



## 'Punjab Assembly cannot be dissolved till Jan 11'

Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan said Friday that the assembly cannot be dissolved till January 11 following the ruling of the Lahore High Court (LHC), ARY News reported. Sibtain Khan said in a statement that his statements proved true regarding the prevailing situation in Punjab. He alleged that the Punjab governor is exceeding his powers.



## Türkiye has brought Kashmir to the fore of its foreign affairs: Dr. Ghulam N. Mir

Dr. Ghulam N. Mir said that Govt of India has committed war crimes in Kashmir, besides denying the people the right to self-determination which was pledged to them by the United Nations Security Council as early as 1948. Dr. Mir thanked the Erdogan Administration which has brought Kashmir to the fore in its foreign affairs; and Turkey is one of the few countries which has constantly raised the voice of Kashmir at the UN. (Report on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Information Technology Exports

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Information Technology Exports on Friday.



Photo: PID

# PM urges steps to promote export of IT products on priority

### News desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said Pakistan had immense talent and skill pertaining to information technology and called the need for increasing the export of IT-related products on a priority basis.

Chairing a meeting to promote the exports of IT products, the prime minister called for devising a future strategy to promote IT-related exports.

The prime minister stressed

taking benefit from the workforce of the country's professionals of information technology.

He directed the relevant ministers and officials to resolve the problems faced by the exports of IT products. He also stressed improving the connection of universities and academia with the IT industries.

Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistani entrepreneurs had played an important role in the promotion of IT sector, adding that such exporters would be appreciated

at the government level.

The meeting was informed that last year, Pakistan's IT-related export touched \$2.6 billion, while efforts were afoot to increase the volume up to \$5 billion in the next five years.

It was told that the largest chunk of the IT products was being exported to the United States, which comprised 57 percent of the total exports.

The meeting was informed that the country had the second biggest freelance workforce in the world, for which Pakistan

Software Export was taking steps to use the potential. Also, the launch of two-year associate degree programmes in IT is under consideration to encourage the young generation to join the field.

It was highlighted that promotion of artificial intelligence, cyber technology, chain, and cloud technology was the priority of the government. Also, the brand of Tech Destination is being promoted at the international level.

The meeting was told that the

Federal Board of Revenue had established help desks in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad to facilitate the IT exporters. The desks are working at the level of Commissioner Inland Revenue.

The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar, Information Technology Minister Amin ul Haq, Special Assistants to PM Tariq Bajwa, Jahanzeb Khan, Syed Fahd Hussain, Shiza Fatima, and senior government officials.

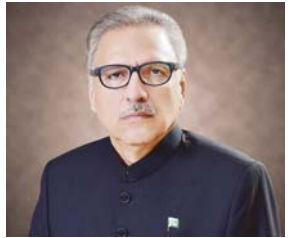
## President gives assent to amendment in criminal, foreign investment laws

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday gave assent to the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

The bill repeals Section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860, relating to the punishment for attempted suicide.

President Arif Alvi also approved the Foreign Investment (Promotion and Protection) Amendment Bill 2022,



under which an amendment has been made in Section 1.

The approval has been given in line with Article 75 of the Constitution.

## Pakistan Army to consolidate hard earned peace ensured by nation, LEAs' sacrifices: COAS

### Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Friday said that Pakistan Army would consolidate the hard-earned peace, made possible by the supreme sacrifices of the resilient Pakistani nation and the law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

The army chief visited Miranshah - North Waziristan and Tarbela, and interacted with troops, an Inter-Services Public Relations' (ISPR) news release said.

At Miranshah, the COAS laid a floral wreath at Martyrs' Monument to pay homage to brave soldiers who laid lives while defending the motherland.

The army chief was briefed by field commanders on the latest security situation in the area and response mechanisms to thwart the terrorist threat.

He also visited the frontline troops deployed along Pakistan - Afghanistan Border. While interacting with officers and men, the COAS commended their profession-



alism, high morale and operational readiness.

The COAS said that Pakistan Army remained focused on evolving security situations and determined to take the battle to the terrorists and break nexus with their facilitators to ensure lasting peace through socioeconomic development.

Later, COAS also visited HQ Special Services Group (SSG) Tarbela and met officers and men of SSG, including the elite Zarrar Company whose soldiers gallantly acted in recent Bannu CTD complex operation.

The COAS praised their indomitable spirit, sacrifices, and commitment to duty in various operations. He said, "SSG is the pride of Nation and it has proved it's metal over the years."

Earlier on arrival, the COAS was received by Commander Peshawar Corps Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat.

## Police head constable martyred, eight injured in suicide blast

### Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: One police official embraced martyrdom, and eight others, including four civilians, received injuries after a suicide bomber reportedly blew himself up in the I-10/4 Sector on Friday.

The bomb disposal squad and other rescue teams rushed to the spot, cordoned off the area and initiated a probe into the incident.

A police spokesman said that ICT personnel stopped a suspicious vehicle during checking near Street 31 of I-10/4 Sector. "As the vehicle stopped, the suicide bomber exploded himself," he added.

He said the police were on alert as it had a tip-off that some anti-state elements could carry out subversive activities to achieve their nefarious designs.

Talking to the media, Deputy Inspector General of Islamabad Police (Operations) Sohail Zafar Chattha said the timely and effective action of police officials did avert the federal capital from an eventual disaster.

He said that Eagle Squad intercepted the suspicious vehicle that was exploded by an alleged bomber, who died on the spot.

The DIG said as per the initial reports, two persons including a woman were seated in the vehicle.

He said all the injured had been shifted to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for medical care.

According to the hospital source-



es, the martyred police official had been identified as Head Constable Adeel Hussain, while injured were identified as Muhammad Yusuf, Mehboob, Naveed, Hanif, Inaam, Raza Hussain, Muhammad Ashir and Usman.

Body parts of the suicide bomber and other evidence had been collected from the incident place to advance the probe.

Following the incident, the police have stepped up security arrangements across the federal capital to avoid any untoward incident.

Issuing the 'red alert' in the capital, Inspector General of Police Dr Akbar Nasir Khan had directed for a crackdown against vehicles plying without registration numbers and unauthorized number plates.

"There will be no permission to carry any weapon," he warned,

advising motorists to keep documents of their vehicles and identity cards with them to avoid any inconvenience.

He asked landlords to register their tenants with respective police stations without any delay in line with foolproof security arrangements being made to tackle anti-social elements.

In the backdrop of a suicide bomb attack the District Administration Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has imposed section 144 in the Federal Capital for a period of two weeks, with immediate, thus prohibited all kinds of corner meetings, jalsa, public gatherings and congregation in the Federal Capital, especially in the wake of upcoming local government elections.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the suicide blast in

Islamabad's Sector I-10/4, saying that the whole nation stood by security forces for the elimination of terrorism. The prime minister paid tributes to Head Constable Adeel Hussain, who was martyred in the terror incident.

"The police personnel intercepted the terrorists by rendering sacrifices. The nation salutes their brave soldiers," he remarked.

He said the people of Pakistan would continue struggling till the elimination of terrorism.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also condemned the suicide bomb blast Friday morning and paid tremendous tribute to the Islamabad police.

He expressed his sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of a police cop and said that Islamabad police performed their duty without any fear.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb strongly condemned the incident of terrorism and paid a rich tribute to the ICT Police and the Eagle Squad for timely action and averting a major disaster.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman also condemned the suicide blast in Sector I-10/4 of the federal capital.

She expressed solidarity with the family members of Shaheed Head Constable Adeel Hussain who embraced martyrdom in a vehicle laden with improvised explosives.

*Imran was imposed on nation by stealing Nawaz Sharif's mandate, says Marriyum*



### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Friday that in 2018 elections Imran Khan was imposed on the nation as prime minister by stealing Nawaz Sharif's mandate.

"Anything that is not yours must be returned to the original owner," she said in her reaction to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's statement.

She said that Imran Khan was fully aware that his government would fall when he lost majority in the National Assembly and his lies, corruption and incompetence were the reasons behind PTI regime's downfall.

"Hundred per cent Pakistanis say that the only solution to the country's problems is transparent elections, but after the completion of the constitutional term by October 2023," she maintained.

## LHC suspends Governor's notification to de-notify Punjab CM Parvez Elahi

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: A larger bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday suspended Governor Balighur Rehman's notification of denotifying Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as Punjab chief minister.

Ali Zafar, CM Elahi's counsel, submitted the undertaking duly signed by Mr Elahi stating he would not dissolve Punjab assembly until he obtained a vote of confidence from the house.

Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman's lawyer argued that the governor would take his notification regarding removal of Mr Elahi from holding the CM office back provided that the court bound the CM not to dissolve the assembly. Justice Asim Hafeez remarked that the Article 130 of the Constitution of Pakistan barred the court from halting the CM to dissolve the assembly after the court conceded to the governor's offer.

"You must submit your undertaking in writing as we have to find a common ground for both parties," he added.

The court issued notices to the governor, the Attorney General, and others, and adjourned the hearing till Jan 11.

Earlier, at the outset of hearing Parvez Elahi's plea against Governor Balighur Rehman's order of his denotification as the chief minister, the court asked the PTI to submit an undertaking that it would defer the assembly dissolution till the CM obtained a vote of confidence.

Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, who heads the five-member bench, inquired whether the PTI would dissolve the assembly if the court annulled governor's notification removing CM Elahi from the office. "Manzoor Wattoo's case is a precedent," he added.

While seeking time from the court to submit undertaking, the lawyer representing the CM argued that if the court reinstated Elahi as the CM, it must order the PTI to halt assembly dissolution.



## Discussing trade relations

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan's delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister H. E Serik Zhumangarin calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

# MoUs with Kazakhstan to enhance trade relations, people-to-people contacts

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the signing of three MoUs on aviation, investment and banking cooperation would not only enhance trade and economic relations

but also spur people-to-people contacts.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation from Kazakhstan led by Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin, welcomed the delegation which was visiting here to attend 11th

Session of Inter-governmental Joint Commission (IJC).

The prime minister appreciated the decisions agreed upon during the 11th Session of IJC and expressed satisfaction on concurrent holding of Joint Business Council which brought business-

men from both countries together.

The Kazakh deputy prime minister thanked the prime minister for the warm welcome accorded to the delegation.

He said the fruitful inter-

action between the two countries would continue to flourish in days to come.

The prime minister reiterated that friendship between Pakistan and Kazakhstan was deepening day by day and the successful holding of IJC was testimony to the growing relationship.

# National task force to be established for the protection of women: Ahsan Iqbal

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday announced to establish a national level-task force for the protection of women.

He made this announcement while speaking at the concluding of the 16-day campaign against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), initiated by the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives while engaging their Young Development Fellows YDFs.

The ceremony was attended by the Executive Director, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr. Shaista Sohail, Vice Chancellor, Rawalpindi Women University (RMU) Dr Alina Kamal, Young Development Fellows (YDFs) of the Planning Ministry, students and civil society activities.



The 16-day campaign was started on November 25 last month on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

On this Day, the Ministry also launched its Gender Unit to ensure that all the policies made under the auspices of the Planning Commission would take the gender perspective into consideration.

Following the campaign, the

YDFs attached to the ministry conducted seminars in various educational institutes to create awareness among the masses about the cybercrime laws, policies and violence against women.

The representatives of the Federal Investigation Agency FIA, National Commission on the Status of Women NCSW and HEC took part in this campaign.

"No country can progress without the active participation of women referring to the example of China and Bangladesh, which have given full representations to their women as a result they showed great progress in development," said the Minister, while addressing the concluding of the campaign.

The Minister also launched a booklet that spreads awareness over violence against women

and pro-women laws in Pakistan that protect women's rights.

The booklet would be disseminated among all the universities in Pakistan through HEC. The booklet contains descriptions of all the pro-women laws introduced in Pakistan to provide guidance to women in Pakistan.

Vice Chancellor, RWC Dr. Anila Kamal in her remarks appreciated the Ministry of Planning Commission for successfully completing this much-needed campaign which helped in creating awareness among the masses.

RWU will continue to collaborate with the Ministry for creating awareness among the masses, she added.

"We are committed to the cause of women's education believing that it is the tool to fight GBV and make them economically independent," remarked the VC.

## Suleman Shehbaz gets interim bail in money laundering case

### Spokesman Report

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore on Friday granted interim bail to Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in money laundering case.

Suleman, who returned to Pakistan earlier this month, was granted bail after he filed a petition for pre-arrest bail in the reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in 2020.

Suleman Shehbaz moved his interim bail plea through his lawyer, Amjad Pervaiz, before an accountability court.

Subsequently, the court granted him interim pre-arrest bail till January 7 against surety bonds worth Rs500,000.

# CM Mahmood launches second phase of 'Insaf Rozgar Scheme'

### Bureau Report

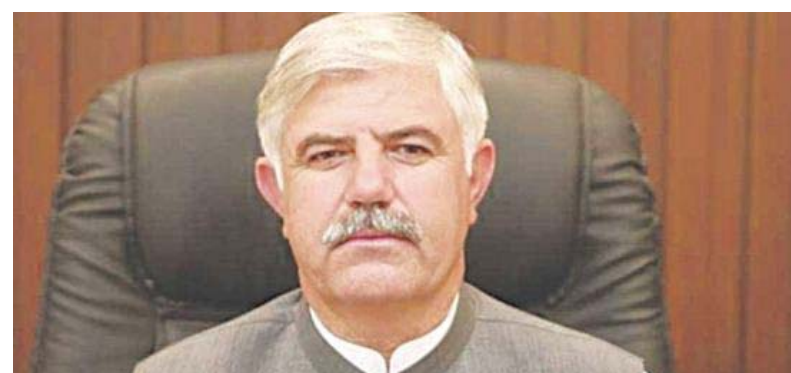
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Friday launched the second phase of 'Insaf Rozgar Scheme' with a total cost of Rs 700 million.

Under the scheme, interest free loans ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 million rupees will be provided to the jobless people of newly merged districts.

People between the age 18-50 years, who are permanent residents of the newly merged districts, are eligible to apply for the loan.

Briefing the participants on the 'Insaf Rozgar Scheme', Bank of Khyber Managing Director said that the first phase was launched in June 2020 with a cost of Rs 1.1 billion. In the first phase, 4,576 jobless people had been provided with interest free loans enabling them to start their own business.

The chief minister extended his heartiest felicitations to the relevant stakeholders on the successful completion of the first phase



as well as launching of the second phase of 'Insaf Rozgar Scheme'.

He said, "The scheme is undoubtedly a poor friendly initiative of the provincial government which has resulted in providing self-employment opportunities to the jobless citizens of the merged areas."

"The KP government has gone all out to create employment opportunities in the province with special focus on newly merged

tribal areas", he added.

Mahmood Khan reiterated, "The top most priority of his government is to address the longstanding deprivations of tribal people. Despite numerous challenges, work on welfare and developmental activities are in full swing in the merged districts."

"On completion of the ongoing projects, these people will feel a positive change in their lifestyle," he said.

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# Bajwa doctrine still in action, claims Imran Khan



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Friday said Bajwa doctrine was still in action in the country and PTI was not in contact with the establishment at the time.

Speaking to journalists, he said establishment was a reality adding only the man sitting on top called the shots. "PTI was in contact with Gen (ret'd) Bajwa when it was in power but now, it has no contacts with the establishment", he added.

He said Gen Bajwa inquired after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif when he [Mr Shehbaz] was in prison. "I asked Mr Bajwa why he was doing this though there a large number of other [common] people who were languishing in jails", he further said.

He claimed that the incumbent government was intended to push the elections forward but it was not in country's favour. "If the country continues at this pace, it will default

up until March", he added.

Earlier, Imran Khan said Punjab 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. The PTI chief once again blamed retired Gen Bajwa for country's current economic woes and reiterated that it was the PTI's legal right to dissolve the assemblies.

During the meeting, the lawyers gave a briefing to Imran Khan that the direction of the governor to Chief Minister Parvez Elahi to seek a vote of confidence was unconstitutional, and the case of Manzoor Wattoo was quite obvious in this regard. He asked the lawyers to launch a nationwide movement for the rule of law.

# Murad Shah visits Bhutto family graveyard in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

### Our Correspondent

LARKANA: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and other offer Fateha at the grave of former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. APP

LARKANA, Dec 23 (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah along-with the president PPP Sindh Chapter Nisar Ahmed Khuhro on Friday visited the Mausoleum of the martyrs of Bhutto's family in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

They also visited the grave of the former prime minister and slain chairperson of PPP Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, laid a floral wreath and offered 'Fateha' for 'Isali-Sawab'.

Murad Ali Shah who was also accompanied by Sindh Minister Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh, Advisor to CM Sindh Aijaz Khan Jakhra, MNA Khursheed Ahmed June-

jo, Murtaza Wahab, Political Secretary to Chairman PPP Jamil Ahmed Soomro, Aijaz Ahmed Leghari, Ghulam Mustafa Leghari, Commissioner Larkana Division Ghanwar Ali Leghari and others sat there for some-time.

Sindh Chief Minister also laid floral wreath at the grave of Founder Chairman of PPP and former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and offered 'Fateha'.

He visited the graves of former Chairperson of PPP and First Lady, Madar-e-Jamhooriat late Begum Nusrat Bhutto, late Shireen Amir Begum, the first wife of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Late Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Late Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto laid floral wreaths and offered fateha.

They also reviewed the arrangements of the public meeting in connection with the upcoming 15th death anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto being held on December 27.

# IHC Suspends CDA's notice to seal Azam Swati's Farmhouse

### City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday suspended the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) notice to seal Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati's farmhouse.

As per details, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the petition filed by Azam Swati's wife in IHC. The court issued notices to all the parties and stopped them from taking any further measures.

CDA didn't issue any notice prior to sealing the farmhouse, the petitioner's counsel told the court and requested the court to stop CDA from taking any further measures.

The court adjourned the hearing for an indefinite time.

Earlier, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) sealed farmhouse owned by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Senator Azam Swati, after 'non-compliance' with the notice issued to his wife.

The notice stated that two basements, a ground floor and guard rooms were illegally constructed in the farmhouses.

The CDA asked Swati to demolish the illegal constructions, otherwise, the farmhouses will be vacated for not complying with the orders.

It further stated that the CDA will raze the constructions and a fine may be imposed.

# SIMS to be issued through new system in Pakistan

### Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has started issuing SIMs through an enhanced version of the Biometric Verification System (BVS) called Multi Finger Biometric Verification System (MBVS).

According to details, a ceremony was held at the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Headquarters to sign the contract between NADRA and cellular mobile operators (CMOs) after a seamless conversion to the updated version of the biometric system. The BVS devices that are

currently available in the market have been modified to comply with the new system's standards through NADRA and CMOs.

While issuing new or duplicate SIM cards, the new system demands impressions of multiple fingers for authentication and applicant antecedents.

Additionally, the control for the choice of fingers for verification purposes has been shifted from the seller representative to the system which asks for two different fingers' impressions randomly. The implementation of the new system will make the illegal use of fake fingerprints impossible.



# 'PharmaFest' - A 1 day event - was organized by Iqra University - North Campus

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD :Various competitions including posters, quizzes, poetry, music, and theatre were organized by the Department of Pharmacy, Iqra University-North Campus. Chief guest PPMA Central Chairman Farooq Bukhari while addressing the 1-day "PharmaFest" appreciated the creativity and quality of education of the students. He exhorted the students to gain maximum experience and competence in the practical field as well. The former chairman of PPMA, Sheikh Kaiser Waheed, while expressing his happiness over the organization of the event, said that it is his second visit and he would like to congratulate the Pharmacy department for polishing the students' abilities at a high scale.



Dr. Tanveer Ahmed, a member of the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, said that the field of pharmacy is very vast and there are many job opportunities for pharmacists in various

fields. He called such competitions very important for the mental development of young students. While recalling the past, renowned artist Ayaz Khan said that in part days,

extra-curricular activities were not very prominent in the universities and it is a commendable initiative of the universities to provide opportunities for the students to show their skills in the arts along with science. Director of Drug Testing Laboratory Sindh Dr Syed Adnan Rizvi, Mr Naeem Qasim, Dr Bina Khan, Dr Syed Imran Wadood, and others were among those who expressed their views. In the closing ceremony, shields and certificates were presented by the Dean Faculty of Health Sciences Prof. Dr Muhammad Masroor and HOD Pharmacy Dr Muhammad Imran to the respected guests and awardee students. Dr Muhammad Imran expressed his gratitude to the participants and Dr Rafaya Ahmed performed administrative duties.

# DC paid a surprise visit to the Tehsil Headquarter Hospital

**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: The Deputy Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh paid a surprise visit to the Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Chak Jhumra and inquired about the attendance of Doctors and staff, availability of medicines, records of immunization of children, storage of medicines at required temperature, cleanliness and other matters checked in detail.



He also reviewed the medical facilities provided to the patients coming for treatment in the hospital and directed the Medical Superintendent to make all possible facilities for the treatment of the patients by arranging better use of the available resources. He said that THQs were of special importance in the field of treatment at the grass-roots level which would be further facilitated so that people would not face any hindrance at the doorstep of minor treatment facilities. The Deputy Commissioner urged to ensure the highest standard of cleanliness at all

times and also checked the expiration date of some medicines.

He said that sudden inspection will remain continuing to be checked and strict action will not be avoided in case of any mis management or obstruction in the delivery of medical treatment. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner also went to Hunza Sugar Mills and checked the facilities provided to

farmers regarding, crushing season. He directed the Mill management for early payment of CPRs of farmers. He checked the weigh bridges of sugarcane and cleared that cutting in weigh would not tolerated and FIRs are being registered against such violators. He said that rights of farmers are protecting and monitoring of crushing season would continue till the end of season.

# OGDCL to organize free eye surgical camps in Hyderabad



**Commerce Reporter**

ISLAMABAD : The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), in partnership with Al-Shifa Eye Trust Rawalpindi, has launched a health programme titled, 'OGDCL Three Day Free Surgical Eye Camps (OTDFSEC)' to facilitate local population residing around the company fields and operational areas in Hyderabad district of Sindh province.

As part of the health programme, OGDCL, under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, will organize a three-day free surgical eye camp from January 10 to 12, 2023, at RHC Tando Jam district Hyderabad.

Similarly, OGDCL Free Surgical Eye Camp will be organized from January 14 to 16, 2023, at OGDCL Tando Alam Oil Complex (TOC) in district Hyderabad through Al-Shifa.

During the three-day Free Eye Camps, doctors and eye specialists of Al-Shifa Trust will provide free Ophthalmic OPDs, treatments, provision of glasses, medicines, and surgeries (including cataract-Mo-ta) to the local population residing around OGDCL fields and operations.

The company has asked local parliamentarians for administrative support to extend the maximum benefit to the masses of the area and make the programme successful. The company has launched an awareness campaign about the free eye camp among area notables, community centers, schools, colleges, and the local population for the free treatment of needy locals.

# TEVTA is contemplating to start evening classes

**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) is contemplating to start evening classes to double its enrollment from 90,000 to 180,000, said Mr. Ahmad Khawar Shahzad, Chief Operating Officer TEVTA.

In a meeting with Dr. Khurram Tariq, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that demand for skilled manpower has increased with innovation and automation in the industrial sector. He said that currently TEVTA has introduced 230 courses in 57 trades while more courses could also be added to cater to the emerging needs.

He mentioned Sector Skill Councils (SSC) and said that its problems would be resolved in consultation with the stakeholders. He said that a meeting would be arranged in TEVTA headquarter in Lahore, providing an opportunity to the industrialists to participate in it online and directly discuss and resolve their TEVTA related issues. He said that a new building in Shahbazpur has been completed and we have made payment of Rs. 2 million for it. He said that a security room and water supply system is being provided to make it functional as soon as possible.

About differently-able children, he said that TEVTA could arrange special courses for them on the specific request of the industrialists. He said that industrialists must inform him about new courses or change in the existing courses specifically for the challenged persons. He said that a new district Board of Management (BOM) for Faisalabad has not been formed.

He requested the President to nominate a suitable person to head this BOM. He asked the President Embroidery Association to inform him through FCCI about their needs of skilled persons so that it could be processed to introduce new courses or make necessary amendments in the existing courses according to their requirement of skilled manpower.

He was appreciative of the vision, positive approach and capabilities of the Dr. Khurram Tariq and said that he needs such persons in TEVTA board to make this organization globally acknowledged. He said that TEVTA was also considering to relaunch "Kissan ki Betti" program for women empowerment by imparting them training in preparation, conservation of food delicacies in addition to its packing and marketing.

# Neighbourhood Council Chairman at Topi Swabi Joined PTI



**Correspondent**

SWABI: Neighbourhood council Topi Chairman Majid Ayaz Khan joined PTI at Topi Swabi. While addressing joining ceremony former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser said that our struggle is for sovereign Pakistan which will not be dictated by Foreign forces. He said that our elected government was ousted and imported government has been imposed on nation. He expressed these views while addressing joining ceremony of Neighbourhood chairman Majid Ayaz Khan at Topi Swabi.

He further said that Governor Punjab has acted against constitution and seized elected Chief Minister of Punjab. He said that incumbent government is violating Human rights rules by abducting senior citizen and lawmaker Azam Swati. He said country is facing severe economic turmoil and unemployment ratio has gone up.

# CBD Punjab value added rainwater harvesting tank in Kalma Chowk remodeling project

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District (CBD Punjab), has planned to build a Rainwater Harvesting Tank at Saint Marry Park Lahore. This initiative is a valuable addition to the authority's existing project of CBD Punjab Boulevard and Kalma Chowk Underpass Remodeling.



During a briefing session about the project Executive Director Technical PCBDDA, Mr. Riaz Hussain said, "The existing water storage tank at Kalma Chowk Underpass, is insufficient for catering an additional estimated 14 cusec rain-

water from the two new barrels. The authority has planned to build a storage tank with a capacity of storing 300,000 gallons of water at Saint Marry Park, Lahore. This water will be filtered and reused in various ways, especially for irrigation

of parks and horticulture". He further added that the rainwater storage tank will have a huge positive impact on the environment as it will control water wastage, soil erosion, water pollution and will reduce inherent flooding issues.

The water storage tank will give an adequate supply of water in case of any emergency and will be a major source of regaining groundwater level. CBD Punjab has already acquired the NOC for the construction of the water storage tank from the Parks And Horticulture Authority (PHA) Lahore, costing an amount of Rs 30.8 Million. According to the NOC, PHA will build new green belts after the completion of CBD Punjab Boulevard and Kalma Chowk Underpass Remodeling. Rainwater Harvesting Storage Tank follows CBD Punjab's eco-friendly initiatives as the authority has a progressive strategy to save the environment and make Punjab clean and green.

# Indus Earth Trust & Coca-Cola to support Pak coastal communities impacted by floods

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Indus Earth Trust and The Coca-Cola Company have partnered to provide flood relief aid to the affected coastal communities in Thatta, Sindh.

Through the funding of PKR 11,500,000 they are providing food, shelter, mosquito nets, WASH facilities, hygienic kits, clean drinking water, and basic shelter support to more than 1000 flood-affected households, especially to families led by women, differently-abled individuals, and minority groups.

In addition to providing basic relief goods, the community will also be provided with safe drinking water facilities. For this, Bondh E Shams, a global water charity organization, is installing its solar-powered all-in-one water pump and filtration system in a communal place. To further make access to clean water easier, the project is providing H2O water wheels by Layaba. org to the women for easier collection.



Coca-Cola Pakistan said, "The sheer scale of damage across Pakistan owing to the recent catastrophic floods is unprecedented. At Coca-Cola, we are committed to building sustainable shared communities and these joint efforts with the Indus Earth Trust are

a part of that commitment." As per government reports one-third of Pakistan was under water and to date in many areas the water is stagnant and continues to be a source of health hazards. Shahid Sayeed Khan, CEO of Ind-

us Earth Trust said, "The recent floods in Pakistan have shown to the world that tackling climate change and environmental degradation needs to be our collective top priority.

It impacts not only all aspects of our lives but our survival as a species. At Indus Earth Trust, our vision is to work for the development of neglected coastal communities by maintaining their sense of dignity. For this, partnerships with organizations like Coca-Cola play a key role in reaching the maximum number of these communities."

This large-scale emergency requires coordinated efforts between the government, I/NGOs, and donors including corporates. Coca-Cola has been at the forefront since the floods hit. The Coca-Cola Foundation, the global philanthropic arm of The Coca-Cola Company, provided a grant of USD 250,000, to CARE International that supported immediate relief efforts in the country for approximately 1,000 households with essential supplies.

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan has formally granted approval to pilot launch Pakistan's first agriculture focused Fintech, Digitt+, its Electronic Money Institution (EMI). Digitt+ is powered by Akhtar Fuiou Technology (AFT).

The purpose of this agri-fintech app is to digitize the agricultural ecosystem, offer financial inclusion to farmers and unbanked people through technology, partnership, relationship with agri-businesses and FMCs in Pakistan.

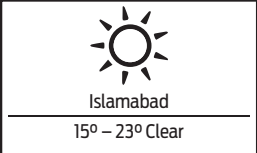
Digitt+ has partnered with FuiouPay, a leading international payment solutions provider, to provide market-based alternative to the traditional banking system. FuiouPay offers holistic enabling solutions through their seventy five intellectual property licenses and several patented software.

"We look forward to providing financial technology solutions to the farmers of Pakistan who will be able to open bank accounts and gain access to credit and modern digital financial services such as bill payments, e-commerce, investments, and money trans-

fers. The approval from State Bank of Pakistan is an important milestone in that direction. This effort has the potential to solve food security issues, enhance crop yields, and improve human welfare in Pakistan, directly impacting thousands of farmers and merchants," said Qasim Akhtar Khan, Founder and Chief Strategy Officer at Digitt+ while talking about the potential of the venture.

Pakistan has been an agriculture powerhouse for decades. Agriculture employs almost half of the country's workforce and contributes about 25% to GDP. Despite its size and prominence, the sector does not have commensurate access to financial services from the banking system. "We are using technology to develop innovative digital financial products focusing on micro services to build a comprehensive platform that will enable the delivery of these solutions to a wide range of users, not only for the retail Agri market but for the corporate sector as well, through the provision of specialized business tools," added Ahmed Saleem, CEO of Digitt+, giving further insight on how the company would unlock the potential of the Agri economy.





**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:40 am
Zohr	12:07 pm
Asr	3:26 pm
Maghrib	5:04 pm
Isha	6:34 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**IHC directs ECP to decide ICTUCs matter after hearing Federation**

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday set aside the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the rejection of Federal Government's notification for an increase in the number of union councils.

The court also instructed the electoral body to decide the matter again after hearing the respondents by December 27.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard identical petitions regarding the increase in the number of union councils and changes in the voter lists. Attorney General for Pakistan Ashtar Ausaf, Additional Attorney General Munawar Dogal, Advocate General Jahangir Jadoon, Director General Legal ECP, Ali Nawaz Awan and others appeared before the court.

At the outset of hearing, Jahangir Jadoon argued that the Interior Ministry had issued a notification on December 19, regarding the increase in the number of union councils but the ECP had rejected using its suo-moto powers.

**Exchange of parliamentary delegations essential to bolster Pak-Somalia ties: NA speaker**

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf Friday said the exchange of parliamentary delegations was essential to bolster the Pak-Somalia relations.

Talking to a parliamentary delegation headed by Somalia's Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation Ahmed Moalim Figi, the speaker said the promotion of parliamentary relations could prove beneficial for both countries. Their parliamentarians could benefit from each other's experiences through the exchange visits.

He said Pakistan wanted to promote cooperation with Somalia in different fields, including trade.

The speaker said Pakistan attached great importance to its cordial relations with Somalia, as both were tied in an eternal bond of religion, fraternity, and brotherhood.



He said the people of Somalia were very hard-working. The problems of Pakistan and Somalia were common, and their people had to face difficult situations.

Somalia's Minister Ahmed Moalim Fagi Ahmed thanked the government and the people of Pakistan for the warm welcome given to his delegation.

He said Somalia valued its fraternal relations with Pakistan. The people of Somalia loved the people of Pakistan.

He said the development of contacts at the parliamentary level could play an important role in bringing the parliamentarians and people of the two countries closer.

**Suicide blast in Capital**

ISLAMABAD: Policemen gather at the suicide blast site at Sector I-10/4 in Federal Capital. A suicide bomber killed at least one police officer on Friday when he detonated a device after his car was stopped in the Pakistan capital, officials said, the first such attack in the city for years. Islamabad has largely been spared the low-level attacks carried out in the country's megacities of Lahore and Karachi, and also along the border areas near Afghanistan.



**CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS**

Photo: Online

**Transgender can benefit from Ehsas Kafalat Programme; Faisal Kundi**

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Kundi Friday announced that a dynamic registry will be starting next month for further inclusion of deserving people under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

Speaking during an informal interaction with the journalists at BISP headquarters, Faisal Kundi said that the eligible women will be able to register for the survey through visiting BISP tehsil offices.

He said that deserving women can register themselves in the survey to get financial support. Scholarships for children in deserving families are provided from primary to higher secondary education under Benazir Education Stipend programme.

Transgender has been included in the Ehsas Kafalat programme while Bank accounts of deserving women are being opened to ensure transparency in the disbursement of cash assistance.

The SAPM said that the cases of beneficiaries expelled from BISP in the past are being re-examined. He assured that the genuine beneficiaries will be reinstated soon.



Photo: Online

**Please don't give license to tobacco industry to kill Pakistanis: PANAH appeals to PM**

Husna Khattak

RAWALPINDI: Civil Society has demanded the government to withdraw the legal status of heated tobacco products. They demanded the government for God sake not to give license tobacco industry to kill Pakistanis. We will go to any extent to save our people (Dr. Samina Matloob). The tobacco industry is putting people to death for their own interests. (Dr. Ziauddin) This was said in a media session organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) at a local hotel in Islamabad. PANAH Secretary General Sanaullah Ghumman hosted the event. Member of the National Assembly, Dr. Samina Matloob, was the chief guest of the event.

Dr. Samina Matloob said in her address that 66.5% of deaths caused by tobacco are caused by tracheal, bronchus and lung cancer, 53.2% of deaths are due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 21.9% of deaths are due to ischemic heart disease, 15.2% of deaths are due to diabetes mellitus, and It causes 16.8% deaths. Giving concession to heated tobacco would be tantamount to facilitating the destruction of public health, the government should withdraw this decision. Tobacco use costs the national exchequer billions of rupees annually. The government will go to any extent to protect the health of its people.

Sanaullah Ghumman said that PANAH has been working to save its people for the last 40 years and Tobacco industry is always using new tactics to kill our people. Currently, the largest segment of the tobacco products market is cigarettes with a volume of 1,526 million dollars. 19.1% of adults (over 15 years of age) currently use tobacco in any form. Among them, 31.8% are males and 5.8% are females. 12.4% of adults smoke. 7.7% use smokeless tobacco. 3% use a pipe (hookah or shisha). About 40% of youth who have ever smoked tried cigarettes before age 10. Tobacco use is deadly. Smoking kills up to half of all lifetime users, so the government has approved the legalization of a new type of tobacco, heated tobacco. This is an unhealthy decision. Heated tobacco is also harmful to health in the same way that cigarettes or any intoxicant can be fatal. Dr. Ziauddin said that tobacco kills more than 163 thousand 600 people in Pakistan every year. About 31,000 of these deaths are caused by secondhand smoke. Tobacco accounts for about 16.0% of all male deaths and 4.9% of all female deaths. Overall, 10.9% of all deaths are due to tobacco. Any kind of it is deadly. Tobacco mafia is misleading the government and the public. Hated tobacco also leads to death. There should be no exception to this.

**Shae Gill: Spotify wrapped most streamed Pakistani female artist and EQUAL ambassador for Dec**

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Nearing a year of celebrating astounding women artists, Spotify's EQUAL Pakistan announced the voice behind 'Pasoori', Shae Gill as its Ambassador for the month of December. The global program featured Shae Gill's track 'Sukoon', a soulful melody about finding peace in solitude, as the highlighted track on the platform. To top it all off, like all previous ambassadors, Shae Gill lit up a digital billboard at Times Square NYC.

Anushae Babar Gill, who became known popularly to us as Shae Gill, hails from Lahore and is amongst the freshest sensations that the local industry has produced. Starting off as a cover-artist on Instagram in 2019 to debuting with a song like 'Pasoori', and now being the most streamed Pakistani female artist on Spotify this year as revealed by Wrapped 2022, Shae Gill has made her mark and has come a long way.

Adding her comments on Shae Gill becoming the latest EQUAL Pakistan Ambassador, Spotify's Senior Manager Editorial for Pakistan, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh, Rutaba Yaqub stated: "2022 has been an eventful year for Pakistani women in music, from Arooj Aftab to Shae Gill making waves outside of Pakistan and making us proud. We are super excited to celebrate the EQUAL Pakistan's December edition with Shae Gill, who is Pakistan's most streamed women artist of 2022. This month, our playlist features the best of women creators that Pakistan has to offer."

**Beaconhouse Organizes Quiz Competition - 'Ubhartay Sitaray'**

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Beaconhouse, Pakistan's largest network of private educational institutions organized a quiz competition titled 'Ubhartay Sitaray' at the Walton Campus. The quiz was based on the general knowledge curriculum for Classes I and II in accordance with the 'National Curriculum of Pakistan'. It is the first time that Beaconhouse has added an additional school subject in Urdu, which addresses key concepts from General Science, Social Sciences and Ethics. This competition was designed to provide students with an opportunity to showcase their newly-learned skills and celebrate their Urdu language competency.

Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Taimur Rehman from LUMS along with Principal Beaconhouse Walton Campus Miss. Tehmina Lodhi, students, parents and teachers attended the competition. Four teams from Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan and Islamabad reached the final round. Lahore Model Town G17 campus team won the competition.

The quiz competition was based on an innovative interdisciplinary approach that combined the subjects of Urdu language and General Knowledge. Such competitions allow students to get a deeper understanding of concepts and learn better ways to express them.



**Struggles of Women Agricultural Workers Rights in Pakistan**

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Rural women working in agricultural fields are the largest contributors to the informal economy in Pakistan, but they are not acknowledged, counted and protected. These women have same rights as working women in cities but in remote areas there is no recognition of their contribution and rights. These thoughts were expressed by Kashmirala Tariq, Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment at the national launch of study on women agricultural workers rights organized by Awaz-CDS Pakistan.

The study titled "The Hands That Feed Us: Struggles of Women Agricultural Workers in Pakistan" was conducted by AwazCDS-Pakistan in collaboration with Forum Asia and Bread for the World in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Executive Awaz CDS-Pakistan Zia-ur-Rehman highlighted in his address that women agricultural workers (WAWs) often earn less than 50 percent of men wages. WAWs traditionally face malnutrition, discrimination, violence, and ill-treatment by their partners, including exploitation and sexual harassment.

Highlighting the need to carry out this study, Mr. Rehman said that "There are several women empowerment studies but limited research is available on the measurement of empowerment in the agricultural context.

The event centered a panel discussion moderated by Zia-ur-Rehman and Maryam

Amjad, Program Manager AwazCDS-Pakistan about the issues brought up within the study. The speakers included Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Chairperson Women Parliamentary Caucus, Ms. Shandana Gulzar, Ex-Convenor Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Chairperson Common Wealth Women Parliamentary Forum, Ms. Mardiya Sultana Member, National Commission for Status of Women, Ms. Mahwish Afridi, Head of SDG Program, Hashoo Foundation.

Mr. Chaundry Intiaz Ahmed, Director Agriculture Rahim Yar Khan, Ms. Sameena Nazeer, Executive Director PODA, Aftab Alam Khan, Chief Executive Resilient Future International threw light on the situation of rural women rights and how they are deprived of their

basic rights. Shandana Gulzar, Ex-Convenor Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Chairperson Common Wealth Women Parliamentary Forum said WAW rights are not an issue of social welfare, it is about basic human rights. She threw light on the situation of rural women rights and how they are deprived of their basic rights.

Mahwish Afridi, Head of SDG Program, Hashoo Foundation said that there is a need to empower women agricultural workers by imparting them with required technical skills to make linkages with the market. They should be aware of their rights and the facilities to acquire and utilize microfinance.

Maryam Amjad, Program Manager AwazCDS Pakistan shared the method, findings



and recommendations from the study. She recommended that provincial ministries, district departments, UN and

Trade Unions must be involved in ensuring WAW rights by building their capacities and raising their awareness. In the

Mr. Debendra Adhikari Head of South Asia Program Forum Asia thanked the Participants for their great contributions



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# Policy, climate, war make 2022 'pivot year' for clean energy

## Spokesman Research

One of India's largest renewable energy firms, Renew Power, will be among the corporations big and small hoping for a piece of a \$2.6 billion government scheme that encourages the domestic manufacturing of components required to produce solar energy. It's the biggest such incentive in India's history.

Renew Power's CEO Sumant Sinha said the government funds for clean energy send "a strong signal" that the country wants "to become a manufacturing location for renewable energy equipment and a global alternative to China eventually."

"We are excited to be a part of this journey," he said. The company has over 100 clean energy projects across India and has become the world's tenth largest solar and wind energy company in just over a decade.

Other major governments around the world have been green lighting ambitious renewable energy policies this past year that aim for major expansions of wind and solar energies, along with development of technologies like carbon capture, which captures carbon dioxide, a central cause of climate change, and stores it in the ground. Some of the policies also include tax credits to buy electric vehicles, heat pumps or energy efficient materials for construction.

The United States signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act, the most ambitious climate legislation in U.S. history, the European parliament passed the REPower EU plan to reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the transition to clean energy and China announced ambitious schemes to enable the country to meet its 2030 clean energy goals five years ahead of schedule.

Experts say the task is now to build on this momentum in 2023, strengthen energy grid infrastructure and resolve backend issues which slow down the distribution and transmission of clean energy.

"From an energy perspective, 2022 will go down as a pivot year. For the first time, we have discernible proof that fossil fuel demand after 200 years of growth had reached a peak in 2019 and we are now bumping along a plateau before an inevitable decline," said Kingsmill Bond, an energy strategist at the Rocky Mountain Institute, a clean energy non-profit group. RMI's research has found that global energy demand grew by around six additional exajoules in 2022 — enough energy for around 6 million transatlantic flights. This is less than usual year-on-year growth as energy use is getting more efficient, the report said. Solar and wind supply growth this year was also calculated to be about six exajoules.

Bond added that the price of clean energy was getting closer to that of fossil fuels and in some cases it was cheaper. A report by the International Energy Agency said that oil prices rose well above \$100 per barrel in mid-2022 and high gas and coal prices accounted for electricity cost hikes around the world. But increased

use of clean energy saved Asian countries, including China and India, a total of \$34 billion in the past year, a separate report found.

Energy analysts say that the global energy crisis triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and increasing climate threats such as the disastrous floods in Pakistan have accelerated the clean energy policies and big ticket investments that are needed to transition to renewable energy, especially wind and solar energy, around the world.

The sudden lack of access to fossil fuels and supply chain crunches were also other key reasons for the aggressive tilt towards cleaner energy. For example, Russia's sale of gas to Europe was reduced to a trickle.

The invasion "had the effect of making it apparent that clean energy is the solution," said Lauri Myllyvirta, a lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Despite the positive momentum towards clean energy, there were some pitfalls too.

"Knee jerk reactions saw some places shift back to fossil fuels even if it's at a higher price to the taxpayer," said Vibhuti Garg, a New Delhi-based energy economist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

India's coal production increased by about 17% from April to November 2022. Bangladesh increased its imports of natural gas and went ahead with opening thermal powerplants in the country. Germany, a strong advocate of clean energy, turned to coal and oil to address its short term

power needs. "It was a good year for renewable energy but sadly, not a bad year for fossil fuels either," Garg added.

But spurred by momentum from previous years the clean energy sector worldwide nevertheless took off this year.

"You know, 20 years ago, renewables became the cleanest forms of energy and then in the last few years, renewables became the cheapest form of energy," said Dave Jones, an energy analyst at London-based environmental think-tank, Ember. "Only this year, they've become the most secure form of energy."

Another report by the IEA said that developments in 2022 triggered unprecedented momentum behind renewables, with the world set to add as much renewable power in the next five years as it did in the past 20.

"There is still a lot that needs to be done but I think 2022 will be remembered as the year in which for the first time, renewables have ticked all the boxes," Jones said.

There's acknowledgement from those in the sector that more work needs to be done to overcome the scale of the transition.

Sinha of Renew Power hopes that government policies in 2023 focus on dealing with the bottlenecks that prevent clean energy growth.

"Currently the power sector is designed around fossil fuels and suddenly you have all this clean energy coming into the grid," said Sinha.

"We need more proactive policies that find ways to make room for renewables."

## Climate weather extremes in 2022

From extreme floods like those in Pakistan to heat and drought, weather and climate-related disasters have affected millions and cost billions this year, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a Geneva-based UN agency, said Friday, describing the "tell-tale signs and impacts" of intensified climate change.

The clear need to do much more to cut greenhouse gas emissions was again underscored throughout events in 2022, said the agency, advocating for strengthened climate change adaptation, including universal access to early warnings.

"This year we have faced several dramatic weather disasters which claimed far too many lives and livelihoods and undermined health, food, energy and water security and infrastructure", WMO chief Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

Record-breaking rain in July and August led to extensive flooding in Pakistan, which caused more than 1,700 deaths, displaced 7.9 million and affected 33 million people.

"One third of Pakistan was flooded, with major economic losses and human casualties", Taalas said.

While Global temperature figures for 2022 will be released in mid-January, the past eight years are on track to be the eight warmest on record, according to WMO.

While the persistence of a cooling La Niña event, now in its third year, means that 2022 will not be the warmest year on record, its cooling impact will be short-lived and not reverse the long-term warming trend caused by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

Moreover, this will be the tenth successive year that temperatures have reached at least 1°C above pre-industrial levels — likely to breach the 1.5°C limit of the Paris Agreement.

Early warnings, increasing investment in the basic global observing system and building resilience to extreme weather and climate will be among WMO priorities in 2023 — the year that the WMO community celebrates its 150th anniversary.

"There is a need to enhance preparedness for such extreme events and to ensure that we meet the UN target of Early Warnings for All in the next five years", said the top WMO official.

WMO will also promote a new way of monitoring the sinks and sources of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide by using the ground-based Global Atmosphere Watch, satellite and assimilation modelling, which allows better understanding of how key greenhouse gases behave in the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gases are just one climate indicator used to observe levels. Sea levels, which have doubled since 1993; ocean heat content; and acidification are also at recorded highs.

The past two and a half years alone account for 10 per cent of overall sea level rise since satellite measurements started nearly 30 years ago, said WMO's provisional State of the Global Climate in 2022 report.

And 2022 took an exceptionally heavy toll on glaciers in the European Alps, with initial indications of record-shattering melt.

The Greenland ice sheet lost mass for the 26th consecutive year and it rained — rather than snowed — on the summit for the first time in September.

Although 2022 did not break global temperature records, it topped many national heat records throughout the world.

India and Pakistan experienced soaring heat in March and April. China had the most extensive and long-lasting heatwave since national records began and the second-driest summer on record.

## Hard decision



## Small dams to combat desertification, water woes in Pakistan

### APP Feature Service

Desertification and drought have recently emerged as one of the major environmental and agricultural development problems across the globe where around two billion people live on dry lands and their biological productivity was under threat due to aggressive degradation of natural resources, especially consumable water in the wake of climate change's challenges.

Out of 195 countries having eight billion populations, about two billion people in 110 states including Pakistan and two-thirds of the world's agricultural land were highly prone to land degradation, drought and desertification mainly due to scarcity of water.

According to available data, an estimated USD 42 billion of economic loss and six million hectares of productive land was being lost every year due to land degradation, drought and desertification in the world, thus affecting overall agricultural productivity and posing threats to food security in the aftermath of weather patterns.

Dr Ikram-ur-Rehman, former Provincial Coordinator, Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP Phase-II) said out of 79.6 million hectares of land in Pakistan, about 70 percent was arid to semi-arid, 50.88 million hectares were rangeland and only 22 million hectares were under cultivation.

He said around 1.5 to 2.5 million hectares of irrigated land, 3.5 to four million hectares of rain-fed agricultural and 35 million hectares of rangelands were either becoming barren or non-productive annually due to drought, land degradation and desertification.

SLMP-II program, which was started with co-partnership of Federal and Provincial Governments with financial assistance from UNDP and Global Environment Facility (GEF), has revealed that underground water resources in the western dry mountains of Sindh and Balochistan were shrinking due to heavy exploitation of aquifers without any natural recharge.

The National Water Policy 2018 has disclosed that Paki-

stan was gradually heading towards water stress due to shortage of dams, which might lead to food insecurity for all living creatures in near future.

According to the policy, per capita surface water availability has declined from 5,260 cubic meters per year in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016 and this quantity would likely further drop to 860 cubic meters by 2025.

It warned that the groundwater situation was expected to further drop in the country mostly in Punjab and Sindh, where one million tube wells were currently pumping about 55 million acres feet (MAF) of underground water for irrigation, which is 20pc more than that available from canals.

Had Diamir Bhasha and Mohmand dams constructed and gas and alternative power resources were developed, Pakistan would have achieved 50,000MW affordable electricity today. He said in the second phase, 200 more villages were included in 2015 under which around six lakh acres land was brought under sustainable rain-fed agriculture and water conservation programs before closure of the project in June 2020.

"We have shared the project's models with KP agriculture, forest and others relevant departments with special recommendations for water conservation, rains water harvesting and construction of small dams," he said.

At Komara Sitam in Tank and Ratkoi DI Khan, he said structures for small dams were constructed for storage of rainwater and averting flash floods from Koh-e-Sulman mountains range.

Engr Fakhre Alam Khan, Spokesman of Small Dams, Irrigation Department said that Allah Almighty had blessed Pakistan with plenty of natural sites on its different rivers for construction of large, medium and small dams.

He said Pakistan was bestowed with more than 24 big and small rivers including five in Punjab, four in Sindh, eight in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and seven in Balochistan with numerous suitable natural sites for construction of small, medium and big dams.

These rivers are endowed with a number of potential sites at Diamir Bhasha, Dasu Kohistan, Kalabagh on River Sindh, Mohamad and Kalam on River Swat, Shal-

man Khyber on River Kabul, Tangi on River Kurram in North Waziristan, Kaghan-Naran on River Kunhar for construction of dams. Engr Fakhre Alam said that in the world, about 46,000 big and small dams were constructed including 22,104 dams by China, 5,334 by India and only 150 dams by Pakistan since its independence.

He said small dams could easily be constructed in a short span of two to three years while big dams mostly require 10 to 15 years, adding that Pakistan would require additional 76 MAF water by 2050 which was only possible by constructing small and medium dams.

Engr Fakhre Alam said that 37 small and medium dams were constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including 15 operated by the provincial government while 11 supervised by WAPDA and ten were constructed in merged districts having 0.1377 million-acre cultivated (CCA) and 0.3414 Acres Feet (AF) water storage capacity. He said 24 small dams with accumulative water storage capacity of 75,008 AF having 49,523 acres CCA were being built in different districts of KP under Federal government's PSDP program.

Besides completion of Pezu dam in Lakki Marwat, Khattak Bandhan dam in Kohat, and Makh Banda dam in Karak by the federal government, he said Ichar and Manchura dams at Mansehra, Chashma Akora Khel dam in Karak, Sarozai dam in Hangu, Sanam dam in Lower Dir, Bada dam and Ulta dam in Swabi were also constructed jointly by the federal and provincial governments.

Fakhre Alam said that seven medium dams including Bara dam in Khyber, Tank Zam in Tank, Shiekh Haider Zam, Chaudwan Zam, Daraban, and Kora Nullah in DIKhan and Larzan small dam in Tank with water storage capacity of 520,884 AF covering 171,748 CCA besides 31.5-megawatt power generation capacity were in design stage and practical work on it would start soon.

The designs of seven medium dams including Barwasa and Sher Dara Swabi, Sumri Payan Kohat, Surkhway Mardan, Naki Nowshera, Shaheed Banda Charssadda and Tora Warae Hangu having a total accumulative water storage capacity of 13,014 AF with 14,935 acres CCA were completed.

## Fruits, vegetables valuing \$133.456m exported in 5 months

### Tayyba Iqbal

Different fruits and vegetables worth \$133.456 million were exported during first five months of current financial year as compared the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The exports of vegetables from the country during the period under review grew by 20.86 percent, where as exports of fruits decreased by 37.24 percent as compared to exports of corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-November, 2022 about 423,489 metric tons of vegetables valuing \$121.976 million exported as compared the exports of 278,244 metric tons worth \$100.926 million of same period last year.

However, the exports of fresh fruits from the country during period under review decreased by 37.24 percent as about 187,744 metric tons of fruits worth \$111.480 million exported as against the exports of 211,640 metric tons valuing \$177.631 million of same period last year, according the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

In last five months, about 48 metric tons of leguminous vegetables worth \$47,000 exported,

which posted 100 percent growth as compared the exports of same period of last year.

On the other hand, \$185.952 million earned by exporting about 71,659 metric tons of fish and fish preparations as against the exports of 56,731 metric tons of fish valuing \$150.502 million of same period of last year.

During the period from July-November, 2022, the exports of meat and meat products also grew by 20.64 percent as about 34,340 metric tons of above mentioned commodities worth \$161.310 million exported as against the exports of 30,870 metric tons valuing 133.714 million of same period of last year.

It is pertinent to mention here that overall food group exports from the country during the first five months of the current financial year witnessed about a 1.03 percent decrease, whereas imports increased by 1.63 percent as compared to the exports and imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During July-November, this year, exports of different food commodities was \$1.927 billion as compared to \$1.947 billion in the same period of last year, whereas food commodities valuing \$4.080 billion were imported as against the imports of \$4.015 billion of the same period, last year.



# Türkiye has brought Kashmir to the fore of its foreign affairs: Dr. Ghulam N. Mir

**Spokesman Report**

ISTANBUL: A seminar, organized by "Post-Colonial Studies Application and Research Center" (PAMER) of Uskudar University, Istanbul was organized on the subject of, "Why Kashmiris must get their right to self-determination? Üsküdar University was declared in 2018 by UNESCO as a "Center of Excellence" for its work in Neurobiology, Cognitive Medicine and Brain Research.

Speakers included: Dr. Ghulam N. Mir, Chairman, Kashmir Diaspora Coalition & President, World Kashmir Awareness Forum & Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, World Forum for Peace & Justice.

The Emcee of the seminar was Dr. Fehmi AGCA, Department of Political Science and International Relations at Uskudar University. Dr. Fehmi is one of the most accomplished scholars at the University who has written more than dozen books, including "International Cooperation on Law against Terrorism." Dr. Fehmi said that Kashmir issue is one of the oldest issues pending on

the agenda of the United Nations Security Council. The people of Kashmir are suffering, and it is our responsibility to explain the plight of the people before the world community. We know that the United Nations resolutions were implemented in other conflict areas, why not in Kashmir? Kashmir deserves international attention too.

Dr. Ghulam N. Mir said that Government of India has committed war crimes in Kashmir, besides denying the people the right to self-determination which was pledged to them by the United Nations Security Council as early as 1948.

The United Nations has adopted multiple resolutions, calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir but none has been implemented due to Indian intransigence. Kashmir has become, Dr. Mir added, a settler colonial project of India, with forced demographic change and the granting of citizenship to millions of Indian Hindus. The environment and ecology of Kashmir have been severely damaged by the influx of tourists and settlers, and ingenious Kashmiris have been denied access to

jobs and education opportunities.

Dr. Mir explained that according to Srinagar-based, Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), more than 8,000 men disappeared in the region between the late 1980's and the early 2000's. Since the men were not declared dead, their wives spent decades waiting for them in uncertainty - Kashmiri civil society coined the term, 'Half-Widows' for them.

Dr. Mir thanked the Erdogan Administration which has brought Kashmir to the fore in its foreign affairs; and Turkey is one of the few countries which has constantly raised the voice of Kashmir at the United Nations.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai said that the self-determination of peoples is a basic principle of the United Nation Charter which has been reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants of Civil and Political Rights (the ICCPR) & International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the ICESCR) and applied countless times to the settlement of many inter-



national disputes. Finally, in 1945 the establishment of the United Nations gave a new dimension to the principle of self-determination. It was made one of the objectives which the United Nations would seek to achieve, along with equal rights of all nations. Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations as one of the purposes of the UN reads: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."

"International Court of Justice considered the several resolutions on

decolonization process and noted: "The subsequent development of International Law in regard to non-self-governing territories as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations made the principle of self-determination applicable to all of them." This opinion establishes the self-determination as the basic principle for the process of de-colonization," Dr. Fai added.

Dr. Fai explained that the principle of self-determination and the maintenance of international peace and security are inseparable. For example, the denial of this right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir has brought two neighboring countries in South Asia-India and Pakistan-to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. The applicability of the principle of the self-determination to the specific case of Jammu and Kashmir has been explicitly recognized by the United Nations. It was upheld equally by India and Pakistan when the Kashmir dispute was brought before the Security Council in 1948. Since, on the establishment of India and Pakistan as sovereign states, Jammu and

Kashmir was not part of the territory of either, the two countries entered into an agreement to allow its people to exercise their right of self-determination under impartial auspices and in conditions free from coercion from either side.

Dr. Fai warned that we must mention here that even by today's violent world, the behavior of the Indian occupation regime in Kashmir is singular in as much as it has enjoyed total immunity. Not a word of condemnation has been uttered at the important capitols of the world, not even a call on India to cease and desist from its near-genocidal campaign. Therefore, we appeal to the United Nations Secretary General to intervene in the situation in Kashmir under the Article 99 of the United Nations Charter. Because human rights violations in Kashmir are systematic, deliberate and officially sanctioned. India has given its occupation forces powers to shoot to kill and the license to abuse the people of Kashmir; in whatever ways they like in order to suppress the popular movement for basic human rights and human dignity.

## Somalian delegation

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a meeting with Somalian delegation led by Minister of Interior Federal Affairs and Reconciliation Mr. Ahmed Moalim Fiqi Ahmed at Parliament House on Friday.



Photo: PID

## Chinese company to provide free cancer screenings for 10,000 Pakistani women

**News Desk**

BELJING :Landing Med, a Chinese medical technology company based in Wuhan, China, dispatched three self-developed cervical cancer screening devices along with 5,000 sets of supporting consumable items to Pakistan.

With these AI-powered devices, 10,000 Pakistani women will receive free cervical cancer screening and early diagnosis of tumors.

This is the first batch of devices under the China-Pakistan AI Cervical Cancer Screening Program. In the future, more will be provided to Pakistan. Landing Med

will also establish a Cloud Diagnostic Research Center for Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital to provide nationwide cervical cancer screening in Pakistan.

Compared with artificial diagnosis, AI screening excels in speed and accuracy. Even an experienced pathologist can only examine up to 100 cell slides a day. In addition, some pathological cells that do not show obvious changes in the early stage may be missed when being observed through the microscope.

The AI-powered screening device, on the other hand, can automatically find traces of cancer cells in digitized images within minutes

based on decades of manually accumulated diagnosis data and algorithm models.

According to Sun Xiaorong, founder and President of Landing Med, as Pakistan has a huge population, there is a large number of women who need cervical cancer screening. In this regard, efficient testing methods are required to enhance coverage.

To benefit women in remote areas with scarce medical resources, the company has developed a 5G+AI cloud diagnosis platform where experts from over ten countries can hold consultations on reports uploaded to the cloud platform, which saves patients

the trouble of repeatedly visiting the hospital for sample collection and report analysis.

The China-Pakistan AI Cervical Cancer Screening Program started in 2019 on the ninth meeting of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Joint Cooperation Committee when two think tanks of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences signed an MoU with Pakistan's Ministry of Health to jointly provide AI cervical cancer screening services in Gwadar Port and other cities in Pakistan.

Landing Med signed an agreement with its Pakistani partner in November 2021 to execute the program.

## Putin says Russia wants end to war in Ukraine

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Russia wants an end to the war in Ukraine and that this would inevitably involve a diplomatic solution.

Putin made the comments a day after US President Joe Biden hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the White House and promised him continued and unwavering US support.

"Our goal is not to spin the flywheel of military conflict, but, on the contrary, to end this war," Putin said. "We will strive for an end to this, and the sooner the better, of course."

White House spokesman John Kirby said Putin has "shown absolutely zero indication that he's willing to negotiate" an end to the war, which began when Moscow sent troops into Ukraine on Feb 24.

"Quite the contrary," Kirby told reporters during an online briefing.

## The new administrative center of the Ahal region received the status of a city and was named 'arkadag'



**News Desk**

TURKMENISTAN: At the meeting of the government of Turkmenistan, the Chairman of the Mejlis of the Milli Gengesh of Turkmenistan G.Mammedova announced the adopted Resolution to classify the new, modern administrative center of the Ahal region as a city with the rights of a district and give it the name "Arkadag".

According to the document, the administrative center of the Ahal region will be moved to the city of Arkadag. At the same time, the area in 2 thousand 370 hectares of the Goktepe district of the Ahal region passes into the administrative territory of the city of Arkadag.

This decision was made taking into account the wishes of the residents of the Ahal region and citizens of the country, the petitions of public associations and the submission of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, in accordance with the Law of Turkmenistan "On the procedure for resolving issues of the administrative-territorial structure of Turkmenistan".

The architectural appearance of the new, modern administrative center of the Ahal region, which is being built on the initiative of the Chairman of the Milli Gengesh of the Halk Maslahaty Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the territory of the Gokdepe district of the Ahal region, reflects the rapid socio-economic development of Turkmenistan, whereas the organization of housing provision mirrors our national heritage, spiritual values, centuries-old rich historical and cultural traditions of our people.

## Japan adopts plan to maximize nuclear energy, in major shift



JAPAN: Japan adopted a plan on Thursday to extend the lifespan of nuclear reactors, replace the old, and even build new ones, a major shift in a country scarred by the Fukushima disaster that once planned to phase out atomic power.

In the face of global fuel shortages, rising prices, and pressure to reduce carbon emissions, Japan's leaders have begun to turn back toward nuclear energy, but the announcement was their clearest commitment yet after keeping mum on delicate topics like the possibility of building new reactors.

Under the new policy, Japan will maximize the use of existing reactors by restarting as many of them as possible and prolonging the operating life of aging ones beyond a 60-year limit. The government also pledged to develop next-generation reactors.

In 2011, a powerful earthquake and the ensuing tsunami caused multiple meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi plant—a disaster that supercharged anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan and at one point led the government to promise to phase out the energy by around 2030. But since then, the government has recommitted to the technology, including setting a target for nuclear to make up 20-22% of the country's energy mix by the end of the decade.

Still, restart approvals for idled nuclear reactors have come slowly since the Fukushima disaster, which led to stricter safety standards. Utility companies have applied for restarts at 27 reactors in the past decade. Seventeen have passed safety checks and only 10 have resumed operation.

According to the paper laying out the new policy, nuclear power serves "an important role as a carbon-free base load energy source in achieving supply stability and carbon neutrality" and pledged to "sustain the use of nuclear power into the future." Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he planned to get the Cabinet to approve the policy and submit necessary bills to Parliament.

As part of the new policy, the Economy and Industry Ministry has drafted a plan to allow extensions every 10 years for reactors after 30 years of operation while also permitting utilities to subtract offline periods in calculating reactors' operational life.

## Sarsabz joins farmers to celebrate fourth Kissan Day

MULTAN: Sarsabz Fertilizer, the flagship brand of Fatima Fertilizer, joined thousands of farmers on December 22 to celebrate the fourth Kissan Day during a special ceremony hosted at Fatima Fertilizer's plant in Multan which was attended by a large gathering of farmers which also included Mr. Khalid Khokhar, President of Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, Dr. Anjum Ali, Director General (Extension & AR) in Punjab, and Nazo Dharejo—a progressive farmer from Sindh, who actively advocates about the hardships faced by farmers.

Important officials including Syed Fakhar Imam (Ex-Minister of National Food Security and Research), the Vice Chancellor of the University of Multan, Dr. Asif Ali and member of the Pakistan Crop Protection Association (PCPA), Asif Majeed and other senior officials also attended the event to mark their tribute and deep appreciation towards the farmers.

On account of Kissan Day celebrations, Fawad Mukhtar, CEO of Fatima Fertilizer said, "In context to the recent floods, protecting Pakistan's future food security has become the most important priority for the agriculture sector. This can only be achieved through the hard work and dedication of our farmers' community who are already facing immense hardships and challenges due to the devastating floods and need our



support and encouragement to achieve this monumental target."

Rabel Sadozai, Director of Marketing & Sales, at Fatima Fertilizer also said: "Farmers are our true heroes who play a vital role in harnessing the true potential of the agriculture sector. Let us all work towards modernising the agriculture sector and helping small-scale farmers to overcome their current challenges so they can play their due role to ensure our economic prosperity and national food security."

The recent floods in Pakistan have

severely impacted the agriculture sector which is currently facing an acute existential crisis. Not only has it become more challenging to meet the country's food security needs, but the potential income from agricultural exports is also expected to decline significantly. Agriculture experts predict that if thousands of acres of agricultural land are not restored on priority, the country may face a noticeable food shortage in the near future. To rescue Pakistan from this threatening situation, the government needs to mobilise all

possible resources and play a pivotal role in reviving the sector.

Sarsabz Fertilizer has been effectively working to protect the interest of farmers by proposing initiatives like Kissan Day to create a platform where farmers' issues can be raised to the attention of stakeholders and policymakers to try and explore possible reforms and policies which can help support the farmers.

The one-day celebrations of Kissan Day concluded with a distribution of shields ceremony among the farmers' community.



**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
39,669.20	39,838.33
Day's High	Day's Low:
39,938.32	39,497.73
Index Value	Change
3,968,038,456	-169.13
Percentage	Time
-0.42%	23 Dec, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,473.01	+3.73
Percentage	Time
+0.050%	23 Dec, 12:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,002.19	-25.30
Percentage	Time
-0.077%	23 Dec, 11:05 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
26,235.25	-272.62
Percentage	Time
-1.03%	23 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	152	153.25
Bahrain Dinar	602.16	606.66
Canadian Dollar	166.09	167.44
China Yuan	32.4	32.65
Danish Krone	32.24	32.59
Euro	259.5	262
Hong Kong Dollar	29.03	29.38
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.29
Kuwaiti Dinar	739	744
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	143.33	144.53
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	587.99	592.49
Qatari Riyal	61.75	62.25
Saudi Riyal	65.1	65.7
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	69	69.6
UK Pound Sterling	295	298
US Dollar	232.5	234.7

# Ayaz for action plan to boost Pakistan-Kazakhstan trade

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq here on Friday highlighted the importance of developing a plan of action for improving trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, which is a far blow to its potential.

Addressing the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Joint Commission (IJC), the minister said the trade volume between the two countries was recorded at just \$163 million in 2022, including \$163 million exports from Pakistan and \$56 imports from Kazakhstan.

He said, there was a lot of potential available that needs to be explored and highlighted that both countries should develop a plan of action to raise the trade volume through enhanced trade activities and the removal of trade barriers.

He said holding frequent joint business council meetings and facilitating businesses to introduce products into each-others markets could also play a vital role in promoting the trade.

The minister expressed the hope that early



finalization and signing of a transit trade agreement between the two sides would further enhance bilateral trade.

The minister said, Pakistan and Kazakhstan enjoy good cordial relations that would be further strengthened through this forum, which was established back in 1993.

He said, IJC resulted in enhancing bilater-

al relations between the two countries in various fields including trade, investment, cultural exchange and tourism.

He expressed the hope that IJC would provide a solid base to consolidate relations to move forward for capitalization of economic opportunities available including investment, and trade to benefit people.

He said, business and investment in Pakistan have improved and various agreements with Kazakhstan would further help enhance it.

He said, the promotion of tourism and culture was also a priority of the Pakistan government as Pakistan was a beautiful place with huge diversity, having 5 out of 14 highest peaks of over 8000 meters. He invited Kazakhstan in the tourism sector.

He also underlined the need for cooperation in agriculture research as the economy of both countries has a dependence on agriculture.

He said cooperation could be enhanced for value addition, processing and joint ventures. He said cooperation could also be enhanced in the higher education sector by the exchange of faculty and students besides the signing of agreements between various universities.

He said, Pakistan attaches importance to a peaceful environment in the neighborhood and invited Kazakhstan to be part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and benefit from it.

He said, there was also a need to have connectivity through rail, road, and air besides cooperating in tapping the potential of natural resources and precious metals.

# ICCI condemns suicide blast in Islamabad

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in a statement have strongly condemned the suicide blast in I-10/4, Islamabad in which one policeman embraced Shahadat and many police officers as well as civilians got injured. They expressed condolences with the bereaved family and paid tribute to the courage and valour of the martyred policeman. They also wished early recovery to the injured ones.

They said that the resurgence of the incidents of blasts and terrorist attacks are creating a lot of concerns in the business community of the country as they are feeling insecure due to such incidents. They said that the economy of Pakistan has already suffered a huge loss of over US\$ 150 billion due to fighting terrorism and the country cannot afford re-emer-



gence of terrorists in its land as it would badly damage the economy and tarnish the image of the country at national and international level.

They said that Pakistan needed a peaceful environment to promote business and investment activities to steer the economy out of current challenges. However, the incidents like terrorists'

attack at CTD Bannu and suicide blast in I-10/4, Islamabad are worrisome as any further rise in such incidents would disturb the peace of mind of businessmen and shake the confidence of local and foreign investors. This situation would further weaken the already fragile economy.

They urged that the government should fight out terrorism with full force in all its forms and manifestations and break the nexus between terrorists, their supporters and sympathisers to achieve a peaceful and stable environment. They further stressed that the writ of the state should be established at all costs and no one should be allowed to derail the hard-earned gains of the war on terror, which Pakistan had achieved after the unparalleled sacrifices of the armed forces and the nation. They assured that the business community of the entire country would fully stand with the armed forces and the security agencies to purge Pakistan of the terrorism and anti-peace elements.

# Energy saving decision may not be executed: Mian Zahid Hussain

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said the speed of economic decline is increasing.

Global rating agency S&P has downgraded Pakistan's credit rating to triple C plus which will have a negative impact on the economy, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government had projected five percent growth for the current year, but even one percent growth would be a miracle as the worst floods in the history of the country and measures to control imports to curb the trade deficit will take a toll on the economy.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that if the cold attitude of the IMF and friendly countries and the political instability in the country continue, the growth rate will fall below one percent.

Former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced the growth rate to five percent in the budget speech on June 11.

Later, the central bank estimated the growth rate to be between three and four percent, while the World Bank first issued an estimate of four percent and later cut it to two percent.

Meanwhile, the IMF had predicted the growth rate to be less than two percent in October, while now the central bank is preferring to remain silent on the growth rate, which shows the criticality of the situation.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to flood



damage, inflation, closure of factories, and other factors, inflation and poverty are increasing rapidly in the country, which has worried the people, but no special measures have been taken in this regard.

The government has once again announced to take measures for austerity and has issued a list in this regard, which it claims will save billions of dollars if implemented.

These measures include the closing of markets and restaurants at 8 pm, a fifth of the government employees working from home, introducing electric motorcycles and low-power bulbs, fans, and other devices, converting buildings to solar energy, and saving water and energy.

The announcement of these measures is welcome, but such announcements have been made dozens of times before, but the public and shopkeepers have never followed them.

The current government has also made such an attempt six months ago which did not yield any results and it is likely that this announcement will have an insignificant impact.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division on Friday.



Photo: PID

## JS Bank solves problems as Pakistan's first bank to offer INSTANT cashback on Credit Cards

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: With inflation rising and prices touching the ceiling, JS Bank, one of Pakistan's fastest-growing banks, has come up with a unique offering that aims to solve these problems for its customers. Living up to its role as an industry trendsetter, JS Bank has launched the First Instant Cashback on JS Credit Cards.

JS Credit Card holders will receive instant cashback when they purchase Fuel at any station across Pakistan. In addition to this, the bank is all set to introduce cashback on other expenditures in the coming months, such as on Groceries, Travel, Utility Bills, and even Educational Fee payments.

In this economically tough situation, JS Bank's initiative helps customers in saving money at the time of purchase since cashback is automatically applied at checkout. This way, customers will never miss the opportunity to save while refueling or shopping. Unlike other products which can take up to 30 days to give cashback to customers, JS Bank sends the cashback instantly.

Once the program is fully launched, consumers will be able to purchase products from thousands of leading brands with instant cashback. Whether it's holiday shopping, a new fridge, or a birthday gift, customers can go to thousands of retailers where they can shop and get universal cashback on all their purchases.

Sharing his views on the new offering, Fahad Siddiqui, Head of Products said, "While cashback is not a new feature, JS Bank is the first Pakistani bank to offer them instantly - which means no more waiting till the end of the month to get your money back - greatly solving the problems that customers face due to high prices."

JS Credit Cards are offered in four main variants - Classic, Gold, Platinum, and Signature - with varying credit limits and additional benefits for cardholders.

The instant cashback feature comes as a big sigh of relief for customers across the country since the prices of fuel, groceries, and even utility bills have recently gone up.

# Climate challenge needs coordinated actions from key stakeholders: OICCI White Paper

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), the collective body of over 200 foreign investors, launched a whitepaper titled, "Synergizing the Climate Ambition: A Blueprint for Achieving NDCs through Private Sector Engagement in Pakistan".

The paper was presented at a Round Table which featured Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Waqar Hussain Pulpoto, Ali Tauqeer, and experts from academia, corporates, and social sector organizations.

The white paper incorporates the key learnings and insights from Pakistan Climate Conference 2022, organized by OICCI in Karachi on March 16, 2022. The conference brought together global climate experts, policy makers and corporate decision-makers including global CEOs, Alan Jope (Unilever), Jesper Brodin (IKEA), Bill Winters (Standard Chartered Bank), and Alok Sharma, President COP26.

This white paper also showcases the best practices from the industry, highlights the commit-

ment of OICCI members, such as Chevron, Indus Motors, Engro Corporation and Unilever etc. to promote positive climate actions accompanied by an outline for action to boost public-private investment in climate change adaptation and resilience.

Pakistan made an ambitious commitment, according to the OICCI white paper, of reducing 50% emissions by 2030 in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets presented at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26). Under Pakistan's NDCs, about 15% of the total proposed emissions reduction is unconditional whereas the remaining 35% is to be achieved subject to conditional support from bilateral and multilateral sources.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar while addressing the round table mentioned, "PSX launched ESG taskforce and interaction with all the corporates in Pakistan. ESG compliance is very important for attracting foreign direct investment and is a very attractive instrument to attract long term investment."

"With ever-rising greenhouse gas concentrations and accumulated heat, the past eight years have been the warmest on record. Heatwaves, droughts, and floods have affected millions making it evident that climate change is a grave and mounting threat globally", said Vice

President OICCI and CEO Unilever Pakistan Amir Paracha during the report launch event. "Pakistan is the 5th most vulnerable country despite having less than 1% greenhouse gas emissions. Taking the right

actions now can move us towards a fairer, more sustainable world by addressing climate change", he added.

The industries will require, as per OICCI white paper, transforming business models that could open new revenue streams and drive innovation. However, the industry partners cannot work alone without the support from government, civil society, and consumer bodies. Coordinated actions, behavioral change, financial commitments, and compliance with regulatory frameworks will be needed, highlights the white paper.

The OICCI's recommended roadmap aims at harmonizing the efforts, sharing learnings of OICCI members such as Shell Pakistan, Siemens, Total Parco and Nestle etc. and lead the way for other industry players. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism suggested in the working paper will help consolidate data and efforts for promoting collaborations as well as support the industry and government stakeholders to streamline the projection and demonstration of their work.

"Pakistan is at a crossroads, the decision it takes today will impact the sustainability of its future" commended M. Abdul Aleem, CE/Secretary General, OICCI, adding that, "a key outcome proposed by OICCI through this white paper is the recommendation to the Government to adopt three primary resolutions to mobilize climate action amongst stakeholders across the country - Set up a Climate Change and Corporate Implementation Task Force, establish a Steering Committee that reviews and gradually raises the bar for improving the Climate Related Disclosures thoughtfully and develop a Pakistan Climate Knowledge Sharing Initiative".



# FIFA are investigating how chef Salt Bae gained 'undue access' to the pitch after World Cup final

News Desk

LONDON :FIFA are investigating how celebrity chef Salt Bae gained "undue access" to the pitch after the World Cup final where he enthusiastically posed for photos with surprised Argentina players including a bemused and irritated Lionel Messi.

Salt Bae, whose real name is Nusret Gokce, was pictured holding and kissing the trophy after Argentina beat France in Sunday's (Dec 18) final in Qatar.

The Turkish entrepreneur was widely criticised for twice grabbing the arm of Messi, who tried to sidestep the unwanted attention.

He was also photographed with Angel di Maria, Lisandro Martinez and even



seen sinking his teeth into another player's medal.

FIFA rules state the World Cup trophy can only be held by the tournament

winners and the likes of FIFA officials and heads of state.

"Following a review, FIFA has been establishing how individuals gained undue access to the pitch after the closing ceremony at Lusail stadium on Dec 18," a spokesman told the BBC.

"The appropriate internal action will be taken."

Salt Bae, 39, owns a chain of luxury restaurants around the world including Beverly Hills in Los Angeles and London's swish Knightsbridge.

His technique for preparing and seasoning meat has become an internet meme.

Earlier in the World Cup, he posted a video of himself at a match sitting alongside FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

# ICAP holds Grand Finale of National Finance Olympiad 2022

Sports Reporter

KARACHI: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) in collaboration with Unilever Pakistan organized the Grand Finale of the annual mega finance competition, National Finance Olympiad 2022 to bring to the limelight, the finance talent of the country at a local hotel in Karachi. The National Finance Olympiad 2022 started with registrations of 40 teams represented by 120 Chartered Accountants and Finance professionals from renowned private and public sector organizations across Pakistan.

The event comprised 3 rounds i.e. the initial qualifying round where ICAP was supported by leading professional firms as Technical Partners. The second round had Harvard Simulation and Behavioral Assessment, which was led by Karachi School of Business Leadership (KSBL) as ICAP's learning partners. In the final round, the top six teams i.e. K Electric, Unilever, Midas Safety, Shan Foods Private Limited, Lucky Cement Limited, and The Professionals Academy of Commerce, competed to lift the NFO Trophy. The Grand Finale encompassed three intriguing rounds, the Buzzer round, The Board Room, and 100-seconds.

The Professionals Academy of Commerce was judged as The National Finance Olympiad Champion 2022 followed by Shan Foods Private Limited and Lucky Cement Limited as 1st and 2nd Runners-up respectively.

Mr. Samiullah Siddiqui, FCA, Chairman PAIB Committee, and Council



Member ICAP welcomed the participants and shared the concept and objectives of the competition. He said that the National Finance Olympiad is one of the Flagship Competition of the country, organized by ICAP, in collaboration with Unilever Pakistan, to unleash the finance talent and to engage finance professionals in their professional development in a unique way, by placing them against each other in a healthy competition and encourage them to discover their true potential, exhibit their talent and celebrate their competence in a befitting manner.

Mr. Ashfaq Yousuf Tola, FCA, President ICAP speaking on the occasion said that the financial services sector plays a crucial role in every nation's socioeconomic development and finance professionals make up one of the economy's most important and influential sectors. Chartered Accountants

are the foundation base of the economy and by utilizing financial proficiency, the nation gets the right direction in various financial and economy-related matters. ICAP through its different key initiatives is playing an imperative role in nation-building, events like National Finance Olympiad provides an opportunity to exhibit and celebrate the talent of finance professionals in Pakistan.

The President congratulated the proud winners and showed gratitude to the NFO organizing team comprising Unilever, KSBL, PAIB committee, jury members, evaluators, ICAP Examinations Department, Information Technology Department, Marcom, and everyone who made this event a success. The event was attended by students, chartered accountants, council members of ICAP including finance leaders from several prominent companies of Pakistan.

# Pakistan Sepaktakraw team player has disappeared in Korea



Bureau Report

KARACHI : The player of the so-called team of Pakistan Sepaktakraw disappeared in Korea. The player disappeared on November 30. Which has not yet been reported to any relevant organization, the player Muhammad Arshad Waja has escaped with the collusion of the team leader. There is a report from the government of Pakistan, Pakistan Olympic Association, Pakistan Sports Board and government security agencies that this human trafficking is related. Shut down those who are causing disrepute of Pakistan all over the world.

According to the details, once again the fake team of Sepaktakraw from Pakistan went to Korea to participate in the ISTAF World Cup, which included two women, while only the male team of Pakistan participated in the tournament and faced the worst defeat in all the matches. The team went to Korea to play the World Cup, but a double entry visa to Thailand was imposed for their joy trip. Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation Secretary Naushad Ahmed Khan quietly returned home from Bangkok on December 4. While Arshad Waja had gone missing on November 30, there has been no report so far. When we tried to contact the team members, all of them replied that we were forbidden to tell anything by the team management.

The management played a major role in the disappearance of the player. Arshad Waja used to work in a private school in Clifton area before resigning and taking all his arrears which is the reason why till now Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation kept silent instead of informing the concerned institutions. Because they have the blessing of Sindh Olympic Association.

President of Pakistan Sports Education and Culture Council Syed Asrar ul Hasan Abidi, Chairman of Sports Promotion Organization Aamir Kifait and other officials have requested the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Pakistan Sports Board, Pakistan Olympic Association and Ministry of Interior to take action against them according to Pakistani laws should be done and they should be banned immediately because these events and tours are their business to collect money, so especially these people keep going around for the sponsor of the office of Secretary Sports Sindh. It should be clear that Naushad Ahmed Khan Various sports including Sepaktakraw, Soft tennis, Kho Kho, Petanque and other sports federations are formed and it is his job to conduct foreign tours in the name of the so-called Pakistan team, in exchange for which he collects huge amounts of money from these fake players.

# Parkha Ijaz looks formidable in 2nd Fatima Jinnah Ladies Golf Championship

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Parkha Ijaz of Lahore Defence Raya Golf Club, playing to a handicap of zero which is a reflection of her golfing prowess and expertise played vibrantly in the first round of the 2nd Fatima Jinnah PGA Ladies Golf Championship to emerge as the front runner in this three round ladies golf championship in progress at the 18 holes Royal Palm Golf Course. The first round activity was reserved for ladies who compete on golf handicaps ranging from zero to fourteen and seen in action were national level ladies contenders like Rimsha Ijaz (handicap one), Hamna Amjad (handicap zero), Suneya Osama (handicap 3), Iman Ali Shah (handicap 7) and former national ladies champion Ghazala Yasmin and other single handicappers Ana James, Ami Qin and Laiba Shah.

Placed at a score of gross 78 is her closest rival Rimsha Ijaz followed by Hamna Amjad at a score of gross 81 who was not too tuneful during the round on Friday.

Others placed further behind are Ghazala Yasmin at 83, Suneya Osama at 84 and Zenun Nisa at 85.

Minaa Zainab, the Lady Captain of Royal Palm and Tournament Director of this ongoing exclusive ladies golf event shared that there are two significant features of this encounter. One, it is being held in remembrance of the mother of the Nation, Fatima Jinnah who was a role model for women and secondly it is a championship recognized by the WAGR (World Amateur Golf Ranking). She further shared that there are three more segments of this championship for ladies and these are players who have a handicap in the range 15-24, 25-36, young ladies 14 years and below and seniors 55 years and above. And junior girls below 13 years. Those who fall in range 14-24 and 25-36, they will compete over two rounds on Saturday and Sunday. Junior Girls who are aged 13 and below will compete only on Sunday over nine holes.

# 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-President Faisal Mir, PPP Lahore Women Wing President Ms Nargis Khan, Kh Abdul Rehman, Imtiazul Hassan, Zavar 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.

# Hopes pinned for international matches' revival after hosting PSL matches in Quetta

News Desk

QUETTA : Principal Secretary to CM Balochistan Imran Gichki on Friday said the doors of international level of competitions and cricket matches would be opened in the province after the much-awaited promise made to host Pakistan Super League's (PSL) matches in Quetta Stadium.

He expressed these views while chairing a review meeting, for the preparation of a cricket match in Quetta under PSL, on the instruction of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, here.

The statement comes in the wake of Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Najam Sethi's announcement, made on Friday, that the provincial capital's Bugti Stadium would hold matches in PSL eighth edition.

Meanwhile, the meeting was attended by the secretary Sports, commissioner of Quetta, DIG Quetta, and provincial and military officials.

It was decided in the meeting that necessary ground repairs and provision of facilities will be started soon and foolproof security would be provided to cricketers and fans in Quetta.

In the meeting, responsibilities were assigned to all the concerned institutions, it was also decided to establish a central liaison office for the coordination between the concerned institutions.

On this occasion, the principal secretary to CM Balochistan said that there was no shortage of talent in Balochistan and the people of Balochistan loved sports, including cricket.

He said that Balochistan was being neglected in organizing international matches and PSL competitions, adding that the PSL match would be held in Quetta due to the efforts of chief minister. He also thanked the CM in this regard.

He said the promotion of sports and patronage of talented athletes in the province were among the priorities of the government.

He also added that the provincial sports department had successfully organized national competitions of football, hockey, badminton, table tennis, and other sports this year, which he added, was important progress toward the development and promotion of sports.

# Training session

KARACHI: New Zealand's cricketers take a part during a training session ahead of their first cricket Test match against Pakistan at the National Stadium in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# PCB Management Committee plans to add Quetta as a venue for HBL PSL 8

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Mr Najam Sethi chaired the first meeting of the Pakistan Cricket Board's Management Committee at the National High Performance Centre on Friday.

The Management Committee received a detailed update on the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 and desired to add Quetta as the fifth venue for the eighth edition of the PCB's annual marquee event, which is scheduled to be held from 13 February to 19 March.

To ensure Bugti Stadium was ready to host the HBL PSL 8 matches, the

Committee agreed that PCB will work closely with the local administration for upgradation and renovation of the Bugti Stadium, while separate discussions will take place between PCB security experts and local authorities to ensure the safety and security of all the participants, officials and spectators.

Mr Najam Sethi: "I am delighted that seven years after launching the HBL Pakistan Super League, I am today announcing our commitment to add Bugti Stadium in Quetta as the fifth venue for our marquee event. Bugti Stadium is the home

ground of Quetta Gladiators and we still remember the incredible scenes when the Gladiators visited the city after winning the 2019 tournament.

"The passionate cricket fans of Quetta have been waiting for long to watch high-profile cricket in their backyard and I am pleased that we will now bring HBL PSL matches to their doors. In this relation, I have already spoken with influential officials in the Balochistan province, who have assured me of their complete support from event delivery perspectives."

On the domestic structure, which



mirrors the PCB Constitution 2014, it was agreed Mr Najam Sethi, Mr

Shakil Sheikh and Mr Haroon Rashid will prepare the first draft, which will

be shared with the Committee for further discussions.