



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: منافق کی علامتیں تین ہیں۔ جب بات کرے جھوٹ بولے، جب وعدہ کرے اس کے خلاف کرے اور جب اس کو امین بنایا جائے تو خیانت کرے۔
(کنج غفری: حدیث نمبر 33)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Dar appreciates WB support for flood-hit Pakistan

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Monday appreciated the World Bank for providing financial and technical support to cope with the challenge posed by the floods in Pakistan. The minister said this during a meeting with World Bank Vice President Martin Raiser on the sidelines of International Conference on 'Climate Resilient Pakistan' in Geneva. (Report on Page 8)



People disappointed with Imran searching for other options: Khawaja Asif

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said people disappointed with PTI chairman Imran Khan were looking for other political parties. Speaking to media, he said eighteenth amendment to the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan holds govt, and no one else, responsible for flour crisis in the province. "Punjab will witness a change, anyhow, if the ruling coalition has majority, why is it reluctant to obtain a vote of confidence", he added.

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At Climate Resilience Conference

GENEVA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Secretary General United Nations Antonio Guterres at International Conference on Resilient Pakistan being held in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland on Monday.



Photo: PID

COAS Asim Munir meets Saudi crown prince, discusses bilateral ties



Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir held a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman.

Both high ups discussed ways to develop bilateral relations in addition to issues of mutual interest, said state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA). Saudi Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman, and other officials of the kingdom and Pakistan were also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, the Saudi premier felicitated Mr Munir on becoming Pakistan Army chief. They also agreed to strengthen bilateral relations.

A day earlier, the Pakistan Army chief performed Umrah and also offered prayers inside the Holy Kaaba.

Last week, COAS Asim Munir arrived in Saudi Arabia on his first official visit to a foreign country since assuming the command of Pakistan armed forces. He has held a meeting with the Saudi defence minister wherein matters of mutual interests were discussed.

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The kingdom's minister in a tweet said, "We emphasized the strategic partnership between our brotherly countries, reviewed the bilateral military and defense relations, and discussed ways of strengthening our cooperation".

After wrapping up his visit to Saudi Arabia, the COAS would head to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss bilateral security cooperation.

Meanwhile, the Inter-Services Public Relations said the army chief is on an official visit to Saudi Arabia and UAE from Jan 4 to Jan 10. COAS will be meeting the senior leadership of both brotherly countries to discuss matters of mutual interest military to military cooperation and bilateral relations focusing on security related subjects.

Pakistan secures over \$10bln in pledges at Climate Resilience Conference

News Desk

GENEVA: Pakistan on Monday secured over \$ 10 billion pledges from the international financial institutions, donor agencies and development partners for the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction of flood affected areas, during an International Conference on Climate Resilience.

The major pledges made at the conference, co-chaired by Pakistan and the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, included \$ 4.2 billion from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), \$ 2 billion from the World Bank, \$ 1.5 billion from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), \$ 1 billion from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and \$ 1 billion from Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif led the Pakistan delegation at Geneva moot where

he described in detail Pakistan's Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF), which laid out a multi-sectoral strategy for rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate-resilient and inclusive manner.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb were part of the prime minister's delegation.

Speaking at the concluding session of the conference, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar said the bilateral and multilateral partners of Pakistan announced commitments totaling more than 9 billion dollars. Further announcements for in-kind support were made by a



number of delegations, she added.

During the conference, she said the delegations recalled their assistance to the immediate relief efforts and affirmed their support to the people of Pakistan for a resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. They expressed their solidarity and announced commitments of financial support to the realization of the objectives and priority areas outlined in the 4RF, as well as to ongoing humanitarian efforts.

Since June 2022, the minister said, a combination of heavy rains and riverine, urban, and flash flooding led to an unprecedented

support of a Core Group of partners comprising the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the United Nations agencies, and the World Bank Group. The PDNA estimates recovery needs at over USD 16 billion. Housing, agriculture and livestock, as well as transport and communication sectors were most impacted. Sindh was the province worst-affected by the disaster, followed by Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab.

Based on the PDNA, the Core Group has supported the Government of Pakistan in developing a Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF). The 4RF provides an overarching framework for planning, financing, implementing and monitoring Pakistan's resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, she added.

UN chief speaks out for Pakistan's cause amid 'climate chaos'

News Desk

GENEVA: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called for massive support to help Pakistan with a \$16 billion rebuilding effort following devastating floods, saying the country had been the victim of climate chaos and the global financial system.

Officials from 40 countries as well as private donors and international financial institutions are gathering for a meeting in Geneva as Islamabad seeks support in what is expected to be a major test case for who pays for climate disasters.

The floods of September 2022 claimed 1,700 lives and displaced around eight million people.

"We must match the heroic response of the people of Pakistan with our own efforts and massive investments to strengthen their communities for the future," Guterres said in opening remarks.

"Pakistan is doubly victimised by climate chaos and a morally bankrupt global financial system," he added, calling for creative ways for developing countries to access debt relief and financing.

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Ijaz ul Haq calls on Imran amid no-trust vote saga

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) chairman Ijaz ul Haq on Monday called on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan amid calls for no-trust vote against Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Parvez Elahi.

Speaking to media outside Mr Imran's residence at Zaman Park, former president Zia ul Haq's son said he had met Mr Imran after a long time. "Country's economy is on the verge of default and only fresh elections could steer the country out of crisis", he added. The present dilapidation, he said, had been brought by the incumbent government.

Sanaullah asks CM Elahi to step down

Special Correspondent

LAHORE: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah asked on Monday Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi to step down.

In a press conference, Mr Sanaullah stated that the current speaker should not preside over the PA meeting on Elahi's vote of confidence, and that the PA meeting should be presided over by a panel of chairs. Demanding CM Elahi's resignation, Mr Sanaullah stated that he [Elahi] was not having complete number game to secure his position.

Speaking about the Wazirabad incident, Mr Sanaullah said that key suspect Naveed was a true accused in the gunfire incident, adding that a large amount of data was recovered from his mobile phone. Mr Sanaullah said Naveed opened fire for at least eight times.

In response to the possibility of the government negotiating with the



PTI, Mr Sanaullah stated that if PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry contacts the coalition government, there is a chance of holding talks with the PTI. Mr. Chaudhry, he added, had a better political mindset than the rest of the PTI leaders.

Drawing a line between the politics of the PML-N and those of his political opponents, Mr Sanaullah said, "To crush our political opponents is not on our party's agenda." He took a swipe at the PTI chief, saying, "Imran doesn't listen to

others. It is important to solve the problems by negotiations, but not by taking a dig at others."

Going back to November 26, Mr Sanaullah said, "When Imran realised that people were not coming in large numbers, Imran came up with the plan to dissolve the assemblies."

Mr. Sanaullah slammed Mr. Khan, claiming that he was talking about the country's default for the past two months, which could left the country in political turmoil.

Talking about the establishment's role, Mr Sanaullah said, "At this point, the establishment is showing neutrality."

Continuing to berate the deposed premier Imran Mr Sanaullah said, "Imran is continuously involved in tussle with all the political parties, including the PML-Q. This person is spreading anarchy. If Imran is not defeated by the power of the vote, the country will suffer the consequences."

Will take vote of confidence at will: Asad Umar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Asad Umar said on Monday the Punjab Chief Minister's vote of confidence will be taken at will.

Addressing the media, Mr Umar went on to say the PTI lawmakers were receiving calls, but there was no impact on them. Mr Umar lashed out at the coalition government for causing an uproar by having a number game in the Punjab Assembly.

Mr Umar, recalling the importance of the elections, stated that the time had come to hold immediate snap elections in the country in order to get the country out of its difficulties.

Bilawal felicitates Qin Gang on appointment as new Chinese FM

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday held a telephone conversation with Qin Gang, the newly appointed Foreign Minister of China.

Conveying his felicitations on Foreign Minister Qin's new appointment, the Foreign Minister noted that Pakistan and China are time-tested friends and All-Weather Partners, with a long history of mutual support and cooperation.

The two Foreign Ministers discussed regional issues of mutual interest. They reaffirmed commitment of Pakistan and China to advance the bilateral All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, a press release issued by the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The Foreign Minister thanked Foreign Minister Qin for China's active participation in and support for the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being held in Geneva.

China's generous and timely assistance for post-flood reconstruction was a source of comfort for millions in Pakistan, and served as a glowing example of international cooperation, he added.

With the approach of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Foreign Minister conveyed his best wishes and warm greetings to Foreign Minister Qin and to Wang Yi, Politburo Member and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, whom Qin

Pakistan receives \$10.7bn pledges for flood recovery: Ahsan Iqbal

News Desk

GENEVA: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that donors had so far committed US\$10.7 billion to help Pakistan build back the infrastructure damaged by the devastating floods and torrential rains.

This conference has proved to be an extraordinary success for Pakistan as the country receives pledges more than expected, the minister said on the sidelines of the International Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference here.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team's extraordinary efforts in taking the case of Pakistan's devastation at the international level resulted in unprecedented success, Ahsan Iqbal said.

"I also thank the President of the United Nations who effectively presented Pakistan's loss and challenge before the world", he said.

Ahsan Iqbal congratulated Pakistani nation for managing in getting

a big success for the country on the international front.

"Now in the next phase, with the help of the pledged funds, we will start a new journey of reconstruction and rehabilitation, build new infrastructure, help our people rehabilitate their houses, and will try to bring the country out of the crisis as soon as possible which it had to face in the wake of climate change-induced disasters", he added.

The minister said the Post-Damage Needs Assessment (PDNA) — conducted jointly by the Government of Pakistan and its international development partners, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, UN relief agencies, in October — has estimated the aggregate cost of the calamity at \$30.1 billion. This includes \$14.9 billion in damages to infrastructure and \$15.2 billion in economic losses. The minimum needs identified for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction are estimated at \$16.3 billion.

At Ka'aba's door

MAKKAH: Doors of Ka'aba opened for COAS Asim Munir as he performs Umrah on Monday.



Doors of Ka'aba opened for COAS Asim Munir as he performs Umrah

Spokesman Report

JEDDAH: Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir performed Umrah on Sunday and doors of the holy Ka'aba were specially opened for him.

Gen Munir also offered prayers inside Ka'aba. The doors were specially opened for Pakistan's top general as a mark of hospitality.

Another clip shows the army chief visiting Masjid-e-Nabwi, the second holiest mosque in Islam, with Saudi security personnel escorting the military commander. Later, Gen Munir

held a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Both higher-ups discussed ways to develop bilateral relations in addition to issues of mutual interest, said state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA). Saudi Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman and other officials of the kingdom and Pakistan were also present.

During the meeting, the Saudi premier felicitated Gen Munir on becoming the Pakistan army chief. They also agreed to strengthen the bilateral relations.

Generous outpouring of pledges in 1st plenary session of conference: Marriyum

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the first plenary session of the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan had culminated in the generous outpouring of pledges from the international community totalling of \$8.57 billion to carry out rebuilding and reconstruction efforts

in the flood-ravaged Pakistan. "EU pledged \$93 million, Germany \$88 million, China \$100 million, IsDB (Islamic Development Bank) \$4.2 Billion, WB (World Bank) \$2 billion, Japan \$77 million, ADB (Asian Development Bank) \$1.5 billion, USAID \$100 million, France \$345 million, total \$8.57 billion, in line with collaborative vision of coalition of willing," she said in a series of tweets.

Dar appreciates WB support for flood-hit Pakistan

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday appreciated the World Bank for providing financial and technical support to cope with the challenge posed by the floods in Pakistan.

The minister said this during a meeting with

World Bank Vice President Martin Raiser on the sidelines of International Conference on 'Climate Resilient Pakistan' in Geneva, according to a Finance Ministry tweet.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Dar in a tweet thanked Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) President Muhammad Al-Jasser for providing support to Paki-

stan in its post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

United States Agency for International Development Deputy Administrator Ms Isobel Coleman also called on the finance minister, and discussed modalities of international support for reconstruction and rehabilitation of flood-hit people and areas of the country.



Elahi vows indiscriminate action against elements involved in smuggling of flour

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi said on Monday effective measures by the

provincial govt, including setting up of new sale points, have ensured availability of flour in the province. He vowed indiscriminate action against elements involved in smuggling of flour.

#KnowYourEconomy

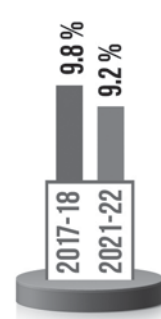
REBUILDING PAKISTAN

Let's know ! When did Pakistan's economic decline start?

Average GDP growth rate decreased by 1.2%



Tax revenues as percentage of GDP decreased



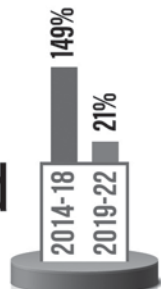
Imports increased by 30%



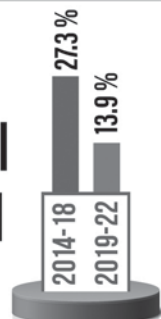
Unemployment rate increased by 0.5%



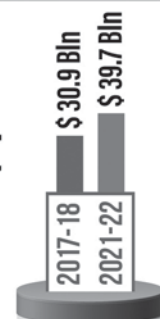
Growth rate of agricultural credit decreased by 128%



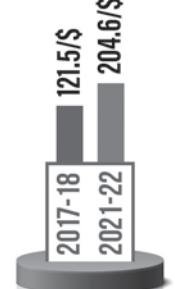
Growth rate of per capita annual income decreased by 13.4%



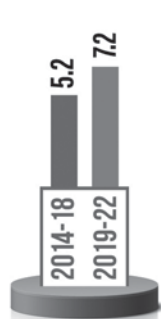
Trade deficit increased by 28%



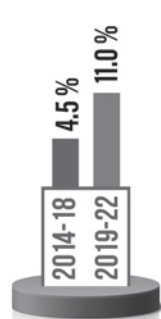
Dollar rate increased by 83 rupees per dollar



Fiscal deficit as percentage of GDP increased by 2%



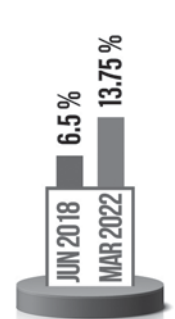
Food items inflation rate increased by 6.5%



Public Debt and Liabilities increased by 80%



Policy rate increased by 725 bps



Together we've averted default. Together we'll rebuild Pakistan.

(*ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST)



Government
of Pakistan

'Pakistan's economy is deliberately rigged': Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan

Aqam-ud-Din Khan

KARACHI: 'Pakistan's economy is deliberately rigged to augment the country's vulnerability in the region so that the global powers that be can push Pakistan down to its knees and keep manipulating and exploiting it for their vested interests.'

This was stated by Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Pakistan's leading economist, educator and former Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Finance, in an exclusive interview with the U.S. award-winning magazine SouthAsia.

In his in-depth interview, Dr. Ashfaq Hasan shed light on how Pakistan's elite will rescue the country from sovereign default, despite on-going economic slump together with the deteriorating living conditions. He said Pakistan has never experienced a sovereign default in the past and it will not face such a doomsday scenario in the future as well.

"I do not think that Pakistan will



default unless the government wants it to be. Otherwise, there is no default in the offing. Pakistan is, in fact, exporting about three to two and a half billion dollars every month against the incoming remittance worth 2.5 billion to 3 billion dollars, along with the coun-

try's total foreign exchange which is around 5 to 6 billion dollars. If we can reduce our monthly import requirements somehow and only import as much as we are earning then the rest of the money could be used for debt servicing, which is indeed very high," he added.

In reply to a question about the losses incurred to Pakistan's economy from April 2022 to December 2022, Dr. Ashfaq Hasan said the reserves, at the end of March 2022, stood at 11.5 billion dollars, but today it has come down to a meagre 7.5 billion dollars. "When the regime change operation against the Imran Khan-led PTI government started in September 2021, we had over \$19 billion in reserves and at the end of February last year when the no-confidence activities were at their peak, we had total reserves of about \$16.4 billion," he stated.

"Because of the toppling of the PTI regime, the country's treasury, in the

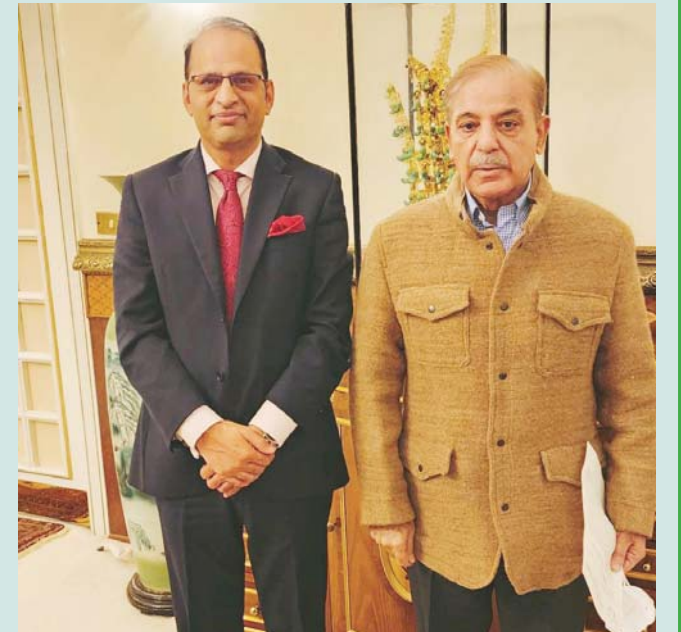
meantime, has lost almost 9 billion dollars and its economic vulnerability has been further exacerbated. If we had these 9 billion dollars reserves in the treasury, there would be no threat of sovereign default today. Once again, these things have been intentionally manipulated and corrupted to increase the vulnerability of Pakistan," according to Dr. Ashfaq Hasan.

Along with the interview of Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, many distinguished writers have also contributed their articles in the January 2023 issue of Monthly SouthAsia (www.southasia.com.pk) as part of the magazine's Cover Story titled 'One Percent Republic.

Among the leading names are Saad Amanullah Khan, former President of the American Business Council (ABC), Farhat Ali, former President of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) and Sirajuddin Aziz, senior banker and author.

President PMLN Lawyers Wing UK met to PM Shahbaz Sharif

News Desk



KHARIAN: President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Lawyers Wing UK Chaudhry Isar Mehmood Advocate had a special meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif at Prime Minister House Islamabad.

On this occasion, it was discussed to solve the problems of Pakistanis living abroad, apart from increasing the domestic imports and exports, and the complaints of occupying the properties of Pakistanis living in the UK.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan while talking to Chaudhry Ansar Mehmood Advocate said that

Overseas Pakistanis have a key role in stabilizing the economy of the country and in the development of the country—the eternal sacrifices of the overseas Pakistanis for the country and the nation and for the development and prosperity of the country cannot be forgotten—our government addresses all the problems of the overseas Pakistanis on a priority basis. Will solve, Chaudhry Ansar Mehmood Advocate thanked Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif.

Export circle might continue uninterruptedly: Dr. Khurram Tariq

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Dr. Khurram Tariq has said that LC of export industry should be opened on priority basis so that the export circle might continue uninterruptedly.

Speaking to Media men, he said that increasing exports and foreign remittances is inevitable to overcome the current trade deficit. He termed these two sectors as a source of income for the country and said that these two sectors are directly affected by the measures taken by the government.

He explored that Pakistan's textile industry was the highest value adding industry in imports but in the last years and decades we have not established import substitution industries in the country due to which the rate of imports for exports has increased dramatically. He further said that the export cycle spans six months.

The results of the impact on exports today will come to us in six months. But by then it will be too late. He said that the financial deficit is 150 million which may reach 250 to 300 million by the end of the first quarter of this financial year. He said that in order to get out of the current crisis situation, the LCs of the raw materials imported for export should be opened immediately and on a priority basis.

Imdad Relief Foundation organized mass wedding ceremony of 10 deserving girls



Spokesman Report

KHARIAN: Under the auspices of Imdad Relief Foundation, a mass wedding ceremony of 10 deserving girls was organized, on this occasion complete dowry equipment, food and greetings were given to 10 deserving couples and TDCP Marriage Hall GT Road Khariyan. Married couples with prayers were allowed. In the mass wedding ceremony, City President of "Amdad Relief Foundation" Chaudhry Zafar Hanj, Chaudhry Zahid Shakir, Mufti Muhammad Mehmood Ahmed, Sethi Faisal Mehmood, Chaudhry Tariq Shakir, Chaudhry Toqeer Ahmad Waraich Advocate, Adil Khan, Muhammad Zaman Ahsan, Haji Muhammad Nawaz, Sufi Riaz Ahmed, Mian Tahir Rashid, Ghulam Mustafa and other local people were also present.

DFP bereaved over demise of prominent figure of Kashmir struggle Prof. Mushtaq Salroo

Abdul Majeed Tahir



SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of prominent figure of Kashmir struggle Prof. Mushtaq Ahmed Salroo who passed away at his home town Bijbehara yesterday.

In a condolence message the DFP's incarcerated chairman Shabir Ahmed Shah and acting chairman Mehmood Ahmed Saghar while expressing their sense of shock over the death of Prof. Mushtaq extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Hailing Salroo family's contribution to the ongoing liberation struggle they said that the deceased and his family have significantly contributed to the Kashmir cause.

Protest

NEELUM VALLEY: Members of Auto Rickshaw Union shouting slogans during a protest in favor of their demands at Azadi Chowk in the city.



Photo: Online

FCCI establishment a standing committee for legal affairs

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: To protect the legal interests of the business community, establishment of a standing committee for legal affairs in the Faisalabad Chamber is being reviewed. This was said by the President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Khurram Tariq during a meeting with the Chairman of the proposed committee Muhammad Ali Ramey.

He said that in general the business community is afraid of getting involved in unnecessary matters and that is the reason why various departments and their officials take illegal financial benefits from them and this process has been going on for a long time. He said that instead of complaining individually in such cases, the Chamber should come forward for their legal protection.

In this way, they will neither be harassed unnecessarily nor will they have to go round the courts and offices. He said that the Chambers Party is not active in this regard even at the national level. He mentioned 7-E and

Capital Value Tax (CIV) and said that it is a collective problem of the busi-



ness community across the country, but none except the Quetta Chamber. The Second Chamber did not chal-

lenge this. Appreciating the initiative of Quetta Chamber, he said that the Faisalabad Chamber should also take such dynamic and urgent steps. Dr. Khurram emphasized that the business community needs to be informed about the implications of 7-E immediately because Some people have also started getting notices under this provision.

He said adding that, because of the Parks and Horticulture Authority, the government has started levying tax on shop boards under the guise of publicity board, although they do not fall under the category of publicity.

He said that the departments set the regular size and collect the tax according to this calculation, while the size is not mentioned on the challans received in this regard. He said that the legal committee can also support the members of Faisalabad Chamber in this regard and Anjuman Tajran will also be consulted in this regard. He also mentioned the publicity contractors and said that they harass the shopkeepers for no reason which has absolutely no scope in the law.

Decisive steps are being taken to stabilize economy of State: PMAJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that decisive steps are being taken to stabilize the economy of Azad Kashmir.

Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan expressed these views while addressing a press conference here today. Sardar Intiaz Shaheen, Adviser on Political Affairs Sardar Iftikhar Rashid, Special Assistant Youth Raza Sabeel Riaz and others were present on the occasion."

Besides getting the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir scheduled 49% if it's shares will be given to the business community", the PM said adding that the AJ&K Bank has earned a profit of 95 crores in addition to taxation and salaries during our government period. He said that Skill University would be established to make the youth skillful." Institutions on the lines of SECP and NEPRA will be established within Azad Kashmir", he said. The PM further said that financial and administrative autonomy would be given to the Department of Electricity."The power supply company is being reshaped on the pattern of DESCO, which will save about 7 billion rupees", he said.

The Department of Electricity has been given the task of creating its own Desco-style institution, which will save 7 billion annually. Similarly the PM said that after improving the tax system, the number of taxpayers will be increased to 100,000. He said that the government would the investors in Azad Kashmir, who were willing to invest their capital in the state. Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the number of tax filers increased from 5 thousand to 38 thousand during the last six months. While the number of filers working in the system has reached 58 thousand.

He said that the number of tax filers would be taken up to 1 lakh. He added that no economy of the world can flourish without development in the private sector and in the future we will bring the best model of public private partnership within AJK he said.

Removing Miftah Ismail was a big mistake

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday said the removal of former finance minister Miftah Ismail from office was a wrong decision and giving Ishaq Dollar the portfolio of the finance ministry turned out to be an even bigger blunder.



Had Miftah Ismail was not removed, the IMF program would have been on track and the tranche would have been received in September last year, it said. Miftah took tough decisions to save the country and the economy would not

have nosedived nor inflation would have broken all records if he was not removed, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. He said that the policies of the former finance minister would have strengthened the rupee, reduced

inflation, and millions of workers would not have been unemployed due to the closure of industries.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the majority of the local business community, foreign investors and international organizations were happy with Miftah Ismail's policies. Still, a campaign was launched against him for six months which ended in his removal.

People were told that after the removal of Miftah, the dollar would drop to one hundred and sixty rupees, which is now available at almost Rs160, wreaking havoc with the masses and economy.

He said that the masses were also assured that the new finance minister will make fuel cheaper, there would be little inflation, and everything would be fine which turned out to be a deception.

Presently, the current Finance Minister seems to be in the background and the Prime Minister himself has to give assurances to the IMF regarding the acceptance of all conditions.

The move of the PM shows that there are divisions in the government over important issues and that he has realized the gravity of the situation to some extent.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:45 am
Zohr 12:15 pm
Asr 3:39 pm
Maghrib 5:16 pm
Isha 6:45 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
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Pakistan needs lifeline for managing predictability

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday said Pakistan needed to create the much-needed lifeline that will help Pakistan manage predictability for basic survival amid unprecedented climate crisis which was the only way to confront the polycrisis hitting the nation.

Addressing the first plenary at the global Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference held in Geneva, the Minister was flanked by Finance and Revenue Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Economic Affairs Division Sardar Ayaz Sadiq,

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and Vice President South Asia Region, World Bank, Martin Raiser.

Senator Rehman said, "the world 'polycrisis' which is a new world for the 21st century as the challenges faced by the century are entirely new."

She added that Pakistan was at the frontline of the extreme climate precipice. "We do appreciate all partners, the UNDP, entire UN system, all development partners, international non-governmental organisations (INGOS) and Pakistani NGOs as all had their sleeves rolled up and gumboots on the ground.

She mentioned that as many of the present had heard that Pakistanis were a resilient nation but, as

projected in the video at the forum, the peril for Pakistan is not over. "Some eight million people still living in inundated areas particularly in the province of Sindh and a homeless winter for many, now 20 million are still affected which is again three times more than the size of many countries."

She noted that it was a new tidal wave of disasters that were besetting the world, adding, "We need to be very clear. They will not go away by themselves and the countries who are facing such frontlines, the ground zero as I called it of climate stress, will not recover on their own."

She emphasised that there was no default setting to nature or human recovery at this scale. "You have seen as the water ripped



through one third of Pakistan, the magnitude and velocity as it was pulling out huge bridges built back better like toothpicks in its fury. So, building-back-better is going to be harder than we planned for and harder than we imagined."

The Minister underlined that

over takes this particular catastrophe because wrapping ones head around the sheer numbers to service has been a monumental challenge. So, everyone has responded of course wonderfully but it is to remembered that while we are building for resilience; Pakistan lies in one of the largest flood plains of the world and it has created now the way the topography of Sindh has been transformed probably forever."

The Minister said there were lakes that were sitting over a hundred kilometers, impossible to drain for a year, transforming the land that 'we till' and the livelihoods living of it and of course the Indus River, the lifeline of the country, was given a new geography.

Charitable Activities

ISLAMABAD: Former Governor Punjab Chaudhry Sarwar addressing a press conference about charitable activities. Earlier he handed over the two trucks of goods to the custodian of Masjid Rehmat Ul lil alameen for flood affectees on Monday.



Spokesman Photo By Ghulam Farid

Alibaba.com announces its first Multan seller summit

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Leading global B2B e-commerce platform Alibaba.com will host its first event in Multan on 12 January to discuss the new era of B2B e-commerce with existing and potential exporters in the region. This is the latest of Alibaba.com's efforts to help promote the growth of Pakistan's e-commerce and export industry by encouraging local businesses to go online and go digital.

The event, titled "Multan Seller Summit- Export! KYA? KYUN? AUR KAISE-Alibaba.com ke saath," will offer business-tips and counsel on ways to begin and develop an online export business, as well as address questions on the necessary skills required by Pakistani sellers to grow in the field.

The Multan Seller Summit will feature a lineup of experts in the fields of e-commerce and export, including Miss Amy Li, Marketing Head of Alibaba.com Pakistan; Mr Sheikh M. Asim Saeed, Vice President of Multan Chamber of Commerce & Industries, and Mr Tanveer Nadla, Founder of ISKILLS Pakistan.

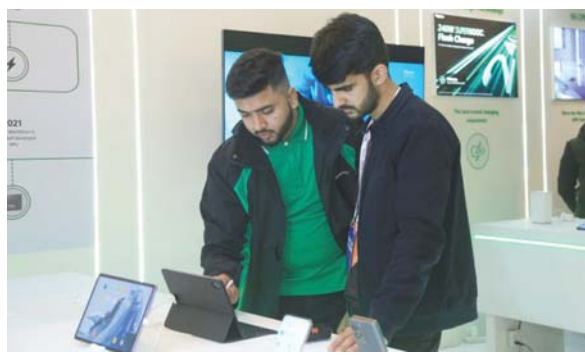
The summit will also spotlight Multan-based SMEs who have successfully leveraged Alibaba.com to keep their businesses thriving. They will share their experience in digital transformation and how they develop innovative online business strategies to identify and unlock new opportunities.

OPPO Shows the Cutting Edge Technologies of Tomorrow to Lead the Innovative Future

News Desk

LAHORE: OPPO leads the road to future by showcasing the technology of tomorrow, its high-end flagship products and record-breaking smart technologies at Expo Center to set the trend for upcoming technology. The event sees the introduction of several new cutting-edge technologies developed under OPPO's Future Vision of safest and fastest charging technology, smart connectivity and an integrated ecosystem. Members of the public are invited to join the event, to discover more about how OPPO is empowering a better future where everyone can live their best lives.

OPPO continues to grow steadily on the global market that



brings it on par with its theme of "Open for More" in coming times. OPPO is showcasing its 240W SUPERVOOC Flash Charge Technology, OPPO Pad, OPPO Watch 3 Pro, OPPO TV R1 65, OPPO Find X5 Pro and OPPO Find N2 on its booth at Future Fest that provides the visitors

with a chance to take a glimpse into the future.

OPPO has previously registered its commitment to the empowerment of a better future through INNO day smart initiatives. The event showcased OPPO's determination to enrich its four Smart Initiatives in smart

entertainment, smart productivity, smart health, and smart learning to deliver more innovation for good and build an inclusive and more positive future for all.

A number of government officials and tech experts are expected to mark their presence at OPPO booth that will add to learning experience for the visitors. This initiative will provide a potential chance for youth to re-imagine a progressive tech future along with OPPO as the emerging home to future technology.

Talking about this partnership, OPPO representative said, "OPPO's ulterior motive to take a glimpse into future along with the visitors is to shape the future in accordance with the needs and expectations of its users.

JS Bank bags 5 accolades at GDEIB Awards 2023

News Desk

KARACHI: Committed to building an inclusive financial ecosystem for all Pakistanis, JS Bank has won five awards at the prestigious Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) Awards 2023 and set new benchmarks for the Pakistani financial industry in the area of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I). These are in addition to the various national and international awards JS Bank has won for its Products & Services throughout the year.

For the third consecutive year, JS Bank has been recognized in multiple categories of the GDEIB and has excelled throughout 2022 in Vision, Strategy and Business Impact; Recruitment; DEI Communications; DEI Learning & Development and Services & Products Development.

These awards honor institutions who champion the cause of DE&I through their vision, values, policies, and actions. By empowering women, providing equal opportunity to its differently abled employees and ensuring provision of full-scope banking products and services for differently abled individuals, JS Bank's vision for inclusion aligns with various DE&I global standards.

The GDEIB helps organizations determine strategy and measure progress in managing diversity and fostering inclusion. These awards are conducted by HR Metrics in Pakistan annually through a merit-based process taking into account Global DE&I Benchmarks standards.

Sharing his views, Basir Shamsie, President & CEO-JS Bank, said, "By fostering inclusivity, we are building a thriving and diverse workforce to strengthen our competitive advantage. Diversity and Inclusion are as essential to us as other areas of our business operations and we want to make a real difference in providing ease of access of financial services to all."

With a commitment to further empowering the DE&I function in line with its core values, JS Bank is expanding its vision and approach towards being recognized as the employer of choice within the financial markets

Ufone 4G's 'Regional Play' brings exclusive Voice and Data offers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani telecom operator, Ufone 4G has introduced extremely aggressive Packages to bring exclusive Voice and Data bundles in 48 districts across all four provinces. The offer has been designed to provide equitable access to contemporary and leading-edge voice and data services in affordable prices, so that customers across the country can enjoy enhanced utility and improved user experience over Ufone 4G's high-speed network.

The exclusive offer is available to customers who are active from last 90 days or have recently joined Ufone network. Customers can avail of the offers by simply dialing *4466* from their handsets to enjoy video calling, gaming, browsing, socializing, educational and professional pursuits and much more on Ufone's blazing fast 4G network or can visit the retailer to avail the amazing offering. Here is the list of districts and the corresponding offers under Ufone 4G's Regional Play.

Ufone 4G is committed to delivering high-quality and reliable voice and data services across the country to foster the digital inclusion of all regardless of their socioeconomic or geographical standing. The recent offer addresses the issue of affordability which is evidently one of the most potent hindrances in access to the internet and digital inclusion of the low-income segments of society. Through the Regional Play, Ufone 4G devolves its digital inclusion agenda to the ground level to enhance its impact, so that more and more people are able to access uninterrupted and high-speed connectivity to unlock their potential for socio-economic progress and development.

Khalid Maqbool, Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal meet Sindh Governor

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The top leaders of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) factions, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Dr Farooq Sattar and Mustafa Kamal held a meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, ARY News reported on Monday.

MQM Pakistan convenor Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, MQM Bahali Committee head Dr Farooq Sattar and Pak-Sarazameen Party (PSP) chief Mustafa Kamal met Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori. They expressed serious reservations on the verdict of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the organisation of the local government (LG) polls in Karachi and Hyderabad, rejecting the complaints about the 'flawed' delimitations and voter lists.

Governor Tessori assured them of contacting the federal government regarding the political parties' concerns ahead of the LG polls.

Earlier in the day, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued a detailed verdict on local government (LG) polls in Karachi and Hyderabad on January 15.

As per details, the ECP issued a detailed verdict of eight pages over the LG polls in Karachi and Hyderabad. The detailed verdict stated that the petition filed by Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on behalf of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) is rejected.

The ECP accepted Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) petition and said that LG polls will be held on January 15 on previous voter lists.

A three-member ECP bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, also signed the detailed verdict.

Bestway Foundation School, Tatal Awards its top positions of SSC Part I Exams 2022

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A prestigious ceremony was held at Bestway Foundation School, Tatal to celebrate excellent performance of the School's students in the SSC Part I Annual Examination 2022 held under Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Rawalpindi and to recognise the invaluable contribution of the teachers in achieving such remarkable result.

The ceremony was attended by the guest of honour, Mr. Irfan Sheikh, (Trustee of Bestway Foundation and the Managing Director of Bestway Cement Limited), Dr Zeeshan Hanif (Deputy Commissioner, Chakwal), Mr. Ashir Iqbal Khan (Assistant Deputy Commissioner (G)), Mr. Ifikhar Ahmed Ali (Chief Officer District Council), Raja Haider Abbas (Asst. Commissioner (Choa Saiden Shah)) along with local notables and parents of the students.

Speaking on the occasion, the guest of honour, Mr. Irfan Sheikh, said "Education is essential for building a strong and vibrant society. Children are our future, not only for their



families but also our country. Our aim must be to produce such productive and responsible citizens who are intellectually, socially and morally well equipped to take up today's challenges. Teachers' role is not limited to just educating children but to be exemplary role models for them also. Children's character-building is a collective responsibility of parents, teachers and the society at large."

Mr. Sheikh congratulated the entire teaching staff and students of the School for their excellent performance in SSC-I Examination 2022 and urged them to aim even higher in future. He handed out cash rewards to three best performing teachers along with Certificates of Achievement to the three best performing students each from Computer and Biology Groups.

Concluding his speech, he expressed his satisfaction with the way the school had flourished over the years. He informed the attendees that construction of a separate new building for the boys' wing adjacent to the existing school building had already commenced, which was expected to be functional by the beginning of the new school session in 2023. The new block is expected to cost more than PKR 65 million.

Bestway Foundation; established in 1987 in the UK and later in 1997 in Pakistan; is the philanthropic arm of Bestway Group, UK. Bestway appreciates its responsibility towards the local communities, thus plays a vital role in their socio-economic development such as improving access to health services and education, taking part in the urban development and environmental conservation programs and helping generate employment. To date Bestway has contributed more than US\$46 million to fund various charitable activities of national and international societies and support projects of communal uplift in the countries in which it operates.

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Home features deforestation: A major challenge to combat climate change

Fakhar Alam

Smile is back on the face of 70 years-old Amanullah Khan after his 'wood taals' started roaring business in the wake of a significant decline in mercury level during the ongoing harsh cold weather that gripped the Peshawar valley.

Busy like a honeybee in cutting timber of native and indigenous species with a big saw in his 'wood taal' with the support of five laborers located at Pabbi station on main GT Road in Nowshera, Amanullah Khan was working against the time to complete orders placed by hundreds of households, tandoors, hotels and marriage halls during the harsh winter.

Amanullah's sons were seen helping his father in preparing bundles of endangered Shisham, Phulai, Ber, Kikar, Poplar, Neem, Amaltas, Saru and Jaman in his wood taal spread on nearly two acres with trees' trunks spread everywhere on his business place.

"The price of one mound (50kg) of firewood starts from Rs 600 to Rs 700 depending on the quality of the timber," said Amanullah, adding that firewood demand increases manifold in December-January due to shortage of natural gas and high prices of LPG cylinder.

"We prefer customers from tandoors, hotels, and marriage halls due to high purchase and profit margin because of wedding season," he said, adding these timbers were being transported from far-flung areas of Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, and Mardan districts after its purchase from farmers on relatively less price than the government's timber markets.

A visitor can see a large number of cut timbers and even uprooted trunks of trees at wood taals while moving on the main GT Road between Tarnab Peshawar to Azakhel Nowshera depicting the high rate of deforestation in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to National Forest Policy 2015, Pakistan's total forest-covered area was five percent and the country was losing about 27,000 hectares of forests per year mainly occurring in private and community-owned natural forests.

Comparing Pakistan's deforestation rate with the world, Dr. Mumtaz Malik, former Chief Conservator of Wildlife KP said that globally around 10 million hectares of forest were defore-

sted every year - equal to the area of Portugal, adding that around half of this deforestation was counterbalanced by re-growing of forests, which means that an overall around five million hectares of the green gold was lost per year worldwide.

"Overpopulation, poverty, and unnecessary trees logging was one of the major causes of deforestation in KP," said Dr. Mumtaz Malik, adding in 1947, Pakistan's population was only 37 million that jumped to a record 223 million in 2022 and if it continued growing with such high pace it is expected to touch 260.3 million in 2030 and 330.8 million by 2050 resulting vanishing of the green gold, wildlife, and bees population.

Dr. Mumtaz said that about 68 percent of forests in the country were being used as firewood and 15 percent of trees were being lost due to urbanization and community-driven demands. He warned, "If we do not change our green sector policies and shift to the adaptation of alternative energy resources including solar, hydroelectric, biomass and wind then there was every possibility of losing the existing forests in next two decades besides witnessing frequent climate change's disasters," he added.

Dr. Mumtaz said deforestation was a national challenge and there was a need to impose a 'green emergency' to conserve and protect the green gold by looking above the party politics. He also suggested an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to control the smuggling of timber.

Wajid Ali Khan, former Minister for Environment and Forests said that thousands of trees planted under the billions tree afforestation project were prematurely cut in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was a violation of the agreement signed between the KP forest department and farmers.

Gulzar Rehman, Conservator Forests said that under KP Forest Ordinance 2002, Forest Force has been raised in KP with powers like the police to protect forest resources and conduct operations against the timber mafia.

"The KP forest force was equipped with necessary weaponry, ammunition, vehicles, and a communication system with the power to shoot offenders and timber mafia in self-defense in case of violation of laws."

The forest officers can arrest, detain or take an accused into custody besides checking any vehicle, boat, railway wagon, or

pack animal and seize the smuggled timber.

Gulzar Rehman said that DFOs/RFOs can enter any depot, wood/saw cutting unit, building, or any premises to search and seize timber and arrest offenders besides holding investigation, inquiry and arrest any offender without any warrant from the magistrate.

Gulzar Rehman said the forest force's jurisdiction has been extended to merged areas where check-posts were also established on national and regional highways and roads to curb timber smuggling. He suggested special forest courts for speedy trial of the accused, an increase in lockups, modern wireless systems, and mobility vehicles imperative to curb timber smuggling.

Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Deputy Project Director of, the 10 billion tree afforestation project said that deforestation was a major reason for climate change, and about 650.17 million saplings were planted till September 30, 2022, in KP under the project to offset its impact. He underscored the need for early operationalization of the COP 29 UN fund to help climate change and deforestation-induced countries including Pakistan.

IHC clubs identical petitions regarding LG polls

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday clubbed the appeals pertaining to local body elections and sought cabinet minutes and summary with regard to the increase in the number of union councils.

The bench instructed the AAG to satisfy the bench on the next hearing regarding the increase in the number of union councils.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Saman Rafiq Intiaz heard the appeals of ECP, federation, and others regarding the LG polls in ICT. PML-N's Leader Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Additional Attorney General Munawar Dogal, Director General Law ECP, and petitioners' lawyers appeared before the court.

Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that what would happen now as the elections were not held as per the orders of the single-member bench. There was also no election schedule before the bench, he noted.

The petitioners' lawyer Raja Inam Amin Minhas said that it was not possible to conduct elections on December 31, in the short time span. The single-member bench issued this order without hearing them, he added.

The court asked how the complainants of the voters' list were affected in this case as the ECP could still hear their grievances at this time.

The chief justice noted that today new appeals had also been filed. He remarked that it was the ECP who had to give a new election schedule in 101 UCs. The reservations of the voters were intact if the decision of single member bench was maintained, he said.

The chief justice remarked that if the UCs number was increased to 125 then the reservations would become ineffective as the whole process on voters' lists would be restarted. The bench said it was not issuing notice so far on the petitions of voters.

The chief justice further remarked that the local government acts are yet to be approved. The legislation would be completed after the completion of all processes, he said.

Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that Islamabad was not only a city but it was also a symbol of the federation. He questioned why a chief commissioner used to be given the extra charge of chairman CDA. Whether there was a shortage of people, he asked.

The bench remarked that the resolution of problems was not the priority of anybody. The issues couldn't be resolved until the city had its own small parliament, he said, adding that it was the duty of the local body system to start development work here.

Petitioner's lawyer Adil Aziz Qazi said that the decision regarding the increase in the number of UCs was taken on his application but he was not served notice. He said that when there was a local government set up, the mayor was not allowed to work.

On the query of the bench, PTI's lawyer Sardar Taimoor Aslam said that they had withdrawn the contempt of court petition. DG Law informed the court that the ECP could conduct elections in seven to ten days in 101 union councils.

The court granted permission to the AAG to submit extra documents in the case and adjourned further hearing till January 19. The court also instructed the AAG to satisfy the bench regarding the increase in the number of UCs.

You already have an image or logo of Javed Ullah Raja

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



Ukraine and Saudi Arabia: Broadening horizons of cooperation-II

Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba said: "Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America are a new diplomatic front in the face of full-scale Russian aggression; world politics and decision-making are concentrated not only in the NATO and EU countries, despite their strategic importance for Ukraine."

Now, Ukraine intends to focus its attention and increase its presence in this significant sphere of interests.

Unfortunately, our plans are overshadowed by the war initiated by Russia. It not only undermines Ukraine's capacity to conduct its usual trade and investment cooperation but also has a major impact on the global energy and food security situation, creating new challenges and hurdles for the post-COVID-19 world trade and economic system.

To remove the hurdles on the way to our joint story of success and prosperity, we need to effectively counter the continuous Russian aggression. Ukraine's formula for peace, presented by President Volodymyr Zelensky at the 2022 G20 Summit, could be a comprehensive basis to achieve this end. It consists of 10 steps to put an end to Russian aggression, restore peace and strengthen respect for international law. The 10 steps include nuclear safety, food security, energy security, the release of all prisoners and deported persons, the implementation of the UN Charter and restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, the full withdrawal of Russian troops and cessation of hostilities, restoration of justice, countering ecocide, preventing

escalation, and ensuring that the aggression is never repeated.

We believe that this initiative could become a global format for peace. Every nation can choose elements of the formula and work with Ukraine on implementing them. The fact is that Saudi Arabia has already begun to work on a number of elements of Ukraine's peace formula, demonstrating the Kingdom's clear intention to take a leadership role in spheres representing the interests of the global community.

We had the pleasure in September of witnessing the Kingdom mediate foreign prisoner-of-war swaps, provide Ukrainians with generous humanitarian and energy assistance, and support pro-Ukrainian initiatives within the UN.

At the same time, we urge our Saudi partners to continue their noble mission by directly joining our formula for peace and participating in the upcoming summit devoted to proliferation of the Ukrainian initiative, which opens a window of opportunity for every country and leader to show political leadership on both the regional and world stages.

Food security remains one of our principal concerns. Ukraine is committed to its obligations as a global guarantor of food security and we are constantly looking for new routes for exports of food.

The humanitarian Grain From Ukraine initiative launched by President Zelensky at the International Summit on Food Security continues to function

successfully despite all the challenges. The initiative allows participating states to directly purchase agricultural products from Ukraine and facilitates the transfer of Ukrainian food to countries in need. Ukraine has already raised more than \$200 million under the initiative. Based on our mutual aspirations to eliminate food insecurity in the most vulnerable countries, we invite Saudi Arabia to join our efforts.

The Russian factor is becoming more toxic by the day and Ukraine warns countries in the Global South about the danger of cooperation with Russia. Moscow is trying to circumvent the sanctions that have been imposed on it, and is looking for shadow schemes in the nations of the Global South, but those who help Russia to bypass international sanctions might themselves be subject to secondary sanctions.

The growing influence of Russian private military companies in African nations threatens the political stability of those states and the security of neighboring countries and entire regions. The Russian private military company Wagner, considered a terrorist organization by the European Parliament, has reportedly recruited militants among prisoners in Africa for deployment on the front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine.

The Russian leadership tries to justify the invasion of Ukraine to the world by investing immense resources in the activities of its state media abroad, which

actively spread fake news and develop propaganda ecosystems promoting disinformation campaigns across the Global South.

It is crucial to stand as one and present a united front so as to deny Russia the opportunity to undermine peace and stability in Ukraine, as well as in the countries of the Global South.

Ukraine believes in victory, the restoration of justice and peace, based on international law. International law is definitely the strongest connecting point between Ukraine and Saudi Arabia, both of which are countries whose political priorities are guided by the principles of respect for territorial integrity and the sovereignty of all nations.

As we map out a draft joint plan for 2023 and beyond, we simultaneously raise a rhetorical question: What will be the best strategy for our bilateral actions? It would be wise to combine our efforts and invest mutual expertise in developing a post-war economic recovery plan and associated investment portfolio for Ukraine.

It is not assistance we ask for, it is a range of opportunities that coincide with Saudi Arabia's agenda of transformation. We would be very honored if our Saudi friends could join in processes that will allow Ukraine to become a modern economy while at the same time offering lucrative, beneficial opportunities to Saudi businesses that can boost recognition and proper appreciation of them in Eastern Europe.

Concluded

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

Knowing all and nothing

Muzna Baig

I know more about the pillow talks of people who have nothing to do with me than I do about why Atta is getting more expensive by the day, which is the paradox of knowing too much and knowing nothing at the same time. With excessive personal information about something that has nothing to do with us, we sure are clueless.

All around social media platforms, famous women are being slandered and made fun of for not being up to the standards of the moral values of our society, when there is no proof of their moral debasing of said society! It is funny how willing people were to get on the bandwagon of ridiculing women on issues that are their matters. Even men and fallen angels are not getting this treatment or scorn because they are not the moral guardians of our society, sometimes, it all boils down to gender and politics. There can be questions on why gender is being brought here because that's the dirty laundry we don't air out. Less trivial issues include how people should know about the failing economy and not what measures are currently being taken to curb it. What are we, the people supposed to do about the economic crisis and foreign reserves dropping from billions to millions, when no one even puts us in charge of that? The masses didn't go to IMF, we were all busy trying to make a living. What we care about is why Atta is getting pricier every passing day, yet

no one talks about that on social media.

Freedom of expression is good and all but there should be a method to it because excessively chaotic freedom of expression is inconsequential and meaningless because it doesn't promote personal or overall growth. There needs to be accountability and reasoning regarding information being spread on social media. What we should be given a lesson about is that excessive sharing and mindlessly consuming information on social media is not the way to go. We're all obsessed with accessing and sharing part of the information that we forget to stop and think about why we are getting this information, why we feel the need to share that information, and what information is actually of consequence to us. There is a need to get out of this cycle of sharing information for mass consensus and acceptability and not get misguided by this. Mindless sensationalism should not be the focal point of sharing and exchanging information. Rather the main purpose of sharing information should be to get knowledge from it, which can be applied to practical aspects of life.

So, next time you come across baseless gossip online, and feel the need to share it on the internet, or come across any information that you don't need to know or are not getting information that could be substantial to you, ask yourself, "What am I trying to achieve over here, and is it worth achieving?" and "What is the bigger picture and what am I missing here?"

Writer is student of Fatima Jinnah Women University.

The Ambassador of Indonesia called on Aminullah Baig, VC, FPCCI

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The business community of Pakistan should play its due role in promoting trade and investment in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) markets such as Indonesia, stated by Adam Mulawarman Tugio the Ambassador of Indonesia in Pakistan during a meeting with the Aminullah Baig, Vice President FPCCI at its Capital Office Islamabad. The meeting was also attended by Umar Masood Ur Rehman, Vice President FPCCI and other members.

The Ambassador said that both nations have immense potential for cooperation in diverse fields including tourism, trade, e-commerce, textile, automobile, pharmaceutical, surgical, sports and defence. The strengthening of bilateral trade and investment could benefit the business communities of both countries, he mentioned.

He said that Pakistan's trade with Indonesia is significant with surplus in favour of Indonesia mainly due to Pakistan's import of palm oil, he invited Pakistani business people to explore Indonesian market to enhance Paki-



stani export to Indonesia. He also highlighted tourism, pharmaceutical, surgical, herbal medicine, spices, and other important sectors as new avenues of cooperation and stressed on the need to explore and unlock the opportunities between the two countries. The envoy claimed that there are significant potential and trade opportunities to strengthen bilateral trade between Indonesia and Pakistan.

Amin Ullah Baig Vice President FPCCI & Incharge Capital Office also assured his utmost support in enhanc-

ing two-way trade. He mentioned that Indonesia is an attractive business destination for Pakistan which can be further maximized through the implementation of trade activities and cooperation programs through business associations & communities of both countries. He drew the attention of the envoy towards the emerging tourism in both countries and said that there is need to establish a joint platform of both the countries for collaboration in tourism and facilitating the tourists.

On this occasion, Umar Masood ur

Rehman Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has said that the Pakistani business community would continue to work together to strengthen bilateral ties with Indonesian businessmen and promote bilateral trade. Pakistan has been enjoying excellent relations with Indonesia for a long time and it is hoped that this journey of friendship will continue forever. He said that there were vast opportunities for trade and investment between the two countries. Pakistan offers attractive opportunities for investment and joint ventures to foreign investors, he added, which would definitely benefit Indonesian investors, and will also lead to prosperity and development for both countries and the ASEAN region as well.

The Vice Presidents FPCCI urged for cooperative ventures between Pakistan and Indonesia to develop bilateral trade and expressed that Pakistan-Indonesia bilateral trade and economic relations can be further strengthened by the exchange of business-to-business delegations, organizing of joint trade exhibitions, and taking equal benefit.

KDC condemns Indian restriction of freedom of speech of esteemed: Dr. Asif Dar

WASHINGTON: Kashmir Diaspora Coalition, a coalition of six international Kashmiri diaspora advocacy organizations, issued the following press statement to denounce the radical Hindutva-led Indian Home Ministry's inflammatory declaration of Esteemed Dr. Asif Maqbool Dar as illegal under international law.



On January 7, 2023, the Hindutva-led Indian Home Ministry declared the highly respected Kashmiri diaspora leader, Dr. Asif Maqbool Dar, a renowned anesthesiologist, as a 'terrorist' under its infamous Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the United Nations have all condemned Indian violations of human rights in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir), especially the use of 'lawless laws' to intimidate the indigenous population.

This is just another instance of a fascist, internationally discredited political organization - BJP-, with a dwindling economy that flaunts international law and brazenly continues its military occupation against a hapless people to distract its impoverished society.

Dr. Asif Maqbool Dar is not an Indian citizen. He is an advocate of the right to self-determination for the people of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This right is accorded to all peoples under international law and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, especially Resolution 47 passed on April 21, 1947.

Currently, upwards of 900,000 Indian military forces and paramilitaries are militarily occupying the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Under both the 4th Geneva Convention and Hague Regulations of 1899 and 1907, India must ensure certain rights to the indigenous people of occupied territories, i.e., the people of Kashmir.

Furthermore, Article 75 of the Additional Protocol of 1977, affords all rights and protections for the indigenous people's freedom of expression in the occupied territories and in the diaspora.

We demand that the Hindutva-led, fascist Indian government repeal these draconian edicts, lift the ongoing siege in the occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir and refrain from weaponizing its law to stifle freedom of expression.

Similarly, we condemn their illegal incarceration of journalists, human rights defenders, political leaders and demand they withdraw their foreign military from neighborhoods in Kashmir.

Lastly, we appeal to the UN, OIC, EU, Organization of American States, African Union, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to intervene and stop India's genocide in the disputed territory of Kashmir.

ISDB, WB pledge \$6.2 billion for rehabilitation of Pakistan' flood survivors

News Desk

GENEVA: The Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank on Monday announced the pledges of a total \$6.2 billion to help build back a climate resilient Pakistan which suffered over \$30 billion losses consequent to the unprecedented floods.

The pledges were announced at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being co-hosted by Prime Minister Shehbaz and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Addressing the conference, ISDB President Muhammad Al-Jasser said the Islamic Development Bank Group had pledged a funding of \$4.2 billion over the next three years.

Moreover, the WB also announced a donation of \$2 billion to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood-ravaged Pakistan.

The pledges by the international organizations proved that the efforts of the Pakistan's leadership were coming to the fruition, besides the success of the government delegation.

Besides the international organizations, the friendly countries also wholeheartedly announced donations for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of flood-hit Pakistan.

Inflation continues skyrocketing in Egypt

News Desk

CAIRO: Egypt's annual urban consumer price inflation slightly accelerated to 5.9% year on year in December from 5.6% in November, data from the country's state statistics agency CAPMAS showed on Monday.



Month-on-month, the headline indicator showed inflation at -0.1% compared to 0.1% a month prior, the agency said.

The annual rate remains within the 5-9% target range set by the central bank which kept its key interest rates unchanged during a regular monetary policy committee meeting on Dec. 16.

"Egypt's annual inflation rate (urban CPI) increased ... at a slower than anticipated pace, impacted by a steeper Month on Month decline in the food index," Naeem Brokerage said in an analyst note. The company was expecting the rate to accelerate to 6.3%.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile items such as food, increased to 6% year on year in December from 5.8% in November, the central bank said on Monday.

Saudi Arabia to host pre-pandemic numbers for 2023 Hajj

News Desk

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will remove COVID-19 restrictions for the 2023 haj season and host pre-pandemic numbers of pilgrims, the kingdom's ministry of haj and umrah said on Monday.

In 2019, the last year before the pandemic struck, some 2.6 million people performed the haj. The kingdom allowed only limited numbers from its residents in 2020 and 2021 before it welcomed back one million foreign pilgrims in 2022.

The ministry of haj said in a Tweet that the kingdom, home to Islam's holiest



sites in Mecca and Medina, will impose no restrictions, including age limits, for this season.

Access was restricted in 2022 to pilgrims aged 18 to 65 who have been fully vaccinated or immunised against the coronavirus and did not

suffer from chronic diseases.

Haj season is expected to begin on June 26 in 2023.

Over the years, the kingdom has spent billions of dollars on making one of the world's biggest religious gatherings more secure.

Haj, a once-in-a-lifetime

duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it, is a major source of income for the government from worshippers' lodging, transport, fees and gifts.

An economic reform plan of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aims to increase umrah and haj capacity to 30 million pilgrims annually and to generate 50 billion riyals (\$13.32 billion) of revenues by 2030.

About 19 million also took part annually in the umrah, another form of pilgrimage to Mecca which-unlike the haj-can be carried out at any time of the year, before the pandemic.

Up to 4 million children in Pakistan still living next to stagnant and contaminated floodwater

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: More than four months after a national state of emergency was declared in Pakistan, up to 4 million children are still living near contaminated and stagnant floodwaters, risking their survival and well-being, UNICEF warned today.

Acute respiratory infections among children, a leading cause of child mortality worldwide, have skyrocketed in flood-stricken areas. In addition, the number of cases of children identified as suffering from severe acute malnutrition in flood-affected areas monitored by UNICEF nearly doubled between July and December as compared to 2021; an estimated 1.5 million children are still in need of lifesaving nutrition interventions.

"Children living in Pakistan's flood-affected areas have been pushed to the brink," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Paki-

stan. "The rains may have ended, but the crisis for children has not. Nearly 10 million girls and boys are still in need of immediate, lifesaving support and are heading into a bitter winter without adequate shelter. Severe acute malnutrition, respiratory and water-borne diseases coupled with the cold are putting millions of young lives at risk."

In Jacobabad, a southern district where many families have little more than mere cloth to cover their makeshift shelters by stagnant floodwaters, temperatures have dropped down to 7 degrees Celsius at night. In mountainous and high-altitude areas, which have also been affected by the floods, snow has fallen, and temperatures have dropped below 0 degrees Celsius.

UNICEF and partners have started

providing items such as warm clothing kits, jackets, blankets and quilts, aiming to reach nearly 200,000 children, women and men. In response to the worsening child survival crisis, more than 800,000 children have been screened for malnutrition;

60,000 were identified as suffering from Severely Acute Malnutrition—a life-threatening condition where children are too thin for their

height—and referred for treatment with Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). UNICEF health interventions have reached nearly 1.5 million people with primary health care services so far, and 4.5 million children have been immunized against Polio in 16 flood-hit districts. UNICEF and partners have also provided more than one million people with access to safe



drinking water, and one million with hygiene kits. In the months ahead, UNICEF will continue to respond to urgent humanitarian needs, while also restoring and rehabilitating existing health, water, sanitation and education facilities for families returning home.

UNICEF Pakistan has permanent field offices in all four provinces and has established four hubs to bring UNICEF operations and programmes closer to the hardest hit areas. We have been working with the Government of Pakistan, UN agencies and NGO partners to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable populations in 55 calamity-affected districts, both for displaced populations and those returning to the location of their destroyed villages.

UNICEF's current appeal of US\$173.5 million to provide life-saving support to women and children affected by the floods remains only 37 per cent funded.

Six fallacies and truths about China's epidemic control

Xinhua

BEIJING: Life is returning to normal and mobility is rebounding as China's COVID-19 prevention and control has entered a new stage — a boon for world economy.

However, some Western media ignore the facts, choosing instead to apply double standard and even spread misinformation, while making unwarranted accusations against China's epidemic fight, confusing the public and misleading the world as a consequence. However, in the face of facts and data, these lies are evident and untenable.

FALLACY 1: "NEW COVID POLICY BRINGS CHAOS"

The real situation is: Grand Tang Dynasty Ever Bright City, a commercial pedestrian street

in Xi'an of Shaanxi Province, was packed with people; residents in Shijiazhuang of Hebei Province and Wuhan of Hubei Province released balloons; locals in Xiangtan, Hunan Province, enjoyed a fireworks show during the New Year celebrations. "Seeing so many people celebrating the New Year together, I was nearly moved to tears," one netizen wrote.

FALLACY 2: "CHINA'S COVID RESPONSE A FAILURE"

During the past three years, China launched a war against COVID-19, effectively handled more than 100 cluster outbreaks, and protected the lives and health of more than 1.4 billion people to the greatest extent.

Every country would and should adjust its anti-COVID-19 policies according to the chang-

ing situation of the epidemic and go through periods of adaptation following such adjustments.

FALLACY 3: "CHINA'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IS DIM"

China's optimized COVID-19 response has triggered a lot of ups and downs in terms of predicting the impact on the Chinese economy. A topsy-turvy time and a drag on global growth were among the typical labels foreign pessimists put on the future of the Chinese economy.

Some foreign naysayers, bothered by the "unfortunate side-effects" of China's recovery, even warned that China's reopening may burden the rest of the world, not with higher growth, but with higher levels of inflation or interest rates.

FALLACY 4: "PATIENTS GOING

SHORT OF MEDICINE AND TREATMENT"

The truth is: Chinese medical institutions at all levels are taking all the necessary measures to increase resources and personnel. The reality is that they are busy but functioning smoothly.

The First Affiliated Hospital of Harbin Medical University in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, has received over 140 critically ill COVID-19 patients in recent days.

FALLACY 5: "DARK COVID WINTER FOR VILLAGERS"

The truth is: China has made rural areas a focal point in the country's current COVID response, boosting medical capacities and providing timely support.

The country's 23,000 coun-



ty-level medical institutions, 35,000 township hospitals and 599,000 village clinics have formed a closely collaborative

and efficient health protection system so that rural patients can enjoy tiered, timely and convenient medical services.

FALLACY 6: "OFFICIAL COVID DEATH TOLL UNRELIABLE"

The fact is: China has always published information on COVID-19 deaths and severe cases in the spirit of openness and transparency.

The global criteria for judging COVID deaths are divided into two categories. Some countries count only cases of people who tested positive for COVID-19 and died of respiratory failure induced by the virus. Other countries count all the deaths as COVID deaths as long as the deceased had tested positive for the virus in the past 28 days.

China's war against COVID-19 is still underway, and victory shall come for the 1.4 billion Chinese people. The fallacies and their fabrications will prove to be wrong.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
40,504.76	41,007.52
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,074.73	40,436.82
Index Value	Change
6,128,863,541	-502.76
Percentage	Time
-1.23%	Jan 9, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,715.12	+15.63
Percentage	Time
+0.15%	9 Jan, 2:19 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,630.61	0.00
Percentage	Time
0.00%	6 Jan, 11:29 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
25,973.85	+153.05
Percentage	Time
+0.59%	6 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	164.15	165.4
Bahrain Dinar	604	608.5
Canadian Dollar	174	175.35
China Yuan	33.18	33.43
Danish Krone	32.5	32.85
Euro	268	270.7
Hong Kong Dollar	29.09	29.44
Indian Rupee	2.76	2.84
Japanese Yen	2.45	2.5
Kuwaiti Dinar	737.84	742.84
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	144	145.2
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	589.88	594.38
Qatari Riyal	62.26	62.76
Saudi Riyal	66.6	67.25
Singapore Dollar	170.12	171.42
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	241.85	243.6
Thai Bhat	6.59	6.69
U.A.E Dirham	68.6	69.2
UK Pound Sterling	305	308
US Dollar	234.4	236.75

Sindh Commerce Policy 2023 - 27



News Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has welcomed the visit of Mr. Faraz Abid Lakhani, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Sindh on Commerce, to the Federation House to seek proposals & recommendations of the apex body on the industrial & economic development of the province.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh appreciated the fact that Mr. Faraz Abid Lakhani has visited the FPCCI Head Office shortly after taking the charge of his important portfolio and, as President FPCCI, has extended his full support for the development of the province; highlighting the infrastructural upkeep & development; law & order; burgeoning cost of doing business; abysmal investor confidence due to the bad state of ease of doing business indicators; bureaucratic red-tapism; lack of digitalization in property documentation; excessive regulations & inspections and poor state of labor laws as the top most issues of the business, industry and trade community of Sindh.

Mr. Suleman Chawla, SVP FPCCI, Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo, Engr. M. A. Jabbar, VP FPCCI, and Mr. Faraz Abid Lakhani & his team explained, in their detailed answers to the FPCCI office bearers and members, that CM Sindh & the provincial government are crystal clear that the new commerce policy of Sindh 2023 - 27 will not be announced in a consultation-less fashion; and, FPCCI will be their focal point to incorporate the feedback, recommendations and proposals of all the sectors & segments. He added that Sindh Government is having technical assistance of USAID in this regard and sectorial action plans will also be incorporated in the policy to make it effective & inclusive.

Mari Petroleum announces gas discovery at Mari Ghazij-1 well in Sindh province

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: By the grace of Almighty Allah, Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL), the Operator of Mari Development & Production Lease (Mari D&PL) with 100% working interest is pleased to announce a gas discovery resulting from its exploratory efforts at Mari Ghazij-1 Exploration Well, drilled in Mari D&PL, located in District Ghotki, Sindh Province.

Mari Ghazij-1 exploratory well targeting multiple Ghazij Limestone units in Mari D&PL, was spudded-in on November 24, 2022 and successfully drilled down to the depth of 1,015 meters. The gas flow rate established through Drill Stem Test (DST) is 5.1 Million Standard Cubic Feet Per Day (MMSCFD) with Wellhead Flowing Pressure (WHFP) of 232 Pounds Per Square Inch (Psi) at 64/64 inch

choke size.

This was the first dedicated exploratory well targeting multiple Ghazij Limestone units. The concept emerged from Iqbal-1 well where in a thin limestone unit in Ghazij Formation



was found to make minor contribution of ~0.5 MMSCFD to the flow. Based on that, the Limestone units within Ghazij Formation were thoroughly studied in the entire Mari D&PL area

to ascertain their reservoir potential and deliverability in the play sweet spot that has been successfully proven through Mari Ghazij-1 discovery.

The said discovery in Mari D&PL shows the commitment of MPCL to exploit the hydrocarbon (HC) potential of the Lease and aggressive exploration strategy. It has opened a new avenue and will positively contribute to mitigating energy demand and supply gap from indigenous resources and will add to the hydrocarbon reserves base of MPCL and the Country.

Mr. Faheem Haider, Managing Director/CEO MPCL has termed this discovery a success for the company's geoscientists and said that the company now plans to appraise this discovery to prove its extent and in parallel evaluate its development options.

He further added that MPCL's aim is to

contribute in arresting the declining gas production in the country through a combination of maximizing production from current fields and discovering new resources via aggressive exploration strategy targeting high grade prospects within the company's portfolio.

Mr. Waqar Ahmed Malik, Managing Director/CEO of the Fauji Foundation and Chairman MPCL Board of Directors congratulated MPCL's management for testing this new play concept for exploration in a mature field.

MPCL is an integrated exploration and production company, currently operating Pakistan's largest gas reservoir in the Mari D&P lease area, Daharki, Sindh. With around 23% market share, it is the second largest gas producer in the country. MPCL is a Fauji Foundation Group company which is a hybrid social enterprise pursuing a social mission in the Country.

Installing Electric Poles

RAWALPINDI: Workers of WAPDA busy in installing electric poles alongside Murree Road with the help of heavy machinery, in the city.



Photo: Online

Pakistan will be prevented from default: Faiz ul Haq

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior economist Faiz Ul Haq has said that friendly countries and international powers will not allow Pakistan to default; because, it is in no way in their interests that a country with a massive population of 230.1 million and strategically located falls into a sinkhole of anarchy due to economic unviability.

Addressing a seminar of international commerce reporters, he however added that it would be necessary for Pakistan to adhere to IMF's fiscal discipline; so that, four big friendly countries feel confident enough to announce their respective bailout packages; namely, Saudi Arabia, China, UAE

and Qatar.

Senior Economist Faiz Ul Haq said that the packages of friendly countries would include deposits in the State Bank; debt restructuring; refinancing & roll over; grants for rehabilitation of flood-affected areas; new commercial & semi-commercial loans and some loan write-offs.

Faiz Ul Haq also expressed his surprise at international commerce reporters taking unusual interest in the news and analysis of Pakistan's possible default. Whereas, answering their questions, he informed them that the share of Eurobonds in Pakistan's external debt is only 4 percent; and, it is way too lower than other countries which have defaulted.

Youth can become a headache if remained unemployed, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday said failed government institutions should not be considered as assets but liabilities.

The state-run companies are burdens on scarce resources and act as landmines for the economy therefore the government should get rid of them immediately, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that 63% of the population in Pakistan is young and the economy must create at least one million new jobs annually to keep them busy otherwise they can become a problem.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the closure of industries and the loss of jobs should be a major concern as employment can help youth become responsible citizens.

He said that the failed state-owned companies could not become profitable and their management could not



be improved despite decades of efforts because the governments lacked the will and skills required to run these companies so it is better to sell them.

Selling these white elephants will provide some capital to the government in these difficult times and save hundreds of billions of rupees annually which are currently being spent as bailouts to keep them alive artificially.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that selling these companies will not endanger the jobs of qualified employees because the new owners will also need qualified employees, but the efficiency of the enterprises

will also create more job opportunities and the government will also receive taxes.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the losses of the top ten institutions including PIA, Railways, power companies and National Highway Authority are ninety percent of the total losses.

It is impossible to deny the usefulness of government-owned companies. It is also a fact that nearly half of the world's GDP is credited to state-run companies and currently there are 600 such companies operating in Europe alone.

However, it is impossible to push state-run companies to profit in Pakistan because here politics is given preference over every other matter including the economy.

How can government operate businesses in an unfavourable environment where private business is difficult to run, he questioned?

The job of politicians is to run the country, not to run businesses. If the government does not want to sell these companies then it must work on a mixed model in which the majority of shares are held by the government but the management is in the hands of the buyer who is responsible for making the company profitable.

Partnership on supporting childhood growth through good nutrition takes flight



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Abbott and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) teamed up to educate on how good nutrition can support childhood growth and bring awareness to the issues of malnutrition and stunting. Passengers on PIA domestic flights will receive materials on how to recognize and address picky eating behavior and ideas to engage kids in the kitchen. In addition, board games, coloring books and puzzles will be provided to keep children entertained on board.

Kids need nutritious foods for healthy growth and devel-

opment, especially during early, formative years of their lives. When kids are picky eaters for long periods of time, they may not be able to get complete and balanced nutrition through regular diet, and this can lead to serious health issues like malnutrition, immune deficiencies, diminished bone health, stunting and decreased muscle mass, which can have lifelong consequences from poor health outcomes.

Growth issues in the first five years may challenge a child's development and limit future potential, as approximately 60% of adult height is achieved by the age of five.

Gearing up for a virtual tomorrow, TPL Insurance enters the metaverse

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: With the commitment to redefine insurance in Pakistan through continuous innovation and product enhancement, TPL Insurance has entered the Metaverse focusing on its next generation of customers. To create awareness about its products and develop a personalized experience, TPL Insurance has become the first insurance company in Pakistan to open in the meta space. The metaverse is growing in popularity, captivating people all around the world. From gaming to networking, many people and businesses are exploring the vast possibilities of the virtual world.

Speaking about the launch, Mr.

Muhammad Aminuddin - CEO, TPL Insurance, said: "As Pakistan's leading Insurtech, we take immense pride in bringing disruption to the digital space, creating new developments and offerings in the industry and for the next generation. Our efforts are focused on making insurance easy and accessible for various segments across Pakistan. TPL Insurance will continue playing a pivotal role in driving awareness about the benefits of insurance and providing customers with innovative solutions."

With the accelerated progression of the tech and internet experience, the Metaverse enables users to go a step further than just browsing the internet or social media. Metaverse is a virtual world where people can



meet and interact, like their real-life experiences and interactions. As the metaverse expands, so will its use as a marketing platform. This is the first

step taken by TPL Insurance to establish a presence in the Metaverse, and insurance policies will be issued and serviced virtually in the upcoming

months.

Users can walk around the TPL Insurance gallery, learn about products and offers as well as get quick access to the mobile app and website for real-time policy issuance and servicing.

Commenting on this initiative, Ms. Sarah Dawood - Head of Corporate Brand, TPL Insurance, said, "The metaverse is the start of a new era in Marketing & Brand Communications in Pakistan, and globally, the consumer's virtual life will now play as important a role as their physical presence and experiences with brands and services. I'm excited to see TPL Insurance as the first insurance company in Pakistan to be in the meta space."

Cricket Centre, Prince Club, Township Whites emerge victorious in K-20 Cup 2023

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Cricket Centre, Prince Club and Township Whites registered contrasting triumphs in 20-K Cup 2023 T20 Cricket Tournament matches, played here at different venues on Monday.

Basit Ali batted Cricket Center Club to a 26-run victory over Model Town Whites in the sixth match of the tournament. Basit Ali's unbeaten convincing knock of 50 runs off just 24 balls was the highlight of the match and for this brilliant knock, he was awarded man of the match award.

Cricket Center, batting first, posted a decent total of 178-5 in the allotted 20 overs. Anas Mehmood was though the top scorer from the winning team as he scored 54 runs off 42 balls with the help of 6 boundaries and 1 six, yet the star batter from the winning side was Basit Ali with his smashing unbeaten knock of 50 runs while opener Ameer Hamza struck 22 runs. Naveed Malik (4-20) and Shahab Khan (1-40) bowled well for MT Whites.

Model Town Whites replied strongly but their middle order failed to deliver as they could score 152-6 in 20 overs, thus losing the match by 26 runs. Opener



Aon Shahzad played brilliant inning of 69 runs while Naveed Malik scored 25 and Farhan Khan hit 16 runs. For Cricket Center, Ali Zafar took two wickets and Saif-ur-Rehman and Asif Ali Khan got one wicket each.

Prince Club overpowered Model Town Club by 6 wickets in highly-charged seventh match of the tournament. Model Town Club, batting first, scored 171 runs for the loss of 7 wickets. Farman

Ali hammered 56 runs, Muhammad Saleem 27 and Hassan Rizwan 23 runs. For Prince Club, Usman Dhillon grabbed 3 for 31 and Ahmed Hassan, Sham ud Din, Zeeshan Shabbir and Anas Mustafa took one wicket each.

Prince Club successfully chased the target on the last ball of the match by scoring 175 for 4 wickets. Player of the match Ammar Tariq played sensational knock of 71 runs of 52 balls, smashing

8 fours and 3 sixes. Sham ud Din (29*), Shoaib Arshad (27) and Anas Mustafa (26) also shone with bat. For MT Club, Usman Shahid (3-25) and Mohsin Irshad (1-35) bowled well.

Muhammad Shoaib's superb bowling guided Township Whites to a thrashing 110-run victory over Lucky Star Club in the eighth match of the tournament. Shoaib bowled four overs and conceded just 14 runs to grab four wickets.

Township Whites, batting first, posted a mammoth total of 191-8 in allotted 20 overs. Rana Ayan Ali was top scorer with 59 runs while Naeem Khan smashed 48, Kamran Afzal 27 and Ali Ahmad Jutt 19 runs. Adil Sarwar bagged 2 wickets for 23.

Lucky Star Club could score paltry 81-10 in 12.2 overs, thanks to outstanding bowling by man of the match Muhammad Shoaib. Junaid Ali (25), Awais Shahzad (20), Imran Dogar (15) and Hanan Zahid (11) could cross the double figures. Besides Shoaib, Kamran Afzal and Muhammad Yasin claimed 2 wickets each.

On Tuesday (January 10, 2023), two matches will be contested. Shinning Club will vie against Shah Kamal Club while Apollo Club will play Shah Faisal Club.



Laure: Pakistan Women football team depart for Saudi Arabia. Maria Khan is leading the Pakistan Women Team while Malika Noor will be Vice Captain. Pakistan Women Team will take part in 4 nation tournament. The team will play first match on 11th January against Komoras, 2nd on 15th against Moraceous and 3rd on 19th against Saudi Arabia.

India's Bumrah ruled out of Sri Lanka ODI series



Sports Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has been pulled out of the three one-day internationals against Sri Lanka, the country's cricket board said Monday, after being added to the initial squad.

The two teams will begin the 50-overs series on Tuesday in Guwahati after the hosts, led by Hardik Pandya, clinched the three-match Twenty20 series 2-1.

Bumrah, 29, has been out of action since September and missed the Twenty20 World Cup, where India lost to England in the semi-finals.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said Bumrah "will need some more time to build bowling resilience" and the decision was taken "as a precautionary measure".

The selectors have not named any replacement for Bumrah, called the "Yorker King" for his ability to bowl the toe-crushing delivery.

Regular captain Rohit Sharma and star batsman Virat Kohli return to the ODI team, which will be preparing for this year's 50-over World Cup at home.

India's updated ODI squad: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Hardik Pandya (vice-capt), Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umran Malik, Arshdeep Singh.

Naseem takes five as Pakistan thump New Zealand in first ODI

News Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan strolled to a six-wicket victory over New Zealand in the first one-day international on Monday after fast bowler Naseem Shah took five wickets in Karachi.

The 19-year-old grabbed 5-57 for his second five-wicket haul in just four ODI appearances as New Zealand, sent in to bat, managed 255-9 in their 50 overs at the National Stadium.

Mohammad Rizwan (77 not out), skipper Babar Azam (66) and Fakhar Zaman (56) then helped Pakistan cruise to victory with 11 balls to spare.

The home team took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The remaining matches are on Wednesday and Friday, also in Karachi.

Azam and Zaman put on 78 runs for the second wicket after Imam-ul-Haq (11) fell in the sixth over.

Zaman hit seven boundaries in his 74-ball knock before he was bowled by Michael



Bracewell, while Azam was stumped off Glenn Phillips after facing 82 deliveries.

Rizwan, who added 60 with Azam, put on another 64 with Haris Sohail who made a quick-fire 32.

Off-spinner Bracewell was the best New Zealand bowler with 2-44.

Earlier, it was Naseem's fiery bowling that kept New Zealand in check.

The teenager dismissed opener Devon Conway in the first over of the match for

nought to kickstart Pakistan.

Naseem returned for a second spell to account for Phillips (37), Bracewell (43) and Henry Shipley (nought).

Naseem, whose first ODI five-wicket haul was against the Netherlands in August, rounded off his night by dismissing Mitchell Santner for 21 in the final over.

Tom Latham (42) and Daryl Mitchell (36) stabilised the innings during a fourth-wicket stand of 56, while Phillips and Brace-

well added 66 off 59 balls for the sixth — before Naseem dismissed both in successive overs.

Skipper Kane Williamson scored 26 before he was beautifully bowled by debutant leg-spinner Usama Mir, who finished with 2-42.

Phillips hit a six and a four in his 53-ball knock, while Bracewell cracked four boundaries and a six.

Opener Finn Allen smashed six boundaries in his 27-ball 29.

Umar Gul 'strong contestant' for Pakistan's bowling coach



Former Pakistan fast bowler Umar Gul has come up as a strong candidate for the role of the Men in Green's bowling coach, sources told Geo News Monday.

It must be highlighted that recently, Gul's assignment as the bowling coach of the Afghanistan cricket team came to an end.

The 40-year-old made 237 international appearances for Pakistan across formats, taking 179 wickets in 130 ODI matches and bagging 85 in 60 T20Is with an impressive career economy of 7.19.

He also played a key role in Pakistan's triumphant campaign during the T20 World Cup in 2009.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee, led by Najam Sethi, also wants to appoint legendary all-rounder Shahid Afridi as chief selector till the 2023 World Cup in India.

Earlier, the PCB had appointed Afridi as the interim chair of the Men's National Selection Committee for the home series against New Zealand.

Messi and Ronaldo to meet in friendly between PSG and Saudi select

Spokesman Report

PARIS: Lionel Messi and Paris Saint-Germain will play a friendly against a select side made up of players from Cristiano Ronaldo's new club Al Nassr and their Saudi rivals Al Hilal in Riyadh on January 19, the French champions announced on Monday.

Qatar-owned PSG will travel to Doha on January 17 before moving on to the Saudi capital for the match at the King Fahd Stadium which will see Messi and Ronaldo renew their rivalry.



Messi returned to training with PSG last week after being given a fortnight off following Argentina's World Cup triumph in Qatar in December.

Meanwhile Ronaldo, who will turn 38 in February, recently joined Al Nassr after agreeing a contract that runs until 2025 and is reportedly worth more than 200 million euros (\$214m).

His arrival at Al Nassr, who are coached by Frenchman Rudi Garcia, comes as Saudi Arabia seeks to improve the profile of football in the country ahead of a possible joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup along with Greece and Egypt.

Ronaldo and Messi have dominated the sport over the last 15 years, winning the Ballon d'Or 12 times between them.

Their rivalry grew during nine years in which they came up against each other in Spain, when Messi was starring for Barcelona and Ronaldo for Real Madrid.

Riyadh clubs Al Hilal and Al Nassr are Saudi Arabia's two most successful sides. PSG have made a habit of travelling to Qatar in winter since the Gulf state bought the club in 2011.

However, this trip comes despite the Ligue 1 leaders having a French Cup tie scheduled for the weekend of January 21 and 22 against lower-league opponents yet to be determined.

Cycling star Cavendish had knife held to his throat, wife tells court

Sports Desk

LONDON: A masked intruder held a large knife to the throat of Olympic cyclist Mark Cavendish and threatened to stab him during a robbery at his home, the British rider's wife told a court on Monday.

The intruders made off with two Richard Mille watches, valued at a combined £700,000 (\$839,000) from the property, about 25 miles (40 kilometres) northeast of London, in the early hours of November 27, 2021, when the Cavendishes were at home with their children, according to prosecutors.

Peta Cavendish, giving evidence at Chelmsford Crown Court, east of London said she

"heard a noise that woke me" in the night and went downstairs to investigate, adding she was "naked" at the time.

"As I got a few steps down the stairs I could hear men speaking but it was still dark," she said.

Peta Cavendish told the court she could see "men's figures in balaclavas, and they were running towards the bottom of the stairs".

Asked by prosecutor Edward Renvoize how she felt when she saw the men in balaclavas, she told jurors: "It was just everyone's worst nightmare."

Peta Cavendish said one of the intruders "dragged" her husband "from his feet and started punching him".

Mark Cavendish jointly owns



the record for stage wins at the Tour de France, with 34, and also won an Olympic silver on the track at the 2016 Rio Games.

Romario Henry, 31, of Bell

Green, Lewisham, south-east London and 28-year-old Oludewa Okorosobo, of Flaxman Road, Camberwell, south London, both deny two counts

of robbery. They are accused of robbing Mark Cavendish of a watch, phone and a safe, and robbing Peta Cavendish of a watch, phone and suitcase.

The trial continues.

A Sports -

ISLAMABAD: South Africa allrounder Dwaine Pretorius has announced his retirement from international cricket, saying he was shifting focus to T20 and other shorter formats for the rest of his career.

Pretorius has played 30 T20Is, 27 ODIs and three Tests during his career and took 77 wickets across all formats.

He also represented South Africa in two World Cups. His best bowling figures came against Pakistan in the second T20I of the three-match series at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium in 2021. He produced 5 for 17 in that match and held the record for the best bowling for South Africa in T20Is.

Calling on his international career, the 33-year-old expressed his desire to play more franchise cricket around the world to have a better balance between professional and family life.

"A few days ago, I made one of the toughest decisions of my cricketing career. I have decided to retire from all forms of international cricket," his statement for CSA read. "By doing this, I will be able to have a better balance in my career and family life."

"All the players I have played with and against over the years you have had an impact on my career," he added. "A special mention goes to Faf du Plessis, who brought me back after being let go from the international side the first time and who backed me and helped me become a better player; thank you."

Prior to the T20 World Cup in 2022, Pretorius was South Africa's preferred all-rounder, but a thumb fracture paved way for Marco Jansen to replace him in the Proteas white-ball side.

Iran snooker trailblazer stuns Selby at British Masters

News Desk

LONDON: Iranian snooker player Hossein Vafaei marked his British Masters debut with a 6-2 opening round victory over three-time champion Mark Selby on Sunday.

Vafaei, who took Zhao Xintong's place in the draw after the Chinese player became one of 10 players suspended amid an investigation into match-fixing, made two centuries and further breaks of 99, 52 and 65 to beat Selby for the third time in succession.

"I can't believe it," 28-year-old Vafaei, Iran's first snooker professional, told Eurosport.

"He's such a tough opponent, he never gives up. He's such a legend and it's such a pleasure to share the table with him."

"I'm so proud of myself to beat him again. He's one of the greatest ambassadors we have so I'm so happy to do the hat-trick against him."