



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے ابن ذبیحہ نے بیان کیا ہاں سے  
محمد بن مکرر نے اور ان سے جا رہے  
کہ ایک شخص نے اپنا ایک غلام آزاد کیا،  
لیکن اس کے پاس اس کے سوا اور کوئی مال  
نہ تھا۔ اس لیے نبی کریم ﷺ نے اسے  
اس کا غلام وادائیں کرا دیں اور اسے نسیم بن  
غمام نے خرید لیا۔  
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 50415)  
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## Nation rejects Imran Khan's 'lies' by warmly welcoming Maryam Nawaz

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said the people had rejected the "lies of Imran Khan" by giving warm welcome to PML-N Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz at the Lahore Airport on her return from London.



## FM to visit Moscow; deliberate upon bilateral ties, global issues

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will undertake an official visit to Moscow from 29-30 January, at the invitation of Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. "Bilawal will hold official talks with his Russian counterpart where the two sides would deliberate upon the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and exchange views on the regional and international issues of mutual interest," the FO Spokesperson said.

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## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on role of Pakistan Development Fund (PDF) and State Owned Enterprise (SOEs) at Finance Division on Saturday.



Photo: PID

## Security forces gun down active terrorist in Mir Ali IBO: ISPR

### Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Saturday killed an active terrorist involved in extremist activities during an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) conducted in general area Mir Ali, North Waziristan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

intense fire exchange took place between the army troops and terrorists, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The security forces also recovered weapons and ammunition from the killed terrorist, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and the killing of innocent citizens.

## Imran's allegations against Asif Zardari baseless, dangerous: PM



### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday said Imran Niazi's baseless and dangerous allegations against former President Asif Ali Zardari were not only irresponsible but also conformed to a pattern of conspiracy theories meant to spread venom against his political opponents.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "such nonsensical rhetoric is an attempt to remain politically relevant. The whole nation knows how he has used politics of hatred to divide the society for the sake of power."

# Maryam wants the masses to have faith in Dar for economic healing

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: The senior vice president of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Maryam Nawaz, landed in Lahore on Saturday afternoon.

Starting off with conveying the felicitations by PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif during her first address to the PML-N workers after landing, she said Mr Sharif was still the most popular leader in the country and he was cognizant of the problems of the people. "He will return to the country soon," she added.

Commenting on the country's economy, she said: "We have to support Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to steer the country out of economic crisis and it will take time to do so. We will not sit until we succeed in changing the course of nation's fate."

She claimed that the PML-N would secure majority in Punjab and the party workers were not hesitant to contest elections. "Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif did not play vengeance game with you [Imran Khan]," she added.

Earlier, thousands of the PML-N workers and support-



ers, led by party leaders, thronged the Allama Iqbal International Airport to welcome the party leader who had recently been elevated to the position of senior vice president.

On the other hand, while speaking to media outside the airport, she said she had come

back to Pakistan after three and a half months, and during this time, she got the opportunity to formulate a political strategy under the guidance of her father and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif. "Mr Sharif will return soon," she said.

Sharing her vision about the

PML-N, she said she wanted to strengthen the party through youth's support and anyone parting ways with the party would not make a difference. No one could question Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's attachment to the party, she said. "I am not happy to see any [political opponent] in the

jail but whatever the PTI goes through will be tantamount to karma," she said.

She said the previous government brought the country's progress to a standstill and the PTI was responsible for economic woes the country was facing. "We have to steer the country out of crisis and I shall try my best to fulfill my duty," she reiterated.

Maryam Nawaz reached Lahore by PIA flight 264 from Dubai after spending three and a half months in London. She had departed from London on Thursday and spent a day in Dubai. She was bid farewell from Avenfield by her father Nawaz Sharif and party members.

The PML-N leaders had finalised preparations for Maryam's reception and it had been agreed that she would speak to the PML-N supporters while perched atop a container before departing for Jati Umra. There won't be a rally, Dunya News reported.

Maryam Nawaz had departed for London on Oct 6, 2022.

"Welcoming the party senior vice president will be a rehearsal for Nawaz Sharif's homecoming," said Khawaja Salman Rafique.

## OGRA for avoiding speculations about POL products' prices

### Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Saturday expressed serious concern over the circulation of speculative reports about the prices of petrol and diesel in the media.

"It has been observed that speculative prices of petrol and diesel are being reported in the print and electronic media since last evening that is misleading and incorrect," OGRA spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a brief press statement.

He advised the elements, spreading misleading and incorrect information, to avoid disseminating speculative prices of petroleum products in the 'public interest.'

## Fawad Chaudhry's physical remand extended for two more days

### City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A judicial magistrate on Saturday granted police two-day physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry, who was arrested for 'threatening' members of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

According to details, Judicial Magistrate Waqas Ahmed Raja accepted the police's request for an extension in Fawad Chaudhry's physical remand, sending the former information minister on two-day physical remand.

In the order, the judicial magistrate ordered the Islamabad Police to produce the PTI leader before his court on Monday (January 30) upon the expiry of his remand.

Earlier in the day, a district and sessions court accepted the police's request for an extension in the physical remand of Fawad Chaudhry in a sedition case.

The PTI leader was brought to court today on directives issued by

Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Mehmood Khan.

In his statement before the court, Chaudhry said he was not retracting his remarks. "I stood by my statement and would not backtrack on it."

During the course of the proceeding, Fawad's lawyer Babar Awan informed the court his client was



being deprived of his fundamental right to meet his family and legal team.

He pleaded with the court to allow his client to meet his family.

At this, Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Mehmood Khan accepted Fawad's plea and allowed him to meet his family.

The Islamabad sessions court Friday rejected police request

for physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry in a case related to using 'threatening language' against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) members.

At the outset of the hearing, the prosecutor pleaded for an extension in physical remand as interrogation in the case is yet to be completed. Fawad's lawyers Babar Awan and Faisal Chaudhry are also present in the court.

The former federal minister was arrested for 'threatening' Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) members.

A case against PTI leader was registered at the Kohsar police station in Islamabad on the complaint of Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Omer Hamid Khan.

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## Miftah wants govt should raise minimum wages to Rs35,000 amid soaring inflation

### Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Former finance wizard and Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) leader Miftah Ismail on Saturday reacted to the depreciation of the rupee against the dollar and rising inflation across the country urging the incumbent government to raise the minimum wages to Rs35,000.

Addressing the "Remerging Pakistan" seminar in Peshawar via video link, Miftah expressed his views on the current economic turmoil saying that more than 86 percent of children are facing malnutrition in an Islamic state like Pakistan. Common masses' trouble is increasing day by day, he added.

## Intelligence agencies bust major terror network

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The intelligence agencies have busted a major terror network and saved the country from major disaster.

As per details, the security agencies have confiscated Afghan sims, drugs and currency from the terrorist's possession.

The terrorist belonged to the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). They were responsible for the suicide attack on the Takhta Baig check post in Jamrud KP, which resulted in the death of three police personnel.

Later the TTP claimed responsibility for the suicide attack on the check post.

The intelligence agencies have collected bullet shells and body parts for foren-

sic analysis with the help of CCTV footage and geo-fencing.

According to the information collected on January 21, TTP terrorist Umar was behind the suicide attack. A resident of Jamrud and TTP member Satana Jan provided him with the information.

Two suspects Farman and Abdul Qayyum close to the suicide attacker were arrested in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) on January 23.

The outlawed TTP has admitted that Satana Jan was killed in the IBO.

The security agencies carried out another operation after receiving a tip-off regarding suspected terrorists on January 27 and arrested the facilitators Fazal Amin, Fazal Ahmad, Muhammad Amir and Hamadullah.

## Press conference

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira addressing a press conference on Saturday.



Photo: PID

## President upholds Rs 900,000 fine to Shifa Int'l hospital

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday directed the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) to issue instructions to Shifa International Hospital Islamabad (SHIFA) to refund an amount of Rs 2.9 million to the daughter of a patient who died due to the medical negligence, professional misconduct, and malpractice of the doctors of the hospital.

The president also upheld the imposition of fine of Rs 900,000 on SHIFA as maladministration and medical negligence had been proven against the hospital, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Saturday.

The president issued these directions while rejecting a representation filed by IHRA against the orders of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (WM) in which the Mohtasib had held that the complainant (deceased patient's daughter) had been discriminated against as in a similar case in the past, IHRA had not only imposed a fine on SHIFA but had also issued the directions to the hospital



to refund the amount in lieu of medical bills.

He ordered that the refund should be paid within a week to the complainant.

While rejecting IHRA's representation, the president observed that IHRA had investigated the complaints, found medical negligence and imposed fine of Rs. 900,000 upon SHIFA which had also been received by IHRA and thus medical negligence had been established upon the healthcare establishment.

He further said that IHRA did not direct the hospital to reimburse actual amount of medical bill incurred on the treatment of the complainant's mother as per orders of the learned Wafaqi Mohtasib; whereas in another case namely Dr. Iqtidar Mehmood

Dara Vs. Shifa International Hospital, Islamabad, IHRA had held that "The medical bill should be refunded to the complainant by SHIFA International Hospital".

The president held that it was an established principle that similarly placed persons should be treated alike and equal treatment to all is the hallmark of our Constitution i.e., Article 4 and 25.

He said that the object and purpose of the law would be fulfilled only when the complainant was provided relief for any negligence by the hospital. "The Agency must have been more vigilant and watchful to fulfil its responsibilities", he added.

The president further observed that the main purpose of the establishment of Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority was "...to provide a regulatory framework to ensure provision of quality health care services, by implementing quality standards by the healthcare sector, to residents of the Islamabad Capital Territory". He noted that IHRA was responsible to "exercise any powers and perform any functions as may be necessary for carrying out the

purposes of its Act on the instruction of the Federal Government", and since maladministration and negligence had been established and it had not been assailed by SHIFA, therefore, the orders had been rightly passed, and the representation deserved to be rejected.

As per details, Mst Farrukh Naem Tahir (the complainant) had alleged that her mother was diagnosed with COVID-19 who died due to the negligence of the doctors of SHIFA and she lodged a complaint before IHRA against the hospital and IHRA imposed a fine of Rs. 900,000/- on the hospital for committing negligence but did not ask the hospital to refund the medical bill amounting to Rs. 2,979,637/- as per order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib.

Thereafter, she filed a review application and requested to re-open the case and re-visit its earlier decision with the direction to IHRA to issue instructions to the hospital to refund the medical bill.

The Mohtasib issued the orders in her favour, which were impugned by IHRA by filing a representation with the president.

## Holding peaceful, transparent elections top priority: Interim KP CM

## Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Saturday chaired a meeting with cabinet members and discussed holding peaceful and transparent general elections in the province.

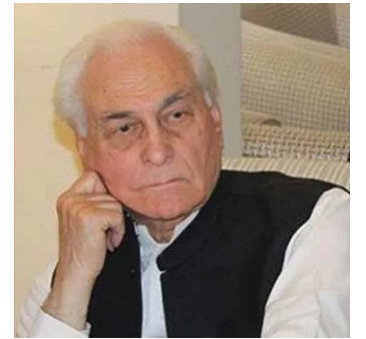
Azam Khan on this occasion said that conducting peaceful and transparent general elections in the province was the top priority of his interim government.

He said special attention would be given to improving the law and order situation in the province.

The interim CM said that the caretaker provincial government was fully aware of its responsibilities regarding the fair and transparent conduct of the general elections and would provide full support to the election commission in this regard.

Wise utilization of available financial resources will be ensured and unnecessary expenditure will be avoided, said Azam Khan.

He said that all possible efforts would be made to resolve the finan-



cial difficulties faced by the province, adding the financial affairs of the province would be taken up effectively before the federal government.

The caretaker CM said that all possible efforts would be made to achieve the constitutional and legal rights of the province, including the merged districts.

He expressed hope that the federal government, especially Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, would cooperate in this regard.

He asked the caretaker ministers to try their best to perform their duties effectively.

## Caretaker CM orders to simplify departmental induction procedure for police martyrs' children

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has ordered to simplify departmental induction procedure for the children of police martyrs.

These directions were issued during a meeting with Inspector General of Police Dr Usman Anwar and CCPO Lahore Bilal Kamyana, who met with CM Mohsin Naqvi at CM Office on Saturday.

It was decided to award 10 extra numbers to the children of police martyrs appearing on open merit during departmental induction.

Mohsin Naqvi apprised that rules would further be eased regarding departmental induction of police martyrs' children and in case of non-availability of a seat in the concerned district the children of police martyrs could be inducted in some other districts.

It was also decided to enhance assistance package of brave ghazis for getting disabled during performing their duties and fighting against anti-social elements.

On the direction of caretaker CM, Inspector General of Police has constituted a three member committee to be headed by DIG Establishment, DIG Operations and DIG IT. The committee after formulating its recommendations within seven days and will submit them in the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that it was a due right of the fami-



lies of martyrs to grant them respect and dignity owing to sacrifices being laid down by the brave martyrs of our dear homeland.

He directed to dispose off pending financial assistance cases of martyrs families at the earliest, adding that arrangement of funds would be made forthwith to ensure financial assistance payment to the families of martyrs without any delay.

Caretaker CM outlined that system would further be streamlined to enable the children of martyrs to acquire higher education and an admission policy would be chalked out in quality educational institutions of relevant districts for martyrs children.

He directed to make admission arrangements for the children of martyrs in the best medical, engineering, computer sciences and other quality educational institutions on preferential basis.

The Inspector General of Police gave him briefing with regard to simplifying departmental induction procedure for children martyred policemen.

## Pakistan working closely with US to unlock climate resilient ecosystem: Masood Khan

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan said that Pakistan was working closely with the US to unlock a climate-resilient ecosystem.

He said the recent initiatives, namely, 'Green Alliance and Climate Smart Agriculture' would benefit farmers and create a framework for conserving water, building small dams and improving yields of staple crops like wheat, rice and cotton.

"We will leverage Pakistan-US partnership to transition to renewable, water conservation and efficient use

of water," Ambassador Masood Khan made these remarks as key-note speaker during a discussion, attended virtually, on "Pakistan's energy and water security landscape" organized by Baker Institute, Rice University Houston, a press release said on Saturday.

US policymakers, members of the think-tank community, intelligentsia and area experts participated in the discussion. The ambassador said that Pakistan's entire ecosystem was sensitive to extreme weather patterns.

"With the help of the international financial institutions, we have initiated reforms for water conservation, transition



to modern agricultural technologies, re-afforestation, waste-water management and water metering," he added.

Masood Khan said that Pakistan, fully cognizant of the serious challenges being faced in the fields of energy and water security, was taking consistent steps to improve its power generation through diversification of its

energy-mix.

He said that in the past decade, Pakistan had commissioned more than 10GW of new power generation and 1GW of wind and solar powered projects, however, he observed, the gap was still very wide that needed to be bridged.

"We need to further diversify our energy mix and decrease our dependence on oil and gas imports by focusing on indigenous resources," he stated.

Masood Khan highlighted that alternate energy, especially solar and wind, was a growth industry in Pakistan and may well be a long-term viable solution for meeting Pakistan's

energy demands.

Highlighting solid foundations of Pak-US partnership in agriculture, water and energy sectors, Ambassador Khan said that the country was working with the US to improve the efficiency of agriculture sector and water management.

"Building a number of dams on the upper riparian parts of the rivers under Indian control eroded trust and creates myriad crises for Pakistan that included flooding, droughts, water scarcity and disruption of energy supplies. The outstanding issues must be resolved quickly and definitively," he concluded.

## Interior Ministry rejects news about increase in Machine Readable Passports' fee

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior on Saturday strongly rejected reports circulating on social media about the increase in fees of Machine Readable Passports (MRPs), terming them "baseless."

"There is no increase of any kind in the fee of Machine Readable Passports," the spokesman clarified.

He further said the federal government had approved the issuance of e-passports, but "The E-passport facility has not been launched yet."

The Department of Immigration and Passports had recently fixed the ordinary fee for e-passports, which would be applicable for "e-passports only" while the rest fees to remain the same-old, he said.

## ICAP elects office bearers for 2023-24

## News Desk

KARACHI: The Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) unanimously elected its new office bearers for the year 2023-24 in its 365th meeting held in Karachi.

The Council unanimously elected M. Ali Latif as President of the Institute, Arslan Khalid and Asad Feroze as Vice Presidents, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The Council lauded the services of the outgoing office bearers and announced Gold Medal for Ashfaq Yousuf Tola for his meritorious services. The Council also announced mementos to Saifullah and Husnain R. Badami in recognition of their services.

Newly elected President of the Institute M. Ali Latif is a Fellow Member (FCA) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP).



He is a second generation Chartered Accountant and son of a well known practicing chartered accountant, late M.T.K Rehmani, who practiced under the name and style of "M/s Rehmani & Co., Chartered Accountants".

He has more than 20 years of experience in the accounting and audit profession and is responsible for managing a wide ranging portfolio of clients across different economic sectors.

He is currently working as Partner in "M/s Muniff Ziauddin & Co., Chartered Accountants, Represent-

ing BKR International and is a Council Member since 2017. He had earlier also served as an Elected Member of the Northern Regional Committee of ICAP for two consecutive four-year terms (2009-2013 & 2013-2017) and as Chairman of various ICAP Committees.

He has also served as Vice President of ICAP & President of Pakistan Institute of Public Finance Accountants, PIPFA and has recently been appointed as the Non-Executive Director on the Board of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

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## Not single polio case reported in Balochistan, says official



## Bureau Report

QUETTA: Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Syed Zahid Shah on Friday said Balochistan had achieved the goal set for eradication of poliovirus as not a single case was reported for the last two years.

According to the Coordinator of Emergency Operation Center for Prevention of Poliovirus in Balochistan Syed Zahid Shah, the last case of polio was reported from Qila Abdullah district on January 27, 2021.

Syed Zahid Shah said in a statement that there were no environmental samples of poliovirus detected since April 2021, which was a positive development in terms of polio eradication.

"The efforts of the provincial government on eradicating the crippling virus paid off to save our children from all epidemic diseases," he added.

Balochistan has achieved 100 percent target of administering vaccines to children under five years of age during the last nationwide anti-polio campaign, despite its difficult terrain, and amid harsh weather conditions, including cold winds and heavy snowfall.

In visuals shared by the EOC Balochistan and health department, female polio workers can be seen walking close to mud-walled houses in Barshore area of the Pishin district to provide anti-polio drops to the children.

# Empowerment of women-folk government's first priority, says PM AJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, has said that empowerment of women-folk was the government's first and foremost priority.

He expressed these views during his visit to the Kamyab Khawateen Program Production Center here today.

"Women's representation in the government is showing better results", the PM said adding that making women skilled and employed across the state was the incumbent government's top priority.

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan on the occasion inspect a variety of things including Shawls, Gaba, Vases, Jewellery and fancy dresses being made by local women in the production center.

He also inspected the sewing work and hand-made items and commended their work.



On this occasion, the Prime Minister was given a detailed briefing about the garments made by women and the problems faced by them in the production center.

Chairman and Secretary TEVTA while briefing the PM said that 100 sewing machines given for Vocational Training Center have been made functional in the last few days. He said that in the first phase Gowns will be prepared for all the doctors and paramedical staff of district Muzaffarabad and Poonch.

Talking to the media representatives on this occasion, Prime Minister the handicrafts being prepared by women in the production center would be taken to major markets. "We are building display centers in Karachi and Mall Road Lahore Islamabad where our local production will be showcased", he said.

"Our goal is to make 6 thousand women skilled in Muzaffarabad so that they can be economically self-sufficient by establishing their own industry in the future", the PM said.

Commenting on the ban imposed on polyurethane bags, he further said that after the ban on plastic shopping bags, the market demand for cloth bags has increased.

He said that sewing centers would also be established in other districts of Azad Kashmir.

On the occasion of Prime Minister was accompanied by minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Maqbool Ahmed, Special Assistant for Women Empowerment Laiba Ahmed, and others.

## Imran Khan is leader of masses Asad Qaiser



News Desk

SWABI: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan's life is at risk and if anything happened to him it will be dangerous for country. He said that Imran Khan is the only hope of the Pakistani people and the whole nation stands with him. He expressed these views while addressing inauguration ceremony of PTI tenure development projects at Swabi.

Former Speaker National Assembly said that our policy is clear that we do not want enmity with any country but we want a relationship based on equality no country is allowed to interfere in the internal matters of Pakistan. He said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman was used to be strong voice against inflation in our tenure but now after becoming part of PDM government he didn't utter a word against historical inflation. He further said that Governor Kpk and Punjab should fulfill their constitutional responsibilities of announcing election day if they failed to do so PTI will challenge them through legal channel.

## Wazir tribal elders held a grand jirga against 22-hour load shedding



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In tribal district of Lower South Waziristan Wana held a grand jirga of tribal elders against 22 hours of illegal load shedding of electricity in which the families of all the tribes participated in large numbers, tribal elders demanded an immediate reduction in load shedding.

On this occasion Malik Azizullah and Malik Gulap Ka Ka Khel while talking to the media said that there is 22 hours of load shedding in our area Wana due to which the wheel of life has come to a standstill.

There is no clean drinking water in homes; water for ablution is not available in mosques which are a big problem.

Tribal elders said that due to load shedding, all business has stopped, all our work is done with electricity.

They strongly demanded the federal government and Tesco authorities to end the load shedding, otherwise we will be forced to close down not only the Wana Bazar but also the Wana to DI Khan route will be closed for all kinds of traffic.

If the government does not accept our demand, we will boycott polio.

## 3rd Marigold Festival

KARACHI: A view of deserted Frere Hall ground during 3rd Marigold Festival in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## The finals of the Pakistan Youth Festival held

News Desk

KARACHI: On the sixth day of the ongoing Pakistan Youth Festival in Karachi, Arts Council of Pakistan, outstanding performance of the candidates in the finals of singing, instrument, acting, dance and Battle of the Band amazed the audience. Federal Minister Shazia Marri and Barrister Murtaza Wahab participated in the festival President Arts Councilor Muhammad Ahmad Shah was also with him; Federal Minister Shazia Marri said that the youth need a free environment for development so that they can develop in the field of their choice. I am happy to see at the Arts Council that Ahmad Shah has provided an environment to the youth where they strive to develop their talents. Seeing the enthusiasm of the youth of Pakistan in the Arts Council, it is clear that they are very happy.

She said that some people want to mislead the youth but today's youth is very wise and will not be misled. The youth of this country want a bright Pakistan, they know who is working for them and who is misleading them. Together we have to strengthen the youth of this country, she said that it is very happy to see the enthusiasm and passion of the youth in the Arts Council Karachi that the statement of Quaid-i-Azam is being followed that the youth needs direction. The Arts Council has given direction to the youth.

I salute this effort of President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah. Ahmad Shah is taking great steps to strengthen the children and youth of this nation. We do not brainwash the children of this country, we have to advance them and provide them with opportunities for development, Murtaza Wahab said that the youth are with us because we are with the youth. He said that all of us will work together to establish a smiling Karachi and Pakistani society where people will be happy just like people are happy in the Arts Council today.

## Kinnaird College hosted conference on international education day

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Kinnaird Center for Learning and Cultural Development (KCLCD), Kinnaird College for Women in collaboration with CMYMC and Youth Revolution Clan organized the conference on International Education Day under the theme of 'Invest in people, prioritize education'.

The conference was aimed to highlight the essential role of education in promotion of development and peace in achieving the sustainable development agenda devised by the UN, which emphasizes that countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adult behind.

The conference commenced with the opening remarks by Rizwan Anwar, Executive Director (KCLCD) and Global Youth Ambassador of UN, While putting light on the objective of the conference he mentioned that international community recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals

when it revealed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. Ms Maha Jamil Chair Organizing Committee of conference shared that Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

During the conference the UN secretary General's video message on international education day was screened which reflected the initiatives of UN in promotion of education. The conference hosted an informative session of learning experiences, diversity and students learning practices in which Ms. Gulsana Mansha (Educationist), Air Cmdr (R) Khalid Chishti, Shoaib Iqbal, Dr. Farzan Arshad and Zeeba Hashmi participated as speakers. The speakers talked about the importance of education and said that education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future.

During the conference it was discussed that about 244 million children and adolescents around the world are out of school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and it is unacceptable.

Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, former Provincial Education Minister was chief guest of the last session of the conference. He acknowledged the role of Kinnaird College in promoting the quality education for girls and said that Educational Policies of which were drafted and implemented during his tenure are benefiting the academia, Research and youth sectors at very large.

Principal Kinnaird Colleges Dr. Ruksana David thanked the speakers and participants for their valuable contributions. She vowed that Kinnaird College will continue to raise awareness about important aspects beside academic activities. The conference concluded with the certificate distribution ceremony among the speakers.



## Seminars on desecration of the Quran in Sweden and the Netherlands



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Seminars on Desecration of the Quran in Sweden and the Netherlands organized by Jamiat Ahl-Hadith also protest rallies, meetings, processions and resolutions of condemnation were passed in mosques across Punjab, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sargodha, Jhang, Sahiwal, Toba Tek Singh, Ferozotoan, Sialkot, Tandlianwala, Jaranwala, Khardianwala, Nankana, Shahkot, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Rallies were taken out in Gujra, Patuki, Kamalia, Pansera, Chiniot, Lalian and other citizens, from which the central leaders were Provincial Amir Allama Abdul Rashid Hijazi, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Anwar, Provincial Nazim-e-Ala Hafiz Muhammad Yunus Azad, Sarsar Sat Syed Sabtain Shah Naqvi, Dr. Babar. Farooq Rahimi, Qari Mohammad Arshad, Maulana Bahadur Ali Saif, Khalid Mahmood AzamAbadi, Abdul Samad Moaz, Maulana Abdul Basit Sheikhupuri, Qari Khalid Jahid, Maulana Abdul Qadir Usman, Qari Hanif Bhatti, Hafiz Abdul Rehman Sheikhupuri, Professor Najibullah Tariq Abdul Manan Noor Puri, Hafiz Mohsen Hameed, Abu Hurairah Salafi, Maulana Hanif Azim, Qari Ahmad Hasan Sajid, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Madani, Qari Abdul Rahman Shaheen, Maulana AbdullahSajid, Maulana Barq Al-Tawhidi, Prof. Saeed Ahmed Chinyoti, Mufti Abdul Rashid Zia, Hafiz Noman Toor, Qari Bashir

Ahmad Azizi, Maulana Ashraf Javed, Maulana Ikramullah Toor, Maulana Ahmed Waqas Zaheer, Hafiz Muhammad Aslam Jat, Qari Muhammad Hasan Salafi, Hafiz Saqib Sarwar Thaqi, Hafiz Alamgir, Hafiz Jahangir, Muhammad Aslam Cheema, Maulana Sheikhin Tawhid-iProf. Abdul Shakoor, Maulana Tariq Zia and others while speaking said that by desecrating sacred things in the guise of freedom of expression, the sentiments of Muslims around the world are being hurt.

The feelings of the Muslims were hurt and the hearts were wounded by making it a cover. It is a very shameful act, which should be condemned as little as possible. Sweden and Holland, like India, are becoming a threat to world peace by fueling extremism and extremism. Such cases do not happen in a civilized society, Muslims are with all Prophets and holy inspired books give respect and reverence, but alas, disbelieving is causing awareness by hurting the feelings of Muslims all over the world, Amir Punjab Maulana Abdul Rashid-e-Hijazi, addressing the rally in Faisalabad, said that those who burn the Quran cannot remove it from the hearts of Muslims. Mosques, madrasas and libraries were burnt, Despite the fact that the Quran is still present in the hearts of millions of Muslims, thousands of people participated in the rallies and demanded the government to send a strong message to the ambassadors of Holland and Sweden and send a strong message to their guardians.

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## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:41 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	3:56 pm
Maghrib	5:34 pm
Isha	7:00 pm

## EMERGENCY

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

## Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

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Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

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

## DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04

## ANF recovers over 51 kg drugs in six operations: arrests nine

## Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan, in six separate counter-narcotics operations, seized over 51 kg narcotics, including 10 ketamine injections, 65 heroin-filled capsules, and 100 intoxicated tablets, besides arresting nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He said that ANF, in an operation at Karachi International Airport, recovered 10 ketamine injections from the possession of a passenger, who was a resident of Karachi and traveling by flight no EK-603.

In another raid, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Khyber to Peshawar and recovered 12 kg charras and two kg charras oil from the possession of two accused, residents of Khyber, netted from Ring Road, Peshawar, he added.

The spokesman said the force, in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, arrested an Abu-Dhabi-bound passenger, resident of Sargodha and flying by flight no EY-232 on recovery of 65 heroin-filled capsules.

ANF North, in a raid conducted near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, recovered 16.8 kg charras from secret cavities of a car and nabbed an accused who was a resident of Lahore, he added.

# Speakers for fast-track implementation of Russia-Pakistan energy agreements

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar on Saturday highlighted the importance of a fast-track implementation of the agreements reached between Russia and Pakistan in the energy sector, terming it crucial for the economic uplift of the energy-starved country.

The webinar titled "Russo-Pak Economic and Energy Cooperation, Scope and Challenges" was

organized by Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications network) and DTN.

Former Senator Lt. General (Retd.) Abdul Qayyum was the keynote speaker, while among other participants were foreign affairs expert Dr Salma Malik, energy and environment expert Qaiser Aijaz, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed, besides Hussain Ali Shah, Iftikhar Ahmed, Sarah Khan, Natasha Jameel, Maliha

and Ayan Mitra.

Abdul Qayyum said the recent Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Russia were a long-awaited icebreaking that could lead to an important partnership and investments in the defence, oil and gas sectors of Pakistan after the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

He said Pakistan needed sustainable and balanced foreign relations while increasing its exports, and attracting

more foreign investment.

He stressed political stability and consistency of policies, declaring them as a 'key' to achieving steady national development and prosperity.

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said a comprehensive Russo-Pak Energy Corridor was 'very crucial' for both countries at this point.

Munir Ahmed said it was high time for both countries

to think about the larger and more comprehensive Russo-Pak Energy Corridor (RPEC), similar to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Dr Salma Malik termed the Pakistan-Russia energy cooperation a "welcomed step" that needs to be viewed with cautious optimism, given the larger geo-economic dynamics.

Qaiser Aijaz said the Russo-Pak economic and energy development cooperation had a histo-

ry, recalling that Pakistan's first five-year plan of 1950 was based on the Russian Economic Model and subsequent provision of technical and financial support in the promotion of the oil and gas development sector in 1960 and establishment of Pakistan Steel Mills in the 1970s.

He said Russia-Pakistan Economic and Energy Cooperation had a huge potential to grow and was expected to develop further on a fast-track basis.

## Lok Virsa Museum

ISLAMABAD: Students are looks silk caravan model during visiting at Lok Virsa museum, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PUIC committee adopts Pakistan's resolution on Kashmir

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries (PUIC) standing specialized committee of political and foreign affairs unanimously approved Pakistan's Resolution on Kashmir.

The resolution, urging the international community to take cognizance of blatant Indian atrocities in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, its unionization, alteration of the political map, and

sought reversal of actions of August 2019, stopping New Delhi from committing human rights violations, was presented by Deputy Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani.

The resolution will now be taken up at the main conference during its final session on Sunday, and if approved, the resolution will be part of the final communiqué of the conference, said a news release received here.

He is leading the parlia-

mentary delegation in Algeria, to attend the 17th session of the Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries (PUIC) in Algiers.

Deputy Speaker emphasized the need for the resolution of the issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The adoption of the resolution marks a significant success for Pakistan in terms of its parliamentary and diplomatic efforts to showcase Kashmiri issue at the international fora for its immediate resolution as per

the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, said Zahid Akram Durrani.

Durrani urged the international community to act and to work towards finding a peaceful and just solution to the long-standing issue of Kashmir.

He also underscored that the resolution represents a crucial step in drawing the attention of the international community to the ongoing human rights violations and the need for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

## Margalla Avenue should not be opened for traffic until phase 2 is completed

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: CDA is going to construct Margalla Avenue from Sanghani GT Road to E-11 Chowk Margalla Road (Iqbal Street) in two phases. The first phase is from GT Road to Sector D-12. It is almost complete. The second phase is from Sector D-12 to E-11 Chowk Margalla Road.

Which is happening. The completion period of which is six months. The CDA had promised the residents of Sector D-12 that Margalla Avenue would not be opened for traffic till the completion of Phase 2. But CDA is preparing to open Phase-1 for traffic due to political pressure. In this regard, Margalla Avenue is being linked with Service

Road North of Sector D-12. Due to which all the traffic of GT Road will go to Margalla Road passing through Sector D-12 from Margalla Avenue\*. According to CDA, 50,000 to 60,000 vehicles will pass on Margalla Avenue every day. When vehicles pass through Sector D-12 in such numbers, Sector D-12 and Sector E-11 and its residents will be badly

affected. And their life will be miserable.

Our demand is that Margalla Avenue should not be opened for traffic until phase 2 is completed. In this regard, the residents of Sector D-12 along with their families will protest against the CDA at the junction of Service Road North and Major Road 3 on Sunday, January 29, at 11 am.

## Two-day global conference 'Majlis 2023' to start on January 28

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A two-day global conference hosted by the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) titled 'Majlis 2023' will start on January 28 in the Federal Capital and will be attended by over 85 successful businesspersons from over 16 countries.

Addressing a press conference, the President of the EO Islamabad Chapter, Hassan Rizvi said that Majlis is a global conference being attended by EO members representing over 16 countries and 10 chapters.

He said that this is the first time that the Federal Capital will be hosting this conference and it has been designed as a series of curated learning activities, cultural experiences, and outdoor excursions spread across Islamabad.

"The purpose of this conference is to showcase Pakistan's beauty, and immense economic and cultural diversity to the larger EO community," Rizvi added.



He said that EO is a global, peer-to-peer network of successful entrepreneurs active across 60 countries with over 16,500 members.

He said that members of EO devel-

op and grow through meaningful relationships based on trust and respect. "We expand that growth and share it with partners by aligning with world-class organizations that share simi-

lar values."

EO Islamabad's Learning Chair and President-Elect, Taimur Adil, said that 'Majlis 2023' will be attended by corporate leaders from countries including Egypt, Jordan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Tanzania, Bahrain, Portugal, and others.

EO Islamabad's Marketing and Communications Chair, Arham Khalid, said that the conference aims to enhance an understanding of Pakistan through member engagement and structured interactions with senior government and corporate leaders.

EO Islamabad's Engagement Chair, Hatim Tabani, said that EO is a global volunteer organization founded in 1987, and the EO Islamabad Chapter, founded in 2018, is one of the fastest-growing chapters in the region.

He added EO has four core values-trust and respect, thinking big and being bold, thirst for learning and together we grow.

## Rain-wind thunderstorm expected at various parts of country: PMD

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rain-wind/thunderstorm (snowfall over the hills) is expected in Islamabad, Potohar region, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, northeast and central Punjab and north Balochistan during the next 24 hours.

Moderate to isolated heavy snowfall may occur in hilly areas. Isolated heavy falls/hailstorm is also expected in upper parts during the period. According to the synoptic situation, a westerly wave was affecting the western and upper parts and was likely to intensify in the upper parts on Sunday and Monday.

During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country, while very cold in upper parts and north Balochistan.

The rainfall recorded during the period was Quetta (Sheikh Manda, Samungli) and Jiwani 01mm.

The lowest minimum temperatures recorded were Leh -14 C, Kalam -11, Chitral, Gupis -08, Parachinar -07, Astore, Kalat, Malamjabbah -06, Mirkhani Quetta and Skardu -05 C.

## Chief Secretary of GB visits Shifa International Hospital Islamabad



## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani (Chief Secretary of GB) visited Shifa International Hospital Islamabad and met the hospital's senior management, who visited various Healthcare Setups in GB District, in lieu of improving quality of care. In addition to appointing competent consultants, SIHL agreed to offer professional advice and consultation for the improvement all healthcare services, processes and infrastructure. The CS assured the complete support and accommodation for all joining doctors.

The CS appreciated that for the success of the program, SIHL will facilitate an adequate backup team of doctors to provide continuous/seamless healthcare services to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, especially in these times of need. The expert's team's efforts in going above and beyond and conducting detailed analysis of healthcare systems for improvement and sustainability of patient care were acknowledged.

The members agreed on the proposed plans to establish 3 state-of-the-art referral laboratories through public-private partnership, where all residents of in Gilgit-Baltistan will be provided quality health services at subsidized rates. It was agreed that SIHL will be a member of various steering and monitoring committees to provide policy advice. Various medical camps and other improvement initiatives are in plan as well.

## Variety musical show held at Punjab Arts Council

## News Desk

RAWALPINDI: The opening ceremony of Gandhara Festival 2023 organized by Punjab Arts Council will be held today at Gandhara Art Village Taxila. Secretary Information and Culture Ms. SilwatSaeed will inaugurate the festival. Director General Punjab Arts Council Muhammad MehboobAlam says that the promotion of culture is the top priority of the Punjab government.

The recent approval of the first cultural policy of the Punjab province is a testament to the efforts of the Punjab Arts Council. Punjab Arts Council will organize festivals on Harappa, Sindh and Hakra culture of Cholistan along with Gandhara, 3 three-day cultural fairs will also be organized in all other districts of Punjab.

The festival will be held from January 29 to February 4 at Gandhara Art Village Taxila and Punjab Arts Council Cricket Stadium Road Rawalpindi.

More than 20 stalls based on sculpture, stone carving and Gandhara art are being set up by expert artisans in the festival. Traditional food, kids play area for children, and book fair on Gandhara are also part of the festival. In the opening ceremony, SainZahoor will perform at Sufi Night. Sham-e-Ghazak with Ustad Hamid Ali Khan will be held on 30th January. FazalJat will present a story-telling program in his unique style, while Naeem Hazzarvi will also accompany him. Saraiki folk singer RahatMultani will perform at Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi on February 2.

## District administration announces local holiday on Monday

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) on Saturday declared January 30 (Monday) as a local holiday.

According to a notification issued by the ICT administration, "the local holiday is declared within the revenue limits of ICT except the offices of essential services including Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) Capital Development Authority (CDA), ICT Administration, ICT Police, IESCO, SNGPL and Hospitals."

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# Iran should seek genuine partnerships with its neighbors

**Hassan Al-Mustafa**

During his participation in a panel discussion on the sidelines of this month's World Economic Forum, entitled "Keeping the lights on amid geopolitical fractures," Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said: "We feel strongly that what we are doing in the Kingdom and what others are doing in the region, especially the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in facing economic challenges and investing in their countries with a focus on development is a strong signal to Iran and others in the region that there is a pathway beyond traditional arguments and disputes toward joint prosperity."

This perception highlights Saudi Arabia's search for unconventional solutions to the problems of the Arab Gulf, specifically the strained relations with Iran. Riyadh is fully aware that Tehran is its neighbor and there is a political geography that cannot be changed. Therefore, these two countries that border the Gulf must adopt dialogue as the only way to reach solutions to existing problems.

Prince Faisal presented the economy and development as a

platform from which to start to build confidence and get out of the circle of security and political crises to an area that is more beneficial to all countries in the region.

Iran suffers from several economic crises and unrest and demonstrations in many cities, which have been ongoing for several months. Moreover, inflation levels are rising. The Statistical Center of Iran announced last year that the inflation rate for households in the 12 months to March 2022 had reached 40.2 percent.

Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi told parliament that he was "very concerned about the rate of inflation in the country," as it was about 59.3 percent when his government took office in August 2021. It has since witnessed a decrease of 19 percent. He added that decisions must be taken to reduce it even more significantly. But the decline in the inflation rate is something that many observers question, especially with the increasing criticism — even from within Iran's conservative current — of the poor economic performance of Raisi's government.

Iran's rigid foreign policy stances and its continued support for the armed militias that are loyal to it in Lebanon,

Iraq, Yemen and Syria have turned international public opinion against it. Tehran continues to engage in activities that destabilize the security of the region, particularly its support of terrorist groups through the Quds Force, the external arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

So, this image, which was formed due to Iran's own practices, has resulted in political stances and even international resolutions in the UN Security Council. Sanctions have been imposed on many Iranian companies, prompting foreign firms to stop investing in Iran.

Hence the importance of focusing on development and the economy as per the speech of the Saudi foreign minister. He knows that the problems of the Iranian people can only be solved by improving their level of income and this can only be done by creating a strong economy that is connected to the world. All of this depends on one thing: Iran's behavior toward its neighbors.

High-level diplomacy and the policy of offering opportunities for real communication, which were outlined by Prince Faisal, are important for Iranian politicians to build on, especially since the Saudi foreign minister confirmed that, "when it comes

to Iran, we have reached out and we are trying to find a path to dialogue ... We believe very strongly that dialogue is the best pathway to resolving differences."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has, on many occasions, whether through Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian or spokesman Nasser Kanaani, spoken positively about Saudi Arabia and Tehran's desire to establish good relations with the Kingdom. However, the problem is that, through this, they want to launch test balloons and show that Tehran is the one that extends the hand of peace, while Riyadh is the one that refuses it, which is not true.

These statements are part of the negotiating papers and an attempt at political pressure and media marketing. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia wants the dialogue to continue in a serious and non-urgent manner because the goal is to reach a strong understanding.

Hassan Fahs, a researcher specializing in Iranian affairs, wrote in an article: "The Tehran regime is run by two heads, one of which tends to enhance cooperation, while the other seeks to block the road to its relations with the Arab surroundings and neighborhood."

Fahs believes that "Amir-Abdollahian is well aware that

achieving positive results in the dialogue with Saudi Arabia constitutes a solid ground for restoring the Iranian relationship with the international community and regional capitals, and allows Tehran to use it as a card of strength at the negotiating table with the international six-party system, especially Washington, on the nuclear file."

So, this insistence on the part of the Iranian foreign minister is due to his realization of the magnitude of the economic and political difficulties facing his country. He now wants the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia to be the regime's salvation from its crises. However, Riyadh will not offer this salvation for free, nor will it help Iran to catch its breath, take a warrior's rest and then resume exporting its revolution and supporting armed militias.

Saudi Arabia wants a strong and sustainable agreement, with a high degree of clarity and commitment, that solves the existing security and political problems and normalizes competition between the countries of the region within international frameworks. Therefore, the best way for Iran is to seek real partnerships with its neighbors and not just temporary solutions that will soon collapse.

## Iran...The Day Sanctions Fall Short

A series of US, British, and European sanctions against Iran were imposed last Monday. These sanctions targeted individuals and entities, including the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the "Basij" militia, and its deputy commander.

Despite all of that, we saw EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell make a remarkable statement. He said that the EU could not include the IRGC on the list of terrorist entities until a court in the EU makes a verdict to that effect.

"It is something that cannot be decided without a court. A court decision [is needed] first. You cannot say: 'I consider you a terrorist because I do not like you.'" Borrell said. He then added that the court of an EU member should issue a concrete condemnation.

Here, several questions must be raised. It is not my area of expertise, but for the sake of argument, I ask: were all of these recent sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals imposed by the US, Britain, and France implemented through a court ruling?

Do all the crimes of the IRGC within Iran and in the Middle East region, besides those that it commits in the United States, Europe, and other countries of the world, require a court decision? If so, why hasn't one of these countries taken action before?

Moreover, why didn't they take the initiative now or months ago, when the IRGC's crimes went as far as Ukraine? where the Russians used its drones! This question is especially pertinent given that the European Union has backed Ukraine in this war.

Or does Mr. Borrell not consider Ukraine a European country in the sense that it does not belong to the Union? This raises a different issue, and the question then becomes: what legal justification did the European Union have in imposing all these sanctions on Russia after the war in Ukraine?

We are not arguing for the sake of argument here. Rather, the aim is to pose questions that demonstrate that the European Union has not moved decisively, until now, against the terrorist crimes, whether in Iran itself or anywhere else, of the mullah regime, neither today nor yesterday, and evidence is abundant.

Here, it suffices to refer to what the IRGC is doing in Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as in Ukraine, on top of what they are doing in Iran itself, where they are repressing the people of Iran who demand dignity and an end to sham executions of Iranians. The crimes of the mullahs and the IRGC—be it those it commits against Iranian states, or international law—do not require evidence.

If the decision to include the IRGC on the list of terrorist organizations requires a court ruling, as Mr. Borrell says, the question becomes: whose responsibility is to go to court? Is it the responsibility of individuals or institutions?

The truth, which we in this region are all too aware of, is that the mullah regime only understands the language of force. It does not understand words, only actions. Nothing the West has done thus far threatens the Iranian regime. Indeed, the West's actions give Iran hope that the door to negotiation is still open.

And so, all the sanctions imposed on the mullahs of Tehran so far have fallen short and are ineffective.



## What the Gulf can learn from the war in Ukraine

**Luke Coffey**

The war in Ukraine has forced Europeans to take security and defense more seriously. Policies are in place now that would have been unthinkable a year ago. For example, this time last year the heated debate inside NATO was on whether to send Ukraine mere anti-tank missiles. Now Germany, Spain, Poland, the UK and the US, among others, will be sending some of the world's most advanced tanks to Ukraine. A lot can change in a year.

Russia's invasion has also finally focused the minds of Europe's finance ministers, many of whom for years have been reluctant to spend more money on defense. After years of underinvestment, it finally appears Europe is getting serious about improving its defense capabilities.

Some tough lessons have been learned in recent months. Even though Europeans are now spending more on defense, they are still playing catch-up after years of chronic underinvestment. During the early days of the invasion, some European countries were scrambling to find weapons and military equipment that had been maintained properly so it could be sent to Ukraine. Many were discovering that the stocks of equipment in their inventories were expired, obsolete, or unfit for combat due to years of budget cuts. Stockpiles of key munitions across Europe, and even in the US, are running dangerously low after supplying Ukraine. Policymakers are only now discovering that the defense industrial base lacks the ability to ramp up production quickly to

close the gap.

Also, some of the debates across Europe on what military hardware to provide Ukraine are concerning. Some countries, such as Germany and Switzerland, have been hesitant to approve the transfer of equipment to Ukraine that was manufactured by them. The most recent examples were Berlin's initial refusal to allow German-made tanks to be re-exported to Ukraine, and Switzerland blocking Swiss manufactured ammunition from being sent there. While Europe looks united on the surface, there are still significant areas of disagreement.

So as Europe arranges its security and defense policies to deal with an emerging threat from Russia, what can the Gulf states learn from this that relates to security concerns with Iran?

The most important lesson is to properly invest in the armed forces. When the bullets start flying, it is too late to start increasing defense budgets. Investments in the military, particularly in modern equipment and training, need to be made over the long term. As seen across Europe, the impact of the penny pinching over the years was never felt until a war broke out. The countries in the Gulf should not find themselves in this position.

Another lesson to be learned from Europe's experience over the past year is the importance of maintaining sufficient stockpiles of equipment and munitions. It is also important to maintain a robust defense industrial base for any military hardware that is not being imported — or at least access to reliable markets to purchase equipment. As witnessed over the past year, defense manufactur-

ers cannot simply ramp up production overnight.

It is also important to consider where military hardware is being purchased from. Germany may produce good tanks, but if Berlin places restrictions on how they may be used, what good are they? Not only did Berlin delay delivering German-made Leopard tanks to Ukraine, but Turkey faced similar problems when it wanted to use Leopard tanks in Syria in 2018.

Also, quite a few countries in the Middle East still use Russian-built military hardware that is turning out to be junk in the face of modern Western weapons. Policymakers in the region should be looking at their inventory closely to see what new equipment is needed and what old equipment needs to be phased out.

Finally, the situation in Ukraine is a reminder of the importance of alliances, partners, and relationships. Ukraine is not a member of NATO and does not enjoy the alliance's joint security guarantee, but close cooperation between Kyiv and many NATO members over the years has been a tremendous help for today. The lesson from Ukraine is that in the face of regional aggression, the Gulf states need to redouble their efforts to work more closely together on security and military issues. In this regard, expanding the Abraham Accords and rethinking the possibility of a Middle East Strategic Alliance with the US should be considered too.

While the war in Ukraine may be thousands of kilometers away, the lessons apply locally. The Iranian threat is not going away. The more prepared the region is, the safer the future will be.

## Can AI ever replace the human touch?

**Dr. Bashayer Al-Majed**

On numerous occasions I've tried to report an issue or phone my bank to request information, and find myself dealing with a "bot," an artificial intelligence — in other words a computer program powered by an algorithm to "understand" what I'm asking and provide an appropriate response.

And this technology is improving all the time; microphones detect our voices, software understands what we say regardless of regional accent, then selects an appropriate response in a recorded voice with realistic inflections.

Nevertheless, to be honest, my relief is palpable when I call a large company and a human being answers — a real, live human being who can (hopefully) understand my dialect and accent, filter out the excess wordage and story-telling, and address the precise matter at hand.

I am not demeaning the technology. It is a wonderful advance, it speeds up queues, it cuts phone waiting times, and there are countless other advantages. But what are the limits of the technology? More importantly, where should we — indeed where can we — draw the line? AI, if programmed with perfect algorithms, can provide a more efficient response than a human being if it's asked the correct questions.

AI could in theory be used for triage in hospital, helping to make swift, accurate decisions on patients' symptoms and risks. Perhaps it could be used to give initial, basic analysis and diagnosis of

medical ailments to reduce the strain on doctor's surgeries, referring the patient to the correct therapy or hospital department, or to the doctor if a second opinion was required for something potentially hazardous. The AI could even make appointments.

There may be lots of reasons why you might require a dispensation from dealing with AI. Some people need more time to be able to process questions, or process their answer into a coherent response. A person could lack concise descriptive vocabulary; would an AI know how to extract the relevant information? Some people get confused with language and information and need someone to ask the right questions to extract the correct information. Neurodivergent people can struggle with processing thoughts to be able to convey information, or may simply take a question too literally, which may not be picked up by the AI in a way that a human might. A person with dyslexia may struggle with a computer interface, as may many others, depending on physical, mental and learning abilities, and experience.

These issues are not limited to medical situations. They could equally be applicable for an application for social housing, or a patent application for intellectual property, or marking a university examination.

The important questions are: Is AI accurate enough, particularly for matters of life and death?

And who is liable if something goes wrong?

For example, in matters of scientific discoveries and intellectual property,

with such huge online access to libraries of global patents it would be fast and efficient for an AI to search for something already in the market. Indeed, with advanced search engines and alerts, this already happens. But the issue arises of who is liable if a patent is granted but it later turns out that a similar item also exists. Perhaps the software lacked the language to search effectively, but is that the programmer's fault? Is it a matter of how the search is carried out? Presumably it would require someone familiar with the specific topic to work with the programmers to ensure everything was covered. Essentially, it seems that the AI itself would be best placed to search for potential biases to eliminate discrimination.

This feels an inevitable move forward; it's just a matter of time, technology, interface and having the appropriate conversations to put in place the right kind of policies to protect the public. In the long run, it would greatly improve access to services if AI could at the very least be used for initial screening processes to provide simple answers and aid where appropriate, freeing up experts to deal with more complicated situations. In areas of housing, medicine and the law, eliminating long backlogs in less complicated cases would be excellent, but currently the legal protection is not in place, so we would have to ask, at what risk?

Bureaucracy can be a nightmare; we have all endured being sent round in endless circles. Sometimes you just need to speak with a human being, and we need to greatly improve the ease with which we can do so when required.

# Pakistani Zaireen lay traditional Chaddar at Dargah Ajmer Sharif

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistani Zaireen placed the traditional Chaddar at the Dargah of Hazrat Khawaja Syed Moinuddin Hasan Chishti (RA) in Ajmer Sharif on Saturday, on the occasion of the 811th annual Urs celebrations.

Salman Sharif, Chargé d'Affaires, Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi, also took part in the ceremony, representing the Government of Pakistan.

According to Pakistan's High Commission in New Delhi, at the Dargah, the delegation was welcomed by Syed Bilal Chishti and other prominent members of the Anjuman Moinia Fakhria Chishtia Khuddam Sahib. After placing the Chaddar, special prayers were offered. The Dargah notables performed "dastarbandi" of the



Chargé d'Affaires and representatives of the Zaireen.

The Chargé d'Affaires thanked the Dargah custodians and the adminis-

tration for facilitating his visit and for looking after the Pakistani delegation during the auspicious occasion of the annual Urs.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti (RA) is one of the most revered Sufi saints of the sub continent. His values, teachings and practices of peace, unity, tolerance and harmony carry an eternal message and serve as a beacon of hope for the world today.

Later, the Zaireen held a separate meeting with the Chargé d'Affaires and expressed their gratitude to the Government of Pakistan and the High Commission for facilitating their visit.

Pakistani Zaireen attend the annual Urs Mubarak under the framework of the 1974 India-Pakistan Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines. This year a total of 240 Zaireen, led by a representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, are visiting Ajmer Sharif from 25 January to 1 February, 2023 to participate in the 811th Urs Mubarak.

## Allama Sabatin Kazmi strongly condemns desecration of Holy Quran

Sohail Anjum Malik

ISLAMABAD: Internationally renowned religious scholar, Mujahid Millat-e-Islamiya and Jafariya Allama Muhammad Sabatin Kazmi based in the United Kingdom, warned that the extremist elements of the West, especially Sweden and the Netherlands, have committed a heinous act of desecrating the Holy Quran. He is in a state of pain and if such heinous act is continued, the reaction will be severe.

This will not only increase the danger about peace of the whole world but also increase the extremism.

Allama Muhammad Sabatin Kazmi further said that every Muslim, believer and people of faith, the Holy Quran is the most sacred and "Holy Book" whose truthfulness prevails all over the world have recognized the "Truth of the Book" as the true and Authentic Book and Non-Muslims are rapidly entering the "Religion of Islam" after being influenced by the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). He specifically mentioned the countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and even USA where the Religion of Islam has emerged as the second major religion and warned that these few miscreants will fail as usual in reducing the greatness of the religion of Islam and the Holy Qur'an and ultimately the religion of the whole planet. The slogan of Islam and "Hussainiat" will be raised.

Allama Sibtain Kazmi emphasized in his statement that in order to thwart the recent evil plots in Sweden and the Netherlands, the true believers and lovers of DEEN-E-ISLAM should celebrate the arrival date of the Ka'aba Al-Sharief "Moulad e Ka'aba" on the 13th Rajab al-Murjab, the blessed birthday of Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), in every place and at every level. Celebrate it like Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (PBUH) is celebrated.



# Khalistan referendum to take place in Australia on Jan 29

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) has announced that voting for the Australian chapter Khalistan independence referendum will be held at Federation Square in Melbourne on January 29.

Melbourne's Ravi Inder Singh, a representative of the Miri Piri Gurudwara (Sikh temple), told Australian media that the voting exercise, known as the 'Khalistan referendum', would be a significant step towards 'self-determination' for millions of Sikhs around the world.

Australian Sikhs, along with millions of others around the world, will vote on January 29 in a referendum to establish a separate Sikh state in India, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) posted on its website.

Sikhs have faced increasing discrimination in India, especially with the growth of Hindu nationalism.

In 1984, thousands died in communal violence, after the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi, it



added.

Singh said the main goal of the referendum was to seek a consensus among Sikhs to establish a separate homeland within India and to determine the extent of the demand for this separatist state that would be known as Khalistan (land of the pure), SBS Punjabi, an Australian news outlet quoted him as saying.

The voting in the referendum, which started in October 2021, had so far been held in the UK, Switzerland, Italy and Canada.

Khalistan referendum to take place in Australia on Jan 29

During a press conference in Melbourne on Wednesday, SFJ co-founder and general counsel Gurpatwant Singh Pannun said that the Indian government was trying to "criminalize" the attempt of Sikhs to demand a separate state.

They were calling the 'Khalistan referendum' illegal and an act of terrorism, he added.

According to media reports, Australia is home to nearly 209,000 Sikhs, accounting for 0.8 per cent of the total population, and is the country's fifth largest and fastest-growing religious group, according to the 2021

census.

Commenting on the 'Khalistan referendum' in Australia, the SBS quoted a spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said that Australia valued diversity and inclusion, respected the right of individuals to engage in peaceful protest and supported the non-violent expression of views.

About Khalistan, the SFJ had proposed that this would be achieved by carving out the north Indian state of Punjab, parts of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, and several districts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

## Death toll in Afghanistan cold snap rises to 166, official says



KABUL: At least 166 people have died in a wave of bitterly cold weather sweeping Afghanistan, an official said Saturday, as extreme conditions heaped misery on the poverty-stricken nation.

Afghanistan has been frozen by temperatures as low as -33°C (-27°F) since January 10, combined with widespread snowfall, icy gales, and regular electricity outages.

Aid agencies had warned before the cold snap that more than half of Afghanistan's 38 million people were facing hunger, while nearly four million children were suffering from malnutrition.

The disaster management ministry said on Saturday the death toll had risen by 88 over the past week and now stood at 166, based on data from 24 of the nation's 34 provinces.

The deaths were caused by floods, fires and leaks from gas heaters that Afghan families use to heat their homes, ministry official Abdul Rahman Zahid said in a video statement.

Some 100 homes were destroyed or damaged and nearly 80,000 livestock, a vital commodity for Afghanistan's poor, also died in the cold.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said this week 17 people had died in a single village in northeastern Badkshsh province due to an outbreak of "acute respiratory infection".

"Harsh weather prevents help from reaching the area," the WHO said.

Afghanistan is enduring its second winter since US-backed forces withdrew and the Islamist Taliban surged back into Kabul to reclaim government.

Foreign aid has declined dramatically since then and key central bank assets were seized by the United States, compounding a humanitarian crisis considered one of the world's worst.

The Taliban government banned Afghan women from working with humanitarian groups last month, leading many to suspend operations.

Women NGO workers in the health sector were then granted an exemption and some organisations restarted their programmes.

## NYTAS to attract foreign investment in tourism sector



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: New York Travel and Adventure Show (NYTAS) 2023 would create a soft image of Pakistan internationally and help to attract foreign investment in the tourism sector.

Pakistan Tourism Development Cooperation (PTDC), along with provincial regional partners and 90 private sector companies of tourism industry, will showcase Pakistan's rich tourism potential in the two-day 'Travel and Adventure Show at Jakob Javits Convention Center New York', which started today.

The Trade and Adventure Show New York is the pre-eminent travel marketplace in the United States and the event provided a great opportunity to interact with the top international and domestic travel destinations, tour operators, cruise lines, and travel providers, said a news release received here.

The Trade and Adventure Show New York attracts 750 exhibitors from more than 175 countries making it the largest trade show in North America.

Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan Awn Chaudhry, while addressing the event, said that "Pakistan has diversified tourist attractions and efforts are being made to represent Pakistan tourism heritage at international forums with the active participation of stakeholders".

He acknowledged the contributions of the foreign mission of Pakistan in New York and the efforts of public & private sector tourism-related entities for the promotion of the soft image of Pakistan.

## Afghan women students not allowed sitting university entrance exam

News Desk

KABUL: The Taliban-run Ministry of Higher Education ordered private universities in Afghanistan not to allow women students to sit university entrance exams next month, underscoring its policy to restrict women from tertiary education.

A letter from the ministry was addressed to institutions in Afghanistan's northern provinces, including Kabul, where exams are due to take place from the end of February. The letter said those institutions that did not observe the rules would face legal action.

The Higher Education Ministry in December told universities not to allow female students "until further notice". Days later, the administration stopped most female NGO workers from working. Most girls high schools have also been closed by authorities.

The restrictions on women's work and education have drawn condemnation internationally. Western diplomats have signalled the Taliban would need to change course on its policies towards women to have a chance of formal international recognition and an easing of its economic isolation.

The country is in the midst of an economic crisis, partly due to sanctions affecting its banking sector and a cut in development funding,

## Indigenous community

INDONESIA: Far in the northernmost reaches of Bangka Island, precisely in Aikabik Hamlet, Gunungmuda Village, Bangka District, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, lives an indigenous community that still adheres to the customs of the Mapor tribe.



# UN Rights chief slams large-scale repression of human rights in Myanmar

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Nearly two years on from Myanmar's brutal military coup against the democratically-elected government, the Southeast Asian country has sunk deeper than ever into crisis, undergoing a wholesale regression in human rights, UN human rights chief Volker Turk has said.

"By nearly every feasible measurement, and in every area of human rights - economic, social and cultural, as much as civil and political - Myanmar has profoundly regressed," he said in a statement.

Citing credible sources, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said that at least 2,890

people have died at the hands of the military and others working with them, of whom at least 767 were initially taken into custody, adding that it was almost certainly an underestimate on the numbers killed by the military.

A staggering 1.2 million Burmese have been internally displaced, and over 70,000 have left the country - joining more than a million others who have fled, including the bulk of the country's Rohingya Muslim population, who've suffered decades of sustained persecution and attacks, OHCHR noted.

"Despite clear legal obligations for the military to protect civilians in the conduct of hostilities, there has been consistent disregard for the related rules of international

law", Turk, the head of OHCHR, added.

"Far from being spared, civilians have been the actual targets of attacks - victims of targeted and indiscriminate artillery barrages and air strikes, extrajudicial executions, the use of torture, and the burning of whole villages."

The UN rights chief saluted the courage of all those who have lost their lives so far "in the struggle for freedom and dignity in Myanmar, and the continuing pain and suffering of their families and loved ones."

Credible information indicates that over 34,000 civilian structures, including homes, clinics, schools and places of worship, have been burned over the past two years, the rights office said.



And Myanmar's economy has collapsed with nearly half of the population now living below the poverty line.

Since 1st February 2021, the military has imprisoned the entire democratically elected leadership of the country and, in subsequent months, detained over 16,000 others - most of whom face specious charges in military-controlled courts, in flagrant breach of due process and fair trial rights, linked to their refusal to accept the military's actions, OHCHR under-

lined.

"There must be a way out of this catastrophic situation, which sees only deepening human suffering and rights violations on a daily basis," Turk said. "Regional leaders, who engaged the military leadership through ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) agreed a Five-Point Consensus that Myanmar's generals have treated with disdain."

"Two of the critical conditions that were agreed - to cease all violence and to allow humanitarian access - have not been met", he continued. "In fact, we have seen the opposite. Violence has spiraled out of control and humanitarian access has been severely restricted."

The High Commissioner pointed to other political measures that

would be crucial to resolving the crisis. First, the release of all political prisoners, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint, as called for by the UN Security Council.

He said inclusive dialogue with all parties was essential, involving both the ASEAN Chair and the UN Special Envoy. OHCHR must be given meaningful access to the country to monitor the situation independently and impartially, he added.

"Restoring respect for human rights is a key to ending this crisis, to end this situation where Myanmar's generals are trying to prop up through brute force a decades-old system in which they answer to no-one but themselves," Turk said.

"Those responsible for the daily

attacks against civilians and the human rights violations must be held accountable", Turk said.

"The military needs to be brought under real, effective civilian oversight. This will be difficult to achieve, but these elements are critical to restoring any semblance of democratic rule, security and stability to the country."

He noted that the Security Council united "to adopt a path-breaking resolution that demanded an immediate end to the violence, among other urgent steps", just last month.

"Now it is time for the world to come together to take common actions to stop the killing, protect the people of Myanmar, and ensure respect for their universal human rights."

*RCCI concerns on rising inflation amid free fall of rupee*

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: The business community, industrialists at chambers of commerce and industry have expressed their concern over the rising inflation rate in the country.

"The drastic fall in the PKR is the most immediate reason for the spike in the inflation rate. Inflation forces our majority of population in the country to spend almost their entire income for the very basic necessities of survival like food, clothing and shelter, said Saqib Rafiq, President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

Inflation affects the lower segment of the society which stands more than 70 percent of the total population of the country, he added.

In a statement, RCCI President said that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) on a monthly basis, along with 'Wholesale Price Index' (WPI) and the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) on weekly basis have increased manifold.

While quoting the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data, he said that the weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Index (SPI), posted an increase of 32.57 per cent for the combined income group on a year-on-year basis ending Jan 26 due to a massive surge in prices of both food and non-food items, especially vegetables like onions.

The government should concentrate on economic reforms besides, fair policy formulation, regulatory realignments and their implementation, he added.

*B2B trade promotion activities*



News Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his optimism that Pak-Turkiye bilateral economic and trade relations are improving; whereas the bilateral trade with Turkiye has surpassed the psychological mark of \$1 billion after a long hiatus of almost a decade. It is a milestone and we can only envisage Pakistani exports to Turkiye growing steadily from here onwards, he added.

It is pertinent to note that a high-profile and large Turkish trade delegation is visiting Pakistan; and, FPCCI has organized a multi-sector B2B networking session for the delegation.

Addressing the official dinner in the honor of Turkish delegation hosted by FPCCI – the apex body of Pakistan – Mr. Suleman Chawla, SVP FPCCI, explained that Pakistan & Turkiye have never been positioned for more robust, diverse and large-scale bilateral trade growth as they are now due to Pakistan's accession into TIR Convention for land-based cargoes. It is a game-changer; and, we can turn it into a transformational milestone in the history of bilateral economic cooperation for peace & prosperity – through creating complementarities in the two economies, shared interdependencies and destinies.

# Chinese President to inaugurate Gwadar airport soon: Alauddin Marri

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Alauddin Marri, former Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan and prominent businessman said that Gwadar is the future business hub of the country and Chinese President Xi Jinping would inaugurate the Gwadar airport during his upcoming visit to Pakistan. He said this while exchanging views with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI.

Alauddin Marri said that the coastal areas of Balochistan including Gwadar, Turbat and Makran have not been connected with the national grid as yet and added that 100 MW of electricity would soon be supplied to these areas from Iran. He said that Gwadar offers huge business opportunities to both local and foreign Investors in many sectors including service industries, fisheries, petrochemical, tourism, trade logistics, processing and manufacturing industries like assembling of oil storage, refining, transport equipment, ship



breaking, food & building materials processing, home appliances manufacturing, electronics

and IT industry. He said that it is a good time for potential investors to move to Gwadar and take advantage of its economic potential. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit Gwadar to explore business and investment opportunities.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed Alauddin Marri, former Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan and assured that ICCI would take a delegation to Balochistan to meet with Chief Minister, Governor and Corps Commander Quetta and explore business opportunities in Gwadar. He said that the pace of all development works in Gwadar including special economic zones and other required infrastructure should be expedited so that business and investment activities could be started. He said that Balochistan is endowed with plenty of natural resources and the government should focus on providing all required facilities to the potential investors to enhance investment that would reduce poverty & unemployment and bring prosperity to the province.

## Rupee depreciation opening floodgates of inflation

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Saturday said exchange rate erosion will open floodgates for unprecedented inflation and add to the debt of the country.

The rupee depreciated by Rs34 against the dollar which shattered the tall claims of some officials while the depreciation can increase the country's debt by six trillion rupees in a few days, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said that the dollar was trading at Rs264 in the last session while it may depreciate further bringing more inflation in the country.

In just two days Pakistan's loans have inflated by Rs4.5 trillion while the incumbent government has increased the loans by over Rs11 trillion while the foreign exchange reserves have fallen below \$4



billion which includes the dollars given by Saudi Arabia, UAE and China.

The business leader said that the reluctance of the IMF at this critical juncture is due to a host of issues including a reduction in the fiscal deficit.

Our fiscal deficit is at Rs3.2 trillion while the government has to levy more taxes on petrol, diesel, and other items, to raise two to three hundred billion rupees which will put more financial burden on the people," he added.

The circular debt was increasing by Rs123 billion per month and touching Rs 3.2 trillion and Pakistan was far from meeting the target relating to circular debt.

Government has to enhance the prices of electricity and gas to fill the shortfall which can push up the electricity tariff to Rs50 per unit.

All these steps will put pressure on the masses and increase the cost of doing business; many businesses will be closed resulting in massive unemployment.

He said that the economic meltdown was caused by political turmoil and right now Pakistan was facing a critical situation calling for urgent steps.

## Latest economic conditions survey from ACCA



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Q4 Global Economic Conditions Survey (GECS) shows signs of steadying, however, many indicators remain weaker than a year ago. The good news is that the GECS Confidence Index bounced slightly for the second consecutive quarter, perhaps reflecting hopes that the worst of the central bank tightening might soon be over and that China might successfully relax its zero-COVID restrictions.

Even so, the Confidence Index remains below its median reading for the period since 2012. There is not much positive news from the other three economic indicators – new orders, capital expenditure (CapEx), and employment. CapEx picked up marginally but remains below the median of the same period; new orders and employment showed a further modest deterioration.

A good cross-check is provided by the two GECS "Fear" indices, which reflect respondents' concerns that customers and/or suppliers may go out of business. Reassuringly, these were little changed from the 2022 Q3 survey, despite the sharp rise in borrowing costs and the prospect of negative

corporate-earnings growth in 2023.

Assad Hameed Khan, head of ACCA Pakistan, said: "What stands out is the improvement in confidence in developed countries—both Western Europe and North America. The improvement in confidence probably reflects hopes that the Russia-Ukraine situation can be contained, and that there will be sufficient natural gas to see Europe through what now looks increasingly likely to be a mild winter. Looking to the weaker emerging markets (especially Pakistan) however, 2023 could still prove to be a challenging time as reflected in the growing sovereign credit concerns and request to International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. Moreover, the central bank remains under pressure for continued higher interest rates, monetary tightening and foreign exchange transaction restrictions (further slowing growth)."

Loreal Jiles, vice president of research and thought leadership at IMA, said: "Global confidence has edged up for the second consecutive quarter as cost concerns have eased and with worries about accessing finance and securing prompt payment having not gotten any worse."

## Unloading Vegetable

MULTAN: Laborers unloading sacks of vegetables from a delivery truck at a vegetable market.

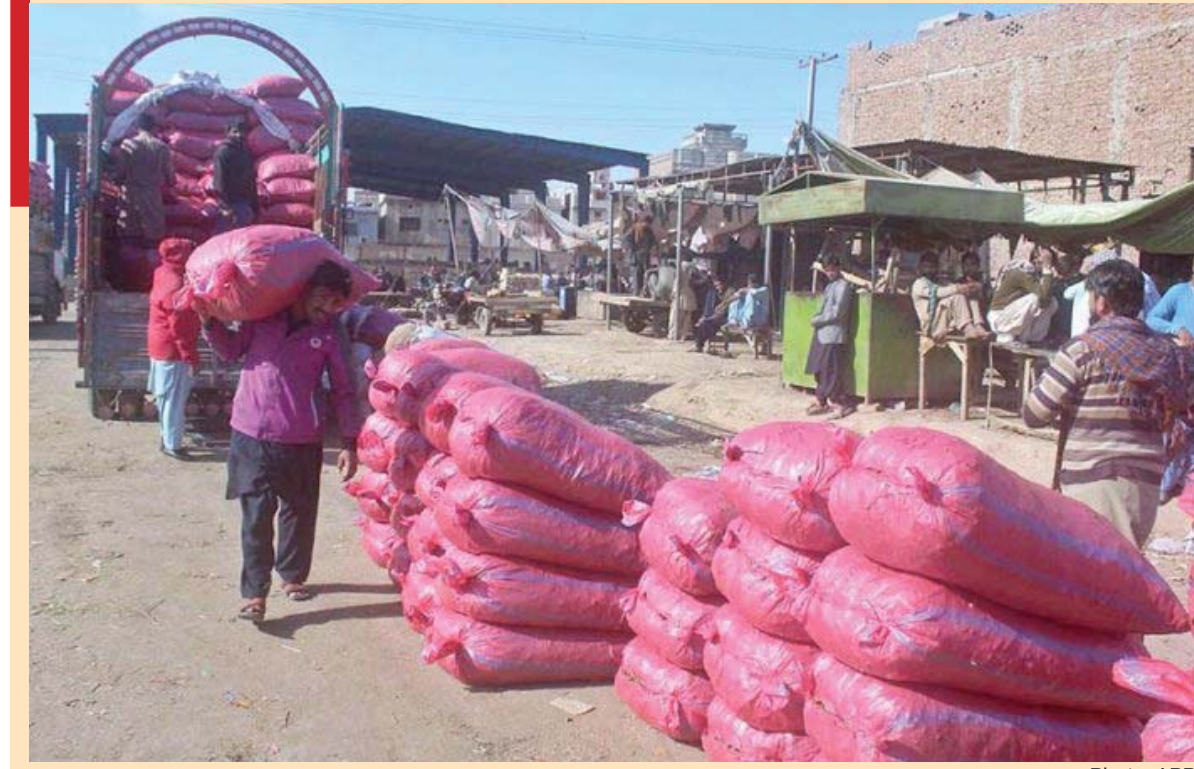


Photo: APP

## Travel Adventure Show 2023 in New York

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Preparations have been completed in Pakistan Pavilion for enthusiastic participation in the Travel Adventure Show 2023 in New York. In the travel show, 27 stalls have been set up including four Provinces Gilgit-Baltistan Azad Kashmir Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation.

For the first time, stalls have been set up by 20 private organizations related to the promotion of tourism in Pakistan. M D. Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation Aftab ur Rehman Rana Sadia Nauman Consulate General of Pakistan Trade and Investment Consul Talat Mehmood and the embassy staff assisted in the preparation of the Pakistan Pavilion.

Talking on the occasion the head of Pakistan High level delegation Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan for tourism ten Sports Avn Chaudhry said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, tourism exhibitions and conferences were being represented at the international level to introduce the tourist destinations of Pakistan to the world and to develop the tourism sector in Pakistan substantially.

He said full participation is being ensured in collaboration with the private sector and great results will be achieved. Tourists from all over the world will visit Pakistan. In the show, a large number of people will get information about the natural places of Pakistan, as a result, tourism in Pakistan will get a new dimension.

The Trade and Adventure Show New York is the preeminent travel market place in United States. This event provides a great opportunity to interact with the top international and domestic travel destinations, tour operators, cruise lines and travel providers. The Trade and Adventure Show New York attract 750 exhibitors from more than 175 countries making it the largest trade show in North America.

Participation of Pakistan in the New York Travel and Adventure Show 2023 can create a soft image of Pakistan internationally and bring in the foreign investment in the tourism and hospitality sector of the country. New York Travel and Adventure Show 2023 is scheduled to be held from January 28-29, 2023 and the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of the Pakistan will be held on January 28, 2023 at 11:00 am.

## Ports in Pakistan set for revolutionary smart, zero-carbon

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Tianjin Port Group and Huawei announced that the two companies will deepen cooperation to build a digital twin of the world's first smart, driverless, zero-carbon port terminal, making it more automated and intelligent. Yang Jiemin, Vice President of Tianjin Port Group, explained that this plan consists of three parts: Construction of new automated terminals, upgrading traditional terminals, and comprehensive digital transformation.

The Section C Terminal in the Beijing Port Area of the Port of Tianjin was the world's first smart, driverless zero-carbon port terminal. It entered large-scale commercial operations in October 2021 and has been operating stably ever since. Using 5G and L4 autonomous driving technologies at the terminal makes operations safer and more efficient. At the terminal, remotely controlled quay cranes lift loaded containers from cargo ships and put them on intelligent robots for horizontal transportation. Supported by the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, these robots are guided to automatic locking/unlocking stations to load/unload containers and then to the container yard along optimal driving routes that are calculated in real-time.



The entire process runs with clockwork precision.

Jiemin explained how the new solution, which combines 5G and L4 autonomous driving technologies, has been put into large-scale commercial application in a partially public scenario at the Section C Terminal for the first time. This has provided a new model for upgrading and transforming traditional container terminals worldwide. "These innovations being used at the Port of Tianjin are having a huge impact on the

port industry, creating new value for ports by improving operating environments, driving green and low-carbon development, and increasing operational efficiency. We believe that these practices will promote the intelligent development of the global port industry," said Yang.

Shunli Wang, Vice President of Huawei Middle East and Central Asia, said, "Ports in Pakistan are set for revolutionary, smart, zero-carbon fully automated digitalized operations that

leverage 5G, AI and cloud and other advanced digital capabilities. We are keen to utilize our expertise to enable ports in the region to be safer, more efficient, smart, green and more intelligent."

Yue Kun, CTO of Huawei's Smart Road, Waterway & Port BU, stated, "Ports are a vital link in the international supply chain, connecting trade and supply markets across the globe. Building more efficient smart ports is becoming an increasingly pressing requirement for the global supply chain. Section C Terminal of the Port of Tianjin has been operating stably for over one year, proving that 5G and L4 autonomous driving have already been successfully adopted by industries in China and are creating true commercial and social value." Kun believes this progress will benefit various industries, with next-generation digital technologies, such as 5G and AI, combined to solve industry problems, promote digital industry transformation and upgrading, and generate social value.

As a major modern port, the Port of Tianjin boasts 300,000-ton-class terminals with a channel depth of 22 m. It has 213 berths of various types. In 2022, its container throughput exceeded 21 million TEUs, ranking among the top 10 ports worldwide.

# Remington JPF win U-19 Junior Polo Championship

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Remington JPF won the U-19 Junior Polo Championship 2023 title for the third time in a row after thumping Team Raptors by 7-4 in the final played here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Saturday.

Rising polo player Basel Faisal Khokhar performed exceptionally well from the winning side and smashed in five fabulous goals while Ibrahim Sultan and Faris Nuruddin contributed with one goal each.

For Team Raptors, Ibrahim Ali hammered a hat-trick of goals while Mustafa Fahad converted one goal for Team Raptors.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Captain Remington JPF Basel Faisal Khokhar said: "My parents have given me the opportunity to play polo at every level due to which I have won this honor and the title. I am very delighted and excited with this title victory and I am eager to win more titles."

The U-19 Junior Polo Championship, which is a calendar event of the Pakistan Polo Association (PPA), was participated by three teams out of which Raptors and Remington JPF qualified for the finals.



President of Jinnah Polo Fields Lt Col Shoaib Aftab (R), Secretary JPF Major Ali Taimur (R), former polo legend Irfan Ali Hyder were the special guests and distributed prizes among the winners.

# 20-K Cup 2023: Ludhiana Gymkhana win coveted trophy

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Ludhiana Gymkhana Cricket Club won the 20-K Cup 2023 T20 Cricket Tournament title after defeating Cricket Center Cricket Club by 47 runs in the final played here at the Model Town Greens Ground on Saturday.

Dawood Barry, President Managing Committee of Cooperative Model Town Society, along with Nabeel Ahmad, sponsor and patron of the 20-K Cup 2023, attended the prize distribution ceremony as chief guests and distributed prizes among the winners and top performers in the presence of galaxy of former Test cricketers Misbah ul Haq, Abdul Razzaq, Aizaz Cheema, Muhammad Ilyas as well as Muhammad Mushtaq, Shoaib Dar, Wahab Dar, Bilal Javaid, Kashif Butt, Farhan Nisar and others.

Ludhiana Gymkhana were off to flying start as they stitched some good partnerships to pile up a decent total of 163 runs for the loss of 5 wickets in the allotted 20 overs. Asim Ali Nasir was the hero of the match as he played a sensational knock of 54 runs off 35 balls that included a good number of boundaries and sixes.

The other key contributors from the winning team, who batted with authority



and struck significant runs were Muhammad Waqas, hammered 48-ball 53 runs, and Fahad Munir, who slammed 27 runs.

Muhammad Ali bowled well for Cricket Center and bagged two wickets for 32 runs while Usama Mir got one wicket.

Cricket Center couldn't chase the required target because of some irrespon-

sible batting displays by their players, who also failed to create a big partnership, that might save their sinking ship. The losing side could score just 116 runs for the loss of 9 wickets in 20 overs.

Bilawal Iqbal was top scorer from Cricket Center as he scored 32 runs off 27 balls while Ali Zafar played 26 balls to gather

only 18 runs. No other batters could add significant runs in their team's total, which lost the final by 47 runs.

Kashif Saddique bowled well and clinched three wickets for 12 runs while Muhammad Junaid grabbed three wickets for 31 and Intasar Ali got one wicket.

Asim Ali Nasir emerged as player of the final.

Speaking on the occasion, Nabeel Ahmad said that the purpose of conducting this event, which was named after my father Col Fateh Sher Khan, was to provide the club cricketers a big platform to showcase their talent and earn big prize money.

"This event has not only encouraged the talented youth to exhibit their prowess while playing against first class and international players but also motivated the club organizers to hold such huge club cricket events in professional manner with the aim of taking club cricket to new heights.

"I will continue to support club cricket in Pakistan and besides holding this annual event, I will also try to provide some other big opportunities to them so that they may excel at higher level and earn good name and international laurels for Pakistan," said Nabeel, who himself is a first class cricketer.

## Turner's magic powers Scorchers into BBL Final

**A Sports -**

PERTH: Perth Scorchers' skipper Ashton Turner played a scintillating 87-run knock in the run chase to steer his side to thump Sydney Sixers and into the final of the ongoing Big Bash League (BBL).



Set to chase 152, Turner led from the front after his side's dismal start as he stitched an astounding partnership with opener Cameron Bancroft and led his team to triumph.

Earlier, the Scorchers were off to a shaky start as the home side were 22/3 in four overs with Stephen Eskinazi (4), Aaron Hardie (9) and Josh Inglis (0) failing to chip in.

Following the slump, Turner turned the game on its head with his belligerent hitting and put on an unbeaten partnership with Bancroft, who anchored the stand with a gritty half-century.

Turner top-scored for her side with 84 off just 47 deliveries, hitting nine boundaries and a six.

Bancroft, on the other hand, was also impressive with his 45-ball 54 that featured six boundaries.

Sean Abbott remained the only successful bowler for the Sixers with his brilliant figures of 3/25 as the rest went wicketless.

After opting to bat first, the Sixers could raise 151/8 in their set of overs despite a brilliant half-century by skipper Moises Henriques.

Henriques top-scored for his side with 58 off 43 balls and smashed three fours and as many sixes and also put on an incredible fourth-wicket partnership with Jordan Silk, who fell three short of his half-century.

Silk scored 47 off 34 deliveries and smashed four boundaries including a six.

Besides the duo, no Sixers batter could make significant contributions with only two of them amassing double figures.

David Payne led the bowling attack for the Scorchers with 3/33 while Jason Behrendorff followed with 2/17. Aaron Hardie and Andrew Tye struck a wicket each.

## Fast and furious South Africa triumph as England collapse



**News desk**

BLOEMFONTEIN: Fast bowlers Sisanda Magala, Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada earned South Africa a dramatic 27-run win in the first one-day international against England at the Mangaung Oval on Friday.

England seemed headed for a comfortable win as Jason Roy and Dawid Malan put on 146 for the first wicket inside the first 20 overs of England's reply to South Africa's 298 for seven.

Roy went on to score a thrilling 113 off 91 balls but the rest of the batting collapsed.

Magala made the crucial breakthrough when Malan mistimed an attempted pull against a short-pitched ball and was caught for 59.

He followed up by trapping debutant Harry Brook leg before wicket for nought.

Magala took three for 46 and was named man of the match, while Nortje (four for 62) and Rabada (two for 46) were irresistible as the match reached a climax.

Five of the wickets fell to short-pitched bowling. "The pitch was a bit two-paced and it made the bouncers effective," said Magala.

England captain Jos Buttler said he was disappointed that his side had not maintained the aggressive intent shown by Roy and Malan.

"South Africa came back really well but I thought we could have kept trying to take it on and put pressure on them," he said.

Although he finished on the losing side, Roy gave an emphatic answer to critics who have questioned his place in the team after a poor run of form since he helped England win the World Cup in 2019.

He had made only one century since the World Cup, against second-tier Netherlands, and his previous eight innings had yielded only 160 runs with a highest score of 43.

But Roy was in dominant form from the start of his innings, reaching his fifty off 45 balls and his century off 79 deliveries. He hit 11 fours and four sixes.

But the rest of the England bowlers made the batsmen work hard for their runs on a slow pitch.

South Africa's total was only 12 runs higher than the average first innings total on a ground known for high scoring.

Left-arm Sam Curran took three for 35 in nine overs, mixing up his pace and making good use of the bounce -- a formula which later worked well for the South Africans.

The three-match series is part of the World Cup Super League and the win was a boost for South Africa, who have yet to earn automatic qualification for the World Cup in India later this year.

Bavuma said South Africa had gone into the series determined to play good cricket, whether or not they qualified for the World Cup.

"We're happy with the way we went about our business but obviously we need the points," he said.

## Inter Departmental Basketball C'ship

ISLAMABAD:- Players are in action during Basketball match between Pakistan Air Force and Police during Inter Departmental National Basketball Championship 2023 at Pakistan Sports Complex I in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Pakistan women's team gears up for third Australia T20I

**Sports Desk**

CANBERRA: Pakistan women's cricket team held a full-strength training session on Saturday at the Manuka Oval before the final T20I of the three-match series against Australia, scheduled for January 29.

All the players of Pakistan's T20I squad participated in the final training session held here in a bid to finish a disappointing tour of Australia on a winning note.

Pakistan players engaged in rigorous batting, fielding and bowling drills throughout the day as they gear up for the final encounter and deny Australia a chance to clean sweep the series.

It is pertinent to mention that Australia have an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series after they beat Pakistan in the prior two fixtures.

The Green Shirts also had a flop show in the recently-concluded ODI series where Bismah Maroof's side endured a series sweep by the dominant Aussies. Furthermore, after concluding a disappointing Australia Tour, Pakistan women's team will depart for South Africa to partake in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to take place from February 10 to 26.

# Sixteen years old Saad Habib sparkles in Nick Faldo Golf Trials at Rumanza Golf Course

**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Golf Federation initiated golf trials move into the final phase at the Rumanza Golf Course. After the completion of the second round of the three rounds golf trials for selection as members of the Pakistan contingent due to participate in the Nick Faldo Golf Series in Viet Nam, the front runner turns out to be sixteen years old Saad Habib Malik of Rumanza Golf

Club, DHA, Multan. In the course of the second round 18 holes stroke play contest, Saad Habib was at his brilliant best and surfaces in total command of the event with a score of gross 67, and an aggregate of 139, five under par for two rounds. Over the past few months Saad Habib has been toning up his golf playing skills and further augmenting his fitness by spending time on the driving range, the gymnasium and all this under the watchful eyes of his mentor Col

Habib. The effort has yielded bounteous results as he finds himself appearing as the best player in these trials excelling over champions in the age category 18-21 who are his seniors, yet find a competing participant in age bracket 16-18 capturing the top position on the leaderboard. "I was so pleased with my shot making yesterday," said Saad Habib and "I certainly look forward to excelling in these trials to an extent that I look better than all fellow competitors".

Salman Abbasi the Tournament Director stated that the governing body of golf, Pakistan Golf Federation has divided these trials into three age groups for boys and one each will be selected in the age group under 21, one in age group under 18 and one in age bracket under 16. As for the girls there are two age groups and the topper in each group will be selected to represent the country in Nick Faldo Series Championship in Viet Nam.

As for the competition in age bracket under 21 years for Boys, the leader in this group is Syed Yashal Shah of Karachi Golf Club at the end of the second round. He compiled an aggregate score of 142 for two rounds and is ahead of his nearest competitor Omar Khalid of Karachi by eight strokes. Omar Khalid is placed at an aggregate of 150 gross. Following him is Damil Atullah of Lahore Garrison at 151.

Saad Habib is the foremost one in under 16 years category also. His round on the second day was simply champion like. With a round of 67, yesterday and that added to his 72 of the first day, gives him an aggregate score of 139. His challengers are placed too far behind and include M. Iriza Hussain at a score of 151, and Laraib Rehman at 164.

Abdullah Ansari, both bracketed at a score of 157.

The positions in Girls category under 21 years are Parkha Ijaz (Defence Raya) 72+80=150 and Hanna Amjad (PAF, Skyview) 76+74=150. Race for final selection in this segment will be frightfully sharp.

In age category under 16 years Bushra Fatima of Lahore Garrison accumulated a score of 158 (80+78) and she is three strokes ahead of Amina Tiwana (Royal Palm).