



Govt takes practical steps for protection of journalists rights

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said that PDM's government had taken practical steps for the protection of the rights of the journalist community. In her congratulatory message to the newly elected office bearers of Peshawar Press Club, she said that the incumbent government fully believed in freedom of expression.



Necessary steps being taken to ensure provision of flour at fixed rate

Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi said on Sunday that all necessary steps were being taken to ensure the provision of flour at fixed rate at provincial and district levels. According to official sources, the CM said that subsidy was being provided to common an through Ehsaas Programme so that people of urban and rural areas could be facilitated. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Labour Conference

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi attended and addressed the Labour Conference 2023.



Photo: APP

President directs SLICP to pay interest to an insurance policy holder

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) to compensate an insurance policy holder by paying the interest due in accordance with the prevailing rate as it had delayed payment of the maturity claim to the complainant without giving any reason.

The president in his decision observed that the complainant had obtained the insurance policy from SLICP on 31.10.1990 for the sum assured of Rs 30,000 for a period of 20 years and that the date of maturity of policy was 31.10.2020, however, SLICP made payment of the maturity claim to the complainant after a lapse of almost two years.

PM leaves for Geneva to co-host 'Climate Resilient Pakistan' conference

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday departed to Geneva along with a high-level delegation to co-chair an international conference on 'Climate Resilient Pakistan', along with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, being held on January 9.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb accompanied the prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

In the conference, Pakistan will outline framework

vision for rehabilitation and reconstruction and emphasised upon the need for global support and long-term partnership to implement it.

In the inaugural high-level opening segment, the official document would be unveiled over reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood-affected areas, and feature partner support announcements.

The prime minister and the UN secretary general will also hold a joint press stakeout.

Leaders and high-level representatives from several countries and international financial institutions, foundations and funds are expected to attend the conference, both in person and virtual format.

Millions of flood-devastated Pakistanis looking for compassion, solidarity: PM

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that millions of Pakistanis, affected by unprecedented devastation due to floods, looked for compassion and solidarity to build back better.

"Humanity is at an inflection point in world history. Our actions today will shape the resilient future for our succeeding generations, the prime minister posted on his Twitter handle.

In a related tweet, the prime minister said that he was leaving for Geneva today to co-host International Conference on Resilient Pakistan,



being held on January 9, along with the UN Secretary-General.

He said that he would take the opportunity to present the case of flood victims before the world. "I will also throw light on steps my govt. has taken for relief & rehabilitation," he further posted.

The prime minister said that in the conference they would place a comprehensive post-disaster framework plan for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with resilience before development partners and friendly countries.

"Bridging funding gap is key to restore critical infrastructure, rebuild lives & livelihoods & revive economy," he added.

Imran blames Gen Bajwa for 'pushing Pakistan into crises'

News Desk

KARACHI: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has blamed former chief of army staff (COAS) Gen retd Qamar Javed Bajwa for 'pushing Pakistan into crises', ARY News reported on Sunday.

The former premier made these remarks while addressing a women's convention of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Karachi via video link from his residence in

Lahore's Zaman Park.

Imran Khan said that Gen Bajwa was solely responsible for pushing Pakistan into the mess it is in today, reiterating that he had sent Shaukat Tarin with a message that country's economy would not be handled if political instability was created at that time.

"We all know who was the one whose decision pushed Pakistan into crisis," he said, adding that he had predicted this 'instability' seven months ago.

The PTI chief lambasted the Sharif and Zardari families for 'ruining' the country's economy, saying that Pakistan stopped developing when these two families made a partnership in the 90s.

Imran Khan further said that the country's future was connected with his party's struggle. "The two major political parties, who were in power for 30 years, are now coalition partners," he said, adding that the people were now seeing towards PTI.

PTI to hunt down all parties in Karachi alone, roars Asad Umer



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umer said on Sunday the PTI would defeat all parties in the upcoming local elections and claimed the whole Karachi would support PTI chief Imran Khan.

He said disappointment had been pervasive and the country would rise again after the elections in 2023 when he claimed Imran Khan would be prime minister again, while alleging the thieves were imposed on the country and the country was being looted.

Talking about the local elections of Karachi, he urged the karachiites to support the PTI and participate in the polls in massive numbers, and also claimed the mayor would be from PTI.

Efforts on to resolve issues facing Pakhtuns: Amir Muqam

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Advisor to Prime Minister on National Heritage and Culture Engineer Amir Muqam said on Sunday that the coalition government, led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), was making sincere efforts to resolve the issues facing the Pakhtuns in the country, as they all were patriotic Pakistanis.

He was addressing an oath-taking ceremony, organised by the Pakistan Pakhtun Welfare Trust (PWT) Punjab at Aiwan-e-Iqbal on Sunday. He said sacrifices rendered by the Pakhtuns for stability and security of the country would always be remembered, adding that "We always stand by our Pakhtun brethren".

He said he, as a representative of Pakhtuns, would always raise voice for their rights, adding that every ethnic group in the country should work for betterment of the country by setting aside its personal differences.

Advisor to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr. Amir Muqam taking oath from Pakhtun Welfare Trust (PWT) new office bearers at Aiwan e Iqbal. APP

He condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's diatribe against the state institutions, saying that former premier was inter-



ested in getting power at any cost.

He said the PDM-led coalition government was working for well-being of people and reviving the country's economy. He said that the nation should stand united and reject the so-called narrative of the PTI leaders, who were bent on creating unrest and instability in the country.

PML-N leader and MPA Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, PWT Punjab President Haji Nadir Khan, Chairman Qayyum Zada, General Secretary Saleem Ullah, Senior Vice Chairman Haji Baghi Jaan, Senior Vice Presidents Safdar Khan and Azam Khan, Finance Secretary Bhadur Taj, Information Secretary Dr Naeem and a large number of people from Pakhtuns tribe were present.

Balochistan political bigwigs join PPP after meeting Asif Zardari

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Prominent political leaders of Balochistan on Sunday called on PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and announced to join Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The announcement to join PPP was made after a meeting with the former president at Bilawal House Karachi.

Those who have joined PPP included former senator Sardar Fateh Muhammad Hassani, Nawabzada Gazin Marri, Tahir Mahmood, coordinator of the chief minister of Balochistan Nawabzada Jamal Raisani and Mir Faeed Raisani. Moreover, Mir Abdullah Raheja and Mir Allah Bakhsh Rind also joined the party.

Zardari welcomed the new members to the party, saying that PPP has always fought for the rights of Balochistan.

On Dec 31, former finance minister Mir Zahoor Buledi, former ministers Saleem Khan Khoso, and SACM Agha Shakeel Ahmed Durrani joined the Pakistan Peoples Party.

All three politicians belong to the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP).

ولادتِ سعید

9 جنوری یوم پیدائش ہے ایک ایسے انسان کا جس کی زندگی میں پیرائے تھی، ایک ایسا چرخہ جسکی لوہے ہزاروں امید کے دیئے روشن کر گئی۔ جو مرزوم بنا تو نہ جانے کتنے دلوں کے آزار مٹا گیا اور جب معلم خیراتو کروڑوں کی سوچ میں روشنی بن کے سا گیا۔

آئیے شہید پاکستان حکیم محمد سعید کے 103 ویں یوم پیدائش کے موقع پر ان کے نڈکار و افکار کو دہراتے ہیں کیونکہ یہی عوامل حیات سعید کے سنگ میل بناتے ہیں۔

حکیم محمد سعید

پیدائش 9 جنوری 1920

Hamdardpofficial

“BEHBUD Bazaar”

ISLAMABAD: Artisans displaying their products on their stalls during the “BEHBUD Art & Craft Bazaar” at Pak-China Friendship Center on Sunday.



Photo: APP

Necessary steps being taken to ensure provision of flour at fixed rate

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi said on Sunday that all necessary steps were being taken to ensure the provision of flour at fixed rate at provincial and district levels.

According to official sources, the CM said that subsidy was being provided to common an through Ehsaas Programme so that people of urban and rural areas could be facilitated.

He said the Punjab government was ensuring provision

of inexpensive flour to deserving people through Ehsaas Programme.

Entry in Ehsaas Programme could be made through CNIC to get targeted subsidy on flour, he said and added that daily official quota of flour had been doubled.

Pervez Elahi said that sale points had also been doubled across the province.

He said that 1,840,000 bags of 10 kg flour would be available on daily basis in Punjab at government fixed rate.

Ch Pervez Elahi said that



from tomorrow 26,000 tonnes of wheat would be released to flour mills more than their demand.

Increase in government wheat quota would reduce prices of private wheat and flour reasonably, he added.

Sheikh Rashid warns of 'thrashing' march

City Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Sunday warned of thrashing march instead of inflation march, saying the government had no control over prices of food and essential items.

Taking to Twitter, he said first death due to hunger had been reported in Mirpur Khas.

“The first death for seeking two meals a day has taken place in Mirpurkhas. Now, instead of inflation, there may be thrashing march. The foreign exchange reserves have reached \$4.5 billion, which is less than 20 days worth of imports. We need a map to avoid nine months of destruction the country has faced.

Flour and wheat crisis engulf Punjab, Sindh

News Desk

LAHORE: Flour and wheat crisis further deepened in Punjab and Sindh on Sunday as citizens found it difficult to receive subsidised flour at local shops.

The shortage of four left thousands of customers in the lurch as people were seen

returning empty-handed from shops. Those who managed to get flour complained that the sellers charged much higher than the official rates.

Though the sacks of subsidised flour were supposed to be available at fixed places of the city, citizens complained of non-cooperation by the suppliers.

There were reports that subsidised flour in green bags also was not easily available in the local markets. There were also reports that the subsidised flour was being sold in black market in Rs700 to Rs750 per 10kg instead of Rs648 per 10kg in Punjab.

In Lahore, chakki flour was being sold in Rs160 per

kg, while 15-kg sack was being sold at Rs1,930. According to the market sources, the flour prices are increasing with each passing day.

In Sindh, the flour shortage was reported in areas of Mirpur Khas and Dault Pur.

Meanwhile, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS),

the rate of 20kg flour bag in Karachi has reached a record Rs2,800-3,000 as compared to Rs1,295 in Islamabad, Lahore and Gujranwala, while the same bag is being sold for Rs1,300-2,880 in Larkana, Sukkur and Hyderabad.

In Quetta and Peshawar, these flour bags sell for Rs1,295-2,700.

Won't allow PA dissolution: Chaudhry Shujaat



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain made it clear on Sunday that the Punjab Assembly will not be dissolved at any cost.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri called on PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat to underscore the matters of the Punjab's political arena.

During his meetup with the PML-Q supremo, Mr. Haideri inquired after Mr Hussain and also sent JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's wishes to the former prime minister [Shujaat].

Comparing PTI Chairman Imran Khan with Mr Hussain, Mr Haideri said, “The PTI chief the politics were based on the promotion of the culture of foul language in the country, whereas the politics of the PML-Q chief were merely based on tolerance.”

Russia claims it killed hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers in rocket attack

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday it had killed more than 600 Ukrainian servicemen in a massive rocket strike on two buildings in eastern Ukraine temporarily housing Ukrainian forces.

Reuters could not immediately verify the defence ministry's assertion. There was no immediate comment on the Russian claim from Ukraine, though the mayor of Kramatorsk, the eastern Ukrainian town Russia said it had targeted, said earlier on Sunday on



Facebook that nobody had been killed in an attack on various buildings in the city.

Russia's defence ministry said the strike on the buildings in Kramatorsk was revenge

for a deadly Ukrainian attack earlier this year on a Russian barracks in Makiivka in part of the Donetsk region controlled by Moscow's forces in which at least 89 servicemen were killed.

The ministry said in a statement that it had used what it called reliable intelligence to target the Ukrainian troops. It said more than 700 Ukrainian troops had been housed in one hostel and more than 600 in another.

“As a result of a massive missile strike on these temporary deployment points of Ukrainian army units, more than 600 Ukrainian servicemen were destroyed,” the defence ministry said.

If true, it would be the single largest loss of Ukrainian troops since Russia invaded on Feb. 24 last year.

Dr Farooq Sattar announces to support MQM-P's political movement

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The head of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Bahali Committee Dr Farooq Sattar has announced to support the MQM-P's political movement against 'controversial' delimitations and raising voices for a strong local government (LG) system, ARY News reported on Sunday.

Dr Farooq Sattar made the announcement after meeting MQM-P convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui at his resi-

dence in PIB Colony today.

During the meeting, Dr Siddiqui invited Dr Sattar to attend the upcoming protest scheduled for January 11.

Addressing a joint press conference, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that pre-poll rigging is started in Karachi and Hyderabad ahead of LG polls via flawed delimitations and bogus voter lists.

Sattar said that he has already warned MQM-P leaders of their mistake by signing a political agreement with

the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh. He also announced to start joint political efforts with MQM-P leadership for the rights of the urban Sindh areas.

Sources told ARY News that Dr Farooq Sattar assured Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui of attending the MQM-P's protest against the delimitations.

He complained about not counting Muhajirs in the population census and depriving them of basic human

rights. He criticised PPP for not complying with the political agreements with the MQM-P.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui welcomed Dr Farooq Sattar for announcing his support to the MQM-P demands. He said that the union councils (UCs) of Muhajir majority areas is based on 80,000 to 100,000 citizens, on the other hand, the remaining UCs are based on 25,000 to 30,000 people where Muhajirs are not in majority.

CM directs SSU, Reserve Police to come out in aid of city police against street criminals

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in an attempt to purge the city of street criminals has directed IG police to mobilize the SSU force and Reserve Police on the roads to support the district police.

“I want the city police to make their mission successful and eliminate street crime”, he said. In case of failure, he directed the IG to immediately transfer or remove the concerned SSP and SHOs.

The Chief Minister directed the IG to deploy the police, reserve and SSU force at the hotspots and intensify police patrolling for vigilance and keep sharing their photos, location as well as deployment plan with him.

He also instructed the IG to keep him informed about the actions taken against the criminals along with the number of their arrests, so that necessary instructions could be given to the prosecution department for bringing them to book.

Murad Ali Shah directed the IG police to intensify the crackdown against repetitive, habitual street criminals, drug peddlers who have



either been bailed out or at large.

Shah said that the people of Karachi have already seen worst law and order, mayhem at the hands of terrorists as well as other criminals.

“After a lot of sacrifices endured by the police and other law enforcement agencies in the line of their duty, the government restored law and order with the support of Karachiites”, he said and added that now, the people of this city could not be left at the mercy of street criminals and we have to develop sense of security amongst the citizens by eliminating the street crime all together.”

The Inspector General of Police, Ghulam Nabi on the directives of Sindh Chief Minister, has issued necessary instructions to the city police, SSU and Reserve Police for their mobility in the aid of district police, Karachi.

China welcomes first arrivals following lifting of COVID restrictions



Web Desk

BELJING: The first flights under China's new “no quarantine” rules for international travelers landed at airports in Guangzhou and Shenzhen in southern Guangdong Province early on Sunday morning, the national customs authority said on Sunday.

Officials said 387 passengers were aboard two flights from Toronto and Singapore on the day the country ended its strict COVID-19 restrictions for travelers.

They said the flights arrived just after midnight, and all passengers had completed customs clearance procedures by 1:32 a.m.

Noting the COVID-19 prevention and control measures have been proactively improved, Yu Jianhua, Director of General Administration of Customs, stressed that it was necessary to implement the optimization and adjustment work of customs in a steady and orderly manner.

Yu added customs authorities should maintain the emergency response capacity and do a good job in epidemic prevention and control to continue building a quarantine

defense line at ports.

On the same day, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region resumed cross-border travel with the Chinese mainland. Many other Chinese borders also saw cross-border travels.

In Jiegao, a border community in Ruili City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, a businessman, who imports and exports grain from Ruili, told CGTN that he was waiting to go to Myanmar. Ruili City had experienced multiple lockdowns due to COVID-19.

The businessman said he had been waiting for the opportunity for three years and the border reopening would definitely help his business.

Myanmar woman, who works in Ruili, told CGTN that she was looking forward to returning her hometown as the border reopened.

At Shanghai Pudong International Airport, a man surnamed Jiang, who was the first to complete the immigration procedures, told reporters that “it is very convenient all the way from exit hatch to border inspection and clearance. International travel saw a surge on the day the policy took effect, according to data from online travel platform Tongcheng Travel.

Mah Jabeen congratulates political, tribal leaders for joining PPP

Special Correspondent

QUETTA: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Balochistan Women's Wing Vice President Mah Jabeen Khalid Jamali congratulated the political and tribal leaders for joining the Pakistan People's Party.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Focal Person Workers Welfare Board Schools Mah Jabeen said that Pakistan People's Party believed in serving of people, therefore political and tribal personalities were joining Pakistan People's Party.

She said that the PPP had always struggled for the strengthening of democracy and people's rights in the country and in this way, the Party leaders and hundreds of workers sacrificed their lives but never bargained for the rights of the people.

She said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and former President Asif Ali Zardari were carrying forward the vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed



Benazir Bhutto.

She also welcomed former federal minister Sardar Fateh Muhammad Muhammad Hassani, former provincial minister Tahir Mehmood Khan, Balochistan Chief Minister's co-ordinator Nawabzada Jamal Raisani, tribal and political leader Mir Mula-dad Raheja, Mir Umair Muhammad Hassani and others for joining the PPP Party.

She hoped that Sardar Fateh Muhammad Hassani and other would play their role more active in Balochistan.

She said that the coming time was for the PPP and it would win with a huge majority in general election across the country including Balochistan.

Only 3% of Pakistanis are a member of any club/organization: PIDE Study

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Only 3% of Pakistanis are a member of any club. The proportion generally remains low across the country; however, slightly more people are members of any club/organization in urban Pakistan (4%) than rural (2.5%). Among the four provinces, Balochistan has the largest proportion (6.5%) of the population that is a member of any club/organization, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (3.6%) and Sindh (3%). Punjab has the lowest proportion of 2.4%. On the other hand, Gilgit Baltistan has the largest proportion (13.9%) of club/organization members across all provinces, territories, and regions.

This was revealed in a recent study titled 'Social And Civic Engagement: Building Community Or "Bowling Alone"?' conducted under the supervision of PIDE Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. DurreNayab.

The research shows the trends by age and sex that Pakistani males (5%) have a higher rate of club/organiza-

tion membership than their female counterparts, among whom only 1.1% have any form of membership. The rates generally remain low for all ages but are lowest among the young, i.e., those aged 15-24. The rate is highest for males aged 45-59 and 60 years and above. For females, the rates are extremely low, with those aged 25-34 years (1.9%) having a comparatively higher rate than those in other age groups.

While narrating the research, Dr. DurreNayab said that Bowling alone is an idea Putnam (2000) gave in his study on the changing American behavior over the decades. Putnam believed Americans were becoming increasingly individualistic and disconnected from structured social structures like clubs, associations, organizations, or bowling leagues. To him, more and more Americans preferred to bowl alone instead of with others or in leagues.

Dr. Nayab, while describing the research details, said that Civic engagement involves actions to improve the quality of life in a community. In the PIDE BASICS Survey, we gauged this through the involvement of people in voluntary work. We found that at the national level, only 9.2% of the people did voluntary work frequently. As found in social engagement, civic engagement was stronger in Balochistan and GB than in other provinces and territories. GB had the highest rate across the country. Punjab had the highest proportion (80.1%) of those not involved in any kind of voluntary work.

She said that the PIDE study shows that volunteerism increases with increasing educational level, with those with higher or more education having the lowest proportion (55%) of those never being involved in voluntary work. In addition, increased income

levels are associated with a stronger involvement in voluntary work, as can be seen from the highest income level (fifth quintile) having the lowest proportion (61%) of those never engaged in voluntary work.

"Those reporting to be involved in voluntary work, be it frequent or occasional, were asked the nature of their work. Those involved in more than one kind of work were allowed to give multiple responses. Research findings show that Teaching and mentoring others (19.7%) was the most common kind of volunteerism, followed by helping hospitals by providing provisions (12.3%), picking up rubbish and cleaning (8.7%), and helping people with disabilities (8.3%). A very small proportion (0.8%) was involved in coaching and arranging sports. Some other tasks (5.4%) that people were involved in included helping people out in the neighborhood whenever help was needed, giving food to the needy, performing tasks at mosques, and arranging/donating blood for patients" PIDE Pro VC added.



Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

Waiting for Customer

KARACHI: An old labourer are sit on footpath along with tools as waiting for customers at Burns Road in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

The festival will continue till 22 January at Arts Council Karachi

News Desk

KARACHI: The 4th 17-day Tilism Theater and Dance Festival was grandly inaugurated with the classical performance of well-known classical dancer Sohail Abro, in conjunction with the completion of 45 years of Tehrik-e-Niswan, with the joint cooperation of Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi and Tehrik-e-Niswan. Sheema Karmani presented a great classical dance along with her dance group.

Romana Hussain performed the duties of the moderator in the event. The founder of Tehrik-e-Niswan Sheema Karmani said that the journey of Tehrik-e-Niswan is continuing with the hard work of the last forty-five years, we have struggled to convince

ourselves. today we are celebrating as the day of our being, I thank Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi who gave the opportunity to organize this festival, theater, dance, music, debates on daily basis in the festival. And games will be presented, the festival will continue till 22nd January 2023 while performances will be presented daily at 7:30 pm, the festival is free for all citizens but children under twelve years of age cannot participate in the festival. It is to be noted that many of the plays presented at the 4th Tilism Festival have been significant in the history of theater and dance in Pakistan, while the Mohenjo-daro Puppet Show was a highlight of the festival.

It should be noted that many of the plays presented



at the 4th Tilism Festival have been significant in the history of theater and dance in Pakistan, including the presentation of the Urdu version of "Light in the Village", originally written by Scottish playwright "Jo Clifford" who is coming from UK to attend the festival. She will

be the keynote speaker at the conference "Building a Theater of Love" on Monday 9 January, followed by 2 performances of her play "Gaoon Me Roshni" on Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 January, the highlight of the festival being the new production "Andrasbha". Premiere, it is a delightfully romantic

dance and music extravaganza with exquisite costumes, sets and lights, festival comedy drama "Bahrupiya", historical play "Jinnay Lahore Nahin Vekhya", Sufi poet, dancer, saint Bhagat Kanwar Ram. Including the story and to mark 100 years of the discovery of Mohenjo-daro, the spectacular dance drama "Mohenjo-daro" will be presented. The performance integrates dialogue and narrative with dance and music, traditional storytelling techniques and the conventions of sub continental traditions and genres. The movement produced videos, documentaries, serials and music videos, organized seminars and conferences and organized residential youth conventions for cultural appreciation

BISP to release first quarterly tranche of Rs. 7000/-

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is releasing the first quarterly installment of Rs.7000/- of Benazir Kafaalat for the year 2023 from Monday. About 7.7 million families would receive over Rs.55 billion in the first tranche.

The beneficiaries women and transgender of Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan will receive this money from Payment Centers or Biometric ATMs designated by Habib Bank; while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, the amount will be disbursed through Payment Centers or Biometric ATMs of Bank Al-Falah.

Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety/Chairperson BISP Ms. Shazia Marri, in her message to beneficiaries, said that transparency will be ensured at any cost while disbursing the funds. She stressed that the beneficiaries should receive their entire amount of rupees seven thousand and not to forget to get their payment receipt. She reiterated that no deduction can be made through this amount and there is no payment fee. If a person demands any kind of deduction or fee for payment, beneficiaries should immediately report to BISP's toll free helpline 080026477 and contact the nearest BISP Tehsil Office. She warned that the message sent by BISP will come from 8171 only and no message from any other number or code should be trusted, as it faked and fraudulent.



Bypass road construction decreases traffic flow: DC



Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: The Mega development project of rehabilitation of Faisalabad bypass road with the cost of 6.4 billion is underway. The Deputy Commissioner, Imran Hamid Sheikh inspected the quality of construction work at Makuana bypass road and took briefing on this ongoing project. The Deputy Commissioner expressed that, safety measures should be implemented responsibly during the construction while installing diversion and direction boards for alternative traffic flow. He further said that, civil rights should not be affected during the construction process. He also urged to speed up the construction process and said that there will be no compromise on this construction transparency in this regard. He said adding that, for the smooth flow of heavy traffic to go another adjacent districts, this Mega project will be a very important which will also reduced the load of traffic in the city, so the completion of this important project should be completed within the stipulated period. DD Development, Rana Tahir informed that 1.4 billion rupees has been allocated for the rehabilitation of Makuana bypass and continued monitoring was being carried out to complete the project within given time period.

Tourist destinations witnessing huge rush after first snowfall

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: With the onset of snowy season, a number of tourists from across the country have started visiting the hilly areas of the country to enjoy the enhanced beauty of nature during snowfall.



Despite biting cold, a great rush of tourists was witnessed on Sunday at popular tourism destinations including Murree, Malamajaba, Kalam, Naran, Kaghan, Swat, Hunza, Ziarat, Chitral and Kashmir, like every year.

A large number of families have planned to visit these areas with their families to enjoy the picturesque beauty of hilly areas and enjoy snowfall, taking advantage of winter vacations announced by the authorities till January 8.

Chief Executive Karakoram Explorers Mubarak Hussain told to media that number of local as well as international tourists was witnessing significant increase after the first snowfall of the season.

He told that Naran-Kaghan road was closed since November 2022, and the only available route to these destinations was Karakoram highway.

He advised the visitors to check weather advisory, road situations and routes before leaving for these destinations.

Keeping in view the weather conditions and increased visitors towards tourist destinations, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has issued advisory and directed the visitors to adopt precautionary measures to avoid inconvenience and save lives.

According to PTDC, tourist are advised to use extra warm cloths, keep the window of the cars open for fresh air and continually clean snow from the exhaust pipe of vehicles. The tourists are also asked to switch off the engine while standing still and not use heaters for more than ten minutes in an hour.

'Waziristan Aman Olasi Pason' protest sit-in regarding establishing peace has entered the third day

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: district headquarter wana of South Waziristan Lower Tribal District, "Waziristan Aman Olasi Pason" (Waziristan Peace People's Movement) continues its third day of protest against unrest, target killing, robbery and kidnapping for ransom.

A large number of people were present on the third day of the protest sit-in in connection with the establishment of peace.

On the other hand, Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi gave his stance and said that their demands are legitimate and the protesters have a ten-point agenda, work is already underway on it.

Efforts to resolve their legitimate demands have been intensified. Local leaders of all political parties, PPP, ANP, JUI, JI, PTI, NDM, PK Map, business community, PTM, tribal elders and youths for establishing peace at the local level. A large number of people participated in the protest.

Local leaders of various political parties expressed their views And "Waziristan Aman Olasi Pason" (Waziristan peace olive movement) presented a 10-point agenda to the government.

1: Peace is the responsibility of the civil government, if the police is required to conduct a search operation or action on wanted

persons or in a place, then action should be taken according to the law.

If the police need the FC or the army, the police can take help under Article 126 of the Order 2002.

2: The erstwhile FATA has been merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all the provisions of the 1973 Constitution are applicable to the areas of erstwhile FATA, Therefore, apart from the constitution and law, peace committee, national army or 2007 agreement are not acceptable to us in any case.

3: Peace in South Waziristan Lower is subject to the restoration of the government writ, for the restoration of the govern-

ment writ, a separate DPO, judges including all line departments should be shifted to Lower Waziristan.

4: Jamshed Wazir should be released immediately.

5: Police checkpoints should be established in small and big bazaars located at Spin, Azam Warsak, Shakai, Angorada, Zarmelan, Ragzai police stations.

To give legal powers and privileges to the police, to restore the closed jobs of the special force and to ensure the attendance of the existing police force.

6: FC should be deployed on emergency basis for the protection of police stations, police posts and police during patrolling.

7: Indiscriminate ban and strict



action should be taken against government/non-government vehicles with black glass, violators should be arrested and presented

in courts for legal action.

8: Indiscriminate action should be taken against drugs.

9: All types of armed organizations and miscreants should be banned.

10: To remove obstacles to trade on the Pak-Afghan border at Angoradaha, and to allow Pakistani identity card holders to enter Angoor adda Gate.

The participants of the sit-in said that if our legitimate demands are not accepted, the protest sit-in will continue.

The participants further said that we strongly demand the government to take our demands seriously and find a solution otherwise we will be forced to take strict step.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings
Fajr5:45 am
Zohr12:14 pm
Asr3:38 pm
Maghrib5:16 pm
Isha6:44 pm

EMERGENCY
Rescue (Police)15
Bomb Disposal15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations
Islamabad9222596
Rawalpindi9270601-20

ENQUIRY
Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA9281092

HOSPITALS
CMH561111
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHO5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS
CDA9221334-43
CDA9208301-04
Met Office9250360-6
RDA5555864
TMA5770886
Cantonment Board9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation9209224

Devcom-Pakistan Webinar

Pakistan need's people-centric National Security paradigm

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar urged for internal political stability and people-centric national security paradigm to meet the geopolitical and geo-economic challenges confronting the country. The vested interest of the key individuals runs the internal and foreign policy framework that is actually based on the short-term measures. A long term integrated and comprehensive national security framework is yet to come out.

The speakers mentioned that the Establishment could not be A-political. It has to watch the state direction and national interests in the context of changing geopolitical landscape. However, the Establishment shall have no political fiddling and interference. The political experimentation has led us to chaos and internal instability, denting the geo-economic interests.

The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN on Saturday. Speakers included former chief ISI Lt

General ret'd Muhammad Asad Durrani, Ambassador ret'd Asif Butt, National Defense University Assistant Professor Dr. Sumeera Imran, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed.

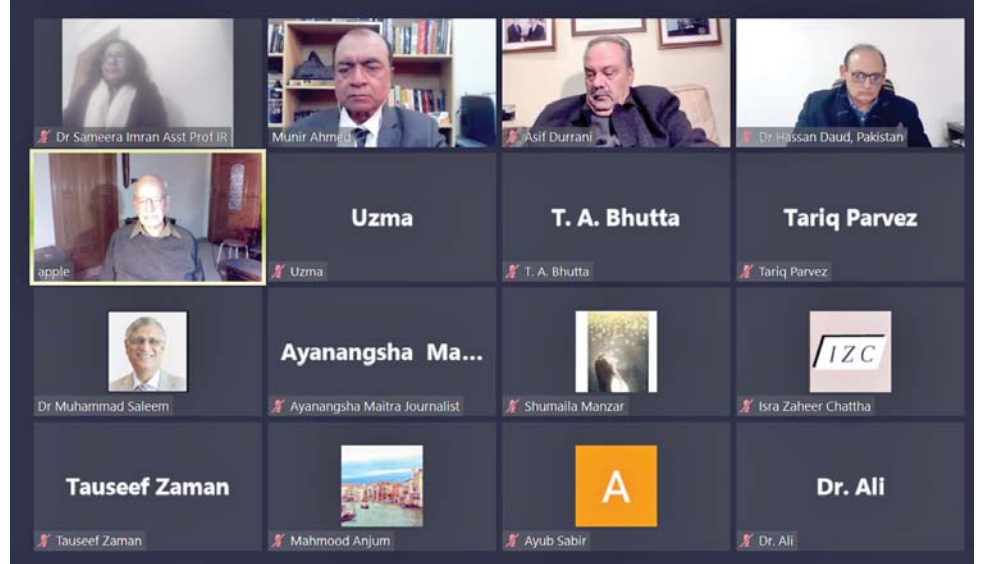
The keynote speaker Lt General ret'd Muhammad Asad Durrani said the National Security (NS) is a comprehensive concept. Its three pillars – internal, external and defence are linked to each other. The domestic front is the most important while other two are essentially its projection. A stable structure is built on firm foundations. In terms of NS, it implies strengthening the Civil Society. The “people centric” policies are therefore the mantra we often recite. Devolution or Local Governments are the doctrine and instrument to implement the policy objectives. “Subsidiarity” is the basic principle of Public Administration, which means that what can be done at a lower level, must not be undertaken at a higher level.

He said because of the weakness of our state structures, it's the

private sector that meets most of our needs, especially for the masses. Gaps in health and education for example are filled by the NGOs or through the individual enterprise. The best illustration of the role of our “Non-State Actors” is in the economic field. Undocumented, Underground, or whatever it may be described; this sector is now probably larger than the official economy. By keeping themselves out of the extractive state's stranglehold, it provides poor employment and affordable livelihood. They may even be helping the country to stay afloat despite the near collapse of our official economy.

Ambassador Ret'd Asif Durrani urged to take steps to come out of the 'security state' paradigm and focus more on the non-traditional security threats including and food and climate security. A long term consistent plan shall be focus of all stakeholders in the government and state institutions, supported by efficient geopolitical diplomacy.

Dr. Hassan Daud Butt stated that the crisis creates new opportunities and after COVID-19 and the



existing financial crises, we have an opportunity for introspection and also to establish a better pattern of development. In these challenging times, governments have a vital role to play in identifying low-hanging fruits in sustainable development. We must prioritize government investments toward a people-led paradigm rather than

a security paradigm. Infrastructure projects shall be the priority to create rural-urban synergy where the agriculture sector is a major contributor to national GDP.

Dr. Sumeera Imran said: Political instability, polarization and uncertainty are the greatest threats to Pakistan's stability. Political stability is the third important

pillar of state power, military and economic being others. In terms of parity and significance, political stability stands at par with military strength and economic security. Revival of the nation's confidence in the sanctity of the political system and administrative structure takes the first priority in any security resolution.

Zib Drive

ISLAMABAD: A tourist slides along a zip-line over the Margalla Hills at 6 Shah Allah Ditta area in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Aleem Khan dismisses reports of forming new political party



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmaker Aleem Khan has dismissed reports of forming or joining a new political party.

In a statement, the former PTI leader, who was disqualified as a lawmaker last year, said that he has good relations with Jahan-gir Tareen and Chaudhry Sarwar but right now he is only focused on his welfare project and had no plans to join any party.

“There is no truth in the reports of my inclusion in a new political party as right now I am only focused on welfare work,” he said in a statement.

The clarification from former PTI comes a day after it was reported that some PTI dissidents, led by Jahan-gir Tareen and himself, were weighing options to either join the PPP or form a new political party.

At least 25 PTI MPs — including Aleem Khan — had been disqualified in line with court order after they violated the party line last year and voted for PML-N chief minister candidate Hamza Shehbaz.

Railways all set to resume Green Line Train operations from mid-January

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is all set to resume Green Line Passenger Train operations from Islamabad to Karachi in mid-January as a superior service to facilitate the passengers and generate revenues for the department.

“The train is comprised of two AC Parlor, five AC Business, six AC Standards, and four to five economy class coaches which will facilitate the passengers on the route,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told to media.

He said the decision was taken on the directives of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad



Rafique, who wanted the best arrangements for the Green Line passenger Train for travelers.

The official said that the minister also directed the official concerned for reducing the travel time of the Green Line from Lahore to Karachi to less than 20 hours which would restore the confidence of the passengers.

“It is also decided to provide the best travelling facilities in the

Green Line train including the provision of high-quality food and keeping the ticket price at an affordable level. Besides, a separate LCD will be installed on each seat of the AC Parlor to let passengers enjoy favourite videos through headphones,” he added.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Green Line Train had been scheduled to start operations from December 20 last but due to some financial and other issues now it would start operations from mid-January.

To a question, he said Pakistan Railways was also going to expedite work to improve services in the passenger trains as well as at the major railway

stations by involving the private sector which would help address growing issues, especially related to cleanliness.

“The department was of the view that the cleanliness-related services in trains and at major stations, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Peshawar, Khanewal, Sukkur, Sahiwal, Multan, and Bahawalpur were not satisfactory,” he added.

He said that if services of the private sector were hired under a fast-track policy, the hygiene conditions at stations and in trains could be improved which would also restore the confidence of passengers in the department.

Training of field staff for 7th Population & Housing Census starts

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Training of Field Staff for 7th Population and Housing Census has started today.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) is going to conduct 7th population and housing census which will be first every digital census of Pakistan. In this connection PBS will train 1,21,000 field staff in three batches from 7th Jan, 2023 to 21st Jan, 2023 all over Pakistan at Census District level.

The field staff is being trained on ethical, IT and subject matter. The main focus is on standardizing the concepts as the quality of training will ensure reliability of data collection. To achieve this target apart from conventional training and conceptual videos, real life examples case studies, mock exercise and FAQs have also been added. To make the sessions interactive the trainer's involvement and questioning has been encouraged. Pre and Post-test and cross-questioning is also part of training.

All the training venues will be physically monitored by higher management of PBS, including Chief Census Commission, Dr. Naemuzzafar, Mr. Sarwar Gondal, Member (SS/RM), Mr. Ayazuddin Member (C & S), and team of monitors from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), to ensure the quality of training.

The trainings will assure that census field staff is fully prepared to collect accurate and reliable data.

Sara Malik case: Suspect confesses to killing girl after rape

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mystery circulating around the death of 22-year-old Sara Malik has been solved as the suspect arrested in the case has confessed to killing the girl after rape.

The 22-year-old girl Sara Malik went missing from Karachi's Seaview beach on Friday and it was later transpired by police that she might have committed suicide while jumping into the sea.

According to police, Dr Shan, nominated in the Sara Malik case, has confessed to killing Sara Malik after sexually assaulting her. The police investigation further said that the girl informed her father on phone about being raped by Dr Shan.

In an FIR registered with Sahil police station, the father of the victim girl alleged that her daughter was raped by the owner of the veterinary hospital and she might have committed suicide under mental stress. “Sarah left home on Friday to perform her duties as a veterinary doctor in private hospital,” he said in FIR, adding that she had a relationship with the owner of a veterinary hospital located in Karachi's Defence Nishat Commercial area.

It is pertinent to mention here that the body of a female doctor who allegedly drowned at Karachi's Seaview beach was recovered on Sunday morning.

ECP to announce verdict on holding Karachi, Hyderabad LG polls today

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will announce the reserved decision on holding the repeatedly-delayed local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad today (Monday).



The ECP had reserved verdict on petitions filed by MQM-Pakistan, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) over local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad.

A three-member ECP bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, reserved the verdict after hearing arguments of the MQM-P and other parties.

During the hearing, the Sindh government sought a week to submit arguments in the case as Additional Advocate General Fauzia Zafar appeared before the ECP unprepared.

The CEC abolished the defence right of the provincial government after its lawyer showed up in the case without preparation. In a petition, the Jamaat-e-Islami called upon the Election Commission of Pakistan to fulfil its constitutional responsibility by holding local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad on time.

PPP-led Sindh government and MQM-Pakistan had moved ECP over delay in LG polls due to delimitations issue.

It is pertinent to mention here that the new phase of the Sindh LG polls are scheduled for January 15 in Karachi Division after its postponement six times.

President & PM agreed to represent Occupied Kashmir in the representative legislative assembly of AJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Jammu Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan had an important meeting with the President Azad Jammu Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry in the Presidency, in which it was agreed to represent Occupied Kashmir in the representative legislative assembly of the state of Jammu Kashmir.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir has decided to continue the ongoing movement in Occupied Kashmir to further burn Pakistan, raise voice on Indian atrocities and human rights violations and take steps



to raise the Occupied Kashmir movement in a more effective manner at national and international forums.

Prime Minister Sardar

Tanveer Ilyas Khan and President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry have agreed on legislation to allocate specific seats in the Azad

Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly for Kashmiris living across the LoC. Prime Minister Azad Kashmir and President Azad Kashmir agreed to give effective representation to the non-Muslims of Occupied Kashmir in the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while consultations were also held on allocating honorary seats to the staunch Muslim leaders who played an important role during the Pakistan Movement.

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan and President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood declared that the hearts of

non-Muslim Kashmiris living across the LoC along with Muslims also beat for Pakistan, their emotions and feelings are connected with us that's why. We value them. Both the leaders say that humanity is ashamed of the way Dalits are being treated in India. Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs, Parsis also dream of a complete Pakistan because in the vision of Pakistan by the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, all religions were given equal opportunities to live and the followers of all religions got complete freedom and protection in the state of Pakistan.

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Iran regime divided on how to tackle protests: analysts

AFP Report

Islamic clerical regime is divided in its response to months of unprecedented protests, wavering between repression and what it views as conciliatory gestures trying to quell the discontent, analysts say.

"The conflicting messages we are getting from the Iranian regime suggest an internal debate on how to deal with ongoing protests," said Nader Hashemi, director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver.

"In most authoritarian regimes, there are hawks and doves" who disagree on how repressive the state should be during crises, he said.

The granting of retrials to several death-row protesters, and the release from detention of prominent dissidents, are signs that some seek to take a softer approach.

But a reminder of the hard-line tack came Saturday when Iran executed two men for killing a paramilitary member during protest-related unrest.

Demonstrations began after the September 16 death in custody of Kurdish-Ira-

nian Mahsa Amini, 22. She had been arrested by morality police who enforce a strict dress code which requires women to wear a scarf-like covering over their hair and neck.

The protests have escalated into calls for an end to the Islamic regime, posing the biggest challenge for the clerics since the 1979 revolution deposed the shah.

Authorities have responded with deadly violence that has left hundreds dead.

Thousands have been arrested and 14 detainees sentenced to hang, many for killing or attacking security force members, according to the judiciary.

"Experimenting" The Supreme Court has upheld some of the death sentences and a total of four men have now been executed. The judiciary has also announced retrials for six of the 14.

This reflects a "political calculus," said US-based Iran expert Mehrzad Boroujerdi, co-author of "Post-Revolutionary Iran: A Political Handbook".

"They know that mass executions will bring more people into the streets and further agitate them. On the

other hand, they want to send a signal that they are not reticent to execute protesters so that people are intimidated."

In what analysts see as another attempt to calm the situation, two prominent dissidents arrested early during the protests, Majid Tavakoli and Hossien Ronaghi, were freed weeks later. Ronaghi had been on a hunger strike.

The regime is using "everything from pressure release valves to long prison terms and executions. They are experimenting with these as they struggle to formulate a more clearly articulated policy," Boroujerdi said.

Anoush Ehteshami, director of the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the UK's Durham University, said the retrials partly reflected mounting foreign and domestic pressure.

"But also within the regime there is division about how to handle this," Ehteshami said, with hardliners on one side and others who see executions as further encouraging resistance.

Retrials and the release of dissidents are "measures of appeasement... to try and throw a bone" to the protesters, he added.

While such measures may appear insignificant, from the perspective of a "securitised, beleaguered regime... they think they are being magnanimous and responding to public pressure."

Survival: Celebrities have also been detained, but often for far shorter periods. Star actor Taraneh Alidoosti was freed on bail Wednesday after being held for almost three weeks over her support for the protests, her lawyer said.

Some analysts see this hold-and-release strategy as intimidation but it is also, according to Hashemi, part of the regime "testing the waters, seeing what the reaction is".

The "leniency" sometimes displayed by authorities "is an attempt to prevent further factionalism within the security establishment" as some of its members are alienated by the deadly bloodshed, said Afshin Shahi, associate professor in Middle Eastern studies at Keele University in the UK.

The regime "doesn't seem to have a clear strategy" in response to public anger, he added.

Despite some releases, other prominent figures have spent months in prison. These

include longtime activist Arash Sadeghi and the two Iranian journalists who helped expose Amini's case.

In early December, Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said the morality police had "been abolished". But no one else has confirmed this.

The announcement reflects the internal debate and shows that "at least one section of the ruling regime" favours a less brutal way of enforcing the female dress code, said Hashemi.

According to Ehteshami, some in authority "are now beginning to talk about a compromise", though it is too early to know what that would be.

But "in broad terms I don't think they have what the people want", which is wholesale change, the details of which have not been defined, he said.

The regime, however, has historically shown an ability to "make concessions when it has to", according to Hashemi.

"People forget that this regime has survived for 44 years because it can be very intelligent, very clever, very Machiavellian in terms of what it has to do to survive," he said.



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

Ukraine and Saudi Arabia: Broadening horizons of cooperation-I



Analysis
Petrenko Anatolii

yet exceeded five months. But from arrival, I have been astonished by the unprecedented hospitality and incredible support of all the people I have met along the way. Friendly, warm, welcoming and helpful to others — all of these words characterize the Saudi people.

But even more accurately, the leadership of Saudi Arabia is aware of public sentiment and this has been reflected in their consistent and unchanging position in supporting the Ukrainian people in the face of unprovoked Russian aggression. In particular, this was seen during a number of votes for key UN General Assembly resolutions condemning the acts of the aggressor.

Another example of the clear wisdom and sincere empathy of Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman was the generous humanitarian assistance provided in 2022 to Ukrainian civilians suffering from the horrific consequences of the Russian war. This is increasingly important against the backdrop of recent Russian terrorist attacks targeting Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure assets during the coldest period of the year.

And so it is my privilege to pass on words of gratitude to the political leadership of the Kingdom. The people of Ukraine will never forget your kindness and compassion. At the same time, we hope that our Saudi friends will continue to support Ukrainians, especially during the tough times to come.

Throughout the past year, we have had the pleasure of witnessing the intensified political dialogue between Ukrainian and Saudi leaders. New challenges and circumstances require a more active exchange of views and coordination on a number of issues that are of common interest. It has been an important milestone on the path to a deepening of friendly relations between our states.

We consider Saudi Arabia as a leader of the entire Muslim world, with a significant influence on a number of global processes, and as our important and promising partner in various areas of bilateral relations. And we hope that, in particular through our personal efforts, we will succeed in unleashing its significant potential.

In line with the above, Ukraine attaches great importance to the development of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation with Saudi Arabia, a major trading

and economic partner in the Middle East and Gulf regions. Despite the negative consequences of the Russian aggression on the Ukrainian economy and business activities, we managed a pretty decent level of bilateral trade over nine months in 2022, worth about \$583 million, with Ukrainian exports and imports estimated at \$365.3 million and \$217.9 million, respectively.

Along with this there is significant unlocked potential for further expansion and diversification, in particular through high-value-added products. Taking into account the Kingdom's geographical position and its influence in the region, Saudi Arabia can become a gateway for promoting and supplying Ukrainian goods to third-party markets in the Middle East and Africa on a mutually beneficial basis.

The events of the past year have made Ukraine reconsider its relations with countries in the Global South, which recently had been characterized by some share of inconsistency and irregularity. But the reality is that this region plays one of the most critical roles in the world.

To be concluded
 Writer is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

NSC meeting to counter security and economic challenges

The top most forum of the nation called the National Security Committee (NSC) held a comprehensive meeting for two days to contemplate on pressing challenges confronting the country, were extensively discussed and vital decisions were taken. The civil and military leadership took decisive action against terrorists and their facilitators to wipeout rising terrorism, militancy, and threatening national economic position. It is validly felt from the perusal of the press release that main focus of the NSC meeting was to crush and curb the explosive threat of terrorism. But the meeting seems to have accorded less importance to the equally dangerous crisis of the economy of the country which is being exploited by the forces opposed to the state as well as to the government.

There is no denying the fact that several nations lost their supremacy due to economic down fall. The National Action Plan has to be reactivated to get hold of terrorists and their facilitators hidden in, generally, holy mazzars, lungerkhanas, shelter homes, beggars and newspaper hawkers to mark high value targets.

The coalition government should take bold steps to adopt economic measures including austerity and frugality. It is surprising that press release of the meeting of the NSC has not laid as much emphasis to the national economic crisis as it deserves. We must seek to the principle and process of earning by saving.

The federal government needs to review the matter of undue and extraordinary concessions and perks allowed by some large organizations, like WAPDA giving free electricity to it employees, PIA granting annual recreation tour trips within and abroad, Railways issuing free travel passes in their trains, Coastal Guards officials allowed to purchase confiscated vehicles etc on depreciated prices.

The latest discovery of the potential of Toshakhana gifts requires immediate legislation to regulate the gifts consigned to Toshakhana, each of which carries the prestige and honor of the personality who offer the gifts and grace our dignitaries, political or otherwise.

The sacred watch and the only one of its kind in the world should have been placed at a prominent place for

the devotees for their sight for spiritual satisfaction and paying gratitude to the honorable donor who had got it prepared. In this matter we can follow the example of our honorable brother country Turkia who have enshrined and preserved the gifts, donations, and jewelry offered by the devotee Muslims for the support the Turkish Caliphate. The valuable sacrifice of South Asian Muslims has become a symbol of Islamic brotherhood and a bond of friendship for Pakistan and Turkia.

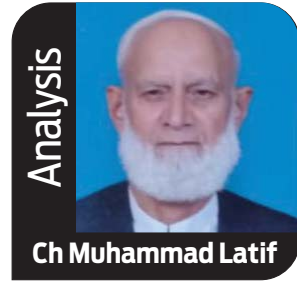
It is astonishing to see the wisdom and vision of the people at the helm of affairs that the schemes for the emelioration of energy position placed before the federal cabinet for sixty two billions are only conceptual and not implementable. The proposals in this respect seem to lead to confrontation and noncooperation by the opposite provincial governments.

The practicable and feasible measures for the federal government in the current political scenario would be advisable in the sectors and sphere where they have direct full administrative control. Instead of managing closing hours of offices and business concerns the apt and appropriate action would be to regulate opening time of offices and business community.

The order of one holiday in a week should be repeated. The federal government could freeze recruitments, trim public service, sell or lease loss making enterprises, crush smuggling of commodities and currency, ban tours and transfers.

The federal government should encourage micro level development oriented schemes like building of artificial lakes, check dams, water reservoirs, water tanks, and roads in rural areas with public participation resulting in jobs for the jobless. The concept of protocol is using major chunks of police force and the public is left at the mercy of bandits and rascals for street crimes. In the open day light male and female travelers are looted in the streets and nowhere police is visible nor available. The number of national flag holders should be reduced to release the police force for their basic duty of law and order. A line should be drawn in security and protocol objectives.

The writer is Retired Additional Chief Secretary and Advocate Supreme Court of AJK.



Analysis
Ch Muhammad Latif

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said

He led by example, and left a living legacy

Born in 1920, orphaned at 2, brought up by a remarkable young widowed mother who kept her late husband's business running, mentored by his older brother (Abdul Hameed), young Mohammed Said, after his initial schooling, studied and trained in Unani (Graeco-Arab) Medicine, as did his brother. They both had before them the shining example of their father, Hakim Hafiz Abdul Majeed, who, though he died at only 39, had made a name for himself and the establishment he had set up in 1906 – Hamdard. It has continued to live up to its name, which means 'sharer of pain' or 'sympathizer'.

Hamdard Pakistan (1948)

Hakim Mohammed Said migrated to Pakistan in 1948, and established Hamdard in Pakistan the same year. His father's Hamdard had been a 1-room shop in Old Delhi, divided in two by a curtain. Hakim Mohammed Said too started Hamdard in Karachi in 2 rooms, rented in Aram Bagh. That matab is still operational – and, ironically, it was outside its doorstep that he was assassinated in 1998 – ending his career in Pakistan where he had begun it. But 70 years after his birth, that clinic has been joined by scores more, till there is a nationwide network of free Hamdard matabs, where patients are examined and diagnosed without cost, and only the very economically priced medicines need to be bought.

Waqf (1953) and then Foundation established (1964)

A mere 5 years later, in 1953, Hamdard had already established a reputation for quality herbal medicaments and health-care. But instead of reaping the benefits for himself, Hakim Mohammed Said converted it into a Waqf, the profits of which were – and are – used for Allah's work: charity, nation-building, and culture-promoting activities. Some years later in 1964, the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan was formed, to take considered decisions about the disbursement of the Laboratory funds and lay down guidelines for Hamdard's activities, which continued to widen.

Hamdard Free Mobile Dispensaries (1953)

In 1953, one vehicle was provided with free health-care facilities for the needy at their doorsteps, in remote



areas of Karachi. Today, there is a fleet of 22 of these – each carrying a trained hakim and herbal medicines. They serve eleven cities of the country, and reach and treat over 450,000 people every year.

Hamdard Naunehal (1953)

Also in 1953, Hakim Mohammed Said started publication of an Urdu monthly magazine for children. Its aim was 'infotainment' as well as character development – and unconsciously the young readers learnt good language skills. Over 66 years later it is still going strong! A provincial governor once said he had almost been brought up on Naunehal!

Hamdard Tibbia College (1958)

1958 saw Hakim Mohammed Said's first venture into education. Today, it is known as the Hamdard Al-Majeed College of Eastern Medicine and forms a Faculty of the Hamdard University, offering a 5-year HEC recognised degree course in Unani medicine.

Sham-e-Hamdard (1961) and Shura Hamdard (1995)

The former became one of the best-known and popular forums in the country, hosting seminars and lectures in major cities, every month. This was

converted into Shura Hamdard Pakistan and continues as a platform for thinkers, writers, poets, and historians, discussing national issues, making recommendations for concrete steps, which are sent to concerned government departments.

Bazm-e-Hamdard Naunehal (1985) & Hamdard Naunehal Assembly (1995)

The former was converted to the latter. Children between 8 and 15 are given a forum to voice their thoughts on important issues. Not only does this increase awareness, it is excellent training for confident self-expression.

Well-known media and political personalities have emerged from these sessions. They are held monthly in major Pakistan cities.

Hamdard Public School (1987)

One of Hakim Mohammed Said's most cherished ideals was to help in spreading education – and not just subjects in the curriculum, but also a grounding in moral values and those cultural norms which were worth preserving.

Focus on high standards of such an education was the purpose of establishing Hamdard Public School, with no more than 30 pupils per class, so as

to ensure adequate teacher's attention. Excellent results in examinations bear witness to the success of achieving this goal. Pleasant environment and sports facilities add to the good experience.

Bait al-Hikmah Library (1989)

Bait al-Hikmah is the main library at Hamdard University, Karachi. It opened in December 1989. Bait al-Hikmah Library has large collection of books and journals on different subjects and in different languages, covering Science and Technology, Medicine, Management Sciences, Indo-Pakistan History, Islam and Religion, Traditional/Alternative Systems of Medicine, Social Sciences and Jurisprudence besides Urdu, English, Arabic and Persian Literature, as well as departmental specialised libraries of the Hamdard University at College of Medicine, College of Eastern Medicine, Institute of Management Sciences, Institute of Education and Social Sciences, Institute of Information Technology, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Legal studies which meet the needs of their students and teachers to a considerable extent.

Hamdard University (1991)

Situated in Madinat al-Hikmah:



City of Education, Science and Culture, on the outskirts of Karachi, is the ever-expanding Hamdard University – the largest private one in Pakistan. It has 7 faculties, also city campuses, and one in Islamabad. It is unique in offering degree courses in both eastern and allopathic medicine, and the first to recognize and give faculty importance to Information Technology (IT).

Hamdard University Hospital (1997)

Not content with only catering to the educational needs of middle and upper classes, Hakim Mohammed Said opened the unique Hamdard Village School for the children of villages surrounding Madinat al-Hikmah. Not only was the tuition

completely free, but books, stationery, schoolbags, uniforms, and shoes were (and are) provided gratis. Vocational training is also provided. Starting from a suspicious and reluctant handful in 1997 the student numbers have swelled to over 700. Not just that, they have competed in inter-school events and won prizes!

Hamdard University Hospital (1997)

Hamdard University Hospital (aka Taj Medical Complex) is not only a teaching hospital for its undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate medical students, it is a fully functional 300-bed hospital, providing the best possible treatment to patients at subsidized rates.

Iran determined to form joint military working group with Pakistan: Cmdr

News Desk

TEHRAN: General Baqeri made the remarks in a telephone conversation with Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza.

Over the phone, Baqeri congratulated General Shamshad Mirza on his appointment as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan.

Baqeri said that the armed forces of Iran and Pakistan have had cordial ties, especially in ensuring security in joint borders.

Launch of border markets is an effective step towards deepening security in the joint border crossings, General Baqeri underlined.

For his part, the Pakistani general said there is no obstacle to development of bilateral interactions. Shamshad Mirza termed the Pakistan-Iran joint border as the border of peace and friendship.

He further said his country has always been a supporter of the Islamic Republic in the international arena, in the issue of nuclear energy in particular.

He went on to say that Pakistan prioritizes formation of a joint military working group between the two countries.

The Pakistani official also appreciated the Islamic



Republic's stance on the issue of Kashmir. Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had said "Kashmir is an issue of humanity."

President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation greets success of CCP

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation Aasma Ismail said that we congratulate the People's Republic Of China for remarkable success of the Chinese Communist Party. We support the Pakistan-China youth policies of President Xi Jinping. Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong's services in Pakistan-China relations are of great value. Through his efforts, Pakistan-China friendship and diplomat-



ic relations have become stronger and more stable. She expressed these views on the occasion of organizing a special event in celebration of the New Year orga-

nized by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. On the special invitation of Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong, President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation Aasma Ismail participated that occasion.

During the meeting, Pakistan-China relations were discussed between President of federation Aasma Ismail and Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong. On this occasion, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong praised

the services of President Aasma Ismail for the Federation and invited her to visit China. And he said that Federation President Aasma Ismail played a vital role in strengthening Pakistan-China friendship from the platform of her organization. Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said that after three years of continuous efforts, the Chinese government was able to control Covid-19. Now, as before, China's doors are open for tourists and business communities from around the world.

We are studying legal and political steps to respond to the occupation govt's actions against our people: Al-Maliki

RAMALLAH: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Riyad Al-Malki, said, "We are studying legal and political steps to respond to the actions of the Israeli occupation government against our Palestinian people, due to the State of Palestine's resort to the International Court of Justice."

Al-Maliki affirmed in statements to the "Voice of Palestine" radio station, today, Sunday, that the occupation's measures violate international law, and come in response to a natural right that the law provides to the State of Palestine, to get rid of the decades-long occupation.

He said, "We will call, in a letter to foreign ministries around the world, to take a clear position on these measures, so that the occupying power realizes that it is not completely free to act as it pleases."

He explained that work is continuing to build an international public opinion against the occupying power and its racist regime after exposing its crimes before the countries of the world.

Thai king's daughter remains unconscious weeks after collapsing



News Desk

BANGKOK: Thailand's Princess Bajrakitiyabha remained unconscious more than three weeks after collapsing due to a heart problem, a palace statement said in an update on the health of the 44-year-old potential heir to the throne.

The eldest child of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn lost consciousness on Dec. 15 due to severe heart arrhythmia resulting from inflammation following a mycoplasma infection, according to a statement issued by the palace late on Saturday.

The princess's "overall condition is that she remains unconscious," the palace said.

"Doctors continue to provide medicine and use equipment to support the functions of the heart, lung and kidney as well as using antibiotics while monitoring her condition closely," it said.

Princess Bajrakitiyabha fell ill while preparing her dogs for a competition in northeastern Nakhon Ratchasima province, where she was initially treated before being taken by helicopter to Bangkok.

She is one of three children of King Vajiralongkorn who have formal titles, making her eligible for the throne under a palace succession law and the country's constitution.

The king has yet to formally designate an heir and there has been no official discussion on the prospect of the princess taking the throne.

BankIslami sponsors Karachi eat festival as exclusive banking partner

News Desk

KARACHI: BankIslami, Pakistan's leading Islamic financial institution with 350+ branches in more than 123 cities is once again sponsoring Eat Festival Pakistan; being held in Karachi at Beach View Park in Clifton on 6th, 7th and 8th of January, 2023, as an exclusive banking partner. This time around, BankIslami is going massive with an exclusive pavilion, free entry for BankIslami MasterCard holders, and Branch on Wheels-ATM service!

The BankIslami MasterCard holders will be granted 2 free entries by presenting their BankIslami MasterCard and CNIC at BankIslami's exclusive entrance, for a smooth and hassle-free experience. The Bank's pavilion at the festival will feature exciting activities such as a VR station, real-time One Touch Banking simulation and a 360-go-round photo station, and instant account opening through digital on boarding.

Speaking about the event, BankIslami President and CEO Syed Amir Ali said, "We at BankIslami, are thrilled to welcome you all to Pakistan's biggest food festival and are proud to be associated with it for the past two years. We urge you all to eat your heart's fill and not worry about going cashless because BankIslami's Branch on Wheels-ATM service is here to serve you!"

All attendees must follow COVID-19 standard operating procedures and keep their vaccination certificates and CNICs with them.

Ex. FPCCI official calls for payment of taxes with honesty

PESHAWAR: Former vice president, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mohammad Adnan Jalil has urged on the people to pay their taxes with honesty and timely to generate resources for the progress and development.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that the prevailing economic situation of the country would not remain the same and we would soon come out soon of the current crisis.

Adnan Jalil, who has also served as president, Peshawar Chamber of Small Traders and Industries, said that the current situation was not developed in few months, rather it was triggered by the Covid pandemic, devastated floods and confrontational politics.

He said that Pakistan was a beautiful country and its various regions and provinces had separate potentials, particularly the huge potentials of tourism and cheap hydel power generation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, he said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Riqo Deck are also game changers to earn billions of dollars and clear our liabilities with international financial institutions.

Similarly, he has also called for the utilization of the oil and gas potentials of districts Kohat and Karak of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to control the energy crisis in the country.

He also called for arrest of the devaluation of the rupee against dollar and asked the central bank to play its due role in this regard to prevent price hike and multiplying woes of the people.

He further called for bringing improvement in the governance system to eradicate corruption. He also stressed the need for political stability and urged all political parties to sign a charter of economy on the pattern of Charter of Democracy between PPP and PML-N to bring an end to the current political instability.

He appreciated the lifting of ban on the opening of the Letter of Credit (LC) and was hopeful that the step would usher positive change and restore the confidence of stock exchange and business community. APP

Exchange firms willing to open LCs for imports at open market rates

Web Desk

KARACHI: Exchange firms on Saturday offered the government to pay for the opening of letters of credit (LCs) for imports as banks hesitate to do so due to a shortage of foreign reserves.

General Secretary Exchange Companies Association, M Zafar Paracha, said in a statement that numerous sectors and industries are facing issues due to the banks' refusal to open the letters of credit.

Taking note of the crisis, the exchange companies decided to share the load, offering to assist the government by providing the needed US dollars, just as these firms do for credit card settlement, education purposes and medical treatments abroad, as well as Hajj, Umrah, religious pilgrimages, and other travels, he added.

Paracha said, "If the government allows, the exchange companies are ready to pay up to USD 50,000/- for the pending LCs and open new LCs to facilitate the concerns for the nation and country."

He added that this would assure the availability of essentials and ease the government's burden.

Prime Minister's resolve to meet IMF conditionalities lauded

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday lauded the resolve of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to meet International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities.

Prime Minister has expressed resolve to complete the terms of the IMF Extended Fund Facility programme which is a step in the right direction as it will subside anxiety in the market, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman of PVMA said that the PM has assured the Managing Director of the IMF to complete the terms of the IMF's program and explained Pakistan's economic difficulties after the devastating floods.

IMF delegation will come to Pakistan soon which is also a piece of good news which will



tackle fears among the investors and masses as some elements are busy spreading rumours

about default, he added.

Pakistan entered a \$6 billion IMF programme in 2019, which was increased to \$7 billion last year. The programme's ninth review, which if completed successfully, would result in the release of \$1.18bn to Pakistan.

The review is currently pending as the government did not comply with the agreement which prompted IMF to suspend the tranche.

The IMF review has earlier been put off for two months due to the PML-N-led government's unwillingness to accept certain conditions placed before it by the Fund, and the disagreements have yet to be resolved.

The business leader said that the international community seems unconcerned about the plight of people in Pakistan hit by floods. Large parts of the Sindh and Balochistan provinces remain inundated. The number of

food-insecure people in Pakistan has doubled to 14 million and another 9 million have been pushed into extreme poverty.

These flooded areas now look like permanent lakes, transforming forever the terrain and the lives of people living there. No amount of pumps can remove this water in less than a year.

Pakistan is suffering not just from flooding but from recurring climate extremes. In spring 2022, the country was in the grip of a scorching, drought-aggravating heat wave that caused forest fires. The fact that some of the same areas that received record temperatures were subsequently submerged shows sharp swings in weather patterns that are becoming a norm.

Pakistanis have responded to this latest calamity with resilience despite facing severe economic headwinds.

Chainstores denounce undue impediments on retail trade to 8:30pm

News Desk

LAHORE: The Chainstore Association of Pakistan (CAP), the certified trade body of organized retailers in the country, has denounced the undue impediments on retail trade to 8.30 pm. The CAP further sensitized the government that the restriction was not doable nor would serve any purpose; rather would mount up economic uncertainties.

The savings estimate of Rs 5 billion per month (Rs. 62 billion annually) appears to be short-sighted because restricting peak hours of business between 7 and 10 pm is expected to result in over 25% drop in turnover of affected retailers and allied industries, employment, and tax revenues. Retail trade contributes above Rs. 12 trillion (\$58 billion) to the annual GDP and employs over 10,000,000 people directly. Therefore, such a big shock will cut at least Rs. two hundred fifty billion per month in economic activity or 50 times the claimed savings in energy. Resultantly, over Rs. 50 billion in

tax generation per month will be compromised at a time when the state is trying to boost much-needed taxes. The CAP also pointed out that the Government earned more from the commercial unit consumed by the malls.

While speaking to the media regarding the latest announcement by the Federal Government, the CAP Chairman, Tariq Mehboob Rana, griped that Govt. never consulted the sake holders before imposing such an imprudent decision. Such decisions have to eventually be reversed due to pressure from the various affected businesses and trade bodies. With broad-based consultation with stakeholders Govt. can make better & sustainable decisions. Retailers and many other businesses can turn off up to half their lights for the entire day and save much more energy", Tariq said.

"Why do we compare ourselves to Western countries when their climate, market dynamics, and consumer behavior are different from ours, Rana questioned. In similar Asian cities, such as Dubai, Bang-

kok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Mumbai, the high streets and shopping malls are usually shut by 10 or 11 pm, leaving the festivals. Chain stores do not wish to keep their shops late into the night on a regular basis because it is not productive to do so.

Instead of irrational curtailing timings, retailers and many other businesses can turn off half their lights for the entire day and save much more in return. The commercial sector only consumes 7% of the total electricity at the highest tariffs, approximately Rs. 65-70 per unit (including taxes). Chairman CAP claimed that many large stores and shopping malls have already installed solar energy and are utilizing energy-efficient lighting and cooling/heating technologies. Our points-of-sale are directly connected with the FBR, and we are documenting all our sales and purchases while paying 20-25% of our gross turnover in the form of GST, income tax, etc. Tier-1 Retailers are the Government's best customers but are being treated like the worst, said the Chairman of CAP.

APBF for taking serious measures, as depleting reserves hit economy hard



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has stressed the need for taking serious measures, as the current economic situation, marred by depleting foreign reserves, has also forced commercial banks to be selective in opening LCs even for sectors such as healthcare, as it has been unable to open Letters of Credit (LCs) as per its usual banking cycle.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood lamented that the economists foresee an imminent humanitarian and healthcare crisis in Pakistan unless prompt actions are taken by the State Bank of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance and other institutions to avert the disaster.

He said that the rupee still continues to witness volatile trend in the process of trading against dollar and other major currencies. He observed that having a clear policy to curb the volatility in exchange market, the central bank should be fully geared to act and monitor the movements more vigilantly and should be ahead of the curve as they have more information than an average market player.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi observed that the foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank fell to \$4.5 billion after Pakistan returned over \$1 billion loans of two foreign commercial banks, hardly enough to finance 25 days of import. Referring to

the reports, he said that two separate repayments of \$600 million and \$415 million have been made to two Dubai-based commercial banks, according to reports. After the loans repayments, Pakistan is left with less than 25 days of import cover.

Ibrahim Qureshi observed that the economic activities in the country have already been severely affected due to depleting reserves, devaluation of local currency and non-opening of letter of credits (LCs) for private companies. Major industries, including car manufacturing companies, have temporarily closed their plants due to import restrictions.

According to reports, Pakistan is expecting to raise around \$1.5 to \$2 billion worth of funds in foreign aid during Geneva Conference to be held next week for the country's flood victims. Besides, efforts are also underway to arrange loans from Saudi Arabia and China. It is expected that Pakistan and International Monetary Fund will hold discussion next week for the completion of the pending 9th review of the program.

Maaz Mahmood said that the 9th review talks have been pending since Oct last year, resulting in the withholding of a \$1.1 billion loan tranche. Pakistan is keen to complete the 9th review so that the World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) may also release their loans.

He said that Pak Suzuki Motor Company Ltd has extended plant shutdown from Jan 9-13 due to a continued shortage of imported parts. Due to the continued shortage of inventory level, the management of the company has decided to extend the shutdown of the automobile plant from January 9, 2023.

Public buy subsidized ATTA

RAWAPINDI: A large number of citizens gather to buy subsidized sacks of flour from a sale point at Committee Chowk area in the city. People are suffering from high price of flour in Pakistan.



Photo: Online

Closing day of Future Fest

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The third and closing day of Future Fest, Pakistan's largest tech conference and expo witnessed the signing of over 50 MoU signings worth \$100 million. Indeed, these agreements and their ongoing financial impact stand to serve as an important contribution to Pakistan's digital economy.

Key agreements signed at Future Fest's concluding day include; An Investment and global expansion partnership signing MoU between GINKGO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's DIGGIPACKS; the launch of Bridging to Saudia and Saudi Arabia based Tracking.me acquiring Telematics Private Limited, a Pakistani company. Further, Tracking signed with Technomatics, Tracking.me signed with Fori Inc, Reskills signing with PNY Trainings, Saudi Azm - Ejad Labs - MK, Ejad Labs with Everest Square Management, Octek with Saudi Azm, and Classera with Ejad Labs.

Additionally, the potential for formal partnerships was explored between Reskills and PITB, Ginkgo Retail Gained Investment, Takad-ao and Craftoo, vFAIRS, Institute of Entrepreneurship and PAFLA and NUST's E-clinic devices for home

care with 2 companies.

The event was supported by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, who also inaugurated the event as chief guest. In addition to this, multiple government representatives participated in the 3 day expo including but not limited to; Dr. Arslan Khalid, Special Adviser to CM Punjab on IT, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Additional Foreign Secretary for Middle East - Ministry of Foreign Affairs Islamabad, and Mr. Emran Akhtar, former Advisor to the Foreign Minister of Pakistan who initiated and led Pakistan's joining of the Digital Cooperation Organisation as a Founder Member in 2020.

The 3 day tech conference and expo, witnessed over 100,000 attendees, an estimated 500 companies participated from across the world with approximately 250 speakers and 150 international guests from 15 countries.

Key highlights from the concluding include a fireside chat with Coke Studio Season producer Zulfikar Jabbar Khan (Xulfi) and Zeeshan Haider Sikandar, Manager Coke Studio. Talks from Taha Memon, Founder & CEO, Founders Club International, Saqib Azhar, CEO, Enablers, Ayesha Nasir, Founder & CEO Scary Ammi, Ijaz Nisar, Pres-

ident & Founder - CEO Club Pakistan, Ali Hasnain Rizvi, Chief Technology Officer- ID- Ware, Andreas Tsindos, CEO- MWAN Mobile, Mohammad Khanani, CEO- mGadgets, Haseeb Khan, Vice-President- Technology tkxe, Azad Chaiwala, CEO Azad Chaiwala Institute, Mirza Saad Baig, Co-Founder - RAWTS.

Future Fest 2023 has hosted a historic delegation of Saudi startups and venture capitalists who met with Pakistani companies and key stakeholders to explore investments, partnerships, acquisitions, and talent recruitment.

Dedicated to using technology to pave the way for the future of Pakistan, the event brought together leaders from more than 50 industries for dialogue, exchange and connect including entrepreneurs, decision makers, policymakers, thought leaders, investors, and innovators who engaged in discussions focussing on technology playing a positive role to

#SaveTheFuture.

Sessions included master classes, fireside chats and panel discussions from top industry leaders who talked about diverse subjects ranging from web3, scaling tech, worldview, gaming, storytelling, music, policy, governance, EdTech and Skills.

The dates for next year's Future Fest were also announced at the event and Pakistan's biggest tech conference and expo will reconvene from 2nd to 4th February 2024.



