



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے موعی نے بیان کیا، کہا ہم سے جو یہ بن اسامہ نے بیان کیا، ان سے ناسخ نے اور ان سے عبداللہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کر رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے خیر کی زینت بنو یوں کو اس شرط پر دی تھی کہ اس میں کام کریں اور اسے بویں تو آدھی پیو اور ان میں دی جائے کہ اسے۔
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 2720)
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CJP takes suo motu notice of 'delay' in Punjab, KP elections

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has taken a suo motu notice of delay in elections for Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies. According to a statement by the Supreme Court, CJP Umar Ata Bandial took the notice on a note issued received from apex court registrar. "It was learnt that a month has been passed since the dissolution of two provincial assemblies", CJP said. (Report on Page 8)



IMF likely to announce EFF agreement by this week: Syed Naveed Qamar

Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar said Wednesday that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was likely to announce its staff level agreement on Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with Pakistan by this week. "Pakistan has taken all the measures needed to unfreeze a \$6.5 billion credit line and expects to clinch the deal 'any day now,'" the minister said (Report on Page 8)

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Austerity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a Press Conference after the Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Cabinet members to forgo salaries, perks amid govt's austerity endeavour

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday unveiled austerity measures amid economic crunch and said the government was trying to save the public from scorching inflation.

Addressing a press conference while being flanked by leaders of allied parties on Wednesday, he said the ministers, state ministers and special advisers to the premier had decided to forego their salaries and perks. He said all ministers had also decided to pay their own utility bills.

Pakistan is facing an economic crunch and has been negotiating with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the next tranche of \$1.1 billion. The international lender has set very tough conditions and demanded that Pakistan boosts its tax base,

end exemptions for the export sector and raise energy prices.

The prime minister said, "All luxury cars being used by cabinet members are being called back and will be auctioned." "Where needed, only one car will be provided for security."

Mr Sharif said the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would be locked soon, adding that the "matters would be settled in a few days" but it would cause further inflation. He said Pakistan had fulfilled almost all of the IMF's conditions.

The premier also announced that only one car would be provided for security purposes where necessary and federal ministers would also travel in economy class when going abroad on state visits. He added that the government had passed a mini-budget under which new taxes would be levied on

big corporations, adding that these measures would protect the common man from inflation to some extent.

Cabinet adopts austerity policy
Earlier today, the session of the federal cabinet was held under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in which the austerity policy was adopted under which the ministers decided to cut down perks and incomes. It was decided that the members of the cabinet and the government officers would not travel by business class.

The PM said the simplicity policy was the first priority of the federal government and the IMF agreement would take place soon while mentioning the tough decisions that were required to steer the country out of the current quagmire. He said the poor people had always given sacrifices for the country and

now the affluent people had to make efforts for the betterment of the economy.

PM Shehbaz urged the ruling class including federal ministers, advisers and bureaucrats to practice austerity with a view to manifesting the government's sincere efforts to address the pervading challenges.

"As the whole nation goes through an ordeal of imported inflation, IMF conditionalities or the negligence of the previous government, we have to show to the people what is the need of the hour. That is austerity, simplicity and passion for sacrifice," the prime minister told the cabinet members while chairing the meeting.

In his televised remarks at the cabinet meeting with austerity measures on agenda, the prime minister said since the creation of Pakistan 75 years ago, it was

the poor who always suffered, starting from the wars of 1965 and 1971, 2005 earthquakes or the floods of 2010 and 2022. He said the poor people faced inflation and had to suffer the hardships of feeding their family members.

The premier said that the elite class also contributed to supporting the poor during the tough times but everyone did not fulfill their responsibility. He told the cabinet members that the IMF program was also reaching finality with a couple of items remaining. "Today, we have to learn the lesson from the past and move ahead. The nation looks at the coalition government which stood united and made the decisions to put the country on the track of economic development. This is not an easy task as it was going through difficult challenges," he remarked.

Ukrainian president phones Alvi; seeks Pakistan's support for resolution on conflict

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday telephoned President Dr Arif Alvi and referring to his ten-point peace formula, sought Pakistan's support on the draft resolution being tabled in the United Nations General Assembly for ending the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

During the conversation, the president conveyed that Pakistan remained deeply concerned over the conflict in Ukraine.

He said that Pakistan supported a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with the UN Charter.

He said that the contents of the draft resolution were being evaluated by the Government



of Pakistan.

The two leaders discussed Pakistan-Ukraine political and economic ties, including energy and food security issues facing the developing world in the wake of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Both sides emphasized the need for enhancing economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

President Zelenskyy also extended an invitation to the President of Pakistan to visit Ukraine.

Bilawal invites Hungarian companies to avail Pakistan's business opportunities

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday urged the business community of Hungary to take advantage of the business opportunities in Pakistan.

The foreign minister, addressing a joint press stakeout with his Hungarian counterpart Péter Szijjártó during his visit there, said the economic engagement between the two countries was satisfactory.

He however said there existed vast potential to expand cooperation between the two countries in multiple fields.

He said there was also a huge potential for the business cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries.

The foreign minister said he looked forward to working with his Hungarian counterpart to take the bilateral ties to the new heights.

Earlier, the foreign minister met Chairman MOL Hungary Zsolt Hernadi who briefed him on MOL Hungary's operations in energy sector in Pakistan.

The foreign minister appreciated MOL's contribution and encouraged the company to expand operations to other parts of Pakistan in view of enormous potential in the country.

In a meeting with CEO Vitafort Zrt. Zoltan Kulik, the foreign minister highlighted the government's investment friendly policy and expressed the hope that more Hungarian companies would invest in Pakistan.

Active terrorist killed in Spinwam fire exchange

Raja Furqan Ahmed

RAWALPINDI: A terrorist on Wednesday was killed during a fire exchange that took place between the security forces and terrorists in general area Spinwam of North Waziristan District.

According to the Inter Service

Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the killed terrorist remained actively involved in terrorist activities against the security forces and civilians.

The locals of the area appreciated the response and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the area.

Pakistan, Afghanistan agree on effective collaboration against terrorism

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high level Pakistani delegation led by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif visited Kabul on Wednesday and discussed with the leadership of interim Afghan government the matters relating to the growing threat of terrorism in the region, particularly by TTP and ISKP.

During the interaction, both the sides agreed to collaborate to effectively address the threat of terrorism posed by various entities and organizations, a Foreign Office statement said.

The delegation met senior leadership of the Interim Afghan government including Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, Defence Minister Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqob Mujahid, Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani and Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

Police drive PTI leaders, workers to prisons after they volunteer arrest

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore police teams on Wednesday drove senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and a number of workers to jails minutes after they courted arrest while honouring the call of party supremo Imran Khan.

PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi was the first to have courted arrest as part of party's "Jail Bharo" movement. Reports said police put the PTI vice chairman in the prison van. Later, other leaders including Zubair Niazi, Asad Umar and Azam Swati sat in the prison van by themselves. Omar Sarfraz Cheema and others also surrendered themselves while Hammad Azhar sat atop a vehicle ostensibly to get media glare.

Police said they were carrying the PTI leaders and workers to the Kot Lakhpat and Camp jails but they could not tell whether those arrested would be put behind the bars. Earlier, it was stated that no prison in Lahore had the capacity to keep a number of political workers.

Taking to Twitter, PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry said many PTI leaders and workers including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar and



Ejaz Chaudhry had surrendered themselves for the arrest. He said the sea of people had created panic among policemen.

Mr Qureshi, while speaking from inside the police van, said: "I am 'happy and satisfied', and I urge the masses to break the shackles of fear and venture out."

Government's Reaction
Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday said the PTI's "Jail Bharo" drive was aimed at creating political instability, and law and order situation in the country. Chairing a meeting on law and order, he said the PTI wanted to get media attention by creating a drama

through the 'court arrest drive.' The miscreants should be exposed by presenting evidence of their wrongdoings before the masses, he added.

The meeting, which was attended by Secretary Interior Yusuf Naseem, home secretaries and inspectors general of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, besides others, gave a detailed briefing to the minister on the law and order, especially in the wake of 'court arrest drive.' The meeting decided that the miscreants would be arrested and the law and order would be ensured in the country at all costs. The arrest of women and poor workers would be avoided, he added.

'Jail Bharo' drive for helpless workers, 'Jail se Bacho' for PTI leaders: Marriyum

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Wednesday said PTI Chairman Imran Khan's 'Jail Bharo' campaign was only for the helpless party workers as it was, in fact, a 'Jail se Bacho' campaign for the leadership.

It was an irony that Imran Khan had obtained protective bail for himself, but at the same time he was asking the innocent PTI workers to court arrest, she said while addressing a press conference.

The minister said instead of leading the court arrest drive, Imran Khan was apparently taking refuge in a bunker at Zaman Park in Lahore with a plaster on his leg.

Get ready for spiralling inflation, Imran Khan tells the masses

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has asked masses to be prepared for spiralling inflation.

Addressing the nation via video link, he lambasted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, saying the latter was preparing the nation for more inflation.

The deposed premier reminded PM Shehbaz of his speeches during the PTI's tenure, adding if enemies would not be dealt with the way the coalition government did in

the past 10 months.

Recalling his ouster, Mr Khan said, "Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari had toppled the PTI's government by joining hands with the foreign powers."

Comparing his tenure with the current regime, Mr Khan said, "Today the country is witnessing inflation three times greater than during the PTI's tenure."

Imran Khan criticised the government and said s promises to improve the country by reducing the number of government vehicles and selling land, calling these plans misleading.

Promotion of Football

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with Pakistan's National Women's Football Team, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

President for promoting football in Pakistan, incentivizing athletes

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday urged the need to incentivize the football players and promote football in the country by adopting international best practices in the field of football.

The president, talking to the members of Pakistan's National Men's and Women's Football teams, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, called for developing linkages with international partners and promoting public-private partnerships, besides providing better training facilities and

coaching to the football players.

He said that the FIFA-appointed Normalization Committee for the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) should speed up its efforts to streamline the issues related to football affairs in the country.

The Chairman of the FIFA-appointed Normalization Committee (FNC), Haroon Ahmed Malik and members of the FNC were also present during the meeting.

Welcoming the athletes, the president said that the sport of football was quite popular in Pakistan and there were

millions of football fans in the country and the game should be promoted at the district and club levels.

He advised the athletes to make their country proud through their performance and work for improving the country's image as they were Pakistan's ambassadors in the field of sports.

The president remarked that he had high hopes from the players to lead Pakistan in regional and international competitions.

He regretted that the internal politics within the Pakistan

Football Federation (PFF) had affected its performance and expressed the hope that with the help of the FIFA-appointed Normalization Committee, there would be a visible improvement in the performance of PFF.

Haroon Ahmed Malik briefed the president that over 7 million people in Pakistan played football, and that FNC was making efforts to improve the functioning and administration of PFF through the FNC.

He informed that Women's National Team played their

first international game in eight years and Men's National Team played their first international game in four years.

He stated that so far almost 4600 clubs from 163 districts of the country had been registered and the documentation and physical scrutiny process would be completed within the given timelines.

It was told that Men's National Team would participate in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and Women's National Team would play in the Olympics Qualifiers for Paris 2024 this year.

CJP takes suo motu notice of 'delay' in Punjab, KP elections

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has taken a suo motu notice of delay in elections for Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies.

According to a statement by the Supreme Court, CJP Umar Ata Bandial took the notice on a note issued received from apex court registrar. "It was learnt that a month has been passed since the dissolution of two provincial assemblies", CJP said.

It said the CJP would head a nine-member bench presiding over the hearing for the case tomorrow (Thursday).

The bench comprises the CJP, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Mumtaz Ali Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muham-

mad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah.

In a statement, the apex court said the bench will assess who is eligible to issue the date for polls, the constitutional responsibility of Centre and provinces, and who will fulfil the constitutional responsibility of conducting elections and when.

The statement noted that the two provincial assemblies were dissolved on January 14 and 18, respectively. "Under Article 224 (2), polls should be held within 90 days of the assembly dissolution. The Constitution mandates that polls be held within 90 days."

The apex court also said that requests for the date of elections were also received from the Islamabad High Court bar, and speakers of KP and Punjab assemblies.

CJP Bandial, in the statement, said that the president had taken the position that he

had the authority and responsibility for fixing a date, and had announced that polls would be held on April 9.

"It seems prima facie that even the matter of appointing the date of the general elections, which is the first step towards the holding of the elections, has still not been resolved," he said.

He noted that statements attributed to the electoral watchdog showed that it was not being provided the "requisite assistance and support, in particular by the provision of necessary funds, personnel and security, as would enable it to hold the general elections in accordance with the Constitution".

In light of the above, the CJP said: "I am of the view that the issues raised require immediate consideration and resolution by this court. Several provisions of the Constitution need to be considered, as also the relevant

sections of the Elections Act".

"These matters involve the performance of constitutional obligations of great public importance apart from calling for faithful constitutional enforcement," the CJP said.

The development came after President Dr Arif Alvi announced April 9 as the date for holding general elections for Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies. The announced the date under section 57(2) of the constitution.

In a letter written to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sultan Sikandar Raja president Arif Alvi said the constitution does not allow to exceed 90 days for holding elections after the dissolution of assemblies and he has taken the oath to defend and protect the constitution.

The letter stated that ECP and governor KP and Punjab are not fulfilling their duties

to hold elections within 90 days and the president has announced an election date to avoid violation of the constitution.

He said that both the constitutional officers are placing the ball in each other's court, which is resulting in delay and creating a serious danger to the constitution. President Arif Alvi said that it is ECP's responsibility to hold the election in 90 days and he started the process of serious consultation on the election date.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Punjab and KP assemblies were dissolved on Jan 18 and Jan 14, respectively, after former prime minister Imran Khan had announced to dissolve assemblies in an attempt to force the government to hold snap polls.

As per the Constitution of Pakistan, polls need to be held for the dissolved assemblies in 90 days.

Donald Blome called on Ishaq Dar



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan Donald Blome called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Wednesday.

Finance Minister welcomed Donald Blome and talked about durable bilateral relations with the United States on economic and trade fronts, said a press release issued here.

The Finance Minister shared economic policies and priorities of the government to address the challenging economic environment and set the economy on the trajectory path. It was also shared that the present government is highly concerned about the well-being of the masses therefore a number of measures are being undertaken in this regard.

The two sides exchanged views on matters of common interest to enhance the existing bilateral rela-

tions between both countries.

The Finance Minister informed the US Ambassador about the government's pragmatic plans related to revenues and expenditures for meeting its national as well as international financial obligations.

He shared various economic avenues in which both countries can further deepen their economic relations.

The US Ambassador underscored that both countries enjoy good relations and expressed confidence in the policies and programmes of the government for economic sustainability and socio-economic uplift of the masses.

He extended his support to further promote bilateral economic, investment and trade relations between both countries.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar thanked the US Ambassador and reiterated the desire of the government to further deepen bilateral trade and investment ties with the USA.

IMF likely to announce EFF agreement by this week: Naveed Qamar

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar said Wednesday that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was likely to announce its staff level agreement on Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with Pakistan by this week.

"Pakistan has taken all the measures needed to unfreeze a \$6.5 billion credit line and expects to clinch the deal 'any day now,'" the minister said in an interview with Bloomberg.

After formal announcement by the fund, Pakistan would get a \$1.2 billion tranche under the Extended Fund Facility.

He said, the IMF agreement would give investors and creditors confidence that "Pakistan's economy is now stabilizing and has taken all the right steps, so in that sense their money would remain protected."

"The IMF program is the beginning, not the culmination, of all other monies flowing in" he said.

He said, a pickup in imports once the nation boosts its reserves will also benefit exports, the minister said.

Limited reserves restricted Pakistan's ability to fund imports, includ-



ing intermediary goods, and stranded thousands of containers of supplies at ports.

Pakistan authorities have taken steps including increasing taxes, cutting subsidies and devaluing its currency to meet IMF conditions, the Bloomberg reported.

It is pertinent to mention here that The National Assembly on Monday passed the Finance (Supplementary) Bill, 2023 aimed to amend certain laws relating to taxes and duties.

The bill proposed to impose new taxes of Rs 170 billion to minimize fiscal deficit.

Barkhan Murders: Police arrest Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran

Bureau Report

QUETTA: After the terrifying Barkhan murders, police arrested Balochistan Communication Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran from Quetta on Wednesday.

Police confirmed that the provincial minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran was arrested from Quetta and shifted to the DIG Office. Police added that Khetran will be shifted to the Cantt police station after further orders.

Balochistan minister Sardar Abdul

Rehman Khetran is accused of terrifying murders in Barkhan. The heirs of the slain persons were demanding the recovery of five disappeared family members of Muhammad Marri and the arrest of Khetran.

The heirs while rejecting the inquiry committee formed by the government, demanded to constitute a judicial committee headed by a Balochistan High Court judge. The protestors vowed to continue their sit-in until their demands are met and claimed the raid at Abdul Rehman Khetran's house was a 'drama' of police.

Indonesia envoy highlights untapped potential of Pakistan to fill global market

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: "There is a lot of untapped potential from Pakistan to contribute to the world market", said the Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Adam M. Tugio during interactive session on "Pakistan Indonesia Relations: Present Status - Way Forward".

Indonesia has a strong desire to enhance its economic relationship with Pakistan noting its geo-economic strategy and its geographic location as gateway to land-locked countries in Central Asia and beyond, said Ambassador Tugio. The envoy showed pie charts of economic complexity indicating industries where Pakistan manufactures have strong comparative advantage and export to fill global market, and corresponding market in Indonesia where Indonesia purchase them from many sources. He made reference to Pakistani products such as medical equipment,



leathers, garments, and textile that could become important trade commodities not only to Indonesia market but also globally.

The envoy emphasized the importance of building people-to-people connections between the nations, and he encouraged students in Pakistan to make use of scholarships being offered by Indonesian government and many universities in Indonesia. Tugio welcomed the initiative of COPAIR and

other think tanks in Pakistan to collaborate with Indonesia's counterparts. "Such cooperation altogether will give contribution to strengthen cultural bridge between the two of biggest Muslim population countries in the world", added Tugio.

Ambassador Tugio further said that Indonesia and Pakistan can work together to promote traditional herbal medicines which have great potential among youth and millennia in the

world for they believe in could boost immunity systems and simultaneously avoid side effects of synthetic medicines. He also exposed the potential of the halal cosmetics and herbal medicine industry which is still widely open. "Pakistan can utilize the current Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (IP-PTA) for exploring 640 million of ASEAN markets and encouraged think tank and business communities to work together in identifying untapped potentials of traded goods for making more broader trade in goods agreement", added Tugio.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, chairman of COPAIR in his concluding remarks underscored the strong foundations of bilateral relation between Pakistan and Indonesia which continues to serve as a time-tested modalities for elevating and deepening relationships and to give broader contribution to global peace, security and development.

ANP announces boycott of NA by-elections

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan on Wednesday criticized politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and said that only PTI has created chaos in the country which incurred huge losses to national exchequer.

In a statement issued here from Bacha Khan Markaz, Aimal Wali said that earlier PTI chief contested poles on nine national assembly seats

and give a huge setback to country's economy.

He said keeping in view current scenario of economic crisis it is important to save maximum finances and avoid contesting poles on NA seats as general elections would be held throughout the country after six months period.

Aimal Wali Khan said that ANP was always ready to contest elections and had announced their candidates in 18 constituencies, earlier.

Violent Extremism Prevention Unit inaugurated at Safe City Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Director General National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) Muhammad Tahir Rai along with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan inaugurated the newly established "Violent Extremism Prevention Unit" at Safe City Islamabad, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, DG (NACTA) appreciated the efforts of IGP Islamabad for establishing the first of its kind anti-extremism unit in Pakistan. Afterwards the DG NACTA was given a tour of various sections of Safe City Islamabad where he was briefed in details regarding the utilization of Safe City Project in maintaining the security of the city and its role during law and order situation.

IGP Islamabad briefed the DG NACTA regarding the working of this unit and said that, this unit will monitor the political, linguistic, sectarian and religious extremist content on social media and websites and submit



its report. The CTD would have Operations and Intelligence Wings while the newly established "Violent Extremism Prevention Unit" would be supervised by SP.

Besides identifying crimes related to extremism the police and CTD will

work together and take prompt action against such elements. The services of communication experts will be hired for this unit. So that the minds of the young generation can be changed according to the national narrative, recommendations will also be made

for legislation in this regard.

Apart from this, joint action teams and a modern center (Digital Hub) are being established, which will include economic and legal experts.

IGP Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that effective measures are being taken for the security of the city following the vision of Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif and special orders and interests of Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan.

He further said that preventing extremism will go a long way in combating terrorism and strengthening the security of the city. On the occasion DG NACTA said that the steps being taken by IGP Islamabad in order to maintain law and order in the city and to protect the life and property of the citizens are commendable. Islamabad Capital Police is a professional police in which the citizens have full faith. In the end, IGP Islamabad presented a shield to the chief guest on the behalf of Islamabad capital police.

Job fair in Iqra University

News Desk

KARACHI: With the primary goal of giving graduating students employment options to achieve a brighter future, the job fair has been a tradition at Iqra University in Karachi for more than a decade. Dr. Wasim Qazi, the Vice-Chancellor/President, expressed this view while speaking at the Job Fair 2023, that job fairs are held right away following convocation. More than 700 students attended the job fair this year, and employers came along with 5000 job vacancies with pay ranges between 40,000 to 165,000. The event gave students the chance to connect with more than 600 multinational and national level HR Directors along with their top management and HR teams of Pakistan,



providing students with a platform to grasp opportunities and have meaningful and insightful conversations.

Because of Pakistan's current economic instability, high unemployment rate, and difficulty in finding

employment, Iqra University has made this commendable step for graduating students. Iqra University is a prestigious

institution with open doors for students from lower- and middle-class backgrounds, Dr. Wasim Qazi continued. Employers can meet brilliant and motivated students looking for jobs and internships in industries including business administration, computer science, media sciences, health sciences, and other subjects at the job fair, which offers great opportunity for networking.

He stated his belief that graduates are prepared to contribute to the workforce and will be an invaluable resource for businesspeople and manufacturers. The initial attempt made by Iqra University is to keep holding career fairs like this in the future. Dr. Wasim Qazi and the university's top management distributed souvenirs to participating employers at the conclusion of the job fair.

UAJK launches Tech Programs

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: In a groundbreaking moment, the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) has launched its Technology Programs during the National Technology Council (NTC) NCRC preliminary meeting for the Industrial Engineering Program.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi officially launched the programs on Wednesday and opened the three-day NCRC meeting brought together esteemed guests and experts from various universities and institutions to develop the Industrial Engineering Curriculum.

Addressing on the occasion, the Vice-Chancellor UAJK, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, emphasized the importance of curriculum development in advancing education and stressed the need for collaborative efforts among higher educational institutions



to produce human resources according to the industry's needs.

The Chairman of the NTC, Syed Imtiaz Hussain Gillani, joined the event through a video link and deemed it a pioneering work in the history of curriculum development for Industrial Engineering Programs.

In his opening remarks, Prof.

Dr. Saadat Hanif Dar, Dean Faculty of Engineering UAJK, welcomed all the delegates and expressed his gratitude to Chairman NTC and his entire team for choosing UAJK for the NCRC preliminary meeting.

It is worth mentioning here that launch of the Technology Programs at UAJK is a significant milestone that will propel the university toward tech-

nological advancement and innovation. The event marked a historic day for UAJK and its stakeholders, and its impact will be felt for years to come.

"The university's commitment to becoming a technology hub and producing human resources according to the industry's needs is a commendable effort toward the country's technological develop-

ment," said the Vice-Chancellor UAJK.

Registrar Prof. Dr. Ayesha Sohail, Controller Examination Dr. Sharjil Saeed, Prof. Dr. Azmatullah Khan Sherani from BUITEMS Quetta, Dr. Lubna Farhi Chairperson Sir Syed UET, Karachi, Prof. Dr. Hussain Imran Jafferi, NUST, Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh, Dean, Hamdard University, Islamabad, Dr. Hasan Raza, Associate Dean, UET, Peshawar, Jalozi Campus, Prof. Dr. Shahid Maqsood Chairman UET, Peshawar, Jalozi Campus, Engr. Dr. Misbah Ullah Director of UET, Peshawar, Dr. Sikandar Bilal Khatkhat, Assistant Professor, UET, Peshawar, Dr. Shahab Ahmad Niazi, Chairman, IUB, Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Muzaffar Ali, UET, Taxila, Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Menhas, Associate Professor, MUST, AJK and faculty members of UAJK Electrical and Software Department attended the ceremony.

Academic council election of GC University Faisalabad

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: ASA panel won four out of five seats in the academic council election of GC University Faisalabad. The progressive panel won only one set of Associate.

ASA's candidate Dr. Muhammad Kamran Khan won 83 votes and Progressive's Dr. Aftab Ahmed won 64 votes for 2 seats of Associate Professor. His opponent Dr. Farrukh Azim of ASA got 58 votes and Dr. Shabana Naz of Progressive got 36 votes. Dr. Farooq Rehman won by getting 117 votes on a seat of assistant professor. His opponent, Dr. Muhammad Younis, got 29 votes.

Dr. Faiz Ahmed 145 and Dr. Zeb Al-Nisa won 152 votes for 2 seats of lecturer. His opponent Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz got 105 votes and Kanza Umar got 105 votes. Dr. Iram Sultana is already an elected member of the Academic Council on the seat of Assistant Professor.

On this occasion, ASA President Dr. Rizwanullah Kokab said that the university faculty showed political awareness and maturity and succeeded by voting for colleagues who raised their voices for their rights and brought them to the decision-making council.

Federal Ombudsman takes suo motu notice

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi while taking cognizance of the objectionable act of physical punishment to special children by the staff of National Institute of Special Education, H-9 Islamabad, has taken suo motu notice under article 9(1) of establishment of the office of Wafaqi Mohtsib (Ombudsman) order, 1983.

The news of inflicting corporal punishment to some special children by the staff of the National Institute of Special Education Sector H-9, Islamabad was broadcast on TV network, yesterday.

The Federal Ombudsman has asked the Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights to submit a comprehensive report, clearly highlighting all aspects of the said incident, including action taken against those responsible for this inhuman treatment as well as the Management of the Center, within one week.

Chairman District Press Club Wana met with Mayor Peshawar

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: District Press Club Wana Chairman Adam Khan Wazir met Peshawar Mayor Haji Zubair Ali in his office.

District Press Club Wana Chairman Adam Khan Wazir had a discussion with Haji Zubair Ali on various topics.

Apart from the current political and economic situation of the country, and also discussed the problems faced by journalists and their solutions.

The Chairman of the District Press Club Wana says that Mayor Haji Zubair Ali took out his valuable time and had an opportunity to have a lively discussion on various topics.

He thanked Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali and said that Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali is a friendly, modest and humble person.

His philanthropic thinking and policy should be appreciated, because in true sense he is a person who believes in selfless service.

Governor KPK has assured business community of support

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has welcomed the whole-hearted support of Governor KPK, Haji Ghulam Ali, to the business, industry and trade community on the FPCCI-proposed Charter of Economy aimed at 10 - 15 years of continuity in economic policies & plans. He gave this message on the occasion of Governor's visit to the FPCCI Head Office Karachi along with other notable parliamentarians.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that Haji Ghulam Ali can effectively utilize his high office to very persuasively relay the concerns, issues and complaints to the federal government as he has been an accomplished businessman himself for the past 4 - 5 decades.

Haji Ghulam Ali maintained that he is fully aware of the unbearable cost of doing business situation in the country and have made it clear to the federal government that it should work towards the protection & sustainability of the export-oriented industries, SMEs, labor-intensive sectors - and, more so, for the sustenance of the common man of the country.

Haji Ghulam Ali congratulated the entire business community of Pakistan in general & FPCCI in particular for the astounding come back of Pakistan's representative as the Vice President of the mighty trade alliance of 27 countries, i.e. Asia-Pacific Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CACCI) after a long-drawn-out period of 8 years. He added that the newly-elected VP CACCI from Pakistan, Mr. Khurram Tariq Sayeed, will help bring a lot of trade opportunities, investments, JVs and business collaborations to Pakistan using his influence & goodwill at CACCI.

Mian Anjum Nisar, former President FPCCI, explained that resumption of IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) after the successful completion of its 9th review will not solve its economic problems beyond a few months.

Mr. Khurram Tariq Sayeed, VP CACCI & a former VP FPCCI, pointed out that energy security is Pakistan's biggest issue - be its uninterrupted supplies; affordability & efficiency; management of circular debts of electricity & gas sectors; cheap power production and environment-friendly electricity plants.

Human rights violations in IIOJK: OIC

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: From the reliable sources of Jeddah reported by Jahangir Khan, the OIC Event Highlights Urgent Need to Address Human Rights Violations in IIOJK

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, organized a special event and a photo exhibition today at the OIC Secretariat to commemorate the Kashmir Solidarity Day and highlight the gross human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

OIC Secretary General, H.E. Hisein Ibrahim Taha, participated as the Chief Guest. Senior leadership of the OIC Secretariat including humanitarian crisis in IIOJK. Condemning India's

unilateral and illegal actions of 5th August 2019, PR emphasized that the OIC should take concrete actions for the realization of the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people as per the relevant resolutions of UN Security Council. He exhorted the Secretary General for appointment of a panel of international eminent personalities to explore legal, political and diplomatic avenues for peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Secretary General OIC, Mr. Hisein Ibrahim Taha reiterated OIC's rejection of India's illegal and unilateral actions since August 5, 2019 aimed at altering the demographic composition of the occupied territory. He highlighted that the OIC has

persistently called India out for its egregious human rights violations in the IIOJK and expressed the urgent need for the resolution of the J&K dispute. He assured to take all possible measures for resolution of the dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and OIC declarations.

In his remarks, Assistant Secretary General and Special Envoy on Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Yousef Al Dobeiy referred to his recent visit to the Line of Control and the stories of plight of the victims of Indian forces. He reassured OIC's firm support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir for realization of their dreams.

Secretary General's Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir, Assistant Secretary General for Palestine/Al-Quds Affairs,

Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology and Permanent Representatives of OIC Missions along with representatives from Saudi and Pakistani media outlets were present at the event.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to OIC, Ambassador Syed Mohammad Fawad Sher, briefed the audience about the atrocities being perpetrated by Indian occupation forces and the magnitude of the Consul General Khalid Majid thanked the OIC for its consistent support for the Kashmiri people and expressed the hope that OIC will take concrete measures to stop human rights violations in IIOJK. Chairman Kashmir Committee Jeddah, Mr. Masood Puri, in his remarks, highlighted the plight of Kashmiri people and urged the Secretary General



to redouble OIC's efforts for the just resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Today's event is yet another manifestation of OIC's unequivocal support to the cause of the

Kashmiri people and its commitment for realization of their right to self-determination.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:22 am
Zohr 12:22 pm
Asr 4:18 pm
Maghrib 5:58 pm
Isha 7:21 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

Tobacco control activists thank govt. for doubling the FED on cigarettes



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Health activists have expressed joy on government's decision to double the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on Cigarettes. In a press release shared by Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), health activists dubbed shared that this decision will go long way in solving Pakistan's financial woes and recommended government to remain steadfast on this decision against tobacco industry's misinformation campaign.

Malik Imran, country head, Campaign for tobacco-free kids (CTFK), expresses his gratitude by thanking the government for increasing FED after an SRO was released on 14th February, 2023. The SRO stating revised taxes on locally produced cigarettes, FED has doubled on cigarettes (16500/- per 1000 cigarettes if the initial price on the packaging exceeds 9000 per 1000 cigarettes).

He mentioned that tobacco induced disease causes an annual economic burden of 615 billion which is 1.6% of Pakistan's GDP. On the other hand, the revenue generated from the tobacco industry is 120 billion. Therefore everyone must appreciate government's decision which is in interest of Pakistan's health and economy. Subsequently, the government needs to remain headstrong because like previous occasions, tobacco industry will oppose this decision using false claims of illicit trade and counterfeit products. Listening to their lies will only push us back.

NUML and NSU signed MoU

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training attended the MoU signing ceremony as the chief guest, between National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and The National Skills University Islamabad (NSU) today on 22nd February, 2023.

Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain was briefed about the MoU by both parties. He was told that National Skills University will provide different skills-based technical education to

NUML students in which they can develop expertise. Furthermore NUML will provide national / international language proficiencies to the students at National Skills University Islamabad main and its Muridke Campus in related languages. Similarly, NUML can also provide translation and interpretation services on demand to National Skills University.

Rana Tanveer was briefed that NSU and NUML will hold joint educational and research activities in addition to seminars, lectures, conferences, workshops and symposia. The scope of cooperation will also include special short-term and long-term academic programs and capacity



training sessions and reciprocal visits of senior management of both the institutions. Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain congratulated both NSU and NUML on the signing of the MoU. He said that all technical institutions in Pakistan need to play their part in equipping the youth of this country in becoming self-sufficient. He reiterated the resolve of the government to transform labour into skilled employees. Federal Minister Rana Tanveer high-

lighted the problem of language barrier that Pakistani labour faces in foreign countries. He hoped that through this MoU and the subsequent trainings of the youth, it will enable them to become productive and sought after skilled employees in foreign countries. Federal Minister, Rana Tanveer said that the development of technical skills in the youth is pivotal in enabling them to become an asset for the country.

Award Distribution

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Ms. Shaza Fatima and UAE's Ambassadors distributing awards among the winners of Future Builders Contest.



8th Annual Surgical Conference held at Aga Khan University

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The 8th Annual Surgical Conference in Pakistan aimed to promote collaboration between clinical specialties and basic science by convening experts from academia, research labs, and healthcare organizations worldwide. The conference focused on the latest developments, challenges, and opportunities in the field of stem cell research and its implications for surgery, with the aim of fostering innovative solutions for fatal diseases, such as heart diseases, strokes, burns, various cancers, diabetes and more. These are increasingly burdening the healthcare system and economy of Pakistan, and the overall quality of life of Pakistanis.

The chief guest, Prof Attar-Rehman who is a UNESCO Science Laureate and Professor Emeritus, International Centre for Chemical & Biological Sciences, University of Karachi, said: "Sharing ideas is the first step towards innovation, and this conference is an unprecedented move towards encouraging discussions about the challenges associated with the field of stem cell science."

50 experts from around the world participated in the discourse, with keynote addresses by Helena Pereira De Melo from Nova School of Law Lisbon, Portugal, Catherine Prescott from Cambridge Network, UK, and Marita Eisemann-Klein from Germany, to name a few. Distinguished guest speak-

ers, most of whom were invited from outside of Pakistan, delivered talks at the conference. Professor Arnold Richard Kriegstein, from the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regeneration Medicine and Stem Cell Research at the University of California and San Francisco (UCSF), commended the Aga Khan University for its pioneering efforts in initiating stem cell research in Pakistan and expressed pride in collaborating with the University to establish the stem cell center at AKU.

Professor Ather Enam, the Scientific Director of AKU's Juma Research Laboratory emphasized the significance of the conference stating that it was a one-of-a-kind event in the University's history that

centered around the theme of bringing stem cell research from bench to bedside and into clinical trials.

Dr. Saleem Islam, the Chair of Surgery at AKU, stressed the importance of conducting basic science research in the region, despite the difficulties that come with it.

The event also provided a platform for young researchers to showcase their work through oral and poster presentations and engage with their peers from around the world, thus fostering the exchange of scientific knowledge and building translational bridges.

The conference proceedings are now available as a special supplement in the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association.

Zong 4G partners with ITCN



Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G continues its mission to bring Pakistan into the digital era by partnering with ITCN as the title partner for the 22nd rendition of Asia's biggest Tech and Telecom conference taking place in Islamabad at the Pak-China Friendship center from the 23rd to the 25th of February.

The event serves as a unique gathering of Pakistan's tech ecosystem. Key stakeholders, such as Government Officials and Chief Level Executives, will be present at the event along with Innovators and Decision Makers from multiple fields and industries, discussing the future of technology and innovation.

As the largest 4G and data network in Pakistan, Zong 4G always makes an effort to promote initiatives such as ITCN which help in fostering the growth and advancement of the Digital Technology industry in the country. Keeping in line with its focus of "Let's get Digital" Zong 4G will be displaying its digital business solutions that are aimed at optimizing businesses' performance and growth along with digitalizing their operations.

The official spokesperson of Zong 4G said about the event, "ITCN Asia is a great opportunity for all tech-oriented and innovative minds to come together and create an environment that promotes learning and digital growth. Zong 4G is proud to align itself with ITCN as we are on the cusp of a new digital revolution and events such as these play an essential part in creating awareness for the progress that has been achieved in the fields of technology and telecom."

Currently, the event has an expected footfall of 25,000+ attendees and 100+ conference speakers. The 22nd ITCN Asia is shaping up to be an energetic and extremely enlightening event where industry leaders are coming together to share and pool their combined experiences and expertise in an unparalleled learning opportunity.

Soneri Bank announces year ended results for 2022

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Soneri Bank Limited, in their 196th meeting held in Lahore on 22nd February 2023, announced the Bank's financial results for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The Bank posted profit before tax (PBT) of Rs. 4,554 million and profit after tax (PAT) of Rs. 1,883 million for the yearended December 2022, as compared to Rs. 5,149 million and Rs. 2,854 million respectively for the prior year. The Bank's EPS was recorded at Rs. 1.7082 per share for the current reporting period, as compared to Rs. 2.5889 per share for the year 2021.

The Bank's Net Interest income for the year ended at Rs. 11,267 million, increasing by 3.01 percent against Rs. 10,938 million for the prior year while non-interest income increased by 20.21 percent to end at Rs. 5,157 million as against Rs. 4,290 million for the last year. Despite inflationary pressures, growth in expenses was restricted at 20.16 percent as compared to the prior year with Non-markup expenses reported at Rs. 12,245 million for the year ended December 2022.

The Board of Directors has recommended cash dividend for the year ended 31 December 2022 @ 10.00 percent i.e. Rs. 1.00 per share (2021: @ 15.00 percent i.e. Rs. 1.50 per share), subject to shareholders' approval in the forthcoming AGM.

The Bank's net advances portfolio increased to Rs. 208,434 million as at 31 December 2022, 25.95 percent higher than the year end 2021 level, while the Bank's Non-performing loans to total Advances ratio improved to 4.71 percent (December 2021: 5.95 percent). Specific coverage was at 71.61 percent (December 2021: 76.51 percent).

Bank's Deposits registered an increase of 1.64 percent when compared to 31 December 2021, ending at Rs. 409,643 million at 31 December 2022. The Bank's CA mix improved to 32.73 percent in December 2022 as against 27.17 percent at December 2021, with yearend Current Accounts at Rs. 134,080 million as against Rs. 109,494 million at the yearend 2021.

As a result of the changes introduced by the Finance Act 2022, the overall effective tax rate for the Bank for the year ended 31 December 2022 stood at 58.65 percent (2021: 44.57 percent).

Following the exercise of the call option for its existing TFC of Rs. 3,000 million, the Bank issued fresh unsecured, subordinated, rated, privately placed Term Finance Certificates of Rs 4,000 million on 26 December 2022, having a tenor of 10 years. PACRA has assigned a rating of A+ with Stable Outlook to this instrument. The instrument is in process of being subsequently listed under the Debt Security Listing Regulations.

While there are challenging times ahead, at Soneri Bank, we remain confident about achieving our targets both in numbers and customer satisfaction ratings. We remain committed to serving our customers to the fullest, and to achieve the milestones and KPIs for the year 2023.

'Integrated Farming' is the ray of light for the Future of Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: While discussing the current economic challenges faced by Pakistan, Mr Khurram Shahzad the Patron in Chief of the Asian Business Forum had said that the "Integrated Farming" is the ray of light for the Future of Pakistan.

Chairman (BOG) Asian Business Forum Syed Jawad Ali Shah and the Chairman Agricultural Chapter of Asian Business Forum Dr. Syed Yassir Abbas Bukhari added if the government support us in this, we would not only be able to convert the barren lands into the lush green areas but we would also be able to create the ample job market in the country. They further emphasized that the value addition of the organic agricultural products will not only address the issue of food security but it would also attract the precious foreign exchange through the export.

Three day 3rd International Public Health Conference begins at KMU

News Desk

PESHAWAR: Former Federal Minister of Health Dr. Zafar Mirza said that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) share in total deaths annually in Pakistan is 55.3%. NCDs metabolic/physiological risk factors refers to raised blood pressure, overweight/obesity, raised blood glucose and raised lipids as well as behavioural risk factors including tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and alcohol abuse.

He was talking to the third international Public Health Conference organized by Khyber Medical University (KMU) Institute of Public Health & Social Sciences.

While explaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC) he said UHS means that all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.

He said that types of services are Preventive, Promotive, Curative, Rehabilitative and Palliative, whereas delivery Platforms are Community and Primary Health Centers (PHC), however 70% of essential health services can be delivered at PHC level.

National NCDs & Mental Health Framework 2021 - 2030 aimed to

reduce by one-third premature mortality from NCDs by 2030, through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being, he added.

The vice-chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq while talking to the conference said that Pakistan is facing a double burden of communicable diseases and NCDs. Adoption of a sedentary lifestyle and changes in diet have resulted in a surge in NCDs in Pakistan.

He said that tobacco use and hypertension are the leading attributable risk factors for deaths due to cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and respiratory diseases.

Pakistan has the sixth highest number of people in the world with diabetes; every fourth adult is overweight or obese; cigarettes are cheap; anti-smoking and road safety laws are poorly enforced; and a mixed public-private health-care system provides sub optimum care.

Furthermore, almost three decades of exposure to socio-political instability, economic uncertainty, violence, regional conflict, and displacement have contributed to a high prevalence of mental health disorders. Pakistan could achieve at least a 20% reduction in the number of deaths from NCDs by targeting the major risk factors, he added.



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Celebrating Saudi Arabia's Founding Day with a rich slice of history

Noor Nugali

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is on a long journey that began some 300 years ago. The country we know today has a past, a present, and a future that is embedded in, and springs from, its history.

The founding of the country by Imam Mohammed bin Saud is celebrated on Feb. 22, and its unification by King Abdulaziz on Sept. 23 which is known as National Day.

Through our Arab News Founding Day Project, we have slowly and meticulously uncovered hidden gems of Saudi history, information which has only recently come to light through our collaboration with the scholars and historians at the Diriyah Gate Development Authority.

It has been a loving and detailed project indeed. For years, what is now Saudi Arabia was seen as a desert land, little known outside the Muslim world though loved and revered by Muslims as the site of Makkah and Madinah. Other than in a few Arabic sources and memoirs which were unavailable to those unfamiliar with Arabic, little was known of the land or its people.

The celebration of our Founding Day is, however, in essence a reminder of

where we came from as well as how both our present and our future are reminders that both are built on important foundations of civilization.

We have worked painstakingly and closely with historians, translating those

every brick there lies a hidden story to reveal. Yes, it is the birthplace of our leadership, where the legacy of Al-Saud was laid and continues to thrive, but also at the heart of what the Kingdom represents: A country that has never been

visionaries; both are groundbreakers and, most importantly, their people lived and are living today in what is a golden era.

On Founding Day, Saudis celebrate their heritage, their culture, and their history. The country is made up of five different regions and though each one is unique, all come together to celebrate their common history and to be embraced by it.

One of the hidden gems, we discovered in our research is Princess Modhi bint Abi Wahtan. She was not only the wife of the First Saudi State leader but also his confidant and adviser. Siblat Moudhi, a famous charitable endowment for the community, stands tall to this day. Its location is strategically to the east of Salwa Palace, on the southeastern side of the At-Turaif district.

By means of vast amount of interviews and research done by historians, one thing became very clear: Saudi women have played a crucial role in the history of the Kingdom. Poems have been written about their generosity along with stories of their bravery in times of peril. We continue to revere and honor them today.

Celebrating Founding Day is a tradition that we will honor and hold dear for generations to come: We embrace our history; we thrive in the present and we look forward to a bright future.



Arabic historical memoirs, manuscripts, and documents into English—and we have brought to light what was largely unknown and unfamiliar. The idea is to bring to light pages from our magnificent history which have thus far been available only in Arabic.

These documents reveal our fascinating history, something that we are all — and should be — proud of.

Diriyah is not only a UNESCO heritage site, but within every structure and

colonized. That is most remarkable in itself, for that rich history, untouched by foreign powers, reveals an authentic and ancient cultural aspect which we see until this very day.

Last year, Diriyah's historian Dr. Badran Al-Honaihen compared Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Imam Saud bin Abdulaziz (the great), third ruler of the First Saudi State. The comparisons are remarkable: Both are

Kashmiris, Palestinians remain deprived of UN-pledged right to self-determination

Pakistan has called for addressing situations where people are still forcibly denied their UN-pledged right to self-determination, as in Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine, saying there is a need to uphold principles of justice and rule of law.

“The right to self-determination which is a fundamental pillar of the world order based on the Rule of Law is the central piece of multilateral framework for peace and security,” Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the Special Committee on the ‘Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization’.

Established as a platform to exchange views on the Charter's implementation, the Special Committee holds annual sessions, with member states gathering to consider proposals and hold substantive discussions. Since its founding, the United Nations' mission and work have been guided by the purposes and principles contained in its Charter, adopted in 1945 and amended three times — in 1963, 1965 and 1973.

“While most dependent or occupied peoples have been able to exercise their right to self-determination peacefully, there are some who have been denied this right and have been obliged to struggle for it,” the Pakistani envoy said in his remarks.

“This is the situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine,” Aamir Khan told delegates.

Voicing concern over frequent resort to use of force around the world in which foreign occupation and intervention are tolerated, he said, “Suppression of self-determination, great power rivalries, festering conflicts and unresolved disputes, terrorism, including new forms of terrorism and extremism and proliferation of ideologies of hate is gaining strength.”

“In the midst of this all,” the Pakistani envoy said, “the United Nations often being deliberately marginalized”. In this regard, he called for reaffirmation of the commitment to the principles and values enshrined in the UN Charter.

“The UN is an indispensable actor in combating existential threats ranging from threats to peace and security including wars and situations of foreign occupation to pandemics to climate change and nuclear proliferation,” Aamir Khan added.

“For a rule-based international order, respect for the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law is a pre-requisite,” he said, stressing the need to uphold principles of justice and rule of law, cooperative multilateralism, sovereign equality, and settlement of disputes by peaceful means in the conduct of international relations.

The Pakistani envoy said the current and future threats to international peace and security could be addressed only through multilateral cooperation within the framework of the UN Charter.



Amjad Rasmi

Founding Day an opportunity to highlight Saudi Arabia's achievements

Dr. Bader Bin Saud

Wednesday, Feb. 22, is certainly no ordinary day, as it will see the second annual celebration of the founding of the First Saudi State in 1727, nearly 300 years ago, by Imam Mohammed bin Saud, who was at that time no more than 30 years old. The historic city of Diriyah, which was the capital of the First Saudi State, will again be returned to what it was in the 18th century as part of the Diriyah Gate project, which began in November 2019.

Events organized as part of the project include Formula E races, heavyweight boxing title fights, international tennis tournaments, equestrian festivals and other regional and international events, in addition to the registration of the Turaif neighborhood in Diriyah on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2010. Diriyah has also been chosen, with the blessing of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, as the Capital of Arab Culture in 2030.

The First Saudi State was not new to its surrounding states, nor was it imported. The clerics, merchants and sheikhs of the tribe stood by it and all Najdi emirates and some current Gulf countries joined together under its banner, along with Al-Ahsa, Makkah, Jeddah, Madinah and Tihama. Four imams successively ruled over it: Mohammed bin Saud, Abdulaziz bin Mohammed, Saud Al-Kabir and Abdullah bin Saud. The rule of these four imams lasted until 1818, when Ottoman colonizers overthrew the state from Diriyah. Prince Mishari bin Saud, brother of Imam Abdullah, tried to restore it, but he did not succeed and lost his life. Historian Abdulrahman Al-Jabarti wrote that Ibra-

him Pasha stayed in Diriyah for nine months and sent 500 families to Egypt and Istanbul to be sold into slavery.

This Ottoman overthrow and attempt to abolish the Saudi state's existence took place because of the Saudis' right to lead the Islamic world ahead of the Mamluks and Ottomans due to their Arab origins, Islamic identity, large number of supporters, and because they were part of the community of the Arabian Peninsula itself.

The Saudis were not absent for long, however, as, in 1824, they established their second state, with Riyadh as the capital. The founder was Imam Turki bin Abdullah, a grandson of Imam Mohammed bin Saud and brother of Imam Abdulaziz. The Second Saudi State lasted for nearly 70 years, with Imam Turki succeeded by his son Imam Faisal bin Turki and then Imams Abdullah, Saud and Abdul Rahman, all sons of Imam Faisal.

As a result of the unstable situation in Najd, a second overthrow occurred. This did not prevent its return 11 years later, in 1902, under King Abdulaziz, the founder of the modern Saudi state, which is similar in its sovereign borders to the state of Imam Mohammed bin Saud and in its capital to the state of Imam Turki bin Abdullah. It has been successively ruled by the founder's sons, Kings Saud, Faisal, Khalid, Fahd, Abdullah and now King Salman, alongside his Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The Founding Day brings with it the philosophy of the founder imam and his ingenious methods of governance and management that moved the society of the Arabian Peninsula from a life of diaspora and conflicts to a life of peace, security and unity. The Arabian Peninsula had been united only once before Imam Mohammed bin Saud, during the time of the Prophet and the Rashidun Caliphate.

If Arab countries and some Western coun-

tries, including the US, celebrate their independence, the Kingdom celebrates its founding and the establishment of a state that has not known a colonizer throughout its history. The Saudi identity has not changed since the First Saudi State, but it has developed in line with the circumstances of time and place and the people's needs and life priorities, in imitation of what Imam Mohammed did.

During his reign, Diriyah was known as the largest commercial market in the Arabian Peninsula and a central station on the pilgrimage route. In addition, it secured the neighboring countries of the state capital against attacks by their enemies.

Diriyah is, for the Saudis, no different from the Acropolis of the Greeks, the Colosseum of the Romans or Machu Picchu in the Inca civilization, because it represents the beginning of everything. The Kingdom owns 45 percent of the Red Sea's water and has six sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The crown prince is keen for leaders and heads of state to visit Diriyah. He wants to see a similar achievement in the Kingdom to what Lee Kuan Yew achieved in Singapore, but over 15 years, not 50.

The Founding Day is an opportunity to rearrange Saudi Arabia's identity and to show the reality and differences between Saudi Arabia and other countries in the world on humanitarian concerns, as well as its eagerness to be the most desirable destination for investment, tourism, entertainment and the quality of life.

It is necessary to review the curricula of history and to give the Saudi state, in its three stages, the detailed attention it deserves and to highlight its milestones, its people and their heroism, and to link their positions and achievements to the current reality, and with it the activation of scientific research to provide a fair national vision about them.

APHC bemoans imposition of autocratic rule, undeclared martial law in IIOJK

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has condemned the upsurge in cordon and search operations being carried out by the Indian forces and said, “these repressive measures are forced to suppress the freedom sentiments of the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The APHC in a statement issued in Srinagar said, “The Indian military and police along with non-Kashmiri bureaucrats are undemocratically ruling IIOJK, while the people of the occupied territory are being suppressed for

raising their voice for inalienable right to self-determination.”

The APHC said that the use of brute military force had failed to dent the morale of Kashmiris, who “are determined to continue their freedom struggle with valor and integrity.”

“The heavy deployment of more than one million occupation troops used against the civil population that has been demanding their legitimate rights is a brazen violation of international law and Human Rights Charter of 1948, adopted by the United Nations,” it maintained.

The APHC denounced the arbitrary arrests during the frequent cordon and search operations and said thousands of innocent people had been put behind bars without any legal trial. “There is no rule of law in the occupied territory and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) backed administration was employing absolute autocratic rule. The BJP has imposed undeclared martial law to subdue the Kashmiris”, it added.

The APHC urged the United Nations

Human Rights Council and other human rights organisations to impress upon India to allow them to visit the besieged Kashmiri people to take stock of the grim situation prevailing in the territory.

Recalling the eve of Kunan Poshpora, February 23, 1991, APHC senior leader Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar said, “The mass rape of Kashmiri women was a well-planned conspiracy hatched by the Indian authorities to keep the Kashmiri women away from the freedom struggle.”

Paying glowing tributes to the valiant Kashmiri women for their active participation and sacrifices in freedom movement, he said, “The Kashmiri women are the prime target of coward Indian forces. They are not only killed, tortured, imprisoned but raped also. Rape of women is used as an tool by the Indian forces to punish, humiliate and intimidate the Kashmiris to force them into submission,” he added.

Indian troops had gang-raped around 100 women of all ages from eight to eighty on the night of February 23 in 1991 during a siege and search operation in Kunan Poshpora area of the district.

Meanwhile, Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar and other APHC leaders, including Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Zamrooda Habib, Yasmeen Raja, Fahreeda Behanji, Dr Musaiib have appealed to G-20 countries not to attend India's planned event in the IIOJK as India will use it to hide its state terrorism and mislead the world about the real ground situation of the disputed territory.



Kazakhstan President to pay historic visit Pakistan this year: Yerzhan Kistafin

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will visit Pakistan this year, which will start a new chapter of trade and economic relations between the two countries. This was said by H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

The envoy said that the President of Kazakhstan is visiting Pakistan after 20 years, which will be a historic visit as 20 MoUs would be signed during his visit to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation in multiple fields between Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

He said that Kazakhstan is launching direct flights between Almaty and Lahore from April and Almaty and Karachi from May this year that would help promote B2B and P2P relations. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit Kazakhstan to join the launch of direct flights. He appreciated the



role of Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI for first-ever direct flights between the two countries. He said a delegation of businesswomen of Pakistan would also visit Kazakhstan to explore business cooperation with

Kazakh counterparts.

He said that Kazakhstan intends to sign a transit trade agreement and agreement between the banking sectors of both countries that would provide a legal framework to the busi-

ness communities of both sides for bilateral trade promotion. He said that Kazakhstan provides Pakistan easy access to Eurasian and Central Asian markets and Pakistan should take advantage of this potential. He

said that a number of delegations from both sides would exchange visits this year that would take the bilateral relations of both countries to the next level.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) offered that ICCI would like to host a dinner reception in honor of the President of Kazakhstan during his visit to Pakistan.

He said that both countries should focus on improving trade ties as their current bilateral trade is quite low. He welcomed the launch of direct flights and assured that the ICCI delegation would visit Kazakhstan to join its inaugural ceremony.

He said that direct flights between Islamabad and Astana should also be started soon to connect the capital cities of both countries.

He said that Pakistani ports provide the shortest route to landlocked Kazakhstan to the Arabia Sea and emphasized that both countries should also establish land and railways

links to enhance business relations. He said that both countries can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, tourism, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance for mutual benefits. He invited the investors of Kazakhstan to explore JVs and investment in CPEC and in other sectors of Pakistan's economy and assured that ICCI would cooperate in connecting them with partners in Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan are gateways for each other to get easy access to their respective regional markets and they should develop close cooperation to take advantage of this potential.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI termed the launch of direct flights a historic development between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. He said that Kazakhstan is an emerging power in Central Asia and Pakistan would like to develop close cooperation with it for improving trade and economic ties.

Korean delegation visits FPCCI capital office Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Korean business delegation consist of 47 members, led by former Korean Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Song Jong-hwan visited The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Capital Office, Islamabad, The President FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Vice Presidents Amin Ullah Baig & Umar Masood ur Rehman, and other prominent Pakistani business leaders welcomed the delegation at FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad and they have a very fruitful discussion regarding trade development between two countries.

The delegation Members belongs to various companies of different sectors. The members of delegation took a keen interest in TOURISM, SILVER SPORT FITNESS, DRON EDUCATION, CONSTRUCTION, AGRICULTURE, DREAM MASTERING, MEDIA, FOOD DRYER, TRADING, STEEL TRADING, VEHICLE TRADING, BIOLOGY, HEAVY MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, and MACHINERY of Pakistan. During B2B meeting, ideas were exchanged on the projects by the companies in Pakistan and areas of interest expanding cooperation in different sectors.

During the conference the issues of e-commerce, transition to the digital system, and the introduction of Kore-



an high-tech inventions into the trading system were discussed for further development of trade and economic relations between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. New ways of cooperation to increase the volume of trade between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan & Republic of Korea were also reveal while exchange of views.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President of FPCCI said that Pakistan and Republic of Korea have developed extensive commercial, political, and strategic terms during past few years, however, the current trade volume between the countries has always been skewed, despite having a huge untapped export potential in Pakistan.

The leader of the Korean busi-

ness delegation Dr. Song Jong-Hwan appreciated the President FPCCI for their warm welcome and reiterated his commitment to bringing Korean investment into Pakistan. The members of the delegation shared their experiences of visiting religious, cultural and tourist sites. The members of the delegation unanimously of the view that Pakistan is worth while especially in religious tourism. Pakistan has been the cradle of Buddhist art and culture and the second holy land of Buddhism for well over a thousand years. The religious faith has marked the most significant epoch in the history of the cultural and social evolution in the subcontinent by promoting religious tourism Pakistan can earn huge

foreign exchange.

Mr. Amin Ullah Baig Vice President of FPCCI & Incharge of the Capital Office spoke about the increasing cooperation between Pakistan and Korea and said that Korea is keen to explore the growing market of Pakistan.

Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President FPCCI emphasized that IT is the most important industry of Pakistan as well as the Republic of Korea; both are experts in exporting skilled human resources of IT. He stated that only 10,000 workers of Pakistani origin are working in the Republic of Korea and that numbers should increase and it will give benefits to both the countries.

JICA agrees for river dike management for reducing damage due to floods

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Record of Discussions of the basic framework of "the Project for Capacity Development of Effective River Dikes Management Response to 2022 Flood", was signed between Mr. Yasumitsu KINOSHITA, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office, and Mr. Ahmed Kamal, Chief Engineering Advisor/Chairman Federal Flood Commission (FFC), Ministry of Water Resources Islamabad.

The 2022 flood was caused by the monthly rainfall amount of 1,500 mm

at the downstream of Sukkur on the Indus River, which is characterized as a dry area with the average annual precipitation of about 100 mm. In response to such an abnormal climate event, it is imperative to understand the effect of climate change. There is still a potential for river dikes to be damaged, or collapsed, due to a flood that is likely to occur with a high frequency and it is also indispensable to prevent the river dikes from further breaches by managing them appropriately. Therefore, the project aims at an effective river dike management while taking the effect of climate change into account.



The project enhances the capacity of FFC to manage river dikes along the Indus River downstream of Tarbela dam. It is expected that, under this project, river dike management by

FFC is improved in line with its notified functions to contribute to future flood risk reduction.

Pakistan has a high frequency of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, cyclones, and earthquakes. Quite notably, every year, Pakistan experiences heavy damages to the large parts of the country due to floods triggered by heavy rains during the monsoon season.

Through this technical cooperation, the Government of Japan and JICA continues to extend its cooperation in Pakistan for strengthening the disaster-risk management of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

UAE sun care firm SunKiss sees 175% growth in 2022



News Desk

DUBAI: SunKiss, the UAE homegrown developer of sustainable and environmentally friendly sun care products, has revealed substantial growth figures topping 175% in 2022, following the company's launch in 2020, underscoring the increased consumer demand for eco-friendly and effective UVA and UVB sun protection in the region.

The company, which designs and produces all products, including the reef-friendly formula, in the UAE, has seen unprecedented demand from the hotel industry as research increasingly highlights the importance of sustainability as part of the guests' decision-making process when choosing where to stay.

According to research from booking.com released in 2022, 78% of global travellers intend to stay in a sustainable property at least once in 2023, with the study also highlighting that guests want to help reduce their impact on the environment (41%), want a more locally relevant experience (33%), and believe sustainable properties treat the community better (31%).

Joanna Barclay, Managing Director of SunKiss, said: "At the very core of our business is the development of sun protection that protects the person wearing it from harmful UVA and UVB sun damage, but just as importantly, also protects our planet.

"Our products are sustainably produced and reduce plastic usage by 90%, and, as a home grown Dubai brand, our carbon footprint is minimised and is dramatically less than some of our competitors from Australia and the US. The formulas have been developed to be reef-friendly, vegan, and alcohol and paraben-free, making them safe and suitable for everyone."

Supporting the sustainability drive, SunKiss has developed a range of products which have been designed in partnership with seasoned hoteliers and wellness and spa experts to provide sustainable, luxury guest amenities.

The formula used within the sun protection is created with zinc oxide and titanium oxide. It acts like a microscopic mirror to reflect harmful rays and offers the highest sun filter available from plants. It is suitable for all skin types and is water and sweat resistant.

"Sun protection is of the utmost importance everywhere, and no more so than in the UAE, one of the top 10 sunniest places on the planet. In line with a host of initiatives introduced by the UAE authorities and with UAE President H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's 2023 Year of Sustainability commitment, we have developed a range of innovative products that protect not only the planet but also one of a hotel's greatest assets, its employees and of course, its guests," concluded Barclay.

Serena Hotels Sarangi Season 6: A Star-Studded Event

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Cultural Diplomacy hosted Sarangi season 6 finale at the Shees Mahal of Islamabad Serena Hotel on 21 February 2023, an evening dedicated to promoting the hidden talents of Pakistan by providing them hotel's platform to showcase their musical talent with a wider audience; an opportunity to become the nation's rising stars. Sarangi, a music initiative has been encouraging young and talented singers and bands to celebrate our cultural heritage through their music. For season 6, a total of 360 contestants participated in the competition, of which 5 were selected by professional jury members.

The five shortlisted contestants, from varying backgrounds

provided an intriguing mix of musical talent on display, included Asma Aslam from Karachi, Muqaddas Younas from Lahore, Mihnhas Khan from Islamabad, Sajjad Ali Hussain from Faisalabad, and Rahat Francis from Quetta. Their experience and training were reflected in their vocal styles as they performed in front of over 300 guests, including a large number of diplomats, government functionaries, corporate heads, businessmen and music lovers; proving their mettle to the highly acclaimed musical genius Sarmad Ghaffoor, whose well known works include Atif Aslam's two platinum albums including 'Jal Pari' and he is the man behind the music of last year's cinematic hit 'The Legend of Maula Jatt'. The other members of the jury panel consist of illustrious Qawwal Asif

Ali Santoo, who was in the tutelage of the Great Legend Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, along with the melodious Aima Baig, who rose to fame with the 2017 songs from the movie 'Lahore se Aagey' and has since been mesmerizing the audience with her electrifying performances.

The jury unanimously decided on Sajjad Ali Hussain from Faisalabad as the winner of Sarangi Season 6, whose first album will be produced by a professional production studio with the support of Serena Hotel. The other performers were also presented with awards by the Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan (Retd) along with the Judges.

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels lauded the talented performers and encouraged others to participate in the next

season of Sarangi. He also appreciated the three jury members for their voluntary services for this wonderful community initiative and presented them with mementos on the occasion.

Bio of Performers Muqaddas (22 years) the youngest of the finalists has been in the tutelage of the "Sur-Taal" Academy for the past year and a half and is a resident of Lahore, her forte is classical, and she prepared classical tunes for the judges.

Mihnhas Khan belongs to Islamabad is a 27 year old self-taught musician whose passion for music has had him practicing and learning it for the past thirteen years, even though by education and profession he has a degree in computer sciences.

Sajjad Ali Hussain hails from the heart of Punjab and has



participated in musical competitions in Faisalabad, his hometown, he has been struggling in this industry for the past 10 years and is hoping to win hearts through the Sarangi platform and be able to finally receive the

opportunity that he has been hoping for.

Our fourth contestant Rahat is 24 and hails from Quetta and has been part of the church choir where his choirmaster has been his main source of learning and

inspiration.

Asma Aslam is an Asset Manager from Karachi where she works with Bahria Town and is a self-taught passionate singer, whose love for music made her pursue it as a hobby on her own.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
41,167.60	40,949.84
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,212.95	40,923.03
Index Value	Change
5,662,493,697	+217.76
Percentage	Time
+0.53%	22 Feb, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,930.63	-47.12
Percentage	Time
-0.59%	22 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,158.67	+29.08
Percentage	Time
+0.088%	22 Feb, 11:50 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
27,104.32	-368.78
Percentage	Time
-1.34%	22 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	179.00	182.00
Bahrain Dinar	699.4	707.4
Canadian Dollar	194	196.2
China Yuan	38.24	38.64
Danish Krone	37.65	38.05
Euro	279.00	281.80
Hong Kong Dollar	33.41	33.76
Indian Rupee	3.16	3.27
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	857.79	866.79
Malaysian Ringgit	59.33	59.93
New Zealand \$	163.68	165.68
Norwegians Krone	25.78	26.08
Omani Riyal	683.05	691.05
Qatari Riyal	71.89	72.59
Saudi Riyal	69.80	70.50
Singapore Dollar	194	196
Swedish Korona	25.32	25.62
Swiss Franc	283.76	286.26
Thai Bhat	7.61	7.76
U.A.E Dirham	171.80	172.50
UK Pound Sterling	316.50	319.50
US Dollar	263.00	265.50

Huawei launches the first ever smart village in Gokina

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: In line with the Government's Digital Pakistan vision and the UN SDGs, Smart Village Pakistan aims to digitally transform remote and rural communities with Internet connectivity and empower local residents with access to a range of digital services to improve their quality of life and well-being. It gives me great pleasure to announce that Pakistan is the first country to establish a Smart Village in the Asia Pacific region.

This pilot project comes under the umbrella of Smart Villages of Pakistan, a nationwide initiative launched by the MoITT in 2021 together with Universal Service Fund (USF), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Huawei.

While applauding the efforts of USF, ITU and Huawei, Federal Minister for MoITT, Syed Amin Ul Haque said, "It is anticipated that the pilot projects and the Smart Pakistan Village initiative as a whole will help overcome key challenges that people in rural areas face such as limited access to healthcare, education, financial, and digital services; lack of employment and income-creation opportunities; digital literacy and gender gaps; and a rural-urban divide exacerbated by uneven technology proliferation. The Smart Village Pakistan Projects will be initiated in all provinces very soon."



Highlighting the Gokina Smart Village Project details IT Minister said that, three priority areas were identified through the needs assessment study in Gokina, a valley settlement located 21 kilometers away from Islamabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman NADRA, Tariq Malik said, "After the success of Mobile NADRA vehicle, we are excited to launch the NADRA Motorcycle Services—starting from Gokina Smart Village and shall soon be initiated all over Pakistan—where people will be able to avail all NADRA facilities close to their homes, such as family registration certificate, child registration certificate, etc."

Earlier in his opening remarks, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of USF said, "Gokina Smart Village project is an exemplary model of how we envision the future of digital inclusivity in Pakistan. Sustainable digital growth is key to accelerating rural development and supporting the socio-economic stability of individuals. The agenda of the USF has been to empower underserved and underserved communities. We look forward to transformative collaborations with our esteemed partners ITU, Huawei, NADRA, and Jazz, as well as service providers TeleTaleem and Sehat Kahani, to have a significant impact on the lives of the peoples."

Addressing the occasion, Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director of ITU said, "The Smart Village Pakistan initiative promotes a whole-of-government approach to bring the benefits of digital transformation in sectors such as health, education and agriculture to the rural and remote communities, leaving no one behind and offline."

While also addressing the occasion, Ahmed Bilal Masud, Deputy CEO of Huawei Technologies Pakistan said, "Huawei continues to progress in Pakistan as a market leader with USF projects in the rural areas through our operators."

Negative policies have a disastrous impact on masses: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday lauded the leadership of IMF that took note of the plight of Pakistan people and asked our government to tax rich and subsidize poor.

Pakistan will need another IMF programme after completion of the ongoing programme to survive giving the ability to the lender to impose conditions that will help the poor come out of the elite stranglehold, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that IMF continuously monitor the economic and financial policies of member countries and helps them design and implement sound policies and the disastrous impact of Pakistan's policies is an open secret that should be fixed without delay.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that IMF typically forces member countries to boost revenues, manage public finances and monetary policy, regulate the financial system, and develop statistical systems but it should also consider providing some comfort to



the masses.

He noted that a distinct politico-economic crisis has been brewing for almost decades in Pakistan and everyone in the country is worried about the impending collapse of the economy.

So far no political implosion or mass unrest has occurred in Pakistan but increasing economic and political instability has given birth to discussions of a

worst-case Sri Lanka-style collapse in Pakistan, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that elite capture of the state and its machinery has resulted in sub-optimal policies for millions over decades but recent changes in the geopolitical system and growing inequality have made it difficult for policymakers to keep bribing the elite.

The business leader said that ventilator-style external support has so far prevented mass unrest on the scale of Colombo in Pakistan but this faux normality must not be taken for granted anymore.

Addressing elite capture remains the most difficult but most necessary issue to addressing the structural causes of further unrest for which the answer is to reform.

The foremost tool and target of elite domination are the state's extractive systems, which have been configured by elites over decades and are crucial in shaping policy outputs, they can also exploit the state apparatus for extractive gain.

Pakistan's power and governance mandate lie not with the people but with the elite collectively working to protect political power, which they then exercise for a mutually beneficial exchange and only IMF has the ability to break this nexus to provide relief to the masses.

NEPRA to conduct public hearing on KE's petition

Bureau Report

KARACHI: NEPRA to conduct a public hearing on February 28th over the petition submitted by K-Electric on account of Fuel Charges Adjustments (FCA) for January 2023 and Quarterly Adjustments for October to December 2022.

For the month of January, K-Electric has filed a petition for the positive FCA at a rate of PKR 2.69/kWh. Per prevailing laws and regulations, these are one-time charges which are expected to apply on only one monthly bill. On the other hand, KE has also requested a reduction of PKR 7.366/kWh rupees on account of Quarterly Adjustments. The impact of quarterly adjustments is usually not passed to consumers under the uniform tariff policy applicable across the country.

However, the final decision rests with the Federal Ministry of Energy, Government of Pakistan, and the NEPRA Authority. Fuel Charge Adjustments (FCA) are incurred by utilities due to global variation in fuel prices used to generate electricity and change in the generation mix. Under the policies governing the power sector, these costs are passed through to the customers following NEPRA's scrutiny and approval. Consumers also receive a benefit when the cost of fuel decreases.

The positive FCA for January 2023 is primarily due to an increase in price of power purchased from CPPA-G. The price of power purchased from CPPA-G in January 2023 has increased by 67% from December 2022.

As per KE spokesperson, FCAs are approved by the regulator, NEPRA, after conducting scrutiny and public hearing, which are conducted independently for KE and state-owned entities (XWDISCOs). The authority also specifies the month during which the charge is applied in consumer bills. This FCA petition is in line with the mechanism given in KE's Multi Year Tariff whereby changes in fuel prices, generation and power purchase mix are passed through.

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Group photograph

MULTAN: First Lady Samina Arif Alvi in a group photograph with members of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries.



Photo: APP

Mobile phone imports decreases over 67% to \$414 mln in 7 months

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed a decrease of 67.35 percent during the seven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$ 414.801 million during July-January

(2022-23) as compared to the imports of US \$ 1270.412 million during July- January (2021-22), showing a decline of 67.35 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Meanwhile, on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also dipped by 71.10 percent during the month of January 2023 when compared to the same month of last year.

SECP issued diagnostic report on Islamic finance

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released a diagnostic report to document key issues and challenges for Islamic finance in the non-bank financial sector.

The report also takes stock of the current state of development of Islamic finance in the country and contains specific recommendations for its promotion.

The diagnostic study was launched in a roundtable, organized in collaboration with the IBA Centre for Excellence in Islamic Finance, at the IBA City Campus.

Another diagnostic study and a proposed FinTech framework prepared by Islamic Finance Advisory and Assurance Services (IFAAS), a consultant to the ADB under a technical assistance, specifically covering issues pertaining to

product offerings by the non-banking Islamic financial institutions, were also issued at the occasion.

In his message, Mr. Akif Saeed, Chairman SECP, stated that the exercise's goal was to comply with the Federal Shariat Court's ruling while also standardizing and improving the quality of Islamic goods and services.

He emphasized that the suggested actions are specifically intended to speed up the growth of Islamic finance in SECP's regulated sectors.

Mr. Abdul Rehman Warraich, the SECP's Commissioner on Islamic Finance, thanked the worthy Shariah scholars and professionals from industry for their valuable contributions while also lauding the SBP's collaboration and support for the growth of Islamic finance in Pakistan.

Director of CEIF, Mr. Ahmad Ali Siddiqui, and Associate Professor,

Dr. Irum Saba, also spoke at the event. The roundtable participants agreed that Islamic finance is inevitable and that it is a driver for shared prosperity.

Mr. Tariq Naseem, Head Islamic Finance SECP, and Mr. Farrukh Raza, CEO, IFAAS, presented key findings of the diagnostic reports. Members of SECP's Shariah Advisory Committee and functional committee on Islamic finance, industry professionals and Shariah scholars attended the events in large numbers.

Mufti Dr. Irshad Ahmed Aijaz praised the efforts of all stakeholders to transform the financial system in accordance with Shariah principles, constitutional requirements, and the decision of Federal Shariat Court.

The diagnostic reports, which cover key aspects of Islamic finance development in the non-banking



sector, are expected to accelerate efforts for growth of Islamic capital markets, takaful industry, and Islamic financial institutions.

The reports are expected to create a conducive environment for the implementation of a strategic action plan and serve as a conduit for further research. Both reports are available on SECP website.

OGDCL announces financial results



Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) in its meeting held on 22nd February, 2023 at OGDCL Head Office, Islamabad announced the financial results for the half quarter ended 31st December, 2022 of fiscal year 2022-23. Net sales revenue clocked at Rs.203.235 billion translating to Profit after tax of Rs. 95.011 billion and earnings per share of Rs. 22.09.

The Board of Directors announced an interim cash dividend for the quarter ended December 31, 2022 @ Rs. 2.25 per share i.e. 22.50 percent. This is in addition to interim dividend already paid @ Rs.1.75 per share i.e. 17.50 percent to its shareholders. The dividend will be paid to the shareholders whose names will appear in the Register of Members on March 07, 2023.

During the period under review, the Company paid Rs. 57.835 billion on account of Taxation. On the exploration and development side company recorded significant enhancement in seismic efforts and drilling activities.

The Share Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from March 08, 2023 to March 10, 2023 (both days inclusive). Transfers received at the CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block "B", S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi 74400 at the close of business on March 07, 2023 will be treated in time for the purpose of above entitlement to the transferees.

The Board of Directors appreciated the efforts of the management for taking effective steps for the implementation of company's aggressive exploration program.

2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup 2023

Sports Desk

LAHORE: FG Polo and Master Paints registered victories on the second day of the 2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup 2023 sponsored by Takmeel Square here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Wednesday.

Raul Laplacette shone in FG Polo's 6-4 triumph over Diamond Paints in the first match of the day. Raul Laplacette was in sublime form and amused the spectators with his excellent polo skills and techniques as he fired in five fabulous goals. Mian Abbas Mukhtar also played well and converted one goal in FG Polo's tally. Chulo Corti banged in a brace while Nico Roberts and Mir Huzaifa Ahmed struck one goal each for Diamond Paints.

FG Polo started the match with two back-to-back goals to earn a 2-0 lead but Diamond Paints bounced back with a conversion of a 40-yard penalty to reduce the margin to 1-2. Diamond



Paints dominated the second chukker by thrashing in two back-to-back goals to gain a slight 3-2 lead but FG Polo scored an equalizer to level the score at 3-3. In the third and fourth chuk-

kers, FG Polo team turned the tables by converting three goals against one by Diamond Paints to win the match by 6-4.

Manuel Crispo excelled in Master

Paints' 8½-6 triumph over DS Polo in the second match. In-form Manuel Crispo did the magic with mallet and polo pony and fired in four fantastic goals while Pelagio Balazaldi and Agha Musa Ali Khan thrashed in two goals each for Master Paints. Hissam Ali Hyder though played extremely well as he converted five impressive goals and Bilal Haye struck one, yet their efforts couldn't yield fruit for DS Polo.

Both the teams started the match well but Master Paints played a bit better polo to take a slight 3-2 lead just before the end of the first chukker. DS Polo dominated the second chukker by slamming in two goals to take a slight 4-3 lead. Master Paints made a strong comeback by firing in four fabulous goals against one by DS Polo to gain a 7-5 lead. Both the sides scored one goal each with Master Paints, having a half goal handicap advantage, won the match by 8½-6. Two important matches will be played tomorrow (Thursday).



A Korean Taekwondo delegation led by President Gyeonggi-do Taekwondo Association (GTA) Mr. Kim Kyungduk called on Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) in Islamabad today.

Returning Bangladesh coach says senior cricketers safe

News Desk

DHAKA: Returning Bangladesh cricket coach Chandika Hathurusingha said Wednesday he did not intend to shake up the team, despite his tempestuous relationship with top players during his first stint at the helm.

The former Sri Lanka batsman, 54, was widely hailed as the architect of some of the national side's finest moments, including ODI series wins against Pakistan, India and South Africa.

However, he was often reported to be at loggerheads with Bangladesh's senior cricketers, including current captains Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal, while coaching from 2014-17.

Hathurusingha said he was "more experienced now" than during his earlier tenure and said the team's veterans had been performing well.

"I don't think their roles will change much," said Hathurusingha, who arrived back in the country on Sunday.

"Many players have been playing well for Bangladesh. Young players have also come up and played well. So being with that team is always great. It motivates me," he told reporters in Dhaka.

Hathurusingha coached the Sri Lanka national team and New South Wales after quitting Bangladesh in November 2017 following a disappointing South Africa series.

He replaces Russell Domingo, who stepped down in December with a year left on his contract after a disappointing Test series defeat at home to India.

Hathurusingha's appointment this month contracts him for two years and begins with a tour by England, who arrive Friday for three ODIs and three T20 matches next month.

Bangladesh has performed best in 50-over matches in recent years but Hathurusingha said the team needed to lift its game elsewhere.

"Test cricket is very competitive. T20 is more popular now. So we have to find our own game plan," he said.

"As a nation, we know how to play ODI cricket. We need to do well in other formats as well," he said.

Quetta to host 34th National Games in May, announces POA

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) on Wednesday announced Quetta as the host of the upcoming 34th National Games, scheduled to take place from May 15 to 23.

According to the notification issued by the POA, a copy of which is available with ARY News, this year's National Games will feature 31 games with over 30,000 athletes anticipated to participate.

"It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that following sports disciplines have been finalized for the contest of the 34th Chapter of National Games scheduled to be held from 15 - 23 May 2023 in Quetta," stated POA in the official notification.

"The events of individual sports disciplines are being circulated separately. Provincial Olympic Associations / Islamabad Olympic Association / Services / Departments and National Sports Federations concerned are requested to take appropriate action for preparation, participation and conduct of the games in a befitting manner," the notification added.

Meanwhile, the upcoming National Games will also include competitions of three exhibition games which include Women's Cricket, Futsal and Tug of War.

It is pertinent to mention that the National Games are to be held after a gap of more than three years. Pakistan Army dominated the previous edition with a whopping 123 gold, 99 silver and 65 bronze medals.

PSL 2023: Two English players to join Lahore Qalandars ahead of next game

Two English players Jordan Cox and Sam Billings will join Lahore Qalandars' squad on February 23, and 25 respectively, the franchise media manager said on Tuesday.

PSL 2023: Two English players to join Lahore Qalandars ahead of next game

Wicket-keeper batter Jordan Cox was representing England Lions against Sri Lanka A in an ODI series that concluded on Tuesday. He would join the Qalandars squad on February 23, while Sam Billings would reach Lahore on February 25.

Meanwhile, wicket-keeper batter Shai Hope would depart from Pakistan to join the West Indies team as ODI captain. The wicket-keeper batter scored 47 runs in Qalandars' victory against Gladiators.

In his farewell presser, Hope said he enjoyed playing in the PSL, adding that the league has very high standards. "I enjoyed my time here. It is a fantastic tournament and I had a great time at Qalandars' camp. I hope to join them back

9th J.A.Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: At the end of second day in this six days 9th J.A.Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship in progress at the Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course, the segment for senior amateurs above 55 years of age stood completed. Though participation in this segment is limited to senior amateurs, many proficient and spirited golf amateurs of the past registered for vibrant golfing activity and while each competitor had winning plans of his own, in the end the successful ones were players like Sardar Murad, Najam Hafeez, Dr Arshed Mehmood and Dr Hamid Awan while some seasoned ones like Shafiq Bhatti, Tariq Usman Abbas Zafar Nasrullah and Col Raja Asif Mehdi had to be content with putting up a forceful endeavor.

As regards the flow of proceedings in the senior amateur competition Sardar Murad of Lahore Gymkhana emerged successful winning the



first gross position with two rounds scores of 78 and 75 and an aggregate of 153. And compliments to him for attaining this position in the presence of some very strong adversaries. The second gross was secured by the lean looking Najam Hafeez who can hit his drives long and precisely on target. His scores for two rounds were 79 and 81 and a match aggregate of 160. Third gross went to

the hard working bureaucrat Dr Arshed Mehmood and his gross score was 161.

Performers of net section were Dr Hamid Awan, Zafar Nasrullah, Wing Cmdr Abdul Nafay and Saadullah Tiwana.

Other two events in progress during the second day were the senior professionals competition and junior professionals competition. These events will conclude on Thursday

after two rounds. Position at the end of the 18 holes on Wednesday was that Muhammed Tariq, a senior golf professional of Islamabad was the leader with an 18 holes score of gross 69 and at the same impressive score was also placed Zulfikar Ali of Multan. Three strokes behind them was placed Muhammed Akhter of Islamabad at a score of 72 followed by Tahir Naseem of Gymkhana at 73.

Leaders in the Junior Professional section were Rehan Babar of Lahore Garrison and Jawad Ahmed of Peshawar. They were bunched together at gross 76.

From Thursday the professional golf stars of the national golf circuit will strive for honors and lucrative prize money on offer by the Zaman Family. They will compete over four rounds and 72 holes. It will be a thrilling contest with super golf on display from Thursday to Sunday at the challenging Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course.

Rizwan's century help Multan beat Karachi in close contest

Sports Desk

MULTAN: Captain of Multan Sultans team, Muhammad Rizwan's 110 runs innings helped Multan beat Karachi Kings in the thrilling contest of 11th match of 8th Pakistan Super League (PSL) at Multan Cricket Stadium here on Wednesday.

Karachi Kings won the toss and elected to field first.

Multan Sultan managed to set a strong target with the help of 110 runs (not out) of Captain Muhammad Rizwan, 51 runs of Shan Masood and 29 runs of Rilee Rossouw.

Shoaib Malik and Muhammad Omer of Karachi Kings took one wicket each.

Karachi Kings failed to achieve the target as the team scored 193 runs at the loss of five wickets. James Vince was the top scorer of his team as he scored 75 runs, Captain Imad Waseem



had 46 runs, Mathew Wade had 20 runs, Shoaib Malik had 13 runs while

Haider Ali and Ben Cutting scored 12 runs each.

The match entered the thrilling last over when Karachi Kings required 22 runs on six balls.

Imad Waseem hit a six on no ball by Abbas Afridi putting pressure on the rival team. The pressure kept on Multan Sultan when the second ball (free hit) was declared wide by the umpire.

Abbas Afridi in the end restricted the batters of Karachi to achieve the target by dismissing Ben Cutting and leading his team to victory by three runs.

The Multan Sultan remained consistent in winning all matches after defeating in the first match while the Karachi Kings have won only one match so far.

It was the last match of Multan Sultan at the home ground while all matches have been played at Multan Cricket Stadium amid tight security arrangements.

Inter-Collegiate Sports Championship 2023

News Desk

After the completion of district level sports events, the Divisional Level Inter-Collegiate Sports Championship 2023 rolled into action across the province under the banner of Sports Board Punjab and Higher Education Department (HED) Punjab. These events will continue till February 26, 2023.

Sangla Hill Graduate College defeated Islamia College Civil Lines by a narrow margin of 58-56 in the first semi-final of the Kabaddi event of Divisional level Inter-Collegiate Sports Championship at Islamia College Railway Road on Wednesday.

Secretary Higher Education Department Punjab Javed

Akhtar Mahmood and DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi were the guests of honour on this occasion. They also planted saplings on this occasion.

Additional Secretary Sports Punjab Mehboob Ahmed, DPI Colleges Punjab Dr Ashiq Hussain, Principal Islamia College Railway Road Dr Abad Nabeel, Principal Islamia College Civil Lines Dr Akhtar Sindhu, Deputy Director HED Waqas Akbar, DSO Lahore Tariq Khanzada, Prof Safdar Ali and a large number of professors and thousands of students were also present on this occasion.

Secretary HED Punjab Javed Akhtar Mahmood said that the winning team of Kabaddi event of Inter-Collegiate Sports Championship will be awarded



Rs 150,000, the runner up team will get Rs 130,000 while the third position team will be

given Rs 110,000 followed by a cash prize of Rs 50,000 which will be given to fourth position

holder team.

DG Sports Punjab on this occasion said that Sports Board

Punjab is working diligently for the promotion of sports across the province. "We are providing

all facilities for the growth and revival of sports culture in educational institutions," he stated.