



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے رنج ہن مجھ نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے زائد نہ ہو شام سے بیان کیا ان سے فاطمہ نے ان سے انہار ضی اللہ عنہا نے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے سورج کو زمین میں غلام آزاد کرنے کا حکم فرمایا۔ (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 1054)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

No large scale privatization of DISCOs on card: Khurram

Minister for Power Division Khurram Dastgir on Tuesday said currently no large-scale privatization of power distribution companies (DISCOs) was on card adding that efforts were being made to control power sector losses. He was addressing a press conference along with Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb. (Report on Page 8)



Planning minister reviews 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed Ministry for Maritime Affairs, Power Division, Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and China Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd (COPHCL) to ensure 100 percent power consumption to 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project in order to avoid any financial loss to the national exchequer. (Report on Page 3)

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Subsidised flour bags

KARACHI: A large number of people stands in a queue to buying flour bags on subsidised price alongside a road, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Shehbaz, Malaysian PM discuss upcoming moot on Climate Resilient Pakistan



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a telephone conversation with his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim wherein they discussed bilateral relations, flood situation in Pakistan, and upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan taking place on January 9, 2023 in Geneva.

The prime minister felicitated his counterpart on his election as the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the momentum of Pakistan-Malaysia relations and agreed on the importance of regular high-level exchanges to strengthen bilateral dialogue and cooperation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz underscored Pakistan's desire to forge a broad-based relationship with Malaysia with robust political dialogue and trade and economic linkages.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the historic ties between Pakistan and Malaysia anchored in strong economic and trade cooperation.

They discussed the devastating climate-induced floods in Pakistan and the upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan when the international community will come together to support Pakistan's recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

Cabinet okays 'National Energy Conservation Plan'

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Tuesday approved the National Energy Conservation Plan, introducing certain measures to ensure judicious utilization of national resources.

"The approval to the conservation plan has been accorded in line with the advice of the Power Division. It will come into force at once across the country," Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said while unveiling the salient features of the austerity plan here at a media briefing after the cabinet meeting.

He was flanked by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Energy (Power Division) Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Housing and Works Maulana Abdul Wasay, Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and Minister for Defence Production Israr Fareen. Elaborating the main contours

of the plan, Khawaja Asif said restaurants, hotels, and markets would close down by 8:30 p.m. and marriage halls by 10 p.m. "With this initiative, which has been taken in consultation with trade bodies, there will be a saving of around Rs 62 billion [annually]."

He said additional duty would also be imposed on inefficient electric fans, whose production would be halted from July 1, 2023.

The use of energy-efficient fans, which were easily available in the market, would help save Rs 15 billion [annually] as they consumed about 40 to 60 watts of electricity as compared to the old ones consuming about 120 to 130 watts of electricity.

He said there would be a saving of approximately Rs 23 billion [annually] with the use of light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs.

Khawaja Asif said the government was in negotiation with

motorcycle manufacturing companies for the production of electric bikes. "The motorcycles that run on petrol will slowly be phased out. We have already been importing e-bikes and had started negotiations with motorcycle companies for the modification of existing ones [...], this will help save us around Rs 86 billion."

He expressed the hope that with the introduction of e-bikes, the prices of existing motorcycles would considerably decrease. However, the government would ensure a price check on the e-bikes, he added.

If all the energy conserving measures were translated into action, the country would hopefully save billions of rupees, the minister remarked.

He said the Ministry of Information would be running a campaign on social media, electronic and print media to create awareness among the public about the measures being taken

under the austerity plan.

The minister urged the nation to "normalize" its behavioural patterns as the country was in a 'grave economic crisis'. "The country can't afford the culture of waste [available national resources] of its citizens anymore."

He said all stakeholders, including the traders' community, were taken on board about the decisions to be made by the cabinet for the conservation of energy, which would have long-term effects.

The minister underlined that some 29,000 megawatts (MW) electricity was consumed during the summer and 12,000 MW in the winter. Approximately 17,000 MW more electricity was used in the summer, including 5,300 MW by air conditioners and 12,000 MW by fans.

For reducing electricity consumption by fans, the government was working on a programme to introduce energy

efficient fans, he added.

He said President Arif Alvi was also briefed on the plan and he not only supported it but also gave more constructive recommendations.

The minister said the energy conservation plan would be a permanent feature and to be enforced at par with the world.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman said the country was already late to take the decision regarding energy conservation.

"The world has introduced such measures decades ago. The behavioural change is a must and the media support is imperative in this regard. When there is no acceptance from society then it will be difficult to reap its [plan's] benefits," she added.

She said despite decline in water resources the country was among the world top five nations having excessive per capita water usage.

Imran must introspect & issue white paper on his 'evil deeds': Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said instead pointing a finger at others Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan should better introspect and issue a white paper on the corruption, loot and wrongdoings during his four-year misrule.

The minister, in a media talk, rejected the white paper issued by the PTI on the current economic situation, saying those who had pushed the country to the brink of default should be ashamed of themselves for their own "misadventures".

"This is not the white paper rather a record of Imran Khan's own evil deeds which were already being exposed every other day," she said, asking the PTI chief to apologize to the nation for rendering a lot of countrymen unemployed, unleashing extreme inflation, taking record foreign

loans and ruining the national economy during his government from 2018 to April 2022.

The white paper seemed to be an attempt on his part to hide his "sinister deeds", but it would not help legitimize his "family corruption", she added. "Imran Khan should stop staging dramas as the people fully know about his corruption, wrongdoings, loot and plunder, and conspiracies against the country," the minister said.

Marriyum accused Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi of "doing black magic". Their "evil deeds" had put the country on the verge of default.

Pakistan, she added, was progressing at a fast pace and was self-sufficient in energy resources, with wheat flour being sold at Rs 85 per kilogram and sugar at Rs 52 per kg in 2018, but the situation got worsened when a "fascist, propagandist and incompetent person" was imposed on the country.

CEO Digital Ocean called on Federal Minister for Finance

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Yancey Spruill, CEO Digital Ocean called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division today. SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Mahmood Pasha, Secretary Finance, Chairman FBR, Commissioner SECP and other senior officers from Finance Division participated in the meeting.

Mr. Yancey Spruill expressed gratitude to the Finance Minister and shared their business profile and their contribution to the economic development of Pakistan. He also apprised the Finance Minister about their current investment in the country in software development and

enabling medium and cloud computing SMEs. He also showed interest in expanding their business further in Pakistan.

CEO Digital Ocean also apprised the Finance Minister that they have recently acquired Cloudways Pakistan and they are planning to start a training programme for Pakistani youth in the country in collaboration with various universities in order to provide IT skills to enable them to compete in global market. Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomed Mr. Yancey Spruill and shared that Pakistan has a lot of potential in IT sector and the present government is keen to expand the IT industry in order to increase its contribution to the economic development of Pakistan.

Two political families plundering for 30 years, says Imran Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said on Tuesday the two political families had plundered the country for 30 years.

Addressing the party workers on the matter of white paper via video link, the deposed premier expressed his concern over the current situation, saying that he feared the direction in which the country was going. Recalling that there was no example of what happened in the last eight months and adding that, considering the situation, 700,000 people left the country.

Talking about the exports, Mr Khan said there was a dire need to solve the problems of the exporters, claiming that the PML-N left the country in a historical deficit, questioning how the country can be transformed into an "Asian Tiger" and "Paris" for Lahore if exporters were not considered important.

Giving his thoughts on the Inter-



national Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr Khan stated that approaching the IMF would cause the country discomfort, adding that if the country received loans from the IMF, it would be difficult to make independent decisions.

Mr Khan slammed the coalition government, saying those involved in activities such as money laundering were now teaching the country a lesson. He gave reference of the economic survey, saying that after 17 years, it was his govt that delivered for the country with perfection.

Talking about the NSC meeting held yesterday, Mr Khan said that he came to know that it was decided in

Education Ministry asked to submit PC-I for Teacher Training Institute in ICT

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal Tuesday asked the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to submit a PC-I for the establishment of a state-of-the-art Teacher Training Institute in the federal capital.

The minister made these remarks while chairing a roundtable on Inclusive National Curriculum organized by the Ministry of Planning Commission, said a press release issued here.

The roundtable was attended by several education experts who shared their ideas with the minister. "The Planning

Commission will give you a development budget for the Teacher Training Institute in ICT which is the dire need of the hour," said the minister.

The curriculum reforms are much needed because growth and innovation in education lead to progress, said the minister, adding that education had been a core agenda to bring Pakistan on the trajectory of economic development.

He said that National Curriculum Reform was launched under Vision 2025 and in this regard, the National Curriculum Council was also established.

However, he said that the previous government made the reform of the national curriculum 'controversial'.

Federal Cabinet moot

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

FM Bilawal, FM Retno Marsudi exchange views on bilateral ties, global issues



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi on Tuesday exchanged views on the bilateral ties and global issues of mutual interest including Afghan-

istan. On his Twitter handle, the foreign minister said that it was a pleasure talking to the foreign minister of Indonesia. During a telephonic conversation, the foreign minister appreciated Indonesia for its solidari-

ty, continued support for the flood affectees and climate-resilient Pakistan. They also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen Pak-Indonesia relations and work together for women's rights and empowerment, the foreign minister further posted in his tweet.

MQM-P to hold protest rally on Jan 9 over reservations with PPP

News Desk

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has decided to hold a protest rally on January 9 against the non-implementation of an agreement signed with the Pakistan People's Party-led (PPP) Sindh government, ARY News reported on Tuesday, citing sources.

According to details, the decision was taken during workers convention of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's (MQM-P) Rabta Committee held in Karachi. Sources told ARY News that the MQM-P has rejected the delimitations of new constituencies and voter lists ahead of local government (LG) elections, scheduled to take place on January 15.

The political party has also decided to protest against the delimitations of new constitu-

encies. A protest rally will be carried out on January 9 over the non-implementation of agreement signed with PPP-led Sindh government.

Sources further claimed that an MQM-P delegation will also hold meetings today with other political parties – including Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP), Mahajir Qaumi Movement, and Farooq Sattar. The political parties would be invited to participate in the protest rally, sources added. Sources claimed that Rauf Siddiqui – a member of the Rabta Committee – has contacted PSP leadership. The delegation will reach Pakistan House at 09:00 pm.

A day earlier, the talks between the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) remained inconclusive as deadlock persisted on the core issues.



Sources said that the recent meeting between MQM-P and PPP at Bilawal House Karachi remained inconclusive. Moreover, the MQM-P leadership set a condition to contest the local government (LG) polls with new delimitations. The delegation expressed serious reservations about the present delimitations. They said that MQM-P will unveil

its next strategy if LG polls are held on the basis of the present delimitations.

MQM-P demands ECP for new delimitation before Jan 15 Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to complete new delimitation before the local government (LG) polls in Karachi

Suspect behind Islamabad suicide attack identified

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police on Tuesday identified the suicide bomber, who detonated himself in capital's I-10 Sector on December 23, killing a police officer.

According to details, the suicide bomber of the Islamabad attack has been identified as a 22-year-old male named Saqib Uddin, who hailed from Kurram district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In a statement, the police said the bomber was wearing vest laden with 10 to 12 kilograms of explosives. "He [the bomber] travelled to Islamabad from the Karam agency with the intention of a suicide attack.

MQM-P, PSP agree to set aside differences, work together

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) have agreed to set aside all previous differences and progress forward on the political front for Karachi's prosperity.

According to details, the development was announced by MQM-P Convenor Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui while addressing a press conference along with PSP Chairman Mustafa Kamal following a meeting at Pakistan House.

During the meeting, the MQM-P delegation and PSP central leadership discussed political situation and matters related to local government (LG) elections.



The delegation also invited Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) to participate in the protest rally, being held on January 9 against the non-implementation of agreement signed with Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The delegation apprised PSP leadership of rally being held against delimitation of constituencies and voters list.

Both the parties agreed to set aside all previous differences and progress forward on the political front for Karachi's prosperity.

Addressing a press conference, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that it was imperative to unite for the survival of Karachi, noting that local government (LG) elections were necessary for

the city's development.

"The time has come to unite for a common struggle", he said, rejecting the voter lists and delimitation of constituencies.

Taking over the presser, Mustafa Kamal said that no single party can resolve the issues of Karachi. "Only Karachi can bring Pakistan out of economic crisis", Kamal said, adding that ignoring the economic hub would damage the country.

Earlier in the day, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) decided to hold a protest rally on January 9 against the non-implementation of an agreement signed with the Pakistan People's Party-led (PPP) Sindh government.

Pakistan progressing under leadership of Shehbaz Sharif: Murtaza Abbasi

Correspondent

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Tuesday said that Pakistan was progressing towards prosperity under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He expressed these views while talking to the delegations of his constituency at his residence.

The minister said, "We will fulfill all of our election promises, all sui gas provision projects those were started during my previous tenure were capped by the PTI-led government and would be started soon."

He said that the top priority of the PML-N government was to serve and



facilitate the masses during this critical time, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took over during a crucial period to bring the country back on track.

The minister said that in upcoming general elections, PML-N would win not only in the provinces but also would form the federal government.

No large scale privatization of DISCOs on card: Khurram

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Khurram Dastgir on Tuesday said currently no large-scale privatization of power distribution companies (DISCOs) was on card adding that efforts were being made to control power sector losses.

Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minis-

ter for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Housing and Works Maulana Abdul Wasay after the Federal Cabinet meeting.

He said various technical functions including meter reading, collection of billings etc would be privatized. Those DISCOs running in losses were not suitable for privatization, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Yancey Spruill, CEO Digital Ocean called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division on Tuesday. Photo: PID

Prices of 20 medicines reduced up to 30 percent

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Tuesday approved the proposal to reduce the prices of 20 medicines up to 30 percent in order to give relief to the masses.

According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of National Health Services, the federal cabinet made this decision on the recommendation of Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel.

He said that the ratio of price reduction of most medicines remained at 30%, adding that the government had also approved the price fixation of 54 other medicines.

On the occasion, in a statement, Qadir Patel said that this step will give relief to those patients suffering from

various diseases and regularly need related medicines for the treatment of ailments including blood pressure, cancer, eye diseases and other medical complications.

Unfortunately, the past government increased the prices of medicines up to 700 percent, he claimed.

The minister assured that the government was committed to taking innovative steps to ensure the provision of best medical care to the people and was also undertaking measures for ensuring transparency and merit in the affairs of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP).

He said that several innovative steps had been taken in the health sector and ensuring the provision of quality medicines to the people of the country was the top priority of the government.

Azam Swati says following Imran Khan's footsteps



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senator Azam Swati said on Tuesday that he was following PTI chairman Imran Khan's footsteps regarding Pakistan army upon his release from the Capital Investigation Agency (CIA) center.

PTI senators including Shibli Faraz, Saifullah Niazi, Dr Shehzad Waseem, and Seemi Ezzid amid a number of PTI workers welcomed Mr Swati outside the jail.

Speaking to media outside the center, he said his leader [Imran Khan] had, on regime change [PTI's mantra of a foreign conspiracy hatched to oust former Prime Minister Imran Khan], said that "country and also the army is mine" adding those who got First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against him had ruined every institution of the state.

Pakistan Military Officer sues Adil Raja for defamation in UK

Web Desk

LONDON: A senior Pakistan military officer has sued YouTuber and social media activist Adil Raja for defamation at UK's London High Court for running defamatory campaign against him on social media, ARY News reported on Monday.

According to details, the serving military brigade sued Adil Farooq Raja for defamation for running defamatory campaign against him on Twitter and YouTube.

The YouTuber has levelled allegations of involvement in election rigging, horse-trading for General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa and holding secret meetings with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari to manipulate Punjab by-elections. The court papers stated that Adil Raja started his campaign against the serving military brigade on June 14, 2022, when he in a tweet accused the Pakistan military officer of involvement in rigging the Punjab by-elections.

Lawyers have told the UK High Court that allegations levelled by Major ret'd Raja have caused serious harm to their client's reputation.

Hamdard Pakistan (HP) and Excellence Delivered (ExD) inked an agreement

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Hamdard Pakistan (HP) and Excellence Delivered (ExD) inked an agreement to promote innovation and automation of enterprise functions through the effective utilization of SAP S/4 Hana.

The agreement was signed on Tuesday at an event hosted by HP at Hamdard Corporate Head Office. Dr. Arshad Saleem Chief Operating Officer HP and Waqas Shahid—General Manager—ExD signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. Shahryar Pasha, Head of Marketing Division, HP, moderated the event and thanked the distinguished guests from ExD for attending the event.

Directors of different divisions of HP and employees of the Informa-



tion Technology Division participated in the event. Speaking on the occasion, Dr.

Arshad Saleem pointed out that in today's era of global corporate competition, only those organizations are

successful that equip all aspects of their operations, planning, monitoring, controlling, and production with modern management models and technologies. As HP is committed to the growth of the health sector in the country, HP is always proactive in adopting cutting-edge technologies to further strengthen its operational efficiency.

HP has introduced a new eco-friendly tradition in line with its commitment to the environment whereby visiting guests are invited to plant saplings in pots, which are later planted with name plaques in various gardens supervised and managed by HP all over the country. The guests highly appreciated the initiative and pledged that they would also follow this tradition of planting saplings.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visits Dadu



Azad Baloch

DADU: Pakistan People's Party Chairman and Federal Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that money is being given to the Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while Imran Khan stated on TV that he have killed the Taliban here. He settled in the locker.

Talking to the media in Dadu, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that this flood was very historic in Pakistan and till today the flood victims are in trouble. has not yet seen, there is no example that a third of the country was drowned.

He said that this is the doomsday before the doomsday, we are going through this natural calamity, there is still water in some areas of Sindh and Balochistan, where the water has gone, there is destruction, including agriculture and houses. Crisis has arisen in every sector, health infrastructure has been badly damaged, not only in Sindh, education has been damaged in other areas, but only in Sindh, 50% of educational institutions are destroyed, resources are less, recovery from floods. It will take time to complete the mission.

In response to a question, the Foreign Minister said that money is being given to the Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was released, I will not forgive the terrorists, nor will the nation forgive him.

Bilawal Bhutto criticized Imran Khan and said that one-third of the country sank but Imran Khan did not stop his ego and stubbornness, such a person is not qualified to represent the people.

Legal action against illicit activities

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: The Deputy Commissioner, Imran Hamid Sheikh paid a surprise visit at Munianwala Bridge on Canal Expressway and reviewed the problems faced by the residents of Chak 197, 198 and 199 regarding U turn issues. He called Deputy Director Development Rana Tahir on the spot and ordered to prepare a feasibility report regarding the opening of the existing bridge to provide them all possible facilities to the residents of this area.

He also met with the concerned residents of Chak and assured them that the district administration would solve their problems and in this regard instructions have been issued to the concerned departments while appropriate steps will also be taken to provide U-turn facilities on the road.

Over 70 acres of state lands retrieved in different districts

News Desk

LAHORE: In compliance with the orders issued by regional offices of the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab on public complaints to recover state lands from squatters, the administration has taken action in various districts and retrieved a total of 70 acres four Kanal and as many marla government lands from the illegal occupants. The total market value of retrieved land is Rs.101 million.

The spokesman of the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab disclosed this in a statement issued on Tuesday.

The spokesman added that the Jhang administration has recovered a total of 49 acres, seven Kanal and 13 marla government lands of 8,52,57,500 rupees from different occupants. This action has been taken at the direction of the ombudsman office.

In another development, the spokesman reported that the ombudsman office interacted to recover one Kanal land of four million rupees in Faisalabad, two Kanal 10 marla land worth three million rupees in Bahawalpur, 142 Kanal and three marla land of over Rs.6.25 million in Rajanpur and nine Kanal agricultural land in Khanewal with a market value of Rs.2.5 million.

Orphans and Widows Support Program

President Women Wing (PPP) and Member Provincial Assembly (Sindh), Faryal Talpur along with Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Amir Fida Paracha giving away the initial payment to a deserving widow under "Orphans and Widows Support Program".



Photo: PID

Non-profit GCT holds fun galas in Hyderabad to entertain over 733 orphan students

News Desk

HYDERABAD: The non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) has organized fun gala in Hyderabad for over 733 orphan students enrolled in its charitable schools in deprived areas of 17 districts of Sindh. Overall GCT has 2000 plus Orphan students in its existing Orphan Support program.

The fun gala was held at Rani Bagh and attended by over 733 orphan students from schools in 15 districts of Sindh. A similar event will be held in Sukkur on January 7 to be attended by 130 orphan students of schools in three districts. Sindh Local Government Minister, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, will likely be the chief guest on the occasion. Previously, the daylong fun gala in Karachi was held



at Dreamworld Resort that was attended by 1,100 orphan students from GCT's schools in Karachi, Thatta, and Ghara.

GCT is providing school education to deserving communities for the past 29 years. Presently GCT has a network of 160 plus schools in deprived areas, all over the remote Sindh. GCT

is providing school education to 29,000 plus deserving students. GCT's Orphan Support program for 2000 plus orphan students is one of the additional states of the art program in addition to school education services. Trustees of GCT, concerned donors, philanthropists, well-wishers, and patrons of the GCT attended

the event in large numbers. ICNA Canada and many other philanthropists are actively supporting GCT for its OSP program. GCT is also one of the active partner with Sindh Education Foundation.

GCT CEO, Zahid Saeed, said that his charity was more than willing to join hands with the Sindh Government for the revival of schooling in the backward rural areas devastated by recent floods. He said the GCT had been running a network of 160 charitable schools having an enrollment of 29,000 students from the underprivileged areas of Sindh. He said the GCT had the aim to increase the number of its charitable schools to 250 with an enrollment of a total of 100,000 out-of-school children till 2025.

Plot to fan sectarian riots in Sindh

Special Report

HYDERABAD: Nazim and Anjuman & Imambargah Syed-e-Sajjad (A.H.) Hyderabad, Ghulam Mohammad Panhwar, has demanded immediate dismissal of SHO Gulab Laghari Police Station, Qurban Mallah.

In a statement issued here Tuesday, he strongly condemned the act of throwing 'Mimbar-e-Rasool (SAAW)' out of the Auqaf Department mosque adjacent to Dargah Bibi Mahem (S.A.) in Agamkot by some miscreants under the patronage of SHO Gulab Laghari Qurban Mallah.

He termed this heinous act as the blasphemy on their part and an effort to fan religious riot throughout the Sindh province.

He called upon the Chief Minister of Sindh, Home Secretary of Sindh and the IGP Sindh to immediately dismiss SHO Gulab Laghari Police Station, Qurban Mallah and take legal action against him and all other miscreants involved in this incident under the Blasphemy Act without any loss of time.

Newly appointed DPO made an emergency visit to Wana

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: According to details District Police Officer South Waziristan Shabbir Hussain Shah paid an emergency visit to Sub-Division Wana headquarter after assuming charge.

All the SHOs including DSP HQ and DSP Circle in Wana received a warm welcome from the officials.

The DPO took a detailed briefing about the security of the ongoing polio campaign and expressed satisfaction.

DPO gave clear instructions and said that there will be no compromise on polio campaign security

Full-proof security should be ensured for all the teams, under

the supervision of all the security personnel, the entrance and exit routes will be blocked, and suspicious persons should be kept a close eye.

Negligence in this regard will not be tolerated in any case after the DPO visited the most sensitive places including blockades on the entrance and exit routes of the city and made a detailed assessment of the security situation. He encouraged them to meet the security officials and issued instructions to provide all possible facilities.

The DPO visited the police station city Wana, which was affected by the terrorist attack, where the SHO Wana city issued orders to immediately remove the old sandbags and



install new sandbags in view of the security of the police station and made a detailed review of the security of the police station and encouraged the personnel present in the police station, said the DPO that Waziristan Police

is a professional force consisting of brave men and officers which I am proud and happy to command

Undoubtedly, Waziristan Police has emerged as the best force in a short period of time

and is capable of dealing with the most difficult situations with determination and they have proved that Waziristan Police is ready to face all kinds of situations.

The morale of the police men is high. Our morale has not been lowered by the martyrdoms, nor will it be in the future to further improve the force, it will soon be equipped with more modern weapons and all facilities will be provided.

The men of our force will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to maintain law and order and to protect the honor, life and property of the people. We have stood in front of all difficult situations before and inshallah we will always stand.

AJK President lauds Khubaib Foundation's welfare work



Abdul Majid Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry while praising Khubaib Foundation (KF) for its unprecedented role and welfare work has said that it had been serving humanity worldwide.

While talking to a delegation of Khubaib Foundation UK that called him here on Tuesday. The delegation was comprised of members of the British House of Lords and the British Parliament.

Speaking on the occasion, the president while referring to the dire situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) said that it was heartening to see that the KF was doing great job but it was high time that the foundation should focus on the plight of Kashmiris in IIOJ&K and play its role to help stop bloodshed and violence in the region.

Terming Kashmir as the biggest humanitarian issue, Barrister Sultan urged the visiting delegates to raise their voice in support of suffering humanity in Kashmir and play their due role in putting an immediate end to human rights violations being committed by the Indian troops.

The president said that collective efforts were required to raise the issue of Kashmir effectively at international level.

He said that the atrocities inflicted

on Kashmiris in IIOJ&K and Indian tyranny have reached at their peak.

He said that members of the British House of Lords and the British Parliament should play their part and raise the issue at every important forum. Urging world community to play its role in resolving the lingering dispute, he said, "Kashmir is not a geographical problem, but it is all about the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people", he added.

On this occasion, the members of the delegation appreciated Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's efforts to highlight the Kashmir issue at international level.

The delegation included Lord Wajid Khan, Member of the British House of Lords, Lord Qurban Hussain, Member of the British House of Lords, Imran Hussain, Member of the British Parliament and Shadow Minister, Mirza Khalid Mahmood, Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, Executive Chair of Regeneration and Environment Overview Committee Kamran Hussain, General Secretary Pakistan Press Club UK Arshad Rachiyal, Chairman Overseas Pakistan Global Foundation Zahir Ahmed Mehr, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International Raja Najabat Hussain, Chairman Slack Asian Majid Nazir, President Khajib Foundation UK Ayman Majid, Vice President Khubaib Foundation UK Hamas Majid, Chairperson of Pakistan Organization of Worker Education and Rights America Tahira Muhammad, Nawabuddin, Syed Ali Kamran Kirmani, Chairman Khubaib Foundation Nadeem Ahmed Khan, Afzal Butt and others.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 3:34 pm
Maghrib 5:12 pm
Isha 6:40 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

AIOU introduces ALP-Middle Tech program

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has introduced Middle Tech Program under Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in collaboration with JICA and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. This program is intended to help those children/youths who could not attend a school or dropped out of school due to any reason and are willing to pursue education. Students enrolled in this program will be able to complete their required education in a relatively short time.

Admissions in the ALP-Middle Tech program will be offered in the admission of semester spring 2023 starting from January 15. Students will be taught through blended learning with the help of technology. Initially, this program is being offered in selected cities. More information about the Middle Tech program is available at the university's regional offices across the country.

AIOU is also offering e-commerce skills and online courses including Virtual Assistant (Amazon), Virtual Trader (Alibaba) Shopify drop shipping and others in collaboration with BF Technologies to empower the youth.

Planning minister reviews 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed Ministry for Maritime Affairs, Power Division, Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and China Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd (COPHCL) to ensure 100 percent power consumption to 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project in order to avoid any financial loss to the national exchequer.

The minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting to review the progress of 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project, said a press release issued here. The meeting was attended by the Chairman COPHCL, Chairman GPA and other relevant stakeholders. The project was conceived under the

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2016 that would cater to the needs of some 150,000 local people by the end of 2023.

The project aimed at improving the reliability of the local power supply that would help gradually solve the problems in current economic development and urban construction in the Gwadar region, which is being restricted by the shortage of power.

Earlier, the minister had directed the COPHCL to provide the exact demand of the electricity for Gwadar Free Zone and share a 10-year plan for electricity consumption by Gwadar Free Zone Company in order to establish the exact electricity utilization of 300 MW Coal Fired Power Project at Gwadar. During the meeting, the minister also directed the Power Division



to review the project and address impediments in order to achieve COD in January 2025. It is noted that all major projects under CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, the

New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China-Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project,

Gwadar Free Zone, and Gwadar Port would become a shining pearl in the region.

Ahsan Iqbal said the government was already working on a project of two transmission lines from Iran which would increase the demand of electricity.

The incumbent government had revived all the CPEC Projects since it came into power in April last year. The previous government had stopped these projects.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif already assured his Chinese counterparts that CPEC was the top priority of the incumbent government and the recent Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was one of the examples in which both sides had agreed to revive several development projects, he added.

Unhygienic food

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is selling unhygienic food alongside a road at Ganjmandi area in the city, which needs attention of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online

Khawaja Asif says the cabinet meeting in a symbolic action also held without electricity

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD : The federal government approved on Tuesday the energy conservation plan that will enforce the closure of markets at 8:30pm and wedding halls at 10pm.

Flanked by ministers Sherry Rehman, Khurram Dastgir and Mairiyum Aurangzeb, the defence minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed to decrease the electricity consumption of all public departments by 30 per cent.

Mr Asif said the federal cabinet meeting in a symbolic action was also held without the use of any electricity. He hoped that the measures would Rs62 billion of the country, facing financial crunches amid depleting foreign exchange reserves.

The government also decided



to impose ban on manufacturing of incandescent bulbs from Feb 1, 2023, he said, adding that additional taxes would be imposed to discourage their import.

The minister went on to say that all government buildings and offices, including courts, would be shifted to efficient energy under the conversation plan.

Mr Asif also announced the production of inefficient electric would be halted by July 1 as they consume extra power.

"Inefficient fans use around 120-130 watts of electricity. Across the globe, fans are available that use 60-80 watts," he said, adding that the import duty on "inefficient" fans would also be hiked. Khawaja Asif said that the

government is also bringing a building code for the construction sector as the maintenance cost of cement, iron and glass is very high.

The minister also announced that e-bikes will be introduced countrywide.

"We are slowly shifting to electric bikes. People will be facilitated by financing via dealers to shift to these facilities," said the minister. He added that Pakistan is using oil worth \$3 billion annually.

The minister also announced that the cabinet has directed the formation of a committee to submit a report on implementing work from home in offices. "Similarly, we have also decided to make the use of conical geysers mandatory within a year. These geysers use less gas and this way we will be able to save Rs92 billion."

SC permits ECP to continue contempt proceedings against Imran, others

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday allowed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to continue its proceedings against former prime minister Imran Khan, Asad Umar and Chaudhry Fawad Hussain in cases related to the contempt of the institution.

The apex court also instructed the ECP to take a decision on the objections of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as per the law.

The court, in its order, observed that no high court of the country had stopped the ECP from continuing its proceedings. The high



courts of Sindh and Lahore had only stopped the ECP from issuance of the final decision.

It further stated that the Election Act 2017 empowered the ECP for such proceedings. The PTI had challenged the powers of the ECP.

The orders were passed by a three-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Ayesha A Malik.

Punjab govt rejects centre's decision of early closure of markets, wedding halls

Bureau Report

LAHORE : Punjab government on Tuesday rejected federal government's decision to close markets at 8:30pm and wedding halls at 10pm.

Provincial minister Aslam Iqbal said the matter would be raised in the federal cabinet adding the federal government must have moved the proposal to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) before enforcing it. "The economy is already in doldrums", he added.

He said we rejected imported government's decision as it was taken in haste. "All stakeholders will be taken onboard regarding the decision", he added.

Earlier, the federal government had announced to close markets and wedding halls early in the night in a bid to conserve energy ultimately saving the country Rs.62 billion.



The government also decided to impose ban on manufacturing of incandescent bulbs from Feb 1, 2023, he said, adding that additional taxes would be imposed to discourage their import.

The minister went on to say that all government buildings and offices, including courts, would be shifted to efficient energy under the conversation plan.

Mr Asif also announced the production of inefficient electric would be halted by July 1 as they consume extra power.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday 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 G-6, Malik Altaf, Zia Masjid, Tufail Shaheed, Marvi, G-8, Tiramari, Highway, F-10 Park, G-9/4, H-8, Police Line, Belaur, New Shahullah Dutta, Pindi Point, Kohala, Pearl Cantonment, Kotli Sattian, Balawara, Trat, Anguri, Shahpur, Shahdara, Mangate, Desto, T&T, Trat, Bhara Kaho. II, Golf City, NCP, Mengyal, Iqbal Street, Peer Suhawah, Quaid-e-Azam University, Punjab House, Bri Imam, Mandala, Athal Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle 4th Road, E-Block, Commercial Centre, Shamsabad, Khurram Colony, Gulzar Quaid, Service Road, Zafarul Haq, Arya Mohalla, Forah Chowk, Mingtal, Ali Market, Sardar Bagh, People's Colony, Askari XI, Officer Colony, G-15, G-15/1&4, Bhadana, Saham, Range Road, BB Shaheed Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt. Circle, Bank Road, Jahangir Road, Rahmatnabad-1, Car Chowk, Model Town, Jhanda, Major Riaz, Humayun, State Bank, Khasala, Defense Road, Murt, UC Lakhani, Dhok Awan, Bhandar Builders, Nad, Kambili Sadiq, New Chua, Fazal Ahmed, Banjar, Hamid Jhangi, Industrial, Sukho, Syed Kasran, Gagan, Shahigan, Adiala Jail, Shahpur, Khasala, Park View, Pindi Borar, Fuji Foundation Hospital, Morg. Ah Feeders, Attock Circle, Jalala, Sher Shah Suri, Ghazi Kohli, Wahdat Colony, Kala Khan, Sangjani, Pind Padian, Purmiana, Ghari Afghanistan, Islampura, Barazai, Visa, Dar es Salaam, Qaziabad, Tin Mela, Musa, Kharpa, Soni, Chhaji Mar, Murt, Nada, Mahfooz Shaheed, Galyal, Gagan Feeders, Chakwal Circle Bhawan, Line Park, Jamal Wall, Color Kahar, Islamia Chowk, Doultala, Dhedyal City, Mulhal Mughlan, Chakaral, Rizwan Textiles, Basharat, Duffer, Toba, Kachhari, Abdul-lahpur, Kot Chaudharyan, DS Bilawal, Dhok Ghazan, Malkwal, Jatla, Pera Fatial, Tho Amharan Khan, Badhial, Patwali Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Abbaspora, Zubair Shaheed, F-3 Gul Afshan, Bolani, Pran., F-6 Machine Mahalla, F-9 Chak Daulat, M Riaz Shaheed, Dinah. 1 Bakrala, Domeli, New Sanghui, Mumtaz Shaheed, Mankiala, Ghori Dhamek, Baba Shaheed, Chhapar Sharif, Galiana, Kangar Thati Feeders, GSO Circle, From 09 AM:00 to 01:00 PM Commercial Centre, Farooq Azam, 4th Road, E Block, Shaheed M Deen, Abu Bakr, Abdul Rehman, 6th Road, T&T, Asgarmal, B Block, New Milpur, Shukrila, Jami Masjid Road, C Block, Affendi Colony, Syedpur Road, Faizabad, Sadiqabad, Noor Mohammad Road, Dhok Khaba, Malikabad, Cricket Stadium, Shamsabad., National Market, Ghausia Colony, PTCL, Haidari Chowk, Tariq Shaheed, Urology Center feeders From 08:00 am to 02:00 pm Jajiabad, Nar, City 2 feeders and surrounding areas.

Weapon handling course organized for police officials

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: An online weapon handling and special tactics was organized at security division Islamabad with the coordination of China Embassy in Islamabad, a police public relations officer said.

He said that special courses for capacity building of Islamabad Capital Police officials are being organized on the special directions of the IGP Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan.

The participants of the course were briefed by the officials of the Consulate of China Embassy about the dispersion of any crowd and effective security system.

ASP Muhammad Zeeshan from Frontier Constabulary highlighted the importance of the course to the police officials who participated in the course. The objective of the course is to acquire knowledge about modern weapons and anti-riot equipment and to ensure its effective use.

The official of the Consulate General of China said that such various courses will continue in the future. At the end of the course, the Consulate General of China was thanked and expressed to organize such courses in the future.

CTP issues 204,339 driving licenses during 2022

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi issued 204,339 driving licenses during 2022.

According to a Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan, a total of 148,271 citizens got learner permits from the department while 12,190 applicants were issued new licenses besides 1751 international licenses during last year.

He said that 37,221 driving licenses were renewed during the period besides 3337 of other districts of the province.

He said that 838 citizens got duplicate licenses while 731 licenses were also endorsed.

The four licensing facilities of the city including of CTP headquarters and six set up in 'Khidmat Marakaz' of the tehsils were providing all driving licensing services to the citizens.

The CTP Licensing Branch had been directed to ensure merit and transparency, CTO said adding, the CTP were issuing computerized driving licenses under a transparent procedure.

He said that in order to provide driving license facility to the residents at tehsil level, CTP had inaugurated driving license facilities in six tehsils of the district.

The CTP Licensing Branch was providing all services under one roof at One Window Operation of CTP headquarters.

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Eco-degradation endangering biodiversity, food security

Dr Saeed Ahmad Ali

Ecosystem degradation through the depletion of natural resources like water, air, soil and habitat is bringing about destructive effects on the environment endangering biodiversity, wildlife and food security. With the rising population and availability of meager resources to excel in this domain, the environmental issues continued to aggravate over the years.

Massive tree cutting resulting in floods, using agricultural land for housing societies and ill-planned cities and towns have further aggravated the situation. Therefore, the natural resources that provide the basis of our existence are massively under pressure as we witness the water table going down rapidly and agricultural land shrinking due to unruly construction.

According to recent World Bank findings, climate change-related disasters have affected over 75 million Pakistanis during the last three decades in terms of agriculture and bio-diversity damages incurring estimated losses of over \$ 29 billion (roughly \$ 1 billion per annum). As Pakistan is a signatory to numerous international agreements and protocols, there was a dire need to focus on this area diligently.

Therefore, the present government efficiently pleaded the case of develop-

ing nations at the Conference of Parties (CoP-27) held in Egypt this November and sailed through successfully in getting created multi-billion funds to cope with climate change challenges. "Agriculture and bio-diversity play a critical role in Development

"Eco-degradation and climate change are issues of our major concern as Pakistan are among the most vulnerable countries to these phenomena." He said climate change is also a major threat to our food security as it is seriously affecting agriculture, forests, and fisheries. "Increasing sea level is another threat that may

submerge many parts of coastal areas in Sindh province badly affecting Indus delta and highly productive cropping areas." He said modern agriculture is characterized by input-intensive practices with enhanced usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. "This tendency has also badly affected our land's natural fertility and contaminated groundwater." To avert these damages, Asad Imran pleaded to use organic fertilizers and

develop insects' resistant seed varieties.

"Ecological degradation may lead us to food insecurity by reducing agricultural productivity." Likewise, bio-diversity has significant value for humanity at all levels because of its role in ecosystem services. In future, it is expected to cause a major loss of some species and changes in genetic biodiversity. "It is affecting our lifeline - the water resource - as we see the water table going down and reducing canal water availability for irrigation," Imran said. "It may also alter our agriculture output including the seasonality of crops' quality and productivity, caused by plant diseases and pest attacks."

Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in its report on the world's biodiversity has warned all countries that all species supporting the food systems and sustaining people, would not be recovered if lost once. It stated that out of some 6,000 plant species cultivated for food and contributing to global food output, only nine species account for 66 per cent of total crop production. "Eco-degradation is affecting our overall crop productivity. Even a one-degree increase in tempera-

ture directly affects productivity and South Asian countries are the worst affected," said noted environmentalist Dr Mahmood Khalid Qamar.

"Despite being rich in natural resources, Pakistan is still a victim to environmental degradation and we need immediate measures to avert its damages," he said. Since 32 per cent of our population lives in urban areas and if the current growth rate of urbanization continues, the country's urban population will surpass its rural population within the upcoming decade.

"Our green cover is rapidly vanishing. Massive tree-cutting results in land erosion and aggravates floods as we recently witnessed," said Javeria Qais, a climate expert at the University of Central Punjab (UCP). "Recurrence of recent flood phenomenon may again damage our most needed crops like maize, sugar cane, cotton and rice. This may land us in serious trouble in terms of food security," Javeria said.

As Pakistan expressed gratitude for creating the "Loss and Damage Fund" for climate justice, Punjab Secretary of Environment Usman Ali Khan has urged collective efforts to cope with environmental and climate change challenges. He said the Punjab government has chalked out strict measures to control eco-degradation and environmental issues including action against smoke-emitting vehicles and industrial units.

Al-Aqsa compound: Jerusalem's flashpoint holy site

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound, or the Temple Mount for Jews, is a highly sensitive site sacred to both Islam and Judaism in the Old City of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem.

On Tuesday, Israel's extreme-right firebrand Itamar Ben-Gvir visited the compound for the first time since becoming national security minister last month, enraging Palestinians who see the move as a provocation.

The third-holiest site in Islam and the holiest site for Jews, it is a powder keg where the slightest incidents can degenerate into sometimes deadly clashes.

The 14-hectare (35-acre) rectangular esplanade at the southeast corner of the Old City was seized by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, along with the rest of east Jerusalem which was later annexed in a move never recognised internationally.

Israel considers all of Jerusalem as its indivisible capital, but the Palestinians want the eastern sector, which includes the Old City and its sacred sites, as the capital of their future state.

Known to Muslims as Al-Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary), the compound houses the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, a famous golden shrine.

Believed to be where the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven on a winged horse, it is the third-holiest site in Islam after Mecca's Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, both in Saudi Arabia.

The compound in its current form was built in the seventh century by Islam's second caliph, Omar, on the site of the Second Jewish Temple that was destroyed by the Romans around 70 AD.

Some ultra-nationalist Jews, who want to begin building a Third Temple at the site, have been caught praying at the esplanade, causing tensions with Muslim worshippers.

The site is a lightning rod in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

In 1996, an Israeli decision to open a new entrance to the west of the esplanade sparked clashes that left more than 80 people dead in three days.

A controversial visit to the esplanade in September 2000 by then right-wing opposition leader Ariel Sharon was one of the main triggers for the second Palestinian intifada, an uprising that lasted from 2000 to 2005.

The day after Sharon's visit Israeli police shot dead seven Palestinian protesters in clashes.

In 2017, the compound was temporarily closed after three Arab Israelis opened fire at Israeli police near the site, killing two of them, before fleeing into the compound, where they were shot dead by security forces.

Two years later, clashes between police and worshippers at the compound left dozens of Palestinians wounded during important Jewish and Muslim commemorations.

In 2021, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the esplanade was again the scene of clashes between Israeli police and Muslim worshippers, events that led up to an 11-day war between the Palestinian militant group Hamas and Israel.

In the spring of 2022, the site saw renewed clashes that left hundreds of Palestinians wounded.



Events that had world on edge in 2022 - I

Abdullah Bin Shehzad

2022 was a year filled with a mix of good and bad memories. On the positive side, many people were able to reunite with their loved ones after a difficult year of social distancing and quarantine. In addition, there were several significant achievements and milestones in various fields such as scientific research and technological advancement. However, the year also brought its share of challenges and hardships. Natural disasters, political tensions and ongoing health crises continue to affect communities around the world. Overall, 2022 was a year of both triumph and tragedy, with moments of joy and sorrow interwoven throughout the year.

Murree Hills Incident
 The year started with the horrendous news that at least 23 tourists, mostly families, tragically froze to death after being stuck in their cars for hours due to snowstorm and no serious rescue efforts in Murree Hills on Jan 7.

They were reported to have died because help couldn't reach them in time. It seemed as if nobody even knew they were trapped under many feet of thick snow. Media, eyewitnesses and survivors blamed the administration's ulterior motives and the greed of the local businessmen for the tragedy.

The tragedy befell the hill station after record-heavy snowfall. Secondly, the unregulated and obviously enormous influx of snowfall enthusiasts' vehicles led to severe traffic jams, trapping travellers in idle cars. The victims mostly died either of cold or

carbon monoxide poisoning, while waiting for the rescue that reached them when it was too late.

Russia-Ukraine War
 Another big news that made the headlines across the world was the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

During the period, Pakistan's then prime minister Imran Khan visited Russia and he was slammed by the media and political leaders.

Russian forces invaded the neighbouring country by land, air and sea on Feb 24, which was dubbed as the biggest attack by one state against another in Europe since World War II.

Lahore Qalandars win maiden PSL Trophy
 Lahore Qalandars' long drought ends with PSL 2022 as Shaheen Shah Afridi led team to win the final match of the seventh edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium back in February this year.

Multan Sultan gave them a tough time but Qalandars finished in style. With last win, all six franchises of country's top cricket league become champions at least one time.

Noor Mukadam case verdict
 The heart-wrenching murder of 27-year-old Noor Mukadam by Zahir Jaffer in Islamabad's upscale neighbourhood on July 20, 2021, sent shockwaves across the country. The incident sparked nationwide outrage and calls for justice for Noor, resulting in a successful trial and eventual conviction of her murderer.

The trial of the high-profile case continued for four months and eight days after which the court finally reached a decision on Feb 24. It was a sigh of relief for millions of

Pakistanis who had their eyes fixed on their TV screens to see Jaffer and his facilitators convicted and penalised.

Imran Khan's ouster as PM
 In a historic first for Pakistan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was ousted as the prime minister through a no-confidence motion on April 10.

The day was extremely thrilling due to the uncertainty about the result of the political move against Khan as the process saw multiple delays spanning over 12 hours.

However, it wasn't just about the day of the no-confidence motion as the entire campaign to overthrow Khan kept the people glued to their TVs and gadgets.

Punjab Assembly ruckus and CM's election
 Following the change of government in Centre, the Punjab Assembly saw violence and ruckus, marring the session before Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hamza Shehbaz was elected as the chief minister on April 16. During the session, the PTI and PML-Q lawmakers threw "lotas" at then deputy speaker Dost Mazari and attacked him.

The brawl in the Punjab Assembly was seen live by people on their TV sets for hours.

PTI long march
 Following his ouster, Imran Khan led his party's first long march of the year on May 25, calling for the dissolution of assemblies and a date for a fresh election. The day, the long march kicked off, saw a lot of political drama and violence across the country as many PTI workers were killed, several injured and hundreds arrested in the government's bid to restrain the marchers from entering Islamabad.

To be concluded

Enrollment of street children
 Fakhra Alam

Working against the time, Asad Khan, hardly a 12-year-old mechanic, was busy like a honeybee repairing water geysers, batteries, heaters and other electric appliances scattered all around him in his small workshop to meet the placed orders in wake of declining mercury levels in Peshawar. He starts working from early morning till sunset at his maternal uncle's workshop to earn two times bread for his family at Pabbi station, Nowshera.

The motivated youngster had entered the electronics repairing work three years back to financially support his seven-member family due to poverty. After three-year expertise in fixing pipes of electric and gas geysers, Asad was called 'Ustad' [master] by his maternal uncle Sadaqat Khan and fellow mechanics.

"I had left school at class V to support my poor ailing parents and meet the education's expenses of my two young brothers and as many sisters," Asad told APP while narrating his ordeal of labour. Earning about Rs 500 per day from his shop, Asad also provides home services to make some extra money to assist his poor father in meeting the domestic expenses including electricity and gas bills, besides the educational expenses of his siblings.

The young boy has the desire to get a diploma in electrical engineering from an institute for employment abroad, however, the financial position is a hurdle for him to accomplish his dream.

Like Asad Khan, there are thousands of out-of-school children (OSC) in the province due to socio-economic imbalances, lack of coordination between government departments, unavailability of transportation to schools, especially for girls, and early child-age marriages.

According to a survey of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) 2021, there are about 22.8 million OSCs in the country including 4.7 million children aged between 5 to 16 years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The survey revealed that the OSC included 2.9 million girls and one million belonged to merged tribal districts. Similarly, 74.4 per cent of girls and 38.5 per cent of boys are out of school in the province. Besides 77 percent reported OSC in Palas Kolai, 70 percent in Upper Kohistan and 69 percent in Lower Kohistan, there are about 61 percent such

children in Torghar, 55pc in Shangla, 53 percent in Lakki Marwat and 51 percent each in Tank and Batagram districts.

In merged areas, 66 percent of children are out-of-school in North Waziristan, 63 percent in Bajaur, 61 percent in South Waziristan, 51 percent each in Mohmand and Khyber and 47 percent each in Kurram and Orakzai and bringing them under school net is a big challenge for the provincial government.

Terming the BISP's survey findings as alarming, PML-N KP spokesperson and member provincial assembly Ikhtair Wali claimed that it negates tall claims of the PTI government regarding an increase in children's enrollment and uniform education policy.

He said neither promises of uniform education were fulfilled nor the dual education system was abolished in the province, adding that private schools continued sucking the blood of millions of people with a roaring increase in tuition fees.

Taking cognizance of the high ratio of OSC, the BISP has started Education Scholarship programme to motivate parents to enroll their children and decrease the dropout rate. Under this programme, Rs 1500 per three months were being provided to boys and Rs 2,000 to girls at primary level, Rs 2500 for boys and Rs 3000 for girls at secondary level, whereas Rs 3500 boy and Rs 4000 per girl at higher secondary school level.

Syed Shahab Khan, Senior Planning Officer, Education Department said that a "Rs 3.7 billion project" had been planned for providing educational stipends to students of class 1-12 and Rs 500 million for school bags and stationary in merged areas.

He said 200 alternate learning pathways centers would be opened for children aged 9-16 for OSC while Rs 3 billion would be spent on converting two-room schools to six rooms besides converting mosque schools into schools. The construction of 100 new primary schools was proposed for the upcoming fiscal year while 150 middle schools to secondary schools in settled districts would be built.

He said a one billion rupees project was proposed for the "establishment of early childhood education programme" to be executed next fiscal year. Shahram Khan Tarkai, Minister for Education, told APP that the second shift was started for OSC in government schools.

PM, UAE President reaffirm to further diversify Pak-UAE special bilateral ties

Diplomat Correspondent

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Tuesday reiterated their mutual commitment to further expand and diversify special bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE.

During a telephonic conversation, the prime minister thanked the UAE president for the financial and material support to Pakistan after the recent devastation caused by climate-induced floods in Pakistan, PM Office Media Wing said statement.



The prime minister briefed him on the upcoming 'International

Conference on Resilient Pakistan', to be held in Geneva on January 9 and

solicited his support for high-level participation from the UAE.

President Sheikh Mohamed expressed UAE's whole-hearted support for the initiatives to strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience which is the main agenda of the conference.

The prime minister also reiterated an invitation to the UAE president for a visit to Pakistan.

"Pakistan and the UAE enjoy close fraternal ties for five decades that are rooted firmly in common belief and shared values and culture. The UAE is Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East and a major source of investments," the statement further added.

People in Pakistan pay tribute to General Soleimani, resistance martyrs



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Simultaneous with the third martyrdom anniversary of Iranian Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani and Iraqi top commander Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, glorious gatherings have been held in the Pakistani cities of Islamabad and Karachi to commemorate the martyrs of the resistance movement.

The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad hosted a seminar called

"The Commemoration of Martyrs of Resistance Movement" on Tuesday.

The seminar was held to introduce different aspects of sublime characteristics of martyrs of the Islamic world and the resistance movement to the world. Iran's diplomats as well as some Shia and Sunni thinkers, political and religious figures, university professors, and cultural celebrities took part in the event.

Iran's consulate in the Pakistani city of Karachi also held a conference on the fight against Islamophobia and



terrorism in the presence of religious and political figures, elite, and media operators.

Some pundits made comments on the special role of the martyrs of the resistance movement, reviewing the significance of the resistance in defending the Islamic world and the oppressed nations of the region.

Pakistani elite paid tribute to the martyrs, condemned the United States' unilateral acts in the region, and ruled out the Zionist regime's plot to pursue the so-called normalization with the

regional states.

Some Pakistani poets recited poems on the characteristics of Martyr Soleimani in Persian and Urdu languages.

Abdullah Gul, a Pakistani political activist, addressed the audience saying that the enemies of Iran have always hatched plots against the country.

At the behest of former US President Donald Trump, General Soleimani and al-Muhandis were assassinated by American drones near Baghdad Airport on January 3, 2020.

Beijing slams 'unacceptable' Covid rules on travellers from China



Spokesman Report

BELJING :China on Tuesday condemned fresh Covid test requirements by around a dozen countries on passengers travelling abroad from its territory, warning it could take "countermeasures" in response.

The United States, Canada, France and Japan are among a number of countries that now require travellers from China to show a negative Covid test before arrival, as the country faces a surge in cases.

"Some countries have taken entry restrictions targeting only Chinese travellers," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular brief-

ing. "This lacks scientific basis and some practices are unacceptable," she added, warning China could "take countermeasures based on the principle of reciprocity".

China is seeing a steep rise in infections after years of harsh zero-Covid restrictions were abruptly loosened last month with little warning or preparation, and hospitals and crematoriums have been quickly overwhelmed.

In late December, Beijing said inbound travellers would no longer be required to quarantine, sending many Chinese people rushing to plan long-awaited trips abroad.

Will tensions between North and South Korea get even worse?

News Desk

SOUL :South Korea called for joint nuclear exercises with the US on Monday, following another round of North Korean ballistic missile tests that capped a record-breaking 2022. Will tensions between the two Koreas escalate to the breaking point in 2023?

After a year marked by repeated North Korean missile tests, the start of 2023 is looking an awful lot like 2022 - with Pyongyang conducting yet another short-range missile test on January 1. This came after North Korea closed the year with three tests on New Year's Eve.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called on Sunday for an "exponential" increase in the country's nuclear arsenal this year, including by mass producing nuclear-tipped missiles. In his speech, the North Korean dictator also explicitly described South Korea as a "target".

This is very telling, said Christoph Bluth, an expert on the two Koreas at the University of Bradford, because Pyongyang historically avoided the term because

it needed to maintain the idea of the "reunification of two brotherly peoples".

Several events from the past few days show that "we are in an avery worrying situation" when it comes to North Korea, said Danilo delle Fave, an associate researcher at the International Team for the Study of Security in Verona.

The first such event was North Korea sending five drones into South Korean airspace on December 27, defying Seoul's air defence system. "North Korea wanted to prove that it could demonstrate success in this field - which its southern neighbour hasn't yet done, even though South Korea has a technological advantage," Bluth said.

Then South Korean President Yoon Seok-yeol gave an interview with newspaper Chosun Ilbo published on Monday, in which he said that the US's "nuclear umbrella" and "extended deterrence" no longer suffice to reassure South Koreans. Yoon startled many observers by calling for joint nuclear exercises with the US.

"This doesn't mean that Seoul is planning to acquire nucle-

ar weapons in the near future," Bluth said.

But, in any case, joint nuclear exercises with the US would be an "unprecedented step" for Seoul as well as for Washington, delle Fave pointed out.

Such exercises would consist of simulating a North Korean nuclear attack and preparing for a response, "both conventional and nuclear", delle Fave said. The US would teach its ally how to support it in conducting a nuclear counter-attack on North Korea with US weapons from South Korean soil.

"It would be the first time that a non-NATO country [Washington classifies South Korea as a major non-NATO ally] has been trained to handle nuclear weapons," delle Fave added.

According to Chosun Ilbo, Washington is open to the prospect - although the Biden administration has refused to confirm this officially, Reuters reported. When reporters at the White House asked US President Joe Biden if there were any ongoing discussions between the US and South Korea on joint nuclear exercises, Biden said no.



However, the mere prospect of such exercises sends a signal to Pyongyang. Raising the prospect is a way of "making North Korea understand that in the event of a bombing on their part, there could very well be a nuclear retaliation, even if South Korea itself does not have any nuclear weapons", Bluth put it.

It is also a way of applying pressure on Kim's weak spot. "One of the North Korean regime's greatest fears is that its southern neighbour will acquire nuclear capabilities," delle Fave said. In this case, joint exercises with the US would allow Seoul to pull off something paradoxical - flexing its nuclear muscles while remaining official-

ly committed to nuclear non-proliferation.

The announcement is part of a broader change of tack enacted by Yoon Seok-yeol's conservative government, which took power in May 2022. "Yoon's government has made a complete break with his liberal predecessor's diplomatic openness towards the North; and the current escalation of tensions is in part the result of this much more hawkish stance towards Pyongyang," delle Fave said.

Yoon has even indicated that he intends to designate North Korea as an "enemy" country in a white paper on national security, after that official label was ditched in

UN must fulfill Kashmir obligation: Dr. Fai

News Desk

WASHINGTON, D.C. :Kashmiri global diaspora will observe the Right to Self-Determination Day on Thursday, January 5, 2023. It was on January 5, 1949, when the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) adopted the resolution that gave the people of Jammu & Kashmir right to self-determination. American Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson said it the best on June 15, 1962, "The larger interest of South Asia's peace and security require, it seems to us, the prompt settlement of the Kashmir dispute."



Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, 'World Forum for Peace and Justice' said that Kashmiri diaspora will hold public rallies, seminars, processions in different capitals of the world. In Washington, DC and New York, 'World Kashmir Awareness Forum' has arranged digital trucks to highlight not only the demand of the people of Kashmir to right to self-determination but also to bring to light the nature of atrocities committed by the Indian occupation forces in occupied Jammu & Kashmir. The digital trucks will move around the city of Washington and New York between 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. with the message like, "Stop India's military and demographic terrorism in Kashmir."

Dr. Fai added that the Kashmir conflict has become the bone of contention of the nuclear tension in the region of South Asia. Without a just and lasting peace in Kashmir that vindicates self-determination, trying to reduce missile and nuclear arsenals; and bring normalcy in the region of South Asia will be an exercise in futility.

Please come and join us on Thursday, January 5, 2023, near the White House at 1.00 p.m. (Corner of H & 17 Streets, N.W.) to express our solidarity with the oppressed people of Kashmir.

Netanyahu held responsible for Ben Gvir's storming of Al-Aqsa



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry strongly condemns the extremist Minister Bin Ghafir's storming of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and considers it an unprecedented provocation and a serious threat to the conflict arena, and a disregard for the demands to stop it. The ministry holds Netanyahu responsible for this flagrant attack on Al-Aqsa, and will follow it up at all levels in coordination with the brothers in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Two helicopters collide in Australia, killing four



News Desk

SYDNEY :Two helicopters collided in mid-air, killing four people Monday at Australia's Gold Coast tourism hotspot, officials said, with images showing one of the aircraft's rotors lying on a sandbar.

Three other people were in critical condition, police said, describing how bystanders had rushed to haul passengers from an upside-down helicopter.

One helicopter had flipped over on the exposed sandbank a few feet from the shore, images on public broadcaster ABC showed.

The aircraft was shorn of its rotors, which lay a short distance away. The other helicopter appeared to be largely intact at the accident scene, which is near the Gold Coast's popular Sea World marine theme park.

A bright yellow rescue helicopter had landed on the sand nearby, its rotors spinning, images of the aftermath showed, with scores of rescuers deployed around the area.

Several small police and rescue boats were moored on the exposed sandbank, which was strewn with bits of the destroyed helicopter.

"Those two aircraft, when collided, have crash landed, and landed, on the sandbank just out from Sea World resort," Queensland police service acting inspector Gary Worrell told a news conference at the scene.

of South Korea," Bluth observed.

All that said, one should not be too pessimistic: both analysts were very clear that the current escalation of tensions is unlikely to erupt into open conflict. "North Korea knows there are distinct limits to how far it can go, because it is economically dependent on China, which does not want the Korean peninsula to be engulfed in conflict," delle Fave said. In any case, he went on, Pyongyang knows "the US can defeat it militarily".

Nevertheless, the two countries are playing a dangerous game, delle Fave underlined. "There's always the risk that an unfortunate accident will cause the situation to get out of hand," he said. In this respect, North Korea's deployment of drones amid simmering tensions creates the possibility of an unintentional incident with severe consequences.

And even if no such accidents occur, Bluth said, the fact remains that North Korea is conducting a lot of ballistic missile tests while South Korea is increasingly hawkish. That could now become the "new normal," he concluded.

Indeed, Yoon is responding to the North Korean threat by urging the US to provide Seoul with more weapons. "We're currently seeing the militarisation

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
40,630.64	40,815.90	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
41,015.92	40,595.58	
Index Value	Change	
4,070,281,689	-185.26	
Percentage	Time	
-0.45%	Jan 3, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,554.09	+102.35	
Percentage	Time	
+1.37%	3 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
32,970.78	-176.47	
Percentage	Time	
-0.53%	3 Jan, 12:16 pm GMT-5	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	160	161.25
Bahrain Dinar	602.95	607.45
Canadian Dollar	171	172.35
China Yuan	32.51	32.76
Danish Krone	32.35	32.7
Euro	263	265
Hong Kong Dollar	29.04	29.39
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.33	2.38
Kuwaiti Dinar	741.02	746.02
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	144	145.2
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	588.08	592.58
Qatari Riyal	61.75	62.25
Saudi Riyal	65.8	66.4
Singapore Dollar	168.85	170.15
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	244.99	246.74
Thai Bhat	6.56	6.66
U.A.E Dirham	68.2	68.8
UK Pound Sterling	299	302
US Dollar	233.2	235.5

FBR launches modules for facilitation of exporters

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has developed and launched various modules for facilitation of exporters under Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS).

Export modules were rolled out here at APTMA House by Nayyar Shafique, Collector Customs along with a team of technical experts, senior officers from Directorate General of Customs Automation and PRAL. Earlier on his arrival, Nayyar Shafique was welcomed by Kamran Arshad, Senior Vice Chairman and Raza Baqir, Secretary General APTMA.

The workshop was attended by a large number of APTMA members from all over the country.

Nayyar Shafique said the FBR had developed various modules for smooth functioning of Export Facilitation Scheme for the facilitation of all categories of exporters including both direct and indirect exporters.



He said the FBR attached greater importance to export sector and a large number of officials were exclusively assigned the task to develop and roll out modules for ease in doing business.

He said that a series of workshops would be organized to educate exporters about the newly developed modules and the modules to be rolled out shortly.

The Collector explained salient features of modules which focused on facilitation for exporters and were easy to follow.

He said the indirect exports were major component of the EFS and a mechanism for the transfer of raw materials and semi-and-fully-finished goods, including local sales, had been deployed in the scheme.

Senior officers of PRAL highlighted technical aspects of modules and explained APTMA member mills on the operational aspects of modules especially relating to purchase of raw material from local supplier under the EFS. They also explained the transfer procedure of

raw material with bond besides the SME-related scheme under Temporary Importation Regime.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice Chairman APTMA Kamran Arshad appreciated the highly positive role being played by FBR for attending the issues and problems being faced by exporters.

He said APTMA had set a way forward of value addition through SME sector and the FBR should extend the deadlines for shifting on the EFS for another year to encourage more and more mills to switch over to EFS.

He expressed the hope that bilateral cooperation would continue in future as well to make the scheme error-free and user-friendly in line with the requirements of textile exporters.

In the end, Raza Baqir, Secretary General extended vote of thanks to the FBR team for apprising the APTMA member mills on the scheme.

Fodder for cattle

Peshawar: Farmer busy in loading green fodder on his buffalo cart near Motorway Toll Plaza on Tuesday.



MMBL scores two awards by HR Metrics at GDEIB Awards 2023

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: HR Metrics has recognized Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited (MMBL), Pakistan's largest digital bank, for being a leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the following categories: Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) structure and implementation and work-life integration, flexibility, and benefits at the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) Awards 2023. The achievement highlights the Bank's unwavering dedication to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for all, especially women and differently-abled individuals, under its flagship Women Inspirational Network (WIN) program.

Mobilink Microfinance Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives, creating opportunities for greater digital inclusion, and driving economic growth across

countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population.

GDEIB Awards highlight organizations that actively demonstrate inclusive behaviors in their everyday operations and have made significant contributions to improving DEI in workplaces.

The awards are reviewed by D&I experts from around the world and focus on creating true inclusion by fostering a cultural shift and involving organizations and their people.

Speaking at the occasion, Chief Operating Officer MMBL, Sardar Mohammad Abubakr shared, "Inclusion—our mantra, is firmly anchored in MMBL's business philosophy and the GDEIB Awards represent the Bank's longstanding commitment to promoting diversity at all tiers of operations."

Also expressing his thoughts on this achievement, Muhammad Haroon Khan, Acting Chief People Officer said, "The recent recognition by HR Metrics reflects our commitment to responsible growth and diversification across all levels."

ICCI demands more lenient import policy to promote business activities

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has lauded the initiative of State Bank of Pakistan for relaxing some restrictions on imports and allowing imports pertaining to HS Code Chapter 84, 85 and certain items of Chapter 87 from 2nd January 2023, which would facilitate in improving manufacturing and business activities.

However, he said that the economy of Pakistan needs to boost exports for which it is important that the SBP should further relax import restrictions and adopt a more lenient import policy as many export-oriented industries have to import raw materials and intermediate goods to produce



the finished products.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the business community. Group leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, Mian Shaikat Masud, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Hamayun Kabir, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Dr. Muhammad Usman,

Faseeh Ullah Khan, Ashfaq Chatha, Khalid Chaudhry and others were in the delegation.

Engr. Muhammad Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the FBR has missed its collection target for December by almost 24 percent i.e. Rs.225 billion mainly due to

sharp drop in imports. It shows that the import contraction policy is not producing beneficial outcomes for the economy and emphasized that the SBP should consider making it more lenient to promote business and investment activities in the country.

RCCI to convene All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference on the country's economy

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) while showing grave concerns on current economic situation has convened the All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference starting from January 16 to 18 in Islamabad. More than fifty chamber presidents, presidents of women chambers and small chambers and their representatives from all over the country will participate in the two days conference. A joint declaration will be issued at the end of the conference.

RCCI President Saqib Rafiq in a media briefing at chamber house here on Tuesday, said that the economic activities are at a standstill due to the uncertainty at the moment. The purpose of the conference was to bring together all the presidents under one roof and a joint declaration will be prepared. We expressed hope that the Government will address trader's grievances, he added. The business community is worried due to the economic instability in the country. There is concern due to downsizing in the industries.

The discussion on the economy in the National Security Council is welcome, he



commented. He said that the biggest issue at this time is double digit inflation; the purchasing power of the common man has been wiped off.

Group leader Sohail Altaf said that the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce wants all stakeholders to agree on the Charter of Democracy. It is an SOS call from the business community and we request that there is a need to close the chapter of politics at the moment and focus on the country's economy.

He demanded that in order to end political polarization and get the country out of the current crisis, all the political parties have to come forward for charter of economy.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shehzad, Chairman ICS 2023 Usman Ashraf, Former Presidents, Dr Shimal Daud Arain, Malik Shahid Saleem and RCCI members were also present on the occasion.

Business community mourns the demise of Yunus Tabba

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: On behalf of the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan, Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has extended heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of the Late Yunus Tabba – an iconic, long-serving and highly-accomplished business leader & industrialist of Pakistan. He was highly-acclaimed as a philanthropist and public figure as well, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that Late Yunus Tabba led from the front for five-long-decades with innovation, ambition, perseverance and institution-building. He was an utmost optimist in the future of Pakistan and kept expanding his businesses; and, venturing into new businesses for more than 50 years.

FPCCI Chief added that his companies are at par with the top multinational companies of the world; and, that is the reason that he was successful in bringing many multinationals to Pakistan in large-scale joint ventures, investment deals and industrial collaborations.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh has expressed his desire that Late Muhammad Yunus Tabba should be given the highest civil award of Pakistan for his all-round services; and, his achievements should be highlighted on a wide-scale national for the youth to learn and imbibe.

A total of 201,058,817 shares were traded during the day

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 185.26 points, with a negative change of 0.45 percent, closing at 40,630.64 against 40,815.90 points on the previous day.

A total of 201,058,817 shares were traded during the day as compared to 242,173,251 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 4.977 billion against Rs 7.278 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 333 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 113 of them recorded gains and 192 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 28 companies remained unchanged.

GO Installs Reverse Osmosis (RO) water filtration plant

Spokesman Report

GUJRAT: Gas & Oil Pakistan Ltd. (GO) has installed a large size RO Water Filtration Plant, with capacity of 3,600 gallons per day at Pateywala Basti, Qasba Gujrat about 200 metres from GO Mahmoodkot Terminal.

It was inaugurated jointly by Mr. Ali Akber Khaleel, Col. Muhammad Anwar Khurshid and Mr. Muhammad Fasihuddin. Locals of the area are highly pleased and over joyous on this welfare measure by GO. It shall go a long way in winning the much-needed good will of the local community of the area.

Commenting on the occasion, COO of GO, Mr.

Zeshan Tayyeb said, "The importance of clean drinking water cannot be over-emphasized as it is a basic requirement of the people for healthy life. Therefore, GO has been making all out efforts to install as many 'RO Water Filtration Plants' as possible for both; the employees and the general public especially for those living in surrounding areas of our installations."

Water is a fundamental human right, and access to clean and safe drinking water can change the lives of human beings for the better. However, in this era of global water scarcity and stress, getting clean drinking water at all is considered a blessing for most people, especially in Pakistan.

Gold price up by Rs500 to Rs187,700 per tola

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs 500 on Tuesday and was sold all time high at Rs187,700 against its sale at Rs187,200, the last trading day.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat also increased by Rs 248 and was sold at Rs 160,922 against Rs160,494; whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat

went up to Rs147,512 against its sale at Rs147,119, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola increased by Rs50 to Rs2,150 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs42.86 to Rs1843.27.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$9 and was sold at \$1833 against its sale at \$1824, the association reported.

Imam steers Pakistan fightback after New Zealand's last wicket adds 104 runs

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's top-order batting woes continued in the new year before Imam-ul-Haq rescued his side from a complete collapse on the second day of the second Test against New Zealand at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Tuesday. Abdullah Shafique once again fell while hooking, Shan Masood's aggressive approach against the spinners led to his downfall and Babar Azam was run-out in a terrible mix-up with Imam-ul-Haq as Pakistan slipped to 99 for three before finishing the day at 154 for three.

Pakistan's response came after New Zealand was bowled out for 449 after starting the day at 309 for six and having been reduced to 345 for nine.

Abdullah managed 19 off 32 balls with four fours, Shan scored 20 from 11 balls with four fours and Babar hit three fours and six in a 41-ball 24 before returning to the dressing room to leave Pakistan in dire straits.

However, Imam held the innings together and in partnership with Saud



Shakeel, he has so far added 55 runs for the unfinished fourth wicket. The left-hander, who turned his back at Babar after the skipper had sprinted for the third run, was batting on 74 from 125 balls with nine fours and a six, while a consistent Saud was 13 not out from 75 balls.

For New Zealand, Matt Henry picked up the wicket of Abdullah and Ajaz Patel dismissed Shan.

Earlier, Henry and Patel had combined

to frustrate Pakistan for 92 minutes during which they added 104 runs in 149 balls for the 10th wicket to lift New Zealand to 449.

No.10 batter Henry notched up his third career half-century in the 18th match when he returned unbeaten on an attacking 81-ball 68 with eight fours and two sixes, while Patel was the last batter to be dismissed after scoring a Test-best 35 from 78 balls and four fours.

Overnight batters Tom Blundell and Ish Sodhi, along with skipper Tim Southee, were back in the hut with the addition of 36 runs as New Zealand slipped to 345 for nine before the last-wicket partnership helped the visitors reach a decent score.

Blundell, who began the day at 30, was dismissed after scoring 51 from 108 balls with six fours, while Sodhi failed to add any run to his overnight score of 11 before he was castled by Naseem Shah (three for 71). Abrar Ahmed picked the remaining three wickets to finish with figures of 37-5-149-4. Abrar now has 27 wickets in seven innings of four Tests.

Scores in brief:

New Zealand (1st innings) (overnight 309-6) 449 all-out, 131 overs (Devon Conway 122, Tom Latham 71, Matt Henry 68 not out, Tom Blundell 51, Kane Williamson 36, Ajaz Patel 35, Henry Nicholls 26; Abrar Ahmed 4-149, Naseem Shah 3-71, Salman Ali Agha 3-75)

Pakistan (1st innings) 154-3, 47 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 74 not out, Babar Azam 24, Shan Masood 20, Saud Shakeel 13 not out).

'Unfortunately, he couldn't hear my call,' Imam on Babar's run-out

A Sports

KARACHI: Pakistan's left-handed opener Imam-ul-Haq opened up on his mix-up between the wicket with skipper Babar Azam and asserted that the latter could not hear his call.

Babar fell prey to miscommunication in the 25th over when Pakistan were struggling to overcome the horrible start. Imam worked through Michael Bracewell's delivery with Henry Nicholls chasing.

The skipper wanted to make it three and ran desperately after completing the second. Imam, on the other hand, started off but soon stopped with Babar already more than halfway down with Imam returning to his crease and Bracewell did no mistake to



dislodge the bails.

Imam in an interview following the conclusion of the second day's play of the second Test responded to a question regarding Babar's frustrating run-out after both batters ended up at the same end and termed it miscommunication.

"Look it is cricket and run-outs happen. Unfortunately, we have been in

such a situation two-three times before and I also got run-out against West Indies and today he got run-out," said Imam.

"It is a part of the game and now will try to console him," Imam added cheekily.

"Once again, it is cricket. But, I think it was a misunderstanding and he could not listen to my call of 'No' so he kept running

and when I saw him he was standing right beside me and it was too late then," Imam shared.

"So, such miscommunication occurs in cricket sometimes," he concluded.

It is worth mentioning here that New Zealand pushed Pakistan to the backfoot by dismantling the hosts' top order after posting a mammoth 449 runs in the first innings of the ongoing second Test.

Left-handed batters Imam and Saud Shakeel, however, launched a counter-attack as they raised a 55-run partnership for the fourth wicket before stumps.

Imam (74*) and Saud (13*) will now resume Pakistan's first innings at 154/3 as they are still 295 runs behind.

Sir Syed and IBA moved into the final of HEC Zone

Sports Reporter

KARACHI: Sir Syed University and IBA made it to the finals of the HEC Zone M Inter-University Hockey Championship. The final will be played today at KHA Sports Complex, Organized by Sir Syed University and in collaboration with Higher Education Commission, HEC Zone M Inter University Hockey Championship started yesterday at KHA Sports Complex. Host Sir Syed University defeated Indus University by three goals to nil to reach the final.

On behalf of the winning team, Yusuf Afzal scored two goals while Rana Abdullah scored one goal. The chief guest of the opening match



was Karachi Hockey Association Chairman Gulfranz Ahmed Khan while Professor Dr. Mahboob was the guest of honor who inaugurated the event by hitting the ball. The chief guest said that in collaboration with HEC and Sir Syed University, successive sports events at the university level are being held one after

the other.

On this occasion, Dr. Majid, Mohsin Ali Khan, Manager Sports IBA Waqas, Director Sports Sir Syed University International Mubashir Mukhtar, Manager Sports Indus University Wasif, Coach Arshad Siddiqui, Organizing Secretary Javed Iqbal, Tournament Director Raja Anwar

Kamal, Umpire Manager Chaudhry. Tanveer Arshad, Tariq Khan and others were also present. Asghar, Shahbaz, Irfan, Tahir were the umpires while Zahid Mahmood, Syed Imtiazul Hasan and Talat Mahmood were the technical officials. In the second semi final match, IBA won against NED University and IBA made it to the finals. The final will be played today and the special guest will be Sindh Hockey Association Secretary Akbar Qaim Khani.

Caption: KHA Chairman Gulfranz Ahmed Khan giving shield to Professor Dr. Mahboob on opening match of HEC Zone M Hockey Championship, Dr. Majid, Mubashir Mukhtar, Mohsin Ali and others are also present.

China's Xintong, Jiankang suspended in snooker fixing probe

Web Desk

LONDON: Former UK champion Zhao Xintong and Zhang Jiankang have become the latest Chinese players to be suspended from the World Snooker Tour during an investigation into alleged match-fixing, it was announced Tuesday.



Zhao, who beat Luca Brecel to win the 2021 UK Championship title, and Zhang, the world number 82, have been banned from attending or competing on the Tour with immediate effect, with 10 Chinese players bow suspended as part of an ongoing investigation.

Former Masters champion Yan Bingtao and seven other Chinese players had already been suspended by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA), the sport's global governing body.

A WPBSA statement issued Tuesday said: "This decision is part of an ongoing investigation into allegations of manipulating the outcome of matches for betting purposes in breach of the WPBSA conduct regulations."

"The suspension will remain in place until the conclusion of the investigation or any subsequent charges that may or may not be brought. Both Zhao and

Zhang have the right to appeal this decision.

"The WPBSA can confirm that the wider investigation is now at an advanced stage, and it is anticipated will be completed shortly at which point any potential charges will be considered.

"No further comment will be made at this time, except in the event of any significant further developments."

Lu Ning, Li Hang, Zhao Jianbo, Bai Langning, Chang Bingyu, Yan Bingtao and Chen Zifan were all suspended in December after world number 56 Liang Wenbo became the first Chinese player to be suspended as part of the investigation in October.

Peshawar Zalmi reveals 3 kits for PSL-8



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Peshawar Zalmi unveiled three kits for the eighth edition of PSL.

In collaboration with Gym Armour and Red Bull Records, the "kit reveal video" released on Tuesday showcases Babar Azam presenting the franchise in the upcoming season.

"The kit reveals video inspired by the modern-day and progressive nature of the franchise, forming a mix of music, sports and fashion altogether," said Chief Commercial Officer Peshawar Zalmi Nausherwan Effandi in a press release.

He said that the front of the jersey features a mandarin collar in black, and a uniquely woven and embedded intricate geometric pattern in hues of lemon yellow, symbolizing the connection Peshawar Zalmi holds with its fanbase.

The bold yet minimalistic design is reflective of the contemporary design philosophy practiced by Peshawar Zalmi, he added.

An imperative addition to the jersey is the badge of authenticity, the emblem crafted in velvet holds the franchise logo embedded into it with a sheen that adds to the element of authenticity.

"The training kit is a testament to the fact that Peshawar Zalmi is consistent with the fashion trends of the year," said Nausherwan Effandi.

He said that the training kit for the franchise is a combination of dark values in indigo accompanied by vibrant chroma of crimson and tangerine. The kit is an ode to the city of flowers and the warm colour palette reflects its people, he added.

The alternate kit for PSL season 8, a classic, timeless, and elegant amalgamation of darker values of black and gold, the alternate jersey features the horns of a Markhor, the national animal of Pakistan and the mascot for Peshawar Zalmi as well.

The kits were revealed in a video featuring Babar Azam with "Sail by Awolnation" as the official background score.

Sultan Muhammad won the 47th Snooker Championship

Sports Reporter

LAHORE: Sultan Muhammad of (Sindh) won the title of 47th Snooker Championship. In final he defeated Shan Naimat of (Islamabad) by the frame of 7-5. The Chief Guests of the ceremony were Chairman Pakistan Billiards and Snooker Association Alamgir Sheikh, President National Bank of Pakistan Rehmat Ali Hasnie, Director Tournament Naveed Kapadia, Khazan Irfan Motan PBSA, VP PBSA, Waheed Abdul Qadir and another dignitaries were present. The Chief Guests distributed the prizes among the successful Snookers players. Sultan Muhammad received the winner trophy and cash prize two lac. Shan Naimat got runner up trophy with cash prize one lac. The biggest breaks of 141 the tournament player Shahid Aftab received 25 thousand and trophy.

Pak team to participate in Asian Tenpin Bowling Championship

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan

Tenpin Bowling team will participate in the 26th Asian tenpin bowling championship 2023, slated to be from January 8 to 18 in Hong Kong.

President Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation Ijaz ur Rehman told APP that the training camp for the preparation of the event was underway at Leisure Bowling Club Rawalpindi.

Six players are taking part in the training Camp including Ijaz ur Rehman, Ali Suria, Afzal Akhter, Shabeer Lashkarwala, Amjid Mehmood and Amir Mehmood.

Men and Women players from 19 countries will take part in the Asian Championship. Five events will be contested - Singles, Doubles, Trios, Team of five and the prestigious Masters for men and women divisions.

BCCI invites bids to operate women's IPL teams

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Indian

cricket board (BCCI) on Tuesday invited bids for the right to "own and operate" teams in the first ever women's Indian Premier League (IPL).

In December, the BCCI also floated tenders for the women's league's media rights for the 2023-27 cycle.

"The Governing Council of the IPL invites bids from reputed entities to acquire the right to own and operate a team in Women's Indian Premier League, through a tender process," the BCCI said in a statement.

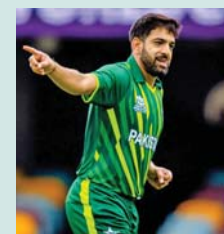
"The (Invitation to Tender) will be available for purchase till January 21, 2023."

The inaugural season of the women's IPL is likely to be played from March 3-26, an ESPNcricinfo report said in December.

A three-team Women's T20 Challenge had been staged alongside the men's IPL since 2018, but the BCCI have been urged to set up an expanded tournament for women with more teams and players.

Australia hosts the Women's Big Bash League as its domestic T20 league, while New Zealand has the Women's Super Smash. England hold the The Hundred tournament for women alongside the men's competition.

Haris Rauf undergoes fitness test in Karachi ahead of ODI series against New Zealand



KARACHI: Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf Tuesday appeared for his fitness test ahead of Pakistan's three-match one-day international (ODI) series against New Zealand.

Rauf, who got injured during Pakistan's first Test against England in Rawalpindi last month, was included in the list of probable players for the series but was also asked to appear for a fitness test to determine his availability for the series.

For his fitness test, the fast bowler arrived at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi on day two of the second Test match between the Green Shirts and the Kiwis.

Pakistan cricket team's physiotherapist Cliffe Deacon and trainer Drikus Saaiman supervised Rauf's fitness test during lunch and tea breaks, also observing him during a running test for two kilometres.

The 29-year-old bowler delivered five overs during the lunch break and three more during the tea break.

Sources said that more endurance tests of the pacer will be conducted by the Pakistan Cricket Board's medical panel before a decision is taken on his fitness test for the three-match Test series.

'Had many offers from Europe, Brazil and even Portugal,' claims Ronaldo

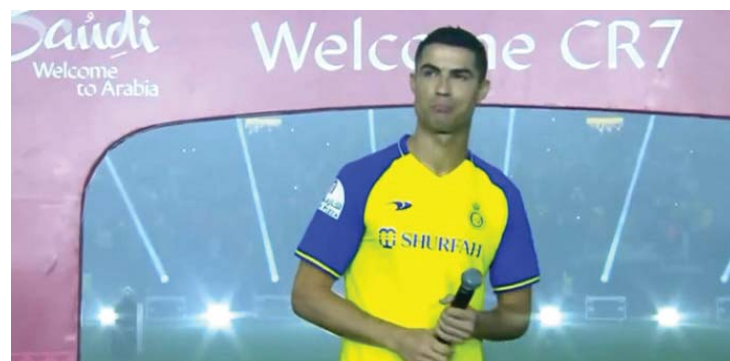
A Sports-

RIYADH: Star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo who shocked the world with his huge deal with Al Nassr estimated at 200 million euros (\$211m), claimed that he had many offers from all over the world including Europe.

Ronaldo arrived here ahead of his stint with Saudi Arabia's club Al Nassr and came up with a major revelation by sharing that he turned down a swathe of offers from Europe and elsewhere, in a bid to be part of success of the country and culture.

"In Europe, my work is done," he said, adding: "I had many offers in Europe, many in Brazil, Australia, the US, even in Portugal."

"Many clubs tried to sign me but I gave my word to this club, for the opportunity to have not only football but (to be) part of this amazing coun-



try. And for me it was a challenge," he added.

The Portuguese forward then described himself as a "unique" player and insisted his career is not over yet and is optimistic to break a few records here as he did in Europe.

"I'm a unique player. It's good to come here, I broke all the records there

(in Europe) and I want to break a few records here," Ronaldo concluded.

It is apropos to mention that Ronaldo's signing with Al Nassr until June 2025 is just the latest foray into top-level sports by oil-rich Saudi Arabia, which has moved into Formula One, boxing and golf, and snapped up English club Newcastle United.