

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے کہ جو ایک ہزار سالوں کے ساتھ (راج کے لیے نکلے) جس کی لپیٹ پیچھے تو نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے ہی کو ہار دیا اور اس کا ریکارڈ عمر کو کا اہرام ہندو (جنگ ناری: حدیث نمبر 1694-1695)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Zero chance of Pakistan's default; assures Dar

Federal Finance and Revenue Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday while rejecting the rumors about Pakistan's going to default assured that Pakistan has resilience and will survive all challenges. However, he stressed on joint and targeted efforts by the public and private sectors to come out of this pressing economic situation.



PTI to resist technocrat government, says Fawad Chaudhry

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday said PTI will not accept the move of forming a technocrat government in the country and will resist. Talking to Twitter, Fawad Chaudhry termed the news of forming a technocrat government in Pakistan 'stupidity' and added that the country is facing a severe political crisis.

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For energy saving

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet meeting on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

PM sets up committee to cut electricity use in government offices by 30pc

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed to set up a committee to work on reducing electricity consumption in the government offices by 30 percent.

The committee will comprise the Federal Minister for Energy, Federal Minister for Planning, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Resources and relevant secretaries.

The prime minister gave the direction while chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet.

The meeting was told that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (National Energy Efficiency and Conservation) have also prepared an awareness campaign about energy saving and austerity.

The federal cabinet discussed the 'Proposed Energy Saving Plan' presented by the Power Division. The meeting was briefed on the consultation conducted so far with the stakeholders regarding the energy saving plan.

In this regard, the prime minister said that the consultation process with all the stakeholders including the provincial governments, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan governments should be completed as soon as possible to ensure the implementation of the 'Proposed Energy Saving Plan'.

The prime minister emphasized that the nation needed to adopt austerity measures with regard to energy and urgently required change in attitudes.

He said the implementation of the energy saving plan and the use of alternative energy was indispensable to reduce the

import bill in terms of fuel.

The federal cabinet condemned the arrest of senior parliamentarian Chaudhry Ashraf by the Punjab government in a 53-year-old case as a step of political vendetta.

The cabinet offered fatcha for those martyred as a result of the incidents of terrorism in different parts of the country.

The federal cabinet paid tribute to the security forces for their continuous fight against terrorism.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing by the Ministry of Industries and Production regarding the generalization of the use of electric bikes across the country.

It was highlighted that currently 90 companies were manufacturing motorcycles and auto rickshaws in the country with a capacity to manufacture

6 million motorcycles annually.

It was informed that 22 companies had been issued licenses to manufacture electric bikes in Pakistan.

The meeting was further informed that the promotion of electric bikes would save a lot in terms of fuel.

The use of electric bikes will not only save fuel, but will also prove eco-friendly by reducing carbon emissions.

The Prime Minister issued instructions to submit a detailed plan regarding electric bikes to the Economic Coordination Committee.

The federal cabinet gave final approval to the report of the Cabinet Committee on Soybean.

The federal cabinet approved the Government-to-Government Commercial Transaction Act 2022 (G2G Commercial Transaction Act 2022).

On the recommendation of the Board of Investments, the Federal Cabinet approved in principle the One Stop Service Act to provide facilities to investors in Special Economic Zones established across the country.

On the recommendation of the Petroleum Division, the Federal Cabinet declared Taj Field (Mirpur Khas Block) for commercial status, covering an area of 14.11 square kilometers on commercial basis and to M/s United Energy Pakistan Limited (UEPL) of this block for five years.

The federal cabinet approved the decisions taken in the meetings of the Economic Coordination Committee held on 21.12.2022 and 15.11.2022.

The federal cabinet approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization held on 26.12.2022.

PM underlines significance of continued global support for Pak post-flood plans



Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday underscored the importance of continued international support and solidarity for Pakistan's plans to build back better after devastating floods.

The prime minister held a telephone conversation with President of the Republic of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

He invited President Erdogan to the international conference being co-hosted with the United Nations in Geneva on 9th January next year in the wake of the recent devastating floods in Pakistan,

PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister highlighted the daunting challenge faced by Pakistan in terms of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the flood-affected areas in a climate-resilient manner.

The prime minister expressed gratitude on behalf of the people and the government of Pakistan to the brotherly government of Turkey for the provision of prompt humanitarian assistance in the wake of the unprecedented catastrophic floods.

The two leaders also exchanged views on various bilateral matters and international issues and agreed to remain in close contact.

Corps commanders resolve to fight terrorists without any distinction

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The two-day 254th Corps Commanders' Conference on Wednesday resolved to fight against terrorists without any distinction and eliminate the menace as per the aspirations of the people of Pakistan.

The conference, presided over by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, was held here at the General Headquarters from December 27-28, an Inter-Services Public Relations news release said.



A comprehensive review of professional and organizational matters of the army was undertaken during the conference.

PAC Chairman requests CJP for information sharing on 'dam funds'



ISLAMABAD: Public Accounts Committee Chairman Noor Alam Khan on Wednesday made a written request to the Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial for sharing details of the Supreme Court dam fund created by his predecessor Saqib Nisar.

"Money collected in the dam fund is public money and it is inevitable for the supremacy of the apex court and ensuring transparency to make the details public for information," said the chairman, requesting the CJP to ask the principal accounting officer of the Supreme Court to provide details of the fund collected.

He said denying the record of funds by the principal accountant officer of Pakistan for audit was against the Constitution of Pakistan.

He said, unfortunately, breaking the law and disrespecting the Constitution had become a fashion for few who prioritized personal interest over the national interest to avoid accountability.

"This is public money and accountability for this money is a must, and if those accounts' information is not shared with the public by the principal accountant officer, it would be a clear violation of the Constitution," he said.

'Establishment's willingness' key to snap polls, says Imran Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supreme leader Imran Khan said on Wednesday the willingness of the "seat of power" was vital for ensuring early elections in the country.

Speaking to a select group of journalists at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore, the PTI chief claimed that he was not in contact with the Establishment for now, and also warned the government of reaction if any "political engineering" would be done in the upcoming elections.

The deposed premier took a jibe at the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), saying the PDM had become a "drawing room" party, adding that they came into power just to get "NRO-2".

Accusing ex-COAS Gen Bajwa of toppling his government, Mr Khan said "Bajwa did injustice to the PTI and now due to him the country is on the verge of default." According to him, Bajwa was not bothered about politicians' corruption, that's why he barred me from taking any strict action against them.

Earlier, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Wednesday



nor his party "could bear" what's coming to them.

While responding to the question pertaining to communication with the Establishment, he claimed that "it has gone neutral now, so there are no links with it."

Bilawal Bhutto while addressing a gathering in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh held to mark the 15th death anniversary of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, asked the PTI chief to return to parliament as neither he

nor his party "could bear" what's coming to them.

Reacting to Bilawal's remarks against PTI and Imran Khan, senior leader Fawad Chaudhry called the PPP leaders "the puppets of the Establishment".

Taking to Twitter, the PTI leader said, "The puppets of the Establishment set up a farce at the mausoleum of Benazir Bhutto today." "Zardari and his son dealt such a deep blow to Benazir's philosophy that her assassins could not eliminate Bhutto but they managed to fulfill the mission of Benazir's adversaries by abolishing the federal status of the PPP," he tweeted

Developing countries under Pakistan's chair successfully achieve 'Loss and Damage' fund: FM



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the creation of "Loss and Damage" fund under Pakistan's chairmanship at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27), in Egypt, last month to support the climate disasters hit countries, was a significant achievement.

The foreign minister, referring to the establishment of the fund, said that it was something that climate activists had been struggling for the last 30 years and he was proud that it was achieved under Pakistan's chair of the G77.

In an interview with the Arab News, the foreign minister said that he felt that they

had managed to achieve some common ground through the language incorporated in loss and damage.

Obviously, the foreign minister said there were different perspectives as the developing world felt that their carbon footprint was smaller, they had not contributed as much as the developed world to this crisis.

"The agenda, or the aspiration of the G77, is exactly that. We represent the aspirations of the developing world," the foreign minister said.

He said the 'Loss and Damage' fund was a demonstration of developing nations wielding collective strength when they had a common cause, adding "I think we were very successful in creating that consensus."

The foreign minister said time and time again, the G77 had come together to take unanimous decisions, consensus decisions. Every meeting that he chaired had an outcome document.

Dangerous

RAWALPINDI: A local restaurant owner placed illegal LPG gas cylinders outside his restaurant at Dhoke Syedan which may cause any indecent at any time and needs the attention of concerned authorities, in the city.



Photo: Online

Zero chance of Pakistan's default; assures Dar

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Federal Finance and Revenue Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday while rejecting the rumors about Pakistan's going to default assured that Pakistan has resilience and will survive all challenges.

However, he stressed on joint and targeted efforts by the public and private sectors to come out of this pressing economic situation.

These words were expressed by the Finance Minister (through a video link) at the ceremony held here. The Pakistan Stock Exchange celebrated the first listing of a development REIT titled "Globe Residence REIT".



It was largely attended by capital market players, leasing businessmen and bankers. The prominent were PSX Chairperson PSX Dr. Shamsah Akhtar, its MD, Faukh H. Khan and Arif Habib.

Dar condemned that certain elements involved in dirty politics were active

in disinformation about the country's economic condition and created chaos where the people had started buying gold and dollars.

He expressed his satisfaction with the listing of another REIT at PSX. However, he observed, Pakistan could not progress much on this account

since the first REIT was listed in 2015. He referred India who had a high REIT portfolio.

He said when he took over as the Federal Finance Minister on September 28, 2022, he identified the areas with a special focus on the corporate sector, the Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan and the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

He regretted that SECP, which is the regulator of the capital market of the country, performed not satisfactorily over the last couple of years. However, he has taken certain concrete steps.

During his previous tenure, Dar added, he along with his team worked hard and brought many amendments

to the SCEP laws including its outdated Act. And, he continued, helped give a boost to the capital market of the country.

He assured Arif Habib and PSX's Managing Director Farrukh H. Khan that Commissioner SECP Abid Saeed along with his team would sit with them and work out the proposals submitted by them to the logical conclusion. He would also ask Federal Board of Revenue authorities to join and work on these proposals.

The Finance Minister thanked the business community of the country for their support to the government's policies and decisions aimed at strengthening the national economy.

Meeting reviews electricity demand in Gwadar Free Zone

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has asked the China Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd (COPHCL) to provide the exact demand of the electricity for Gwadar Free Zone and share a ten-year plan for electricity consumption by Gwadar Free Zone Company in order to establish the electricity utilization of 300 MW coal-fired Power Project at Gwadar.

The minister was chairing a meeting to review the progress of 300 MW coal-fired power project on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Chairman COPHCL Zhang Baozhong, Chairman Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Pasand Khan Buledi, and other relevant stakeholders.

The project was conceived under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2016 that would cater to the needs of some 150,000 local people by the end of 2023.

The project is aimed at improving the reliability of the local power supply which would help in gradually resolving the problems in current economic development and urban construction in the Gwadar region, which is being restricted by the shortage of power.

"The government is committed to provide electricity for Gwadar Free Zone; however, COPHCL should tell the exact demand of the electricity in order to avoid any capacity issues in the future, said the planning minister, while chairing the meeting. It is noted that all major projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, the New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China-Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project, Gwadar Free Zone, and Gwadar Port would become a shining pearl in the region.

The minister further said that the government was already working on a project of two transmission lines from Iran that would increase the supply the electricity.

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Pakistan's business community can get benefit from Uzbek Market: Uzbek Deputy PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD :Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Foreign Trade, Jamshid khodjaev said that there are excessive opportunities for trade and investment in Uzbekistan for Pakistani businessmen and investors.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that there are plenty of investment opportunities in Uzbekistan potential regions including Bokhara, Samarkand and Tashkent in which Pakistani investors can invest.

Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Foreign Trade, Jamshid khodjaev said this while addressing the gathering of Pakistan's business leaders, including the representative from different industrial sectors here.

He said that "we will provide all facilities to Pakistani investors and businessmen in Uzbekistan."

He said that cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan in the field of energy cannot be ruled out. The Deputy Minister said that "we are trying to resolve all the issues of Pakistan's investors and businessmen working with Uzbekistan."

He said that during this visit "we discussed various measures to increase bilateral trade in negotiations with the



Pakistan government."

He said that agreements have been signed to facilitate and increase bilateral and transit trade in both countries.

The Deputy PM said that the restructuring of road links for regional economic and trade integration is extremely important.

In this regard, the governments of Uzbekistan and Pakistan are cooperating fully, which will increase regional trade not only between the two countries

He said that we are seeing new avenues of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan opening in the future, which will usher in a new era of prosperity in the region.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov said there is a need to bring the business communities of Pakistan

and Uzbekistan closer so that trade between the two countries can increase.

He said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have cultural and religious compatibility which can lead to an increase in economic activities in both countries.

Meanwhile, businessmen and investors also expressed their views and gave their suggestions for increasing trade and investment in both countries.

On the Occasion, All Pakistan Textiles Mills Association (APTMA) Secretary General, Shahid Sattar said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have vast trade potential in the textile sector.

He said that there is a need for increased cooperation on cotton seed development in both countries.

Shahid Sattar said that Uzbekistan can benefit from the Generalized Schemes of Preference (GSP-Plus) agreement between Pakistan and the European Union, which will increase economic and trade activities in both countries.

On the occasion, Ahmed Jaudet Bilao from the cement sector said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan need full cooperation in the energy sector.

He said that regional economic integration is possible only through cooperation in the energy sector, which

will increase economic activities in the region.

The business leader and exporter Khalid Iqbal emphasized on the need to rationalize mutual tariff and tax regimes in Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, he said that there is a need to simplify the visa process on both sides and introduce multiple visas.

Deputy Governor Bokhara, Asadov Rizo Raupovich and Ferghana Valley, Mr Ikboljon Ergashev expressed their views and said that there are wider opportunities for investment and mutual business for Pakistani investors in these two regions.

The Deputy Governor of Bukhara said that there are vast investment opportunities in the tourism sector in Bukhara region for Pakistan's businessmen and investors.

Earlier, the Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister arrived with his delegation in Islamabad and the two sides exchanged views on further strengthening bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas and a number of bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding were also signed.

The high-level Uzbek delegation has also met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the Prime Minister's office.

PTI not serious in returning to NA: Sherry Rehman



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said that it was the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership who were not serious in returning to the National Assembly.

The minister, in a series of tweets, said that it was not the government but the PTI itself which was demonstrating non-seriousness. Accusing the government of being non-serious was contrary to the facts as it had never advised the PTI to dissolve or quit the assemblies.

Apparently referring to a state-

ment of PTI Vice President Shah Mahmood Qureshi, she said he (Qureshi) had testified that the PTI members were willing to return to Parliament and play their due role. However, it seemed that the "ego of a person" impeded them to do so.

The foreign minister (Bilawal Bhutto) represented the Federal Government and the reaction of the PTI leader to his advice [returning to the NA] reflected the party's non-seriousness, the minister added.

She wondered whether the PTI leaders would hold the government responsible for the arbitrary decisions of Imran Khan.

People suffering due to Imran Khan's wrong policies: Marriyum



Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said people were suffering due to the wrong economic policies of Imran Khan-led government which had resulted into extreme inflation and massive unemployment.

The minister, in a news statement, said Imran Khan was a "thief and foreign agent", whose four-year stint had turned a prosperous Pakistan into a ruined state. His was the worst experiment in the country's history.

The group of "incompetents and foreign agents", imposed on Pakistan in 2018, was thrown out of the Parliament in April, she added.

Marriyum alleged that Imran Khan had traded off national interests, including the Kashmir cause, in return of foreign funds, and malicious campaigns against the martyrs of army and the institutions were launched at his behest.

She said ironically Imran Khan had the audacity to blame those for economic woes who inherited him the national economy with 6.3 per cent growth rate.

The minister dared the PTI members of the National Assembly to appear before the speaker for acceptance of their resignations. It was astonishing as to why the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was not dissolving assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, she added.

PIA offers discount to passengers on Beijing-Islamabad flights

News Desk

BEIJING :Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has offered a big discount to passengers travelling on Beijing-Islamabad route with immediate effect.

The new fare from Beijing to Islamabad is now RMB 4,681 including all taxes, which will greatly facilitate those passengers who plan to travel to Pakistan to meet their families during the Chinese New Year holidays, a senior official told APP here on Wednesday.

The national flag carrier has also

announced a cut in the existing fare of Beijing-Islamabad-Beijing round trip and the new price is now RMB 12,050 including all taxes.

PIA is currently operating weekly passenger flights on Islamabad-Beijing-Islamabad and Islamabad-Chengdu-Islamabad routes on Sunday and Wednesday respectively.

In addition, PIA has also been granted approval to start weekly flights on Islamabad-Xian-Islamabad route by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and the airline is making necessary arrangements to start flights on this route.

OGRA advises careful use of gas appliances to avoid tragedies

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Wednesday advised consumers to ensure careful use of gas appliances including heaters and stoves to avoid any untoward incidents.

"Gas heaters and stoves pose serious health risks and are the main cause of many fatal incidents, so due care is needed in the use of gas appliances," OGRA spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a press statement. He said carbon monoxide was

colourless and odourless, adding "high levels of carbon monoxide in the air are very dangerous and may cause people to pass out or even die."

In the winter season, he said people should consider 'safe alternative' ways of keeping themselves warm and remain extra careful, especially while using indoor gas appliances.

Highlighting necessary precautionary measures, the spokesman suggested regular service of gas heaters, ensuring appropriate ventilation, and keeping away all flammable materials like clothes at least one meter away from the heater.

Hamdard Pakistan has reached an agreement with Gennecc Health Sciences

Bureau Report

KARACHI : Hamdard Pakistan (HP) has reached an agreement with Gennecc Health Sciences Pvt. Ltd, to manufacture some of its leading products in Gennecc's manufacturing unit. In an auspicious contract signing ceremony, held on Wednesday at Hamdard Corporate Head Office, Dr. Arshad Saleem—Chief Operating Officer—HP, termed the agreement as a milestone for the growth and development of the health sector of Pakistan. The event was attended by the Directors and senior staff of both organizations in a large number.

in society and the growth and development of the country's health sector are among the core values and objectives of HP. In line with the founder Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said's vision and in pursuit of his guidelines with untiring efforts, HP today has emerged as an industrial standard for Eastern medicine manufacturing in the country."

He also said: "To increase its operational capacity, HP actively seeks partnerships with reputed medical and technical institutions under an integrated strategy to utilize their expertise and professional capabilities. This ensures the continued upward development and growth trajectory

of the health sector in Pakistan. "Today's agreement with Gennecc Health Sciences is a testament to HP's commitment and resolute for the betterment of society," he added.

He remarked that the journey of growth was not over. HP had been proactively studying diseases and illnesses and continued to introduce new effective products and medicines. Also, there had been a concentrated effort to rebrand and refurbish Hamdard's existing product range in accordance with modern needs and preferences.

Earlier, the signing ceremony of the agreement started with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Shahryar Pasha – Head of Marketing – thanked the

distinguished guests on behalf of HP for their presence and said that HP would continue to adapt to modern health challenges.

Later after signing the agreement, Dr. Arshad Saleem presented a memento to Abdul Jabbar CEO Gennecc on behalf of HP. Since Hamdard is an environmentally conscious company, it took a novel initiative to commemorate the signing ceremony. The distinguished guests were asked to sow plants in pots, which they also watered.

These plants will be planted in one of the many gardens managed by HP. The guests highly appreciated this initiative of HP and announced they would emulate this practice.

AIOU organizes Int'l symposium on Arabic Language Day



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : A one-day International Symposium was held at Allama Iqbal Open University on World Arabic Language Day. Director, Media and Cultural Affairs, Saudi Embassy in Pakistan, Muhammad bin Saleh Al Muhammad was the chief guest. Prof. Dr. Hind Abdul Halim Mahfouz and Dr. Hina Abdul Fattah from Al-Azhar University, Egypt were among the foreign speakers. Dr. Inam ul Haque Ghazi from International Islamic University and Dr. Abdul Majeed Baghdadi, Chairman, Arabic Department AIOU were the national speakers. Dean, Faculty of Arabic, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi presided over the symposium. This symposium was organized by the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, AIOU.

Dr. Abdul Majeed Baghdadi explained the aims and objectives of the symposium. He said that the United Nations included Arabic as an international language in December 1973, and December 18 has been celebrated as the International Day for Arabic Language since 2012. Professor Dr. Hind Abdul Halim Mahfouz, Dr. Hina Abdul Fattah, and Dr. Inamul Haq Ghazi presented their research papers. Lebanese poet Jamal Ahmad Arafat presented a poem in Arabic on the theme of event. Muhammad Bin Saleh Al Muhammad reiterated to start joint program with the department of Arabic, AIOU. Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi congratulated the Arabic Department for holding a successful symposium. Highlighting the educational contribution of AIOU in Arabic and Islamic Studies, he said that we are trying to promote the Arabic language in the country.

Two-day international moot starts at NUML Rawalpindi



News Desk

RAWALPINDI : Two-Days International Conference on "Prevention Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Use Disorders: Issues and Challenges" was organized by the Department of Applied Psychology National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Rawalpindi Branch commenced here on Wednesday. Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar HI (M) (Retd) was the chief guest for the inaugural session while Vice Chancellor Rawalpindi Women University Prof. Dr. Anila Kamal, Dr. M. Zeeshan, Clinical AP in Psychiatry, Rutgers University, USA, Brig. Ammar Ali Commander North Anti-Narcotics Force and Prof. Dr. Mowadat Rana, Psychiatrist were among the keynote speakers. Pro Rector NUML Rawalpindi Brig Muhammad Ibrahim (R), Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, faculty members and a large number of students also attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest Rector NUML Major General Jaffar (R) emphasized that psychology is one of the most important subjects, and everyone must study the subject to better understand the human nature. He was of the view that it is time to break such taboos that anyone visiting a psychiatrist is mentally ill. Such people only need attention and assistance from the society to get over their problems.

He also announced that a Psychology Center will be set up in NUML Islamabad soon for the counselling of youth.

He expressed hope that the conference will cover all the aspects of substance use disorder and will come up with concrete recommendations to address these issues. He thanked all the honourable guests and hoped that this will be a great success.

Earlier, VC Rawalpindi Women University Prof. Dr. Anila Kamal spoke about "Prevalence of Knowledge About Risk Factors of HIV/AIDS Among Injecting Drug Users". Dr. M. Zeeshan talked about the "Psychological Trauma, Depersonalization and Drug Addiction. Brig Ammar Ali briefed the audience about the role of ANF in drugs control and rehabilitation and Prof. Dr. Mowadat Rana enlightened the audience about "Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation: A game played by five". At the End Rector NUML distributed shields among the keynote speakers.

PTI to clean sweep in the forthcoming elections: Zulfi Bukhari

Qazi Shoaib Khan

ATTOCK : The Central Leader of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf and candidate for NA-50 Attock Syed Zulfikar Abass Bukhari (Zulfi Bukhari) while talking to the local journalists here in Attock on Wednesday has said that PTI under the leadership of Imran Khan will also clean sweep in the forthcoming elections and run the country with full majority.

Mr. Zulfi said that PDM has dragged the country into a severe political-economic crisis and only Imran Khan will make political stability due to his revolutionary approach. He said that living standard of masses is being upgraded in the changing socio-political scenario of the country.

Responding different questions of the media persons Mr. Zulfi Bukhari said that all out efforts are being made for the development of his constituency. He said various development schemes of millions of rupees have been got approved and tenders were also floated in the national press to complete all these development schemes within the stipulated period.

He said that work orders for development schemes of Rs.114 million include metaling of streets, pathways and construction of roads already been issued. He while giving details of the schemes said that six schemes in village Akhlaas, 04 schemes in Nara Pind sultani, 02 schemes in Qutbal, 05 schemes in Sharae Saadullah, six schemes in Dharek, 03 schemes in Tarap, 07 schemes in Bahatar one scheme in Khunda and 14 schemes will be completed in Jhang. Zulfi Bukhari said that a large number of people will be benefitted after completion of these schemes.

He said, similar schemes will be completed in Langar, Makhad, Malowali, Kharpa, Mithial, Jalwal, Maira Sharif, Jaba and Domel, he added.



ISLAMABAD RIDERS marked the club's second anniversary with more than 100 motorcyclists from twin cities gathered to promote the sport of motorcycling and peace

Protest

FAISALABAD: Owners of flours Querns shouting slogans during a protest in favor of their demands at District Council chowk in the city.



Photo: Online

IIUI President chairs high profile meeting on security at university

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high profile meeting to review the overall security measure at International Islamic University (IIU) keeping in view the prevailing security situation in Islamabad was held here at the new campus on Wednesday that was chaired by the university President Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi.



The IIU President, who was briefed about the security measures, directed in the meeting that security within the campuses be further beefed up and no loopholes be left. He advised that no stone should be left unturned to make the university safe. He desired that there must be strict vigilance observed across the boundary line and strict checks must be maintained at the entry gates to

avoid intrusion of any irrelevant person. He also advised the university officials and the students to cooperate with security personnel and contribute in maintaining peace at the campuses.

The meeting was also attended by Vice President female campus Prof. Dr. Samina Malik, Vice President Research and Enterprise Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, Vice President Academics Prof. Dr. Ayaz Afsar, Security

Advisor, Provosts, Student Advisors, Directors, officials of P&PR, medical office and other relevant officials.

In the light of the directions of the worthy President, the house decided that it will be mandatory for all across the university to wear the university cards and no official or the students shall be allowed to use transport or enter into university without proving his/ her identity through valid cards.

The house was also briefed that security has been beefed up at the hostels as well and turnstile gates have been activated. It was informed that the students who are not in the data of turnstile are only allowed to enter into hostel premises by showing valid and original university cards. The security office was directed to increase surveillance and petrol across the campuses. The meeting also discussed immediate infrastructural requirements pertaining to the security measures and vowed that all such initiatives shall be taken within a limited time. It was agreed that zero tolerance policy shall be observed to the illegal hoste students and actions shall be taken if any negligence is spotted in the matters pertaining to security.

Passengers should not be served sugary drinks during the journey

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Sugary drinks are a threat to our public health and economy. NCDs especially obesity and diabetes are increasing at an alarming rate in Pakistan. Pakistan has the third highest burden of diabetes worldwide with 33 million people living with diabetes and the rate at which diabetes is increasing Pakistan is the world's number 1 diabetes developing country.

Airlines are often serving sugary drinks to their passengers during flight which pose a health risk to the passengers. PANAH has written letters to the heads of all airlines in Pakistan asking them not to serve sugary drinks to their passengers during flights and instead provide them with water and other healthy foods.

Pakistan's largest tech conference and expo FUTURE FEST start from January 6

Bureau Report

LAHORE : Pakistan's largest tech conference and expo, Future Fest, will take place at Expo Lahore from 6th to 8th January 2023.

This year, the conference is hosting a historic delegation of Saudi startups & venture capitalists who will meet Pakistani companies and key stakeholders to explore investments, partnerships, acquisitions, and talent recruitment. This delegation and interest in Pakistan's future indeed comes at an important time for Pakistan's economy.

"The Saudi tech ecosystem is growing very fast. In Pakistan we have the talent and startups that can support this growth. At Future Fest, we are proud to be the catalyst for this partnership and to provide a platform

form for greater collaboration and growth and indeed a new dimension to what is an already historic relationship between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," said Arzish Azam, CEO of Future Fest / Ejad Labs

The delegation of Saudi startups and venture capitalists includes Unifonic, Noon, Salasa, Mozn, Qoyod, [atm], Nana, AZM, Elm, AlGooru, Hala, Salla, Moyasar, Claspera, Squadia, Nama Ventures, Merak Capital, Misk Foundation, Tracking.me, Diggipacks, Khwarizmi Ventures, Derayah Financial, ILSA Interactive, Takadao and senior representatives from Digital Enablement Partner, Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) and Invest Saudi.

The provincial govern-

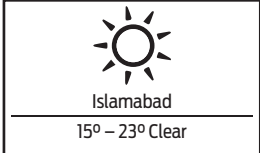


ment of Punjab collaborated with Future Fest for providing a secure venue for the 3 day event. Earlier, Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) became the official partner for Future Fest 2023 through an MOU between PITB DG e-Gov Sajid Latif and CEO Ejad Labs Arzish Azam. Punjab IT Minister Dr. Arslan Khalid, PITB Director Communication &

Coordination (C&C) Wing and PITB Joint Director Freelancing Wing Ahmad Islam Syan were also present at the occasion. Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Home, Prison, and Information, Omar Sarfraz Cheema and Minister for Industries, Commerce, and Investment Mian Aslam Iqbal have also assured their support for Future Fest 2023.

"With more than 95 million students and a high appetite for private tutoring, Pakistan is becoming a desirable hub for global EdTech companies, and we're excited to explore expansion opportunities there through our participation at Future Fest 2023," said Khalid Abou Kassem, Founder & CEO at AlGooru, a leading EdTech startup.

Dedicated to using technology to pave the way for the future of Pakistan, Future Fest 2023 is a 3-day event, which will bring together leaders from more than 50 industries to foster discussion on the future of life itself. Entrepreneurs, decision makers, policymakers, thought leaders, investors, and innovators will discuss the most important aspects of current times and how technology can play



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:42 am
Zohr	12:09 pm
Asr	3:29 pm
Maghrib	5:07 pm
Isha	6:36 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

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PIA Flight Info	114
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CAA	9281092

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MH	561116
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Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
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DEPARTMENTS

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CDA	9208301-04
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RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

Prominent political and social figures of swabi are joining PTI Asad Qaiser



Correspondent

SWABI : Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that prominent political and social figures of swabi are joining PTI. He said that our policy is clear that we are partner in peace with everyone and we are not partner in war with anyone. He expressed these views while addressing the joining ceremony of former MPA candidate khaznada Zia Ullah khan and son of former provincial minister Khaznada Jahangir khan at Swabi. The former Speaker said that elected government was overthrown through foreign conspiracy. He said that PDM used to say that inflammation is core problem of the country but now they are silent over historical inflammation. He further said that people of Pakistan will hold those accountable in upcoming elections who destroyed the economy of the country. He said that foreign exchange reserve of country touched lowest level of last nine years figure.

President calls for environment-friendly & affordable housing for the people

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the need to adopt environment-friendly, energy-efficient and cost-effective construction and housing practices to provide quality accommodation for the Pakistani people. He added that promoting vertical construction in the country could help provide cost-effective and affordable housing to the poor and lower middle class, besides overcoming the shortage of space in urban areas, preventing unplanned growth of cities, and saving agricultural land from encroachment.

The President expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the 2nd Pakistan International Property Expo and Convention, organized by the Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry (PAEI), at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday. Founder Chairman of PAEI, Mr Khurshid Barlas, Senior Vice President Ammad Rasheed, Fahad Barlas, President RCCI Saqib Rafiq, Former President RCCI

Nasir Mirza, Ambassador of Morocco H.E Mr Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of State of Palestine H.E Ahmad Rabaie, members of the housing and construction sector, businessmen, and government officials attended the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, the President said that the government had been focusing on the development of the construction and housing sector as it played an important role in creating jobs, advancing growth and economic development, and fulfilling the growing housing demands of the rising population of the country.

The President called for discouraging the tendency to make unplanned housing schemes lacking basic civic amenities at all levels, adding that no housing society should be approved until it met all the codal formalities, provided civic amenities, was environment friendly and catered to the needs of the lower segments of society. He also called for promoting aesthetically pleasing construction in the country, besides adopting green building



practices, including the promotion of solarization and vegetation on unutilized roofs in urban areas.

The President said that no society could rise until it lifted its vulnerable and poorer segments of the society out of the poverty trap. He highlighted the need for the public and private sectors to join hands to bring innovative and out-of-the-box solutions for the rehabilitation of the residents of Katchi Abadis and resolving their issues. He stated that Katchi Abadis suffered from a lack of civic amenities and were inhabitable, adding that inclusive and poor-friendly develop-

ment should be promoted in the country so that no one was left behind and the fruits of development reached all segments of the population.

The President said that every eligible citizen of the country should responsibly take part in politics, and intelligently vote for electing capable, efficient and effective representatives. He said that leadership should be capable of taking the right decisions at the right time, fighting against corruption and corrupt practices, and expediting the decision-making process via the state machinery to lift people out of poverty.

The President also urged the members of the business community to take proactive and practical steps to increase the representation and participation of women in different sectors of the economy, particularly in the housing and construction sector. He called for providing a conducive, women-friendly and harassment-free environment in the workplaces and called for including women in different trades. He cited the example of Hazrat Khadija (RA) who was an ideal Muslim woman and used to actively participate in business and trade activities.

The President appreciated the management of PAEI for holding exhibitions, organizing seminars and conferences in all parts of Pakistan, in the region and around the world to promote "Brand Pakistan", benchmark best practices in different sectors, create joint ventures with the world leaders in different sectors, and promoting trade and investment in different fields.

Addressing the ceremony, the Founder Chairman of PAEI,

Mr Khurshid Barlas, highlighted that PAEI had been making efforts to promote "Brand Pakistan", improve Pakistan's image, enhance trade and investment in the country. He said that PAEI had organized almost 500 different events, conferences, seminars, and expos nationally, regionally, and internationally to promote different sectors of Pakistan's economy, including gemstones, jewellery, sports, and pharmaceuticals. He added that Pakistan needed investment, foreign exchange, and economic activity and the business community of the country was playing an important role in this regard. He also called for regulating the construction sector of the country, developing linkages, and imparting training to people associated with the construction and housing sector. SVP PAEI Ammad Rasheed and Fahad Barlas also delivered the speech.

Earlier, the President distributed shields among the representatives of companies in the housing and construction sector for their exceptional performance.

COMSATS Projects and Careers Expo inaugurated in Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Over 150 Companies participated in the COMSATS' Projects and Career Expo organized by the Career Development Center, COMSATS University Islamabad, today in the Islamabad Campus. Prof. Dr. Muhammad T. Afzal, Rector, COMSATS University Islamabad along with Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation and Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Advisor (Academics and NAHE), Higher Education Commission inaugurated the Projects and Careers Expo.

While talking to media, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tabasum Afzal, Rector, COMSATS University said that COMSATS' students receive extensive training in a variety of industry relevant skill sets and are exposed to industry problems as part of their final year research projects to help them succeed in their careers.

Internships and apprenticeships during their degrees enables students to critically analyze situations in the industry and should be made an integral part of the curriculum. COMSATS University Islamabad has created opportunities for internships in different sectors to help its students find the right career path for themselves.



Companies participating in the expo belonged to the sectors of Architecture and Design, Banking, Development NGOs, IT/Software firms, Construction, Health Care, Hospitality, Manufacturing, Advertising and Media, Oil and Gas, Technology, Telecom and Textile.

Through this biannual event, final year students interact with industry experts from various sectors. Students from faculties of Science, Architecture, Engi-

neering, Information Science and Technology as well as Business Administration presented the results of their final year research projects. Each year several companies and aspiring startups participate in this expo to recruit promising young talents for their ranks.

CUI takes pride in the fact that each year hundreds of students are offered job on campus right before their graduation.

Prof. Afzal along with Dr. Baig and Engr. Chouhan along with senior faculty members visited several stalls and took keen interest in the students' research projects displayed in the Expo. The Guests interacted with students, faculty members as well as the participating companies.

Representatives from local companies expressed optimism and confidence in the prospective students and said that such events must be organized frequently in all universities.

Launch of BOP e-Business Qarza Scheme

News Desk

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) held the launch Ceremony of BOP e-Business Qarza for SMEs today at BOP's Head office, in Lahore. BOP e-Business Qarza is an End to End (E2E) Digital Lending Program for Existing BOP customers. Via this digital product, BOP aims to offer a Revolving Collateral Free credit facility up to Rs. 3,500,000/- to its customers.

This program is based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and decision is made on the basis of a Digital Scorecard. This program is in line with the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) vision to use relevant cash flow estimation techniques and other proxies to assess repayment capacity of SME Borrow-



ers. This unique proposition is an addition to our SME Products Suite, which has not only set new industry standards but is also expected to help our small enterprises to meet their immediate financial needs without any hassle.

Mr. Zafar Masud, Presi-

dent & CEO of BOP emphasized that the banking industry should come forward with products focusing on ease of finance for SMEs who usually suffer a lot on this front. He added that such initiatives would help lead towards socio economic uplift of SMEs particularly our small enterprises.

He also said that BOP has recently won the PBA's prestigious award for "The Best Bank for Small and Medium Businesses" which is a result of our bank's overall SME strategy and effort towards Financial Inclusion by way of efficient utilization of modern day tools. He appreciated the team for their efforts and making BOP a lead bank in offering such Digital Program. He also added that BOP fully committed and shall actively contribute towards achievement of the desired results.

Other senior members of management were also present on the occasion and extended their heartfelt congratulations to the Team on achieving this important milestone.

The marriage ceremony of Barrister Hamza Amjad Malik held



Arif Chaudhary

MANCHESTER: The marriage ceremony of Barrister Hamza Amjad Malik, the son of British lawyer Amjad Malik, was held in Manchester, while the Dawat Walima ceremony was held at Sarina Hotel Faisalabad. In which relatives, political and social figures, Pakistani A large number of superstar cricketers, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz officials and friends attended including Inzamam-ul-Haq, Mushtaq Ahmed, General Secretary of International Affairs and Overseas Pakistanis MNA Noorul Hasan Tanveer, former MNA Chaudhry Talal, Brigadier Arshad Malik, Legal Adviser to the UK Chaudhry Ensan, Pakistan Muslim League-Nun President Turki Mir Abrar, Britain and European businessman Khalid Chaudhry, Pakistan Muslim League-Nun Saudi Arabia Central President Sheikh Saeed Ahmed's son Sheikh Saad, Pakistan Muslim League-Nun President Hong Kong, Pakistan Muslim League Noon President Muscat Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Fazl, Senior Vice President Muscat Maqsood Ahmed Butt, Senior Vice President Dubai Shaoukat Mahmood Butt, Guardian Highness of Saudi Arabia Rana Muhammad Ashraf, General Secretary of Saudi Arabia Malik Manzoor Hussain Awan, Businessman Wanted Butt, Al-Riyadh President of Saudi Arabia Sultan Ali, Nasir Butt, Umi R. Ahmad Butt Advocate and others participated. At the end of the ceremony, the host Barrister Amjad Malik thanked all the distinguished guests on behalf of himself and his family for attending the Dawat Walima ceremony of his son Barrister Hamza Amjad Malik. And Pakistani superstar cricketer Mushtaq Ahmed gave a brief speech and superstar hero Inzamam-ul-Haq prayed -

Two-day training workshop for media persons begins in IUB



News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Information Centre (PIC) on Wednesday organized a two-day training workshop for media persons on disaster management at Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB), under the auspices of Press Information Department Lahore.

Around 40 journalists from print, electronic and social media were imparted training on disaster management reporting in flood-affected areas, says a news release.

PID Lahore Director General Shafaqat Abbas, Vice Chancellor Bahawalpur University Azhar Mehboob attended the workshop as chief guests.

Addressing on the occasion, the DG and VC extended special gratitude to the Ministry of Information and the PID for organizing the workshop in Bahawalpur.

They said that such training workshop would enhance the professional capacity of journalists to enable them in performing their duties effectively.

Coordinator Muhammad Owais, DEO Muhammad Hashim and Muhammad Hussain from PIC, faculty members of Mass Communication department, regional police officer and other dignitaries also attended the workshop.

The journalists expressed pleasure over organizing training workshop for them in South Punjab and expressed special thanks to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, and PID in this regard.

Ismail Industries extends relationship with SAP for digital transformation

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Ismail Industries Limited, one of the major Pakistani confectionery and snack food manufacturers, has signed up a roadmap contract with SAP for the digitization of business functions across all its operations.

SAP has successfully provided a holistic solution to one of the largest manufacturers in Pakistan to improve its core system and move to the cloud.

Ismail industries are a family-run business and required a massive investment to meet the challenges of complete digitization.

Although Ismail Industries is an existing customer of SAP ERP Central Component (ECC), this new agreement intends to assist Ismail Industries in their expansion plans to reach global markets in the UAE and Europe. The transformation will provide ease in terms of data gathering and real-time



reporting in six diverse businesses that Ismail Industries operates.

SAP has provided various solutions, enabling the manufacturer to move to strategic procurement and improve its supply chain and human capital management. These solutions include RISE with SAP for core operations, SAP Ariba, Digital Board Room Solu-

tions, SAP Analytics Cloud, Success Factors and Integrated Business Planning.

"This digital transformation initiative will take Ismail Industries to new heights. As leaders in our industry, we have been relying on the SAP software for quite some time, and now we look forward to adopting SAP's latest technologies to be able to take the quality products, that our customers have come to love and trust, to other international markets" said Hamid Ismail, Director Ismail Industries Ltd, CEO Biscinni, SnackCity, and Ismail Global Trading LLC.

Elaborating on the same, Saquib Ahmad, Country Managing Director, SAP Pakistan, said, "We are proud to be selected as the digital transformation partner for Ismail Industries in order to help them with their strategic vision, daily operations as well as their expansion plans. This builds on over a decade of us being providers of their enterprise resource planning software"

SAP Pakistan has strengthened its customer relationship by providing end-to-end solution with seamless execution. Digital transformation stands at SAP's core, and fundamentally changes how businesses operate and deliver value to the customers.

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 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Role of government in higher education



Dr. Atiq ur Rehman

After 2018, discouraging news about the financial position of public universities has become a regular occurrence. Historical and reputable universities like Karachi University, University of Peshawar, and University of Punjab have suffered financial crises in recent times and the list of universities suffering from crisis is getting longer day by day. It is expected that some public sector universities may fail to maintain their existence. In such a situation, the role of the government appears to be that of a silent bystander, who has nothing to do with the whole scenario. But the government is actually not a bystander, its policies are actually causing more problems for the universities.

When the government is continuously carrying the burden of white elephants like Steel Mills and PIA, why are the

universities being neglected? The dominant character behind this detachment is a phrase, which our policy makers have heard from the western world; That "higher education is not included in the basic human rights, therefore their official patronage is not necessary". Unfortunately, some policy-making institutions are engaged in advocacy of this thinking. Now, the question arises that the government spends hundreds of billions annually to keep institutions like PIA or steel mills alive, what basic human rights are being achieved by this investment? Providing government jobs to everyone does not fall under the category of basic human rights, so why does the government create hundreds of departments and spend hundreds of billions on them? Because it is necessary to do this for the execution of various affairs of the government. Similarly, higher education is not included in the fundamental rights, but higher education deserves full attention for carrying out many government functions.

The Government has taken the meaning of the phrase quite contrary to its internationally recognized meanings. The exclusion of higher education from the list of fundamental rights means that the government is

not bound to incur unnecessary expenses on people of all intellectual levels. However, the provision of higher education for those who are capable is sponsored by all the governments of the world. Developed countries invite hundreds of people from Pakistan by giving them expensive scholarships. Why are these governments sponsoring higher education despite excluding higher education from basic human rights? Higher education is actually an investment that helps achieve many of the most important goals of any government.

Look around you, you will see hundreds of people who have been below the poverty line, but in the past few years, they have progressed into the middle or privileged class. If you explore the reasons enabling them to improve their economic condition, you will find that about 40% of them improved due to higher education, 35% due to foreign jobs and the remaining 15% for the other reasons. These people, who were among the poorest people a few years ago, were able to get education because the government had set up institutions where education was subsidized.

Eradication of poverty, attainment of decent employment, and social development

are all included in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Government of Pakistan has adopted these goals as National Development Goals. Therefore, higher education, which is not itself recognized as a fundamental right, is a very important government responsibility because of its contribution to the implementation of various national goals and government affairs.

Pakistan's economy today survives on the basis of foreign remittances and in the current era, obtaining remittances is not possible without highly educated manpower. Not only this, but many other government affairs are impossible without educated people. NADRA is among the best performing institutions of the country, and a pride for the nation. Is it possible to have an institution like NADRA without highly educated manpower?

The currently prevailing higher education policy meant that higher education should be restricted only to those who could afford to pay for it. The first result of this policy will be that the role of education in reducing the class differential will be completely lost. On the contrary, the privileged class will get more privileges and cause more inequality. It will become impossible for common people to find

employment abroad, and this will reduce the supply of remittances. The supply of manpower for industries and other technical matters will decrease, which will further increase the economic difficulties of the country.

On the one hand, the government claims that since higher education is not included in the fundamental rights, and there is no need to patronize it, on the other hand, by announcing new universities every week, the government is increasing the difficulties of the existing universities and the list of candidates for aid is being extended. At least, the government must prepare the need assessment and economic feasibility before announcing the new universities. Universities which are not patronized by the government and an adequate number of students are not available in the market, what will be the benefit of establishing such universities?

There is a need for the government to understand its responsibilities and pay full attention to the patronage of higher education and to eliminate the negative interference in higher education.

Kashmir Institute of Economics, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Agri-loans worth Rs 663.9 bln released

Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema on Wednesday said agriculture loans worth Rs 663.9 billion were released during the month of November 2022 and it was expected that the loan disbursement would reach Rs 800 billion by the end of the current month (December).

Addressing a press conference, he said that the agriculture loan was the component of Prime Minister Kissan Package of Rs 1,819 billion to revive Pakistan's agriculture sector, particularly restoring the agriculture of areas affected by catastrophic floods during monsoon season.

He said the package comprised 15 main points to restore and revive the agriculture sector in the country in order to ensure food safety and security in the country, adding that significant progress has been made in all the points.

The prime minister on October 31, 2022, he added, had announced the package and the cabinet accorded the approval to this effect on November 17. Prime Minister was taking a keen interest and holding a fortnightly meeting in order to review the progress on the package, said Cheema.

The minister said that under the special directives of the prime minister, the value of PIU was enhanced from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000, adding that Finance Division has already notified that it would equally benefit the large and small-scale growers.

Besides, he said, a summary was also moved to allow the import of 3 years used tractors to facilitate the local growers and introduce mechanized agriculture in the country. The ministry was also negotiating with private banks to provide financing facilities for the import of used tractors, he added.

The minister further informed that the electricity tariff for farmers was reduced and the government was also working to chalk out a mechanism to provide affordable electricity to agricultural tube wells and it was intended to convert electric tube wells to solar energy. "This would help in reducing the cost of inputs and produce competitive agricultural goods."

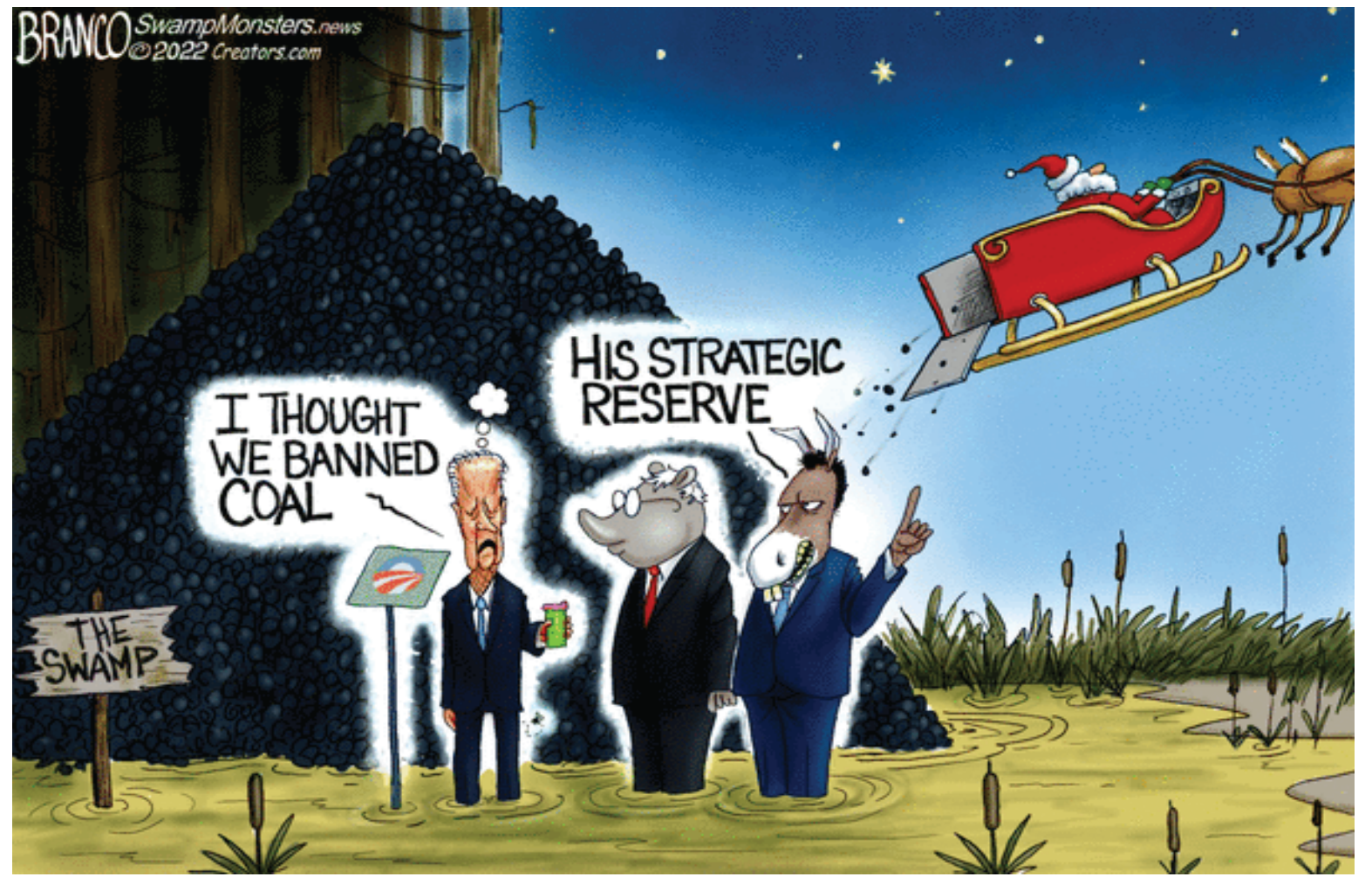
Cheema said due to hard work and efforts of the government, bumper wheat output was expected during the current season as crop sowing was completed over 91 percent of set targets for the 2022-23 season, adding that grains sowing was completed over 21 million acres as against the set targets of 22.85 million acres.

To a question, the minister said that after the constitutional amendment, agriculture was a provincial subject and the federal government was responsible to provide policy guidelines. The federal government was determined to provide all possible support for the provinces, he added.

He said that the wheat support price was fixed at Rs 3,000 per 40 kg by the provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, however, Sindh intended to fix it at Rs 4,000 and the Sindh chief minister was requested to review it in order to fix a uniform price to discourage market manipulation and protect all stakeholders.

About the import of GMO soybean seeds, the minister said about 75 percent of poultry feed was manufactured with maize, which was available in sufficient quantity, adding that there were three shipments on the port out of which two were off-loaded and one was in process of inspection.

He said that off-loaded shipments would be re-exported and the remaining one shipment would also be returned if the test declared positive, adding that the ministries of climate change and law also worked on it and the cabinet accorded approval.



Pensioners' merit and injustice



Javed Ullah Raja

Human rights and solidarity days are celebrated all over the world for the purpose that if human rights are being violated, it should be removed. Human rights organizations play an important role in this regard in their respective areas. They pay and decide the future course of action keeping their performance in front. But it is very sad to say that, why are such organizations here silent in protecting the legitimate rights and that too of the elderly citizens? How disturbing that the retired employees of a local bank are being pushed for decades to get their right. The old sick elderly and their widows have been struggling for years to get their rights. Lawyers and courts were resorted to, which is a cause of great difficulty and trouble for the retired class in this era of inflation.

The retired employees of bank and their families salute the high courts of the country, the High Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan, who have given

decisions in favor of the retired employees of the bank by issuing decisions of justice and fairness. The High Court of Peshawar on 22 January 2015, and on 17 January 2020, the Supreme Court of Pakistan also decided in favor of the retired employees of Allied Bank. In February 2018, the Chief Justice of Pakistan decided to pay a minimum pension of 8 thousand rupees. But till today, the bank administration is not implementing any decision and is bothering the retired senior employees of the bank and their families by unnecessarily delaying the decisions of the high courts of the country. Currently, pensioners across Pakistan are suffering from immense problems due to record-breaking inflation and the rapid increase in the prices of life-saving medicines. It is a bitter reality that it is becoming not difficult but impossible for these elderly people to pull the car of life in the current meager pension. But till date no government has done practically anything to solve the problems of the pensioners. While pensioners live only on this limited pension. Pensioners are "valuable capital" as well as "valuable voters", but till date no political party has paid attention to them. The pensioners are living day and night on a small amount of money, but they are not hearing anything about inflation.

It is a pity that even the human rights organizations have never raised their voices in favor of the retired pensioners from various

departments. In such a tense situation, senior citizens and senior pensioners should appeal to whom? Whose door should they knock on? When the decisions of the high courts are not implemented, then where should we go? There is a need. It should have been that the institutions and the government would have automatically paid attention to the problems. Where various pensioners individually or collectively have filed cases in the High Courts for their legitimate rights which have been pending for a long time, even if a case is decided in favor of the employees, the concerned administration may file review appeals. In this way, the problems of pensioners have been going unsolved for many years. Like other institutions, an example of this is the retired employees of Allied Bank, who were ordered by the Peshawar High Court in January 2017 and by the Supreme Court of Pakistan on January 17, 2020. Decisions were given in favor of retired employees from the bank. It was said that from the bank Retired employees should be paid pension and dues based on their last salary drawn. Because the bank has not given pension and dues based on the last salary, the bank is not looking at all these decisions and it is not being implemented by the government.

It is to be noted that the bank has given pension and dues as per its own circular as on 30th June 2002 instead of, last pay drawn. It is a pity that thousands

of bank pensioners and widow family pensioners have become dear to Allah while waiting for their legitimate rights. No one has paid attention to the violation of rights, injustice and abuse. The clear decisions of the Court of Pakistan which are in favor of our senior citizens should be implemented by the government. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Finance Minister and the Chief Justice of Pakistan are strongly requested to take notice and order the owners of Allied Bank and other authorities to comply with the judgment of Peshawar High Court dated 22/01/2018 which Supreme Court of Pakistan has confirmed on 17/01/2020 that on the decision in the implementation, the retired employees from Allied Bank should be paid immediately according to their last basic salary. Keeping all these facts in front, it is hoped that the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Supreme Court of Pakistan, State Bank of Pakistan, President of Pakistan, take the prayers of thousands of families by issuing orders for immediate implementation from the Ombudsman.

Bank Retired Employees and pensioners also request that: Please highlight the injustice done to us in electronic and print media and raise loud voice for the senior citizens. Our efforts seem to be failing to attract the attention of the masses as the owners do not allow this commercially harmful practice.

Pakistan's energy sector needs up to \$155 bn investment until 2030: Report - Part II

Spokesman Report

Speaking on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Grandi said that the UN refugee agency had born witness "to the ugly reality, that some Black and Brown people fleeing Ukraine - and other wars and conflicts around the world - have not received the same treatment as Ukrainian refugees".

Grandi's concerns were echoed, in July, by Gonzalez Morales, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. Mr. Morales alleged that there was a double standard in the way that refugees are treated in Poland and Belarus, particularly when it comes to people of African descent, and other racial and ethnic minorities.

In Ethiopia, millions remain displaced due to the armed conflict in the Tigray region, which began on 3 November 2020 between Ethiopian national forces, Eritrean troops, Amhara forces and other militias on one side, and forces loyal to the Tigrayan People's Liberation front on the other.

By the end of this year, a fragile internationally-brokered truce seemed to be holding with aid returning to embattled northern regions inaccessible for months, along with many returning home to rebuild their shattered lives.

Back in January, the UN refugee agency issued the stark warning that, due to deteriorating conditions, refugees in the region were struggling to get enough food, medicine, and clean water, and risked death unless the situation improved.

"The desperate situation in these camps is a stark example of the impact of the lack of access and supplies affecting millions of displaced persons and other civilians throughout the region," said UNHCR spokesperson Boris Chesirkov.

Refugees also found themselves under direct attack: in February, for example, thousands of Eritreans were

forced to flee a camp in the Afar region, after armed men stormed in, stealing belongings and killing residents.

By August, UN agencies put out an urgent appeal for funding to help more than 750,000 people seeking refuge in Ethiopia.

The World Food Programme warned that, unless it received the funding, many refugees would have nothing to eat. The number of people who died or went missing trying to reach Europe by boat doubled between 2022 and 2021, to more than 3,000. This grim statistic was released by the UNHCR in April.

"Most of the sea crossings took place in packed, unseaworthy, inflatable boats many of which capsized or were deflated leading to loss of life," UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo told journalists at a regular press briefing in Geneva.

This did not deter many from putting themselves at considerable risk, by trying a sea crossing. In just one attempt, in March, at least 70 migrants were reported dead or missing off the coast of Libya, the departure point for many crossings.

In August, when a boat sank off the Greek island of Karpathos in August, there were dozens of reported deaths, and in September, more than 70 bodies were recovered following a shipwreck off the coast of Syria. Amid the tragedy and difficulties faced by so many, there was at least one ray of light, reported in December.

UNHCR declared that governments around the world had pledged some \$1.13 billion, a record amount, to provide a lifeline to people displaced by war, violence, and human rights violations.

"As a result of conflict, the climate emergency, and other crises, displaced people around the world face unprecedented needs," said Grandi. "Fortunately, UNHCR's generous donors continue to support them during these dire days, creating hope for a brighter future."

Concluded

UAE's first NH Collection hotel to open on Palm Jumeirah in February

News Desk

DUBAI : UAE-headquartered upscale real estate developer, Seven Tides, has confirmed that the Emirates' first NH Collection hotel will open its doors to the public in February 2023.

NH Collection Dubai The Palm is a 533-key property located on Seven Tides' Seven Palm development - a two-tower complex that overlooks the lagoon of Dubai's world-famous Palm Jumeirah.

Operated by Minor Hotels and adjacent to Seven Palm Residences, the tower housing NH Collection Dubai The Palm will offer a diverse range of high-end accommodation, amenities and food and beverage venues to guests, residents and visitors.

Abdulla Bin Sulayem, CEO

of Seven Tides, said: "This project will deliver exceptional guest experiences, including spectacular views of the Arabian Gulf and the Dubai skyline, as well as access to landmarks and attractions across our emirate and beyond. We are confident this complex will add significant value to Dubai's thriving real estate landscape.

"NH Collection Dubai The Palm will feature an extensive range of premium facilities, including our 45-metre rooftop infinity pool, a fully-equipped fitness centre, a kids' club, an NH Collection Spa and much more", added Bin Sulayem.

The hotel includes 227 guest rooms and suites as well as 306 studios and apartments. Guests will be able to choose from 11



room categories, and those who opt for the destination's top-end accommodation will also gain

exclusive access to the NH Collection Premium Lounge.

All rooms will feature NH Collection 'Sleep Better' mattresses, complete tea and coffee sets, rain-effect showers and LED TVs. The property's location offers direct access to the beach, downtown Dubai and Dubai Marina. Dubai International Airport is also located 30 minutes away, with private transfers available to attendees.

NH Collection Dubai The Palm includes five dining venues, serving up everything from haute cuisine to healthy, post-gym bites. Maiora will offer an extensive range of dishes served all day. Te-Lounge will provide light refreshments and healthy snacks. Seven Sports Bar will be a more informal setting, offering classic

snacks and drinks. Revo Café will serve creative and healthy dishes, and SEEN will be a modern rooftop venue.

For those looking to introduce a little luxury to their events, the hotel also includes five airy spaces replete with the latest technology and equipped to cater to gatherings of up to 45 people, making it the perfect venue for business meetings, conferences, celebrations and more.

Bin Sulayem commented: "The best way for people to learn about NH Collection Dubai The Palm is to experience it first-hand. With our dedicated team ready and waiting to exceed the expectations of our guests and visitors, we cannot wait to start welcoming people through our doors from February onwards."

PCJCCI received Pak-China Friendship Award 2022

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Zhao Shiren, Consul General China presented Pakistan China Friendship Award 2022 to Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) and Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary PCJCCI received the award today at a ceremony held at Royal Palm. Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren appreciated the working of the PCJCCI (Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry) related to regional connectivity and bilateral-trade and declared it as one of the best chambers working in Pakistan. He also praised various initiatives of the PCJCCI which includes; Pak China Knowledge Portal, China-Way magazine, Chinese language courses and Pak-China Technology Gateway. Mr Zhao Shiren said, Pakistan is the owner of all the CPEC projects and we are here to facilitate them in



if we work with unity and harmony. So here, I will raise my motto; "Let's work together

all aspects. The trade, investment, business between two nations could be much better; let's grow together". Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General thanked Mr. Zhao Shiren for honoring PCJCCI with such prestigious award he also said that Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry was resolute to serve as a model chamber and a vibrant platform for promoting mutual investment and friendship between Pak-China. Our objective is to adopt an innovative stratagem to promote trade and development not only between Pakistan and China, but also over the entire region in order to ensure future stability, security and prosperity for all of us. He added China had emerged as second largest economy of the world and international experts were envisaging a far bigger role for China on the economic horizon of the world. The way China managed the global financial crisis was commendable and an example of hard work for all of us.

Sindh Sabha protest for the freedom of missing persons, slogans raised

Azad Baloch

DADU: Nationalist Party Sindh Sabha President Sindh Inam, Eng. Rafiq Laghari, social worker Zamir Korejo, Shabir Laghari, Dewan Sindh and others led by protesting in front of Dadu Press Club on the 12th day for the freedom of the missing youth Sathi Asghar Jamali and other missing persons and protesters raised slogans for the freedom of the missing persons.

On this occasion, Sindh Inam President Sindh Sabha said that for a long time innocent Sindh youths have been missing without any crime and returned as dead bodies.

He said that the innocent missing workers should be freed. If our youths have committed any crime, then they should be produced in the courts and prosecuted according to the constitution and law of the country.



SECP issues digital lending standards

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), taking notice of rising concerns involving mis-selling, breach of data privacy, and coercive recovery practices of licensed digital lending companies, has issued directive to safeguard public interest and ensure fair treatment of borrowers in digital lending ecosystem. The circular can be accessed from SECP website.

Through Circular No. 15, SECP has issued digital lending standards applicable on

Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) undertaking lending activities through digital channels / mobile applications (Apps). The requirements stipulate minimum mandatory disclosures and provision of Key Fact Statement (KFS), before loan disbursement to the borrower. These include, loan amount approved, annual percentage rates, tenor of loan, installments/lumpsum payment amounts with date(s), and all fee and charges.

To ensure transparency and ease of understanding, the App shall display the summary of KFS through a video/audio, screen shot

and email/SMS in both English and Urdu languages. Any fee not included in KFS will not be charged to the borrower. To discourage non-licensed digital lenders, the licensed digital lender shall be required to disclose its full corporate name and licensing status on its lending platform(s)/App(s), and ensure that any advertisement and publication shall be fair and not contain misleading information. In addition, SECP has also specified a comprehensive grievance redressal mechanism over and above the current NBFC grievance redressal framework.

Wrong Person for the Right Job

Govt aims to regulate higher education through typical bureaucracy

Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: This is a unique quality of governments in Pakistan to dig the pit of glitches for organizations and individuals who perform amicably. Perhaps ruling elites' psyche circles around all odds to keep the efforts and energy engaged in making all rights into wrongs. Following the same spirit, the government is intended to amend the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Ordinance, 2002 by slashing all the powers of HEC to run its business through a federal secretary. The proposed amendments are a 'recipe of disaster' by surrendering the autonomy of a well-performing organization before the typical bureaucracy of Pakistan.

A candid review of the amendments' draft reveals that Govt wants to introduce amendments to the existing Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002 in the name of improvement and promotion of higher education, research, and development while faculty all proposals leading to empower the bureaucracy rather education, research, and development. The proposed changes suggest adding a clause (n) referring to word "Ministry" in Section 2 of HEC Ordinance 2002 where all definitions are noted for the inclusion of concerned ministry. This amendment (if implemented) would give legal rights to the Federal Ministry of Education & Professional Training to supersede the Commission's authorities in its functioning.

The proposed amendment in Section 3 further suggests changes in controlling authority by delegating Primer Minister's authority to Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training. Historically, Prime Ministers in Pakistan have shown some grace by avoiding direct intervention at the grass-root level in organization's routine affairs however, since the ministers are politically obliged individuals, they frequently

leave aside the sanity of affairs and put their interests before rules and regulations.

As per existing HEC Ordinance, the Chairperson under sub-section (1) has the status of Federal Minister whereas, the proposed amendments hinted change in this section without suggesting any status of Chairperson, HEC in the future. According to sub-section (1) of Section 6, the proposed amendments in the composition and constitution of the Commission suggest empowering Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Government of Pakistan (previously noted as Secretary Ministry of Education) by deleting the sub-clauses (c) and (d) where the role of Secretary, Information Technology and Telecommunications Division or Scientific and Technologic Research Division and four nominees of the provincial governments is being quashed through this change. Also, as per sub-clause (e) Commission's members' strength is suggested to lower from Ten (10) to Six (6).

In selection of members, the existing Ordinance which was previously amended by the PTI-led government in 2021, there was one slot for a Rector or Vice-Chancellor and Two slots for eminent individuals from the private sector to be selected in a prescribed manner are now suggested to be canceled through new proposed amendments. The amendments further suggest that the controlling authority (which Govt intends to delegate to concerned Minister or Secretary) would appoint six members considering their geographic and regional diversity in addition to the contribution to education with a mandatory selection of a woman. The amendments suggest repealing sub-section (4) of Section 6 of HEC Ordinance, 2002 where a due process of members' appointment was prescribed through a panel of

three person. By repealing this clause, Federal Minister or Secretary would be powerful enough to appoint HEC members.

The former Govt made amendments to HEC Ordinance in 2021 and reduced the Chairperson's appointment tenure from Four (4) to Two (2) years and the current Govt suggested no change in the proposed amendments to restore the HEC Chairperson appointment for four years which was previously criticized ruling parties' leaders being in opposition. Govt also intends to amend sub-section (6) of Section 6, where the Chairperson and members can be removed from office at any time on account of "Unsatisfactory Performance or Misconduct" which is not possible as per existing Ordinance unless proven guilty of corruption, inefficiency, permanent disability or failure to attend two



consecutive meetings without prior information.

In case of the vacant slot for Chairperson or a member, the existing Ordinance bounds the controlling authority (Primer Minister) to appoint an acting Chairperson for a maximum period of three months whereas, the proposed amendments suggest that the controlling authority (now may be the Secretary) can fill vacant slot of Chairperson for a period of three months or till the appointment of a regular Chairperson and the acting Chairperson would be able to exercise all powers. This unlimited time relax may give free hand to run the apex body of higher education through adhocery.

Regarding conduct of the Commis-

sion's meeting as per sub-section (1) of Section 9 of HEC Ordinance 2002, the new amendments suggest that at least three members instead of six may call a meeting of Commission, five members would constitute a quorum instead of nine and most significantly controlling authority would get the power to rescind a decision in case of Commission fails to provide justified grounds while as per existing Ordinance, the controlling authority may refer the decision to Commission for reconsideration. Post approval of proposed amendments, practically HEC decisions made in its meetings after deliberation and review of factual circumstances would be depended on the 'best wisdom' of a person who otherwise may have no understanding of higher education dynamics.

The further proposed amendments in sub-section (1) of Section 10 of HEC Ordinance, 2002 which deals with the power and functions of Commission suggest multiple changes including the most important segment of HEC funding through federal government for higher education in Pakistan. The proposed amendment would bind the Commission to prepare plans for development of higher education in consultation with the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training. HEC would require to submit the budgetary demands for recurring and development purposes of public sector institutions to the federal government through ministry of education. These proposed changes in Ordinance are direct attempt to cut the HEC autonomy and to empower the education ministry in curriculum development, monitoring of higher education quality, establishment of councils, evaluation of HEIs performance, funding for research and development, establishment and awarding charters to new institutions, etc., The ministry would also be able to issue instructions and guidelines to HEC to simply obey as a subordinate

organization.

Most importantly to curtail the HEC authority, Govt suggests addition of a new Section which is not part of the existing HEC Ordinance 2002 by empowering ministry to issue policy directions as binding for the Commission to implement. Also, the ministry would be able to assign measurable performance targets to HEC for achievement and HEC would be required to submit its annual performance report to the ministry.

The former government through HEC Ordinance IX of 2021 introduced amendment in the process of appointment of an Executive Director (ED) where Commission was previously empowered to appoint an ED on the recommendation of Ministry of Federal Education. There were dedicated responsibilities of ED as head of the Secretariat of Commission for implementation of order, decisions, directives, and policies. The new proposed amendments in sub-section (1) of Section 11 empower the government to appoint an ED in consultation with Commission without mentioning the categorical role of this appointment.

New amendments in the HEC Ordinance, 2002 in sub-section (1) of Section 12 suggest curtailing the Commission's authority in appointments of officers, servants, consultants, and advisers to run the operations including the mandate to make rules for recruitment of employees. If the suggested changes are implemented then HEC would require to seek the ministry's approval for hiring staff and making recruitment rules. The government also proposed an amendment in sub-section (3) of Section 14 where the federal government intends to add the role of Auditor General of Pakistan instead of Controller General of Accounts to review and audit the Commission's accounts and financial reports. According to existing HEC Ordinance, 2002 the Commission

was empowered through Section 21 to make rules with prior approval of the controlling authority (Prime Minister) which is now suggested to seek prior approval from the concerned ministry.

Earlier in December 2022 at the 3rd Rectors' conference of private sector universities of Pakistan, the participant unanimously opposed the amendments suggested to introduce in HEC Ordinance 2002 and termed these as a direct attack on the HEC to work with freedom and clear mandate as a regulatory body of higher education in the country. Senator Irfan Siddique of the ruling party PML (N) while addressing in Rectors' conference stated that organizations like HEC are products of continuous efforts and get maturity in functioning over the years. He vowed to share the concerns of the academic community with government on proposed amendments. He also suggested to government to refrain from surrendering the HEC autonomy before bureaucracy. The ministry of education's performance through bureaucratic control can be easily gauged with the condition of education in schools and colleges across Pakistan.

This is not clear so far whether these amendments are a product of the 'collective wisdom' of the government or being proposed by the concerned minister and his team of bureaucrats. In the presence of PML (N) leaders in cabinet like Ahsan Iqbal, Khawaja SaadRafique, and other like-minded such proposals may be binned without a second thought which are designed only to empower a minister and bureaucracy rather than higher education. HEC over the years introduced some good steps in regulating higher education in Pakistan therefore, Pakistani degrees are recognized and accepted in the world as legal qualifications. Unnecessarily, Govt is going to compromise the HEC autonomy with a shabby mandate to deliver its services to Pakistan.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
39,279.43	39,802.91
Day's High	Day's Low:
39,866.99	39,027.51
Index Value	Change
7,164,112,852	-523.48
Percentage	Time
-1.32%	28 Dec, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,527.43	+54.42
Percentage	Time
+0.80%	28 Dec, 2:45 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
33,293.25	+51.69
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	28 Dec, 9:51 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
26,340.50	-107.37
Percentage	Time
-0.41%	28 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	155.5	156.75
Bahrain Dinar	603.5	608
Canadian Dollar	168	169.35
China Yuan	32.51	32.76
Danish Krone	32.35	32.7
Euro	261	263.5
Hong Kong Dollar	28.99	29.34
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.3	2.35
Kuwaiti Dinar	739	744
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	144	145.2
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	588.08	592.58
Qatari Riyal	61.75	62.25
Saudi Riyal	65	65.6
Singapore Dollar	167.97	169.27
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	242.7	244.45
Thai Bhat	6.52	6.62
U.A.E Dirham	68.4	69
UK Pound Sterling	298	301
US Dollar	233.2	235.5

Director DMA, MCI accepts demand of business community for signboard tax

ISLAMABAD : Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the business community is facing problems due to high signboard tax rate and trade license fee and stressed that the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) should address these issues by revising their rates. He said that the MCI should charge signboard tax rate @ Rs.60/- per sq. yds. and trade license fee should be fixed at Rs.1000/- per annum that would ease the problems of business community and facilitate them in growth of business activities. He said this while talking to Shakeel Arshad, Director, DMA, MCI during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Committee of ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi President Super Market, Ahmed Khan President F-10 Markaz, Khurram Khan President Islamabad Restaurants Association, Khalid Chaudhry and representatives of markets also highlighted various issues that needed the attention of MCI for redress.

Speaking at the occasion, Shakeel Arshad, Director, DMA, MCI accepted the demand of the business community to charge signboard tax @ Rs.60/ per sq. yds. He further said that the pending area signboard tax would be charged according to 2008 rate @ Rs.20/- per sq. yds. without any additional charges and stressed that after the notification, the business community should pay this tax to settle its dues.

He said that the trade license rate would be finalized after further discussion, preferably according to the wishes of the stakeholders. He said that MCI is introducing a mobile app for renewal of trade licenses to facilitate the business community. He said that the CDA Board had finalized the tax of Rs.500 for outdoor areas of restaurants and it could also be revised by the Board. He assured that he would always cooperate with the business community to facilitate them.

The issues of occupation of footpaths and green areas were also discussed and Director DMA said that MCI has allowed controversy-free areas for business activity.

Country entering another food security crisis

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 Wednesday said the country has entered a serious crisis of food security after inflation and floods.

The price of flour has increased by 40% across the country, which has increased the price of roti by 5 to 7 rupees in different parts of the country, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to the high cost of flour, the majority of the people cannot bring ample food to the table which is the result of the bad economic situation and smuggling.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that after the destruction of the agricultural sector by the floods, drainage of water could not be ensured due to which wheat sowing has been delayed.

After this disaster, the balance of demand and supply of wheat along with



cotton and other crops also deteriorated but timely imports were not ensured due to a deficiency of foreign exchange in the country.

Due to the delay in imports, the profiteers and hoarders got an opportunity to make billions of rupees overnight by exploiting the masses.

At present, the poor people of Pakistan are forced to eat flour that is 30% more expensive than the wheat available in the international market.

There was already a difference of twelve to thirteen hundred rupees between the government rate of wheat and the market rate in Sindh and Punjab which has now increased to more than two thousand rupees, he informed.

In addition to the delay in wheat import, the current crisis includes factors such as the reduction of wheat supply to flour mills by the government, a statement by a political figure about the reduction of wheat stock in Sindh and smuggling of wheat to Afghanistan.

He said that the government is trying to improve the situation by raiding the hoarders which have never helped.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the immediate solution to the current situation is to fully comply with the agreement made with the IMF. The difference between the interbank and market rate of the dollar has to be eliminated. By artificially restraining the rising value of the dollar, exports, remittances, FBR revenue, and foreign exchange reserves are rapidly shrinking, which is extremely dangerous for Pakistan's weak economy.

Delegation of RCSTSI industries visits PTA



News Desk

ISLAMABAD : A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (RCSTSI) led by Mr. Tariq Khan Jadoon, President RCSTSI visited Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Headquarters, Islamabad today.

The delegation met with Chairman PTA, Maj General Amir Azeem Bajwa (R) and discussed matters related to business interests of the traders regarding mobile devices. The Chairman assured the delegation of PTA's full cooperation and support to pursue their business interests. President RCSTSI appreciated PTA for its efforts to support the business community.

Dangers

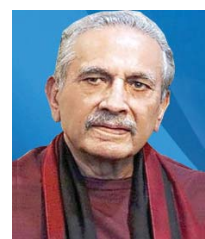
LAHORE: A worker of WAPDA is busy in repairing high voltage wires, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Politicians busy solving their own problems sidelining masses

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Wednesday said politicians who always claim to serve the masses are busy in resolving their own problems and are serving themselves instead of the people.

Politicians are least concerned about the plight of the masses, inflation is increasing on a daily basis putting an unbearable burden on the people and now the price of flour has been increased to an unprecedented level which is unacceptable, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the flour crisis has been deliberately created in the country to take out trillions of rupees from the pockets of the starving people to fill the coffers of the elite.

The country that should have been one of the world's largest agricultural exporters is importing food items worth nine billion dollars and the volume of imports is continuously increasing due to the lack of attention of the ruling elite.

The continued fall in agricultural output is evidence of failed policies and indifferent attitude of policymakers, he added.

The business leader said that one and a half million acres of land in the country which is forty percent of the total cultivable area, is affected by salinity and water logging and the recent floods have further damaged these lands.

In some areas, the level of underground water has risen so much that it has become difficult to bury the dead, he informed.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that all the institutions related to agriculture are causing harm instead of benefit and have failed to deliver for many decades wasting public money.

Agricultural loans are not given to farmers and those who are facilitated include landlords, hoarders, and influential companies, which has eliminated the possibility of agricultural development.

JazzCash partners with National Savings to provide ease of payment solution for 4 million Pakistanis

Bureau Report

LAHORE: JazzCash, Pakistan's leading Fintech, and Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS), Pakistan's largest investment and financial institution, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Disbursement and Collection solutions.

Through this partnership JazzCash, a subsidiary of Jazz, and a part of VEON Group and CDNS will ease payment solutions for more than four million people, including widows and senior citizens, under the ambit of digital financial inclusion. JazzCash users will be able to receive profits in their mobile wallets and buy national saving certificates digitally through the JazzCash App.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Head of JazzCash, Murtaza Ali,

said, "Our collaboration with CDNS is a testament towards our commitment to improve the lives and livelihood of consumers through technology. This partnership is key in highlighting how digital solutions assist with saving cost and time while providing convenience to the end-user."

CDNS Director General Hamid Raza Khalid shared similar sentiments saying, "We are excited to partner with JazzCash - the largest digital wallet app in the country - to enable CDNS to achieve its vision of financial inclusion. Our department is fully committed to transforming itself into a vibrant and digitally integrated entity, servicing serve millions of our citizens."

National Savings is the largest investment and financial institution in Pakistan with a portfolio of



over Rs. 3.4 trillion and more than 04 million valued investors are being served through a large network of 376 branches nationwide controlled by 12 Regional Directorates of National Savings (RDNS).

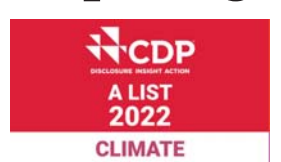
Ericsson recognized as a leader in climate performance, reporting

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ericsson's global leadership in climate performance and reporting has been recognized by the independent non-profit CDP (formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project) by being named in its annual 'A List' - the top ranking possible.

CDP's annual climate disclosure and scoring process is widely recognized as the gold standard of corporate reporting. Based on data reported through CDP's 2022 Climate Change questionnaire, Ericsson is one of more than 280 of companies that achieved an 'A' out of more than 20,000 companies scored.

"At Ericsson, we take our role in climate action seriously, and you can't manage what you don't measure," Heather Johnson, Head of Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, Ericsson, says. "That's why it means so much to colleagues across the company to see our commitment to climate action recognized on the CDP A List this year. This recognition is a



testament to our continuous progression toward ambitious and science-based climate targets."

A detailed and independent methodology is used by CDP to assess companies with scoring based on the comprehensiveness of disclosure, awareness and management of climate risks and opportunities, and demonstration of best practices associated with climate leadership such as setting ambitious and meaningful targets.

Johnson adds: "Today more than ever, companies have a crucial role to play in limiting climate change to 1.5°C. That's why Ericsson will continue to join forces with our customers, suppliers, and the entire ICT ecosystem to manage our climate impacts and develop sustainable solutions that can help take effective climate action."

18th International Cholistan Rally will open from Feb 6

Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: The 18th International Cholistan Desert Rally, a most famous car racing event, will be kicked off from February 6 to 12, 2023 in the beautiful desert of Cholistan.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Zahid Parvez Waraich in DC office committee room to review the arrangements in this regard.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Naeem Sadiq Cheema, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Aitzaz Anjum, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Farooq Qamar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Sumaira Rabbani, and Assistant Commissioners of concerned tehsils attended the video-link meeting.

Deputy Commissioner said that fool-proof security arrangements should be ensured and better arrangements



should be made for traffic management.

He said that Rescue 1122 camps should be established by the Health Department and improved arrangements should be made for sanitation.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General and Focal Person International

Cholistan Desert Rally Naeem Sadiq Cheema explained that Bikaneri Food Street will be established in Bahawalpur city and another food street will be established at Derawar Fort on the occasion of the rally.

Handicraft Bazaar and other stalls would be set up by Islamia University

Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and Bahawalpur Arts Council.

He said that various sports activities will be organized to make the desert rally attractive, including cricket, hockey, volleyball, Kabaddi, Taekwondo, paragliding, auto show, goat show, camel ride, and other sports.

It was informed that a musical night, Qawwali night, and folk music will be presented for the participants on the occasion of the International Desert Rally.

It was further informed that for the successful organization of the rally, several committees including the Management Committee, Event Committee, Vehicle Recovery Committee, Parking Management Committee, Time Management Committee, Registration Vehicle Committee, and Medical Emergency Committee have been established.

Illegal Occupation

KARACHI: Pakistan's Mir Hamza bowls during the first test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the National Stadium, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Kane Williamson century gives New Zealand the lead

Pakistan struck back in the final thirty minutes to eventually share the day's honours

KARACHI: New Zealand 440 for 6 (Latham 113, Williamson 105*, Conway 92, Abrar 4-143) lead Pakistan 438 (Babar 161, Salman 103*, Sarfaraz 86, Southey 3-69) by 2 runs

New Zealand's batters, led by Kane Williamson, made Pakistan toil for most of day three in Karachi. However, the hosts struck back in the final 30 minutes to eventually share the day's honours.

Starting the day on 165 for 0, New Zealand finished on 440 for 6, two runs ahead of Pakistan's first-innings score. With Pakistan having the momentum at stumps, the game stands in a tantalising position with two days to go and a tricky pitch to deal with.

Williamson finished the day unbeaten on 105. He was supported by Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell and though neither man got even as far as a half-century,

their aggression allowed Williamson to quietly build on his score. In the morning, Tom Latham added to his overnight score of 78 to post his 13th Test century.

Mitchell shellacked 42 runs in 47 balls after walking in at No. 5 in the middle session. He used the reverse-sweep to get his boundary-scoring underway before graduating to playing more conventional shots in the V. Nauman Ali was launched for six and four down the ground while Mohammad Wasim bore the brunt of even more aggression, hit for four boundaries in four deliveries.

Blundell, on the other hand, was a much less assured presence at the crease. He rode his luck coming down the track to the Pakistan spinners, Nauman and Abrar Ahmed, who bowled in tandem for long spells through the day.

The New Zealand No. 6 was the aggressor after tea, targeting the leg side for most of his boundaries. His battle with Nauman was fascinating, with the left-arm spinner getting the ball to turn across him, leading to innumerable leading edges and sliced shots that went to the off-side instead, including one when he was on 41 that saw two fielders try to take a catch with neither committing to it. Eventually, the missed Blundell chance did not cost Pakistan much with the wicketkeeper-batter falling lbw for 47 to Wasim's reverse-swing late in the day.

Nauman created more chances earlier in the day. Had they been converted, his figures would have looked a lot better than 2 for 137 and Pakistan might well be in control of the whole Test match. He had bowled beautifully to force errors from Williamson

when the batter was on 15 and 21, however both times Sarfaraz Ahmed could not pull off the stumping. In fairness to the wicketkeeper, they were moderately tough chances.

Williamson, batting for the first time since giving up the Test captaincy, made his entry in the day's sixth over following Devon Conway's dismissal for 92. After a 183-run opening partnership with Latham, Conway was out lbw to Nauman, trapped inside his crease on the back foot. At first, Conway was deemed not out by umpire Aleem Dar but the decision was overturned on review.

While Williamson was still finding his feet, Latham charged to his 13th Test hundred in the morning. His ton broke the New Zealand record for most centuries by a Test opener, going past John Wright's 12.

Shaheen Shah Afridi and Fakhar Zaman not included due to their ongoing knee rehabilitation

News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan have recalled hard-hitting batter Sharjeel Khan into the ODI fold after five years, with the team's new chief selector Shahid Afridi naming as many as six uncapped players in the 21-man probable list for the upcoming series against New Zealand.

While the final squad will be trimmed to 16 players next week, there will be no place for both Shaheen Shah Afridi and Fakhar Zaman, due to their ongoing knee rehabilitation. The 21-man list is mostly made up of younger players in the system like Qasim Akram, Ihsanullah and Tayyab Tahir, who have all made a mark in the domestic circuit. Also included is top-order batter Kamran Ghulam, who scored a record 1249 runs for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 2020-21 Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, and is among the leading scorers in the ongoing Pakistan Cup with 435 runs from six matches, including two hundreds. Pakistan's probables: Babar Azam (captain), Abdullah Shafiq, Abrar Ahmed, Aamer Jamal, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Qasim Akram, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shahnawaz Dahani, Shan Masood, Sharjeel Khan and Tayyab Tahir.

Australian Football League Pakistan team visits RCCI



City Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Australian Football League (AFL) Pakistan team headed by President AFL Sazdar Tariq Mahmud Khan visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

President Saqib Rafiq lauded AFL for promoting the positive image of Pakistan across the globe. He appreciated President AFL for patronizing, engaging youth and introducing a new genre of sport in Pakistan.

RCCI President gave a short briefing on the chamber's current activities and future programs. He assured all kinds of support and assistance for promoting "Footie" through chamber platform.

Sharjeel among 21 probables shortlisted for New Zealand ODIs

A Sports -

LAHORE: The Men's Interim National Selection Committee on Wednesday announced 21 probables for the home ODI series against New Zealand, left-handed batter Sharjeel Khan included.

The interim selection committee for the national men's team under the leadership of former captain Shahid Afridi named 21 probables for the home ODI series against New Zealand, scheduled to take place from January 9 to 13 in Karachi.

Former captain and wicket-keeper batter Sarfaraz Ahmed, who marked his return to Test

cricket after a gap of more than three years, has not been named among the set of players, while his Sindh teammate Sharjeel, who last donned the national jersey in the fifty-over format in 2017 was named among the 21 probables.

Besides Sharjeel, Shan Masood who last played an ODI in 2019 has also been named among the 21 announced players that also feature six uncapped players Abrar Ahmed, Ihsanullah, Aamer Jamal, Kamran Ghulam, Qasim Akram



and Tayyab Tahir.

The final squad for the historic home ODI series will be announced following the conclusion of the ongoing Pakistan Cup and amid the second Test in Karachi, shared Pakistan

Cricket Board (PCB) in a press release.

"The selectors will announce the 16-player squad following the conclusion of the Pakistan Cup and during the second Test, which will also be played here from 2-6 January," said PCB in a statement.

Meanwhile, Fakhar Zaman, Khushdil Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi (injured) and Zahid Mehmood, who were part of the squad for the ODI series against the Netherlands, have not been named in the probables list.

It is pertinent to mention

that Pakistan will take on New Zealand in three ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League matches, which will be played at National Bank Cricket Arena, Karachi on January 9, 11 and 13 respectively.

Probables: Babar Azam (c), Abdullah Shafiq, Abrar Ahmed, Aamer Jamal, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Qasim Akram, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shahnawaz Dahani, Shan Masood, Sharjeel Khan and Tayyab Tahir

Ramiz's claims against Sethi 'misleading' and 'inaccurate', says PCB

A Sports -

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has expressed its disappointment over the comments made and language used by former Chairman Mr Ramiz Raja against Chairman of the PCB Management Committee Mr Najam Sethi on a social media platform and in a TV interview.

PCB on Tuesday issued a detailed rebuttal to the allegations raised by its former head against his successor, saying the board believes the former Chairman's comments are aimed at tarnishing and damaging the impeccable reputation of present Chairman Mr Sethi.

"It (PCB) reserves its rights to pursue legal proceedings to protect and defend the image and credibility of its Chairman and the institution" added the statement released by the cricket board.

To put the record straight, the board reported the following facts:

- The PCB Patron, on the popular demand of cricket fans, administrators as well as former and current cricketers, exercised his constitutional right by restoring the PCB Constitution 2014 to safeguard the livelihoods, wellbeing and careers of professional cricketers as it recognised the role of departmental cricket, which was not the case in the PCB Constitution 2019 promulgated by the then government.

- PCB Chief Operating Officer Mr Salman Naseer has already rebutted Mr Raja's allegations that he was not allowed to collect his belongings by confirming these were picked up personally by him and will be returned to Mr Raja today (Wednesday) as a part of the usual handing and taking over process. Mr Raja was never stopped from entering the Gaddafi Stadium premises and will be welcome to visit any time in future.

- Mr Sethi, who was elected as the PCB's 34th Chairman in August 2017 for a three-year term, had voluntarily resigned with two years remaining in his tenure after his nominating authority had lost the 2018 general elections in July. This clearly indicates his approach and positive attitude.

- Similar to Mr Sethi's appointment as Chairman of the PCB Management Committee, Mr Raja had also been elected as the PCB Chairman on the eve of the 2021-22 domestic season on 13 September 2021 and two days after the New Zealand cricket team had arrived in Islamabad on their first tour in 18 years.

Maria vows to perform well in Four-Nation Cup 2023*



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Pakistan National Women's Team Captain Maria Jamal Khan vowed to perform well in the Four-Nation Cup scheduled in Saudi Arabia.

The captain was sharing her views during training camp here in Lahore. Maria Khan highlighted the importance of international exposure that is needed for every player and eventually help player boost their confidence. "After a hiatus of eight years, we are back again and hopefully, if we get chances consistently to take part in international assignments, then the football lovers will see us on a different level," Maria assured.

She said combination is the most important thing in every sport, and they have senior and junior players who may bring positive results at any platform. "Our performance in the SAFF championship might not be up to the mark but we tried our best and resulted in a historical win against Maldives."

"We have been in training camp for the past few weeks, and the players participating in the camp are giving their best. We are hoping for positive results. The joining of Nadia Khan will give a boost to the side and will strengthen our attack which can do well," she added.

Pakistan women's football is all set to feature in the Four-Nation Cup in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, commencing from 11 January to 19th of January, 2023.

UKCAB a ceremony was held at Sarwar College of Professional Study



LAHORE: From UK Curriculum accreditation (Body) UKCAB a ceremony was held at Sarwar College of Professional Study (SIPS) in the honour of Pakistan National Hero who got the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals in Birmingham.

Former Health Minister Dr.Yasmeen Rashid was the Chief Guest and she distributed the cheques along with Chairman and Ceo UKCAB Zahid Bhatti, Nooh Dastgir Butt Wait Lifter got gold medal was giving one thousand pounds cheque Arshad Nadeem Gold Medal in Javelin Throw one thousand pond, M. Inam Silver Medal 500 ponds, Zaman Anwar Silver Medal 500 ponds, M.Sharif Tahir Silver Medal 500 ponds, and Inayatullah Bronze medal 300 ponds, while coaches Faeed Ahmed, Wrestling, Arshad Sittar, Manager Athletic, Irfanullah Khan, coach Table Tennis, President Pakistan Table Tennis Association and coordinator of event were giving 500 ponds each. On this occasion Trustees Nabeel Ahmed, Sharjeel Mehmood, Media Head, Director Operation Abdullah Mushtaq, Ghulam Sabir, Pakistan Regional Head Ghulam Sabir, Komal Sabir Accreditation Lady, Hamza Atiq, Media head who arranged this fabulous event with Irfanullah Khan President PTTA also present. At last former Health Minister also appreciated the all the medalist to achieve the medals in Birmingham Common wealth games and she said that I hope that in futures Pakistani Athletes, Players also will win more medals in up coming International events.

The Chairman and CDO UKCAB Zahid Bhatti also thanked to Dr.Yasmeen Rashid to come in the prize distribution ceremony. Agencies