



President orders FBR to refund deducted tax to British era library in Multan

President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) to issue tax exemption certificate for the tax year 2021 to a British era library in Multan, in addition to returning the deducted tax of Rs. 198,000 to meet its essential expenses. (Report on Page 8)



Strict financial discipline required for achieving economic stability: Ishaq Dar

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that strict financial discipline was needed to achieve economic stability, without which the economy would not grow. While addressing the two-day "Bacha Khan, Wali Khan and 21st Century" Conference in Islamabad, he said the recent economic challenges and inflation were due to the poor financial discipline of the former govt. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jacked up the petrol prices

ISLAMABAD: New rate list of fuel prices displayed after increase in petroleum prices.



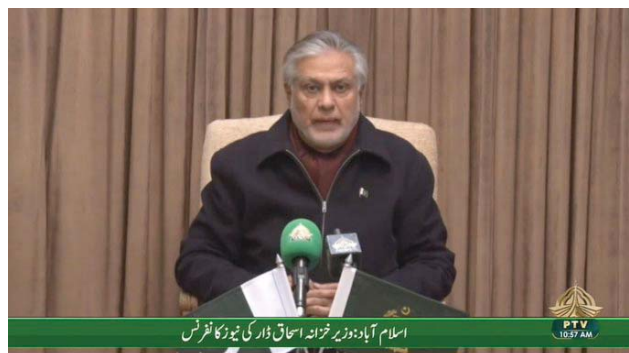
Photo: APP

Ishaq Dar announces Rs35 per litre increase in petrol, diesel prices

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday announced an increase of up to Rs35 in petroleum prices with an immediate effect as Pakistan is scrambling to meet the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for revival of much-needed loan programme stalled since September last.

Since Saturday night, people have been thronging to the petrol pumps for panic buying after reports surfaced about government's plan to hike in petroleum prices.



The prices of the petrol and diesel had been jacked up by Rs35 per litre each, taking the new prices to Rs249.82 and Rs262.80 respectively, he said. The price of kerosene oil surged to Rs189.93 per litre after an increase of Rs18 while the

light speed diesel also witnessed as much increase with new price reaching to Rs187 per litre.

Saying the government did not increase the petroleum prices in last four months, Mr Dar said the latest increase had been made in line with the 11 per cent hike in oil prices in the international market. He said the new petroleum prices will come into effect immediately on Sunday.

Earlier this week, the finance minister assured the IMF in virtual dialogues that the government will fulfill all conditions including increase in gas prices and petroleum development levy

will be fulfilled.

The IMF has set preconditions including increasing the PDL on petroleum products, ending the electricity subsidy and fixing the exchange rate of dollar according to the market, whereas the inter-bank and open market differences should be eliminated.

The government has already allowed free floating of the exchange rate, causing historic devaluation of the rupee against dollar that would spark another wave of inflation in the country.

This is the internationally oil price chart available on <https://www.macrotrends.net>

At least 40 die in Lasbela Bus accident



Bureau Report

KARACHI: At least 40 people died and four others were wounded in an accident after a passenger plunged into a ravine and caught fire near the Chinkli stop in the Bela area of the Lasbela district on Sunday. According to a private media report, the accident took place in the wee hours of Sunday as the bus was en route to Karachi from Quetta.

Bela Assistant Commissioner Hamza Anjum Nadeem said there were 48 passengers on board the ill-fated bus and the said number of bodies and injured passengers have been

taken out, so far.

He said that the rescue operation is underway and the deceased and injured had been shifted to the Civil Hospital, Lasbela.

Meanwhile, the police said that the accident happened due to overspeeding as the bus went out of the driver's control and was careened into the ravine.

They said that teams of the fire brigade, rescue services, and law enforcement agencies' personnel arrived at the site of the accident and launched a rescue operation. Efforts to completely douse the blaze were underway, they added.

President, PM, FM express deep grief over loss of lives in Lasbela bus mishap

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed their deep grief and sorrow over loss of lives in a tragic bus accident in Lasbela, Balochistan.

The president and the prime minister expressed their condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls. President Secretariat and PM Office Media Wings said in separate press releases.

They also prayed for the early recovery of the injured people. The president stressed upon taking of practical steps to avert the occurrence of such like incidents in the future.

The prime minister directed for provision of all available medical facilities to the injured ones.

Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also expressed his heartfelt grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a tragic accident in Lasbela area of Balochistan.

Iran embassy extends deepest condolences on bus accident

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamabad extends deepest condolences and sympathy

due to the bus accident claiming tens of dear Pakistani loved one's life and some people injured. It wishes full health for the wounded. May God bless the soul of the deceased.

Khawaja Asif says Imran Khan may be arrested 'for causing unrest'

Correspondent

SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has warned that former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan can get away with 'proven charges' of Toshakhana and foreign funding?

"Imran Khan can also be arrested due to the violation of the law," said Khawaja Asif. He also criticised the PTI chief's 'failed strategies', saying that Imran Khan first accused foreign powers of ousting him, but now he held Mohsin Naqvi accountable for the ouster.

Khawaja Asif maintained that the PPP and PML-N leaders were thrown into jail in Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, opposing the 'political victimization' of political opponents.

Khawaja added that the PTI leaders had threatened courts and institutions for 'taking relevant against the party leadership'. He advised the PTI leaders to 'deal politically and no action will be taken against anyone'.

In response to a question regarding PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest, the defence minister said if PDM leaders can be arrested in 'bogus cases', then how Imran Khan can get away with 'proven charges' of Toshakhana and foreign funding?

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Khawaja added that the PTI leaders had threatened courts and institutions for 'taking relevant against the party leadership'. He advised the PTI leaders to 'deal politically and no action will be taken against anyone'.

Islamabad police brings Fawad Chaudhry to Lahore for photogrammetry test

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Islamabad police brought Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) stalwart Fawad Chaudhry to Lahore for conducting the photogrammetry test. The Islamabad police sent Mr Chaudhry to Lahore specifically for the test after the court ordered a medical checkup due to the threat of violence. The Islamabad police's move



surprised Mr Chaudhry's brother Faraz Chaudhry, who remarked, "Which test is conducted on a holiday?"

Transport fares spike deals a blow to the masses

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The All Pakistan Public Transport Owners Federation (APPTOF) on Sunday announced 10 per cent increase in the inetrity fares following a massive hike in the petroleum prices.

According to the federation's spokesman, the participants of the meeting opined that considerable increase in diesel prices would destroy the transport system across the country.

Know more: Ishaq Dar announces Rs35 per litre increase in petrol, diesel prices

The spokesman said the fare for Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Multan from Lahore had been increased by Rs100; Lahore to Gujranwala Rs50, Lahore to Sadiqabad Rs200; and the fare for Lahore to Karachi had been increased by Rs600.

Ahsan Iqbal holds Imran Khan responsible for petrol price hike

Correspondent

NAROWAL: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has held former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan responsible for the recent hike in fuel prices and ongoing inflation.

"The nation is witnessing inflation and economic crisis due to imprudent policies of the previous Imran Khan-led government," the planning minister

said while addressing PML-N's workers convention in Narowal.

Ahsan Iqbal lambasted the former premier for signing an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on "difficult terms and conditions".

Praising PML-N's previous tenure, the minister said that his party put the country on right track during its previous tenure under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, claiming that the country was rapidly progressing in 2018.

Pak-UAE Relations

ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way in front of portraits of UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif along Constitution avenue, in Federal Capital. ONLINE PHOTO



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

President orders FBR to refund deducted tax to British era library in Multan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) to issue tax exemption certificate for the tax year 2021 to a British era library in Multan, in addition to returning the deducted tax of Rs. 198,000 to meet its essential expenses.

While rejecting FBR's representation against the decision of FTO, the President noted that it was manifestly a hardship case, that Public Library and City Reading Room, Multan (the complainant) was registered as a Non-Profit Organization, and the late filing of returns withholding statement had not caused any loss to the

national exchequer, therefore, FBR should take a sympathetic and considerate view of the matter. FBR had filed a representation with the President directing it to provide relief to the public library.

In his decision, the President observed that the complainant was providing readership facility to the citizens of the area at nominal cost of Rs. 20 as membership fee per month. The library had approximately 400 members at present, and that a small number of staff was running the library and none of them drew taxable salary. He further noted that the running cost of the library was met through donations and the profit on fixed deposit of its



endowment.

The President noted that the tax Exemption Certificate could not be issued to the complainant due to non-filing of return for the Tax Year 2020-21 and the delay in issuance was attributed to non-filing of the

return. He further observed that consequent to non-availability of the exemption certificate, tax amounting to Rs. 0.198 million was deducted on the deposits being maintained with the bank which was a primary source of its survival, and due

to non-issuance of exemption certificate, even its four employees had been deprived of their small salaries i.e., less than Rs.20,000 for each.

The President observed that since the FBR had already issued an exemption certificate for the later six months of the tax year in question, thus, the Department was required to issue exemption certificate for the earlier six months of the financial and also in future take a sympathetic and considerate view of the matter. In such circumstances of the case, the FBR may issue exemption certificate to the Library for the remaining period and refund its deducted amount enabling it to meet its most essential expenses, held the President.

Strict financial discipline required for achieving economic stability: Ishaq Dar

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that strict financial discipline was needed to achieve economic stability in Pakistan, without which the economy would not grow.

While addressing the two-day "Bacha Khan, Wali Khan and 21st Century" Conference in Islamabad, he said the recent economic challenges and inflation were due to the poor financial discipline of the former government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Ishaq Dar said the solution



to the current challenges of the country lies in the promotion of the constitution, democracy, education, non-violence, and dialogue, which was the philosophy of legendary leader, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Bacha Khan.

He said that Bacha Khan fought for non-violence and democracy all his life and his struggle continues even today.

He said that big decisions are needed to get the country out of the crises and to bring economic stability to the country.

The minister said: "We fought the war of terrorism with our own resources and provided our abundant resources for it and will continue to do so in the future. The principle and ideology of our politics are to serve the people and our government is committed to it."

Ishaq Dar said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government had left the gross domestic production (GDP) growth at above 6 percent in 2018. "We left the GDP at \$356.8 billion with an increase of \$122 billion. During our previous government, international rating agencies were predicting Pakistan to join the

G20 by 2030," he added.

The minister said, "We had a choice to save the country or our politics, but we sacrificed politics for the sake of the country."

He said the per capita income was \$1,798 during the PML-N previous government, which went to \$1,768 in the PTI government.

He said the inflation rate was 8.6 percent in the former PML-N government, which came to "double digits during the PTI era. Along with this, he added, food inflation was just two percent during the last PML-N regime, which reached 12 percent during the PTI's tenure.

IRSA releases 44,500 cusecs water

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 44,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1494.32 feet and was 96.32 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow as 25,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1128.65 feet, which was 78.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 7,200 cusecs and 100 cusecs respectively.

Electricity supply to Upper Chitral from Feb 1st: Khurram Dastgir

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Energy and Power Khurram Dastgir on Sunday said, on the directives and special interest of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the electricity supply to Upper Chitral would be started from February 1st.

Addressing a press conference here at the Governor House, he said that on the directives of Prime Minister, he especially came to Peshawar to meet a delegation of Upper Chitral and to hear their problems.

He said that like Lower Chitral, the electricity to Upper Chitral would be ensured on a priority basis, adding that an agreement to the elders of

Upper Chitral has been signed at the Governor House in which the Governor has been included as guarantor.

He said the elders of Upper Chitral informed the Prime Minister about their issues and problems related to the inadequate supply of electricity.

The minister said that a report for payment of outstanding dues would be prepared within a month and an increase in electricity bills for the people of Upper Chitral would be decided after the supply of electricity to the area.

He further said that the federal government would fulfill its promise of electricity supply to Upper Chitral and assured that if the bills are paid regularly the power supply

would further be improved.

Governor Ghulam Ali expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for paying attention to the deprivations of Chitral and said that Chitral is a large area of the province where the people of Upper Chitral were living a life in the dark for the last 5 years.

He also thanked the Federal Ministry of Energy, the Provincial Energy Department, and senior officials for resolving the issue of power supply to Upper Chitral.

On the occasion, Khurram Dastgir thanked Governor Ghulam Ali for hosting the event and said that Ghulam Ali was playing an active role in solving the problems of the people of KP.

Bugti grieved over loss of lives in Lasbela road accident

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti on Sunday expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in the tragic bus accident in the Lasbela district of Balochistan.

In a condolence message, he sympathized with members of bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

MQM expresses concern over hike in petrol prices

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) on Sunday expressed concern over the hike in petroleum prices by the federal government.

In a statement, the political party stated that the increase in the prices of petroleum products will further increase inflation, impacting the already inflation-hit people of Pakistan.

The MQM-P regretted that putting

the entire burden on the citizens to save country from an economic crisis was 'unfair', advising the coalition government to implement an agricultural tax instead to take additional tax from working-class people.

MQM-P accused the government of not imposing tax on the agricultural sector "due to fear of landlords which is tantamount to enmity with the people of Pakistan". The political party also demanded to withdraw the notification of increased petroleum prices.

Powerful earthquake hits Islamabad, parts of Punjab

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake tremors of 6.3 intensity jolted Islamabad and other parts of Punjab on Sunday.

According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC), the quake's epicentre was near Tajikistan. The earthquake's depth was 150km, and its magnitude on the Richter scale was 6.3.

The earthquake jolts were also felt in Rawalpindi, Murree, and other parts of Punjab and Khyber Pakh-

tunkhwa. There were no reports of any damage from the earthquake, according to initial reports.

Felling the tremors, people came out of their houses while reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba. It was reported that several neighboring countries including Iran, India, and other regions also witnessed severe tremors.

Earlier on January 5, a 5.8 magnitude earthquake jolted several cities of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), including Islamabad and Lahore.

Govt announces holiday in Islamabad on Jan 30 upon UAE president's arrival

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government announced holiday in the capital city on Jan 30 ahead of the visit of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Shaikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to the city.

All schools, colleges, and public offices except CDA, SNGPL, IESCO,

hospitals, district administration, and metropolitan corporation will take the day off. His visit to the capital city will underscore important meetings.

The president has been on a five-day private visit to Pakistan since Jan 25. Prime Minister Shehbaz Shaif had, earlier, welcomed him on his arrival to Rahim Yar Khan airport.

Nation stands with Pak Army in war against terror: Samina

Spokesman Report

QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Sunday expressed deep sorrow and anger over the martyrdom of Levies soldier Khalid Ahmed, who was martyred while performing his duties at Levies check post in Kachchi area of Bolan.

She expressed her condolences and sympathy with the bereaved family of the martyred official and said that the sacrifices of the martyrs for the country would not go in vain and the terrorists would be wiped out from

the country very soon. The enemies are carrying out cowardly attacks on innocent citizens and security forces all over the country, she said and added that Balochistan and KPK were especially on the target of the terrorists. She said that we strongly condemned these terrorist activities in the country and wanted to persuade the enemy. The nation and the brave soldiers of the security forces are committed to such a cowardly attack against terrorism, she said adding that such cowardly attacks would be foiled in future.

J. Salik arrives in Washington to launch worldwide interfaith campaign

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister for Population Welfare and Convener World Minorities Alliance (WMA), Julius Salik has arrived in Washington D.C. to launch a worldwide interfaith campaign through the exhibition of portraits of international celebrities hailing from various faiths and segments of the society.

The former Federal Minister and veteran human rights defender through the platform of WMA has been organising different initiatives to promote peace, tolerance and coexistence among communities of different faiths and religions at the international level.

He had been elected as Councilor twice from Lahore, remained three times member of the Parliament on reserved Christian Seat with a constituency spanning over 33,000 polling stations. Salik was detained seven times during the Martial Law regime of General Zia ul Haq. He is the only Pakistani nominated for Noble Peace Prize for his services to promote and protect human rights.

Talking to media in a telephonic conversation from Washington D.C., J. Salik said the portraits made by his brother included that of the Head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, first U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr, and Imam-e-Kaba Abdul Rahman Ibn Abdul Aziz al-Sudais.

NA Speaker, Deputy Speaker express deep sorrow over coach accidents in Lasbela, Tanda Dam Lake

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durran expressed their deep sorrow and grief on the loss of precious humans' lives due to coach accidents that occurred in Lasbela Quetta Balochistan and Tanda Dam Lake Kohat KPK.

In their separate messages, NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker have expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious humans' lives due to unfortunate accidents that to the passengers' coach in Lasbela and to the tourist children who were visiting to Tanda Lake in Kohat KPK.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker expressed their heartfelt sympathy with the affected families and termed the loss of precious humans' lives especially the loss of innocent children lives as an irreparable loss to the affected families which cannot be compensated. They said that they share the deep sorrow and grief of the bereaved families.

The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker prayed to Allah Almighty for granting to the souls of deceased the highest places in Jinnat and also grant solace to the bereaved families.

Bizenjo directs for investigation into tragic Bela bus accident

Spokesman Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo asked for the investigation report on tragic accident of a passenger coach in Bela.

Quddus Bizenjo directed the Commissioner Kalat to investigate the causes of the accident and submit a report within 24 hours.



He said that the increase in traf-

fic accidents and the loss of precious lives on Quetta-Karachi highway was very alarming.

He said that Transport Department, Commissioner Kalat, Regional Transport Authority and Highway Police should ensure measures to prevent traffic accidents.

"Strict action should be taken against drivers for over speeding of passenger coaches and viola-

tion of traffic rules on national highways.

Accidents can be controlled by ensuring effective enforcement of traffic rules on national highways, punishing and penalizing speeding drivers and transport companies," he added.

He said that passengers cannot be left at the mercy of transporters and irresponsible drivers.

Promoting tourism

ISLAMABAD: A view of double-decker tour bus service which start from Rawalpindi towards Islamabad for people to visit Faisal Mosque, Daman-e-Koh, Saidpur Village, Parliament House, the Supreme Court, Lok Virsa and the National Museum and other tourist places of Federal Capital.



Photo: APP

PM AJK administers oath to newly elected office bearers of KJF

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has announced a grant of 5 million rupees and Umrah tickets for ten members of Kashmir Journalists Forum (KJF).

The announcement in this regard was made by the PM while addressing a swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the KJF at Kashmir House late night on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister while appreciating the media persons significant contribution to the society said that the journalists were performing their professional responsibilities well despite adverse conditions. "I am well aware of the problems being faced by the journalist", the PM said adding that the KJF played crucial role in highlighting the issues of vital national interest including the Kashmir Freedom Movement.

He said that journalists have an important role in highlighting public issues.

The PM on the occasion announced that 10 members of the Kashmir Jour-

nalist Forum would be given Umrah tickets and five million rupees for the forum. He said that a housing scheme would be made for the journalists.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir also announced a grant of rupees 1 million to the family of deceased journalist Sardar Dilpazeer Abbasi and rupees three lakh to the families of former members of the Kashmir Journalist Forum, Sardar Shafiq Rafiq Siddiqui, Sheikh Latif.

Referring to his decision of joining politics the Prime Minister said that the only purpose of entering the politics was to change the destiny of the state.

Referring to key decision taken by him as prime Minister, the PM said that despite facing opposition, the PTI government took the historic initiative that made it possible to hold local bodies elections in the region.

He said that in a short period of time the incumbent government took important steps for the welfare and development of the people of the state including increase in the subsistence allowance of post 90 refugees, dowry and Zakat funds given meant for the poor and deserving citizens



of the state.

He said that the Mirpur Dry Port project has also been reactivated, which would improve our economy.

The PM said that issuance of first ever private airline in Azad Kashmir would further boost the economy and tourism in the state.

"Reforms are underway to improve functioning of the government institutions", he said adding that the government was determined to make the state a welfare state.

He said that journalists should play their positive role in highlighting the welfare and development initiatives of the government.

"Journalists have every right to criticize, but the criticism must be constructive".

On this occasion, the newly elected president of Kashmir Journalist Forum, Khawar Nawaz Raja thanked the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir for attending the ceremony.

The newly elected President paid great tribute to the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir for the successful conduct of local body elections, the establishment of Rahmatul Ulalamin Authority, the permanency of more than 2600 ad hoc employees and other religious and welfare initiatives.

Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir administered oath to the newly elected members of Kashmir Journalists Forum.

Parliamentary Secretary Javed Butt, Secretary Information Ansar Yaqoob, Media Advisor Sardar Zahid Tabsum, President Kashmir Journalists Forum Khawar Nawaz Raja, Former President of Forum Zahid Abbasi, and others were present on the occasion.

Earlier, on his arrival the Prime Minister was warmly welcomed by Rawalpindi and Islamabad based Kashmiri Journalists.

PML-N ready for election; Nawaz Sharif to return soon: Muqam



Correspondent

SWAT: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture, Engineer Amir Muqam here on Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) workers were ready for elections every time and hinted that Nawaz Sharif would soon return to Pakistan.

Muqam was addressing the party workers at Sangota in Swat. He said the objective of PML-N politics is to provide uniform services to the masses.

Work on gas projects worth billions of rupees were launched, and he was pleased to see work on Alam Ganj and Dakork bridges after four years.

Muqam said he was well aware of the price hike, adding PML-N has joined a coalition government to uplift the country.

Divisional Commissioner to be honored at farewell ceremony

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The farewell ceremony was organized by the Deputy Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh in the honor of Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Shahid Niaz who was transferred from Faisalabad, in which the Deputy Commissioner presented a commemorative shield to the transferred Commissioner. Divisional, District and Police Officers also participated.

The transferred Commissioner has said that during his short-term posting, he performed his duties with a missionary spirit to provide relief to the citizens across the division and Alhamdulillah, he is taking good memories from Faisalabad.

He said that transfer and posting are part of the government job, but considering the posting in Faisalabad as the capital of the employee's life and worked day and night to make the division ideal which was rewarded in the form of recognition and love from the citizens.

He said that there was a constant effort to improve the quality of the performance of the Commissioner's Office.

In this regard, the officers and staff played an important role as a team. He asked the district officers to always prioritize transparency in the performance of official duties. He thanked the district officers including the Deputy Commissioner for organizing a farewell ceremony in his honor.

The Deputy Commissioner bid farewell to the Divisional Commissioner and said that his tenure was exemplary and memorable. He appreciated the administrative skills of the transferred Commissioner and wished him all the best for the future.

He said that Mohammad Shahid Niaz increased the good name of the division and district at the provincial level by carrying out even the most difficult assignments with patience and responsibility. Other officers also called Mohammad Shahid Niaz the best officer.

Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum is founder of Pakistan: Faqir Bukhari



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari, head of Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum, said in a press conference with party officials at the National Press Club that our party is Pakistan's founder and creator party. Muslim League Qayyum is dynamic and active from Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar. We can confidently say that as this party had a successful past, so will its future be bright. In light of the thoughts of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, this party is being organized at the level of the Union Council by playing its role for the survival, security, prosperity, and independence of this country.

Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari said that Muslim League Qayyum is the only party that played a historic role in making Pakistan and now it will play an important role in bringing Pakistan out of economic, political, and social crises. The head of the Muslim League Qayyum said that we are well aware of the problems of Pakistan living abroad and it is our political, moral, and national responsibility to fight for them, that's why we are organizing Muslim League Qayyum overseas.

President Muslim League Qayyum demanded that the completion of the CPEC project should be possible by 2030 so that the economic conditions of the country can be stabilized as soon as possible. Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari said that any kind of internal and external pressure in the completion of the CPEC project is intolerable. From Khunjerab to Gwadar, the people have the right

to be provided with suitable quality employment and benefit from this mega project.

Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum Central Information Secretary Colonel (ret'd) Asad Mehmood said that the development of Balochistan is related to the peace of Gwadar, we want to live in peace with neighboring countries and want good relations, but India should know that until he ends his usurpation of Kashmir, no negotiations are possible. Let India know that this is a party following the ideology of Khan Qayyum Khan, and no interference will be tolerated in Balochistan. It's 2023, not 1948. Now if an army moves to Kashmir, it will not be 4 thousand but 4 crore people. He said that basic facilities and economic development are the right of the people of Balochistan, but blocking and suspending the CPEC routes under the guise of protest is anti-Balochistan rather anti-national. Asad Mahmood said in clear words that restoring and completing CPEC is the door to the prosperity of Balochistan and Gwadar. Targeting CPEC in the guise of public protest is like playing into the hands of the enemies of the country.

Muslim League Qayyum Central Deputy Information Secretary Faisal Bhatti, Youth Wing, and Social Media Organizer Syed Saqlain Bukhari, Muslim League Qayyum Provincial President from Gilgit-Baltistan Nawab Alam Usmani, President Kohistan Badar Nawaz and Provincial Vice President Ahmed Jameer also attended the press conference.

Sports Tourism Conference concludes

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: 2nd Winter Sports Tourism Conference concludes here at Islamabad. The stakeholders which includes Federal/Provincial/Regional Governments and actors from sports tourism industry attended this Conference online and with physical presence as well.

The purpose of this Conference was to highlight the importance of winter sports tourism among the masses and to allure service providers to improve the service quality for such tourists. Mr. Abu Zafar Sadiq, President Alpine Club of Pakistan introduced the concept of sports tourism. He after taken into account brief historical development reflecting the introduction of National Snow Hikes a decade ago by Alpine Club of Pakistan appreciated the role of Winter Sports Federation. He stressed the need to build synergies among the stakeholders and strategies for long term sustainability and attract for foreign tourists in winter. The representatives of PTDC Mr. Mukhtar Rana,



PSB Mr. Shahid Islam and Aqib Awan AJK Sports Departments highlighted their role for promotion and development of winter sports tourism in the country. Dr. Prof. Salahuddin from MY University stressing the need of engaging youth in healthy activities like Winter Sports Tourism argued that it is the only source to challenge the potential of youth towards healthy society and keep them away from drugs, intol-

erance, gadgets etc. AVM R Ijaz Malik stressed the need to be more systematic and quality conscious while developing winter tourism products. He also invited attention of the participants towards environment care of the winter tourism areas. The national and international athletes from Alpine Club of Pakistan, winter Sports Federation, Bikers Association also expressed their concern about lack of support for their develop-

ment by the Government departments. These included M. Javed Ali, Kasrat Rai, International Walker/Hiker, Saqib Rehman, Naila Kiyani, Fazal Wadood, Mian Salim Shah, Nabila etc.

E-Expo was also held at the end wherein pictures, clips, V-logs, documentaries and advertisement from tourism industry were screened which were very much appreciated by the participants.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5: 41 am
Zohr	12: 21 pm
Asr	3: 57 pm
Maghrib	5: 35 pm
Isha	7: 01 pm

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Motorway Police	9270601-20

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Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

Gas, electricity rates will soar off after POL prices hike, Farrukh Habib cautions citizens

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Farrukh Habib cautioned on Sunday there would be increase in the prices of electricity and gas amid the ever-increasing hike in petrol prices.

He said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz asked the nation to trust the performance of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar despite his failures in the economic front.

He said Ms Nawaz had no concern over the unprecedented rise in petroleum prices notwithstanding the fact that she used to bash the PTI government despite minimum increase in POL rates.

Minister Iqbal tasks Pakistan's engineering universities to reform curriculum for fourth industrial revolution

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal has urged the Vice Chancellors (VCs) of the Pakistan's engineering universities to reform their curriculum keeping in view the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution and the market demands of the country.

The Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting with Vice Chancellors of the country's engineering universities, representatives of the engineering industry, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and the Institution of Engineers Pakistan (IEP), according to a press release issued here on Sunday.

The meeting aimed at formulating a comprehensive plan of action to review the curriculum of engineering universities and modernizing teaching methodology bringing our engineering education on path with the global competition, and to establish the link-

ages between industry and university.

"Mere degree based education doesn't mean anything but it's the skill set and the skill based education, our universities impart to the students. Today's world values skilled human resources than mere armchair scientists or degree holders, hence, it's imperative especially for the engineering universities to equip students with the modern day technology and accustom them with the technical knowledge and skills", maintained the Planning Minister.

We need to break "ego-systems" and instead create "eco-systems" of innovation in our universities, remarked the Minister. It was decided that a task Force comprising of a representation of the VCs of the engineering universities, officials from the HEC, PEC, IEP and the engineering industry. The Task Force after its thorough review and expert level extensive deliberations, would give its recommendation and overall implementation strategy to modernize the engineering education



in Pakistan.

It is noted that since the government came into power in April last year, the Planning Minister has been conducting such reviews and reassuring his resolve to keep higher education as one of the

top priorities.

The federal government since it assumed last year had been funding the HEC and the universities for the improvement of higher education programs and upgrading the educa-

tion and the infrastructure of the public sector universities despite acute financial crunch. In this regard, the Ministry has recently approved a project worth Rs 650 billion to equip laboratories of engineering universities with state-of-the-art apparatus as well to improvise.

During a long session with the stakeholders, the Minister said that in future funding of engineering universities would be done on the basis of their research quality and their overall performance.

While highlighting the significance of laboratories in varsities, the Minister added, "survival of the nations will depend on their capacity in classrooms and laboratories, hence, the Vice Chancellors have to work hard to make their universities a global brand for the education of and academics in engineering. The minister reiterated to continue provision of all necessary resources to the higher education especially in the field of engineering and technology despite all challenges.

Marathon

ISLAMABAD: People are taking part in Marathon race for polio-free Pakistan, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Hiba Fawad urges CJP to take notice of 'injustice' with Fawad Chaudhry

News Desk

LAHORE: Hiba Fawad, wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry, has urged Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial to take notice of 'injustice' with his husband, ARY News reported.

Talking to media along with other PTI leaders in Lahore, Hiba Fawad criticised how Fawad Chaudhry was produced before court handcuffed and head covered 'like a terrorist' saying that the authorities were not allowing daughters to meet their fathers.

She also thanked PTI Chairman Imran for inviting her to today's meeting and listening to her concerns. "I have informed Imran Khan about the injustice being done with Fawad Chaudhry," she added,

It is pertinent to mention here that 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.

Govt will try to keep poor people away from effects of IMF agreement: Shazia Marri

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri on Sunday said that the federal government will try its best to not have an effect of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement on the poor people of the country as no one is in favour of taking loans.

She said that the priorities of the country would be on top in talks with the IMF. Talking to media persons after a ceremony of transgender's inclusion in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) at the Arts Council of Pakistan- Karachi, she said that Prime Minister Mohammed Shahbaz Sharif had constituted an austerity committee.

Shazia Marri said that they were bearing the brunt of the previous government's wrong decisions.

Condemning allegations of the PTI Chief Imran Khan against former President Asif Ali Zardari, she said that Imran Khan always issued irresponsible statements.



She said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would sue Imran Khan. The Federal Minister said that the prisons were broken in PTI-led government.

She said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his family were under threat. She alleged that Imran Khan was facilitator of terrorists.

Earlier, addressing the ceremony, Shazia Marri said that transgenders were being formally included in BISP. She said that the transgenders belonged to a poor segment of society.

They were facing economic and societal challenges in the country, she said adding that they were ignored in soci-

ety and moreover, they were separated from their families.

She said that transgenders avoid to come forward before the data managers due to society's behaviour towards them.

The Federal Minister said that as per available data 50,000 transgender were registered with an organization.

She said that their registration with NADRA was mandatory for availing BISP financial support. Shazia said that the transgenders should register themselves with NADRA and later, visit a BISP centre for further process to get Rs7000 financial assistance quarterly.

She said that initially three transgender had got registered themselves with BISP.

She said that in all 9 lac families were being financially supported by BISP.

The spirit of the programme was to support the poor people of society, she added.

Later, she handed over Rs7000 financial assistance among three registered transgender.

Siraj sees dominance of Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) emir Sirajul Haq claimed on Sunday even after 75 years, the same people who played the roles of Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq were still imposing themselves on the country.

Mr Haq lashed out at the government during a public speech, saying, "There was no smile on the masses due to the rulers' policies."

Fearing now the price of flour will be increased after the petroleum (POL) prices, Mr Haq took a jibe at the political opponents, saying, "The Supreme Court and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) cannot hold them accountable. They [rulers] consider themselves masters and treat people as slave".

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period From 09: 00 am to 02: 00 pm, Islamabad Circle, Shaheed Millat, Iqbal Town, Alipur, Satara Market, Azad Shaheed, Service Road East, Abbasi Market, G-9 Center, Carriage Factory, G-11/ 2, Railway Road, T&T, Company Bagh, Gharial, Kotli Sattian, Balawara, Buri Imam, Sohtran Road, Anguri, Shahpur, Shahdara, Magniyal, Desto, T&T, Treat, Bhara Kaho.II, Golf City, Bhara Kahu, NIH, Athal, Quaid-e-Azam University, Iqbal Street, NCP, Mandala Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Farooq Azam, New Milpur, Shakryal, F Block, Fazahia, Zafarul Haq Road, Arya Mohalla Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bank Road.II, Tipu Road, Rahmatabad.I, Swan Garden.II, Model Town, Murree Brewery, Humayun, KH Road, Gulshanabad, Chakri, Qureshiabad, Cantt, Kahota City. II, Khawaja, New Chuah, Fazal Ahmad, Panjar, Hamid Jhangji, Pind Jatla, Bahr Kalia, Syed Kasran, CB Khan. II, Reliance Weaving Mill, Jarrar Comp, Lab. 1 & 2, Bhal, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhata Hatial, Shahigan, Adiala Jail, Shahpur, Khasala Feeders, Attock Circle, Taxila, Margalla, Nawababad, Behlot, Bin Bola, AWT, Valley, Small Industrial Estate, Lalazar, Khanabad, Lala Rukh, Industrial, Visa, Bolinwal. , Hattian, Hazro, Bara Zee, Bagh Nelab, Soni, Chhaji Mar, Murt, Pind Soltani, Mahfouz Shaheed, Ahmad Dal, Gagan Feeders, Chakwal Circle, From 10: 00 am to 03: 00 pm, Tharpal, Megan, Khairpur, Islamia Chowk, Dera Muslim, Dhodial Express, Latifal, Sihgalabad, Pinnwal, CS Shah, Duffer, Toba, PD Khan, Abdullahpur, Hassal, Dhadanka, Murt, Jatla, Pira Fatial, Tau Muharram Khan, Mail, Vanhar, Darut feeders. , Jhelum Circle, Ajmal Shaheed, F-13 Garmala, Langarpur, Mandi Bhalwal, Fatehpur, Akram Shaheed, Pakhwal, Dina 3 Rohtas, Chamala, Dina. 1, Bakrala, Domeli, New Sanghui, Dina City, Ward No. 8, Sohawa Kachhari. , Baba Shaheed, Chhappur Sharif, Kantriala, Islampura Feeders, GSO Circle, From 09: 00 AM to 04: 00 PM, Mira Jafar, G-14/2, Chakswari Feeder, From 09: 00 AM to 03: 00 PM, Islampur Grid Station, From 12: 00 pm to 04: 00 pm, Dhadyal Rural, Dhadyal No. 2, Chowk Subhan Feeders and surrounding areas.

Ex-IB chief Masood Sharif dies aged 72

News Desk

KARAK: Former Intelligence Bureau (IB) Director General Major (R) Masood Sharif Khattak father of Kashmala Sharif Sehgal and father-in-law of Zarrar Sehgal Chairman Pathfinder Group passed away on Sunday at the age of 72.

He was politically active throughout his life and held the position of vice president in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). He also contested the 2002 National Assembly elections on a PPP ticket, but was not successful.

Due to differences, he left the PPP in 2007 and joined the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 2011, but eventually quit the party two years later.

As a mark of respect all personnel of Pathfinder Group throughout Pakistan will wear black armbands on their left arm for three days starting Monday Jan 30th, Tuesday Jan 31st & Wednesday Feb 1st.

To give time for his son Hassan Sharif Khan, Kashmala Sharif Sehgal and son-in-law Zarrar Sehgal to reach Pakistan for the Namaz-e-Janaza, it will be held at 10 am at Motamar Al Islami-F-6 Markaz, Islamabad on Tuesday Jan 31, 2023. The burial will take place at his ancestral home in Karak after Asr prayer the same day.

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Paying special heed to differently-able persons

Farhat Fatima

Allah Almighty has bestowed mankind with countless abilities to see, listen, speak, walk, think and much more regardless of their religion, caste, creed, sex, race and mobility.

The creation of human beings is the best ever creation among all creatures on earth and in the heavens and Allah Almighty commands to equally protect the rights of all human beings particularly of the differently-abled persons.

After the human rights enshrined in holy scripture, our Constitution guarantees social and economic well-being of all citizens.

Article 38 (d) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan states "provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, who are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment."

It also guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and expres-

sion for all people and equal protection of the rights of normal as well as differently able persons by providing social justice.

Pakistan also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in July 2011 with Ministry of Human Rights being the Focal Ministry to coordinate and facilitate implementation and reporting of UNCRPD.

Rather, these people are equally capable to deliver in different arena of life if provided ample opportunities as being provided to normal people.

Instances are all around right from cramming the Holy Quran by a blind student, or the one surviving without both arms or the one becoming a great scientist; Stephen Hawking. History shows that differently-able persons can do a lot if patronized and encouraged through proper education and training.

Therefore, different governments embarked on a number of initiatives like "The Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance, 1981" which laid the foundation for the institutional care of such persons.

This Ordinance ensures PWDs' rights to education, employment, rehabilitation; emphasizing to create Funds

and establish National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons.

Later in 2010, after 18th Amendment in the Constitution, although powers related to disability and associated matters were devolved to provinces, Federal Ministry of Human Rights shouldered the responsibility of better coordination and implementation of international Conventions.

As the provinces were required to enact proper laws for protection of the rights of differently-able persons after 18th amendment and in June 2018, Sindh government promulgated the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act.

Such acts were also promulgated by Balochistan in 2017 and Gilgit Baltistan in 2019 as similar legislation is in process in Khyber Pukhtunkha and Punjab provinces.

The Federal Government also devised an Action Plan for Human Rights that covers various actions with regard to rights of marginalized groups including PWDs.

Reserved job quota for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) is being implemented to ensure their participation in various professions while a Treaty Implemen-

tation Cells (TICs) have also been established at Federal and Provincial levels including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Counting on other routine measures, the Government has provided elevators and lift services for PWDs at Metro Bus Stations for their direct access; elevators and lifts are provided at every entrance/exit point for their direct access to each bus station.

Provision of level boarding to and from the bus without involving any steps has been ensured. One space for PWDs with wheelchair and four designated seats have been reserved for other PWDs.

In most of the Government offices (Ministries and Departments) and private offices, special elevators, lifts, chairs, ramps etc. are available for PWDs besides measures like mass transit projects envisioned under Vision 2025 by the Planning Commission of Pakistan.

To promote participation in political processes and in decision-making, an awareness campaign was launched by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on the Postal Ballot facility offered to PWDs.

Besides ensuring their access to polling stations and polling

booths, they also imparted training on casting votes.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal across the country has also set up a special cell to facilitate PWDs on a priority basis.

They are extended financial support as well as accessories like artificial limbs, hearing aids, wheelchairs and white canes etc.

For the first time in the country's history, it has also been decided to give the status of Special Friend of PBM to each family having one or more differently-abled persons.

This provision authorizes families with one differently-able person to get Rs 30,000 assistance per annum from PBM and families with two or more such persons to draw Rs. 60,000 per annum besides other aids.

Moreover, Ministry of Planning Development and Reform has been requested to include Disability Impact Assessment (DIA) in their PC-I like (Environmental Impact Assessment) EIA.

Since, the government has taken numerous measures to facilitate differently-able persons, it is also a shared responsibility of private sector and the society as a whole to treat such people with honor and respect and ensure training and jobs opportunities for them on priority.

Latest Israeli violence is a sign of much worse to come

The increase in violence against Palestinians by Israel's militant army and the armed Jewish settler movement is part of an intentional strategy by extremists in the Israeli government who have been given the green light to flex their muscles.

The level of violence directed against Palestinians was already on the rise last year, mostly driven by the escalating political rhetoric of Israel's far right. In 2022, Israeli soldiers and armed settlers killed 146 Palestinians in the West Bank, 32 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and four Palestinians inside Israel, the highest total since 2004, according to B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization.

Among the 182 Palestinians killed were five unarmed women, 34 unarmed children and seven unarmed seniors. Israel justified all of the deaths by claiming they were targeting "terrorists" planning "terrorist attacks," without providing any evidence or proof of this or prosecuting perpetrators in Israel's lopsided judicial system.

During the same period, Palestinians responding to Israeli military incursions and armed settler assaults killed 17 Israelis, all of whom were armed.

For example, those extremists — including Israel's new National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu's closest political ally — have ordered a ban on the display of the Palestinian flag and the arrest of Palestinians who fly it in Israel and the Occupied West Bank.

Ben-Gvir described the display of the Palestinian flag as "an act of terrorism" and a "threat to public order." Unarmed Palestinian protesters caught displaying the flag have been beaten and arrested by armed soldiers and settlers.

Under Ben-Gvir's leadership, settlers have also stepped-up Jewish incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Other measures being publicly discussed include a weakening of the power of the Israeli Supreme Court, even though only on a few occasions has it ruled against Israeli and settler violence.

And leaders of the Religious Zionist Party, a foundational part of Netanyahu's coalition, have vowed to annex the West Bank and aggressively expand Jewish-only settlements on Palestinian land there.

Netanyahu's extremist and militant Israeli government has also tightened restrictions on Palestinian leaders. It even blocked Jordan's Ambassador to Israel Ghassan Majali from entering Arab East Jerusalem through Bab Al-Asbat, the Lion's Gate, to prevent him from praying at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Israel is also extending the delays that prevent sick Palestinians from receiving life-saving medical care. For example, Mahmoud Al-Kurd, 45, from Deir Al-Balah, who has metastatic cancer, was forced to wait five months for permission to receive radiotherapy. When it was finally granted, the cancer had spread too much for the treatment to help.

His is not an isolated case. For instance, Akram Al-Sultan, 61, from Beit Lahya in the northern Gaza Strip, was denied permission to receive cancer treatment in East Jerusalem.

Cancer victims such as these are not included among the statistics on fatalities caused by Israel's assault on Jenin and the West Bank but they should be.



General elections can revive the economy

Wali Ullah

Known as the best governance system in the world, democracy provides an inclusive mechanism for the resolution of socioeconomic and political issues through evolving of broad based political reconciliation among all the relevant stakeholders to anchor the ship of democracy to the safe shores.

Analysts said that a permanent political divide with no channel of communication and intolerance in society would further retards the political and economic development besides widening the economic gap between the influentials and underprivileged class.

They said that if the trend of political intolerance, accusations and blame games among politicians continued, then it would be extremely difficult to bring political and economic stability to the country despite holding the general election in Pakistan.

"Democracy provides solutions to all problems. It is the best governance system being practiced in the world through which socioeconomic and political conflicts are being addressed through reconciliation and dialogue among relevant stakeholders supported by people," Professor Dr AH Hilali, former Chairman of Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while talking to media on Sunday.

"In the democratic process, the doors to political dialogue among religious and political entities are always open to take decisions in national interest and for people's well being."

"Political dialogue is an effective tool in a democratic system, which removed misunderstanding among political players on

existing issues and strengthened democracy besides ensuring the smooth transition of power." Professor Hilali said unfortunately our politicians did not learn lessons from our history and again started wrangling by closing the doors of political dialogue ahead of election despite the country's difficult economic situation.

He said the absence of political dialogues among politicians in the past led to derailment of democracy for four times in Pakistan.

The government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was dismissed after the 9 religious and political parties under the platform of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) launched agitation movement, claiming rigging in 1977 elections.

In spite of strong denial of the rigging allegations by PPP, he said PNA's agitation movement have sparked riots and unrest and incurred colossal economic losses to the country and subsequently democracy was packed up for the third time on July 5, 1977.

In 90s, he said the absence of political dialogue had led to the premature dissolution of the elected assemblies and the governments of former Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif twice each after being accused of riggings in elections by opponents and its negative outcome came before us in the shape of martial law on October 12, 1999. He suggested political dialogue between government and opposition on existing difficult economic and political challenges besides election reforms inevitable for the country's stability and development.

Ikhtiar Wali, PML-N KP spokesman said that his party believed in political dialogue. He said Charter of Democracy signed between former Prime Ministers, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Mohatma Benazir Bhutto was a great example of political reconciliation that

later led to an adoption of the landmark 18th constitutional amendment that returned all powers back to the parliament, granted provincial autonomy to the federating units, identity to people of KP after renaming NWFP and abolishment of the draconian 582 (B) article from the constitution.

He said PMLN did not believe in political victimization of opponents and law would take its own course in Fawad Chaudhary case. However, he said that mocking national institutions and officials of national institutions as well as their family members was highly deplorable.

Ikhtiar Wali said the historic welcome accorded to PMLN Vice President and Chief Organizer, Maryam Nawaz by the people at Lahore have unnerved the opposition.

"Maryam Nawaz has cleared the party's policy in her address being appreciated in all social and political circles and rightly said that Nawaz Sharif being an elected Prime Minister of Pakistan was ousted from the government thrice by the undemocratic forces in a bid to deprive the country's of development.

He termed the ouster of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on July 28, 2017, in the Panama leaks case was a big tragedy from which Pakistan has not yet recovered, adding it was unfortunate that no elected premier has completed his five years term in the country's history.

He said that all characters that played role in ouster of an elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2017 and bringing Imran Khan into power were stand exposed before masses.

Accusing PTI for creating political division in society and destroying the country's economy, he said Imran's recent accusations against former President Asif Ali Zardari was an attempt to create hatred against political opponents to get cheap popularity.

Pakistan steps to protect human rights of women, children, vulnerable

APP Report

Pakistan has taken a range of legislative, policy and institutional steps to advance the human rights agenda with a focus on protection and promotion of rights of women, children, journalists, refugees and vulnerable sections of society, in line with the standards of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

According to official data available with APP, the federal government had enacted legislation to safeguard rights of women and children including Women's Property Rights Act, 2020, Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act 2020 and, Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021.

The legislative and institutional steps had gone a long way in safeguarding rights of the Pakistani citizens especially women, children and transgender persons.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 guaranteed rights for transgender citizens and prohibited any discrimination against them in their enjoyment of fundamental rights of voting, inheritance, education, work, property, access to public areas. The enactment of ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020 went further to safeguard and prevent any discriminatory acts against persons with disability. Senior citizens were also protected from discrimination under ICT Senior Citizen Act, 2022.

The Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review mechanism periodically reviews the human rights record of every UN member state. The ultimate goal of UPR is to strengthen the realization and enjoyment of human rights in a country. The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022 criminalised torture, death and rape in custody and protected due process and fair trial rights of under trial persons.

The government had also taken credible steps to provide a safe and enabling environment to jour-

nalist community. The Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021 (Journalist Act) was its concrete example. The act stipulated establishment of a Commission as a grievance redressal mechanism for journalists and media professionals in any case of intimidation and harassment.

Despite the serious social and economic impacts of the COVID pandemic, global economic downturn and devastating floods of 2022, the Government had taken wide ranging measures to alleviate poverty, provide adequate standard of living, strengthen social safety net, and reduce inequalities.

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was a flagship initiative under which unconditional cash transfers had been disbursed to the poor and the marginalized. During the pandemic, the program was launched to help poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and an amount of approximately Rs 180 billion to around 14.9 million beneficiaries (Rs 12,000 per beneficiary) was disbursed.

Moreover, the government was also implementing the National Population Action Plan with the target to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health by taking multi-pronged measures including involvement of all public and private sector health facilities. A national campaign to fight malnutrition and stunting among children was also underway.

The bill to criminalize enforced disappearances was undergoing parliamentary process. In line with the State's zero tolerance policy, the alleged cases of missing persons are being expeditiously and efficiently dealt by Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. The overall decrease in number of alleged cases received from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances attest to this positive trend.

The economic constraints notwithstanding, Pakistan had also continued to safeguard and advance basic rights of over 3 million Afghan refugees, who were enjoying access to basic amenities and opportunities like employment, health care, education, water and other public services at par with Pakistani citizens.

Pakistan strengthening ties via multi-lateral engagement in Algeria

Diplomat Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Algeria-Pakistan's Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Zahid Akram Durrani, is leading a parliamentary delegation to the 17th session of the Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries (PUIC) in Algiers. During their visit, the delegation has been actively participating in multi-lateral engagements, including bilateral meetings with parliamentary delegations from Qatar, Malaysia, and Burkina Faso. These meetings were aimed to find mutually beneficial solutions for the region, promote peace, stability, and economic growth.

Deputy Speaker emphasized that the bilateral meetings held by the delegation are a testament to Pakistan's continuous efforts to strengthen its relationships with other countries in the region. He stated that the discussions on socio-economic and political



matters were aimed at finding solutions that would bring benefits to all parties involved. The successful conclusion of these bilateral meetings marks a positive step towards further enhancing the relationships between Pakistan and

other nations and promoting peace, stability, and economic growth in the region, said Mr. Durrani.

In addition to the bilateral meetings, the parliamentary delegation also visited the Pakistan House in Algiers,

where they were warmly welcomed by the Embassy officials. The delegation appreciated the Embassy's efforts to facilitate the Pakistani community and expand cooperation with Algeria. Mr. Durrani expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the delegation by the Embassy and the people of Algeria. He emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relationship with Algeria and promoting peace and stability in the region.

Overall, the delegation's visit to Algiers, Algeria, has been productive and successful in advancing Pakistan's goal of strengthening its relationships with other countries in the region. The delegation's active participation in the PUIC session and the bilateral meetings with other parliamentary delegations demonstrate Pakistan's dedication to promoting peace, stability, and economic growth in the region.

President AJK to attend annual breakfast being hosted by US president



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry would attend the annual breakfast party being hosted by the US President Joe Biden at Washington.

The event being held each year on the first Thursday of February in Washington, D.C. is attended by thousands of guests including dignitaries from many nations.

Meanwhile on his arrival to New York the president met with various delegations of the Kashmiri community settled in America.

Pertinently, the president has a tight schedule, during his stay he will address public gatherings at different places besides having some important meetings with key officials if the UN and the US state department, including congress men and senators.

Regional connectivity key to boost Pakistan's exports



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said that promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan could be a milestone in regional and global trade integration and connectivity.

Delivering his presidential address at a seminar on "Trade Prospects between Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan" held under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said the geo-strategic position of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan also highlights their geo-economic importance, which could play a significant role in promoting trade connectivity amongst different regions and potential markets of the world.

He said that Pakistan was currently a major player in global and regional trade, bordering the Middle East and South Asian states on the one hand and the global economic power China on the other. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan, due to its very important geographical location, had a distinctive place among the Central Asian states (CARs).

He said Kyrgyzstan exporters can also use Gwadar port for the shipment of their products to European countries and other parts of the world and Pak importers can import value-added milk products besides either side can also promote tourism and collaboration in the mining industry.

He said that Pakistan was contributing \$100 million to the Kyrgyz economy in terms of fees and other living expenses of approximately 10,000 Pakistani students. He said Pakistan partially can also meet its energy needs from Kyrgyzstan.

He said Kyrgyzstan offered many opportunities for trade with Pakistan as it was the shortest entry point of Pakistani products to the 'Eurasian Economic Markets' of 182-million people comprising Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Armenia.

He said that goods once exported to Kyrgyzstan could be further transported to the Eurasian markets without payment of customs duties.

Meher Kashif Younis said that many high-rising buildings for shopping malls, apartments, and hotels were currently being constructed mostly by Turkish firms for which raw material was being imported from other countries. He said that construction materials from Pakistan could also be exported.

Trump warns 2024 election 'our one shot' to save America

COLUMBIA: Donald Trump warned Saturday that the next election would be America's last chance for salvation as he attempted to revive a faltering third run for the White House in two US states that launched his winning 2016 presidential campaign.

Buffeted by political and legal headwinds, the 76-year-old Republican addressed a few hundred supporters at an intimate rally in South Carolina's capital Columbia after speaking to grassroots activists in Salem, New Hampshire.

"The 2024 election is our one shot to save our country and we need a leader who's ready to do that on day one," Trump said from a podium beneath the Statehouse rotunda, flanked by American flags and some of his most loyal political allies.

The events were seen as a chance to revitalize a stuttering campaign amid criticism over Trump's failure to make any public appearances since he announced his latest run in November.

Iran condemns 'cowardly' drone attack on defence site

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran on Sunday condemned a "cowardly" night-time drone attack that targeted a defence ministry site, at a time of high tensions over its nuclear programme and Russia's war in Ukraine.

An anti-aircraft system destroyed one drone and two others exploded, the ministry said, adding that there were no casualties and only minor damage to the site in the central province of Isfahan.

"This cowardly act was carried out today as part of the efforts made by enemies of the Iranian nation in recent months to make the Islamic republic insecure," Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said at a press conference with his visiting Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

"Such measures cannot affect the will and intention of our specialists for peace-

ful nuclear developments," he added.

A fireball lit up the night sky in video footage widely shared on social media and published by Iranian state media, with people outside seen running and emergency service vehicles speeding towards the site.

The defence ministry described the attack as "unsuccessful", saying it was carried out "on one of the workshop complexes of the ministry", according to state news agency IRNA.

"The attack, which occurred at around 11:30 pm (2000 GMT) on Saturday, did not cause any disruption to the operation of the complex," it said.

Authorities did not elaborate on activities at the site, but IRNA said the strike had targeted "an ammunition manufacturing plant".

The agency added that "one of the quadcopters used in the attack, which suffered less damage during

the confrontation operation, was handed over to the security forces stationed in the complex".

Parliament member Mohammad-Hassan Assafari told the Mehr news agency that "opponents and enemies" of Iran were aiming to "disrupt the defensive power" of the country with the attack.

The drone strike comes at a tense time in Iran, which has been rocked by protests over the death in custody of Kurdish-Iranian woman Mahsa Amini in September, and as the standoff with major powers over its nuclear programme remains unresolved.

Iran has also faced accusations by Western countries that it has been supplying armed drones to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine, a charge Tehran denies.

Iran has been engaged in a shadow war for years with its arch-enemy Israel, blamed for a series of sabo-

tage attacks and assassinations targeting the Iranian nuclear programme, and with Israel's ally the United States.

A few hours before the Isfahan attack, a major fire broke out at a motor oil production plant in the northwestern province of East Azerbaijan, IRNA reported.

Images of the huge blaze in the key industrial complex of Shahid Salimi linked to the Ministry of Industry were published by the agency.

It said the fire was brought under control by firefighters, and authorities were investigating its cause.

Shahid Salimi, in the city of Azarshahr, is the largest industrial zone in northwestern Iran. It hosts 790 factories and other facilities employing nearly 28,000 workers, according to state media.

Iran has several known nuclear research sites in the Isfahan region, including a uranium conversion plant.

Turkiye keen in raising trade ventures with Pakistan: Mian Kashif Ashfaq



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council, Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said Turkiye wanted to launch joint ventures with Pakistan to further cement bilateral trade and economic ties.

Talking to a delegation of business community led by Faran Shahid, he said Turkey has offered a joint roadmap to give new direction to either sides for strengthening economic and commercial relations to generate employment and overcome growing financial problems.

He said there is a vast scope of exploring new avenues of mutual investment and enhancement of economic cooperation between the private sectors of two Muslim countries.

He said Turkiye Embassy Commercial Counsellor to Pakistan Nurettin Demir told him that "A preferential trade agreement has been signed between Turkiye and Pakistan which he added is expected to be approved by the Turkish parliament next month which will also act as a catalyst for improving trade and economic relations between two countries".

He said trade volume between both countries is very low which he hoped will jump to new heights through mutual cooperation.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq called for concrete measures to bring the business community of both countries closer, business-to-business meetings, Joint trade exhibitions and full exploitation of bilateral trade potentials.

He said Pakistan could address the current economic issues by taking advantage of Turkiye's experiences.

He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is a suitable trade route for Turkish investors to export goods to Central Asian states via Afghanistan.

Car Show

KARACHI: Vintage cars are displayed during a car show organized by the Vintage and Classic Car Club of Pakistan, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Enthusiastic Sikhs form queues to support Khalistan referendum in Australia

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A large number of Australian Sikhs on Sunday stood in queues to cast their votes for the Khalistan Referendum being held at Melbourne's Federation Square under the auspices of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ).

According to media reports, Sikhs living in and around Melbourne converged on the spot to cast their votes at 7am local time with the religious Sikh prayers, conducted by the local leaders.

The eyewitnesses said that within a short period, the queues

stretched to over two kilometers going past the Finders Train station to the deep town. Enthusiastic Sikh youth, men, women and elderly were seen enthusiastically forming queues while carrying banners and flags in support of their rights for the creation of Khalistan.

Sikh men arrived in jeeps, cars and coaches to take part in voting amidst the traditional playing of music and songs.

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

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

During a press conference in Melbourne on Wednesday, SFJ co-founder and general counsel Gurbatwant 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 percent of the total popu-

lation, and is the country's fifth largest and fastest-growing religious group, according to the 2021 census.

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.

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



Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance rejects POL price hike

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Rejecting the recent hike in PoL prices by the federal government, the Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance on Sunday announced to 'resist' the decision.

President Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance Malik Shahzad Awan said the time has come to hit the streets against the incumbent government as it has become impossible for them to run their business in this inflation.

We will 'resist' the decision and devising strategy in this context, Malik Shahzad Awan said in his statement.

It may be noted that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday announced Rs35/litre hike in the prices of petrol and diesel.

In a televised address, Ishaq Dar said that 11 per cent increase was witnessed in the prices of petrol products in the international market.

Dar further announced that the prices of kerosene oil and light diesel oil have been increased by Rs18 per litre.

No plot allotted in Cat-I & Cat-II amid pending litigation matters; FGEHF

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has not allotted plots in the first and second categories (Cat-I & Cat-II) to the employees of Constitutional bodies in Park Road Housing Scheme due to litigation matters pending in the courts and other impediments pertaining to Park Road Housing Scheme.

However, the numbers of plots as per the specifically approved quota had been reserved in the Park Road Housing Scheme for the registered members of "Constitutional Bodies/Quota," an official in the Authority told APP on Sunday.

He said now, the matter has been resolved and after completion of legal and codal formalities, they would be issued consent letters for allotment of plots under constitutional quota shortly.

Responding to a question, the official said the Ministry of Housing and Works in collaboration with NESPAK, Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and other stakeholders formulated the Building Codes of Pakistan 2007.

He said that implementation of the building codes was under the domain of respective provincial governments and municipalities.

The official said that in the case of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the Capital Development Authority (CDA) was responsible for enforcing the Building Codes.

He said that no request had been received from any quarter during the last two years for technical consultation and engagement with PEC on standardization of Building Codes, standards and specifications for low-cost (affordable) housing units.

US trade shifts on COVID and China tensions, but no 'decoupling' yet

WASHINGTON: US trade flows are realigning on the back of pandemic shocks and tensions with China, but efforts to reduce interdependence between the superpowers have not brought a swift decoupling.

While security concerns have escalated and US imports from China fell after Washington and Beijing imposed tit-for-tat tariffs, trade has since climbed again. The numbers could rise further when 2022 trade data is released next month, pointing to how interlaced the world's two biggest economies are.

But experts say tensions have left their mark in other ways.

"US imports from China are well below the trend that they were on before the trade war started," said Mary Lovely, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE).

"There is definitely a turn away from China in US imports, especially or primarily in those goods on which the US raised tariffs," she told AFP.

After the trade war started, the value of America's goods imported from China dropped from \$506bn in 2017 to around \$450bn in 2019.

Bilateral relations are not the only factors affecting trade. The pandemic took a heavy toll as well.

Last November, China saw its sharpest drop in exports since the start of COVID-19, with business activity slammed by a strict zero-COVID policy. Also weighing on imports is an "ongoing shift in the US away from spending on goods," said Ryan Sweet of Oxford Economics.

Americans spent heavily on imported products during the pandemic, but "people are going back out and spending on services" as virus concerns ease, he said.

Shaukat Tarin sees further increase in fuel prices

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former finance minister Shaukat Tarin has predicted further increase in fuel prices in the upcoming days.

Shaukat Tarin said that the rupee has fallen by 14 to 15 per cent in recent days. The PDM government has increased fuel prices under the pressure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The PTI leader said prices of petrol and diesel will be further increased, while gas rates will also be hiked. Tarin said the recent increase in fuel prices will bring inflation storm in the country.



Shaukat Tarin claimed the PDM government came into power only to change the NAB rules.

The PTI leader said that this government does not care about the people at all. After the increase in the prices of petroleum products, now the prices of food and beverages will increase by 45 to 50 percent and people will suffer more as a result of this inflation.

He said Punjab and KP Assemblies have been dissolved now the government should go for general elections in the country to control the further economic damage.

It may be noted that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday announced Rs35/litre hike in the prices of petrol and diesel.

Govt to impose Rs200bn taxes to comply with IMF conditions

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to overcome the worst economic crisis in the country, the government is finally ready to swallow the bitter pill of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) "stringent" condition by preparing two draft ordinances to impose Rs200 billion in new taxes to revive the loan program.

In this regard, an official of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) stated that the country's top tax machinery has prepared both ordinances - one is the imposition of Rs100bn taxes and the other Rs100bn flood levy on imports - after which there would be a surge in withholding tax rates and regulatory duty on luxury items to generate additional revenue amid continuous devaluation of rupee against greenback. While the flood levy collected will be used to curb a shortfall in the petroleum



development levy (PDL). Because the international money lender has forecasted a deficit of Rs300bn in PDL, and has requested the Ministry of Finance to raise the tax on petrol and diesel from Rs 35 to Rs 50 per litre. According to a source, this decision is anticipated to be made during the upcoming review of petroleum prices on January 31, leading to an increase of Rs20 to Rs 40 per litre in petroleum prices. Don't miss: Govt jacks up petrol, diesel

prices by Rs35 per litre While IMF delegation is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on January 31 for discussions, following the assurance from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to implement policy measures. The implementation of these measures had been postponed for political reasons for nearly four months, as they were believed to contribute to the already elevated inflation rates. However, the government has agreed to comply with IMF conditions after the lender refused to make any concessions.

On the other hand, the centre is considering ending the power sector subsidy and implementing sales tax on raw materials for the export sector, particularly for textile manufacturers. These measures may cause concern among the PML-N's key supporters during an election year. Additionally, increases in electricity and gas tariffs are being considered as well.

SBP rebuts claims capping dollar price caused \$3bn loss in remittances

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Sunday rebutted claims that capping the price of the dollar caused a loss of \$3 billion in remittances and exports.

"Export of goods have been facing headwinds due to moderating demand in international markets as most of our major trading partners are going through a period of monetary tightening," the central bank said in a statement. It further stated that US Federal Funds rate has surged from 0.25 percent in March 2022 to 4.5 percent to date, suggesting a noticeable global monetary tightening.

The SBP further said inflation was significantly higher in developed world, eating into the purchasing power of consumers. "These, together with domestic factors like devastating floods and ensuing supply disruptions, have negatively impacted exports," it added. "In this backdrop, linking decline in exports to relatively stable exchange rate is not appropriate," the



central bank added. Explaining further, the SBP said that workers' remittances were gradually tapering off from all time high level of \$3.1 billion achieved in April 2022 due to Eid related flows. "This decline is primarily attributed to global economic slowdown as higher inflation in developed countries has led to higher cost of living abroad, thus reducing the surplus funds that could be sent back to homeland as remittances," it added.

In a statement, ECAP secretary Zafar Paracha said that the association was withdrawing the cap on the US dollar in the "nation's interest" as the limit was causing adverse effects. The statement noted that there was artificial demand in the market as people would buy the dollar from us and sell it in the grey market.

Illegal Occupation

ISLAMABAD: Labourers along with their tools waiting for daily wages work while sitting along road at Khana Pull.

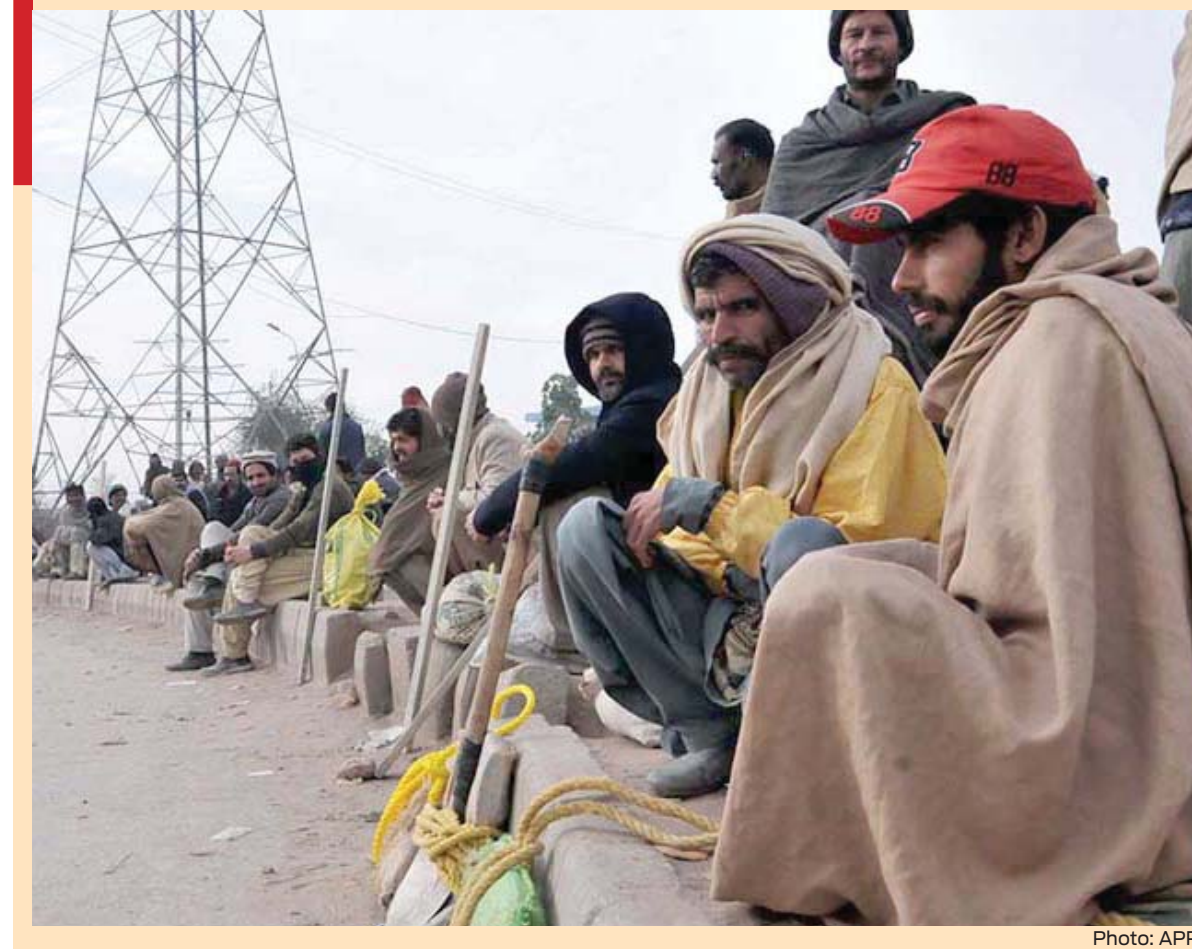


Photo: APP

Small businesses, big dreams: Iraq's women entrepreneurs

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The sewing machines and fabric that surround Alaa Adel at her "Iraqcuture" studio in Baghdad are testament to her success in deeply patriarchal Iraq.

Adel, 33, counts herself among a limited number of female entrepreneurs in a country where most women don't work outside the home.

"We have a social tradition that prevents many women from working," Adel said at her studio in Baghdad's Karrada commercial district.

Even for those who do, "it is not always that easy," she added.

The International Organization for Migration said in an October report that "prevailing customs and traditions... limit women's activities to their domestic and nurturing role".

Adel said such prejudices, as well as practical difficulties, posed a challenge to fulfilling her dream.

A graduate of the University of Baghdad who specialised in fashion and design, Adel wanted to create her own fashion house.

"I went to see the patrons of organisations that support art and culture. But my idea was systematically rejected because I had no experience in the conception of projects," she said.

Thanks to an Iraqi foundation, The Station, and its "Raidat" (Female Entrepreneurs) programme financed by the French



embassy in Baghdad, Adel got training which, she said, gave her the confidence to start her own business.

Iraq's private sector is still embryonic, making more tedious and lengthy the steps to set up a company.

The country, which is trying to move past four decades of war and unrest, is also plagued by endemic corruption, widespread unemployment and a poverty rate of around 30 percent.

Almost 38 percent of people with jobs work in Iraq's public sector - one of the highest rates in the world, according to the

International Labour Organization (ILO). Adel eventually secured a loan from a private bank, and created her "Alaa Adel" brand last summer.

At the beginning, she had to deal with sexism from some fabric suppliers who were reluctant to do business with a woman, she said.

Then there was a lack of public childcare facilities, in a country where tradition says children should be taken care of at home - by the mother - until they go to school.

Adel got help from family members who look after her two boys, aged nine and four, while she is at work.

NBP Commissioner Karachi Marathon receives overwhelming participation

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI: Residents of Karachi actively participated in the 4th Commissioner Karachi Marathon, held in collaboration with the National Bank of Pakistan on Sunday, January 29, 2023, at the Nishan-e-Pakistan, Sea View. The event saw people of all ages and all walks of life attend the event in large numbers from different parts of the city. Despite the cold weather, people gathered early in the morning to participate in the marathon as they tried to reach the finish line for each category.

The marathon specified multiple routes for runners of various abilities including Children, families, and differently-abled people, who participated in a special category; namely the Fun Run category. The runners ended their race by returning to the starting point at Nishan-e-Pakistan. It was encouraging to see efforts and planning invested to make the event a success. There were designated rest stops throughout the route with a significant emphasis on safety and security for both spectators and participants.

Several dignitaries attended the event, including Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Adviser to Chief Minister of Sindh and other members from the diplomatic corps. Mr. Sohail Rajput, Chief Secretary Sindh was the chief guest who commended the event organizers and congratulated the winners.



The gold medal and the cash prizes were awarded by Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President and CEO (A) of the National Bank of Pakistan to winners. Mr. Muhammad Akhtar won gold medal in the 1st Category of 12 km, Mr. Muhammad Yasir Gil in 2nd Category of 7.5 km. In the women's category, Nimra Iqbal won the gold medal and Fida Hussain won the gold medal in the special category.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Hasnie said, "NBP is proud to be a part of events like these, and we commit to supporting a brighter and healthier future for the nation. NBP has always been at the forefront of encouraging people to participate in sports and other healthy activities. This is one of the first steps as we continue to collaborate with Commissioner Karachi on several sports projects.

The Karachi Commissioner, Muhammad Iqbal Memon, on the occasion shared his views, "The marathon is meant to bring the citizens of Karachi together. Healthy activities such as these energize the youth and build confidence in them to take ownership of the city. We aim to engage and empower the community through such activities for the promotion of healthy activities across the city.

Fatima Sana finally meets her inspiration Ellyse Perry

Sports Desk

CANBERRA: Young Pakistan all-rounder Fatima Sana has finally got a chance to interact with her childhood inspiration and one of the greatest female cricketers Ellyse Perry.

Sana, who earlier expressed her wish to meet Perry for which she requested the latter's compatriot Jessica Jonassen as she felt shy approaching the star all-rounder directly, at last, met her favourite cricketer after the final T20I between Pakistan and Australia in Canberra on Sunday.

In a video posted by Australian Women's Cricket Team, Sana can be seen inquiring about techniques to increase the bowling pace during her meeting with Perry.

Australian veteran admired Sana's dedication towards the game and her bowling besides sharing useful bowling tips with the youngster.



Earlier after the final ODI of the three-match series, Australia Women's Team shared a video on Twitter in which Sana could be seen requesting Jonassen to introduce her to Perry. "Can I talk to Perry?" asked Sana to

Jonassen who was standing with a few other teammates.

In reply, Jonassen told Sana that she could approach Perry directly while being empathetic to her hesitation.

"Do you look up to Ellyse?" she asked Sana. "Yes I was 11 when she was winning the World Cup" Sana replied.

Perry, widely regarded as one of the prolific sportswomen, played a vital role in all of Australia's four World Cup victories between 2010 and 2014, though she will forever be remembered for the 2013 Women's World Cup final against West Indies, when, barely able to walk, she limped in to bowl 10 overs and took 3 for 19.

It is pertinent to mention here that the last match of the T20I series was abandoned due to rain without a ball being bowled. Australia had already claimed the series 2-0 after they won the first two matches of the three-game series.

Final T20I washed out as Pakistan Women end winless tour in Australia



A Sports -

CANBERRA: With a lot to ponder on before they set foot in South Africa for the T20I mega event, the Bismah Maroof-led Pakistan can certainly learn from the experience of playing against one of the most competitive sides in Women's cricket after they failed to break the status-quo in Australia.

Rain washed out the final T20I on Sunday without a ball being bowled, leaving Pakistan devoid of any cheerful moments from their last trip before the Women's T20I World Cup in February as Australia completely dominated the visitors on their home soil.

Pakistan, who are yet to claim their first win in Australia, lost the ODI series 3-0 followed by a 2-0 T20I defeat during the current tour that happened after a hiatus of almost nine years.

Though there was little optimism left looking at the deplorable outcomes of the two earlier T20Is in which Australia bagged comprehensive wins by eight wickets in each game, Pakistan surely had a chance to figure out the combination before boarding South Africa's flight.

It is important to note here that Pakistan will play their first match in Group B against arch-rivals India on February 12.

Pedri winner helps Barcelona down Girona to extend lead at top

A Sports -

GIRONA: Pedri's second-half strike earned Barcelona three more points and maintained their top position in the La Liga table as they beat Girona 1-0 on Saturday.

Barcelona jumped to 47 points, six ahead of their arch-rivals and second-placed Real Madrid who will host Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Girona, however, slipped to 12th and level on 21 points with 13th-placed Sevilla who later beat Elche 3-0.

Xavi Hernandez made a few adjustments to his starting lineup, which defeats



Real Sociedad in Copa del Rey on Wednesday, resting key players including Robert Lewandowski and Ronald Araujo.

Despite outplaying the opponents in the first half,

Barcelona failed to create clear-cut chances. In the 14th minute, Ousmane Dembele was able to test Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga, but he made a crucial stop. Eleven minutes later, Dembele

was forced off the field due to an injury.

Pedri broke the deadlock after the hour mark and scored the lone goal of the game.

Meanwhile, Sevilla's convincing 3-0 win came on the back of a sensational first-half display which witnessed three goals within 20 minutes.

Youssef En-Nesyne scored a brace with Marcos Acuna striking in between to give Sevilla a comforting lead before the break.

Later Real Betis edged past Getafe 1-0 thanks to a late penalty by Borja Iglesias in the dying minutes.

Porto beat Sporting to win first Portuguese League Cup



News Desk

LEIRIA: Porto won the Portuguese League Cup for the first time on Saturday after four previous final defeats with a 2-0 victory over Sporting Lisbon in Leiria.

Sergio Conceicao's men took the lead in the 13th minute as Canada midfielder Stephen Eustaquio scored his seventh goal of an impressive season.

Sporting were reduced to 10 men with 18 minutes remaining when Paulinho was shown a second yellow card.

Porto secured the title in the 86th minute through Ivan Marcano's header.

The win was a welcome boost for reigning Portuguese league champions Porto, who sit third this season, eight points adrift of leaders Benfica.

Chelsea sign France Under-21 defender Gusto

News Desk

LYON: Chelsea continued their winter spending spree by announcing on Sunday they have completed the signing of France under-21 right-back Malo Gusto from Lyon.

The 19-year-old has signed a contract at Stamford Bridge to the summer of 2030 but will finish the current season back in Ligue 1 with Lyon on loan.

Chelsea will pay a reported £26.3 million (\$32.6 million) for Gusto, who came through the ranks at Lyon and made his senior debut in January 2021. Gusto is the seventh signing of a busy January window for Chelsea, who have already brought in Mykhaylo Mudryk, David Datro Fofana, Benoit Badiashile, Noni Madueke and Andrey Santos on permanent deals and signed Joao Felix on loan from Atletico Madrid.

WTT contender Doha 2023

Zhang Rui (L)/Kuai Man of China compete during the women's doubles final match against Jeon Jihee/Shin Yubin of South Korea at WTT contender Doha 2023 in Doha Qatar



Photo: Reuters

India thump England to win inaugural Women's U19 T20 World Cup

A Sports -

POTCHEFSTROOM: India crowned the inaugural edition of the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup after they sealed a convincing seven-wicket win against England in the final on Sunday.

India wreaked havoc on England's batting line as their bowlers bundled out the opponents for a paltry 68-run total

before chasing down the target comfortably in 14 overs.

A clinical bowling effort with two wickets each to Titas Sadhu, Archana Devi and Parshavi Chopra put India on top after they elected to field first.

In reply, middle-order batters Soumya Tiwari and Gongadi Trisha made 24 runs each to help India take a comfortable win in the end following the early dismissal

of the dependable opening pair of skipper Shefali Verma and Shweta Sehrawat.

Sehrawat, who remained the leading run-scorer of the tournament with her exuberant 297 runs coming at a ridiculously-high average of 99, fell cheaply this time off Hannah Baker in the fourth over after making just 5 from 6 balls.

England found their first breakthrough in the third over when skipper

Verma in her bid to finish the proceeding early handed a chance at mid-on which was excellently grabbed by Alexa Stonehouse off Grace Scrivens' bowling.

Verma smashed a couple of boundaries during her brief yet energetic knock of 11-ball 15.

Tiwari and Trisha then led the chase and stitched a solid 46-run partnership before Stonehouse dismissed the latter with only two runs left to defend.

Djokovic wins Australian Open to equal Nadal's 22 Slam titles

Sports Desk

MELBOURNE: An emotional Novak Djokovic beat Stefanos Tsitsipas Sunday to claim a 10th Australian Open title and equal Rafael Nadal's 22 Grand Slam crowns, a victory that returned him to world number one.

The Serbian star overcame a hamstring injury and off-court drama on his return to Melbourne Park to sweep past the Greek third seed 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5) on Rod Laver Arena.

He surged to victory without father Srdjan in the stands after he sparked controversy by posing with a fan carrying a Russian flag featuring Vladimir Putin's face

following his son's quarter-final win.

Djokovic climbed to his player's box after the win to embrace his mother and broke down in uncontrollable tears, collapsing to the ground sobbing.

It capped a remarkable comeback by the 35-year-old fourth seed, who missed last year's tournament when he was deported over his Covid vaccination stance.

After a three-year ban from Australia was lifted, Djokovic won the lead-up Adelaide International before reinforcing his stature as an all-time great in Melbourne.

The emphatic win drew him level with Nadal on a record 22 Slams, two clear of Roger Federer.

The Spanish great made a shock second-round exit with a hip injury, but is targeting a return for the clay-court season and another crack at the French Open, and with it a 23rd Slam title.

Nadal, though, is set to slide down the rankings when they are released on Monday, in contrast to Djokovic, who will dethrone Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz and return to the top for the first time since June. Tsitsipas will climb one place to three.

Both men were back on a court that helped them rise to stardom.

Djokovic won his first Grand Slam in 2008 on Rod Laver Arena while Tsitsipas burst

on the scene in 2019 when he stunned defending champion Federer in the last 16.

With sizeable Greek and Serbian communities in Melbourne, and Rod Laver in attendance, there was a raucous atmosphere.

Djokovic came into the match with his confidence high having won all nine of his previous Australian Open finals and with a 10-2 career advantage over the Greek.

Moving freely with only minimal strapping on his troublesome left hamstring, he opened with a comfortable hold after being greeted by huge cheers.

Djokovic worked two break points on Tsitsipas's opening serve, to no avail, but kept prob-



ing and the Greek handed him a break for 3-1 with a careless double fault.

Tsitsipas, in only his second

contention in a much closer second set as his confidence grew, improving his serve and winning some pressure points.

He earned his first break point — and set point — when Djokovic blasted a backhand wide.

But the Serb clung on to keep the set on serve and it went to a tiebreak, where his greater experience came to the fore.

Against the odds, Tsitsipas broke for the first time on Djokovic's opening serve in set three, only to relinquish the advantage immediately after a gripping rally, furious with himself.

It again went to a tiebreak, where Djokovic once again raised a level to claim another title.

Grand Slam final to Djokovic's 33rd, appeared nervous, losing the first set in just 36 minutes.

But he battled back into