



Ahsan for utilizing climate resistant seeds to increase agri production

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed the need to adapt the agricultural production to new opportunities and potential threats, besides using such seeds that were resistant to climate change to increase the produce. (Report on Page 8)



Attack on judicial complex conspired to make judicial system hostage

Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Tuesday said that attack on the judicial complex is a conspiracy to hold the judicial system hostage and get arbitrary decisions. In a statement, the minister said that a 'person' along with an armed group tried to hold the judicial system hostage. This is the same person who has neither answered to foreign funding nor to the theft of billions from Tasha Khana, he added. (Report on Page 8)

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Inaugurations

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates the "School on Wheels" projects on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM launches mobile schools to promote child literacy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday termed children the 'future builders of the nation' said the government would provide maximum educational facilities to them.

Addressing the launch of mobile schools under the project 'School on wheels', he said

the step would increase the literacy rate in the rural areas, particularly in the rural areas.

In the first phase, the mobile schools consisting of eight buses will provide primary-level education to the children of Islamabad and adjoining areas.

The buses have been equipped with computers, desks, whiteboards, and LCDs, to create an effective teaching

and learning environment.

Shehbaz Sharif said the government would increase the number of buses and expand the project to the rest of the country and Azad Kashmir.

He expressed satisfaction that the project would mainstream the children in rural areas who faced the unavailability of modern educational facilities.

Also, he said, the mobile library would promote a reading culture among the children.

He said education was a vital factor to make a society developed and cultured.

The prime minister on the occasion interacted with the schoolchildren and encouraged them to take interest in learning.

Earlier, the prime minister

launched the countrywide Spring plantation campaign by planting a sapling.

He urged civil society and the general public to participate in the plantation drive to save future generations.

He pointed out that cities were transforming into concrete jungles and the environment needed urgent rectification through the plantation of trees.

Govt cuts petrol price by Rs5 per litre



Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Government on Tuesday slashed petrol price by Rs5 per litre.

The announcement was made by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar on Thursday after which the new price of petrol will be Rs267.

The finance czar said that the price of diesel would be maintained at Rs280 per litre till the next review.

The price of kerosene oil was reduced by Rs15 per litre to Rs187.73. Similarly, the price of Light Speed Diesel was reduced by Rs12 per litre to Rs186.86 per litre.

The new prices will come into effect from March 1.

SC to pronounce verdict in Punjab, KP polls' date case at 11am on Wednesday

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday reserved verdict in the suo motu case taken up to determine who has the authority to announce a date for the elections.

A five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Shah and Justice Mandokhail will pronounce the verdict on Wednesday at 11am.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial thanked all the lawyers for assisting the apex court throughout the hearing.

"I cannot say when will we be back [to announce the verdict]," the CJP added.

Earlier today, the court directed the political parties—both in power and opposition—to sit together to work out the date for the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elections.

The apex court directed PTI leaders Shireen Mazari and Fawad Chaudhry to hold consultation with party chairman, Imran Khan, and legal team of the ruling coalition to consult with their leaders on the election date.

The latest directive was issued after the three ruling parties – PML-N, PPP and JUI-F – withdrew the plea seeking formation of the full bench to hear the suo motu case following the recusal of four judges

from the bench. While withdrawing the petition, Farooq H Naek said the ruling partners did not want to pursue the plea.

Justice Mansoor remarked the political parties should think about the country instead of indulging in the legal battle.

Previously, the case was being heard by the nine-member bench but it split on Monday into a five-judge bench after four judges – Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah—recused themselves from hearing the case.

Tuesday's Hearing

At the outset of the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Barrister Shehzad Ata Elahi raised objection about Islamabad Bar Council lawyer Abid Zuberi, saying his name was removed from the previous order of the top court. CJP Bandial remarked that an order became a decree when it was signed by the judges. He then allowed Mr Zuberi to submit his arguments.

At one point during the hearing, Justice Mandokhail asked if the governors and president were bound to take advice from the cabinet in the matter. "Can they announce the date for polls on their own?" he questioned.

The chief justice observed there was no need to take an advice when a person had a discretionary authority.

Every action of president bound to be on gov't recommendation under Article 48

The CJP then inquired, "Who can issue the notification of dissolving the assemblies?" Mr Zuberi said the law secretary had issued the notification to dissolve the assembly. He said the apex court had declared in the past that elections were to be held within 90 days.

Meanwhile, Justice Mandokhail commented on the authority of the president to issue the date for elections, remarking that the Article 48 of the Constitution explained that every action of the president should be based on the recommendation of the government. At this, the CJP remarked: "This means that the announcement of the date for polls will be on advice of the government".

However, Mr Zuberi argued that the governor had the authority to dissolve the assemblies. When the CJP asked, "Who will then issue the notification of the dissolution of assemblies?"

The lawyer said the governor had to issue a notification of dissolution of the assembly on the advice of the chief minister. He said the assemblies automatically stood dissolved within 48 hours of sending the advice whether the summary was signed by the governor or not. In this case, the notification of the dissolution was issued by the law secretary and not the governor, he said.

Vandalism by PTI activists proves Imran can't face courts: Marriyum



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that abusing and threatening judges, attacking courts and vandalism at Judicial Complex by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activists was the manifestation that "foreign funded Toshakhana thief" Imran Khan could not face courts to answer allegations.

In a tweet, showing a screen grab sharing PTI workers breaking the door of Islamabad Judicial Complex, she opined that when courts took lenient views against the accused to make him personally appear, such incidents were bound to happen.

Referring to Imran Khan, she said one person was attacking the Constitution and the country's judicial system but no action was being taken against him.

President for joint efforts to prevent mental health disorders



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday called for joint efforts by stakeholders including the federal and provincial governments, the community and health professionals to work for the prevention and treatment of mental health disorders.

He said that it was a matter of serious concern that 24 percent of the country's population was suffering from mental health-related issues, whereas only 500 to 600 mental health professionals were available in the country to cater to the needs of this population.

He emphasized the need for increasing the number of mental health profession-

als, besides strengthening the capacity of general health professionals by training them to address the challenge of rising mental health disorders.

The president expressed these views while chairing a meeting on mental health through the video link.

President of Pakistani American Psychiatric Association of North America (PAPANA), Dr Muhammad Zeeshan, representatives of the National Commission of Human Rights, World Health Organization, Pakistani Psychological Association, Pakistan Psychiatric Society, Taskeen Health Initiative, and Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination attended the meeting.

Five Pakistanis lost lives in two boat wreck incidents near Italy, Libya: FO spokesperson

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: At least five Pakistanis were among the people who lost their lives in two different capsized boat incidents off Southern Italy and Libya.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, on her Twitter handle, announced that they could confirm with great sorrow that two Pakistanis had lost their lives in the tragic incident of a boat capsized off the coast of Italy, as identified by their families.

"However, another Pakistani national has Alhamdulillah been found among survivors in the same incident, bringing total Pakistani survivors to 17," she further posted.

The spokesperson said the Embassy of Pakistan in Italy remained engaged with the authorities to assist in the matter. The embassy officials had met survivors and were in contact with the Italian authori-

ties as well, she further added in her tweet.

Five Pakistanis lost lives in two boat wreck incidents near Italy, Libya: FO spokesperson

Italy capsized boat While in a related tweet, she posted that in an earlier, separate tragic incident, three Pakistani nationals perished in a boat wreck near Benghazi, Libya.

The Pakistan embassy in Libya was facilitating the process of transportation of the mortal remains to Pakistan, she added.

According to BBC at least 63 migrants were confirmed to have died, with 12 children including a baby said to be among the victims after the vessel, thought to have carried some 200 people, broke apart while trying to land near Crotona, Italy on February 26.

On board, there were people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, Iraq and Iran, the report claimed.

Dar for strengthening economic relations with US

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Tuesday said the incumbent government wanted to extend and deepen its relations with the United States in trade, economic and investment sectors.

In a virtual meeting with US Deputy Secretary of Treasury, Wally Adeyemo, the minister highlighted deep rooted friendly relations between the USA and Pakistan, according to a press release issued by finance ministry.

Dar apprised the US Deputy Secretary of the economic outlook of the country and stated that despite challenging economic conditions, the government was focusing on

steering the economy towards stability and growth by introducing structural reforms in all sectors including energy sector and capital market.

He also apprised him on the economic priorities of the government to fix the economy to right path while fulfilling its international obligations.

The Finance Minister apprised him of the talks held with International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission on the 9th review and shared that as a finance minister he had successfully completed the IMF programme in the past and that the government was committed to complete the present programme.

On the occasion, Wally Adeyemo underscored good relations between Pakistan and the United States.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, Mr. Asim Ahmad in a group photo with Executive Directors of Asian Development Bank at FBR Headquarters on Tuesday



NDMA dispatches 1000-tonne relief cargo through PNS NASR to Syria, Turkiye

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: As part of continuous relief assistance on Prime Minister's instruction to the people of countries affected by the deadly earthquake, the National Disaster Management (NDMA) has dispatched the first shipment through Naval Ship NASR from KTP West Wharf Karachi.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Faisal Subzwari, Turkish Consul General Jamal Sangu and Commander Pakistan Fleet Rear Admiral Faisal Abbasi graced the departure ceremony of the ship, a news release said.

This consignment contains



large family-sized winterized tents & blankets as per the current need of quake affectees in Turkiye whereas generators, dry rations, medicines and clothing for the victims in Syria.

The ship carrying 1,000 tonnes of assistance goods for the two countries has departed today and would reach the destination within 14 days.

Federal Minister Faisal Subzwari expressed his sincere condolences for the loss of precious lives due to the earthquake in both countries and assured him of every possible help from the government and the people of Pakistan.

Toshakhana case: Imran gets relief as IHC approves interim bail plea till March 9

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's interim bail plea till March 9 in the Toshakhana case.

Earlier, the IHC had fixed the pre-arrest bail application of the PTI chief for hearing and IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq heard the case.

The deposed premier reached the Islamabad High Court and after biometric

procedure, he appeared before the court. In view of security concerns, Imran's car was given special permission to be taken inside the Islamabad High Court. Leaders and workers of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf were also with him.

Watch here Court issues no-bailable warrant for Imran Khan

Earlier, a district and sessions court in the federal capital issued non-bailable arrest warrant for PTI Chairman Imran Khan in the

Toshakhana case.

Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal issued the warrant on non-appearance in the case while rejecting the exemption plea of former prime minister. Earlier, Mr Khan filed a petition seeking adjournment of the case for five days due to his tight schedule as he was to appear in other courts today.

The former prime minister's lawyer, Ali Bokhari, told the judge that his client was coming to Islamabad from Lahore as he was

due to appear before two other courts in the Judicial Complex. He said his client would not be able to attend the hearing of the Toshakhana case due to shortage of time.

At this, the judge expressed outrage, stating: "Why he [Imran Khan] cannot appear before court when he is attending hearings in the Judicial Complex?". He remarked the PTI chief should first come here for indictment and then he could go anywhere.

ECP lawyer Saad Hassan

also opposed the adjournment plea, saying the suspect did not want to appear before the court. Later, the judge adjourned the hearing for later today and ordered Imran Khan to appear before him.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed a petition filed by the PTI chief seeking pre-arrest bail plea in the Toshakhana case for hearing later today. Mr Khan is expected to appear in the high court where Justice Aamer Farooq would hear the case.

Creating rift in apex court is PML-N's old strategy, says Farwad Chaudhry

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Farwad Chaudhry said on Tuesday that creating division in the Supreme Court was an old policy of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Talking to the media, he said the PTI also believed in consensus but the opposition wanted Imran Khan's disqualification first for any dialogue. The negotiations could not proceed in this kind of atmosphere.

The former minister added the Supreme Court took an important step to protect the constitution because it was its custodian while mentioning the people were looking towards the apex court for justice.

He mentioned everybody knows which groups were active to create a schism in the Supreme Court while mentioning the polls could not go beyond 90 days after the assemblies' dissolution.

Moody's downgrades Pak credit rating to 'Caa3'

Spokesman Report

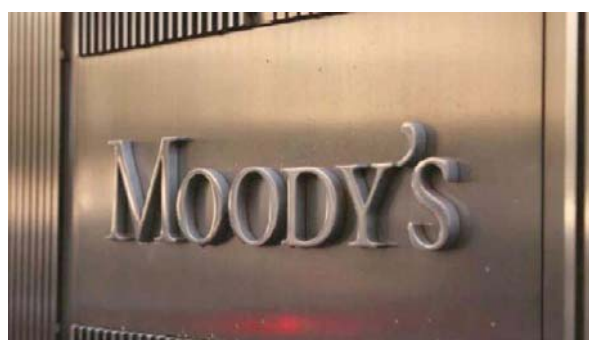
ISLAMABAD: Moody's on Tuesday downgraded the Pakistan's local and foreign currency issuer and senior unsecured debt ratings to Caa3 from Caa1.

The decision to downgrade the ratings is driven by Moody's assessment that Pakistan's increasingly fragile liquidity and external position significantly raises default risks to a level consistent with a Caa3 rating, said a statement.

In particular, the country's foreign exchange reserves have fallen to extremely low levels, far lower than necessary to cover its imports needs and external debt obligations over the immediate and medium term.

Moody's added that it has also downgraded the rating for the senior unsecured MTN programme to (P)Caa3 from (P)Caa1. The agency further noted that it has changed the country's outlook to "stable from negative".

Although the government is implementing some tax measures to meet the conditions of the IMF programme and a disbursement by the IMF may help to cover the country's



immediate needs, weak governance and heightened social risks impede Pakistan's ability to continually implement the range of policies that would secure large amounts of financing and decisively mitigate risks to the balance of payments.

The stable outlook reflects Moody's assessment that the pressures that Pakistan faces are consistent with a Caa3 rating level, with broadly balanced risks. Significant external financing becoming available in the very near term, such as through the disbursement of the next tranche under the current IMF programme and related financing, would reduce default risk potentially to a level consistent

with a higher rating.

However, in the current extremely fragile balance of payments situation, disbursements may not be secured in time to avoid a default. Moreover, beyond the life of the current IMF programme that ends in June 2023, there is very limited visibility on Pakistan's sources of financing for its sizeable external payments needs, Moody's said.

The downgrade to Caa3 from Caa1 rating also applies to the backed foreign currency senior unsecured ratings for The Pakistan Global Sukuk Programme Co Ltd. The associated payment obligations are, in Moody's view, direct obligations of the government of Pakistan.

Economically, politically strong Pakistan can advocate for Kashmir cause comprehensively: CM GB Khalid Khurshid

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Barrister Khalid Khurshid on Tuesday said that economically and politically strong Pakistan can advocate for the Kashmir cause comprehensively before the world.

"Our Kashmiri brothers and sisters are valiantly combating the Indian brutalities for the last seven decades and are giving unprecedented sacrifices," he said while addressing a dinner party, which was hosted in his honor by AJK PM Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan.

The AJK PM on the occasion said that his government was in consultation to organize APC including the leadership of Indian Illegally Held Occupied Kashmir in view of the exceeding Indian brutalities, and to arrange grand consultations to adopt a joint comprehensive strategy to highlight Kashmir issue aggressively on the international level.

Attack on judicial complex conspired to make judicial system hostage

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Tuesday said that attack on the judicial complex is a conspiracy to hold the judicial system hostage and get arbitrary decisions.

In a statement, the minister said that a 'person' along with an armed group tried to hold the judicial system hostage. This is the same person who has neither answered to foreign funding nor to the theft of billions from 'Tosha Khana', he added.

Rana Sanaullah said that a case has been registered for the attack on the judicial complex. He said those involved in this incident are being identified through CCTV cameras and everyone including Imran Khan



will be arrested.

The minister said that Imran Khan's motivation to do the such act is a result of the special treatment given to him.

He appealed to the judiciary not to spare such lawbreakers as this is a matter of its honour and respect and no relaxation to be given under any circumstances.

Strict legal action will be taken against hooligans and those not respecting law, he maintained.

Ahsan for utilizing climate resistant seeds to increase agri production



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed the need to adapt the agricultural production to new opportunities and potential threats, besides using such seeds that were resistant to climate change to increase the produce.

Addressing the Agriculture Investment Symposium, he said it was the responsibility of the private sector to play an active role in the export sector.

There were vast investment opportunities in the livestock, flowers, and date industry, and the government

would provide all possible cooperation to the private sector to explore them, he added.

Ahsan Iqbal advised the people related to the agricultural sector and institutions, and private investors to adopt sustainable agricultural strategies in view of climate change as Pakistan being an agricultural country, had the potential to export agricultural products.

The minister urged the private sector to play a diligent role in increasing agricultural exports. The government had taken steps to improve the economic structure in 2014-15. "Pakistan was self-sufficient in wheat, sugar, and cotton in 2018."

Minority communities enjoying equal rights in Pakistan: Chela Ram Kewlani

Bureau Report

KARACHI: National Commission for Minorities Chairman Chela Ram Kewlani on Tuesday said the minority communities were enjoying equal rights in Pakistan.

Addressing a conference titled 'Interfaith Harmony and Contemporary Obligations' organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, here, at a local hotel, he said today's gathering was an eye-opener for enemies who always tried to create religious chaos in the country.

Kewlani said the world could not find such an example of interfaith harmony on the earth as in Pakistan, expressing his determination that "we are all united under the national flag".

He further said, "I am proud of my Pakistani identity and we have got all

the rights."

He quoted the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah as saying that "people of all religions living in Pakistan will have equal rights either they are Muslims or minorities. All people are equal and everyone has the right to live their life according to their religious practices."

Kewlani said the National Commission for Minorities was an excellent example of religious harmony in Pakistan. At the same time, the commission provided a platform where the people from minority communities could discuss their issues in broader perspective and legislate accordingly, he maintained.

He also shed the light on the issues being faced by the minority communities and sought government help for their redressal with mutual understanding.

Petition filed against Maryam Nawaz for contempt proceedings

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A petition has been filed against the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) chief organiser Maryam Nawaz for the contempt proceedings for her anti-judiciary remarks, ARY News reported on Tuesday.

The Civil Society Network filed a petition against Maryam Nawaz over her anti-judiciary remarks, seeking the contempt of court proceedings.

The Civil Society Network President Abdullah Malik stated that the ruling PML-N led by Maryam Nawaz is running a propaganda against the judiciary and defaming the judges for its ulterior motives.

It added that Maryam and her supporters want to pressurise the judiciary via launching serious allegations that are tantamount to the

contempt of court.

The petition pleaded with the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) for taking suo motu notice of Maryam's controversial statements and contempt proceedings should be started against the PML-N chief organisers and other leaders.

Yesterday, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president and chief organiser Maryam Nawaz fired off a fresh tirade at judiciary and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, saying that elections would be held after accountability.

Addressing a workers' convention in Sahiwal, the PML-N leader lambasted the PTI chairman for violating the agreement with International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying that Imran Khan was responsible for bringing the country on the verge of bankruptcy.

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf rules out any possibility of Pakistan's default

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly said that there is no possibility of Pakistan's default and the current economic crisis would be overcome soon to make Pakistan a strong economy. He said that he has talked to the finance minister about LCs issue and this issue would be resolved soon to facilitate the business community in import of essential manufacturing items. He said that business community is playing key role in the economy and the government should consult them while making business and economic policies. He said that he would support ICCI representation in CDA Board and if rules allow, he would invite ICCI members to the meetings of NA standing committees. He said that he would cooperate with ICCI in efforts for charter of economy. He stressed that the business leaders should play role to develop national unity and harmony as division in society is not good for the country. He expressed these views while addressing as Chief Guest at "ICCI Business Role Models Awards" ceremony at Chamber House. He distributed awards to the business leaders and congratulated them for their achievements.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Indus-



try (ICCI) said that the business community is the key stakeholder in the development of the federal capital and ICCI should be given representation in CDA to help resolve their key issues more effectively. He said that ICCI should be invited to the business related standing committees of National Assembly including Finance & Revenue, Commerce, Board of Investment, Industries & Production Committees. He said that ICCI is ready to bring all political parties on one platform to develop consensus on a charter of economy in order to ensure long-term economic policies that should not be disturbed with the change of government and said that Raja Pervaiz Ashraf should support ICCI in these efforts. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice Presi-

dent ICCI stressed that the government should fully support ICCI in establishing a new industrial zone in the region. He said that government should promote ease of doing business to increase revenue generation and tax expansion.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the Chief Guest and all the participants for attending the awards ceremony.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader stressed that the government should finalize economic policies in consultation with business community and allocate land to ICCI for industrial estate.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI said that business leaders should be acknowledged to promote them as

role models in society. He said that Pakistan needs to develop brands to emerge as a strong economy.

Ajmal Baloch, Kashif Chaudhry, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Asad Aziz, Zikria A. Zia, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, Ahmed Khan, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Raja Javed Iqbal, Raja Ammad Bin Arif, Raja Khuram Niaz, Altaf Hussain Shah, M. Abid Abbasi, Raja Fayyaz Gull, Ch. Aftab Gujjar, Safer Ahmed, Wajid Ayub, Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Zahir Abbasi, Babu M. Aleem, Azhar Iqbal, Najeeb Malik, Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, Muhammad Nouman, Raja Zahid M. Danyal, Ch. Riasat Ali and Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry and others were given the ICCI Business Role Model Award.

Nation Stands with Judiciary for Protection Of Constitution, Asad Qaiser



Correspondent

SWABI: Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Shahbaz government is imposing more taxes on poor people which will make life miserable of poor people. He said that in upcoming elections PMLN will face tough time from people of Pakistan. He expressed these views while addressing protest against inflation at Swabi.

Former Speaker said Maryum Nawaz has started campaign against judiciary. He said that judiciary have to stand with constitution and for protection of constitution Pakistani Nation stands with its judiciary. He said that those who are violating constitution today will face strong consequences in future.

He further said that poor people are suffered alot by historical inflation. He said that hype in petrol and daily use items has made poor people life more miserable. He said that our struggle for protection of constitution and holding free and fair election according to constitution of Pakistan will continue till we meet out target.

PhD scholars of Peshawar University visited Miran Shah



Adam Khan Wazir

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: For the purpose of personality building, bright future and practical awareness of youth in North Waziristan, distinguished PhD scholars of Peshawar University were invited to Miran Shah.

They belonged to various fields of psychology, social sciences and personality development. In the first phase, PhD scholars gave useful advice on Career Counseling to the youth through radio awareness program.

The duration of the program was one hour. But due to the many questions of students, female students, teachers and people, the program was run for two hours.

In the second phase, a seminar on educational leadership and mental development was organized at Tochi Hall in Miran Shah, North Waziristan.

In the seminar, PhD scholars and professors of Peshawar University gave lectures on the topics of educational leadership among teachers and students, mental development of children and students.

Teachers from different schools of North Waziristan participated in the seminar, GOC Seven Division Major General Muhammad Naem Akhtar attended the seminar as a special guest, and special thanks to the team of PhD scholars for coming here willingly, without any greed, to discuss child development.

Moreover, the GOC also announced the study tour of the seminar participants and per-mile teachers.

Saudi govt making all out efforts for ease, comfort of pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi government was making all-out efforts for the ease and comfort of pilgrims through all possible means during their stay in the Kingdom.

An official of the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, in a statement, on Tuesday said the pilgrims could perform Umrah as per their desire because the ministry had not fixed any specific number for them to perform the sacred rite. "However, it is mandatory to comply with the directive to take an appointment for the specific time for performing the pilgrimage," he maintained.

The Saudi official said even those who arrived in the Kingdom on a visit, tourist, or work visa could perform Umrah. He said the Umrah visa holders could travel across the country besides Makkah and Madinah. They could arrive in or depart from any international or regional airport in Saudi Arabia, he added.

He further said the pilgrims could also change the means of transportation during their departure from the holy country. APP

ACCA and AGP join forces to professionalise public sector finance

ISLAMABAD: ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) marking a landmark agreement between the two organisations.

The key focus areas under the MoU include joint initiatives to strengthen the capacity building of public sector finance professionals and to support the Public Financial Management (PFM) transformation in Pakistan. AGP and ACCA will also collaborate on specialised training opportunities, including cyber security, data analytics and ERP, which will be delivered through ACCA's global accountancy partnerships



and international academic network.

At the MoU signing ceremony, ACCA President, Joseph Owolabi, also presented ACCA's Approved Employer accreditation to the Auditor General of Pakistan, recognising AGP's high standards of staff training and development. ACCA's Approved Employer status

will ensure AGP has access to ACCA's globally sought-after talent with the right skills, ethics and competencies to drive AGP's vision of a model supreme audit institution adding value to national resources.

Speaking at the occasion, the Auditor General of Pakistan, Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, stated 'I congrat-

ulate DAGP and ACCA on the signing of this MoU. This memorandum will cement the on-going collaboration between AGP and ACCA on various initiatives thus far. The MoU lays down the guiding principles of varied initiatives including capacity building to benefit the public sector in serving the nation by promoting accountability, transparency and good governance in the management and use of public resources.'

'This MoU with ACCA will go a long way to further the Government's vision of public sector transformation (in particular, public financial management) and professionalisation of public sector audit and accountancy professionals.'

IIU President addresses orientation ceremony held for new students

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotabi, President, International Islamic University addressed an enthralled audience of newly admitted students on Tuesday in a welcome orientation ceremony at Faisal Masjid. The ceremony was organized by Directorates of Students Affairs (male and female) of the university.

In a maiden speech to the new students in presence of Vice President Academics, Students Advisors and relevant officials, the IIU President urged the students to adopt patience and consistency adding that these are the attributes that lead to success. He opined that same is the



case with education as it needs immense hard work, dedicated learning and devotion.

"You are the future, take the responsibility and raise the lamp of knowledge, we will always be there to make your life a real success" Dr. Hathal said while discussing the

importance of youth. "We are committed to provide all the logistic, learning and counselling support in all fields to our students, our mission is to prepare the generations for the future" said IIU President.

President said that love for the homeland is a necessary

attribute that must be adopted by the youth. He also called upon the educational institutions to inculcate the passion and love for country in the minds of youth. Dr. Hathal also hailed the fervor and emotional attachment of Pakistani nation for homeland.

Talking about the Challenges of youth of Muslim world, Dr. Hathal said students must prepare themselves for future. Belief in one's self and benefiting from the best learning opportunities at varsities is the way to deal with the contemporary challenges, said Dr. Hathal. He said "Magic Formula "for success is all about behaving in best manner according to the values of the educational institution.

3rd Annual Literary Festival BLCF-2023 starts at Islamia University of Bahawalpur

News Desk

BAHAWALPUR: The 3rd Annual Literary and Cultural Festival BLCF-2023 in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur has officially started today at Baghdad ul Jadeded Campus. In the opening ceremony, Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Commissioner Bahawalpur Dr. Ehtisham Anwar, Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Ahmad Jappa, Syed Tabish Alwari and President Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bahawalpur Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Mann inaugurated the Bahawalpur Literary and Cultural Festival. On this occasion, Asghar Nadeem Syed, Jami Chandio, Hina Jilani, Nazir Leghari, Sardar Ali Shah, Prof. Dr. Hameed Raza Siddiqui, Hafeez Khan, Deans, Principal Officer, Senior teachers and

officers participated. Vice Chancellor Engr. Professor Dr. Athar Mahboob said that educational institutions try to involve the young generation in literary and cultural activities along with education so that they can play their role in the society. He welcomed all the guests to the 3rd Bahawalpur Literary and Cultural Festival.

Commissioner Bahawalpur Dr. Ehtisham Anwar while speaking said that the organization of this festival is very welcome as this kind of literary and cultural festival gives our youth an opportunity to know about their culture. Speaking, Jami Chandio said that literature is very important for the society and such a festival helps in shaping the society. He said that literature and culture have a close relationship with education. Universities around the world are

creating a new educational revolution by harmonizing modern sciences with literature and culture. Shahzad Ahmed Khalid, Focal Person/ Director Press Media and Publications, the Islamia University, Bahawalpur, briefing on this occasion, said that the first day was on February 27. Recitation and Naat and Elocution Competitions were organized at Abbasia Campus and Rizwan and Moazzam Ali Khan entertained the participants in Qawwali Night. Aqeel Abbas Jafari, Sajjad Parvez, Naeem Masood, Saleem Saffi, Syed Noor, Nasir Adeb, Aqeeb Abbas Jaffari, Hasnain Jamal, Azhar Majuka, Ajmal Sajid, Jameel Parwana, Mohan Bhagat, Zahoor Ahmed Lohar, Wahab Bhagti, Javed Iqbal, Mujahid Barelvi, Amna Mufti and other famous personalities were among the four-day events of Baha-

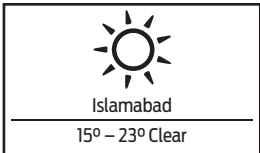
walpur Literary and Cultural Festival. On this occasion, the launch of 20 books will also be held.

A RuBaru session was held with Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob in which his personal life, struggles and achievements were discussed. His book was also launched on this occasion. Besides, special sessions will be held with Hasnain Jamal, Mujahid Barelvi, Seema Kamrani, Khalil ur Rehman Qamar, Oriya Maqbool Jan. There will be special arrangements for regional music and theater plays.

The important part of Bahawalpur Literary and Cultural Festival is the Media Conclave. Dr. Asif Naveed Ranjha, the organizer of these events, said that on the occasion of the festival, book exhibition, flower exhibition, industrial and handicraft exhibition, agricultural Exhibition and food



stalls will be set up. The celebrations will conclude with a late night musical night on Thursday in which popular singer Falak Shabbir will participate.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:15 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:23 pm
Maghrib	6:03 pm
Isha	7:26 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 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 Enquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04

Renowned persons from different fields to attend event on March 3

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Noteworthy people from different walks of life will attend an event in Karachi on March 3 to reaffirm their commitment towards the cause of education for all children in Pakistan. The event is being held under the aegis of the non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) to raise funds for the schooling of over 30,500 children from deprived families in Sindh. Noted persons who are likely to attend the fundraiser include former Sindh Governor, Imran Ismail, President of Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Muhammad Tariq Yousuf, renowned industrialist, Sardar Yasin Malik, who is also patron-in-Chief of Green Crescent Trust and other hundreds of leading businessmen in Karachi.

GCT CEO, Zahid Saeed expressed his determination to raise Rs 500 million through a series of resources mobilization activities, also including, fundraisers in few major cities in Pakistan, like as forthcoming event in Karachi, pre-Ramadan and Ramadan based fundraising campaigns, inauguration ceremonies of their few new schools, annual school events and other events for the schooling of up to one year of over 30,500 children from destitute families. These children are enrolled in 160 charitable schools of the GCT in Sindh.

He expressed his gratitude to the business community of Lahore for generously donating to the charitable drive of his non-profit in the education sector.

RoLR Balochistan convened its 6th session hold

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Steering Committee on the Rule of Law Roadmap (RoLR) Balochistan convened its 6th session on 28 February, 2023 in Quetta to celebrate the successful completion of the first five-year phase of reforms and launch a new chapter for the RoL Roadmap developed for 2023-26.

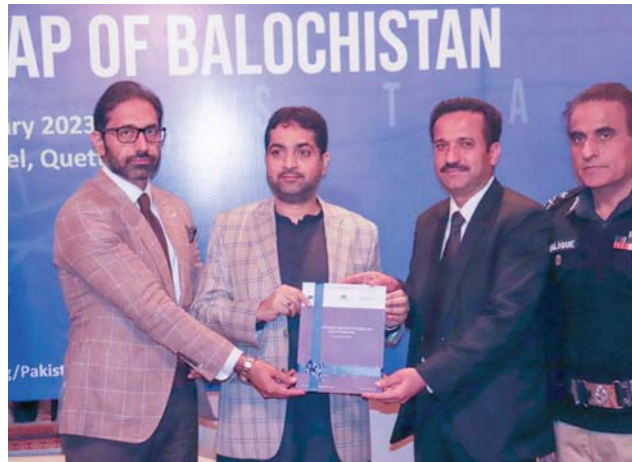
During the meeting, key stakeholders renewed their commitment to advance evidence-based reforms in the rule of law sector with the aim of furthering public trust and confidence in law enforcement institutions in Balochistan.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Zahid Saleem, Additional Chief Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs, Government of Balochistan

praised all institutions and departments for their dedication in implementing key reforms under the roadmap.

The RoL Roadmap has adapted a results-based methodology to inform institutional decisions and improve system-wide performance. The meeting provided a convergence platform to Rule of Law institutions and development partners to deliberate on the progress of the roadmap. Overall, the results of the first phase report an increase in the conviction rate from 20% in 2019 to 40% in 2023 for serious and violent crimes whilst the number of Under-Trial Prisoners (UTPs) reduced to 11.2% from 1122 in 2019 to 900 in 2023.

For the first time, the representatives of the Balochistan Police, Prosecution, Prisons,



Levies, and Reclamation and Probation Departments presented their institutional progress against RoL provincial set targets. Challenges and success-

es of criminal justice institutions to address fundamental issues through sector coordination were shared. A way forward was also discussed for the implemen-

tation of RoLR against PKR 50 million allocated by the Government of Balochistan.

Present on the occasion, Mr. Sven Ruesch, Team Leader Governance and Education, EU Delegation in Pakistan recalled that good governance, including Efficient rule of law and human rights are among the key policy priorities of the EU—globally and in Pakistan. “The new rule of law roadmap sets important milestones for the Government of Balochistan to actively advance the delivery of justice, peace, and security for its people, particularly women and girls”, he stressed. “We are pleased to support you towards this shared objective.”

In addition to the EU Delegation, representatives from UN partner agencies of UNDP and UN Women were also present.

Ms. Juhaida Hanano, Criminal Justice and Reforms Advisor from the UNODC Country Office in Pakistan, stressed the necessity for working through a shared responsibility to drive forward results-based change. She thanked the Government of Balochistan and RoL institutions for their steady commitment and the EU for its generous funding for continuing the momentous journey of the rule of law reforms for improved justice delivery to the people of Balochistan.

Mr. Ziaullah Langau, Minister of Home and Tribal Affairs for the Government of Balochistan, thanked all stakeholders for their contributions, particularly the EU for its financial support and the UNODC for its ongoing technical assistance.

Meeting with PM

Islamabad; Begum Tahimna Daultana, former Minister & MNA along with her son Mian Irfan Daultana met the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to highlight the development work in Vehari.



AIFD puts Pakistan on the map

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Institute of Fashion Design-Iqra University through its students is all set to showcase a collection of work at the Hôtel d'Évreux located in Place Vendôme in Paris, France on March 5th, 2023. Place Vendôme is the most prestigious square in Paris and is home to designer brands like Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Dior, and Cartier. AIFD Students will be showcasing their work in Paris during Paris Fashion Week for the very first time, putting Pakistani designers at the forefront of the fashion landscape.

AIFD's show in Paris will begin with their first ever student-made Fashion Film, 'Enchanted Odyssey' which will be followed by a showcase of the Top 10 looks from the AIFD Thesis Collection 2022. The collection is going to be showcased at Hôtel d'Évreux in Place Vendôme which was built in the 17th century, the Hôtel d'Évreux is a model of Period architecture. With its 18th Directoire and Napoléon III style rooms, it's a jewel of the Paris historical and assets heritage.

Fashion Weeks provide one's



brand a platform to be part of a prestigious and momentous global event. Young designers are given an opportunity to present their collections

during off-schedule slots or presentations during Fashion Week. Many Fashion Weeks have events or spaces specifically designated for emerg-

ing designers to showcase their work during this coveted time of the year. Any brand that wishes to make an impact begins with Paris, during Paris Fashion Week. Propitiously this relates to the storyline of our Fashion Film, where a young girl's dream of entering the fashion world is akin to how AIFD students envision themselves.

“As the CEO of AIFD, I wanted to break away from the norm and do the extraordinary and raise the bar for Fashion Institutions in Pakistan. At first, my team and I presented the thesis collection as a Fashion Film in December 2022 which was the first-ever Fashion Film by a Fashion institute in Pakistan and I certainly didn't want to stop there. I wanted their degrees to feel like trophies and what better way than to finish it off with the representation of our students' work on a runway in Paris during Paris Fashion Week? These students are not only presenting their collection but are proudly representing Pakistan on a global platform,” stated Co-Founder & CEO of AIFD Maheen Lakhani Ahmar.

Momal Sheikh, Hasan Rizvi, and Alizeh Pasha will be join-

APCO to pay tribute to Pakistani women on International Women's Day

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation Aasma Ismail Butt said that on the occasion of International Women's Day, a grand ceremony will be organized in Pakistan National Council of Arts Islamabad to pay tribute to the brave and talented women of the country. Salutes will be presented to mothers, recognizing their tireless and invaluable services, from raising children to making them active citizens of the society with excellent education and training, who, along with being a mother, also have professional responsibilities alongside men.



President All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation Aasma Ismail Butt said in her important statement on the occasion of the International Women's Day coming a few days later that the women of today are standing by the side of the man, our women who are working at home and raising children. There are also professions and I think it is very important to acknowledge their services, I am trying to provide a platform to such courageous and talented women where they can inform everyone about their practical struggles and emerge as a role model for other women. I am proud of my Pakistani women who are fulfilling the responsibility of being a mother as well as a father. I salute such mothers who are playing an important role in making it, on March 8 is the night of prayers, Shab Barat. Therefore, on the occasion of International Women's Day, a grand ceremony will be organized on the platform of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation on March 9 to pay tribute to our brave Pakistani women who have faced the challenges of life. We are very much busy with preparations, it will be a unique event, which will also have a message for young girls to be proud of being a woman, because women like you have not only faced the situation with their courage and strength, but also a Be a role model too.

Pakistan observes Protein Day 2023

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan observed Protein Day along with many countries, 'Right To Protein' – a public health awareness initiative has announced the launch of Pakistan's first-ever protein calculator called 'Protein-O-Meter'.

Citizens can access the Protein-O-Meter tool by logging on to 'Right To Protein'. Protein-O-Meter can help citizens to calculate their daily protein requirement basis individual information such as body profile, type of lifestyle and by sharing detailed inputs of the food consumed at different times of the day. The Protein-O-Meter can assess protein content in local cuisines and dishes such as nihari, lobia curry, trotter's curry, mutton karahi, etc. The goal of this tool is to showcase the protein gap in one's diet, act as a reminder to all citizens to be aware of their protein goals and consume one-fourth of protein in every meal.

While protein is the most essential macronutrient for our overall well-being, protein deficiency continues to be a trigger for many health concerns. Experts in Pakistan suggest that awareness of protein foods, their benefits and long-term behaviour change among citizens is the need of the hour. To drive this mission, 'Protein Day' and tools such as the 'Protein-O-Meter' will help drive self-awareness and behaviour change.

This year, Protein Day observes the theme of 'Easy Access to Protein for All'. The goal this year is to therefore draw attention to the accessibility of protein foods and encourage citizens to learn more about the many protein food choices available. The day will help drive nutritional education drive on protein at different platforms in the country, including social media-led mass awareness, supported by like-minded individuals, brands, organisations, experts, associations and more.

Join the movement, celebrate #ProteinDay today and take a step towards a more nutritionally secure world.

COMSTECH Organizes Int'l Workshop on Leishmaniasis in Nairobi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH in collaboration with The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) network, Durham University, UK, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, and University of Nairobi organized a 3-day workshop on, "Identification of New Lead Compounds and Diagnostic Tools for Leishmaniasis: Concepts, Approaches, and Capacity Building", from February 23 to 25, 2023 at the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

The Coordinator General COMS-

TECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary mentioned that a high number of cases in tropical regions of Africa and Asia both of cutaneous and visceral Leishmaniasis emphasizes the demand to identify the potential drugs from our rich folk medicine and natural resources rather than expensive imported medicine.

Leishmaniasis is a vector born disease-affecting people of more than 97 countries, including Pakistan and Kenya. The growing cases of Leishmaniasis around the globe particularly in African region is a major health challenge, which needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Unfortunately, to date no vaccine is available to treat Leishma-

niasis and therefore capacity building to identify new drugs lead is critically important.

The event was attended by 50 participants from 12 countries including Kenya, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, together with resource persons from UK, Argentina, Uruguay, and Pakistan.

The participants appreciated the role of COMSTECH and NTD-Network UK, for the promotion of science and technology in Afro-Asian region. High commissioner of Pakistan in Kenya, Honourable Syeda Saqlain graced the event as Guest of Honor.



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Dhai Chaal to showcase indelible sacrifices against terrorism

Arslan Kashmiri

Pakistan has been facing the scourge of terrorism for the past two decades, rendering countless human sacrifices and economic losses, highlighting the dire need to make these sacrifices acknowledged globally and counter enemies' onslaught.

Changing media dynamics and fifth-generation war has also made it more essential to reach out to international organisations and world nations to present the true face of Pakistan amidst this growing menace.

Although there had been movies like 'Khuda Ke Kiye', 'Waar', 'Yalghar' and others, there was a need for a film project that could focus on digging up the hidden stories of successful and hard-earned achievements of the country's people and its security forces against the inimical forces.

'Dhai Chaal' (half trick), a well-thought-out and properly designed film project by Faisal Production, revolves around an Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav who was arrested by the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan on March 3, 2016.

After World War II, this was a unique incident happening where a serving intelligence officer of a country (India) got arrested while spying in another country (Pakistan).

The story is based on how Pakistani security forces arrested the Indian spy. It is a unique effort by the producer, director and actors to prepare a film on a novel topic rarely touched before by any producer with its shooting taking place at Balochistan's unique and underrated locations.

The shooting sites selected by the film director Taimour Sherazi and producer Dr Irfan Ashraf are an amalgamation of tough terrains and scenic beauty of Balochistan province.

This amalgamation of shooting sites will not only reveal the hardships the sons of soil face in foiling the enemy's sabotage bids but also present the culture and natural beauty of Balochistan that is under threat due to the anti-state activities of the saboteurs.

"Basic theme of the movie is to pay tribute to the sacrifices of locals of Balochistan, to promote positive impact of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and expose Indian-sponsored terrorism in Balochistan," said producer Dr Imran Ashraf.

"The film also aims at exposing the Indian sabotage network run by Spy Kulbhushan Jadhav and his terrorist activities in Balochistan and to show the reality of Pakistan to the world in a soft way," he added.

Dr Ashraf said another theme of the movie was to pay tribute to Balochistan people who stood firm for national unity in the fight against terrorism and rendered valuable sacrifices by losing

their dear ones in terrorist attacks.

During the filming of this project, the untapped tourism potential of Balochistan has also been highlighted. "The film has amicably utilized the landscape for good cinematography and to create public awareness on Balochistan's tourism potential."

"Moreover, after the launch of this film, it can also grab the attention of filmmakers through Balochistan's picturesque scenery because it has the unique topography, landscape and natural beauty unmatched in the world," Dr Ashraf said.

He said Dhai Chaal in its different scenes tried to expose Indian-sponsored terrorism through Kulbhushan Jadhav-type hostile networks of Indian agencies involved in foiling CPEC and perpetuating terrorism in Balochistan. "Enemy's sabotage activities and evil designs still persist in the region and world nations must come to know about this reality."

He urged the youth and overseas Pakistanis to visit cinemas to watch this film after its release as the date will be announced soon.

India had recently screened many movies against Pakistan especially Codename Tiranga, Mission Majnu, Bard of Blood, Kashmir files and others.

"Therefore, we direly needed to thwart their malicious propaganda by screening a film based on reality," Dr Ashraf said. "Dhai Chaal is an outcome

of such an endeavor."

He said the film highlights different aspects of Balochistan from terrorism to tourism, insurgency to enduring peace and from bloodshed to development. It also highlights the legitimate freedom struggle of the Kashmiris in a realistic manner.

"It also underscores as to how India is unleashing its unabated atrocities against innocent Kashmiris and how they are resisting Indian brutalities unleashed to quell their voice for a just right of self-determination," he remarked.

The movie with its developing narrative amid thrill, action, drama and sensation sheds light on very technical and serious issues in a subtle manner with its cast comprising Shamoon Abbasi, Ayesha Omer, Humayoun Ashraf, Adnan Shah Tipu, Taqi Ahmed, Areej Chaudhary, Faraz Marri, Irfan motiwala and many others.

As India has started engaging Pakistan internally through insurgency and terrorism incidents across the country, it is also busy in crushing the Kashmir freedom movement in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Therefore, it is direly needed to give India a matching response and foil its bids to quell the Kashmiri people's struggle and curtail Pakistan's diplomatic role by keeping it stuck with insurgency and barring it from raising voice against Hindutva at global forums

North Korea's Kim opens key meeting on agriculture

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has opened a key party meeting to discuss agricultural development, state media said Monday, following a report of "grave" food shortages in the isolated country.

Normally such meetings are convened only once or twice a year, but the plenary comes just two months after a previous one, which also focused on agricultural issues.

The unusual frequency of the meetings focused on agriculture has fuelled speculation that there may be serious food shortages in North Korea now.

Kim chaired the opening on Sunday of a plenary meeting of top ruling party officials to "analyse and review... the programme for the rural revolution in the new era, and decide on the immediate important tasks and the urgent tasks," the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The participants "unanimously approved the agenda items and went into discussion" on the topic, the KCNA said without giving further details.

South Korea's unification ministry says there have been reports of starvation deaths in the North.

"We judge the food shortages there to be grave," ministry spokesman Koo Byoung-sam said last week, adding Pyongyang appeared to have requested food aid from the World Food Programme.

North Korea monitoring site 38 North said it judged the current food shortages in the country to be the worst in decades.

The Pyongyang regime was being forced to deal with "a complex humanitarian emergency that has food insecurity at its core", it said in a January 2023 assessment.

An analysis of rice and corn prices globally and in North Korea show "significant" price divergence since early 2021 — meaning food is far more expensive in the North — "signalling a breakdown" in supply, it added.

Official denial

But a recent commentary carried by North Korea's main state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun said the country should continue to stick to the "self-sufficient economy" as part of its fight against "the imperialists".

"The imperialists, under the cloak of the so-called 'collaboration' and 'aid', are clamouring as if some countries in economic difficulties could not tide over crises without their support."

But such support are efforts to "make the countries their sources of raw materials and market after completely demolishing the barrier of their national economy", Rodong said.

Nuclear-armed North Korea, which is under multiple sets of sanctions over its weapons programmes, has long struggled to feed itself.

It is highly vulnerable to natural disasters including floods and drought due to a chronic lack of infrastructure, deforestation and decades of state mismanagement.

This has been compounded by a years-long self-imposed border closure since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, which has only recently been eased to allow some trade with neighbouring China.

The country has periodically been hit by famines, one of which in the 1990s killed hundreds of thousands of people — some estimates range into millions.



Pak Army successfully tackling many fronts

Pakistan Army is the world's seventh largest military. With around 560,000 active duty personnel, 550,000 reserves, 185,000 National Guards and 6,500 civilian personnel of Pak Army's ground force, around 35,300 active duty officers and sailors, around 5,000 reserve force; 12,000 marines, 4,000 Maritime Security Agency, 2800 civilian personnel, around 154 ships and 85 aircraft of the Pakistan Navy; 70,000 active personnel, 8,000 reserve, 128 civilian personnel and over 970 aircraft of Pakistan Air Force; the brave sons of our soil are serving day and night to seal our borders and save us from our enemies.

The tasks are not as easy for Pak Army as it has to tackle with many internal and external threats.

Pak Army is successfully taking care and protecting our long geographical borders. Pakistan is facing threats from neighboring countries of India and Afghanistan since inception. India is not only engaged in supporting and facilitating the terrorism in the country but they are continuously carrying out their devious activities on borders. Cross border and unprovoked firing incidents are routine on our borders which

are carried out by Indian army repeatedly. Pakistan army never initiate such firings but have to answer when such incidents are imposed on our border from our enemies without any reason. Pakistan's Border with Afghanistan is also not safe and Afghanistan have also been hosting and facilitating the terrorist groups. The role of Pak Army is quite appreciable in securing our borders. India is also engaged in False Propaganda against Pakistan and Pak Army. Spying activities also on peak from their side. They don't miss any chance to destabilize Pakistan. India is continuously aiming to show their superiority on neighboring countries by expanding its military numbers and capacity. Their huge military expenses of 76.6 billion dollars clearly shows their dirty intentions. On the other hand Pakistan's total National Budget is 57 billion Dollars which is half than the Military expenses of India. It clearly shows that how India is spending huge money to keep its hold in the region. On the other hand Pakistan is spending the minimum appropriate money

on Army just to cope with the challenges, threats and operational needs. Notable decrease in the military budget have been seen in last few years which is now at the minimum level of 2.2 percent of GDP. Pakistan army is seventh largest Army of the world whereas it's on 29th number in the list of countries of least military expenses. Pakistan is proud to get and prepare quality and professional soldiers on very less budget as compared to other militaries of the world. US spends 392,000 dollars, Iran Spends 23,000 Dollars, India Spends 42,000 dollars and Saudi Arabia spends 371,000 dollars whereas Pakistan spends 12,500 dollars on a soldier. Apart from these minimum expenses Pakistan Army ensures same quality and professionalism which is even better in terms of enthusiasm, loyalty and motivation.

Internally, terrorism has been a big issue with the country and taken thousands of precious lives over the decades. Between 2002 and 2022, the country suffered over 28,000 civilian and security forces casualties in more than

15,000 incidents. The Pakistan Army conducted successful operations, Zarb e Azab and Radd ul Fasaad, to cope with terrorist networks across the country.

In the war against terror, the nation sacrificed over 86000 lives and lost over \$152 billion. but the results were remarkable. During over 1200 operations, over 18,000 terrorists were eliminated, bulk of weapons and equipment were recovered, many training centres, madrassas, marakiz involved in terrorism dismantled, 449 tons of explosive recovered and 46,500 sq km area cleared.

The Pakistan Army broke the international terrorist networks during this War on Terror and supported the international community by killing or arresting and repatriating over 1100 Al-Qaeda Terrorists.

Intelligence was shared with over 70 countries. Fencing was done on borders and a proper monitoring was carried out to check the flow of terrorists. Pakistan, Army's efforts helped a lot in taking the country out of FATF grey list

Readers, our Army has done and is doing remarkable job for the country and the institution has proved themselves best on all fronts. The need is to make a united approach from all segments on national Issues.



Abdul Basit Alvi

Condolences II

Spokesman Report

Israel continues expanding illegal colonial settlements across the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem, and adopting policies and practices that further entrench colonization and apartheid. In other words, Israel has spared no effort to commit crimes with impunity;

How did the international community respond to these grave violations of international law? Did it rally to take action for accountability? or sanction the occupying power for international crimes? Or assist the Palestinian people in seeking Justice?

No, it did not. Instead, many international actors used their political clout to shield Israel from accountability and to bully the Palestinians out of seeking justice;

In fact, some went as far as nominating Israel, a prolific violator of human rights and a country that stands accused of committing the crime of apartheid among others, to sit on the UN committee that is charged with reviewing the United Nations Charter!

Consequently, some international officials have been encouraged to issue statements that perverse and twist reality as well as undermine the core values of international law. This is not just unacceptable; it is an outrageous assault on the international system;

And if such willful dereliction of international obligations was not enough, some members of the HRC have the audacity to lecture Palestinians on bias and to work diligently to undercut discussions under Item 7;

It is an insult – not just to the Palestinian people whose suffering is prolonged and amplified by such duplicity but to the very principles of international law this body is entrusted to uphold;

What, other than double standards and exceptionalism, can explain such an upside-down reality? The answer is quite simple: nothing;

But it's not enough to know this painful answer.

This body has an obligation to right this egregious wrong and to stop sufficing with rhetorical correctness;

It is time to stop allowing Israel to commit these crimes while getting rewarded for its criminality. It is time for the international community to confront, rather than appease, the oppressor. It is time for actionable solidarity because it is the only one that counts;

As the world confronts complex and interconnected crises, the international community must come to terms with the fact that the chronic denial of Palestinian rights will remain the elephant in the international room;

The Palestinian people will not surrender to dying in the cold and to disappearing into the night;

We will continue to claw our way out to justice and freedom, no matter how much brutality and injustice is piled on. We will do that with the active help of principled states and peoples around the world who refuse to watch us suffocate into submission;

But when the dust settles and it is time to write the story of how this international system was wilfully made irrelevant;

It will be made clear that the Palestinian people fought for their humanity, dignity, and freedom with grace and an unbreakable will despite the odds and those who made a conscious decision to break it rather than champion human rights universally and unequivocally;

There is still time to write a different ending and to defend this noble system against those eroding it to serve their needs. But time is running out fast;

Perhaps the upcoming commemoration of the universal declaration of human rights that was adopted 75 years ago when Nakba of the Palestinian people was transpiring provides us all with an opportunity to correct our collective path and the injustices that befell our people.

Officials and terrorist settlers accountable for their crimes.

Concluded

Parliamentary diplomacy pivotal for enhancing mutual ties: says NA Speaker

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has said that it is an era of Parliaments and people to people contacts. He said that enhancing parliamentary diplomacy is key to further strengthen ties among nations. He said that both Pakistan and Hungary enjoys cordial relations which can be further strengthened by enhancing parliament to parliament contacts. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of Pak-Hungary Friendship group today at Parliament House Islamabad. Hungarian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Mr. Béla Fazekas was also present in the meeting.



While welcoming participants, Convener of the PFG Mehnaz Akber Aziz, apprised about pivotal role played by the PFG to promote bilateral and

parliamentary relations. She also shared that efforts were underway to create Air link and expand cooperation in socio-economic sector between both countries.

Hungarian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Mr. Béla Fazekas said that both Hungary and Pakistan share long history of friendly ties. He also

said that the recent visit of Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Bilawal Bhutto to Hungary is an historic event as he has been first Pakistani Foreign Minister who visited Hungary during last forty years. He also expressed his hope that Hungary would continue to support Pakistani youth for provision of international standard education. He said

that Hungary is also enriched in Islamic culture and monuments.

Members National Assembly Makhdoom Syed Sami Ul Hassan Gillani, Syed Javed Hasnain, Ms. Naz Baloch, Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, Ms. Javeria Zafar Aheer, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam, Ms. Shamim Ara were also present in the meeting of Pak-Hungarian PFG.

e& and Mastercard partner to drive an ambitious digital future

News Desk

KARACHI: e& has announced a strategic partnership with Mastercard that will see consumers and businesses in 16 markets across the Middle East, Asia and Africa benefit from a variety of new technologies and user-friendly experiences powered by Mastercard's capabilities when using digital financial services provided by e& operating companies.



These experiences include providing consumers with innovative alternatives to how they choose to pay for a variety of lifestyle activities. Consumers will also benefit from exciting, personalized offerings and opportunities to engage with multiple brands.

Mastercard will support e& as it expands its financial services ecosystem across its footprint by integrating digital payment services and tools into people's day-to-day lives. The collaboration will enhance the consumer user-experience journey and encourage greater agility and flexibility in business operations.

The benefits will impact consumers whether they are making purchases in-store or online. They will also be able to send and receive money internationally between people and businesses through a simple, safe and convenient remittance payment option.

Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO, e& international, said: "Consumers' payment behaviors and spending habits have changed dramatically over the last few years, and it is imperative that we stay

innovative to create solutions that enhance their digital journey. Our strong presence in 16 countries across the Middle East, Asia and Africa, provides multiple opportunities to scale synergies, explore growth opportunities and identify new possibilities to work in collaboration with strategic partners. Through our partnership with Mastercard, we will ramp up our efforts to bring financial offerings that consumers most need in the digital age."

Amnah Ajmal, Executive Vice President, Market Development, EEMEA, at

Mastercard, said: "We are delighted to partner with e& during its transformation journey by delivering the technology and expertise that can take consumer engagement to a completely new level. This collaboration further strengthens Mastercard's position as a trusted partner for ambitious businesses who want to expand customer choice and access."

Mastercard's goal is to bring 1 billion people into the digital economy by 2025, including 50 million micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with a focus on 25 million women entrepreneurs. Mastercard is creating a future where payments keep pace with the way we live, work and do business, accelerated by the rapid transition to digital solutions and offerings. As more people enter the financial mainstream, money management tools and solutions must be fit for purpose – inclusive for all, digitally driven and built on a foundation of security.

UN envoy says Israel must prevent settler attacks on Palestinians

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland has expressed his disappointment with the Israeli security forces for failing to prevent the vigilante mob attack on a Palestinian town last night, saying that 'security forces have the responsibility to maintain security and prevent individuals from taking the law into their own hands'. In a written statement, Wennesland says that he is 'gravely concerned by the deteriorating security situation'.

He expresses his condolences to the family of the two Israeli brothers killed on Sunday in Huwara, and the family of the Palestinian slain by Israelis during the subsequent rampage in the same town.

International media also reported that a Palestinian man shot and critically wounded a 25-year-old Israeli man near Jericho on Monday.

Wennesland – officially UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process – stressed that security forces have the responsibility to maintain security and prevent individuals from taking the law into their own hands.

The UK's University of Essex will hold first graduation in Pakistan this weekend

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: UK-based University of Essex will be holding its first-ever graduation celebration in Pakistan on Saturday 4 March 2023.



The event will celebrate links between the internationally-renowned University of Essex and Pakistan with Vice-Chancellor Professor Anthony Forster travelling from the UK to take part in the special ceremony at the prestigious Serena Hotel in Islamabad.

This is believed to be the first Graduation ceremony organised by a leading UK university in Pakistan and attended by its Vice-Chancellor.

High-profile guests will include the Education Minister and Minister of Planning and Development plus representatives from the British High Commission and the British Council.

The Graduation ceremony will be attended by many Essex alumni with Vice-Chancellor Awards presented to two outstanding graduates. Education and environment campaigner Nasira Habib and heritage and human rights champion Nasiruddin Mirza will both receive awards during the historic event.

Professor Forster said: "This is the first time in our history that the University of Essex has held a Graduation ceremony in Pakistan – in fact it is only our second international graduation ever."

"I am so delighted to be able to hold this event in Islamabad. It is wonderful to have the chance to bring our community together. The University of Essex deeply values its relationship with our international community and our alumni across the world."

"The level of interest in studying at Essex seems to be stronger than ever and in 2022 we celebrated close to 200 Pakistan graduates, our highest number ever."

During his visit Professor Anthony Forster will also visit National University of Science & Technology, Air University and Bahria University to build new partnerships.

Taliban forces kill top ISKP commanders in Afghanistan

Raja Furqan Ahmed

KABUL: Afghan Taliban said that their security forces killed two key Daesh or Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) commanders in an overnight counterterrorism raid against their hideout in the capital, Kabul. Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement that the intelligence force conducted an operation on Daesh's hideout in Kabul city, killing two key members of the group and capturing another one. "One of the killed terrorists was Qari Fateh, known as the intelligence chief and a former minister of war of the IS-Khorasan province," said Zabihullah Mujahid.

The statement also said that Qari Fateh was the main mastermind for the Daesh or Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and was responsible for planning several attacks, including those on Russian, Pakistan, and Chinese diplomatic missions in Kabul. Qari Fateh previously served as Amir-al-Harb (military leader) for Khorasan, head of Kunar province, and head of the eastern zone. Mujahid also confirmed the killing of Ijaz Amin Ahangar, also known as Abu Osman, the so-called first Amir of the Islamic state Hind province and a senior leader of the ISK in southern Afghanistan along with two others members of the group.

The statement further added that several other Daesh members, including foreign nationals, have been detained who planned deadly attacks in recent days. Since the return of the Taliban to power in the country, the IS-Khorasan group has been the main security challenge and adversary to the government.

Pak embassy, Pak int'l school contribute goods, 20mn cheque for Syrian quake victims



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Embassy in Syria in coordination with the Pakistan international school of Damascus have contributed a truckload of goods along with a presentation of a cheque worth 20 million Syrian Pounds to the Governor of Hama province.

The students along with the Ambassador of Pakistan visited shelters of earthquake affecteds and distributed the relief stuff, a press release on Tuesday said.

The students also undertook the task of loading and unloading of the goods.

Pak embassy, Pak int'l school contribute goods, 20mn cheque for Syrian quake victims

The administration of Hama greatly appreciated the gesture and thanked the people of Pakistan for standing by with their Syrian brothers.

A large number of media persons covered the event as it was one of its kind activities by an international school.

Sohail Khan attends China-SCO Conference

News Desk

BEIJING: Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Deputy Secretary-General Sohail Khan attended a conference of the China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area in Qingdao, China.

Representatives of the embassies of SCO countries in China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and other relevant ministries of the PRC, along with financial institutions, participated in the event, according to SCO Secretariat here.

Sohail Khan noted that it is impossible to develop the SCO without the active work of its member states, the support of concerned ministries and agencies, the efforts of diplomatic missions, and the cooperation of trade offices.

The demonstration area, which has gained solid experience in vari-



ous areas of trade and economic cooperation since 2018, has played an important role in implementing

many SCO projects on the economic track, studying new approaches to building systematic cooperation

and deepening trade and economic interaction between the SCO family countries.

International conference on combating trafficking in persons in Pakistan concludes

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The two-day international conference, organized by Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) in alliance with the US Embassy and Pakistan US Alumni Network (PUAN) with the purpose of reducing trafficking in persons and increasing direct referrals of victims for services or rehabilitation and advocating for prevention and prosecution of Trafficking in Persons came to an end with participants and panelists sharing collectively developed ideas and recommendations.

Mushahid Hussain Syed, Member of Senate, spoke at the Closing Ceremony where he

articulately explained the intricacies of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) coupled with narcoterrorism, developing into a dangerous dimension of this issue to the point that it is becoming a national security threat.

The Senator also stressed the need for regional, national, and global partnerships and thanked the US Embassy for collaborating in this initiative with SSDO.

During opening of the conference Mr. Donald Blome, US Ambassador to Pakistan reminded that trafficking in persons is a centuries old problem that requires everyone to play a role and create innovative approaches to combat perpetrators who remain a threat due to continuous development of new traffick-

ing techniques. His message was further addressed by Chief Guest, Ms. Shehla Raza, Deputy Speaker of Sindh Provincial Assembly by adding that human trafficking is a disaster of its own kind which severely impacts women and children in particular. There is a law-and-order imbalance, alongside poverty and illiteracy, which makes trafficking in persons easier to execute. Ms. Raza stated that her ministry is working on legal aid and provision of rehabilitation for victims.

Mr. Syed Kausar Abbas, Executive Director SSDO emphasized the necessity of developing understanding among law makers and implementers to sensitize them towards and mainstream the issue of traf-

ficking in persons. Since 2015, Pakistan appeared five times in the Tier II Watchlist countries in the US Department of State's annual report on TIP.

US Embassy members responded with their input including guest of honor, panelist Ms. Terresa Chang who appreciated Pakistan's efforts towards tackling Trafficking in Persons via legislation, awareness-raising, and initiatives such as this International Conference.

Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer of the US Embassy expressed the utility and impressive depth of knowledge presented across plenary sessions. He highlighted that TIP undermines national security, distorts markets and endorses terrorism.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
40,510.37	40,784.13
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,810.04	40,436.36
Index Value	Change
5,094,757,497	-273.76
Percentage	Time
-0.67%	28 Feb, 2023 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,876.28	-58.83
Percentage	Time
-0.74%	28 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
32,722.27	-166.82
Percentage	Time
-0.51%	28 Feb, 11:56 am GMT-5
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
27,445.56	+21.60
Percentage	Time
+0.079%	28 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	174.5	176.9
Bahrain Dinar	691.87	699.87
Canadian Dollar	193.2	195.4
China Yuan	37.46	37.86
Danish Krone	37.03	37.43
Euro	276.5	279.3
Hong Kong Dollar	33.45	33.8
Indian Rupee	3.14	3.25
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	847.02	856.02
Malaysian Ringgit	58.2	58.8
New Zealand \$	160.34	162.34
Norwegians Krone	25.12	25.42
Omani Riyal	675.67	683.67
Qatari Riyal	71.47	72.17
Saudi Riyal	69.8	70.5
Singapore Dollar	191.5	193.5
Swedish Korona	24.98	25.28
Swiss Franc	277.45	279.95
Thai Bhat	7.43	7.58
U.A.E Dirham	74	74.8
UK Pound Sterling	315	318
US Dollar	263.7	266.4

President urges philanthropists, business community to generously donate to protect deprived people

News Desk

KARACHI: President, Dr Arif Alvi, has urged the concerned philanthropists and business community to generously donate to help out the people from the deprived communities whose survival have become highly difficult due to record inflation and devastating floods in the country.

President expressed these remarks as he met a delegation of the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) led by its President, Naem Qureshi, here at Governor House.

The President appreciated the drive of the NFEH for the past many years to provide a common platform to the concerned leading philanthropists, donors, non-governmental organizations, and charities to work collectively for noble social causes in the country.

He said that such noble charitable efforts had gained much significance in the backdrop of unprecedented hikes in the prices of essential products and catastrophic floods in the country last year.

The President said that charities and business entities under their drives under the concept of corporate social responsibility



should make sure that people in underprivileged areas should get access to quality education and health facilities in addition to fulfillment of their basic needs.

He also appreciated the continuous campaign of the NFEH to do massive tree plantations in major urban centres and conduct awareness campaigns to conserve energy.

Dr Alvi recalled that during his stint as a member of the National Assembly, he had

conducted a campaign to plant 200,000 trees in his constituency and distributed 100,000 pencils among school students containing seeds to motivate children to practically take part in the plantation campaigns.

He said the tree plantation drives in urban areas would go a long way in empowering Pakistan to tackle the adverse impacts of the phenomenon of climate change.

The President urged the state and govern-

ment institutions to fully participate in the energy conservation drive by curtailing electricity consumption in offices.

He said the use of solar energy would also go a long way to improve the environment and reduce the consumption of fossil fuels for electricity production in the country.

He said that for the same cause, the project of solarization had been carried out at the President's House.

NFEH President while briefing President about the annual activities of his NGO informed him that 15th International CSR Summit-2023 was held in Islamabad on February 21 where over 70 companies were recognised for their community uplift activities in last one year.

He said the annual CSR Summit had been held for the past 15 years to appreciate the show of excellence by concerned philanthropists and corporate sector in doing noble charitable and philanthropic work in the country.

The meeting was attended by Ruqiyah Naem, Engineer Nadeem Ashraf, Mustafa Tahir of NFEH, Imran Taj of the Fire Protection Association of Pakistan, and Muhammad Ghazal of Saylani International Welfare Trust.

Smart Future Technologies signs an MOU with Huawei Technologies

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Smart Future Technologies (SFT) team led by Head of Smart Technologies FHDL, Brigadier (Retired) Arshad Kayani visited the Huawei Office in Islamabad on 24th February, 2023 for MOU Signing between the two companies.

Smart Future Technologies PVT Limited (SFT) is a partner company of Habib Rafique Group Pvt. Limited (HRL Group) & Future Development Holdings (FDH) for Smart Cities projects like Capital Smart City and Lahore Smart City etc. Their systems deployed in "Smart Cities" connect people, things and processes to eventually permit our habitats to ensure quality living.

Both SFT & Huawei teams look forward to working on key projects together going forward, with a focus on the Smart Community projects in Pakistan, where SFT Pakistan is the developer and Huawei is the lead technology OEM. Both the parties will cooperate on Smart Destination development across architectural planning and construction execution phases by harnessing key technologies such



as Cloud Computing, Big Data, AI, Data Center Network, Storage, and Servers, Data Center Facility, Intelligent Security Surveillance System and Solar Energy, etc. Furthermore both companies will work in close coordination on latest updates and development in smart technologies.

Smart Future Technologies and Huawei Technologies Pakistan have decided to join hands for working together in collaboration to develop innovative ICT infrastructure solutions that will serve as a game changer for the Real-Estate Industry in Pakistan.

Pakistan only 1.77 percent of GDP was spent on the education sector: President RCCI

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Our students have more talent and ability than the rest of the world. If they are shown the right direction, given training and opportunities to advance, it will be of great benefit.

RCCI President Saqib Rafiq in a statement said that the Education policy has not been formulated keeping in mind the demand of the industry in Pakistan. Be it development in any field in the world, be it knowledge economy or science-based development, be it traditional business development or IT sector development, education is fundamental in all these systems and development.

He said that it is very unfortunate that in Pakistan

only 1.77 percent of GDP was spent on the education sector whereas developed countries are spending more than 5% of GDP on education.

President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said that it is a disappointment that the product we are developing in educational institutions has no market value. We did not understand the market and did not consult the stakeholders, he further added.

He also informed that the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is organizing a two-day International Education Summit 2023 from March 4 to 5 at a local hotel in Rawalpindi. The aim of the conference was to increase connectivity between industry and academia in view of contemporary challenges.

Amir Paracha elected President of OICCI

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Mr. Amir Paracha, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Unilever Pakistan Limited has taken over as the President of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) for the 2023 term.

This was announced at the 163rd Annual General Meeting of the OICCI held at the Chamber on Tuesday, February 28, 2023. Mr. Rehan Muhammad Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bank (Pakistan) Limited, was elected as the Vice President.

The other elected members of the OICCI Managing Committee for 2023 are as follows:

Syed Anis Ahmed, Abbott Laboratories (Pakistan) Limited, Ahmed Zahid Zaheer, Chevron Pakistan Lubricants, Mr. Umar Ahsan Khan, Dawlance (Private) Limited, Mr. Kamran Ataulh Khan, Dupont Pakistan Operations (Pvt) Limited, Ms. Erum Shakir Rahim, Galxosmithkline Pakistan Limited, Mr. Najeem Ahmad, Hitachi Energy Pakistan (Pvt) Limited, Mr. Ali Asghar Jamali, Indus Motor Company Limited, Mr. Waqar Irshad Siddiqui, Shell Pakistan Limited.

In his message to the members,



incoming President OICCI, Mr. Amir Paracha, said "Pakistan's multi-fold challenges are evident to all of us and now is the time for leaders across all sectors to unite as a force for good and lead Pakistan back on a path of growth.

Foreign investment is the primary gateway with which developing econ-

omies like Pakistan can access innovative technology and increased market access resulting in improvement of human capital. These factors are critical in enabling Pakistan to achieve a higher growth trajectory, supported by predictable, consistent, and transparent policy frameworks.

There are many examples in the region of economies with similar challenges managing to achieve notable economic growth primarily through promotion of FDI. For strong sustainable socio-economic growth, bringing in technology advancements is imperative."

Mr. Amir Paracha began his career at the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company in 1996. He joined Unilever Pakistan in 2000, leading multiple categories in Pakistan and in the GCC cluster. He has also led the Home and Personal Care Division as well as Customer Development before becoming Chairman & CEO in 2020. Amir earned his Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi and is serving on the Boards of Endeavor Pakistan, Karachi Vocational Training Centre, and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).

SECP organizes financial reporting workshop on NBMF sector



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), organized a financial reporting workshop on Non-Banking Microfinance (NBMF) sector, in light of new regulatory requirements outlined under Circular 15.

The aim of this interactive workshop was to apprise participants on the measures taken for the promotion of the sector and to protect the interests of borrowers. Leading journalists from print and electronic media attended the workshop.

SECP Executive Director Khalida Habib gave a

presentation on the circular that explains the digital lending standards applicable on Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) undertaking lending activities through digital channels/mobile applications (Apps). The lending standards have been issued by the SECP to tackle concerns involving mis-selling, breach of data privacy, and coercive recovery practices of licensed digital lending companies, she said.

She informed the attendees that through Circular 15, SECP has stipulated minimum mandatory disclosures for the digital lenders before loan disbursement to the borrower.

The Square Peg takes centre stage at ITCN 2023

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The SquarePeg, a leading women-led digital marketing agency, remained the centre of attention at ITCN Asia 2023 which served as inspiration for other women leaders and professionals.

An information technology and telecom show that was recently held at the Pak-China friendship centre, with massive footfall, and provided an outstanding opportunity for the entire tech ecosystem of Pakistan.

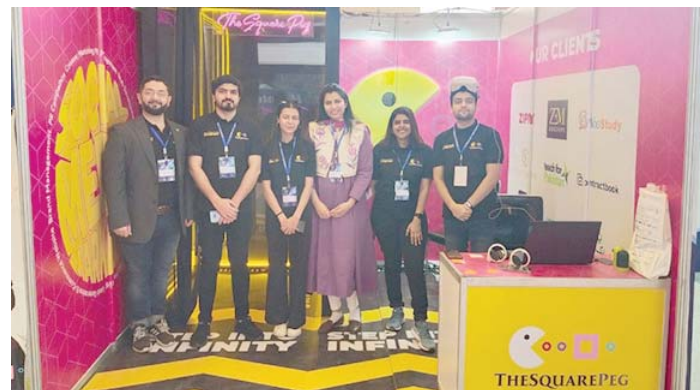
The SquarePeg with a diverse culture that encourages innovation and creativity was passionate about empowering and supporting

women in the tech industry.

People from all walks of life took great interest in the company's booth, they learned more about their services, met their team, and explored how the agency helps other businesses thrive in the digital age.

At the occasion, Zunaira Omar, founder of The SquarePeg said that more women representation with creative and innovative minds is needed in this growing sector and we aim to work toward a healthier and more just world.

"We believe in inclusiveness to drive innovation and growth, and we are committed to building lasting relationships with our partners,"



said Qanita Mehmood, Senior Project Expert.

Founder President IWCCI Sami-

na Fazil and members of the trade body also visited the expo to support the initiatives of the women entre-

preneurs. Business leaders should be answering more calls to address some of the most pressing issues and help communities by taking their experience into the social sector.

The tech world needs the perspective of more women if we're going to tackle some of the biggest challenges impacting us, said Naima Ansari, former VP of FPCCI.

She said that India is earning 178 billion dollars through IT exports while Pakistan is making only 2.5 billion dollars. Pakistan can outshine India if policymakers pay attention to this sector.

KE's announced First Half of Financial Year 2023

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Challenging sociopolitical and macroeconomic factors have had a cascading impact on multiple sectors including KE which grapples with immense challenges during the first half of FY23. Surging inflation, policy rate hike and reduction in economic activity had a significant impact on the Company's operations and profitability.

The Company observed a reduction in units sent-out by 5.7% on account of reduction in economic activity and an increase in impairment loss against doubtful debts due to high inflation, increase in consumer tariff and current economic conditions impacting customers propensity to pay. An additional burden is being placed by surging finance cost mainly on account of increase in effective rate of borrowing and higher levels of borrowing due to non-payment of dues by Government entities which have surged to an alarming level of PKR 79.6 billion on net principal basis. The Company operates under regulated tariff and as per current Multi-Year Tariff effective from July 01, 2016, no adjustment is provided to the Company in tariff for changes in sent-out and policy rates. The aforementioned factors resulted in net loss of PKR 27.0 billion in the first half of FY23 compared with the net profit of PKR 3.3 billion in the same period for FY22.

KE reiterates that regular bill payment is critical to ensuring uninterrupted supply of power and is taking initiatives to improve recoveries by introducing easy instalment payment solution for its customers under the scheme named as "Humqadam - Recovery Plan" and establishing facilitation camps to address billing concerns. KE's BQPS-III power plant successfully dispatched during testing its full capacity of 900 MW to grid just before the turn of the period. On the transmission front, KE is making quick progress on its KKI Grid - the first 500 kV facility in KE's network strengthening the connection with the National Grid - and the new 220 kV Dhabeji Inter-connection. Further projects to enhance system reliability are also underway.

Gabin Jabba Snow Sports Festival ends with sweet memories

Sports Desk

SWAT: Gabin Jabba Snow Sports Festival has come to an end with all its grandeur and sweet memories, here at hills top.

A large number of local and foreign tourists turned up and enjoyed the three-day festival – organized by District Administration and the Culture and Tourism Authority Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (CTAKP) – that ended on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner Irfan Wazir was the chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony. Trophies, certificates and cash prizes were awarded to the position holders. DPO Shafiqullah Gandapur, ADC Sohail Khan, ADC Abdul Laif, AC Matta Abdul Qayyum Khan, RSO Kashif Farhan, District Youth Officer Farhad Ali Khan and others were present.

On the last day of the festival, cycling, marathons, tug of war, and weight lifting contests were held.



In the cycling event, Abu Zar won first position, followed by Bilal and Talha at second and third respectively. In the marathon, Swat Runners got the first, Swat Road Liners the second and

Khawaja Khela Club third position. In the tug-of-war, Swat Green won the first position by defeating Swat Red by three to zero.

On the occasion of 'Shahid Maling

Group', Shahid Ali Khan performed the magic of his art. In the festival, famous Pashto singers Heshmat Sahar, Imran Khan, Shahzad Khyal, Wasal Khyal, Shaikat Mehmood, Zubair Nawaz graced the event with their performances.

The most beautiful and challenging five-kilometer cycling race was organized in the festival, which started from Loka and ended at Gabin Jabba top. A total of 40 cyclists participated in the race. Three different categories, senior, junior and mountain bike category were included.

The festival included a playground for tourists and their children, magic show, handicraft stalls, tourist information desk, and folk dances.

The youth participated in the festival in large numbers. Last year also this festival was organized in a perfect manner and this year too, the Gabin Jabba Sports Festival attracted both local and foreign tourists, as well as families and children.

Sports Journalists Association of Lahore XI defeated UK Media XI by 35 runs

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Sports Journalists Association of Lahore (SJAL) XI defeated UK Media XI by 35 runs in a goodwill match played here at the Model Town Greens Ground on Tuesday.

Batting first, SJAL XI posted a huge total of 196 runs for the loss of six wickets. Muhammad Waqas dazzled with bat and smashed superb 98 runs while Adnan Butt contributed 22, Hamza 20, Shehbaz Ali 12 and Imran Sohail 11 runs for SJAL XI. From UK Media XI, Usman and Akhtar Ali bowled well and claimed two wickets each while Ghulam Hussain dismissed one player.

In response, UK Media managed to score 161 runs for the loss of five wickets. Akhtar Ali scored 38, Amir Khan 35 and Ghafran 22 runs. Imran Sohail showed with ball for SJAL XI as he clinched three wickets while Hamza and Yusuf Anjum scored one each. SJAL's Muhammad Waqas was declared man of the match for his excellent batting.

Chairman PCB Manage-



ment Committee Najam Sethi, CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana, Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, former Pakistan Team Manager Azhar Zaidi, Test cricketer Abid Ali, cricket organizers Sarfraz Ahmad, Shoaib Dar, Khurram Hafeez, Rana Anees Ahmed Khan and other prominent ones attended the match.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PCB Management Committee Najam Sethi said: "Seeing the media representatives playing cricket, I am also feeling like playing cricket with them. Cricket is a very lovely and lively game which

fully involves its lovers in it, whether they are watching or playing it. This is a very good event for sports journalists and such events not only keep them healthy and fit but also help in promoting sports especially cricket. We will fully support such fruitful activities in future as well."

Sharing his views regarding PSL 8, Sethi said: "HBL PSL is a brand now. Cricket crazy people of Multan and Karachi really enjoyed matches at their home grounds and now the matches in Lahore have added color to the league. The stadiums seem smaller due to a huge number of crick-

et fans, who want to witness and enjoy PSL matches.

"The PSL has always given good talent to Pakistan as well. Every year, some promising and shining stars are hunted from the PSL, who then serve in the national team and win laurels for Pakistan. This year too, many new faces have impressed the cricket fans as well as the selectors, and their future will be quite bright," Sethi said and added: "The hosting of Asia Cup and Champions Trophy will be considered in the ICC and ACC meetings. Like PSL, these events too will be hosted in a trend-setting manner."

5,000 policemen to be deployed for PSL remnant matches



City Reporter

RAWALPINDI: The police have finalized foolproof security arrangements for Pakistan Super League PSL cricket matches, to be played from 1 March till 12th March at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

More than 5,000 officers of Rawalpindi police will perform special duties, whereas 347 traffic police officers have been assigned to maintain the flow of traffic.

RPO Syed Khurram Ali and City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani on Tuesday gave instructions to the officers to ensure a peaceful and conducive environment for PSL remnant matches, to be played at the said cricket stadium.

Moreover, special teams of Elite force and Dolphin force will also perform patrolling duties in the vicinity of the stadium. Along with the effective security of the cricket teams' traffic routes, expert snipers have been deployed on the roofs.

Meanwhile, CPO Khalid Mahmood Hamdani directed officers to perform their duties with responsibility and due diligence. In addition, RPO Khurram Ali directed the officers to articulate well with the citizens during the cricket matches.

Pakistan Veterans Hockey Club won the Oman, Pakistan friendly Hockey series



KARACHI: Pakistan Veterans Hockey Club won the Oman, Pakistan Friendly Veterans Hockey Series, Pakistan won the three test matches series by 1-0, the last match of the series played at Sultan Qaboos Hockey Complex, Muscat was tied 2-2. Pakistan's forward Wasif Raza and Uzair Ahmed scored goals, the host team had a lead of two goals to one until the last minute, but in the last minute of the match, Wasif Raza scored on a good pass from Olympian Sameer Hussain, the captain of Pakistan. The match was equalized by scoring a goal, the first match of the series between the two teams was tied 2-2 while in the second match Pakistan veterans defeated Oman by five goals.

First-ever Women T-10 Cricket Tournament on March 2



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration would be holding the first-ever Women T-10 Cricket Tournament and women sports gala in the first week of next month.

The Women T-10 Cricket Tournament would be held on March 2 (Thursday), while the women sports gala will take place on March 8.

The tournament would be played here at the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) Cricket Ground, F-7, an ICT spokesperson informed APP.

He said students from schools and colleges would take part in the tournament while the participants eager to feature in the tournament can avail of free registration till Wednesday.

Cash prizes, medals and trophies would be distributed among the winners and best performers of the tournament, including women of the match and tournament awards, said the spokesperson.

He informed women sports gala would be held at Multipurpose Ground F-6, featuring Basketball, Lawn Tennis and seven-a-side Football tournaments to mark International Women's Day.

He further said that a series of healthy and physical activities including, a cycling championship, Archery, classic car show and cultural festivals would also be organized for the citizens.

ICC Women's T20 WC 2024 qualifiers confirmed



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The automatic qualifiers for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 have been identified after the end of the eighth edition of the tournament that saw Australia win their sixth title at Newlands in Cape Town on Sunday.

As per the qualification process, the top three teams from each group earn direct qualification along with the hosts and the highest-ranked team outside of the six direct qualifiers from the 10-team tournament, said a press release on Tuesday.

Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are the teams to earn direct qualification as the top three teams of Group 1 in the league stage while England, India and the West Indies similarly make it from Group 2.

Bangladesh qualify as hosts of the ninth edition of the tournament while Pakistan make it by virtue of being the next highest-ranked team in the MRF Tyres ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings as of February 27.

The remaining two spots would be identified through a Global Qualifier to be held in early 2024. The dates and venues of this tournament will be announced in due course.

From the teams who played in this year's tournament, Sri Lanka and Ireland are the teams failing to get a direct qualification. Sri Lanka were currently ranked eighth in the rankings while Ireland are 10th.

SA openers attain career best positions in ICC Rankings

Spots Reporter

ISLAMABAD: South Africa openers Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits have attained career-best positions in the MRF Tyres ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings after helping their team reach their first ICC Women's T20 World Cup final in Cape Town.

Wolvaardt, who scored 53 in the semi-final against England and a valiant 61 against Australia in the final to finish as the most prolific batter in the tournament, has shot up eight places to sixth in the rankings. Brits's Player of the Match effort of 68 in the semifinal sees her advance five places to 12th position, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Others to move up the rankings for batters include England's Dannie Wyatt (up two places to 16th), Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana (up two places to 21st) and India all-rounder Deepti Sharma (up one place to 28th).

England spinner Sophie Ecclestone's three for 22 in her four overs in the semi-final was enough to make her just the second bowler in history to go past 800 rating points in the Women's T20I bowlers' rankings. Australia fast bowler Megan Schutt peaked at 805 in 2019 and is the only other woman to reach that barrier. Ecclestone is currently on 801 rating points.

Roshan Khan Team C'ship 2023

KARACHI: World famous Squash player, Jahangir Khan briefs media persons regarding Roshan Khan Team Championship 2023 set to start on March 01 at PN Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex Karachi.



Photo: APP

First Rumanza Open Golf 2023 ready for national golf stars

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The First Rumanza Open Golf Championship extends over five days of classy golf playing activity from 1st March to 5th March 2023 at the most captivating Rumanza Golf Course, Multan, known as city of saints and has now acquired more popular touch as the city having the first signature golf course. A history creating championship for this Nick Faldo designed golf course of the country, Rumanza will host ladies, veterans, senior amateurs, senior professionals, junior

professionals, merited amateurs with handicap of nine and below and the 100 super golf professionals who are so very motivated about competing at this magnificent and technically demanding 18 holes golf course. Additionally the huge attraction for eligible golf professionals is the cash laden purse of Rupees twelve Million and an alluring car for a hole in one.

Out of the aspiring golf professionals, some of the contenders are heralded and rated highly and predictions, assessments and statistics seems to favour them, as they get ready for a fling at the

prize money and honors. Competition for them will be over four rounds from 2nd to 5th March, a total of 72 holes, 18 holes each day at the Rumanza Golf Course.

Mohammed Shabbir Iqbal the top ranked professional of our national golf circuit is a champion whose consistency is almost automatic. He wins tournaments in unruffled fashion and having him as a participant in this 1st Rumanza Open is distressing news even for prominent players like M. Munir, Matloob Ahmed, Waheed Baloch, M. Ashfaq and Talat Ijaz.

In this part of the country,

however, young Ahmed Baig remains a popular choice of many golf lovers, as his record for the past few months is enough to intimidate many hopefuls including Shabbir Iqbal. Declared a brand ambassador for Rumanza Golf Course, he is a player of remarkable physique, command over golf playing technicalities and oozing with passion. Just a week back, at the Lahore Gymkhana Golf course he demonstrated tremendous flair and devastating powers of recovery to emerge as the winner of the J.A.Zaman title.

Another brand ambassador of

Rumanza is Hamza Amin who will miss this grand event because of his marriage.

For the past two days, Matloob Ahmed ranked number two in Pakistan, as well as other acclaim seeking golf professional champions have been practicing at the Rumanza Golf Course, improving familiarity with the fairways and getting adjusted to the feel of the greens. Matloob says, "It is not preparation that is so important, it is the right preparation". Whispers about Matloob suggest that he is not going to be easy to beat, although even after the lapse of a few days he is fur-

ous with himself for having lost to Ahmed Baig.

Competition among amateurs will be fearsome indeed. Teenager Saad Habib of Rumanza will make competitive life tough for top ranked amateurs like Qasim Ali Khan, Salman Jehangir, Saim Shazli and Hussain Hamid. Certainly Saad Habib enjoys the home course advantage and appears in winning form. As for flites composition top amateurs will form a part of the Pro flite.

As for the playing arena, the Rumanza Golf Course is all ready to test the skills of the competing golfers with course

length extended to 7553 yards. From the championship markers the course is likely to present an exacting examination that requires meticulous shot placing accuracy due to the demanding fairways. The infrastructure is top class and the organizing team at Rumanza Golf Club Brig. Fayyaz Ahmed Sial, Col Muhammad Anwar Tarrar, the Tournament Director and Samuel Humphery, General Manager are expectant that exceptional quality golf will be witnessed during the days of the 1st Rumanza Open Golf Championship.