



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

ابو سعید خدری رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے: "میں نے تم کو نہیں دیکھا، اور پانچ مہار اور تلوں سے تم کو نہیں دیکھا۔ اور چاندی کے پانچ اوڑھے سے تم کو نہیں دیکھا۔"

(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 1484)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Elahi to go for confidence vote before Jan 11, says Fawad

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry on Monday said the Punjab CM Parvez Elahi would go for a vote of confidence before January 11. In a press conference, Fawad while launching a tirade against the ruling PDM said that the incumbent rulers incompetence has put Pakistan on the verge of default, adding that after the "regime change" operation, the overwhelming support from the masses for PTI chief Imran Khan put them in an unknown fear.



Bilawal gives heartfelt message on mother's martyrdom anniversary

Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's vision and philosophy of reconciliation was a feasible strategy to resolve domestic and international issues as well as a world's shared legacy. (Report on Page 8)

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Namaz-e-Janaza

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, CJCS General Sahir Shamshad Mirza carrying coffin of martyred Captain Muhammad Fahad Khan after offering Namaz e Janaza, at Army Graveyard Rawalpindi, Captain embraced shahadat yesterday in IED Blast near Kahan Balochistan.



Photo: Online

COAS, CJCS attend funeral of Captain martyred in Balochistan

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI : Chief of Army Staff Gen Syed Asim Munir and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza on Monday attended the funeral prayer of Captain Fahad who embraced martyrdom in Balochistan's Kahan area during a clearance operation.

Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported that the funeral prayers were offered in Army graveyard and later the martyred was laid to rest with full military honors. Senior civil and military officers, soldiers, and other citizens also attended the funeral. Earlier, an Improvised explosive device (IED) exploded while the Army was conducting an intelligence-based clearance operation in Kahan area of Balochistan resulting in the martyrdom of five army men including Captain Fahad and four sepoy.

Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR), in its press release, stated "Captain Fahad along with four other brave sons of soil Lance Naik Imtiaz, Sepoy Asghar, Sepoy Mehran and Sepoy Shamoon have embraced Shahadat, laying their lives in defence of the motherland against an externally perpetrated threat of terrorism." "The operation was underway in Kahan area of Balochistan since 24 Dec 2022", the statement added.

Elections will be held on time, says Khawaja Asif

Bureau Report

LAHORE : Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif said on Monday the general elections would be held on time.

Speaking at a ceremony, he declared the government could not be blackmailed into holding early elections. "The right time to hold early elections was when Mr Khan was ousted of the Prime Minister office". He said if Imran Khan wanted to dissolve assemblies, why he did not start with the dissolution of the KP assembly.

Taking a jibe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, he said Imran Khan was disloyal to the country as he used public money for his political ambitions, adding the members of the PTI in assemblies were as disloyal to the country as their leader because they were drawing Rs500 million a month in salaries. "Mr Khan deceived those who facilitated him as he was not loyal to anyone but power and money", he added. He criticised Mr Khan over his claims that he was not calling the shots during his tenure.

Lamenting the sorry state of the country, he said all including politicians and Establishment had played a role in bringing the country to such a lows in the last 75 years. He said President Dr Alvi confessed that Nawaz Sharif would have got the PM slot in 2018 if he had not gone against the powerful. "Mr Nawaz's crime was that he did not compromise but Imran's crimes are bigger than Nawaz's", he added. Sounding hopeful for the Palestinians, he said they were nearing their objective but Kashmiris were being pushed back from moving towards their destiny. "Pakistan must fight for the Kashmir cause at all international forums," he said.

Imran brought disrespect to the country by selling out gifts: PM

Adam Khan Wazir/Agencies

DERA ISMAIL KHAN : Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan brought disrespect to the country by selling out the precious gifts given by foreign leaders.

Addressing a ceremony in Dera Ismail Khan, he said the leaders gave these precious gifts as a sign of fraternal ties with the people of Pakistan but the former ruler sold them out in open market. "Due to faulty policies of the PTI government, the friendly nations including China were dismayed," the PM regretted.

The prime minister said that despite myriad economic challenges including the post-flood situation, the coalition government was determined to steer

the country out of the current difficulties. He said the coalition government was determined to steer the country out of the issues.

He also laid foundation stones of communication, road, hydel and power infrastructure projects. He said: "These challenges might be manifold but 220 million people of the country should not get worried as the coalition government with the support of its partners will steer the country out of the challenges."

Shehbaz mentioned that during his previous visits, these areas were inundated with flood-water and the people of the areas had faced immense destruction from Nowshera to Swat, Kalam, Kohistan, DIKhan and Tank districts were badly affected by floods. Destruction in Swat was caused mainly due to man-made structures in the middle of course

of river, he said and criticized the provincial government of PTI for its flawed policies.

The PM sarcastically referred that the PTI provincial government always talked about introduction of an efficient system, but the people had witnessed the crumbling of that system whereas the government's blunders in this regard could not be neglected.

The prime minister said that construction of Hakla-Yarak motorway which had hugely reduced the travel time from Islamabad to DIKhan had been conceived and implemented by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

He said the whole country had been connected with a network of motorways and Nawaz Sharif solely deserved credit for the launch of such mega projects, adding that he had laid founda-

tion stone of the last segment of Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway section recently.

The prime minister reiterated that dream of Nawaz Sharif for the prosperous Pakistan would be fulfilled.

He regretted that during the past PTI's government, all these uplift projects, initiated during PML-n government, were brought to grinding halt.

Citing the Hakla-DIKhan motorway, the prime minister said it was part of CPEC conceived during 2017, but the PTI government put these projects into cold storage, thus affecting the development and progress of the country.

Maulana Fazal further said the policies of the previous government of PTI had brought the country to the brink of disaster. Huge development projects

were launched by the PML-N government, overseas Pakistanis started sending remittances, and the global partners were investing in Pakistan, but unfortunately all these hit

The JUI-F amir said that attempts were made to create upheaval in the country with economic uncertainty, but these would be foiled.

He said they would have to make efforts for regaining the erstwhile prestige among the comity of nations.

Maulana Lutfur Rehman, MPA, said that JUI-F had always strived for the solidarity of the country and strongly resisted and condemned any attempts to create chaos in the society.

While enroute to DIKhan, the prime minister also took an aerial view of the area and was briefed about the development projects.

Ehtesab Bureau chairman calls on AJK President

Abdul Majid Tahir

MIRPUR :Chairman of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Ehtesab (Accountability) Bureau Sardar Naeem Ahmed Sheraz called on President AJK Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry here on Monday.

The Ehtesab Bureau chairman gave a detailed briefing to Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry about the difficulties and challenges being faced in the process of accountability in Azad Kashmir, said a press release.

On this occasion, AJK President assured the Sardar Naeem that he would take up the issue at the highest level to ensure continuation of the accountability process.

President says his statement was taken out of context

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi clarified on Monday that his statement about alleged help extended by former chief of army staff (COAS) Qamar Javed Bajwa and his team to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the Senate and elections was taken out of reference.

The president, in a statement on Twitter, said the statement was being quoted out of context and was twisted and self-concocted.

Earlier, it was reported that President Dr Arif Alvi had said retired Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa did help PTI Chairman Imran Khan in the elections and later in Senate. The reports said the president, in a conversation with journalists and leaders of the business community, remarked that if the army had decided to stay away from politics, it's time politicians took charge of the situation and created a situation where they didn't have to depend on the army.



Responding to a question, the president said the ties between the PTI chief and retired Gen Bajwa soured probably in October 2021 and then again in April or May this year.

However, Mr Alvi stressed that the country was facing difficult times and urged all sides to let go of the past and forgive people for the mistakes they had committed earlier for a new beginning. The president also revealed that he had verbally suggested to the government as well as the opposition that a middle ground

might be found and elections could be held at the end of April or in May; however, the date of the next elections was not certain.

Dr Alvi said Imran Khan should be worried about whether elections would be held even in October next year. He lauded Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto's response to India and remarked that the minister had done the right thing. He said the world and the global order were based on vested interests. "A good reply was given by Bilawal Sahib," he stated.

Film industry revival to promote Pak narrative, positive image: Marriyum

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the government had announced multiple incentives for the film industry which would eventually get a major boost and help promote the country's narrative and positive image across the world.

Addressing the award distribution ceremony of National Armature Short Film Festival 2022 (NASFF-2022), she said the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had launched the first-ever film and culture policy, and finalized its implementation framework.

Pak, Saudi FMs reiterate support for stability and peace in Afghanistan



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD : Reaffirming the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Monday reiterated their mutual commitment to further enhance and deepen bilateral cooperation across all areas of mutual interest.

The foreign minister during a telephonic conversation with his Saudi counterpart and thanked the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for valuable flood relief assistance to Pakistan, Foreign Office Spokesperson said.

The two foreign ministers also discussed the recent developments in Afghanistan. They reaffirmed the importance of guaranteeing women's rights and their full and equal participation in all aspects of life.

They also reiterated their support for security, stability and peace in Afghanistan and the importance of international engagement for building a more sustainable future for the Afghan people.

Foreign Minister Bilawal apprised his Saudi counterpart of the upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, which is being held in Geneva on 9 January 2023.

Award winners of NASFF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the award winners of National Amateur Short Film Festival (NASFF) 2022 on Monday.



Photo: PID

Budding winner of NASFF 2022 vows to bring laurels for Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The budding star Moez Ahmed, the youngest winner of National Amateur Short Film Festival (NASFF) 2022, Monday vowed to bring laurels for the country in film-making and production.

The 14-year-old 8th class student won the NASFF award in special category for making a 6-7 minutes short documentary on the Mughal era tomb of Ali Mardan Khan located in

Lahore city.

"I cannot express my feelings in words for winning this award, which is an honour for me," as ecstatic Moez said while talking to APP after receiving the award from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who graced the NASFF 2022 awards distribution ceremony here at the Prime Minister Office as the chief guest.

NASFF is an initiative of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which has been conceived to encour-

age the talented Pakistani youth, who have chosen film and TV production and mass media communication as their academic and professional careers.

Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb giving souvenir to famous actor Farhan Ali Agha during National Amateur Short Film Festival Award distribution Ceremony at PM Secretariat.

As many as 15 young people won the NASFF 2022 awards in three categories— special,

undergraduate and mobile. The award winners will be sent to the New York Film Academy in Australia for a film-making course which will be sponsored by the Dubai Port World – a collaborator in this year's short film festival.

Moez Ahmed, who is currently studying in a private school, said short film-making was his childhood passion and he wanted to opt it as a career in future. "I have a supportive family, who have been backing me fully since my childhood,"

he added.

Similarly, Muhammad Adam Khan, who won the NASFF in another category for a short film on the ancient place of "Gor Khatri" in Peshawar, described his feelings as "amazing" because he had put a lot of efforts in making the documentary.

Adam Khan said he wanted to learn more skills at the film-making course in Australia so that he could play his role in uplifting Pakistan's film industry.

Bilawal gives heartfelt message on mother's martyrdom anniversary

Monitoring Desk

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's vision and philosophy of reconciliation was a feasible strategy to resolve domestic and international issues as well as a world's shared legacy.

In his message issued by the PPP media cell of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari House on the eve of the 15th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the chairman PPP paid glowing tribute to her and said that they remembered her everyday and got guidance from her vision and ideology, adding that she was a charismatic leader with an understanding far ahead of her time, which



was born in centuries. "Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto always taught never to hate anyone and to forgive others," he added.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari briefly referred to the services rendered by

the 'Daughter of the East', saying that she was the architect of the democratic struggle in Pakistan, as well as the defender of the rights of the downtrodden classes and minorities; the pioneer of the practical struggle for the

development and empowerment of women in the country; an advocate of civil liberties; advocated harmony and unity among federal units and was an unquestionable symbol of federalism.

"It is also the achievement

of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's ideology that the democratic forces in the country today are on the same page and are determined to tackle the challenges facing the nation," he said.

He reiterated his determination that the PPP, while strictly adhering to the ideology and philosophy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, would continue its struggle to eradicate poverty, hunger, and unemployment from the country, and establish a society based on tolerance, equality, and brotherhood.

He further stated the PPP was also determined to continue its struggle to make Pakistan a strong democratic federal country and a role model for the Islamic world, to ensure social as well as economic justice by strengthening the parliament and democracy.

Pakistan fully ready to cope with new wave of Covid variant: NCO

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider chaired a session of the National Command and Operation Centre.

The officials of the NIH Islamabad and the NCO gave a briefing to the NDMA chairman regarding the country's preparations to cope with the challenge of any new wave of the Covid pandemic.

The NCO officials briefed the NDMA that surveillance has been increased at the airports and other entry points, whereas, all sections of intensive care are functional in hospitals across the country.

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri Monday said Pakistan People's Party was continuing the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to uphold the supremacy of democracy for which she sacrificed her life.

In a video message, Shazia Marri said that December 27, 2022, marks the 15th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

"On this day we visit the tomb of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to pay homage to the lady who fought a lot for democracy, human rights and economic rights of people in Pakistan," she said. Shazia Marri said that on



December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto made a great sacrifice for the sake of the nation while fighting terrorism in the country.

Many workers of the Pakistan People's Party were also martyred on the same day, but even today, Pakistan People's Party is committed to the mission of its martyred leader,

she added.

The Minister said the Benazir Income Support Program is associated with the name of Benazir Bhutto, a program that she herself had dreamed of.

She wanted poor families to be given some kind of help so that they could lead a dignified life in this society. This program, which provides income support

to 8.5 million poor families, was started by former President Asif Ali Zardari after her martyrdom, she said.

Shazia Marri said, "We pay our respect and tributes to the martyr Benazir Bhutto and we remind ourselves and the people of Pakistan that the mission of Bibi Shaheed is still not accomplished—the mission through which Pakistan will touch the heights of development."

Chairman of Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is carrying forward the mission of making Pakistan economically and socially strong.

Let us make this determination that we have to make Pakistan a developed and progressive country, she said.

Sindh Governor calls on President



News Desk

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi meets with Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

According to a Governor house

communiqué, they discussed overall political situation, development projects of the federation in city, and other issues of mutual interests.

The Sindh Governor said that the federal government was cooperating for the development of the province.

UAE consul general rebuts claims of visa restrictions on Pakistani cities

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The consul general of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ateeq Al-Remeithi rebutted the claims of visit-visa restrictions on the residents of some Pakistani cities.

He said the UAE government was granting visas to the residents of Pakistani cities without any discrimination adding the news circulating on social media platforms was fake. He lamented that rumors were circulated on social media every now and then claiming a ban on some Pakistani residents.

The Foreign Office of Pakistan has also confirmed the news that no ban

has been imposed on any Pakistani city. "We have seen the reports. We can confirm that no such ban is in place by UAE for issuance of visas to Pakistani citizens," Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said.

The response came in view of the queries by journalists on reports of blacklisting or ban by the UAE on the issuance of visas to Pakistani citizens belonging to specific cities.

Earlier, it had been reported that the UAE government had banned the residents of at least 24 Pakistani cities from getting visit visas as the travel agents in those cities were helping them get visitor visas in the guise of overseas employment.

Azam Swati shows 'distrust' over IHC CJ

Court Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati has expressed distrust in Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Amir Farooq, requesting to transfer his bail plea to another IHC judge.

According to details, the PTI Senator penned down a letter to Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Amir Farooq, expressing 'distrust' in the latter over 'delayed justice'.

In the letter, Azam Swati referred to his bail petition and said "justice delayed is justice denied." "I was abducted and was illegally taken from PIMS Hospital on December 2 to Quetta then to Sindh where 46 false first information reports (FIRs) were filed against me," he wrote.

He claimed that Special Court Judge Raja Asif Mehmood was "transferred immediately for unknown reason" after the decision on the bail application was reserved and a new judge was appointed "following several days of delay," who dismissed the bail application.

Concluding his letter, Swati expressed distrust of the IHC CJ and requested to transfer his bail plea to another IHC judge. However, sources within IHC told ARY News that they haven't received any letter from Azam Swati.



Sources claimed that the former federal minister had submitted the letter to Deputy Superintendent at CIA sub-jail in I-Nine. "The special judge – who heard Swati's bail case – was transferred as usual," sources claimed.

Earlier in the day, the Islamabad high court (IHC) adjourned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Senator Azam Swati's post-arrest bail petition in a session case for posting controversial tweets against state institution.

The bail petition states that the PTI leader did not post any derogatory remarks against the state institutions. The applicant wanted Centre and FIA cybercrime wing respondents in the petition. Furthermore, IHC adjourned the hearing till next Monday, January 2.

It is pertinent to mention here that an Islamabad court rejected the bail plea of Senator Azam Swati in the case of the controversial tweet, ARY News reported. During the hearing, the Islamabad court remarked that the PTI leader committed the "same offence" twice.

Pak Suzuki announces shutting down production plant

News Desk

KARACHI: Another automobile company Pak Suzuki Motor Company Limited has announced to shut down its production plant from January 2 to 6, ARY News reported on Monday.

Pakistan Suzuki Motors wrote a letter to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) that the production process of cars and motorcycles will be completely shut down from January 2 to 6.

According to the automobile company, the management decided the shut down due to conditional permission of the imports of the auto parts and completely knocked down (CKD) kits. The firm stated that its supply chain is affecting due to restriction of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The export consignments are affecting due to the conditional permission, said the company, adding that the restriction damaged the inventory.

Earlier in the month, Indus Motor Company (IMC) had announced to shut down its manufacturing plant for



10 days due to the imposition of a ban on the imports of completely knocked down (CKD) kits by the central bank.

The Indus Motor Company, the maker of Toyota vehicles, announced to shut down its manufacturing plant for 10 days from December 20 to 30.

It stated that the decision was taken after a ban on the imports of completely knocked down (CKD) kits by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The import restrictions increased difficulties of the automobile manufacturing due to a shortage of the raw material essential to run manufacturing plants on a daily basis.

Peaceful conduct of local elections in Azad Kashmir raised Pakistan's stature globally: PM AJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, has said that the peaceful conduct of local elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir has raised the profile of Pakistan worldwide.

While addressing a press conference at Kashmir House today the PM said that the people of Azad Kashmir deserve praise and appreciation for the role and responsibility they had demonstrated during the local government elections. He said that previous governments had utterly failed in holding Municipal elections for the past 32 years. Political leadership of Azad Kashmir, he said, did not want to hold local elections this time too. "And they tried to stop the election by blackmailing us but the



credit of the peaceful election goes to the people", he said. Praising police and other law enforcement agencies, election commission and bureaucracy for peaceful conduct of polls the PM said, "The polls were held peacefully in a free, fair and transparent manner". Reiterating his government's commitment to empower the local government, the PM said, "All the candidates who won the elections will be given funds and will also be empowered".

Referring to the regime changing attempts in Azad Kashmir the PM said he would fight it tooth and nail if federal government intervened in the affairs of AJK and tried to dislodge the PTI government through unfair means".

The PM said that he enjoyed a cordial relationship with speaker legislative assembly. "I have a relationship of respect with Speaker Legislative Assembly Anwar-ul-Haq", he added.

The PM said that he was asked to file a reference against the Chief Justice of the High Court, but he flatly refused.

On accountability, he said that across the board accountability was the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that during the PTI government number

of tax payers have increased to a great extent. "There were 5 thousand tax filers in Azad Kashmir now this number has increased to 37 thousand", he said. Khan said that E-tendering system has been activated for contractors in the development departments of Azad Kashmir. He said that people are ready to invest their capital in tourism and other sectors in Azad Kashmir and accountability system was also being improved.

Lauding the struggle and sacrifices of people in the Indian occupied Kashmir, he said, Kashmiris have been fighting for freedom for 75 years". He expressed the optimism that Kashmiris' struggle would reach to fruition soon and the dawn of freedom would descend on the horizons of Kashmir. Citing Kashmiris' love for Pakistan, he said, "Pakistan is a part of our faith".

Chilled weather

FAISALABAD: A gypsy man riding donkey cart carrying his belongings on his way at Sumandri road during chilled weather, in the city.



Photo: Online

Pak-Qatar Takaful Group and BLINQ came into an agreement aiming to fast track payments digitally

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pak-Qatar Takaful Group and BLINQ Solutions Private Limited held signed an agreement with an aim to fast-track payment collections and facilitate existing and new customers to make payments from a wide range of payment options.

Saqib Zeeshan (Deputy CEO, PQGTL) and Asif Hasan (Founder and CEO, BLINQ) signed the agreement along with senior officials of both companies including Mr. Muhammad Kashif (SVP, Digital Business, PQGTL), Muhammad Shoaib Akhtar (SEVP - Operations, PQGTL), Muhammad Saleem (CFO, PQGTL), Kashan Rafique Ahmed (Head of Automation, PQGTL) and Hassan Rahim (Head of Business and Partnership, BLINQ).

While expressing his views at the signing ceremony, Saqib Zeeshan (Deputy CEO, PQGTL) said, "Pak-Qatar Takaful is committed to providing convenient and innovative services to



its customers. Our partnership with BLINQ is yet another step forward in this endeavour. By enabling wide range of payment options, we are hopeful to create a long term positive impact across our customer base."

Asif Hasan (Founder and CEO, BLINQ) while sharing his viewpoint

stated that "BLINQ remains focused on supporting businesses in pursuit of digital transformation through its centralized payment aggregation service. Our collaboration with Pak-Qatar Takaful Group will provide their customers the freedom to transact from their preferred mediums."

Balochistan govt committed to socio-economic uplift: Farah

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD :Balochistan Government Spokesperson Farah Azeem Shah said on Monday that the government of Balochistan was determined to uplift the socio-economic status of the Baloch people.

Addressing a press conference, she said that the royalty on the Reko Diq project had been raised from two percent to five percent for the people of Balochistan. She said that the opening ceremony of the project would be held in Quetta in January.

She said that Balochistan had previously been over-



looked in development projects, but Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo was determined to give the Baloch people their due.

She further said that the people and the govern-

ment of Balochistan strongly condemn the terrorist attacks in the country. She said no one would be allowed to disrupt the peace and development of Balochistan."There would be no compromise on the sover-

eignty of Pakistan and Balochistan," she said.

Applications open till Dec 30 for admission in e-Rozgaar Training Program

Bureau Reporter LAHORE : Applications for admission in the new phase of e-Rozgaar Training Program, an initiative of Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, are open till December 30.

In this regard, PITB Chairman Syed Bilal Haider said that e-Rozgaar Training Program has been equipping the young with the relevant digital skills to tap into online

employment opportunities.

"Under this training program, more than 48,000 students, of which 56 percent are women, have earned more than Rs 3.5 billion through the Internet after the completion of their training," he added.

The unemployed youth bearing Punjab domicile can submit applications for training in 7 different fields including Mobile App Development, Content Marketing, Creative Designing and e-Commerce. In order to secure admission in the said program, the age limit is 35 years and the required educational qualification is Masters.

KE seeks Rs 7 per unit relief for customers in November FCA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : NEPRA will conduct a public hearing today over the petition submitted by K-Electric on account of Fuel Charges Adjustments (FCA) for November 2022.

For the month of November, K-Electric has filed a petition for a reduction in FCA at the rate of PKR 7.04 /kwh (per unit)

November's FCA was lower primarily due to a reduction in prices of RLNG, Furnace Oil, and power purchased from CPPA-G by 18%, 15%, and 37% respectively as compared to September 2022.

FCAs are dependent on changes in global prices of fuel and are passed on to consumer bills under the prescribed rules and regulations of NEPRA and the Government of Pakistan. FCAs are approved by NEPRA after review who also specifies the month during which the charge is applied in consumer bills.



Chairman State Life, Mr. Shoaib Javed Hussain celebrates Christmas with State Life employees on December 26 2022 at State Life Head Office in Karachi. On this festive occasion he gave a message of inter-faith harmony and peace saying that State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan is for all Pakistanis.

Christmas celebrated at University of Agriculture Faisalabad

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: Like other parts of the world, Christmas was celebrated at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad with prayers for the development of the country.

The ceremony was held at the University church situated at Shahbaz Town. UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan (S.I) along with PMAS Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qamar Uz Zaman, Christian religious scholars (Father) Farhan Sultan, Abid Tanveer; UAF Treasurer Umer Saeed, PRP Principal Officer Dr Jalal Arif, Dr Muhammad Tayyib, Estate Officer Rana Shahzad, Research Associate Nehal Ahmad Khan, Riaz Masiah and other notables cut the cake.

The colony was decorated with the twinkling lights, stars and traditional Christmas trees.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan wished the Christian community on the occasion. He said that the university has provided conducive environment for the followers of all religions to perform their religious duties so that they can fulfill their responsibilities effectively. He said that the university administration has played an important role to establish a church, and to provide jobs without any discrimination. He stressed the need to create inter-religion harmony. Christian religious scholars appreciated the role of the University for holding the ceremony.

The Deputy Commissioner visited the Human Rights Center for Women



Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: The Deputy Commissioner, Imran Hamid Sheikh has ordered the local government department to shift the rooms used in the Human Rights Center for Women of Islam Nagar till the next week so that, the building can be used only for the Women Center.

The Deputy Commissioner visited the Human Rights Center for Women and while reviewing the condition of the rooms used by the Human Rights Center for Women, which is managed by the Social Welfare Department, he said that the problems faced by the institution working for the rehabilitation of women victims of violence have been resolved for a long time, in this regard, instructions have been issued to shift the office of the Union Council from the same building. Deputy Director Social Welfare Anma Alam informed the Deputy Commissioner about the problems caused by the office due to the Union Council office in the Women Protection Center.

Ibn-e- Khaldoon Public School held annual results ceremony



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Annual Results Ceremony at Ibn-e-Khaldoon Public School, Wana. District Cardiologist Dr. Dost Muhammad Niazi was the chief guest.

The famous Ibn-e-Khaldoon Public School of Doog area of Lower South Waziristan wana, Organized the annual results ceremony and prize distribution ceremony and put on a great PT show,

On the other hand, culture, books and regional food stalls were also set up in the school, which the participants and special guests appreciated the culture stalls.

During the speech, the chief guest Dr. Dost Muhammad Niazi said that I felt very happy to see the students here.

That really there is no lack of talent among the tribal students here, but due to the lack of better facilities, the children here are deprived of quality education.

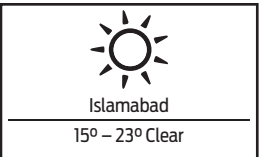
He said that no country or nation has developed without quality education, today's students are tomorrow's doctors and scientists who should provide better services to their people

and the country.

Therefore, during this speech, Rabia Zardad, a student of the second class, in her speech emphasized on the children, teachers and parents and said that for the attainment of higher education, one should pay attention to the better education of one's heart.

He said that if the students, teachers and parents follow the words of Rabia Khan, then surely the day will not be far when the backward tribal children here will shine the name of the nation and the country.

On this occasion, Principal Asmat Ullah said that I am proud of my staff and students because the hard work of the teachers and the excellent study of the students made me more motivated And I will not fail to make the school more active, the principal announced on the occasion, saying that due to unemployment and inflation, the fees of the students will be discounted by 50% and position holders students will also be a part of this presentation, Principal added that we are seeking peace but without education peace and development is an incomplete dream.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:41 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 3:28 pm
Maghrib 5:06 pm
Isha 6:35 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
& Rescue 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
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

NDMA directs for Anti-COVID National Preparedness Audit 2022-23

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Monday presided over the special session of the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) and directed the officials concerned for Anti-Covid National Preparedness Audit 2022-23.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) team was called on for updated monitoring of regional trends of a new variant of coronavirus and trajectories development for Pakistan without creating undue alarm, a news release said.

NDMA Chairman focused on evolving COVID variants and expressed confidence in Pakistan's current strategies and National Preparedness.

However, the situation would be continuously monitored by

National Command & Operation Center (NCOCC), and preparedness, preventative protocols, and vaccination administration system will be strengthened to tackle the spike in concern.

The NCOCC showed detailed statistics on COVID management, vaccination administration data, and the low risk of the new variant in Pakistan. It was informed that the current COVID positivity rate stood at 0.53 percent and 95 percent eligible population has been inoculated with the first and 90 percent with the second dose of COVID vaccines.

NDMA Chairman directed the NCOCC ex National Institute of Health (NIH) to issue precautionary COVID variant risk advisory for public and relevant stakeholders based on scientific analysis of data at the global and regional level and carry out selective mock drills for the COVID emergency.

He also directed NIH to review the stocks of COVID vaccines and arrangements in hospitals to deal with COVID cases.

The chairman apprised the participants of the Prime Minister's vision on the establishment of the National Preparedness and Response System in the country.

He also explained the expansion plan for NEOC and making it live interfaced with all departments to remodel the country's emergency response from a reactive to a proactive mode for disaster management.

During the meeting, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) also briefed the forum on the weather outlook for this winter season.

The Representative from National Information Technology Board (NITB) informed NEOC about the current status of the registration of flood-affected

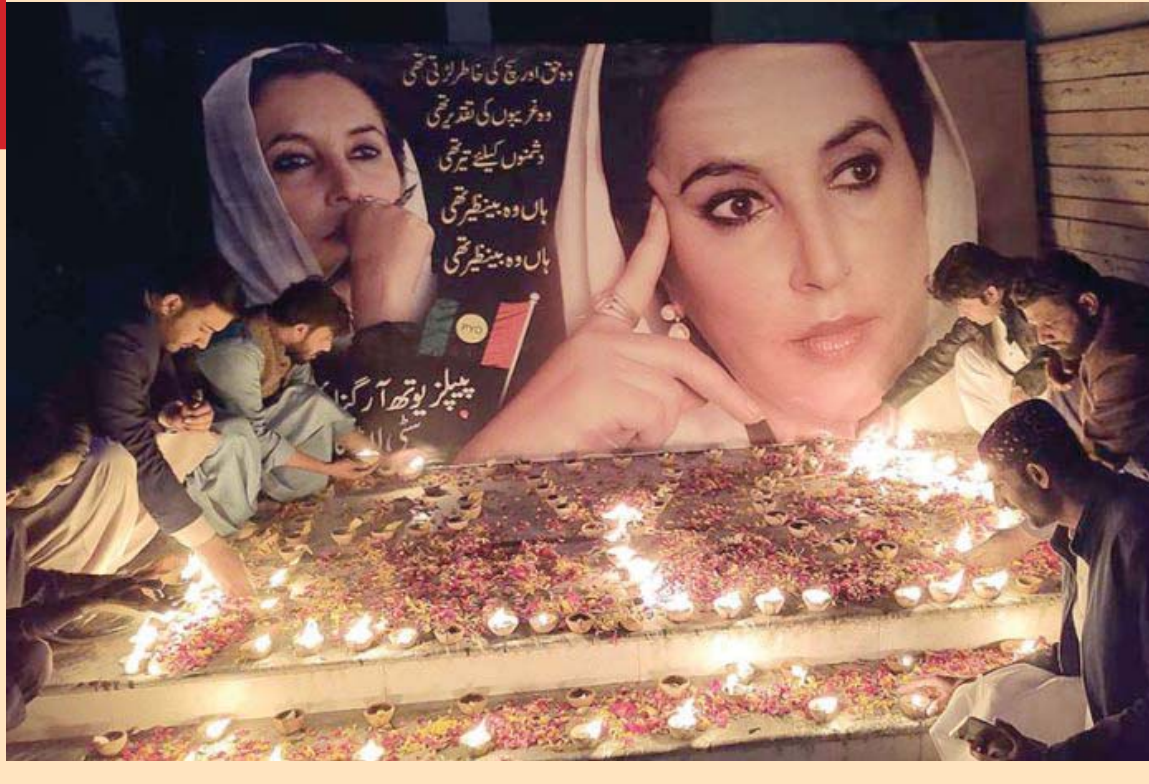


Islamabad: Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik Presiding Special Session of NEOC at NDMA Main Hall, ERRA Premises.

farmers on digital applications and their ongoing verification process to provide relief assistance. Representatives of the Ministry of Food Security, Ministry of Railways, Pakistan Meteorology Department (PMD), Federal Flood Commission (FFC), National Highway Authority (NHA), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Provincial Health Departments, and NITB also attended the session.

Death Anniversary

Islamabad : Workers of Pakistan Peoples Party light candles to pay tribute to Former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on the occasion of her 15th death anniversary in front of Press Club.



Shaheed Benazir Bhutto sacrificed for the supremacy of democracy: Shazia Marri

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: we express our determination at the shrine of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto that the mission, she sacrificed for the supremacy of democracy, has not yet been accomplished. These views were expressed by the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Ms Shazia Marri through a video message.

She said that December 27, 2022, is the 15th martyrdom anniversary Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. "On this day we visit the tomb of Ms. Benazir Bhutto and pay homage to her - the lady who fought a lot for democracy, human rights and economic rights of people in Pakistan" She added.

Ms Marri said that on December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto made a great sacrifice for the sake of the nation while fighting terrorism inside Pakistan. Many workers of Pakistan People's Party were also martyred on the same day, but even today, Pakistan People's Party is committed to the mission of the same martyred leader, she added.

The Federal Minister said that the Benazir Income Support Program is associated with the name of Ms. Benazir Bhutto. A program that she herself had dreamed of. She wanted the poor families to be given some kind of help so that they could lead a dignified life in this society. This program, which provides income support to 8.5 million poor families, was started by former President Asif Ali Zardari after her martyrdom, she said.

Federal Minister Shazia Marri said in her video message that on December 27, we pay our respects and tributes to the martyr Ms. Benazir Bhutto and we remind ourselves and the people of Pakistan that the mission of Bibi Shaheed is still not accomplished.

The mission through which Pakistan will touch the heights of development. Pakistan will be economically, socially and socially strong. Chairman of Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is moving forward with this mission. Let us make this determination that we have to make Pakistan a developed and progressive country, she said.

ECP asks parliamentarians to submit statements of assets by Dec end

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD : Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has drawn the attention of all members of parliament and provincial assemblies to submit their statements of assets and liabilities including those of their spouses and dependents by December 31.

According to ECP, all parliamentarians have to submit their yearly statements of assets and liabilities, including similar details of their spouses and dependent children, on the preceding June 30 on Form B for the financial year 2021-2022.

The commission, on the first day of January each year, publishes the names of members who fail to submit the requisite statement of assets and liabilities within the period specified under sub-section (1). The commission will on January 16 by order suspend the membership of a member of an assembly or Senate, who fails to submit the statement of assets and liabilities and such Member shall cease to function till (s) he files the statement of assets and liabilities.

The ECP further said that any member submitting a fake statement of assets and liabilities under this section in material particulars may, within 120 days from the date of submission of the statement, be proceeded against for committing the offense of corrupt practice.

The ECP said that the prescribed form, along with instructions and guidelines prepared in this regard, can be obtained free of cost from the Election Commission of Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, offices of provincial election commissioners in each province, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly, and secretariats of provincial assemblies.

Health authorities fully prepare to deal any sub variant of Covid-19

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Health authorities on Monday said they were fully prepared to deal with any sub-variant of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, including BF.7, in the country.

According to official sources at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, an efficient system with a proper management team was fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and was ready to make an emergency plan in case of any untoward situation.

They said that there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. They added medical staff at intensive care units (ICU) of hospitals across the country were also active to handle any situation.

They said that genome sequencing was started in laboratories of all four provinces and the federal capital. They added that 90 percent of the country's population already got the Covid-19 vaccine so they are safe.



IIUI extends last date of admission till January 02

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) has extended the last date to apply for admission in more than 100 programs of its 11 faculties till Monday, 2nd of the January, 2023.

The university administration made this decision keeping in view the interest and requests of applicants to extend the date. The university has offered admissions in BS, MS and PhD programs of 11 faculties including Social Sciences, Basic and Applied Sciences, Management Sciences, International Institute for Islamic Economics, Arabic, Usuluddin, Languages and Literature, Engineering and Technology and Shariah and Law, Faculty of Computing and Faculty of Education.

The applicants can apply by visiting the IIU website or this link <http://admission.iiu.edu.pk>. Male applicants can also call on 051-9019567 and female applicants can call on 051-9019327 for guidance and details.

Pakistani News Channels taken over by Schoolgirls to Read Prime Time News

News Desk

LAHORE: It is no secret that women in Pakistan are deprived of their basic right to education. The Global Gender Gap Report placed the country at the 145th rank out of 156. UN Women stated that 53.6% of women had limited access to education, training, and employment in Pakistan. These facts would have remained ignored, but a hijacked news segment stressed the importance of girls' education and shared the progress of the educational sector in Pakistan.

On 23rd December, young schoolgirls took over leading Pakistani news channels and shared how the literacy rate of the country has gone up by 4 points in the last three years, standing at 62.3%. They highlighted how the distribution of funds for girls' schools has led to an increase in the literacy



rate in Pakistan. New schools in the areas with low literacy rates were mentioned in their news bulletin.

Dr Zeelaf Mumir, Managing Director and CEO of EBM, talked about the importance of education in building a better Pakistan: "Over the years, we have devoted ourselves to the advancement of educational standards, life-long nourishment, enabling livelihoods and nourishing the environment. EBM

believes its efforts will create new avenues of social development. We have collaborated with the PAF & RMWO in their welfare project to provide better access to quality education for the youth of the country. These are some minor steps in a long and uphill journey of improving the overall education infrastructure in Pakistan."

The leading FMCG company of Pakistan collaborated with Pakistan Air Force

(PAF) & Rashid Memorial Welfare Organization project (RMWO) to set up two campuses for girls and boys named after Rashida Khawar Butt in Alamabad, Swabi. The two campuses will cater to students from pre-primary to secondary levels.

In addition, EBM supports GCT's network of schools in the rural areas of Karachi and interior Sindh at 150+ remote locations with approx. 29,000 students. They have contributed towards the adoption of TCF schools as well as the TCF Agahi - Adult Literacy Program in a bid to impart basic literacy and numeracy skills to the family members of TCF students, particularly mothers.

EBM believes that these efforts will add to the much-needed educational advancement in Pakistan, particularly in the underdeveloped regions.

PAC organized Quaid-ka-Pakistan Conference

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with the International Recitation Research Academy (Iqra) organized a Husne Qirrat & Naat Conference entitled Quaid Ka Pakistan. The program was presided over by Prof. Qari Muhammad Mushtaq Anwar, a prominent reciter of the world of Islam.

Pir Mujtabi Farooq Gul Badshah, Sajjada Nashin Astana Alia Mohra Sharif, came as a special guest. Addressing the young generation, Syed Mahmood Saharanpuri said that young generations are fortunate to come to such gatherings, but at the same time, these conferences are also a refresher course for your spiritually.

Qari Abdul Basit Siddiqui, Qari Waseem Abbas, Qari Abu Bakr Safir-



Lodhi, Qari Mirza Zain Baig and Qari Kashif Rabbani recited the Holy Quran, while the honor of Naat Sharif was given by the well-known Naat Khan of the National Assembly Syed

Zeeshan Bukhari, Professor Syed Asad Ali, and Muhammad Armağan Sarwar. Prof. Gul Mast Khan and Hafiz Mohsin Ali Bhatti performed the duties of host in the conference. Alla-

ma Sheikh Muhammad bin Qasim, while highlighting the Quaid-e-Azam and the message of Pakistan, said that the main purpose of the establishment of Pakistan was to promote the elevation of Islam and the power of Islam, but unfortunately we deviated from the right path and followed another path. Professor Qari Muhammad Mushtaq Anwar Sahib says that the thought of Pakistan's thinker Hazrat Allama Muhammad Iqbal was put into practice by Quaid-e-Azam, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is a special distinction of my soulful dear Muhammad Zeeshan Haider that he has associated the Quran Conference with the message of Pakistan, the Quaid's Pakistan and the restitution of all the deceased and this is actually the soul and purpose of Islam and Pakistan.

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Multan – The land of perennial spiritualism

Salman Raza

Dating back to ancient times and serving mankind, the city of Multan cherished generations in its rich archaeological and cultural heritage with historical linkages revealing secrets of the past.

Previously called “the City of Gold” and “the City of Saints”, and then recognized as the sister city of Rome back in June 2011, it stands tall among contemporaries with all its spiritual and traditional essence.

Within the radius of twenty-five miles, there have been hundreds of mausoleums of saints who preached Islam in sub-continent with a message of fraternity, love, peace, tolerance and religious harmony that also named it as ‘Madeena-tul-Olya.’

But, with the passage of time, out of hundreds shrines in the city and suburbs, many were erased or damaged due to urban expansion or development.

According to Auqaf Department, 3000 to 4000 shrines are still intact with grandeur and visited frequently by the people of different creeds for spiritual inclination.

“Most frequently visited shrines include well-known Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya Suhrawardi, Shah Rukn-e-Alam, Bibi Pak Daman, Shah Yousaf Gardez and some others,” said a senior official of Auqaf Department.

Bahauddin Zakariya also remembered as “Baha-ul-Haq,” was the noteworthy Sufi saint of his time following whose marvelous contribution, Multan earned meta-

phoric title as “Baghdad of the East.” He travelled across South Punjab to preach Islam converting thousands infidels to this great religion.

“Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya was not only a Sufi saint but also a great social and economic reformer,” said an official of the Auqaf Department. “Thousands devotees visit his shrine that features the earliest example of blue tile work in the subcontinent.” He and Bibi Pak Daman are stated to have brought the Suhrawardiyya order of Sufism to Multan, he said.

Shah Rukn E Alam (1251-1335) was the grandson and successor of Baha-ul-Haq who continued message of his grandfather. His shrine was built by Ghias-ud-Din Tughlaq in early 14th century and is a masterpiece of architecture.

Build atop a small hillock, behind the old ruins of Multan Fort, the mausoleum and its majestic dome can be seen from afar when anybody enters the city. More than 50 feet in diameter with a height of over 100 feet, the entire complex is built of red bricks and decorated with wonderful woodwork.

“Around 2000-3000 devotees visit the shrine Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, and 1500-2000 people during other week days,” said another Auqaf Department official, Muhammad Arshad. “The department’s officials welcome visitors, offer them traditional green Chaddar to round it around their necks or heads.”

Shah Rukn-e-Alam’s grave is surrounded by graves of his descendants manifesting marvelous interior decoration art with elaborate tile work coated with the plaster

material. The Auqaf department arranges annual 3-day Urs of Shah Rukn Alam’s on 5th to 7th Jamadi-ul-Awal every year.

Another revered saint is Bibi Pak Daman (1170-1262). Also known as Bibi Rasti, she was mother of Shah Rukn Alam and a disciple of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya.

She died in 1295 and was buried near to the temple of Mai Totla, one of Multan’s three pre-Islamic deities. The tomb is roughly rectangular, decorated with Multan’s signature blue and white tiles with design of the tomb appearing as a ‘flat roof.’

The mausoleum of Shah Yusuf Gardez, near Bohar Gate inside the walled city is another gorgeous example of Sufism. The mausoleum was built in 1150 AD and the mosque in its southern part by Sher Shah Suri during his tenure (1639-1655).

Shah Yousaf Gardez converted a large number of non-believers to Islam. His descendants are known as Gardezis and counted among noble families of the country. Born in 1058 in Gardez (near present-day Ghazni), he died in 1136.

In the South Eastern part of city, to the northwest of Delhi Gate, is the tomb of Shah Dana Shaheed – a disciple of great Bahauddin Zakariya (1170-1262).

According to Auqaf Department, there is very little substance available about Shah Dana Shaheed’s life and many others including Hameed-ud-Din Hakim,

Qutab-al-Qutaab, Syed Pir Sakhi Shah Hassan Parwana, Syed Hasan Khan-jee, Hazrat Shah Dana Shaheed, Abu Hassan Hafiz Jamal-ud-din called Musa

Pak Shaheed, Hazrat Shah Kamal Qadari, Hafiz Muhammad Jamal Chisti Nazami, Pir Chup Wardi Waly, Mollana Hamid Ali Khan Naqshbandi. Hazrat Khawaja Awais Khagga, Pir Syed Wali Muhammad Shah (Chadar Wali Sarkar), Hazrat Sakhi Sultan and Hazrat Gul Shah whose shrines were situated at deserted locations of the district.

Thousands devotees visit these sites every year to learn from their teachings and rekindle their spiritualism.

“I have come here to pray for success of my son in intermediate examination,” said 63-year-old Ismael who had come from Toba Tek Singh to visit Shah Rukn-e-Alam’s last abode. “We come here out of respect and honor, we owe to these pious people.”

Safia Bibi, a scholar also came long way from Dera Ghazi Khan to view inspiring layout of the shrines.

“It’s typical of Suhrawadi tombs with three entrances, a western-facing Mehrab and original main entrance on the southern axis,” she remarked with joy and wonder.

Visitors continue to throng the shrines particularly those of Bahauddin Zakariya Suhrawardi, Shah Rukn-e-Alam and Shah Yusuf Gardez round the year.

Annuals Urs are organized at prominent shrines marked by Qawwalis and Dhamal with visitors donating hundreds of thousands rupees for the shrines and the welfare of poor people. Series of lectures by renowned religious and sufi scholars are also organized to highlight services of Sufis for spreading Islam in the Sub-continent.

Winning strategies

Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Najam Sethi has said that his top Cricketing priorities are the restoration of the PCB constitution of 2014 with amendments if any.

He said that the revival of regional and departmental crickets was also part of his advanced approach and vowed to constitute a good team and draft winning strategies for staging the best cricket matches on the grounds.

He stated this while talking to media persons at the National Bank Cricket Arena, formerly known as the National Stadium Karachi, here on Monday.

The PCB management committee’s chief said that the committee had full powers and it had been provided with a four-month period to function. He said that the management committee would be dissolved as the constitution of 2014 was re-established and all elected representatives were ready. He said that, later, the Prime Minister would recommend nominations and then elections would be announced.

Sethi said that for last four years he did not make any comment regarding two previous PCB chairmen. ‘I was of the view that they must be provided space to work as the mistakes are part of life.’

Replying to a question on renaming of National Stadium Karachi as National Bank Cricket Arena, he said that in 2013, when he became PCB chairman some officials of PCB and media said that Gaddafi Stadium should be changed, but, in my view, the names should not be changed.

He said that if HBL name could be attached to PSL then why National Bank’s name could not be attached to National Stadium Karachi.

To another question, he said that grounds and pitches would be reviewed as they were behaving differently. The game was changing around the world, he added.

Replying to a question regarding matches with India, he said, ‘Whatever the government says we will go to India. If government says no go —no go.’

He said that in his previous tenure as a PCB chairman, he had told Indians if they would not come to play in Pakistan then we would also not come to you.

Replying to another question on Niaz Stadium, he hoped that they would find a way for Niaz Stadium restoration with Sindh government.

‘Environmental Emergency’

Dr. Saeed Ahmad Ali

As the city areas remain covered by a thick layer of smog, even the Environmental Emergency imposed in Lahore could not do much good for the residents as almost all areas of the city remained under smog cover most of the time.

During the week ending this Sunday, the provincial metropolis witnessed thick clouds of smog covering heritage monuments, tall buildings and residential areas with the sun appearing just for a couple of hours.

With over a hundred thousand people dying every year due to air pollution in the country, the recent phase of smog was exposing more and more people to health hazards by inhaling Co, Co2, Sulphur and ammonia gases emitted by vehicles and industrial units.

The city’s air index was badly affected over the time due to massive tree cutting and erasing green areas for constructing housing societies and industrial units. Burning of crops residue and brick kilns emissions is another phenomenon adding to air pollution.

Although the provincial government has imposed Environmental Emergency in the city by banning crops residue burning, shifting brick kilns to zigzag technology, raising anti-smog squad to check vehicular and industrial emissions and closing schools three days a week, yet desired results are still awaited.

“Globally ambient air quality standards for Sulphur Dioxides, nitrogens and carbon emissions have been produced for protection against air pollution,” remarked an environmental expert, Professor Dr. Ijaz Bhatti. “SO2 is of great importance for being used globally as an indicator for group of gaseous Sulfur Oxides (SOx).”

Farooq Baig, another environmentalist mentioned that with the help of some local entrepreneurs, construction of a 25-foot solar-powered “smog tower” was on cards that will filter clean air for

about 95,000 residents in its vicinity.

He hoped, the project would provide some relief to residents in the worst smog-hit areas. “But, it was not a long term solution as even a dozen smog towers would be insufficient for this mega city.”

“We need to change our overall life-style, fuels usage mechanism and strict monitoring of farmers, brick kiln owners, vehicles and industries and penalizing those polluting the environment,” he said.

The city’s air quality level that sometimes brings Lahore atop the most polluted cities list, it worries citizens especially the mothers of junior classes students.

“We are worried about health of our children. This unending smog is really a nuisance,” said 45 years old Maryam, a scary mother in Daroghawala area.

“No matter that we all are responsible for this situation. But now the time has come to strictly implement respective laws sparing no one and penalizing polluters across the board whatever the position or post,” she stressed.

“How long we can see our children coughing with inflamed eyes, soaring throats and headache,” she said. “It is too much. Authorities must go for an action no matter it is me or any influential politician, industrialist or a bureaucrat.”

Health experts are also worried about prevailing situation with more and more patients rushing to hospitals with complaints of multiple diseases.

“The current smog and polluted toxic environment greatly affects our health,” said Dr. Kashif Saleem, a dermatologist at Mayo Hospital. “Smog and air pollution exposes citizens to asthma, coughing, emphysema, allergies, chronic bronchitis, lung infections and irritation of the eyes, throat, nose and chest infections.”

He said different epidemiological studies have revealed that smog and a kind of Sulphur-laden air pollution contribute to increasing morbidity (especially at respiratory levels and cardiovascular), premature mortality

and even cancer.

“We see more and more patients coming to hospitals during the worst season. This phenomenon not only create health hazards for people but also exert extra financial burden on poor people,” Dr Kashir said.

Amidst complaints by different segments of society on air pollution, Punjab Environmental Protection Department (PEPD) officials claim that air pollution level in the city was within the permissible limits of Air Quality Standards.

“We have seen significant outcome of measures taken by the government,” said PEPD Director Nasim-Ur-Reman. “Air Quality Index has visibly improved during last few days.”

He also mentioned to regular checking of smoke emitting vehicles and industries by anti-smog squads. “We have nine anti smog squads working across city and so far 586 smoke-emitting industrial units have been sealed imposing a fine of Rs34 million.”

Nasim said the farmers were being provided modern harvester “Hepper Seed” to destroy crop residues instead of its open burning. “We are also ensuring conversion of brick kilns to zigzag technology. Farmers and brick kiln owners, violating environmental laws have also been fined.”

He also claimed that air pollution level recorded at different locations in the city showed downward trend to 130 on Air Quality Index (AQI) that is moderate and below the permissible pollution level.

Nasim said the Punjab government has also directed ethanol manufacturing units to document their current status regarding installation of wastewater treatment plants to treat effluent in compliance of Punjab Environment Quality Standards (PEQS).

Despite the claims of PEPD, the ground situation feels worrisome and there is dire need of concrete measures to fight out this menace to secure human health and overall environmental conditions.



Pakistan’s organic skincare industry gaining foothold

Spokesman Research

The global skincare industry over the years is captured by France, South Korea, United States and Germany, taking a major chunk of the overall revenue generated through synthetic beauty products.

Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have occupied 80 percent of the European natural and organic personal care products market.

The global personal care active ingredients market size is reportedly US\$ two billion with China leading the East Asian market having US\$ 123 million share by 2022.

Though the skincare industry is booming worldwide, the Pakistani counterpart isn’t far behind in the race with local natural and organic products not only gaining foothold in the country but also attracting global consumers.

“The reasons behind popularity of the organic personal care products is growing public awareness on the significance of natural products and people don’t want to compromise on health,” said Dr Ashraf Wani, an Economy expert.

Women in Pakistan, specifically, are more concerned about their skin and skin-related issues, including acne, wrinkles, and sunburn.

Dr Wani said that growing skin care problems were the force behind popularity of these organic and natural products as “the local industry unfortunately is flooded with synthetic substandard beauty products sans quality monitoring from the relevant authorities.”

With climate change and pollution, the risk of skin diseases has worsened, leading many brands to look for producing skincare solutions sustainably.

“Organic products are devoid of any harmful chemicals and are a more safe and healthy option for the environment, and they don’t pollute groundwater,” Co-founder and Director Conatural, Rema Taseer explained.

Conatural, co-founded seven years back by Rema and her sister Myra, is among a variety of companies, including SkinDeepIntl, Kishmish organic skincare, Aura, Lush Organix that sprung up in Pakistan for providing organic and authentic skincare to the public. T

These brands primarily use social media, specifically Instagram and TikTok for the promotion of their products and reaching customers, majority of whom rely on brands’ official websites to avoid fake sellers.

This practice also helps companies in gaining public trust and driving sales.

Makeup enthusiast from Islamabad Anicee said that she never opts to buy skincare items from brands without an

official website because, in her opinion, those with official websites are more reliable than those who don’t.

Minimum price of organic skincare items starts from Rs 2,500 and goes up to more than Rs 8,000 per product, she added.

Even though these organic elixirs are good for the environment and skin, nonetheless they are not suited for everyone’s pocket.

Another consumer Ambreen Ali said people buy expensive products thinking “they are more effective.”

There was a need to create awareness about the possibility that less costly skincare products can also be as good or even better than high-priced ones, she added.

An online survey conducted with around 50 participants revealed that mostly females purchase skincare products. Women of 25-40 years of age are more likely to try skincare items, with most relying on online customer reviews.

Majority of the respondents are satisfied with their brand of choice giving an 80% score.

However, very few consult a skin specialist or beautician before making a purchase while most set a specific monthly budget for their daily skincare regime and confirm authenticity through reviews or testing.

Beautician Kiran said that skincare brands can be useful to protect skin, adding that many clients consult her before buying such products.

Whereas, Dr Uzma, a dermatologist in Islamabad, said she recommends medicated skincare products. It would take time for local organic skincare products to be suggested by doctors because “we don’t have substantial data on effectiveness of such products”, she added.

According to Statista, the Skincare segment in Pakistan is valued at US\$ 709.70m in 2022 and is expected to grow annually by 2.58% (CAGR 2022-2026).

The data further shows that the majority of revenue share (70%) is of facial products, followed by body care solutions.

Dr Ashraf Wani predicted exponential growth in the local skincare industry if “it gains public trust”. He said the growing trend of seeking natural and organic solutions could see more brands enter the skincare arena and generate more business activities and employment opportunities thereby increasing revenue and decreasing dependence on foreign brands.

Rema saw enormous potential for the industry to flourish in Pakistan.

“The most important factor which can add to local industry’s growth is more awareness to make people realise the harmful effects of using substandard and synthetic ingredients,” she concluded.

Shehbaz Sharif felicitates Nepal's new PM

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday felicitated Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on assuming the office of the prime minister of Nepal.

"Heartiest felicitations to Rt Hon'ble Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on becoming Prime Minister of Nepal," he said in a tweet.

Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan and Nepal enjoyed cordial relations as regional partners and expressed the desire to work with the new Nepalese prime minister.

"I look forward to working with him to further strengthen our bilateral ties and regional cooperation," he said. APP



PM invites Qatari Amir to attend Climate Resilient Pakistan conference

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday invited Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to participate in the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, co-hosted with the United Nations, in Geneva on January 9, 2023.

The prime minister spoke on telephone with the Amir of Qatar, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister thanked the amir for the generous humanitarian assistance provided by Qatar in the wake of the devastating climate-induced floods in Pakistan earlier this year.

He recalled that Pakistan now

faces the enormous challenge of rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate-resilient manner.

The prime minister highlighted that while Pakistan had mobilised its own limited resources to the extent possible, continued international support and solidarity was required to meet the daunting challenge of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas,

and to build resilience against future climate shocks.

The prime minister congratulated the Amir on Qatar's successful hosting of FIFA-2022 Football World Cup, which had set a new benchmark for international sports events.

The prime minister and the Qatari amir also had a brief exchange of views on bilateral and international issues of mutual interest.

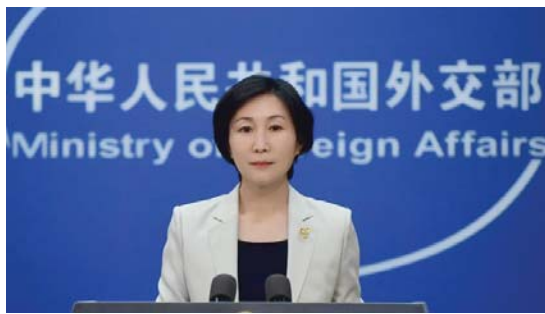
China congratulates Dahal on becoming new Nepali PM

News Desk

BELJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on Monday congratulated Pushpa Kamal Dahal on his appointment as the new Prime Minister of Nepal.

We have noted the smooth and successful general elections in Nepal. We congratulate Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on his appointment as the new Prime Minister of Nepal, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning said during her regular briefing held here.

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) Chairman Pushpa Kamal



Dahal was sworn in as the new Nepali prime minister on Monday.

The spokesperson said that the Chinese side believed that with the concerted efforts of the Nepalese government and people and through the

consultation and coordination of various political parties and political forces, Nepal would enjoy continued stability and socio-economic development.

As Nepal's traditional friend and neighbor, China deeply values its relations

with Nepal, she said.

We stand ready to work with the new Nepalese government to expand and deepen friendly exchange and cooperation across the board, pursue high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, inject new impetus into our strategic cooperative partnership featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity and deliver more benefits for our two peoples, she added.

The former Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal was appointed Nepal's new prime minister for a third time on December 25, with the backing of 169 members of the parliament.

South Korea scrambles jets, fires warning shots as N Korean drones intrude

SEOUL: South Korea scrambled warplanes and attack helicopters and fired warning shots on Monday after North Korean drones violated its airspace, the South Korean military said.

South Korea tracked the drones crossing from North Korea over what is known as the Military Demarcation Line between the two countries after detecting them in the skies of the western city of Gimpo at around 10:25am (0125 GMT), the military said.

The drones are the first confirmed to have come from the isolated neighbour since 2017, when a North Korean drone believed to be on a spy mission crashed and was found on a mountain near the border. In 2014, a North Korean drone was also discovered on a South Korean border island.

At least one drone came down farther and flew over South Korea's capital Seoul in the latest intrusion, News1 agency reported, citing an unnamed military official.

The military said it tried to shoot down the drones, but it was not clear if it was successful, and whether any of them were armed. South Korea's transport ministry said earlier that flights departing from its Incheon and Gimpo airports were suspended following a request from the military.

The suspension began at 1:08pm (0408 GMT) at Gimpo and at 1:22pm at Incheon and lasted for about an hour before flight departures resumed at around 2:10pm, a ministry official told Reuters. While scrambling to counter the drones, a South Korean KA-1 light attack aircraft crashed shortly after departing its Wonju base in the country's east, a defence ministry official said. Its two pilots were able to escape before the crash and are now in the hospital.

Ukrainians break with Russian Orthodox Christmas tradition

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a small Orthodox church in Ukraine some 20 kilometers from the Russian border, the congregation chose to celebrate Christmas on December 25 rather than the traditional January 7, their way of protesting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. FRANCE 24's Andrew Hilliar, Elena Volochine, and Abdelkader Dermas report from Bogodukhiv.



children," said one worshipper. The church's priest, Father Guenadiy Gontcharov, spent 70 days in his basement to escape the bombardment

during the Russian occupation of his village.

"They brought us horror, death, and ruin. I don't want to be associated with a Patri-

arch and clergy who despise us and wish us dead," said Gontcharov, referring to Patriarch Kirill, the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, which marks Christmas on January 7. "We are tearing ourselves away from this imperial domination. Now that we're free, we can say that we're independent of Moscow's Orthodox churches," he said.

Some of those who came to the church in Bogodukhiv prayed for their family members caught up in the conflict. Others prayed that victory would come soon.

Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister calls on Ishaq Dar

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Uzbekistan headed by Khodjaev Jamshid Abdulkhakimovich, Deputy Prime Minister / Minister of Investment & Foreign Trade called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here at Finance division on Monday and discussed with him matters of mutual interests.

The delegation comprised Kudratov Laziz Shavkatovich, 1st Deputy Minister-Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Mahkamov Ilkhom Rustamovich, Minister of Transport, Siddikov Furqat Ahmedovich, 1st Deputy Minister-Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yuldashev Kahramon Anvarjanovich, Deputy Minister- Ministry of Agriculture, Ergashev Ibrohim Kenjaboevich, Chairman-Agency of Plant Protection & Quarantine and Oybek Arif Usmanov, ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan.

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomed the delegation and highlighted cordial and brotherly relations based on common faith, shared history and cultural affinities between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The Finance Minister further underscored that constructive interaction at the top leadership level has given a positive momentum to our bilateral relations which must be continued and strengthened. He highlighted the potential of cooperation in economic and investment sectors and expressed desire of the Govt to further strengthen and diversify bilateral trade and economic linkages between the two countries.

Mr. Khodjaev Jamshid Abdulkhakimovich, Deputy Prime/Minister of Investment

& Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan acknowledged the friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan. He exchanged views to extend bilateral economic and trade relations with Pakistan and showed keen interest to establish road and rail link between the two countries through Afghanistan.

The two sides discussed various avenues of cooperation to deepen the trade and economic partnership between the two countries including improvement of road infrastructure from Tashkent to Pakistan, Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan Rail link, export/impport facilitation, etc. The two sides agreed to enhance the current trade volume between both the countries at optimal level. The Uzbek side also sought technical support of Pakistan for its inclusion in WTO and getting GSP+ status.

The two sides expressed confi-

dence that scheduled meeting of Joint Inter Governmental Commission (IGC) in early February, 2023 in Pakistan will further enhance bilateral economic cooperation and investment to the mutual benefit of the two countries.

In conclusion, the Finance Minister thanked the Deputy Prime/Minister of Investment & Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan and extended full support and cooperation of the Government to enhance bilateral economic and trade relations between both countries.

Federal Minister for National food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Aisha Ghous Pasha, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Governor SBP Jamil Ahmed, Federal secretaries and senior officers attended the meeting.



In another meeting minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC) at Finance Division, today.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Ayesha Ghous Pasha, Minister of State for Petro-

leum Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Finance, Deputy Attorney General, MD OGDCL, representatives of SNGPL, SSGCL, PPL and senior officers from Finance and Petroleum Divisions attended the meeting.

The meeting was apprised of amount of outstanding Cess recoveries from various entities and discussed GIDC Acts and Supreme Court's order in this regard. It was informed that Rs. 447 billion is still outstanding and needed to be recovered and there are 3194 petitions in various court of laws.

Examining the Court's decisions and stay order, the Finance Minister expressed serious concerns over the non-recoveries of Cess dues and expressed resolve of the government to recover each penny from the defaulters on account of Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC).

At least 180 Rohingya refugees in stranded boat feared dead: UNHCR



Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations refugee agency has said it feared that at least 180 Rohingya Muslim refugees stranded for weeks in the Andaman Sea may have died, while hope emerged that some of those adrift on a second crowded boat had been rescued in Indonesia.

In a statement Sunday, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it had received unconfirmed reports that the vessel with 180 onboard, which had left Bangladesh several weeks ago, had started cracking early in December before its likely sinking.

About one million Rohingya refugees, heavily persecuted in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, risk their lives each year on long, expensive sea journeys — often in poor-quality vessels — in an attempt to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

"Relatives have lost contact. Those last in touch presume all are dead," the agency said. "We hope against hope this is not the case."

If the boat's loss is confirmed, it would make 2022 one of the deadliest in recent years for Rohingya refugees in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, bringing the year's toll to about 400. At least 2,500 Rohingya refugees have lost their lives in the dangerous waters of Southeast Asia since 2013, according to U.N. estimates.

"This is a deadly stretch of waters in the region; the numbers of those taking the journey are small and the casualties big," said Babar Baloch, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency. "Most of it is linked to inaction."

With conditions abysmal in the overcrowded refugee camps in Bangladesh and the future uncertain, a large number of Rohingya families have taken the dangerous journey by sea to other countries in Southeast Asia.

The U.N. Security Council, in a resolution last week, "demanded an immediate end to all forms of violence" in Myanmar and asked for addressing "the root causes of the crisis in Rakhine State."

"Thousands of Rohingya have faced violent deaths in the state after the Myanmar military and allied militias intensified their targeting of the minority group in 2017; the United Nations has previously called the military's actions there "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

Last week's resolution called for creating "the conditions necessary for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons."

Rohingya activists and refugee officials said that since November at least five boats had left Cox's Bazar, the location of the main refugee camp in Bangladesh. While one reached Indonesia, and two others were rescued by Sri Lanka and Vietnam, the fate of two remained uncertain for weeks.

Restricting female access to education in Afghanistan

Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell

News Desk

NEW YORK: "UNICEF strongly condemns the recent decree issued by the Taliban de facto authorities banning all female humanitarian workers at national and international NGOs from working across Afghanistan. This decision is a blatant violation of obligations under international humanitarian law and the most fundamental human rights of women in Afghanistan. It comes just days after the decision to ban all women from access to higher education.



Beyond the egregious roll back of basic rights, these decisions will have far-reaching consequences for the delivery of essential services for children and families across the country — especially in the areas of health, nutrition, education and child protection — areas where female humanitarian workers have an immeasurably important role to play. This includes the programming of UNICEF, through which we provide services to 19 million people, including more than 10 million children, across the country.

"By banning female NGO workers, the Taliban de facto authorities are effectively denying these services to a significant portion of the population and putting the lives and well-being of all Afghans, especially women and children, at risk.

"UNICEF calls on the Taliban de facto authorities to immediately reverse both decisions, on higher education and humanitarian work, and to allow all female students to go back to school and female NGO workers to continue their important work in Afghanistan across the humanitarian sector."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
40,155.16	39,669.20
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,367.43	39,669.20
Index Value	Change
4,434,319,948	+485.96
Percentage	Time
+1.23%	26 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
26,405.87	+170.62
Percentage	Time
+0.65%	26 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	152.5	153.75
Bahrain Dinar	599.97	604.47
Canadian Dollar	165.95	167.3
China Yuan	32.4	32.65
Danish Krone	32.24	32.59
Euro	260	262.5
Hong Kong Dollar	29.03	29.38
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.29	2.34
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	65.2	65.8
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	69.2	69.8
UK Pound Sterling	296	299
US Dollar	233	235

Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister arrives in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Khodjaev Jamshid Abdulkhalkimovich arrived in Pakistan on Monday morning.

Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar received the Uzbek Deputy PM on his arrival in Islamabad by a special plane.

Syed Naveed Qamar presented bouquet to the honorable Uzbek Deputy PM on his arrival. The two sides would exchange views on further strengthening bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas.

During the visit, a number of bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding are expected to be signed.

"The Uzbek Deputy PM visit to Pakistan is expected to impart a renewed impetus to deepening cooperation between the two countries in diverse fields.

The high level Uzbek delegation will also meet with different state dignitaries including

the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade is comprising of Mahkamov Ilkhom Rustamovich Minister of Transport, Oybek Arif Usmanov Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Kudratov Laziz Shavkatovich 1st Deputy Minister, of Investment and Foreign Trade, Siddikov Furqat Ahmedovich 1st Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Khaydarov Ilkhom Utkurovich Chairman Association "Uztextileperom".

Bakhrom Yusupov Trade & Economic Counselor to Pakistan, and Oybek Kambarov, from Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan are brotherly countries linked through longstanding historical, cultural and religious bonds.

These ties are marked by mutual respect and exceptional cordiality.

The two countries have a commonality of views on various regional and international issues.



Ignoring development of backward areas is a mistake: 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 Monday said the incidents of terrorism are increasing in the country.

Our soldiers and policemen have been sacrificing their lives to provide security to the masses while lack of resources can hamper the fight against terrorists, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that military action is taken against the terrorists but development is avoided while only claims are made to provide employment to the local population due to which the problem resurfaces after a few years.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that claims of breaking the back of the terrorists have been made for years, but they have proved wrong.

In the past, the top military officers had told the political leaders many times that if the backward areas were not developed,



the problem of terrorism would continue to reappear after a few years, but despite this, the development of these areas was not given importance.

Politicians prefer to spend resources where they can get votes which amount to wasting sacrifices offered to eradicate terrorism.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government has asked the Afghan Taliban many times to play their part in stopping the attacks of Tehreek-e-Taliban, but

so far no positive result has come out of the negotiations.

The reactivation of the TTP will divert attention and resources, which may reduce the focus on fighting terrorism in Balochistan, which will create new problems.

Pakistan is already suffering from incompetence, political instability, depletion of resources, unbridled debt, inflation, and the ravages of floods, and under these conditions, it is not surprising that the security situation will deteriorate.

The government also does not want to turn the people against it by making tough decisions and economic reforms, due to which economic recovery is becoming difficult and the country will have to run on loans.

Even in such a critical time when the survival of the country is at stake, some politicians are trying to create uncertainty instead of doing any constructive work, which is making the economic crisis more serious.

The country's problems will not be solved but will increase until the country's leaders change their priorities and economic reforms are carried out.

SMEDA launched preliminary assessment report



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has unveiled its preliminary assessment report on impact of recent floods on SMEs. Mr. Hashim Raza, CEO SMEDA, while addressing the launching ceremony of the Report today disclosed that 197,658 economic establishments have been affected by floods across the country bearing an estimated loss of loss of US\$ 5.3 Billion.

Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry from Quetta, Dadu, DG Khan and Swat also addressed the launching ceremony via internet. CEO SMEDA said that recent flood in Pakistan was one of the worst natural disasters in the country's history. More than 33 million people or 14% of the country's total population has been affected by floods and heavy rains that have hit more than 90 of the 160 districts of the country. In Pakistan, 90 districts have been declared "calamity-hit". Out of the total 90 districts, 32 belong to Balochistan, 24 Sindh, 17 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 9 Gilgit-Baltistan, 5 AJ&K and 3 Punjab, he added.

Referring to the report compiled by SMEDA, Mr. Hashim Raza informed that the effects of the 2022 Flood

were broadly analyzed in this study that aims to assess the impact of Floods on SMEs at the provincial and district levels. Analysis has been conducted for economic establishments across 71 districts to estimate direct and indirect losses, he said adding that both secondary data and primary data were gathered through site visits of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Punjab to derive estimates of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) affected by floods across the country and also identifying their need for assistance for revival.

CEO SMEDA admitted that the research had its limitations due to accessibility to flood affected areas and unavailability of updated district level data of economic establishments.

Highlighting results of the study, CEO SMEDA informed that according to the findings 25% of the economic establishments had completely destroyed in the floods, whereas rest of the SMEs had suffered from a damage of over Rs.1.4 billion in total because of disruption in supply chain, loss of customers, electricity disruption, roads, bridges and other transport network disruption. Over 20% of the surveyed SMEs have an estimated Annual sales Turnover loss of Rs.1.3 billion.

Donation

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) officials presenting cheque to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan for Flood affectees.



DG Customs Valuation has committed to update valuation rulings

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the Director General of Customs Valuation, Mr. Gul Rehman, has committed to update customs valuations; which happens to be a long-standing demand of FPCCI on behalf of the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan. He added that due to obsolete customs valuation rulings, trade community remains in a continuous strain to get their issues & complaints resolved with the customs.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh also informed that DG Customs Valuation has agreed to the demand of FPCCI that rulings should be updated every 90 days ideally; however, due to the backlog, customs valuations department will strive to revise & reissue the rulings at the earliest possible.

Shabbir Mansha, VP FPCCI, highlighted that customs should act as the facilitator of exports; and, any issues, anomalies & complaints should be



resolved swiftly. He added that a high-powered liaison committee may be formed with the customs from the platform of FPCCI - which is the apex body; representing 250 chambers, trade bodies and associations from across length & breadth of the country. This will also provide an effective forum for alternative dispute resolution; and, will save a lot of resources, time and energies of the businessmen.

Saqib Fayyaz Maggo, Convenor of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Customs, demanded that the valuation rulings should be aligned with the international markets and reflective of their real & current values. Hundreds of customs valuation rulings are long-overdue than that of their original 90-day limit, he added.

Gul Rehman, DG Customs Valuation, informed the

high-profile and well-attended session that customs department is launching a module in its systems within a couple of weeks to link it to international markets to reflect up-to-date and accurate customs valuations. This will resolve a large number of anomalies and discrepancies on its own, he added.

Gul Rehman welcomed the proposal that issues and conflicts between customs house and businessmen should be resolved within themselves instead of being taken to courts and tribunals.

Additionally, Gul Rehman added, that hundreds of customs valuations are pending and it is not possible to carry out all the valuations in few weeks; but, they will be completed at the earliest and some obsolete valuations will be deleted as well. He also encouraged business community to come forward and join hands with customs valuations department to make it possible to improve country's ease of doing business environment.

Bank Alfalah won 'Best Investor Relations' award, for the 9th year in a row

News Desk

LAHORE: One of Pakistan's largest commercial banks, Bank Alfalah, has been honoured with three prestigious awards in recognition of its exceptional banking performance. Investment Banking and investor relations at the 19th Annual Excellence Awards hosted by the CFA Society Pakistan in Karachi.

The bank was nominated in several categories and was awarded the 'Best Investor Relations' award for the 9th time in a row this year.

In addition to that, Bank Alfalah was declared the runner up in the 'Best Bank of the year' category, in recognition of its operational excellence, product suite and profitability. The Bank was also awarded the 'Best transaction of the year', for Shams Power Limited, which is a testament to its capability to successfully execute large scale and innovative transaction.



Speaking on this development, Pervez Shahbaz Khan, Group Head, Treasury at Bank Alfalah commented:

"It is a proud moment for all of us that Bank Alfalah has been recognized at CFA Society Pakistan's 19th Annual Excellence Awards and has achieved a new milestone, wrapping up 3 major awards. For the 9th consecutive year, Bank Alfalah has been lauded as the 'Best Investor Relations'. This shows the management's level of commitment towards investors and competence of the investor relations team, exceeding expectations.

Instability and economic decline worrying Chinese investors

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday said political instability, law and order situation, and economic decline are upsetting Chinese investors.

There is no possibility of further investment by Chinese businessmen in Pakistan under the current set of circumstances, it said.

Under the CPEC, some investments are being made in energy and infrastructure projects, but it is becoming impossible to attract Chinese investors in other sectors, said Dr Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW.

In a statement issued here today, he said that Pakistan's trade with Iran and Afghanistan is insignificant while trade with India is suspended while trade continues with only one neighboring country China.

Chinese investors can invest heavily in Pakistan if their concerns are addressed and they are provided with a favorable environment, he added.

Dr Mughal said that Chinese investors have relocated many industries to far-flung countries avoiding Pakistan due to a number of issues that were never addressed.



Mr. Omer Farooq, Chief Financial Officer and Group Head - Finance & Accounts at Jubilee Life Insurance received the Certificate of Merit in Insurance category at the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) Best Presented Annual Reports Awards 2021 ceremony held in Kathmandu, Nepal. The accolade was presented as an honour to Jubilee Life for its excellence in financial reporting in accordance with the internationally accepted financial reporting framework.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICCI is giving trophy to Salman Ali Khan the winner of All Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Chess Tournament at ICCI. Azhar-ul-Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Chairman Pakistan Chess Federation Hanif Qureshi, Raja Gohar Iqbal, Saad Farooqui, Humayun Kabir, Asher Hafeez, Imtiaz Abbasi are also Present

Hakim Mohammed Said, Hamdard Premier League cricket tournament

News Desk

KARACHI: Hamdard Pakistan (HP) organized a two-day Hakim Mohammed Said (Shaheed-e-Pakistan) Hamdard Premier League cricket tournament at UBL Sports Complex which successfully concluded yesterday.

Eight teams representing different divisions along with the teams of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan and Hamdard University participated in the event.

All matches of the tournament spanned 5 overs, while the final and semi-finals were set to six overs. In the final, the Sales and Distribution team comprehensively outplayed the Hamdard University team to clinch the winners' trophy for the first time in



the history of the tournament events.

Muhammad Zeeshan, Assistant Manager of Sales and Distribution showed exceptional batting performance throughout the tournament and was awarded Player of the Match and Player of the tournament.

Ms Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Group, graced the occasion as chief guest and presented the trophies to the winner and runners-up teams.

Fatema Muneer Ahmed, MD & CEO, HP, Amina Humayun Mian-Trustee HP and Farrukh Imdad-Director General Hamdard Foundation Pakistan also attended the tournament and praised the individual and collective performances of the players and teams.

Pakistan stumble after losing wickets in 1st test against NZ

Sports Reporter

KARACHI: Pakistan's top order stumbled early against New Zealand's spinners on a dry and tacky wicket to reach 115-4 on the opening day of a two-test series on Monday.

Captain Babar Azam got a reprieve on 12 and also survived lbw television referral in Ish Sodhi's first over to be unbeaten on 54 at the break.

Recalled former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, playing his first test since 2019, was not out on four as New Zealand took the early advantage in its first test in Pakistan in 20 years.

Babar raised his fifty off 76 balls when he drove Sodhi through mid-on off the backfoot for his seventh boundary before Tim Southee made further inroads in his return spell by dismissing Saud Shakeel (22) in the penultimate over before lunch.

Shakeel, who scored four half-centuries in England's 3-0 clean sweep against Pakistan last week, played a loose drive against Southee and offered a regulation catch in the gully just when it looked the pair had started to rebuild the innings.



Spinners Ajaz Patel and Michael Bracewell found plenty of turn in the first hour after Southee lost the toss in his debut as New Zealand skipper and Babar elected to bat.

Southee read the slow and dry wicket quickly and brought on his spinners with the new ball just three overs old.

Patel got the breakthrough off his third ball as Abdullah Shafique (7) was stumped after getting beaten on two successive deliveries from the leftarm

spinner. Shan Masood also tried an over ambitious shot against Bracewell's (3) offspin and Tom Blundell got his second stumping before Imam-ul-Haq (24) played a reckless shot and holed out to Southee at mid-off to leave Pakistan struggling at 48-3.

Pakistan made three changes from the team which lost to England by eight wickets at the same venue last week. Sarfaraz got his first test in three years

after all-format wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan was rested.

Mir Hamza was also drafted into the playing XI after the leftarm fast bowler played his only test against Australia in 2018 in Abu Dhabi. Hamza replaced allrounder Faheem Ashraf.

Opening batter Imam also returned to the side after missing out Pakistan's last test due to a hamstring injury. Masood moved down the order at No. 3 as Azhar Ali retired from test cricket after playing his last test against England.

Southee was appointed captain for the two-test series after Kane Williamson stepped down from the captaincy before the Black Caps' first test tour to Pakistan since 2002.

New Zealand did play an ODI series in Pakistan in 2003 and was due to play a limited-overs series in Pakistan last year, but abandoned its tour just hours before the toss in the first ODI due to security concerns.

Weather concerns in Multan has forced the Pakistan Cricket Board to organize the entire tour of the Black Caps in Karachi which include two test matches and three ODIs.

Sarfaraz says he was hopeless on playing his 50th Test



Sports Reporter

KARACHI: Former Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed said on Monday he was not sure whether he would play his 50th Test match.

After making a solid statement on his Test comeback, Mr Ahmed was sharing his emotions on his return, saying he continued to put up his all-out efforts and had a confidence on Allah Almighty. Saying that many people were praying for his Test return, Mr Ahmed said when he arrived on the wicket to play, he was feeling as if he was making a debut.

Mr Ahmed credited former all-rounder Shahid Afridi for his support, saying he [Afridi] played a significant role in boosting "my morale". He also lauded Babar Azam for guiding him and said his close friends also urged him to pay attention to cricket.

Talking about his critics, Mr Ahmed said he used to stop himself from responding to the critics, urging the critics to criticize him but not get personal.

Punjab Cycling Association organized the cycling event



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: With the collaboration of Punjab Cycling Association and CML on the birth day of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah the Cycling event was organized in Wagah Border, where the Chief Guest was Wing Commander Wahga Lieutenant Colonel Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi was the Chief Guest. In the competition large number of men's/women's professional cyclists took part in the competition. Under-35 cycling category was also included.

The cycling race started from Jalo More, Pakistan Cycling Federation General Secretary Moazzam Khan inaugurated the event along with Punjab Cycling Association President Adnan Ehsan Khan and PCA General Secretary Shehzada Butt. Adeel Shahid, Hassan Zaidi, Amjad Nawaz Khan, and Umar Butt were also present.

The Concluded ceremony Chief Guest was Lt.Colonel Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi gave away the prizes among the successful Cyclists and he also encouraged the Cyclists after their outstanding performance. On this occasion Punjab Cycling Association President Adnan Ehsan Khan thanked to the Chief Guests and announced the several events of cycling in Punjab. The President PCF Moazzam Khan Klair appreciated the arrangements of PCA and CML Management team who organized such a fabulous event of cycling in Lahore.

Players stand for national anthem

KARACHI: New Zealand's and Pakistan's players stand for national anthem prior to start of first Test Cricket Match between Pakistan and New Zealand, at National Stadium, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Not enough attention paid to international schedule: Stokes

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: England test captain Ben Stokes has raised concerns over the scheduling of international cricket, saying the authorities do not give the matter enough thought.

Stokes highlighted England's three-match one-day international series in Australia in November, which started four days after they won the Twenty20 World Cup. He described it as a "series which meant nothing". "The scheduling doesn't get enough attention that it should," Stokes told the BBC on Monday.

Some people say you are playing for England, that should be enough. But there is a lot more to factor in."

Stokes announced his retirement from ODIs in July, citing the "unsustainable" rigour of playing all three formats of the game.

The 31-year-old was part of the England team who won the ODI World Cup in 2019.

"You want international cricket to be the highest standard. But we have seen a lot of different squads being picked and players



LCWU is committed for Empowering Women: Dr. Bushra Mirza

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Dr. Bushra Mirza, Vice Chancellor Lahore College for Women University inaugurated the seminar. Speaking on the occasions she stated that the Lahore College for Women University is delighted to host the national heroes and the athletes at this very educative event. She recalled the services of the LCWU for the promotion of women's sports in Pakistan. She also emphasized that such seminars should be held frequently enabling athletes and officials to benefit from the educational value of sports. She said that the LCWU is committed for Empowering Women. She thanked Lt. Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan, President POA and Mr. Muhammad Inam Chair-

man Athletes Commission of POA for collaborating with the LCWU for this important event. She assured the athletes of her and LCWU's full support in their future education and sporting endeavors.

Lt. Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan, President POA thanked Dr. Bushra Mirza for extending support to the Athletes Commission of POA and the Pakistan Olympic Association for organizing the seminar. He recalled that the POA has had organized 5 seminars aiming at athlete's education in a period of two years. He said that it is the prime responsibility of the sports organizations to educate their athletes and facilitate them enabling them to take over the future role of leadership of the Olympic Movement.



Mr. Muhammad Inam, Chair Athletes Commission of the Pakistan Olympic Association welcomed the athletes and thanked Lt. Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan, President POA for continuous support to organize educational seminars frequently. He thanked Dr. Bushra Mirza for the facilities LCWU provided the athletes in this seminar. He recalled that the athletes are being imparted valuable and necessary education that would benefit them in achieving their sporting and educational goals. He said that the athlete's active would ensure that the athletes are aware of their rights and responsibilities as well as it would equip athletes for future leadership of the sports organizations and beyond.

Dr. Shamsa Hashmi, Dr. Asad Abass Shah, and Ms. Ada Jaffery gave lectures to the audience on Mental Health Matters, Doping Controls & ADEL and Athlete365, Career Pathways & Career Transition in Sports. Mr. Muhammad Shafiq, Secretary General Asian Handball Federation / Treasurer POA chaired the first session whereas Col (R) Mudassar Asghar, Olympian Hockey, former Secretary General PHF chaired the session of Doping Controls and ADEL.

The closing ceremony of the Seminar would be held on 27th December 2022 at 1130 AM. Mr. Tayyab Ikrum, President International Hockey Federation (FIH) would be the chief guest of the closing ceremony.