

He expressed hope that the ECP will implement the order regarding the elections. He said that the PTI Sindh chapter is ready for a strong protest in case of any delay in the LG polls.

Pak-China Relations

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Mr. Nong Rong called on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf at Parliament House on Friday.



Photo: PID

President rejects appeal of accused in workplace sexual harassment case

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has rejected the appeal of a person accused of sexual harassment at workplace and referred the case back to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH) for final adjudication after appraisal of the evidence.

While deciding on an appeal filed by the accused, President Alvi held that the request to once again cross-examine the complainant after the engagement of a fresh counsel had no ground.

The president endorsed Ombudsperson's observa-

tion that the appeal filing by the accused was an apparent attempt to prolong the impugned case indefinitely to enhance the anguish and agony of the complainant.

It was further observed that the matter had already consumed sufficient time in the disposal due to the accused's miscellaneous applications and was tantamount to starting a new round of litigation which prima facie was against the spirit and scheme of the Act 2010.

The president observed that the complainant who had filed a case of sexual harassment under section 8 of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at



the Workplace Act 2010 before the Ombudsperson on 27.05.2019 had yet not been adjudicated. The accused had filed a representation before the President against the order of 23.09.2021 for

ment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 before the Ombudsman on 27.05.2019. The accused had earlier filed a representation before the president against interlocutory order dated 23.09.2021 for seeking permission for the cross-examination of the complainant which was rejected on 26.01.2022.

The accused filed another representation despite the fact that the proceedings of the complaint were pending before the learned Ombudsman and a decision in this regard had yet to be made after appraisal of the evidence on the question of whether the element of harassment had been established or otherwise.

Country importing wheat worth \$2 billion annually: Tariq Cheema

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema on Friday said that now Pakistan is importing wheat worth \$2 billion annually, at one time, Pakistan used to export wheat.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that this time "we have to import 2.6 million tons of wheat from Russia, out of which we have received 1.3 million tons. The minister said that after the decision of the review committee, the government has decided to import 2.6 million tons of wheat this year.



He said that the government had stored 1.8 tons of wheat in the Strategic Reserve last year, which will contain 1.5 million this year.

The minister said that there is no shortage of wheat/ flour anywhere in the country, "we have wheat in abundance

and the provinces have also been asked to tell how much wheat they want."

He said that provinces including Punjab are not releasing wheat; they are getting wheat as per requirement.

Tariq Cheema said that the

shortage of wheat in the country and noise about prices is unnecessary and the government is ready to face all kinds of challenges.

He said that after the 18th amendment, agricultural commodities including wheat are the issue of provincial governments.

He said that all the provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are getting quota wheat and there is no shortage of wheat anywhere in the country.

The minister said that when provincial governments released wheat from the provinces, the prices of flour in the country decreased.

He said that Pakistan Agri-

cultural Storage and Services Corporation Ltd (PASSCO) does the procurement of wheat and all the provinces also deal with it in terms of wheat.

Replying to a question, he said that efforts were being made to reduce the reliance on imported food commodities, and enhance the local output of food commodities, including that of wheat and oil seeds as edible oil imports swelled to \$ 4.5 billion during last year and wheat imports to \$ 2 billion.

He said that a strategy was being devised for stabilizing flour prices to ensure the provision of flour at affordable rates.

Pakistan pushes for implementation of UNSC resolutions on Kashmir, Palestine

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Citing the unresolved Kashmir and Palestine disputes, Pakistan has called for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions that provide for the exercise of right of self-determination by the Kashmiri and Palestinian people, suggesting such a move would promote international peace and security.

"The Security Council needs to actively promote the resolution of conflicts and disputes, not simply manage them, much less ignore them." Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member body on Thursday.

"The Council has not been able to secure consistent implementation of its own resolutions, such as the resolutions relating to Palestine or Jammu and Kashmir," he said in the course of a debate on 'the Rule of Law among Nations'.

"In these cases," the Pakistani envoy

added, "the right to self-determination has been suppressed brutally and foreign occupation has been allowed to persist over several decades. It is essential to elaborate the modalities through which this principle can be implemented universally and consistently in the contemporary context."

Noting that the international community has adopted laws to regulate the use of force, especially military force, he also pointed out that the Charter has placed explicit restraints on the use of force, except in cases of defence. It has laid down principles which have been a foundation to maintain world order over the past seven decades and prevent another world war.

The Security Council's resolutions — whether adopted under Chapter VI (peaceful settlement of disputes) or VII (enforcement action) of the UN Charter, are legally binding since Member States are obliged, under the Article 25 of the Charter, to implement the Council's decisions, Ambassador Akram said.

ECP rejects Sindh's decision to delay Karachi, Hyderabad LG polls

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday turned down the Sindh government's request to delay the local government polls in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions, saying elections would be held as per scheduled.

Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired an emergency meeting to review the situation after the provincial government announced to put off the elections in Karachi division, and districts of Hyderabad and Dadu, scheduled for Jan 15, citing political issues and flood water.

In a late-night development, the Sindh government announced that the long-awaited LG elections would not be held in the divisions. However, it said polls in seven districts — Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal and Jamshoro — will go as per plan.

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon announced on Thursday



that the notification to hold the polls on the basis of the existing delimitation had also been withdrawn on the demand of the Mutahida Qaumi Movement, which had serious reservations in this regard.

The top electoral body, in its decision, said the LG polls would not be delayed in any way, adding that deployment of troops at the sensitive polling stations would also be ensured. The ECP has directed the Ministry to Interior to provide security for the elections.

The Sindh government's move sparked strong reactions from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamat-e-Islami (JI) as the opposition parties announced protest against it.

Denmark pledges DKK26.7 mln humanitarian assistance for Pakistani children

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD -: Denmark has announced additional humanitarian assistance of DKK 26.7 million to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for supporting the flood relief efforts of Pakistan.

"The Danish assistance will provide health, nutrition, WASH, child protection services and education for 10 million children in Pakistan through UNICEF-Pakistan", Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy made an announcement while addressing International Conference on a Climate Resilient Pakistan recently held in Geneva.

According to a news release from Denmark's embassy in Pakistan, the Danish minister said: "The scale of the destruction is almost beyond comprehension. Yet it is the harsh reality for the 33 million people who were affected by them. The floods



show all too clearly the severe consequences that climate change has for the world's most vulnerable people."

He further said that Denmark had already supported Pakistan by providing water purification and humanitarian aid in connection with the floods.

"I am happy that we announced a further DKK 26.7 million through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support the nearly 10 million children, who continue to need humanitarian aid" he added.

The minister said, "We are looking forward to further deepening bilateral relations between Denmark and Pakistan and developing a Resilient Pakistan."

NA will complete its term: Rana Sanaullah

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: - Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan said on Friday that the National Assembly, as well as the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies, will remain intact until August this year.

"With the CM's advice of dissolution, Imran's bandit rule has ended in Punjab," he claimed.

Talking to a private news channel, Rana Sanaullah said that after dissolution, elections for both the KP and Punjab assemblies would be held within 90 days. "We will contest the elections and win them".

Opposing the option of general elections, the minister said how can we ask the governments of Sindh and Balochistan to dissolve the assembly?

Chinese diabetes medicine approved for use in Pakistan

News Desk

BEIJING: The insulin glargine injections developed by a Chinese pharmaceutical company has been approved for diabetes patients in Pakistan.

The insulin glargine injecta BASAGINE developed received approval (Reg. No. 111178) by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

According to the company, it is the first insulin glargine injection (prefilled injection pen) biosimilar drug in Pakistan.

Insulin glargine injection is an essential long-acting insulin analogue product in the treatment of diabetes for its efficacy and safety.

CM KP inaugurates different projects in AG Complex

Staff Reporter

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan here on Friday inaugurated several projects including GP fund automation and online payment system at Accountant General Complex, Peshawar.

The Chief Minister while speaking on the occasion said that the employees would help get information about their GP fund's balance through a single click through an online automation system.

He said a pilot project for online payment has been launched, enabling the project's authorities to issue cheques and collect it online.

Mahmood Khan said that our aim was to bring improvement and ease in the lives of the people through speedy and effective service delivery.



The provincial departments have prepared a paperless governance system that would soon be implemented, he added.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated solarization project of AG Complex Peshawar.

LHC orders action against restaurants without parking facility

Bureau Report

LAHORE: In a step towards controlling smog, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed the authorities to take action against restaurants without parking facilities.

Punjab badly struck with such weather conditions in recent years in the initial days of winter in the region. The LHC bench issued orders while hearing a petition seeking the court's intervention to curb smog. During today's hearing, the LHC showed reservations about the commencement of development projects simultaneously.

The court summoned details of the development projects, out-of-order signals and cameras from the Lahore Development Authority (LDA).

The chief traffic officer (CTO) Lahore raised traffic issues before the Lahore High Court bench. He said due to development projects and public gatherings at the three different spots of Lahore, traffic jam has become routine.

Court observed that restaurants working without proper parking facilities are also fuming traffic problems in the city and ordered to take action against such units.

"They (restaurants) are not building parking facilities nor paying taxes, if this behavior continues, the restaurants will be closed."

S&P Global sponsored mega coding competition concludes at LUMS

 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), held a two-day technology event in collaboration with Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers bracket (IEEE) Society, titled CodinGuru 5.0. in partnership with S&P Global Pakistan. This competition aimed to improve the tech quotient of the students and encourage ambitious and skilled coders to enhance their abilities.

Senior Director Commercial S&P Global, Shafqat H. Shah, addressed the audience and said, "At S&P Global, we not only deploy cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), virtual reality (VR), data science, and analytics in our products to power the markets of the future, but we do so while being inclusive and equitable towards our people, clients, and the communities we operate in. Together, we can accelerate progress in the world."

The competition was planned across 3 segments: Programming, UI/UX, and WebApp Module. The participating teams developed innovative solutions for daily usage like delivery applications, climate change actions,



and energy-saving appliances through different programming languages like C++, Java, and Python.

To further highlight the correlation of 'Diversity, Equity & Inclusion' (DEI) with innovation and creativity, a panel discussion was held focusing on the significance of inclusion in workplaces. Moderated by Campus Recruiter S&P Global, Hiba Khalid, it included Senior Director Commercial S&P Global, Shafqat H. Shah, Director People S&P Global, Samia Qamar, and Founder Skills Todo, Ayesha Zaman. "A thriving, inventive workplace must aim to represent the society that it func-

tions in. Coding skills are intrinsic to progress and S&P Global ensures the development of skills by incorporating the diversity of backgrounds, and more importantly, different perspectives, which result in more creative solutions for the problems" stated Director People S&P Global, Samia Qamar.

The top three places were secured by FAST Karachi as the winner of the Programming Contest, LUMS students for the UI/UX module, and COMSATS Lahore for the WebDEV module.

LUMS has been organizing this mega-coding competition since 2018.

This year, a total of 70 teams from different universities, mainly Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Punjab University College of Information Technology, FAST National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, University of Engineering and Technology, Information Technology University, COMSATS, and Government College University Lahore participated in the event. The participants were given 24 hours to design a creative IT solution and customer-friendly interface for a contemporary real-world problem aligned with the given theme.

Fuel Shortage

Islamabad: A woman on the way carrying a bundle of tree branches to be used for cooking purposes at F-11 sector in the Federal Capital.



Photo: APP

More than 40 percent of the population is facing malnutrition

 Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Amid the situation when more than 40 percent of the population is facing malnutrition, the Pak Korea Nutrition Centre established at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad would help combat the challenge at national level, said University of Agriculture Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan.

He chaired the 1st National Steering Committee (NSC) meeting of the project titled "Establishment of Pak-Korea Nutrition Center (PKNC) to Improve Child and Community Nutrition" the other day.

He added that the malnutrition had emerged as the biggest challenge that need to be addressed by creat-

ing awareness, tangible research and outreach work. He also said that to provide nutrition education at community level, the project will train Master Trainers in Korea who will further disseminate nutrition education to concerned stakeholders. He also stated that with continued support from stakeholders, we will meet objectives as mentioned under PC-1 of this project. He thanked KOICA for such an important initiative that will work to address malnutrition issues at national level.

Planning and Development, UAF Director Irfan Abbas, presented the Agenda of the meeting.

While giving an overview of this project, Faculty of Food Nutrition and Home Sciences Dean /Central Project Director/PI, PKNC Prof Dr Masood Sadiq Butt, said that the PKNC project

was approved by the CDWP at a total cost of Rs. 1593.775 Million with the share of KOICA US\$ 7 Million, and PSDP/HEC share Rs. 438.775 Million) with 60 months duration.

The meeting was attended by Yeon Je Ho, Country Director, KOICA; Heungsu Lee, Deputy Country Director, KOICA; Dr Nazeer Ahmed, Chief Nutrition, Planning Commission of Pakistan; Dr Arif Rehman Chief (S&T), Planning Commission of Pakistan; Prof. Jaehan Kim, Chungnam National University, South Korea; Prof. Dr. Imran Pasha, Dy. Project Director/CO-PI, PKNC; Umer Saeed Qadri, Treasurer, UAF; Ali Raza, Program Manager KOICA Pakistan; PKNC thematic chairs, and focal persons from provincial partners of PKNC.

53 transformers & 106 electric poles distributed to the constituency

 Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: On behalf of MPA PK 114 Naseer Ullah Wazir 53 transformers and 106 poles were distributed on the basis of needs and referred to the people of the concerned villages in Lower South Waziristan keeping in view the needs of the people in his constituency.

On this occasion, local leaders of PTI, former Finance Secretary Bakht Nawaz and former Labour Wing President Haroon Wazir thanked the MPA and told the media that these transformers and poles were distributed to the people from the personal funds of MPA Naseerullah Wazir Distributed.

Mohsin Ranjha launched New luxurious Studio

 News Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's premier fashion designer Mohsin Naveed Ranjha launched his new studio in DHA Phase 6 Bukhari Commercial in Karachi. The new store is the brand's first one outside designer's home base in Punjab.

The luxurious new Mohsin Naveed Ranjha studio opened its doors to Karachi just in time for this festive season, showcasing the label's most sought after collections, along with an signature heirloom bridal, semi-formals and prêt-à-porter collections. Speaking on the launch of his new studio designer Mohsin Naveed Ranjha commented, "Over the years we have had a lot of interest from people in Karachi who have been wanting to buy our clothes and places orders for custom bridal.


With this the brand new Mohsin Naveed Ranjha flagship store is sure to be the perfect one-stop shop for weddings this year.

The star-studded launch turned out to be an exciting affair for fashionists and glitterati from all across Pakistan with some flying in from Islamabad and Lahore to show their support. Models presented an exclusive preview of Mohsin Naveed Ranjha's new signature creations. The launch was attended by power house actors Maya Ali, Syra Yousuf, Armala Hassan, Hareem Farooq, Gohar Rasheed, Ushna Shah, Hamza Amin, Bilal Saeed, Imran Ashraf, Junaid Khan, Aijaz Aslam, Sarwat Gilani, Fahad Mirza, Fellow designers like Hassan Sheheryar Yasin, Zaheer Abbas, Ansab Jahangir and models Hira Tareen, Nausheen Shah, Umer Alam, Amna Arshad, Waqar Butt, Junaid Niazi, Nubain Ali, Jerjees Seja, Abdullah Sultan, Zainab Reza, stylist Mehek Saeed, Zahra Malik, graced us with their presence. Members of press and many more along with an assemblage of luminaries from the fashion, entertainment, and media industry were also in attendance.



A panel discussion titled "Psych Meet" was organized by Iqra University North Campus.



 Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The Department of Psychology of Iqra University North Campus organized a "Psych Meet" panel discussion. HOD and registered psychologist Dr. Salima Ahsan Tejani discussed the importance of mental fitness for the students.

Dr. Salima informed the audience that such sessions aim to identify the students' psychological concerns and issues. In addition, it will further enable the student to seek the best practices in the field and introduce them to the practices of the psychology council. Through these sessions, we can enhance the mental capabilities of our students and equip them with tools to live their lives better and excel in their academic and personal lives. Ms. Shamsha Shamsi, a life coach, joined the online session from Canada to inform the students that controlling their emotions is the key to success in life. She further said that these sessions should be organized to help those who need help so that people do not take matters into their hands by ending a precious life. She said that our purpose is to educate the students and make them aware of life's challenges. Later, the participants of the session participated in "laughter therapy," which improves a person's thinking capabilities and reduces stress and pain. The session ended with different singing, poetry, and comedy programs presented by the students and a commemorative shield presentation to Dr. Salima Tejani.

Industrialists determined to make Faisalabad a model beautiful city



 Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: On the initiative of District administration, the beautification work of Kashmir bridge underpass has completed with the support of local industries, which was formally inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner, Imran Hamid Sheikh along with the representatives of United Industries Limited. DG PHA Rai Naeemullah Bhatti, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Mudassar Ahmad Shah, Assistant Commissioner City Waqas Saffdar Sikandari, In-charge District Emergency Operational Center Muhammad Sadiq, CEO United Industries Limited Muhammad Waleed Mago, Muhammad Hanif Mago, Muhammad Shahnavaz, Muhammad Akbar Mago and other members were also present on this occasion.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the installation of the

extraordinary models on the walls of this underpass which highlight the culture of this city. The beauty of the walls and the untouched scenery can be seen in the lighting at night making the minds luxurious.

DC thanked the industrial group for financially supporting this project. He said that the process of improving the aesthetic beauty of the city will continue and by highlighting the beauty of the underpass, the citizens will see an attractive environment. He further expressed that, under the PHA, certain models are also being installed at the squares and intersections of the city for highlighting the beauty of the city. Meanwhile, various sections of society appreciated the initiative of beautification of Kashmir bridge underpass and said that visitors from other cities will also get to see the attractive environment, which will make Faisalabad more beautiful and there will also be a further increase in identity.

PEC holds its 3rd Engineering Capstone Expo in Islamabad with participation of 37 universities

 News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council held the 3rd Engineering Capstone Expo-2023 at Pak-China Friendship Center, Islamabad. The Capstone Expo is a project of the Pakistan Development Committee (PDC) of the PEC.

PEC Chairman Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon inaugurated the ceremony. Engr Dr Nasir Khan, PEC Registrar, Engr Dr Shakir, convener jury committee, Engr Mir Masood Rashid, PDC Convener, Engr Sardar Ali Khan, Engr Dr Mansoor Baloch, convener organising committee, Engr Mohsin Ali Khan, Engr Mian Sultan Mahmood and different industry delegates and guests from academia attended the inaugural ceremony.

In his welcome speech, Engr Mir Masood Rashid gave a briefing on the Capstone Expo's theme and highlighted the initiatives of the PEC for the period 2021-24, among which one is the Engineering Capstone Expo.

This is the third Engineering Capstone Expo organized by the PDC. He highlighted different initiatives of the PEC and PDC committee includ-



ing FYDP, OJT (paid internship by PEC), PEC E-Gateway, day trip industrial visits, SDG's 2022-25, PEC mobile application, online payment mechanism with banks, and job placement portal.

Speaking as the guest of honor, Engr Daroo Khan Achakzai, Former FPCCI president, appreciated the initiatives and efforts that are being made

by PEC.

Vote of Thanks and Capstone statistics briefing delivered by Engr D Mansoor Baloch in which efforts of the organizing team and contributors were acknowledged. In this federal Expo, a total of 37 universities participated with 235 project stalls and 1050 project participants.

Islamabad

15° – 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:45 am

Zohr12:16 pm

Asr3:42 pm

Maghrib5:20 pm

Isha6:48 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15

Bomb Disposal 15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/

Islamabad1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance 1122 &

& Rescue Services 4451122

Motorway Police 9266044

Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596

Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115

PIA Flight Info 114

PIA Cargo 9280979

Railway Inquiry117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi5555489

CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111

MH561116

MH561116

Cantt Hospital9270907-11

DHQ5556311-4

RGH9290301-7

Holy Family9290322-7

PIMS9261170-79

Polyclinic 9218300-09

Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43

CDA 9208301-04

Cultural Consulate marks birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad’s (S) daughter

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Cultural Consulate in Islamabad hosted a ceremony to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad’s daughter, Hazrat Fatima Zahra SA.

To mark the occasion, the cultural consulate of Iran in Islamabad organized special gatherings to pay tribute to the only daughter of Islam’s holy prophet Mohammad.

The host of the event Ehsan Khazaei, Cultural Consular Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamabad, while giving a welcome speech, congratulated the audience on the occasion of Birthday of Hazrat Fatima Zahra (S) which also Women’s Day and Mother’s Day and paid great tribute to Khatoon Jannat SA.

He further said that it is an opportunity to take

stock of how much we have understood the real position of women, and what fundamental steps will be taken to fill this gap in a systematic manner on the occasion of birth anniversary next year.

He also congratulated Imam Khomeini on the birth anniversary of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

When Hazrat Imam Khomeini (R.A.) was arrested to be exiled, the guard said, “Where are your soldiers?” He said, “They are drinking milk in their mothers’ laps, and today these children have become young.

Their sacrifices, especially commanders like Qassem Soleimani, were trained in the arms of their mothers and played a vital role in the success of the Islamic Revolution.

After the success of the Islamic Revolution of Iran,



women have performed outstanding works in various fields and have been pioneers in many fields.

The number of Iranian women in various fields, especially in these last three months, protected their veils

by making Hazrat Fatima Zahra (PBUH) a model and the image presented by the Western media is not correct.

Because the majority of Iranian women are in favor of hijab. In order to lead a successful life, we should

follow the example of Hazrat Fatima (PBUH) as she is a role model for us.

The special events were attended by women from all walks of life and included prayers and lectures by scholars on the life and

services of Islam’s greatest lady Hazrat Zahra.

The participants in the ceremony described the wife of first Shia Imam Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib, as a role model for Muslim women for her moral and religious virtues.

Religious Scholars said that if the women of the modern century really want to get their rights, they have to take refuge in the shadow of Islam by associating them with the life of Prophets Mohammad’s daughter.

Every year, Shia Muslims worldwide commemorate Mother’s Day on the 20th day of the Islamic lunar month of Jamadi al-Thani, which marks the birthday anniversary of Lady Fatima Zahra.

The participants say they wish that women would follow in the footsteps of Hazrat Zahra in order to obtain prosperity in both, this world and the hereafter.

Renowned religious scholar Khanum Tayyaba Bukhari and Dr. Farhat Jabeen also addressed the event.

Khanum Tayyaba said that the various aspects of Hazrat Fatima (S) life have not been explored yet.

He read the poems of Hazrat Allama Muhammad Iqbal which are in Persian and interpreted them in his honor, in which Iqbal says “Madaran ra Uswa e Kamil Batool” that the caste of Batool has the status of Uswa for mothers.

Dr. Farhat Jabeen emphasized on the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and practicing it, which is part of our faith.

Apart from this, the ‘daf’ group of Minhaj Al-Qur’an performed Maddah with the daf in honor of Ahl al-Bayt.

Women were also awarded with special gifts. A large number of women participated in this program.

AIOU to offer new admissions tomorrow

Rehmanullah

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing admissions of Spring 2023 semester (first phase), throughout the country including AJK and GB tomorrow (January 15, 2023). The admissions of matriculation, middle-tech, intermediate, I Com and certificate courses offered in the first phase will continue till February 21, 2023, while admissions in BS (face to face), MS, MPhil and PhD programs will be open from January 15 to February 15, 2023. Admissions in the second phase will be offered from March 1, 2023, which includes teacher training programs, associate degree (BA) and BS (ODL) programs. Continue students can also register themselves in offered courses.

Prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) on January 15, 2022 and will also be available at the regional campuses and countrywide established prospectus sale points. Admission in BS (face to face), MS/MPhil and PhD programs can only be applied via online system whereas admission application forms for matriculation, intermediate and I Com can be submitted manually as well as via online mode. In case of online submission of admission application form, the candidates are not required to dispatch printed application form to the university.

Wall paintings

ISLAMABAD: A view of artists busy in painting of Sindhi traditional cultural history on a wall at F-6 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

World Bank appreciates BISP’s innovative mechanism for selection of beneficiaries’ and payments

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: World Bank delegation by Mr. Lire Ersado appreciated the innovative ideas being implemented by Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) to ensure transparency in selection of beneficiaries and the payment mechanism. The delegation met with SAPM /Minister of State, Faisal Karim Kundi in Islamabad on Friday.

The World Bank delegation reiterated its continued support to BISP’s efforts toward alleviating poverty in Pakistan and expressed desire to visit the BISP field offices to observe the cash disbursement among the beneficiaries and registration process under the



dynamic registry.

Mr. Lire Ersado acknowledged that BISP is totally apolitical in its functions and underscore that this help to a great deal in uniting all the stakeholders. Mr. Erdado said that World Bank would appreciate

if BISP could share the lessons learnt during disbursement of relief package among the recent flood affectees with the expert of the World Bank (WB). He said that success BISP’s Crisis-Resilient Social Protection (CRISP) project is

also a matter of pride for the Bank.

Faisal Karim Kundi apprised the delegation on various initiatives of BISP, which included, launch of dynamic survey, the hiring of family members of BISP beneficiaries for dynamic survey, release of a tranche of Rs. 55 billion for Benazir Kafalat beneficiaries and Rs. 13 billion for Benazir Education Stipends beneficiaries, inclusion of transgender in Kafalat Program, payment Rs. 70 billion package for the BISP beneficiaries who were affected by the recent floods and introduction of appeal mechanism for more than 8 lac BISP beneficiaries who were removed in the previous government.

Microsoft for Startups graduates third cohort of B2B tech startups from GrowthX Accelerator program



News Desk

ABU DHABI: Microsoft for Startups Middle East, in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO), today graduated the latest cohort of tech startups from its GrowthX Accelerator program. The conclusion of the cohort was celebrated during a Demo Day event, hosted at Abu Dhabi’s financial centre, Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), with attendees including startup founders, government officials, investors, business leaders and stakeholders from the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Run as part of a strategic partnership between ADIO and Microsoft for Startups, GrowthX is specifically designed to empower growth-stage B2B startups ranging primarily from Seed to Series A stages to grow and scale in Abu Dhabi. The program features weekly sessions from Microsoft experts, as well as regional and global leaders in business and technology. The 12 startups in this cohort hail from across the Middle East, Turkey and Pakistan, and are developing solutions in E-commerce, EdTech, Fintech, HRtech, and Insurtech. The companies in this cohort are Fortygard, Intiversity, Klickit, MonSpark, Pisano, Poilabs, Raabtaa, Supercommerce, Vita Virtues, Xina AI, Edraak Systems, and Pay Caps.

Eng. Abdulla Abdul Aziz AlShamsi, Acting Director General at ADIO, said, “The rapid pace of digital transformation is an opportunity to continually find new technological solutions to global challenges. The GrowthX Accelerator is a proven platform to identify and empower innovative startups to achieve scale and impact. We congratulate all the graduates on completing this program and look forward to seeing how they leverage the tools gained to accelerate their growth and enhance the regional startup landscape.”

Naim Yazbeck, General Manager, Microsoft UAE, said, “It has been both inspiring and encouraging to witness the growth and development of each of the startups enrolled into this cohort. They’ve leveraged every opportunity to maximize the potential of their offerings, enhance their skillsets and embrace the support and resources available to empower them to grow and scale their businesses. Together with ADIO, we are proud to have empowered another incredible cohort of startups to showcase their innovative ideas and develop them into real-world solutions, that will strengthen the regional ecosystem and develop our digital economy.”

Investment in tech startups across the UAE and the Middle East continues to grow exponentially as demand for new, creative, and innovative products and solutions continues to rise. Over the past year, venture capital funding in MENA reached \$2.6 billion, 138% more than in 2020, according to MAGNITT. Startups in the UAE accounted for 26% of all deals closed across MENA and 45% of all funding raised across the region in 2021.

‘The Publication of Holy Quran (Elimination of Printing and Recording Errors) Act

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister drafted the law

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK: Legislative Assembly in its session under the chairmanship of Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Anwarul Haq began on Friday with the recitation of the Holy Quran. At the beginning of the meeting, Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani presented the draft law “The Publication of Holy Quran (Elimination of Printing and Recording Errors) Act,” 2022 presented a motion to be introduced in the House.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani drafted the law

“Rahmatul Ulamain Wa Khatimul Nabien Syed Muhammad PBUH and Sahabah Wa Sallam Azad Jammu

and Kashmir Authority Act 2022” presented a motion to present in the House. The House, by consensus, handed over the draft law “Rahmatul-ul-Lamin and Khatim-ul-Nabien Sayyid Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions and the Free Jammu and Kashmir Authority Act 2022” to the Majlis-e-Qaima.

Another draft law

“The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Substance Allowance for Widow and Orphans (Amendment) Act, 2021.”

Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani presented it in the House which was unanimously handed over to the Majlis-e-Muntakhiba.

During the question break in the session of the Legislative Assembly in response to the question of the

Member Assembly Waqar Ahmed Noor, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani said that the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Department of Services and The transport policy issued by the General Administration is effective on June 12, 1993. In the light of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Vehicle (Use and Maintenance) Rules, 1977, guests except the Ministers/Special Assistants/ Govt. Vehicles are provided from the Central Transport Pool level to the officers of Azad Kashmir and Services Department. Services currently have 582 speeding vehicles which are in use by various departments and 145 non-speeding vehicles, out of which 121 vehicles have been auctioned in 2022 while auction process of 24 vehicles is in progress. He said that

the vehicles are not purchased from the services department/central transport pool level for the project, but the respective secretariats under whose supervision the development projects are running purchase the vehicles for the project themselves.

Transport policy in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Executive Order dated 12th June 1993 is still in force. While the present day vehicles are not compatible with the said policy. Most of the vehicles in the said transport policy are no longer available in the market, while strict implementation of the transport policy will be ensured after the approval/promulgation of the new transport policy. There are difficulties in the implementation of the Sardast Transport Act 12 June 1993.

Till June 2021, 160 vehicles/

motorcycles have been procured. The price of the mentioned vehicles is 87,19,40,730/- (Eighty Seven Crore Nine Lakh Forty Seven Hundred and Thirty) Rupees and the details of the companions used are included.

In response to a question of Member of Assembly Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Higher Education Minister Malik Zafraqbal has said that the government provides 15 million for universities, the respective university provides funds to any campus. He told the House that 100 kanals of land was required for the Poonch University Haveli campus, out of which 40 kanals of land have been transferred. In response to another question, Higher Education Minister Malik Zafraqbal said that the shortage of staff in Degree College Fatehpur Thikiala will be met soon. There

are difficulties due to court injunction, matters will be resolved soon.

In response to a question of Assembly Member Mian Abdul Waheed in the meeting, Khawaja Farooq Ahmed told the House that there will be no shortage of flour anywhere in Azad Kashmir. Flour supply is being ensured in Neelum Valley. He said that there will be further improvement in the coming days. Food Minister Ali Shan Soni said that there is stock of flour in Neelum valley in snow areas and supply of flour to Neelum valley is being ensured on priority basis. He said that they will not tolerate any kind of deficiency in the supply of flour. Finally, Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq adjourned the session till 11 am on Tuesday, January 17.

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Iran top diplomat hopes for restoration of Saudi ties

Iran s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian expressed hope that diplomatic ties between Tehran and Riyadh could be restored through dialogue between the two regional arch-rivals, as he visited Lebanon on Friday.

Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran in January 2016, after protesters attacked its embassy in Tehran and consulate in second city Mashhad following Riyadh s execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Amir-Abdollahian told a news conference in Beirut that he hoped “diplomatic missions or embassies in Tehran and Riyadh will reopen within the framework of dialogue that should continue between the two countries”.

He also hailed a potential rapprochement between Iranian ally Syria and Turkey, after their defence ministers met last month.

Iran and Saudi Arabia back opposing sides in various conflicts in the region, including in Syria.

Since April 2021, Iraq has hosted a series of fence-mending meetings between the two sides, but the talks have stalled in recent months, and no meetings have been publicly announced since April 2022. Iran holds sway over political life in Lebanon and Iraq, where it also supports armed groups.

Amir-Abdollahian met Friday with officials including his counterpart Abdallah Bou Habib and caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

In a meeting with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, the pair discussed “possible threats arising from the formation of a government of corrupt people and extremists” in Israel, according to a statement from the Tehran-backed group.

Lebanon s southern neighbour in late December inaugurated the most right-wing government in the country s history, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The move has sparked fears of heightened tensions between Israel and Palestinian groups, and of a potential military escalation in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Syria s pro-government Al-Watan newspaper said Amir-Abdollahian was set to visit ally Damascus on Saturday, at a time of warming ties between Syria and Turkey.

“We are happy with this dialogue that is taking place between Syria and Turkey,” Amir-Abdollahian said.

“We believe that this dialogue should have positive repercussions benefitting these two countries.”

Ankara had long backed rebels opposed to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

But after more than a decade of war that has seen Damascus claw back territory with Russian and Iranian support, ties between Syria and Turkey have begun to thaw.

In late December, Syrian and Turkish defence ministers held landmark negotiations in Moscow — the first such meeting since 2011.

Assad had said on Thursday that a Moscow-brokered rapprochement with Turkey should aim for “the end of occupation” by Ankara of parts of Syria.

The defence ministers meeting is to be followed by talks between the three countries top diplomats, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Thursday.

The mooted reconciliation has alarmed Syrian opposition leaders and supporters who reside mostly in parts of the war-torn country under Ankara s indirect control

Politics or Uniform

Javed Ullah Raja

Believe it or not, we are incomplete without the army. As because, the army has stood with the nation at each and every difficult time. Even in Swat, Bannu, remote areas of Baluchistan, or in other parts of the country, their services have been obtained. When all the infrastructures remain paralyzed Pak Army is dedicated and served the nation and the country. During the floods of 2010 or the natural calamities of, 2005, their services are appreciable. Apart from this, they did not hesitate to offer their precious lives. During the last flood in, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and wherever there was a need for relief operations, the Pak army offered their precious lives and also played an important role in saving the precious lives of people of the nation.

Then why do we forget their help and kindness to the country? Until today, we have seen and heard that any government, whenever it is in power, joins hands with the army and considers its dignity in that. This is our duplicitous policy to this day is beyond understanding. To say that the army do this did that, and gone. By God! Tell me a government, tell me a sincere leader who has looted the country not only with both hands but also with both feet and bankrupted the country, our entire history consists of these ambitions and such writings. If the military rulers come in the last 75 years’ history of the country, it is the result of our own mistakes. Today, once again, the country of Pakistan is in a very difficult time passing through more internal problems than external threats are issues that cannot be fixed, nor the politicians try to solve them. It is to be remembered that today, we are valued by the whole world, so it is not our politics behind it, but the uniform, whose strength and power are acknowledged by the whole world. At a time,

when no one is ready to help. And when the news of default and bankruptcy of the country started to boil. So once again, the military leadership of the country took the initiative. During his visits to the neighboring Islamic countries, the Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Syed Asim Munir, met with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in which bilateral relations were discussed. It was agreed to strengthen military and defense cooperation. On this occasion, issues of mutual interest, common interests, and security issues were also discussed. Which will obviously prove to be the best step to get the country out of difficulties. The military leadership stood out to create harmony between Muslim countries. It is obvious that when it comes to military and defense cooperation, in front of the host rulers. Our internal problems will not only come to the fore but attention will also be paid to remove them.

And now a look at the country’s problems! The World Bank’s report was released on October 6, titled “Pakistan Development Update 2022”. In this report, it is said that in 2022, the rate of growth in Pakistan will remain at 20 percent, which In the year 2024, it will be 3.2 percent while the rate of inflation may possibly reach 23 percent. The report added that on an annualized basis, the trade deficit reached its highest level in 2022 at around \$44.8 billion. Many experts believe that this deficit will increase further. It is believed that more than four million people are already living in poverty in Pakistan. Which is a reflection of our wrong policies.

On the appeal of the international community by the Pakistani rulers to restore the damage caused by last year’s floods, the international community and institutions will give 10.57 billion dollars in aid to the Pakistani people to deal with the damage caused by the floods. While there is a budget of 16 billion 30 million dollars for rehabilitation by the govern-

ment which may increase. According to another report, the country will need at least eleven billion dollars to pay its financial obligations next year. According to the announcements of international aid, the Islamic Development Bank Group will give 4.2 billion dollars in the next 3 years. While we have to fulfill our obligations immediately.

It is a matter of thinking about how long this country will keep its eyes on foreign aid and loans. will Just as the Chief Justice said, “The country cannot afford more loans. And he also pointed out that these loans do not lead to these disasters and the people are suffering from borrowing billions of dollars today.” Taking loans to Pakistan has become a sensitive matter. The entire nation has become indebted. The country’s infrastructure worth billions of dollars already exists, what has been delivered on it? Actually, we treat aid and loans as prizes. We spent where and whatsoever. Whoever comes into the government will do it, and will return the debts. Due to these same reasons, our dear country has reached the brink of destruction. At this time, the strange situation of the country Currently, load shedding of electricity and gas is on the rise, apart from inflation and essential commodities, now the flour crisis has taken a severe form across the country. Flour has become more expensive than petrol. Gas prices are going to double. The effect of this will then affect the object and the degradation will increase further.

Readers! For countries around the world, Pakistan’s strength, Pakistan’s power, and natural location are great assets from Allah. Let the decisions of survival come first. Let the country get rid of the debts and do not spread our hands in front of the world and make it a giver instead of a taker. Even today our rulers need the nails of consciousness. Repeating the mistakes of the past is not only Pakistan. Rather, it will have a negative impact on relations with the world.

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Overpopulation exerting pressure on socio-economic resources

Fakhar Alam

Alongside poverty and climate change, the developing countries including Pakistan were faced with the monster challenge of overpopulation that was exerting an extraordinary pressure on its socioeconomic resources.

According to the UN population report 2022, the world population had crossed the psychological barrier of eight billion population mark in November last year and is expected to reach 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100 courtesy to modern innovations and research in medical and pharmaceuticals sciences that significantly reduced mortality rate.

The experts believed that if the population bomb was not wisely defused, then millions of people especially children and women mostly in SAARC, CARs and underdeveloped states would be exposed to hunger, starvation and malnutrition every year in the wake of global economic recessions and international conflicts including USSR-Ukraine, Kashmir and

Palestine that has already put peace of these regions at jeopardy.

The first national population census 1951 had revealed that Pakistan’s total population was only 75 million and 93 million in 1961(Incl East Pakistan), 65.3 million in 1972 (Excl East Pakistan), 80.68 million in 1981, 134.8 million in 1998 and it further jumped to a record 207.9 million in 2017, thus showing a massive increase of 132.9 million during 65 years with a substantial 1.91 percent annual growth rate recorded in 2021.

Being the fifth most populous country and the second largest population in Muslim world after Indonesia, Pakistan’s increasing population has already started exerting tremendous pressure on hospitals, educational institutions, agricultural production, forestry, roads, employment and socioeconomic resources.

He said about 20pc Pakistanis i.e 55 million were reportedly living below the poverty line mostly in underdeveloped districts including merged areas of Pakistan and in the prevailing shabby economic situation and high food requirements in post-flood era, there was a need to make a cut on unnecessary

expenditures, development budget, imports bill on luxury goods and ensuring strict implementation of an energy conservation plan.

Dr. Malik said Pakistan produces about 20 percent edible production of its total requirement and was spending approximately US\$ 4 billion annually on its import which was very high for an agricultural country. “I have lost my mother in her sixth pregnancy due to my family’s wish for a son,” Nargus Bibi, a resident of Pabbi, Nowshera told the scribe after tears rolled down over her face.

“The desire for a baby boy had deprived my entire family and four sisters from a loving mother, who had worked day and night for our happiness and made us orphans forever,” she said.

Dr. Riaz Khan, Head of the Children Department, Government Hospital Pabbi Nowshera said the chances of mortality of mothers and newborns increase due to lack of spacing among children, inadequate medical checkups and poor nutrition.

He said stunting and malnutrition in children mainly occur in the first three to six months of birth due to an unbalanced diet of lactating mothers.

“The nutritional status of

newborns and infants was directly linked with the health and diet of the mother before, during and after pregnancy. I can tell you that about 30 to 40 percent of children were impacted by stunting that could be avoided by adopting contraceptives and reproductive healthcare services in the country including KP”.

Director, the Population Welfare Department, Imran Shah said the KP’s first population welfare policy 2015 had been approved under which the contraceptive prevalence rate would be raised from 28pc in 2013 to 55pc in 2032 while efforts would be made to decrease the fertility rate from 3.9pc to 3.3pc birth per woman and attain replacement level fertility 2.1 births per woman during the said period through the cooperation of relevant stakeholders.

Besides KP reproductive healthcare rights act 2020, he said work on four ongoing development projects worth Rs721.348 million and two new schemes costing Rs54 million was underway focusing on strengthening of social welfare programs.

Rs390. 698 million was being spent on the promotion of social

welfare and family planning programs, Rs93.550 million on establishment of adolescents and reproductive healthcare centres, Rs19.041 million on the mobile service unit at Upper Kohistan and Palas Kolai and Rs1161.34 million for the establishment of 260 family welfare centres.

Under the new projects, the regional training Institute at Bannu would be established at a cost Rs 362.782 million while Rs127.767 million to be spent on franchising family planning programs under public-private partnership. He said social-cultural and religious barriers, lack of education, poverty, early child marriages and a desire for baby boys were one of the major constraints making negative effects on family planning program in KP.

Imran Shah informed that 120 family planning centers were approved for merged areas and mobile services were being extended to all those areas where family planning centers were not available.

He said the population bomb was a serious social issue and a collective effort was required especially by media, political leaders, religious scholars and civil society to defuse it before it make our lives miserable.



Christians bearing brunt of growing Hindu supremacist juggernaut-I

APP Research

The recent attacks on churches and Christians in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and elsewhere post-Christmas and on New Year celebrations indicated continued violence against Christian minority with alarming regularity.

According to a report of Deccan Herald, unfortunately, the state authorities had been found to be failing to provide a conducive environment of equality for all of its citizens.

In the latest incident, hundreds of villagers armed with sticks and iron rods marched into Sacred Heart Church in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh, and vandalised the church.

Over 1000 indigenous people following the Christian faith were driven out of their homes in the villages near Narayanpur in the past couple of months.

A church in Periyapatna near Mysuru was allegedly vandalised in late December, where miscreants damaged the idol of Infant Jesus, ransacked the altar, and took away the offerings box.

Another report by the Times of India said that on the eve of new year celebrations, Assam police had sought details of the churches established in the last one year in the state and the instances of conversions, which had created a sense of insecurity among the Christian organizations and spoiling the Christmas mood.

The New York Times, in its related report, said that Anti-Christian vigilantes were sweeping through villages, storming churches, burning Christian literature, attacking schools and assaulting worshippers.

In many cases, the police and members of India’s governing party are helping them, government documents and dozens of interviews revealed. In church

after church, the very act of worship has become dangerous despite constitutional protections for freedom of religion,” it added.

To many Hindu extremists, the report said, the attacks were justified — a means of preventing religious conversions.

To them, the possibility that some Indians, even a relatively small number, would reject Hinduism for Christianity is a threat to their dream of turning India into a pure Hindu nation.

Many Christians have become so frightened that they tried to pass as Hindu to protect themselves.

But the organized assaults against churches were propelled by a growing anti-Christian hysteria that is spreading across this vast nation, home to one of Asia’s oldest and largest Christian communities, with more than 30 million adherents.

“In the past few years, Mr. Modi and his Hindu nationalist party have tugged India far to the right, away from what many Indians see as the multicultural foundation Nehru built. The rising attacks on Christians, who make up about 2 percent of the population, are part of a broader shift in India, in which minorities feel less safe,” it added.

The report said Modi was facing increasing international pressure to rein in his supporters and stop the persecution of Muslims and Christians.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, a government body, recommended that India be put on its red list for “severe violations of religious freedom”.

According to the United Christian Forum (UCF), an inter-denominational organisation fighting for the rights of Christians in India, the most hate crimes against Christians in 2022 took place in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand.

To be concluded

IS Message

The Auspicious Birthday of the Dear Daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S)

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad felicitates all the lovers of Hazrat Mohammad Mostafa (PBUH) on the auspicious occasion of the birth of Hazrat Fatima, the beloved daughter of the Great Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH).

The spiritual character of this lady, who is from the lineage of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has a prominent and exalted position to the extent that Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) honored the character of this righteous lady by kissing her hand and also in order to honor the position and dignity of all women in all periods and places to remove the dust of ignorance from the mirror of the ages and to obliterate the superstitions that disregarded the women. After receiving the message of revelation and the emergence

of Islam, the women regained their true place in the world, and this is only realized due to the sublime and revolutionary thought of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the field of social justice, equality and the recognition of the natural rights of all human beings. The Prophet (PBUH) honored the women and restored their rights by respecting and revering his daughter in an appropriate manner.

In Iran, in order to honor the admirable women of our land and to follow the good manner of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), the birthday of this endeared lady has been declared as Women's Day, to make an opportunity to honor the position of the women and to renew the covenant with the gracious thought and manner of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about women and the position of women.

Congratulations and good wishes to all the women and mothers in Iran and Pakistan. We pray to Allah Almighty, as it is He who has so far been the supporter and supportive of the women of this two countries, and henceforth it is He who make them successful in their personal, national and spiritual flourishing and development.

The diligent and determined women of the two nations of Iran and Pakistan have taken valuable steps in the direction of reviving their values and abilities in all areas including spiritual, scientific etc. and to struggle for the development of their countries. The efforts of these women for the progress and development of their nations along with preserving their spiritual values, is an incomparable example and an indisputable model of progress and self-reliance in the contemporary history of the world.

There is no doubt that our societies owe a large part of their successes and achievements to the indefatigable efforts and contributions of our assiduous and noble women.

Today, the women of Iran and Pakistan, relying on their God gifted capabilities and talents, have appeared in the best possible way in all specialized scientific and technical fields and are working tirelessly in this direction. The statistics and figures show their hard and tireless efforts.

Today is the harbinger of a bright, successful and spiritual future for the women of Iran and Pakistan. They always keep Iran and Pakistan in high regard.

We congratulate once again this auspicious day to all the dear women, mothers and daughters of Iran and Pakistan. Best wishes for Pakistan and Iran

NEPRA Decides on GOP Petition to apply quarterly adjustments on KE customers

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Announcing its decision on the petition filed by the Federal Government, NEPRA has adjusted the tariff of K-Electric under the head of Uniform Tariff Policy.

Across Pakistan, electricity users are charged an equal or 'uniform' tariff, per the rules and regulations of the Federal Government and the regulator, NEPRA. Individual distribution companies cannot unilaterally make any changes. All such petitions undergo a public hearing and scrutiny prior to approval; public hearing on this petition was conducted on 27th December 2022.

Per NEPRA's decision, the approved uniform quarterly tariff adjustments will be applicable on KE customers for a period of 4 months from January 2023 to April 2023 to be applied on the consumption for the months of October, November, December 2022, and January 2023 after notification from Federal Government. For bills already issued in January 2023, the adjustments will be billed in the following month.

As per the decision, category wise application of the 4th quarterly adjustment is as follows:

Residential consumers with consumption up to 300 units (excluding lifeline customers) to be charged PKR 1.4874 per unit whereas residential consumers with consumption above 300 units to be charged PKR 3.2116 per unit. All other categories to be charged PKR 4.4547 per unit.

Russia claims capture of Ukraine's Soledar; Kyiv says fighting goes on



KYIV: Russia said on Friday that its forces had taken control of the town of Soledar in eastern Ukraine, claiming Moscow's first big battlefield gain in half a year, but Kyiv said its troops were still fighting in the town.

Reuters could not immediately verify the situation in Soledar, a salt mining town that has been the focus of relentless Russian assault for days.

If confirmed, Russia's capture of the town would at last give Moscow a trophy for one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war, following major battlefield setbacks throughout the second half of 2022.

Kyiv and the West have played down its significance, saying Moscow sacrificed wave upon wave of soldiers and mercenaries in a pointless fight for a bombed-out wasteland, unlikely to affect the wider war except insofar as the huge losses have sapped manpower on both sides.

"The capture of Soledar was made possible by the constant bombardment of the enemy by assault and army aviation, missile forces and artillery of a grouping of Russian forces," Moscow's defence ministry said.

Seizing the town would make it possible to cut off Ukrainian supply routes to the larger nearby city of Bakhmut, and trap remaining Ukrainian forces there, it said. Moscow has been trying to seize Bakhmut for months.

But Serhiy Cherevatyi, spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command, told Reuters by telephone Soledar had not been captured: "Our units are there, the town is not under Russian control."

A Ukrainian officer in the area, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media, also told Reuters by telephone the Russians had not fully taken the town.

"Last night artillery fire was like from hell, both sides. From what I know, our boys have managed to exit some parts (of Soledar) in an orderly manner and now (assault) groups are counterattacking, but we still hold the town."

Ukrainian officials said on Thursday more than 500 civilians were trapped inside Soledar, including 15 children.

In an overnight video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked two units in Soledar he said were "holding their positions and inflicting significant losses on the enemy." He did not give more details.

Donald Trump's company to be sentenced for 15-year tax fraud

NEW YORK: Donald Trump on Friday will learn how the company that bears the former US president's name will be punished after being found guilty of scheming to defraud tax authorities for 15 years.

A New York state judge will impose the sentence after jurors in Manhattan found two Trump Organisation affiliates guilty of 17 criminal charges last month.

The sentencing comes three days after Justice Juan Merchan of the Manhattan criminal court ordered Allen Weisselberg, who worked for Trump's family for a half-century and was the company's former chief financial officer, to jail for five months after he testified as the prosecution's star witness.

Trump's company faces only a maximum \$1.6 million penalty, but has said it plans to appeal. No one else was charged or faces jail time in the case.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office, which brought the case, is still conducting a criminal probe into Trump's business practices.

Bill Black, a professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law specializing in white-collar crime, called the expected penalty a "rounding error" that offers "zero deterrence" to others, including Trump.

"This is a farce," he said. "No one will stop committing these kinds of crimes because of this sentence."

The case has long been a thorn in the side of the Republican former president, who calls it part of a witch hunt by Democrats who dislike him and his politics.

Trump also faces a \$250 million civil lawsuit by state Attorney General Letitia James accusing him and his adult children Donald Trump Jr., Ivanka Trump and Eric Trump of inflating his net worth and the value of his company's assets to save money on loans and insurance.

Bragg and James are Democrats, as is Bragg's predecessor Cyrus Vance, who brought the criminal case. Trump is seeking the presidency in 2024, after losing his re-election bid in 2020.

At a four-week trial, prosecutors offered evidence that Trump's company covered personal expenses such as rent and car leases for executives without reporting them as income, and pretended that Christmas bonuses were non-employee compensation.

Trump himself signed bonus checks, prosecutors said, as well as the lease on Weisselberg's luxury Manhattan apartment and private school tuition for the CFO's grandchildren.

"The whole narrative that Donald Trump was blissfully ignorant is just not real," Assistant District Attorney Joshua Stieglitz told jurors in his closing argument.

Weisselberg's testimony helped convict the company, though he said Trump was not part of the fraud scheme. He also refused to help Bragg in his broader investigation into Trump.

The Trump Organisation had put Weisselberg on paid leave until they severed ties this week. His lawyer said the split, announced on Tuesday, was amicable.

Ethiopia wants multi-faceted bilateral cooperation with Pakistan: Envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula has said that his country wanted to have bilateral cooperation with Islamabad in diverse areas of security, climate, tourism, business, trade and investment.

"Pakistan has many products which are in huge demand in Ethiopia and likewise, Ethiopia can send different edibles which are consumed in Pakistan in huge quantity," the ambassador said during an exclusive interview with the Addis Media Network-English.

He said the Pakistani business community can contribute to the Pakistan's economic development by exporting rice, chemicals, textile, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, sports items and construction material to Ethiopia while Pakistan can import coffee, tea, pulses and oil seeds from Ethiopia.

At the first place, the envoy said he identified areas of mutual interests keeping in view the foreign policies of both the countries and then moved on to establish connections with the key stakeholders in business community and the government of Pakistan.

The bilateral trade between the two countries was minimal and amounted to 78 million US dollars; however,



my target is to take it to 200 million US dollars by the end of 2023, he said, reiterating that an inclusive Pakistani business delegation with representation from all the economic sectors would soon be brought to Ethiopia to help them connect with the fraternity here.

The ambassador said another area where both the countries can enhance collaboration was the climate change which had recently brought flash flood to the shores of Pakistan and inflicted colossal damage in terms of life and property.

"Our country too is affected by the climate change but it is our Prime

Minister H.E. Abiy Ahmed who has brought green revolution in the country and recently received award from the United States for the Green Legacy Initiative."

He said efforts were also underway to increase collaboration with Pakistan for technology transfer and knowledge sharing. Agreements would be signed with the government of Pakistan in this regard soon.

H.E. Jemal Beker said tourism of Ethiopia would also be promoted among Pakistanis who viewed Ethiopia as one of the civilizations and had great attachment to the land of origin due to Hazrat Bilal Habshi and King Nijashi.

He said the Pakistanis viewed Ethiopians as heroic people because our country had never been colonized by any imperial power.

"Connecting with Ethiopia means connecting with civilization and beliefs of mutual equality, tolerance and independency," he remarked, adding that his country would play a major role in current global dynamism.

He said there was a dire need to sensitize the world about capacity and capability of Ethiopia which had undergone a lot of reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister H.E. Dr Abiy Ahmed. Ethiopia was the big nation, founding father of the League of Nations, the United Nations and

African Union.

In the last four years, he said his government tried to identify what we can offer to the world and where we can make improvements. The current government in Ethiopia had transformed the institution in an amazing way by adopting digitalization and automation."

"Our geographical location was very critical as most of the trade routes run through the horn of Africa. We are very close to Red Sea, Middle East and Bab-el Mandeb and on the other side we have the Indian Ocean," he said while highlighting Ethiopia's role in the current global dynamism.

As regards the annual trainings of the ambassadors, he said it was annual gatherings of our diplomats where we review our performance.

Under the foreign policy reforms, he said we are trying to build strategic alliances like Middle East and Pakistan. Our government has deployed vibrant people as ambassadors of Ethiopia in other countries who have been aggressively engaging the key people in the host countries to develop bilateral, regional and multilateral relations.

He said the core engine of any achievement was human capital and that was why we have placed a right person for right job with right attitude and skill so that they could protect our national interests by adapting to the evolving situation around the world.

President AJK seeks USA's proactive role to resolve Kashmir dispute

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the unresolved Kashmir problem was main cause and consequence of the worsening political and human rights situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir.

He expressed these views while talking to Bradley Parker, Political Consul of the American Embassy who called on him here today.

Referring to the prevailing situation in the held territory the president said that it was high time that the world in particular the United States of America should play its due



role for the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

He said that rights situation in the held territory had further exacerbated after the Indian government stripped the territory of its special status by abrogating Article 370 and 35A.

The unilateral actions taken by the Modi government, he said were in violation of the UN resolutions.

Seeking the Biden administration's urgent attention towards the simmering situation in the region, the president said, "United States should play its role to stop the violation of human rights in Occupied Kashmir and resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully in line with the UN security council resolutions.

World renowned Islamic experts, scholars visit Xinjiang region: Wang Wenbin

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: A delegation of world-renowned Islamic experts and scholars recently paid a visit to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region at the invitation of the local government, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Friday.

Led by Chairman of World Muslim Communities Council, Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, the visiting team composed of more than 30 members from 14 countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Tunisia, South Sudan and Serbia, he said during his regular briefing held at International Press Center (IPC).

During the trip, the dele-

gation visited Urumqi, Altay and Kashgar, saw an exhibition on counter-terrorism and de-radicalization and visited mosques, the Xinjiang Islamic Institute, local companies and old streets and towns.

They also visited Uyghur families, prayed together with local Muslims at a mosque and participated with locals in a workshop on rural revitalization and poverty alleviation, he added.

The spokesperson informed that members of the delegation said they were deeply impressed by Xinjiang's achievement in development and stability over the past decade.

They saw a safe, prosperous and stable Xinjiang where Muslims can freely exercise their ethnic and religious rights, and people from all



ethnic backgrounds live in harmony as equals.

The Chinese government has made enormous efforts to protect Xinjiang's multi-ethnic culture. China's counter-terrorism and de-radicalization policies have been very successful and delivered benefits to people of all ethnic groups.

Wang said that members of the delegation said that what they saw in Xinjiang is entirely different from what has been painted by some media, and the accusations against Xinjiang's human rights situation and so-called Uyghur cultural genocide are nothing but distortion of facts. The Islamic civilization and the Chinese civilization have interacted with each other amicably throughout the ages.

They members of the delegation expressed readiness to deepen cooperation between the Islamic world and China and firmly support China's position on Xinjiang-related issues, he added.

"Seeing is believing. People can tell right from wrong. The experience of the world-renowned Islamic religious figures in Xinjiang once again shows that truth will not be

hidden by lies, and those who seek to smear China by manipulating Xinjiang-related issues will not have their way," they commented.

The spokesperson said that China welcomes friends from all countries to visit Xinjiang and experience first-hand Xinjiang's social stability, economic prosperity, ethnic harmony and freedom of belief.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
40,323.45	40,803.89
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,803.89	40,195.67
Index Value	Change
4,924,400,254	−480.44
Percentage	Time
−1.18%	Jan 13, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,855.08	+61.04
Percentage	Time
+0.80%	13 Jan, 3:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,194.65	+4.68
Percentage	Time
+0.014%	13 Jan, 10:39 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
26,119.52	−330.30
Percentage	Time
−1.25%	13 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	170.5	171.75
Bahrain Dinar	607.88	612.38
Canadian Dollar	185	186.35
China Yuan	33.73	33.98
Danish Krone	33.26	33.61
Euro	268.25	270.5
Hong Kong Dollar	29.09	29.44
Indian Rupee	2.80	2.89
Japanese Yen	2.41	2.46
Kuwaiti Dinar	747.98	752.98
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
NewZealand \$	145.98	147.18
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	593.68	598.18
Qatari Riyal	62.26	62.76
Saudi Riyal	66.2	66.9
Singapore Dollar	171.42	172.72
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	246	247.75
Thai Bhat	6.89	6.99
U.A.E Dirham	68.5	69.1
UK Pound Sterling	303	306
US Dollar	236.25	238.5

Descon partners
with US firm
to provide
engineering services
in Gulf countries



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Descon Engineering, a leading Engineering enterprise in the region, has joined hands with KBR, a leading Global Engineering and Project company, to extend the scope of their joint pursuit of outsourced maintenance and turnaround management opportunities across the Gulf countries.

Taimur Dawood, Chairman of Descon, and Jay Ibrahim, President of KBR's Sustainable Technology Solutions, inked a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Dubai in this regard, extending their mutual area of expertise to the Gulf countries.

This strategic alliance will leverage both KBR and Descon's combined strength as leaders of industrial services in the market to optimize client OPEX, improve asset availability and reliability through KBR's portfolio of advanced digital solutions, and Descon's presence across the Gulf countries.

Commenting on this momentous development, Taimur Dawood, Chairman of Descon, observed, "Descon holds great stature in the engineering sector of Gulf countries and is playing a pivotal role in the industrial growth of the region. This accord with KBR will allow us to extend our already existing skillset and expertise, and implement mutual learnings to achieve exponential growth."

Jay Ibrahim, President of KBR's Sustainable Technology Solutions, said, "This agreement signals our confidence in this alliance following our success in the delivery of outsourced maintenance services in Qatar since 2021, and maps out the foundation for future growth of this strategic partnership."

Descon is committed to delivering quality services with safety and is determined to continue being a reliable partner in progress for KBR.

At least 300 tractor parts SME units
shut amidst total crash in demand

PAAPAM says over 100,000 workers lose jobs in an unprecedented crisis

Spokesman Exclusive

LAHORE: At least 300 tractor parts manufacturing SMEs have been forced to shut their units amidst a total crash in tractors' demand along with a severe liquidity crunch following the suspension of refunds by the Federal Board of Revenue to tractor assemblers, which was due for a long time.

In a hurriedly called meeting held here today, the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts & Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) discussed the gravity of the situation being faced by the auto parts industry of the country. The house submitted an alarming report that the closed industrial units had laid off around 100,000 workers in and around Lahore during this unprecedented ongoing crunch, which was very unfortunate.

PAAPAM Chairman Munir K. Bana, the Senior Vice Chairman Usman Aslam Malik, former Chairmen, including Engr Mumshad Ali, AbdurRazaq Gauhar, Abdul Rehman Aizaz, and Tariq Nazeer, former VC Irfan Ahmed Qureshi and MC members, including Shahid Daad, Syed Mansoor Abbas Shah, Saeed Iqbal, Javed Hafiz, and Secretary General,



al, Ghulam Murtaza attended this meeting.

The house was of the opinion that the present crunch, followed by the floods, would cause acute food shortages if the government did not take stock of the situation immediately. A large number of jobless people were rendered homeless in tractor and ancillary industries which were closed down in recent days. The closer of AGTL, followed by Millat Tractor, has aggravated the situation, they added.

PAAPAM Chairman Munir K. Bana informed the meeting that both plants carried surplus inventories of CBUs and parts worth billions of Rupees and were not purchasing parts from local parts-making SMEs, leading to their closure and redundancies of over 100,000 skilled workers, technicians, and engineers. The house further registered that due to a drop

in fresh bookings and stuck-up GST refunds, the assemblers needed more much-needed cash for making payments to part makers. It would cause a crippling effect on the agro-sector when low yields would necessitate importing wheat for which government has no foreign exchange, the house apprehended. If the tractor sales drop to 3000 units a month, it will no longer be commercially viable for part makers to produce parts, and they will therefore be forced to close their operations.

PAAPAM Senior Vice Chairman Usman Aslam Malik, addressing the meeting, said that tractors production in the first six months of the current financial year was expected to remain at around 10,000 units averaging around 1600 units per month, which was far short of the industry breakeven point. PAAPAM calculated that if the industry doesn't achieve 3,000 units of average production per month in the next six months, the industry will not be able to revive in the future. It is essential for the government to take concrete corrective steps now rather than wait for the next budget. As an outcome of the meeting, the house agreed to take up the matter with the government, as the industry alone cannot handle the worst

downturn in the industry's 50 years of history.

Usman Aslam Malik appreciated the government scheme of low markup tractor financing through commercial banks. But more actions were needed to achieve the industry's breakeven sales of 3,000 units per month for the next six months. He warned if collective actions were taken after a period of time, the tractor industry's ship would be bound to sink lock, stock, and barrel.

Munir K. Bana recommended the facilitation of tractor exporters as the current GST regime was making Pakistani tractors totally uncompetitive in the African market. He also asked the government to remove customs duty, additional customs duty, and regulatory duties on the import of tractor-specific auto parts and pass on its benefit to the farmers.

PAAPAM, the apex body of local auto parts manufacturing, assured all-out support to the tractor and parts manufacturers of the country and agreed to take up the matter of this vital national industry head-on with the ministries of finance, commerce, and industries, both at the federal and provincial levels, as it was a matter of survival for this highly indigenized industry.

Donors must be satisfied or efforts
can be wasted: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said arrangements should be made for the better and timely use of the ten billion dollars to be received by Pakistan as a result of the Geneva Conference.

The relevant laws should be changed according to international standards, the incompetent and lazy officers should be kept away from this matter and transparency should be ensured under all circumstances, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that if the donors are not satisfied, the efforts can be wasted as witnessed in the past.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the government had announced projects worth 16 billion dollars 3 years before the Geneva conference, now more than 10 billion dollars will be provided by the international community and Pakistan will be spending about \$5 billion annually on rehabilitation of flood victims, protection



tion of people from natural disasters and construction of infrastructure.

This money will circulate in Pakistan's economy, improving GDP and generating employment opportunities, he underlined.

Presently, the country is suffering from climate change, malnutrition, water scarcity, pollution and the destruction of farms, which deserve the full attention of authorities.

The process of institutional reforms has to be initiated. It is difficult but not

impossible for governments of different parties in different provinces to agree on a single plan because all parties should know that delaying these matters for a long time would be suicidal, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that delay and losses in important projects is considered a normal process in Pakistan which will be unbearable for donors.

At present twelve hundred projects worth 1.6 trillion rupees are pending, the size of which is more than PSDP, he informed.

Therefore, the government should improve planning, construction, procurement and approval rules should be made according to international standards so that losses are reduced and the private sector can participate in it and donors can better monitor all the projects.

The business leader said that the disappointment of any donor would have a negative impact on the rest of the donors which will cause loss for Pakistan.

Pakistan is the fifth largest country in the world in terms of population. The first four countries generate forty-five percent of the world's GDP, while Pakistan's share in the world's GDP is only 0.4 percent, which is further reduced after the floods.

Uncompleted

FAISALABAD: A view of uncompleted constructed parking Plaza at Chiniot Bazaar, which needs the attention of concerned authorities



Photo: Online

CDA asked to focus on better development of D-12 Markaz

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that D-12 Markaz is a new commercial centre which lacks modern facilities and stressed that CDA should focus on better development of this market that would facilitate the traders in promoting business activities. He said this while addressing a delegation of the Traders Welfare Association, D-12 Markaz, Islamabad during their visit to ICCI led by Muhammad Nauman, President. Gul Andaz Abbasi Senior Vice President, Malik Mubashar Nazir Vice President, Haider Cheema Secretary General, Hafiz Inamul Hassan Finance Secretary, Yasir

Khan Information Secretary, Imtiaz Ali Rajput Press Secretary, Asif Hussain Shah Patron-in-Chief, and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that D-12 Markaz has the potential to become a hub of business activities in future and emphasized that CDA should adopt a futuristic approach to develop this market on modern lines. He said that due to development work on IJP Road and Margalla Road, the traffic rush in the city has increased and sometimes, traffic remains jammed for hours on some roads.

Muhammad Nauman, President, Traders Welfare Association, D-12 Markaz, speaking on the occasion, said that due to lack of parking facility in their market, the traders are facing problems and demanded that CDA



should develop a parking facility in their market to address this major issue.

Khalid Chaudhry Convener, ICCI

Traders Committee, Imtiaz Abbasi, Akhtar Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatha, Gul Andaz Abbasi, Asif Shah, Malik Mubashar, Zahir Abbasi Ch. Irfan

and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that CDA should expedite development works in D-12 Sector.

Easypaisa & Faysal
Funds Collaborate to
Bring Fully Digital
Investment Journey

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital payments platform has partnered with Faysal Funds (Faysal Asset Management Limited), one of the fastest-growing Asset Management Companies in the industry, with an aim to boost the collective vision of financially empowering all Pakistanis, especially when it comes to investments and saving for their future.

An agreement to this effect was recently signed in Karachi by M. Mudassar Aqil, CEO, Telenor Microfinance Bank/ easypaisa and Khaldoon Bin Latif, CEO Faysal Funds. Senior officials from both the organizations were also present on the occasion. The ceremony was also attended by Mr. Salman Ahmed Usmani, Chairman of the Board, Faysal Bank. Joining via video link, Mr. Akif Saeed, Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) also congratulated both the institutions on this ground-breaking partnership.

Commenting on the partnership, M. Mudassar Aqil,



CEO Telenor Microfinance Bank/ easypaisa, said: "We are excited to partner with Faysal Funds as this partnership will enable us to carry forward our mission of a financially inclusive Pakistan and help millions of Pakistanis to make easy and convenient investments in a frictionless, digital process.

Speaking on the initiative, Faysal Funds CEO, Khaldoon Bin Latif said, "Our strategic alliance with easypaisa is yet another step forward to make saving & investing more convenient, accessible and secure for the masses," he added, "We both (easypaisa and Faysal Funds) aim to increase financial inclusion and freedom, and with this collaboration, we can achieve that vision by working together to provide value to everyone."

Jazz conducts successful
trial of Pakistan's first
1.2Tbps transport
network with Huawei

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator and part of VEON Group, has successfully conducted trial of Pakistan's first 1.2Tbps (1200Gbps) transport network. This technology increases the optical fiber capacities by 50% from its existing 800Gbps over a single wavelength.

Commenting on this

industry-first development, Jazz's Chief Technology Officer, Khalid Shehzad said, "Our customers are increasingly using high-bandwidth applications which has led to an amplified demand for faster data. The 1.2T technology allows us the freedom to provide more data at greater speeds in an efficient manner enabling our customers to use enhanced services on their 4G devices."

Messi, Mbappe and Neymar set to join forces for first time since World Cup

News Desk

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's trip to Rennes on Sunday is set to be the first time their superstar front three of Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar have all played together since the World Cup.

Mbappe returned to training on Thursday having been given 10 days off after coming back from Qatar and playing in PSG's first two games following the tournament.

He jetted off to New York for a break and was nowhere to be seen as Messi made his comeback, and scored, in a 2-0 victory for the Ligue 1 leaders against Angers on Wednesday.

The World Cup was a clear motivating factor in the trio's outstanding form during the early months of the campaign, and how they play together will be crucial in determining how the remainder of the season goes for PSG.

They are six points clear of Lens before completing the first half of the season in Rennes, but the Champions League is their main objective.

After failing to come top of their group, Christophe Galtier's side were drawn to play Bayern Munich in the last 16, with the first leg at home set for February 14.

Galtier described the 35-year-old Messi as "relaxed and in great shape physically" after his first match since captaining Argentina to a penalty shoot-out victory over Mbappe's France in an epic World Cup final last month.



The question now is how much motivation the former Barcelona star has after that career-defining triumph.

PSG are keen to extend his contract in the French capital into a third season and Messi's biggest goal now will be to win the Champions League for the first time since 2015.

Fuelled by losing the World Cup final despite scoring a hat-trick, 2018 world champion Mbappe will be desperate to get his hands on the Champions League trophy for the first time.

Neymar, meanwhile, appears a little like the odd man out — he left the World Cup in tears as Brazil lost on penalties in the quarter-finals, aware his chance of winning that trophy may have gone forever.

He was then sent off in PSG's first game

post-Qatar against Strasbourg, completing a miserable end to 2022.

But for PSG it is not just about those three.

They look light in defence, where they appear overly reliant on an ageing Sergio Ramos, and short of muscle in midfield, an area where a fragile Marco Verratti is their key player.

Galtier insists they still need time to get back up to speed.

"We are all just getting used to playing together again and you could see at times that we lacked some of the connections between the players that we had more often before the World Cup," he said after the midweek game.

Player to watch: Ross Barkley
If the England midfielder was hoping to relaunch his career in France, the move

was not working out for the 29-year-old former Everton prodigy as he struggled to make a serious impact in the first three months of the season. Things have improved for him at the start of 2023, however. Barkley scored a brilliant goal against Rennes on January 2 in a 2-1 defeat, and then came off the bench to score twice in Wednesday's 6-1 thrashing of Montpellier.

The latter game was also the first for Nice since coach Lucien Favre was sacked and replaced by Didier Digard. Barkley will hope to make a greater impression under a new manager in the months ahead with the club owned by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe.

Key stats

48 – Goals Mbappe, Neymar and Messi have scored between them for their club this season

10 – Bottom side Angers have lost their last 10 league games. The record for the most consecutive defeats in a single French top-flight season is 12

8 – Rennes have won their last eight home league games.

Fixtures (kick-offs GMT)

Saturday

Lens v Auxerre (1600), Marseille v Lorient (1800), Lyon v Strasbourg (2000)

Sunday

Lille v Troyes (1200), Reims v Nice, Angers v Clermont, Montpellier v Nantes, Toulouse v Brest (all 1400), Monaco v Ajaccio (1605), Rennes v Paris Saint-Germain (1945)

Phillips stars as New Zealand down Pakistan in ODI series decider

A Sports -

KARACHI: New Zealand batter Glenn Phillips put on a scintillating show with his brisk 63-run knock and powered his side to defeat Pakistan by two wickets in the ODI series decider.

Set to chase 281, New Zealand amassed the total on the first delivery of the 49th over at the back of a quickfire 63-run knock of Phillips.

The touring side had a decent start to their run chase as openers Finn Allen and Devon Conway provided an important 43-run partnership before Allen got run out in the eighth over after scoring a run-a-ball 25.

Following the dismissal, Conway and skipper Kane Williamson anchored the run chase with a gritty partnership and took New Zealand to over the 100-run mark before Agha Salman picked up his maiden ODI wicket and provided a much-needed breakthrough to Pakistan.

Conway scored 52 off 65 deliveries, laced with five boundaries and a six.

Batting first after winning the toss, Pakistan posted a decent 280/9 on the board at the back of a brilliant centu-



ry and a half-century from Fakhar and Rizwan respectively.

The hosts had a dismal start to their innings as they lost two early wickets including their skipper Babar Azam for a mere 21 in the seventh over.

Following the setback, Fakhar and Rizwan scripted an astounding recovery for Pakistan as they added 154 runs

amid their third-wicket partnership and brought Pakistan back into the game.

Rizwan was the core aggressor of the stand as he kept ticking the scoreboard with his sensible rotation of strike while Fakhar played an anchoring role.

The duo frustrated the Kiwi bowlers and were looking for their team to amass the 300-run mark before Ish

Sodhi provided a much-needed breakthrough to his side in the form of Rizwan.

The leg-spinner castled Rizwan with a googly and brought an end to his vital 79-run knock. He faced 74 deliveries and hit six boundaries.

Following Rizwan's dismissal, Fakhar continued to push for the runs and soon brought up his century. The left-handed batter, however, soon perished after achieving the landmark and remained the top-scorer for his side in the series decider.

Fakhar scored 101 off 120 deliveries, laced with 10 boundaries and a six.

With both set batters back in the pavilion, Pakistan batters struggled to pound on the foundation and the hosts began to lose wickets at regular intervals.

Agha Salman, however, stood firm at one end while wickets were tumbling at the other before perishing in the final over after a vital 43-ball 45.

Veteran pacer Tim Southee led the bowling attack for New Zealand with three wickets, while Lockie Ferguson bagged a couple. Spinners Sodhi and Michael Bracewell struck out a batter each.

Futsal Referee MA Course

Tahir Amin Malik.

LAHORE: The first-ever Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal Referee MA Course is all set to commence today (Saturday, 14th January) at Football House Lahore under the supervision of Porferio J. Barlas, JR who is the AFC Futsal Referee Instructor.

A total of 25 participants from different areas

of Pakistan will be able to join the course while the course will be lasting till 18th of January.

The participants include Waseem Hayat, Muhammad Ahmad Rauf, Danish Ejaz, Akber Karim, Asadullah, Muhammad Omer Iqbal Butt, Ahmed Tariq, Danyal Mumtaz Kiani, Muhammad Nadeem Arshad, Zara Iqbal, Muhammad Junaid, Sonia Mustafa, Tahir Hussain,

Ibrar Ahmed Khan, Sadaqat Ali Khan, Hasnain Mushtaq, Muhammad Jawad Khokhar, Sikandar Zaib, Sughra, Adil Zameer, Muhammad Faizan, Shabana, Muhammad Umar, Raja Sajjad Ahmed and Shahbaz Ali.

Sharing his views, AFC Futsal Referee Instructor Porferio J. Barlas, JR said: "On behalf of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), I am honored to be

invited by Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) to educate and instruct their Futsal Referees."

"For the first time, the PFF holding this Referee seminar for futsal that shows positive and direct efforts to promote the sport in the region and I am very happy to be a part of this history, particularly in the development of Futsal Referees of the country", he added

games," he said. Hockley said the Australian cricket authority consulted with the Australian government and others before scrapping the games. He also responded to Afghanistan's best-known international cricketer and leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who had criticised the cancellation and warned he would be "strongly considering" his future in Australia's Big Bash League. "We acknowledge and applaud Rashid Khan's and other Afghanistan cricketers' comments at the time condemning the Taliban's decision to ban women from universities. Rashid will always be welcome in the BBL," Hockley said.

Australia defend scrapping Afghanistan cricket series

SYDNEY: Australia on Friday defended their hotly contested decision to pull out of a cricket series against Afghanistan following a Taliban crackdown on women's "basic human rights".

"Basic human rights is not politics," Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said in a statement sent to AFP after Afghanistan's cricket board lashed the cancellation as "pathetic".

The Australian men's team had been due to face their Afghan counterparts for three one-day internationals in the United Arab Emirates in March, following a tour of India. "It is clearly a very challenging and sad situation. We



A student protests against the Taliban's ban on women's higher education outside Kabul University in December 2022.— AFP File

did not take this decision lightly," Hockley said.

Cricket Australia had been hopeful of playing Afghanistan and was in regular contact with the Afghanistan Cricket Board, he added.

"However announcements by the Taliban in late November and late December signalling the deterioration of basic human rights for women in Afghanistan led to our decision to withdraw from these

'Subconscious' racial bias continues in Australian cricket: Usman Khawaja

A "subconscious" racial bias continues to influence cricket in the country all the way up to the top level, said Australian Test batter Usman Khawaja.

Khawaja stated that a lack of representation "at a high-performance level" was a key challenge faced by non-white players and that the cricket scene in Australia was still stagnant.

"That's where I'm trying to work with Cricket Australia saying, 'Look, guys, you invest a lot of money into this, but something's not going right. You've been doing it for 10 years and nothing's changed'," Khawaja told Sydney Morning Herald. "There's a subconscious bias. If you have two cricketers, one brown, one white, both the same, the white coach is going to pick the white cricketer just because he has a son that might look similar to him. It's what's familiar to him."

Khawaja's opinion is correct in the sense that the entire CA board, national selectors, and senior coaching staff are white.

Last month, he claimed on Twitter that despite being dressed in proper team kit and in the middle of a series, he was frequently stopped by security to have his credentials examined.

"I got stopped 3 times last year at our hotel, while in Australian kit, and [was] asked if I was with the Australian Cricket team..." Khawaja wrote.

It should be noted here that Khawaja was born in Pakistan and relocated to Sydney at a young age, where he grew up and played cricket in the eastern suburbs, along with veteran batter David Warner.

Khawaja represented Australia in 105 international matches and scored 5,957 runs.

All Pakistan Intersvarsity Squash Championship for Men 2023



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) in collaboration with Pakistan University Sports Board, HEC organised All Pakistan Intersvarsity Squash Championship for Men 2023 at NUST Islamabad Campus from January 11 to 13, 2023. As many as 105 players from 21 universities across Pakistan took part in the competition. Government College (GC) University, Lahore won the championship after defeating Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology (SUIT), Peshawar by a decisive margin of 2-0.

POA nominee Saad Asif was awarded a certificate for successful completion of the WAO's online athletic course

Sports Desk

KARACHI: In yet another achievement, Pakistan Olympic Association's nominee, Saad Asif has completed the World Academy of Sports online course for athletes.

This was an online course developed for student athletes aged between 15 and 18 years. It was targeted at those athletes who want to gain a broader understanding of the tools needed to become successful and knowledgeable athletes.

It may be mentioned here that the Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) of every 72 countries had nominated two athletes each to participate in this course.

The course consisted of 5 key areas that were designed by experts and officials that had been working with athletes for a long time.

At the end of every module, there was a test which included MCQs regarding the information on that particular topic.

Every participant needed to secure above 75 percent to claim the certificate.

Meanwhile Squash legend & former World Champion Jahan-gir Khan, Former Hockey Captain Olympian Islahuddin, President Pakistan Olympic Association Lt Gen (R) Syed Arif Hassan, Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mehmood, Vice President Fatima Lakhani, President Pakistan Taekwondo Federation Col * Waseem Janjua, CEO Omer Saeed & others congratulates young Saad's for his achievement.



Shan, Hasnain back in Playing XI as Pakistan opt to bat in final NZ ODI



A Sports

KARACHI: Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat first in the third and final ODI of the series against New Zealand, here at National Bank Cricket Arena on Friday.

Pakistan made two changes in the Playing XI as Shan Masood and Mohammad Hasnain replaced Imam-ul-Haq and Naseem Shah. Meanwhile, New Zealand remained unchanged.

Playing XIs:

Pakistan: Fakhar Zaman, Shan Masood, Babar Azam (capt), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Haris Sohail, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Mohammad Wasim, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain

New Zealand: Finn Allen, Devon Conway, Kane Williamson (capt), Daryl Mitchell, Tom Latham (wk), Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Lockie Ferguson

Norwegian Kilde takes super-G victory in Wengen

News Desk

Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde narrowly beat Swiss Stefan Rogentin to win the super-G race in Wengen on Friday, his second victory in the discipline this season.

The home supporters in the Swiss Alps were cheering for Rogentin and fellow Swiss Marco Odermatt but saw Kilde push hard and win the race.

Kilde clocked one minute, 47.84 seconds, edging out Rogentin by 0.27 seconds. Odermatt took third place, 0.66 seconds behind Kilde.

"On the limit, that's how we have to do it in super-G, and sometimes it works and sometimes not," Kilde said after the race. Rogentin secured his first ever World Cup podium. "Special day for me, amazing feeling. It couldn't be better," Rogentin said.

"That's so special, my first podium and to share it with Oddie (Odermatt), that's perfect."

Odermatt is now 360 points ahead of second-placed Kilde in the overall standings in a season that so far has been dominated by the two rivals.

