



Gaza escalation: Senate condemns Israel's brutalities, calls for immediate ceasefire

The Senate on Monday expressed concerns over Israel's atrocities against innocent people of Palestine, urging for immediate ceasefire and providing essential humanitarian aid to alleviate their suffering. (Details on Page 8)

DAYS REMAINING
0

Last day for illegal immigrants to leave Pakistan
Foreign citizens residing illegally in Pakistan now have only 0 days to leave the country or face deportation. Foreigners living illegally must leave Pakistan by October 31 or law enforcement agencies will ensure their arrest and deportation. In the recent meeting of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan, it had been decided to take strict action against the illegal immigrants living in Pakistan and the trade and properties of illegal immigrants

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet on Monday.



Photo: PID

Deportation process applies to all illegal foreigners: Caretaker PM

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday reiterated that as per the government's policy and relevant laws, they were sending back all the illegal aliens and foreigners from the soil of Pakistan as the set deadline of October 31 under the repatriation process draws nearer. He said that such a policy was not centric to only illegal Afghan nationals that had been staying inside the country but encompassed all those undocumented and illegal foreigners. In an interaction with the students of Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) during a special session, the prime minister elaborated that Pakistan had hosted more than

four million Afghan refugees on its soil for the last 40 years under the Geneva Convention, despite the fact that it was not a signatory to that. He said more than one million foreigners had been categorized as illegal who had been staying in Pakistan without legal and valid documents. They were being encouraged to return to their native countries, he said, adding if they wanted to return to Pakistan with the required legal documents and valid visas, there would be no restriction. Replying to a question regarding an incident involving Afghan nationals, the caretaker prime minister said that he had already given direction to the relevant authorities of the interior ministry to ensure the dignity of the

repatriated women and children as there might be vulnerable groups. The prime minister said that Pakistan had entertained on its soil for decades those Afghans who had been registered as refugees and compared the treatment meted out to immigrants' boats in the Mediterranean Sea. To a query, he maintained that in various terrorist incidents, certain groups were involved and referred to a suicide attack in a mosque in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in which the suicide bomber was identified from DNA tests as an Afghan national. He clarified that all Afghans were not terrorists but the involvement of certain groups in illegal activities was a part of the problem, adding it was the prime responsibility of the government

to protect the lives of its people which was also a constitutional obligation. The caretaker prime minister said that governments' policies were framed after institutional inputs from different institutions and departments. Replying to a student's question, he said that the caretaker government was a product of a constitutional order after the former leader of the house and leader of the opposition in the previous National Assembly adopted a constitutional procedure and agreed upon his nomination. He said that the previous parliament had passed a law in which the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was mandated to announce an election date. "It is the mandate of the ECP

and not of the Caretaker Prime Minister to set a date for the general elections," he said, adding if he was mandated under the constitution, he would have given the same. Prime Minister Kakar further said that the caretaker government would assist the ECP with the provision of finances and security for a smooth process and assured to fulfill their constitutional duty. About delay in Punjab and KP polls, the prime minister said that the matter did not pertain to the tenure of the interim set up and referred to Article 254 of the Constitution which said that any delay or failure to comply with the legal requirement as to time, did not render an act invalid or unconstitutional because it happened late.

Thousands of people performed funeral prayer of Molana Asim Jameel



Asim Tanveer / Waqar Paracha

KHANEWAL: The funeral prayer of Asim Jameel, son of religious scholar Maulana Tariq Jameel performed in Home Town Near Tulamba in District Khanewal. Yesterday, the son of religious scholar Maulana Tariq Jameel allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself

ECP finalises categories of polling stations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalised the categories of polling stations across the country ahead of the general elections. Sources told that 91,809 polling stations will be established in four provinces, including 15,821 in Punjab, 19,236 in Sindh, 5,015 in Balochistan and 15,737 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Sindh: 8,030 polling stations have been declared sensitive and 4,430 most sensitive. Punjab: 15,829 polling stations have been declared sensitive and 6,599 most sensitive. Balochistan: 2,068 polling stations have been declared sensitive and 2,038 most sensitive. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP): 6,581 polling stations have been declared sensitive and 4,344 most sensitive. Election date? A few days ago, it was learnt that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was considering to fix January 28 - 2024 as the election date. According to the details, the Election Commission has proposed to hold the general elections in the country on January 28, 2024, however;



sources stated that the ECP is consulting to fix Sunday as the day for polling. The sources within the ECP stated that the Supreme Court will be informed regarding the election schedule, after the completion of delimitation of constituencies which is expected to conclude by November 30. Earlier to this, The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday denied impressions that general elections could see a further delay in the country. The ECP said that the schedule for the general elections will be announced immediately after the announcement of the delimitations. The statement added that the first stage in creating fresh delimitations has already been completed and the second would be completed on October 27. "A final list will be issued by November 30," the statement added. Reacting to President Arif Alvi's remarks regarding the delay in general elections, the election body said that "it is fully prepared to hold polls".

Petroleum Division notifies massive hike in gas prices

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker federal government has notified a massive hike in gas prices which would be taken into effect on November 1. The Petroleum Division issued a notification regarding the massive hike in gas prices for domestic, export, non-export units, CNG, cement and other sectors. However, the gas prices were not hiked for protected consumers using 25 to 90 cubic metres in a month, however, the fixed charges for this category of consumers were increased from Rs10 to Rs400. The notification stated that the gas prices for non-protected domestic consumers were hiked by over 172%. The gas prices for different slabs of consumers are as follows: Consumers using 25 cubic metres: From Rs200 to Rs300 per mmBtu Consumers using 60 cubic metres: From Rs300 to Rs600 per mmBtu Consumers using 100 cubic metres: From Rs400 to Rs1,000



Economic Coordination Committee (Pakistan)
PRICE HIKES
Consumers using 150 cubic metres: From Rs600 to Rs1,200 per mmBtu
Consumers using 200 cubic metres: From Rs800 to Rs1,600 per mmBtu
Consumers using 300 cubic metres: From Rs1,100 to Rs3,000 per mmBtu
Consumers using 400 cubic metres: From Rs2,000 to Rs3,500 per mmBtu
Consumers using over 400 cubic metres: From Rs3,100 to Rs4,000 per mmBtu
Tandoors: Rs600 per mmBtu (previous rate is maintained)
Power plants: Rs1,050 per mmBtu
Cement sector: Rs4,400 per

mmBtu
CNG sector: Rs3,600 per mmBtu
Export units: Rs2,100 per mmBtu
Non-export units: Rs2,200 per mmBtu
ECC's decision
On October 23, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet had approved varial summaries including revision of natural gas pricing. A summary submitted by the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) regarding the revision of the natural gas sale pricing for the FY 2023-24, was also approved as per the tariff schedule submitted by the Ministry, prospectively w.e.f. 1st November 2023, instead of 1st October 2023. It was learnt that the federal cabinet is likely to approve a massive hike of up to 193 per cent in the gas tariff. The government is likely to increase the local gas tariff up to 173% for non-protected domestic consumers, 136.4% for commercial, 86.4% for export and 117% for the non-export industry.

Sugar, flour prices jacked up at Utility Stores

Commerce Desk

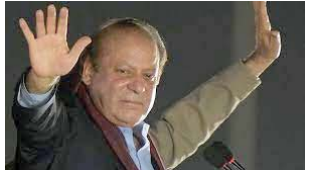


ISLAMABAD: The prices of sugar, flour and other essential items have jacked up at utility stores across Pakistan. As per details, the report issued regarding the prices of grocery items stated that the price of sugar is Rs 155 in Utility Stores where the price in open market stands at Rs 142.54 which is Rs 12.46 less than in utility stores. Similarly, the price of a 20 kg flour bag is Rs 2840 at Utility Stores whereas in the open market, the price is Rs 2706.32 which is Rs133.68 less than in Utility Stores. Earlier in August, the wholesale price of sugar hit a record high and reached Rs163 per kilogram in Pakistan. Wholesale Grocers Association in its statement said that the per kilogram price of sugar has gone up by Rs 6 with a 1-kilogram pack being sold out in the wholesale market at Rs 163. In retail, the price of the commodity varies between Rs170 to Rs180 per kilogram. The chairman of the Wholesale Grocers Association Rauf Ibrahim said sugar is not available to wholesalers even at high prices. If the surge continues the sugar prices can go beyond Rs 200 per kg.

Nawaz Sharif to chair PML-N's high-level huddle after 'almost four years'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif will chair the party's high-level meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) after four years of self-imposed exile in London. Sources told that the three-time prime minister has summoned PML-N's high-level



meeting at Jati Umrah, Raiwand. The meeting - which will be attended by party president Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz,

Hamza Shehbaz and others - will discuss matters related to country's political situation, general elections and other important issues. The meeting will also mull over commencing of Nawaz Sharif's political activities, sources said, adding that a detailed consultation will be held on the party's election campaign and manifesto.

Furthermore, all presidents at the provincial level will table the names of potential candidates for upcoming general elections. Nawaz Sharif arrived in Pakistan on October 21 after four years of self-imposed exile in London. The former prime minister reached Lahore's historic Minar-e-Pakistan monument,

the venue for a grand rally of the PML-N to welcome the former premier, in a helicopter after landing in Lahore from Islamabad. PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and former finance minister Ishaq Dar accompanied the former premier on the trip to Pakistan from the United Arab Emirates.

Foreign airline increases direct flights to Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: SriLankan Airlines has increased the number of direct flights to Pakistan following the approval of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Sources told that SriLankan Airlines will operate weekly four flights to Lahore. An additional flight will be operated between Colombo and Lahore on October 31 (today). According to the foreign airline, it will operate four flights between Colombo and Lahore in a week. The foreign airline is already operating weekly four flights from Karachi. It added that the additional flights would also generate revenue of the foreign airline and facilitate the passengers. The SriLankan Airlines is using Airbus 320, Airbus 321



and Airbus 330 aircraft for flights in Pakistan. In September, Malaysian airline Batik Air announced the launch of direct flights between Karachi and Kuala Lumpur commencing on 31 October 2023. Following the resounding success of its daily flights to Lahore, Batik Air announced new services between Karachi and Kuala Lumpur. The airline will operate three times weekly flights. The new route strengthens the airline's ties between the countries, fostering both business and leisure travel opportunities.

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Country Director UNPF meets President AJK

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that it was quite heartening to see that the number of public welfare projects in Azad Kashmir were being sponsored and funded by the UN and its subsidiary organizations including the United Nations Population Fund.

He expressed these views while talking to Dr. Luay Shabaneh the Country Director United Nations Population Fund in Pakistan here today. Speaking on the occasion, Barrister Chaudhry



said that there was a dire need that the UN and its subsidiaries should extend their support and cooperation to the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in health, education and other sectors.

On this occasion, Dr. Luay Shabaneh briefed the President about the UNFPA's objectives and the ongoing projects and proposed projects in Azad Kashmir. Dr. Shabaneh, assured the President that the ongoing projects being funded by the United Nations Population Fund in Azad Kashmir would be completed within the stipulated time frame.

Ex-Premier calls for urgent UN action on Israeli pogrom in Gaza

Abdul Majeed Tahir



RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, ex-Premier of AJK, has described pogrom of territory-caged Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli military invasion as history's worst violation of international humanitarian law, urging UN and civilized international human care agencies to pressure urgent ceasefire in Gaza-contained genocidal operations.

Talking to a delegation of Mothers Social Protection here Monday he referred to reports unfolding worst human rights violations in Gaza, caged camp of Palestinians whose fate lingers on unsettled as UN road map of a 2-state Palestinian solution is not being implemented by Israel; those powers who claim to be elders of the world peace are silent spectators to non-implementation of UN's 2-state ruling on Palestine; it is most shocking and called this silence as heinous disservice to global peace and security, he added.

It is a callous crime to shut food and medical aid to the caged Palestinians; it is an open war and humanitarian crime which no sane head can resort to in extraordinary regional conditions which obtain today in the Middle East, he added. He urged the UN to break open the shut vistas for supply of humanitarian food and medical to the war blasted Gaza and the Gazans.

Govt of Punjab is trying to provide easy access to health facilities to the people.

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Government of Punjab is trying to provide easy access to health facilities to the people. Cardiology New Block, DHQ Completed, Children Upgradation, Children Hospital Emergency Block, Nishtar 2 is under construction. Training courses play an important role in personality development of officers. South Punjab Secretariat is fully functional. These views were expressed by Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak during a meeting with the delegation of the 38th Mid-Career Management Course at the Commissioner's Office.



DC Captain Rizwan Qadir was also present. Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak said that Multan is a historical city. It is very important to highlight the culture of the region. The Punjab government has given a scheme under Walled City to protect the historical heritage of Multan. Steps are being taken to welcome artists, writers, poets. Aamir Khattak said that the details of available medicines were clearly displayed in all the hospitals. The beautification of important squares, pillars of flyovers is going on for the beauty of the city. Orders have been given for cleaning, beautification and complete scrapping of the general bus stand. Later, Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak presented soner to the head of the delegation while the delegation asked questions about various issues of Multan. Officers of various departments were also present in the meeting.

Wana timber market victims wait of govt compensation for last two years

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: The victims of the timber market belonging to Wana in Lower South Waziristan district have knocked on the door of every government office from Wana through Peshawar to Islamabad, but the promises of the government authorities could not be fulfilled.

Rehman Ullah Wazir, the victim of Timber Market Wana, said that two years ago, our Timber Market Wana suffered a loss of crores and billions of rupees due to a fire in the dark of night and due to which our businesses were badly affected, however, since then, no financial support has been provided to the victims despite repeated assurances from the district administration to higher government officials.

Rehman Ullah Wazir further said that the district administration officers of South Waziristan Lower visited the site and compiled a report of the damage and assured us that they will compensate for the loss.

The victims said that the former MPA Naseerullah Khan and EX MNA Ali Wazir of the current constituency are also fully aware of this whole situation, but till now our case is as it is, no progress has been made.

On the other hand, Pakistan People's Party Lower South Waziristan district president Aman Ullah Wazir said that two years ago, valuable timber and goods were burnt to ashes due to a fire in Wana Bazar Timber Market but despite the passage of such a long time, no one has provided financial assistance to the victims, this is a matter of injustice and cruelty.

Aman Ullah Wazir added that we have raised this issue at the highest level, but no one listened to them and no one is trying to solve it.

In this regard, District Coordinator Syed Umar Mehsud said that the PDMA Relief Compensation Act of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa does not have any scope for damages or compensation for property caused by fire.

The PDMA Act provides relief compensation only for death or injury, not to mention other damages caused by fire.

The coordinator further said that the former DC Khalid Iqbal had sent the case to SMEDA at that time, but SMEDA got lost in the middle and therefore the case is pending.

It should be noted that two years ago, two fires broke out in the Wana Timber Market due to unknown reasons, which caused a loss of crores of rupees, among the victims were shopkeepers who suffered losses of crores of rupees if not millions.

Dua

LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar offers dua at the shrine of Sufi Saint Hazrat Ali Hajveri on Monday.



Photo: PID

Women University Expresses Solidarity Walk for Palestinian and Kashmiris Muslims

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A walk was organised by the Directorate of Student Affairs, the Women University Multan to support Palestinians' right to self-determination and peace against Israeli aggression. The walk was led by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Kalsoom Pracha along with Registrar Prof. Dr Mamoon Khan. The walk attended by a large number of students, staff, and faculty members.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha expressed profound grief for the loss of lives in Palestine due to the Israeli attacks, and condemned the bombings on Gaza soil in the strongest terms. She called on the international community to take notice of Israeli atrocities and take actions to halt them. VC Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha appealed to the participants to offer moral support to the Palestinian cause and provide financial assistance to the vulnerable



Palestinian population.

Registrar Prof. Dr Mamoon Khan said every year, we come together to condemn Oct 27 as a black day, which marks India's illegal occupation of Jammu & Kashmir." She stressed the importance of standing in support of

the Kashmiri people and called upon the international community to take practical measures to address the severe human rights violations in the Indian-held Kashmir. Dr. Mamoon Khan also strongly condemned Israel's barbaric acts against innocent Pales-

tinians.

The speakers of the walk said that Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinians and Israel is an illegitimate state. The people of Pakistan are with the Palestinian cause and fully support their oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Students displayed placards, banners, and Palestinian flags inscribed with slogans demanding justice and an end to the violence against Palestinians. The event was aimed at expressing wholeheartedly support to the relentless struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination. Student protestors appealed to Muslim community to take notice of atrocities by Indian and United nation forces in Kashmir and Palestine. At the end Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Kalsoom Pracha pray for peace and end to oppression for people of occupied Kashmir and Palestine.

PTCL Group adopts Red Hat hybrid cloud solutions to power digitalization and deliver cloud-native services

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading telecom and ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) announced today that it is leveraging Red Hat OpenShift, the industry's leading hybrid cloud application platform powered by Kubernetes and Red Hat Application Foundations. These are a comprehensive set of components for developing and modernizing software to strengthen the Group's digitalization ambitions.

Red Hat Application Foundations can be used with applications that run on-premises or in the cloud when combined with Red Hat OpenShift, creates a platform that streamlines execu-

tion across the application life-cycle. This helps reduce Capex and Opex expenditure, improve efficiency with faster rollouts and automated pipelines, thus allowing businesses to accelerate innovation for gaining a competitive advantage. The collaboration will not only help PTCL Group transition its legacy applications towards a more robust and scalable microservices-based architecture, but also provide advanced cloud services for its customers.

Red Hat OpenShift provides a cloud-native, unified application platform that enables organizations to quickly build, deploy, run and manage applications across a hybrid cloud. The Red Hat deployment fulfills PTCL Group's technology require-

ments for moving to microservices-based applications. Its new OpenShift-based platform is capable of scaling horizontally in a cross-cloud architectural approach, spreading across on-premises and other cloud providers including major hyperscalers such as AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, etc.

Commenting on the collaboration, Group Chief Technology & Information Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G

Jafar Khalid said, "By embracing this innovative platform, Red Hat Application Foundations on Red Hat OpenShift, the Group is poised to transform its legacy architecture, enhance its future readiness, reduce operational costs, and deliver state-of-the-

art services to its customers. The collaboration with Red Hat, a leading provider of enterprise open-source solutions, helps position PTCL Group at the forefront of the industry and enables the adoption of industry best practices like Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment (CI / CD) and Open API Gateway. Beyond PTCL Group, this initiative contributes to Pakistan's digital transformation and seeks to foster greater automation and agility, ultimately driving progress, innovation and growth."

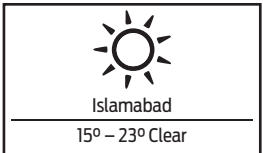
Speaking on the collaboration, Ayham Alzaaim, Regional Director Telco, Media & Entertainment, Middle East, Turkey and Africa, Red Hat, said, "Red



Red Hat is pleased to support PTCL Group with its ambitions to deliver new services and better experiences ahead of the curve

for its customers. With Red Hat, PTCL Group gains greater flexibility and consistency for developing, scaling, and enhancing the security of applications with extended interoperability across clouds."

Cloud-native development provides the ability to be more flexible and agile in creating and operating applications, following the best methods for streamlining integration and deployment. Using the Red Hat-powered platform, PTCL Group aims to increase its advantage in setting the blueprint for future and current applications. This shift also shows a strategic move towards more agility, automation, and DevOps, while embracing the top industry practices.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:00 am
Zohr	11:51 am
Asr	3:40 pm
Maghrib	5:18 pm
Isha	6:42 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 Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

NTDC secures land for construction of 220kV Grid Station in Gujranwala

Bureau Report

LAHORE: National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) has successfully acquired 369 kanal (46,125 acres) land for construction of a 220 kV grid station in Gujranwala.

Land Acquisition Collector (NTDC) awarded land measuring of 369 kanals under Section-11 on October 26, 2023, which is the final stage of land acquisition under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. Director General (Land) NTDC, was also present at the site of the future grid.

The establishment of 220 KV grid station at Gujranwala will improve the voltage profile of the area, it will also benefit the domestic, industrial, commercial and agricultural consumers and help to meet the growing demand for electricity in the area.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan appreciated the efforts of the NTDC team, which remained in continuous liaison with the local administration to complete the land acquisition process.

Symposium on Eastern medicine to be held at Hamdard University



Bureau Report

KARACHI: A two-day symposium on Eastern medicine will take place at Hamdard University, Madinat al-Hikmah from November 1-2, 2023. The symposium is organized by the Pakistan Association for Eastern Medicine (PAEM) in partnership with Hamdard Laboratories (Waqf). The event will focus on the significant contributions of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said

to the development of the Unani system of medicine in Pakistan.

Hundreds of Hakims and physicians from across the country are expected to attend. The symposium will delve into the utilization of herbs to reduce the burden of diseases, the role of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said in the promotion of Tibb-i-Unani and explore the future of Tibb-i-Unani in Pakistan.

Distinguished guests scheduled to

speak in the symposium's opening session on Wednesday include Dr. Ahsan Qavi Siddiqui, the CEO of Sindh Health Care Commission, Ms. Sadia Rashid, the president of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, Chief Patron of PAEM and Chancellor of HU, Dr. Azhar Ali Shah, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Sindh University (Larkana Campus) Prof. Dr. Syed Shabib-ul-Hasan, HU's Vice Chancellor and Prof. Dr. Hakim Abdul Hannan, the President of PAEM.

Protest

ISLAMABAD: Relatives of Baloch missing persons hold protest on call of Balochistan National Party outside Parliament House in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

PPL's 72ndAGM approves 15 percent cash dividend

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The 72nd Annual General Meeting of Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) was held on October 30 at Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi. Members approved financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, together with the auditor's report. A final cash dividend of 15 percent on both ordinary and convertible preference shares was also approved. Hence, total dividend paid for the year is 25 percent.

Presiding over the meeting, Chairman PPL Board of Directors Mr. Shahab Rizvi welcomed shareholders to the meeting. He appreciated management and staff's efforts in achieving extraordinary financial results as well as operational milestones during 2022-23 despite a challenging business environment. He



reaffirmed the board's commitment to maintain the highest standards of safety, corporate governance and accountability to ensure sustainable growth for PPL and also thanked shareholders for their support.

MD and CEO PPL Mr. Imran Abbasy highlighted the company's key achievements during 2022-23, notably the highest-ever profit-after-tax of Rs. 98 billion in PPL's history. He shared that the company made four discoveries - Shahpur Chakar North in operated Gambat South Block and three in partner-operated Tal and Kirthar blocks. With this, the company added 226 Bef

in 1P reserves.

PPL clinched four new blocks - one operated and three partner-operated - during the year. Besides, 1,416 line km 2D and 1,130 sq. km 3D seismic data was acquired. The company paced up exploration efforts in high-risk-reward Balochistan-based frontier assets with initiation of 2D seismic in Margand, Musakhel, Kuhan and Suleiman blocks and 3D seismic in Pezu Block. He further shared that the PIOL consortium for PPL-operated offshore Block 5 in Abu Dhabi aims to drill identified prospects in 2023-24.

Looking ahead, PPL is

poised to bridge the national energy supply-demand gap through potentially large hydrocarbon discoveries in high-risk high-reward frontier basins, including offshore concessions, and international ventures to broaden its portfolio. Efforts will continue to maximize recovery from existing reservoirs, including mature fields, with the use of latest technology and upgrading facilities. Moreover, PPL will keep enhancing its stakes in the mining sector and look for opportunities in the energy value chain, including green energy, to expand its outreach as an integrated energy player.

Business Community Strongly Condemns DGTO for Mala-fide Meddling into FPCCI Affairs

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, SVP and Vice Presidents of FPCCI have apprised that the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan strongly condemns the role of Director General of Trade Organizations (DGTO) for his mala-fide, illegitimate and destructive meddling into FPCCI affairs and its elections' process.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh added that the Executive Committee (EC) of FPCCI has appointed the Election Commission for the upcoming elections of FPCCI for the tenure 2024 - 25; held on 13th October 2023 with a thumping majority of 75 as against 25. Therefore, the election commission is legal and valid under Trade Organization rules.

President FPCCI added that, on the other hand, the objections, interference and unwarranted questioning on the formation of the FPCCI election commission by the DGTO is against TORs and, moreover, rules of FPCCI; and is against the role of regulator under the law.

First batch of students completes Russian language course at AIOU

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Teaching foreign languages is a great initiative of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Pakistan-Russia relations will improve by teaching Russian language to Pakistani children. Learning Russian language in a short period of three months has made it clear that there is no shortage of talent among Pakistani people," said Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan, H. E. Mr. Danila Ganich at the ceremony of distribution of the first batch of Russian language course at Allama Iqbal Open University.



Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that by learning foreign languages, students will get better educational and job opportunities abroad. He said that teaching language is the most difficult task, and the teachers of Russian Language and Culture Center of the university did a wonderful job in teaching the Russian language. While congratulating the students, Dr. Nasir said that you are our ambassador and now you must play a role in strengthening the relations between the two countries.

It is pertinent to mention here that Allama Iqbal Open University in collaboration with Ural State Pedagogical University (USPU) of Russia has established "Russian Language and Culture Center for Pakistan" in AIOU which offers a three-month Russian language course. In the first batch, 117 students completed the course. Russian language instructors, Dr. Roman Porozov, Dr. Zavalova Natalia, Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad and Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi were also present at the ceremony. Recorded messages of Deputy Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, Dr. Berg and Rector, Ural State Pedagogical University (USPU) Russia, Prof. Svetlana A. Miniurova, were played. They appreciated the efforts of AIOU for offering a Russian language course and said that this initiative will bring people of both countries closer to each other. Students also presented various tableaux in Russian language.

Mobilink Bank signs MoU with HRSG to provide premium financial services to their employees

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HRSG, a globally renowned service provider. This collaborative agreement strives to extend financial services to HRSG employees, showcasing the Bank's dedication to



improving the economic well-being of these individuals and supporting their financial aspirations. This partnership also highlights Mobilink Bank's broader commitment to working with organizations across Pakistan to contribute to the nation's economic growth. By fostering strategic partnerships with like-minded entities, the Bank actively participates in the global initiative to strengthen Pakistan's economic standing.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives by creating opportunities for increased digital inclusion and by driving economic growth across countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population.

Under this collaborative endeavour, Mobilink Bank is offering a wide range of services designed to cater to the multifaceted financial requirements of HRSG employees, effectively turning them into borrowers and future clients. These offerings encompass Housing Finance, Commercial Vehicle Loan, Salary Pension Loan, Gold Loan, Corporate Enterprise Solutions, Payroll Solutions, Deposit Banking (Free Banking Services and Business Plus Account), along with Health Insurance facilities.

Sharing his thoughts at the signing ceremony, Ghazanfar Azzam, President & CEO Mobilink Bank said, "By extending the Bank's premium financial services to HRSG employees, we are not only solidifying their financial security but also contributing to their long-term prosperity. With HRSG's extensive presence in Pakistan and foreign countries, we foresee a path to mutual growth and shared success that will resonate throughout the industry. We are committed to unlocking new opportunities and setting standards for excellence towards financial sustenance."

Maroof Int'l Hospital's Community Support Program runs Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: As part of its community support program, MIH implements a comprehensive breast cancer awareness campaign. And have organized around 55 Free Physical & Mental Health Awareness sessions, for women at college & university campuses, public & private offices and marginalized communities across the region; including CAA, NBP, PTCL, Ufone, RCCI, OGDCL, Bahria University, Roots Millenium Schools, Nayatel, UMicro Finance Bank, Bahria University & Quaid e Azam

University among many others. The three months campaign activities include print, electronic & social media messages, distribution of information leaflet about self-examination, displays, presentations, face to face & online sessions. With an aim to educate people & empower them in their health care decisions. Additionally, MIH offers 50% discount on mammograms from 1st Oct to 31 Dec 2023.

At a session, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saira Mehmood Breast Surgeon MIH said that Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer

deaths in women around the world. In 2018, 2.1 million new cases were reported with 627000 deaths. Given that Pakistan has the highest incidence rate of breast cancer among Asian countries, one in every nine women has a lifetime risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer, our women have very low rates of early detection and diagnose breast cancer at advance stages with fewer chances of survival said Dr. Saira. Hence, it is important to educate women about early detection, risk factors, self-examination & prevention of breast cancer she added, emphasizing women to



notice any change in their breast appearance or inconsistency, &

report it to a healthcare provider right away.

Ms. Zubia Zubair Psychologist & Psychotherapist MIH

said diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer may induce psychological challenges such as anxiety, depression, anger, uncertainty about the future, hopelessness, desperateness, fear of recurrence of cancer, fear of separation from relatives, fear of pain, decrease in self-esteem & impairment of body image. She added that there is a dire need to counsel cancer patients and their families. In the same vein she said doctors & Psychologists, should arrange sessions with patients to assist them with physical, emotional & psychological trauma, before, during and post recovery period.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Chinese Growing Influence in Contemporary Blue Diplomacy through Sixth Island Chain in Atlantic

Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik & Dr. Deanna Anderlini

Apart from Pacific, Indian and North Oceans, China is enhancing its influence in Atlantic Ocean as well by extending the Island Chain Strategy as a naval restraint disposition envisioned by John Foster in 1951, during the Korean War. It planned surrounding China and Russia by establishing the U.S naval bases in the Western Pacific to restrict sea access. Presently it is emerging as a focus for Beijing and Washington's geopolitical ascendancy. For U.S, this strategy continues as substantial tool of projection in Far East. For China, the concept is integral to its maritime security and to expand its influence.

U.S established three island chains in Pacific Ocean; Subsequently Center for Strategic and International Studies has proposed two additional island chain to assess Chinese Indo-Pacific naval approach. These proposed Island Chains are located in the Indian Ocean.

It is envisioned that due to ever growing strategic competition, Beijing is likely to out play Washington by establishing a Sixth Island Chain in North Atlantic from Azores archipelago to Trinidad islands stretching over 4500 km to strategically fix military power of an already ocean trapped America. Azores archipelago with its nine Islands stretches over 1500 km as an autonomous Portuguese region in mid-Atlantic located only 2,222 miles east of New York and 900 miles

west of Lisbon, hence linking Americas to Europe and Africa for fiscal, armed, and geo-political gains. U.S has long maintained Lajes air field on the Azores Island since WWII which continued even during Cold War, Beijing articulated its presence in the Azores as Washington cut down 35 million USD in funding and troops reduction to 177 from 1110 at Lajes base. Initial sign of Beijing attention was witnessed during 2014 once President Xi Jinping visited the islands on way back from South America.

Lisbon is also welcoming engagement with Beijing even against the wishes of US lead NATO. A Chinese foothold will allow Beijing to leverage the islands for immediate diplo-economic gain by utilising logistics centers and fostering lucrative business ventures in Caribbean under its pragmatic Belt Road Initiative. Better Chinese access in North Atlantic will not only augment its influence to exploit regional politico-military interests but will also decrease the US leverage in South China Sea. Beijing is eager to expand its export markets and to find new sources of energy to fuel its growing economy, moreover Portugal is one of the first nations among West European nation to be part of Belt Road Initiative (BRI). Chinese enterprises have capitalised 5.6 billion euros since 2011, which makes Portugal as the fifth-highest invested nation in EU by China. Chinese Three Gorges Corporation has acquired 22 per cent shares of Energy de Portugal. Huawei has been investing into Portuguese markets since 2018 for partnerships in the development of 5G and fiber-optic technologies. More Portugal



relies on Chinese investments, the more leverage Beijing can exercise in Atlantic including Africa and ME.

Reduction of U.S. troops from Lajes due to budget has created a strategic vacuum which China is eager to fill.

Portuguese "Golden Visa" initiative which allows residency to by purchasing property worth more than 500,000 euros will provides a legal option for Chinese to exert a greater regional influence. Beijing's investments will aid Portugal to surmount 30 per cent of its fiscal suffering caused due to decrease of U.S troops from Lajes. U.S is resisting to establishment of Chinese logistics and research centers close to U.S. military base in the Azores, however Beijing's support to Portugal to overcome its debt crisis during 2008 has led to a covenant to develop microsatellites. U.S NATO allies also endure to condemn Beijing's disposition in the strategic Azores; which will allow Beijing dual-use of aircraft and shipping vessels. Azores ultimately is likely to emerge as another base including Gwadar and Djibouti.

Chinese engagement with Latin America has increased since new millennium as Chinese enterprises are capitalising

in infrastructure, space, ports, shipping and industries even more than U.S. Washington is apprehensive that Beijing is doing this to pursue its maritime interests in Atlantic with a view to response against U.S provocations in South China Sea. For more than half a century, Trinidad and Tobago has been a center of Chinese interests in the Caribbean. Chinese investments in Trinidad include \$500 million Chinese-built dry dock. In 2011, China invested USD 850 million to acquire a 10 per cent shares in Atlantic LNG. COSCO has expanded its service like in Azores islands. Huawei and ZTE have also established a strong position market. In the defense and security sector, Trinidad was the first in Western Hemisphere to purchase a Chinese-made naval vessels. It is estimated that by 2035, Chinese market share in Latin American and Caribbean will be 700 billion USD. As per 2015 Defense Strategy White Paper, Beijing is trying to strengthen its military ties with Trinidad. Nevertheless, Washington's concerns are enhancing over growing Chinese influence in Latin America as Washington has shifted its focus to Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions. Washington is imposing sanctions on some Latin American nations to maintain its dominance however is failing against Beijing with time at its end to establish 4500 km long Sixth Island Chain from Azores to Trinidad to fix ocean trapped U.S.

Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation, UK.
Dr. Deanna Anderlini, Bologna University, Italy.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

OIC strongly condemns ongoing brutal Israeli aggression against Gaza

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Brahim Taha on Monday strongly condemned the continued and escalating Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip, persisting for twenty-three days in a row. "This relentless assault has resulted in butchering thousands of martyrs and wounding innocent civilians, including women, children, medical personnel and journalists, in addition to the deliberate destruction of buildings, hospitals, schools, places of worship, and United Nations facilities," OIC Secretariat in Jeddah said in a press statement.

Israel still threatened to bomb hospitals, in addition to continuing to prevent access to food, medicine, water, and electricity, which constituted collective punishment, war crimes, and flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, it was added. The secretary-general also affirmed the OIC's rejection and condemnation of the escalation of acts of murder, incitement, and organized terrorism committed by extremist settler groups and Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian citizens throughout the West Bank, including the occupied city of Al-Quds. These criminal acts have tragically led to the martyrdom of more than 115 Palestinian citizens since the beginning of the month. "He holds Israel, the occupying power, fully responsible for the continuation of these criminal acts," the press statement said.

Meanwhile Pakistan has told a UN panel that while most people under colonial rule have been able to exercise their rights to self-determination, the people of Palestine and Kashmir so far remain denied of that inalienable right. Speaking in the General Assembly's Third Committee, Ambassador Munir Akram said that UN Security Council resolutions decided that the Kashmiri people will decide their status through a plebiscite, but India has thwarted every attempt through "force and fraud."

Ambassador Akram, who was speaking in a debate on the right of self-determination, said that right was a "core principle" enshrined in the UN Charter and other covenants. In 2019, the Pakistani envoy said India illegally annexed Jammu & Kashmir in what India's Hindu extremist leaders ominously called the "Final Solution". During the past 4 years, he said, India has resorted to a campaign of "gross and systematic" violations of human rights in occupied Jammu & Kashmir, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide. Despite concerns voiced by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other mechanisms, he said, India has blocked visits to the territory, enjoying impunity "due to the protection offered by some major powers." "Indeed, like Israel, India has resorted not only to intensified oppression of the Kashmiris but also a belligerent posture against all those who call upon it to halt its crimes, especially Pakistan" Ambassador Akram said. "India's leaders, including its Defense Minister have repeatedly threatened Pakistan with aggression across the Line-of-Control in Kashmir. "Today, while the world watches, Israel is engaged in an indiscriminate genocidal campaign of bombardment of the unfortunate Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, as well as in the West Bank," he added. Following Ambassador Akram's pointed words about Kashmir, an Indian delegate reacted by claiming that the disputed state was its integral part and would remain so. In reply, a Pakistani delegate asserted that Jammu and Kashmir was not an integral part of India; the question of its accession to India or Pakistan would be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

Deadline for Undocumented Afghan Refugees - II

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 involved the deployment of a substantial military force, including ground troops, armored vehicles, and air support. Afghan resistance, known as the mujahideen, was composed of various factions, including tribal militias and religious warriors. They received support from a range of countries, including the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

The war was marked by its protracted and brutal nature, with atrocities committed on both sides. The challenging terrain and the resilience of the Afghan resistance made it difficult for the Soviet Union to achieve a decisive victory. In 1989, the Soviet Union initiated its withdrawal from Afghanistan, concluding a decade-long occupation. Subsequently, the Afghan government continued to battle the mujahideen, ultimately leading to its downfall in 1992.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces left Afghanistan in a state of civil war, paving the way for the rise of the Taliban, which imposed strict Islamic rule over much of the country. The Soviet-Afghan War had destabilizing effects on neighboring countries like Pakistan, which grappled with an influx of Afghan refugees and the radicalization of specific segments of its society.

Historians often view the Soviet-Af-

ghan War as a contributing factor to the economic and political strain that led to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This conflict's legacy continued to shape Afghanistan's modern history, including the U.S.-led invasion in 2001 and the subsequent war against the Taliban.

For decades, Pakistan has sheltered one of the world's largest refugee populations, primarily hailing from its neighboring Afghanistan. The story of Afghan refugees in Pakistan reflects the country's humanitarian ethos, while also shedding light on the challenges associated with hosting a long-standing refugee community. Pakistan's history of providing sanctuary to Afghan refugees goes back to the late 1970s when Afghanistan faced the Soviet invasion. Over time, successive waves of Afghan refugees have sought refuge in Pakistan due to conflicts, instability, and economic hardship in their home country. Pakistan initially opened its borders and established refugee camps to offer humanitarian aid, exemplifying the nation's commitment to assisting those in distress. Pakistan has continued to host a substantial Afghan refugee population. However, it's important to acknowledge that circumstances may have changed since then, especially in light of the evolving dynamics in Afghanistan following the U.S. withdrawal and the return of the Taliban to power.

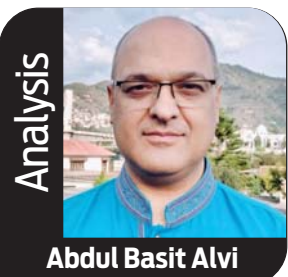
The presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, a consequence of enduring

conflict and instability in Afghanistan, has evoked both humanitarian empathy and concerns regarding security. Some Afghan refugees have been associated with activities that give rise to serious apprehensions, including acts of terrorism and involvement in illicit practices.

Pakistan has witnessed acts of terrorism perpetrated by individuals with Afghan refugee backgrounds, encompassing bombings, assaults on security forces, and sectarian violence. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has been linked to Afghan refugees and support from the Afghan government. Several Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan have been susceptible to radicalization due to the prevalence of extremist ideologies. Factors such as poverty, limited access to education, and exposure to extremist influences contribute to this issue. Additionally, some Afghan refugees have been involved in criminal activities, including drug trafficking, smuggling, and other unlawful enterprises. The use of counterfeit or forged documents by Afghan refugees has raised concerns, as it can facilitate illegal activities and pose security risks.

The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan has historically been marked by a complex web of geopolitical, security, and ethnic dynamics. In recent years, allegations of Afghanistan supporting the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have introduced another layer of intricacy to this relationship. From Pakistan's perspective, these allegations are a source of worry and exasperation, prompting questions about the Afghan government's commitment to regional stability.

To be continued



Abdul Basit Alvi

Finally, Pakistan was Saved.... - II

Illicit businesses that had been operating with complete impunity, such as water hydrants and the hoarding of wheat, sugar, fertilizers, oil, and other essential commodities, were subjected to thorough raids. Their stockpiles were confiscated and then sold in the open market at controlled prices.

A comprehensive crackdown was launched against drug smuggling and the distribution network of illegal drugs. Operatives involved in this illicit trade were apprehended and placed behind bars.

An amnesty period of one month was provided to all illegal aliens, allowing them to leave the country without facing legal consequences for their unauthorized stay in Pakistan. This primarily included 1.7 million Afghans who had been residing in the country for a significant duration, as well as those who had fled Afghanistan following the establishment of the Taliban's rule. A few of them had been promised evacuation to the UK, USA, and other European countries, but these host countries had been slow in fulfilling their promises, leaving Pakistan to bear the burden alone. The government's prudent decision eventually spurred the UK and USA to reactivate their programs and fulfill their commitments to repatriate the Afghans, as initially pledged after the establishment of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan.

The action taken against the 1.7 million illegal Afghan migrants was resolute and unwavering. They were duly warned that after the expiration of the one-month amnesty period, they would be placed in detention camps, and their assets, both immovable and movable, would be confiscated.

This decision sent shockwaves across the global community, with many countries and international media outlets strongly criticizing Pakistan. The United Nations issued a stern warning, and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai echoed UN experts' calls, urging the Pakistani government to reconsider its hurried policy of mass deportation.

The US State Department expressed deep concern, emphasizing that the decision could have a devastating impact on the lives of millions of Afghans, particularly women and children. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also voiced concerns about the potential consequences for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Afghan government expressed worry that the repatriations might be

carried out in an inhumane or disorderly manner.

International media outlets rallied to support the Afghan refugees. Reports from Al Jazeera, the BBC, and The Guardian highlighted criticism from the international community, deeming the decision unrealistic, inhumane, and potentially leading to a humanitarian crisis. One report emphasized the grave risk of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and inhuman treatment, if those facing deportation were returned to Afghanistan. Bloomberg noted that the arrest of Afghans following the October 31 deadline marked a low point in cross-border relations.

The undue pressures and media reports were dismissed by Pakistan, and rightly so. The seven-pronged coordinated actions have yielded significant dividends for the country:

The currency stabilized, becoming one of the top-performing currencies globally against the US dollar and major world currencies. The availability of essential commodities within the country provided much-needed reassurance, averting a state of emergency and panic. The stock exchange turned bullish, breaking records for business activity over the past five years. Dollar availability improved, benefiting businesses in the country. Incidents of terrorism were curtailed, reducing in both frequency and lethality.

Tightened border controls substantially reduced smuggling of petroleum products, illegal drugs, foreign goods, and the reentry of Afghan transit trade into Pakistan. This provided a boost to the consumption of locally made goods and commodities, offering much-needed relief to our manufacturing and consumer sectors. Those who were contemplating leaving the country in panic found solace.

All in all, the establishment made prudent decisions, with an outstanding strategy and unwavering political will. The immediate results have instilled a sense of security and hope for a better and more secure future among the nation. Refusing to succumb to external and internal pressures, this approach aligns with the collective desire and wish of the entire nation to safeguard the country's legitimate interests, and this strategy will persist until all objectives are achieved.

Writer is former Press Secretary to the President of Pakistan, Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan in France, Former MD, SRBC



Qamar Bashir

Finance minister says government ready to facilitate foreign investors

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar has asked OICCI to support government's endeavors to encourage foreign direct investment and invest in export based industries to support countries development and contribute to strengthening balance of payments in a sustainable manner. She shared these views while speaking to OICCI members during her visit to OICCI. She was accompanied by the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwani and custom and income tax commissioner and SECP Commissioner, Warriach.

Sharing her perspectives on recent economic assessment and outlook, she said that first few months data reveals signs of economic recovery. Outlook for agriculture appears prom-

ising based on crop output results, large scale manufacturing sector has positive growth though remains low relative to potential. FBR collections in first quarter are good. Bold and quick decisions in exchange market, cost recovery and control of theft etc. are restoring confidence. Minister highlighted the efforts are underway to launch SOE reform policy and compile the latest financial position, while renewing efforts to enhance their corporate governance.

The minister appreciated OICCI members efforts to bring in foreign investments in Pakistan and said that the government is ready to facilitate investors in every way possible. She revealed the key features of the Pakistan's economic revival program and indicated that its main emphasis is to support sustainable economic recovery through private sector. Pakistan



is not the only country in grip of multiple global crises but "The crisis like we are facing at present cannot be addressed solely by the government, private sector's support is very critical," she maintained.

During the meeting, the OICCI urged the government to aggressively broaden the tax base to increase revenue. It was further highlighted by OICCI that over Rs300bn of tax evasion in the tobacco sector alone is notable. The Chamber called for setting up an independent private sector group of experts outside the domain of the FBR. A large number of OICCI members representing large foreign investors present in the meeting urged for a level playing field to compliant taxpayers, who already contribute a significant tax revenue and have reinvested \$22bn since 2013 in Pakistan. They further complained of

tax harassment as collectors have been given unrealistic targets from existing tax payers. It would be prudent to expand the net base to retailers.

The OICCCI presented the findings of its recent survey which recommended the GOP to take measures to stabilize the declining value of the rupee and reducing the overall cost of conducting business in Pakistan – all aimed at making the country a more attractive destination for FDI.

The Minister and FBR chairman also addressed specific concerns raised by OICCI members, which encompassed critical issues such as high tax rates for corporate entities and salaried individuals, tax refunds of MNCs (standing at Rs93bn), revamping and simplification of withholding tax rates, and FBR reforms. In addition pricing and tax distortions were discussed.

PRCS Inspires 'Hope for Humanity' with Grand Fundraising Event to Aid Monsoon 2022 Flood Affected

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), in its relentless pursuit of aiding those in need, organized a spectacular Fundraising Event under the theme "Hope for Humanity" followed by an inspiring Luncheon on Monday. The event aimed at garnering support and donations from distinguished individuals, including diplomatic circles, business leaders, philanthropists, and corporate sectors, to fortify the ongoing recovery efforts for the families devastated by the Monsoon 2022 floods.

In a setting resonating with compassion and dedication, participants were urged to collaborate with PRCS, contributing generously to the recovery initiatives. The call extended to forming strategic partnerships and engaging in joint humanitarian ventures, fostering a collaborative approach to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable communities.

The distinguished ceremony was graced by the presence of Sardar Shahid Ahmed, Chairman PRCS, along with members of the PRCS managing body and Secretary Gener-

al PRCS Muhammad Abaidullah Khan. Notable attendees included Head of Delegations and representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and partner National Societies, including Turkish Red Crescent, German Red Cross, and Norwegian Red Cross. Ambassadors and diplomats from various countries, business leaders, and esteemed individuals from different institutions of Pakistan were also present to show solidarity.

Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed, passionately addressed the gathering, highlighting Pakistan's vulnerability to severe weather events aggravated by climate change, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. He underscored the ongoing challenges faced by vulnerable groups, particularly women, who have suffered significant losses in livelihoods associated with agriculture and livestock.

PRCS, in collaboration with esteemed partners, has already reached out to over 2.7 million individuals in 55 districts, providing life-saving essen-



tials and a glimmer of hope in the darkest hours. Chairman Shahid Ahmed expressed the organization's shift towards a comprehensive Recovery Initiative, focusing on addressing

persistent challenges faced by the most vulnerable groups. He appealed to the compassion and generosity of present, urging philanthropists, the business community, diplo-

mats, and organizational leaders to join hands with PRCS. He emphasized that their support would bridge the resource gap and enable the organization to provide permanent shelters,

rebuild livelihoods, and ensure the well-being of those affected.

During the event, Mr. Nicolas Lambert, the Head of Delegation to Pakistan from the ICRC, expressed that the

PRCS boasts a rich history of humanitarian efforts and having a strong volunteer network at the grassroots level. Emphasizing the shared fundamental principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, he underscored the enduring collaboration between ICRC and PRCS. Mr. Lambert affirmed ICRC's ongoing commitment to supporting PRCS in its humanitarian endeavors and called upon all partners, organizations and the international community to generously contribute to the National Society's cause.

Earlier, Secretary General PRCS Muhammad Abaidullah delivered an in-depth presentation covering PRCS, the historical monsoon flood operation, and the subsequent rehabilitation efforts.

The event concluded with Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, presenting commemorative shields to representatives from various organizations that played a crucial role in supporting PRCS during its Monsoon Flood response.

Turkey at 100: Inspiring Progress in a Changing World

Ankara, Turkey—October 29, 2023, marks a historic date in the annals of time, commemorating the centenary celebration of the Republic of Turkey since its monumental inception in 1923. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the visionary architect of modern Turkey, laid the cornerstone for a nation that not only shines as a beacon of hope and prosperity for its people but also resonates as an emblem of progress across the Muslim world. This momentous milestone underscores Turkey's incredible journey toward socio-economic development and its vital role in nurturing profound bonds with nations worldwide, most notably its deep-rooted connection with Pakistan.

Turkey has endured the tumultuous winds of history, facing five successful military coups since the birth of the Republic in 1923. However, the events that unfolded on that fateful Friday marked a daring attempt at the sixth coup, with soldiers marching against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his ruling Justice and Development Party, known as the A. K. P.

Nestled within the heart of this remarkable nation is a constitutional secular state, a unique blend of history and modernity. Turkey, with more than ninety-five percent of its population adhering to the Muslim faith, carries the legacy of once being the seat of a mighty Islamic empire. Throughout its storied history, the Turkish military has often stood as a stalwart guardian, shielding the cherished principles of secularism and the Constitution, diligently preserving the vision of its founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Turkey also shares a profound connection with the Indian subcontinent, which reviews the complexities of Muslim identity. As time flowed on, the dynamics of Muslim identity in India underwent significant transformations. Following the reign of Shah Alam II, a practice emerged that held deep symbolism—the recitation of the name of the Ottoman caliph during the Khutba, the Friday sermon. This seemingly subtle act signified a profound shift in perception, indicating that the mantle of safeguarding and defending the Muslim community in India had passed from the Mughal emperor to the Ottoman Caliph, the spiritual leader of the Ottoman Empire.

The passage of a century has borne witness to Turkey's remarkable metamorphosis into a regional powerhouse, replete with a robust economy and a rich cultural heritage. It stands as a dynamic and influential global player.

The transformation of Turkey's economic landscape across the past century is nothing short of extraordinary. Its commitment to diversification, innovation, and visionary leadership has catapulted it into the echelons of emerging economic giants. Straddling the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey's strategic geographical position has amplified its global significance. Embarking on ambitious endeavors such as Vision 2023, Turkey is poised to continue its journey toward becoming one of the world's leading economies by its centennial anniversary. While the path ahead is laden with challenges, it also brims with opportunities for further progress, stability, and prosperity.

Over the course of the century, Turkey has borne witness to

a remarkable economic transformation. This evolution has been marked by diversification, innovation, and technological advancement across various sectors. In recent years, Turkey has been ardently working towards establishing itself as a regional hub across a spectrum of fields, encompassing finance, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture, to name a few. Its geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has conferred upon it a unique advantage, facilitating international trade and beckoning foreign investments. Under the sagacious leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has embarked on a series of comprehensive reforms aimed at fortifying economic growth and stability. Initiatives like the Vision 2023 plan, unveiled in 2011, have set audacious targets, envisaging Turkey as one of the world's top ten economies by its centennial anniversary. These reforms have fostered an environment conducive to foreign direct investment, nurturing both domestic and international trade.

This journey is nothing short of miraculous. Turkey's path to progress is emblematic of relentless pursuit—of growth, modernization, and diversification. It has transitioned from a primarily agrarian economy into a dynamic and multifaceted one.

Diversification stands at the

heart of Turkey's economic prowess. The nation has been unwavering in its promotion of innovation and technological advancement across a spectrum of industries. This strategic approach has enabled Turkey to diversify its economic foundation, transcending traditional sectors and embracing novel opportunities.

In recent times, Turkey has been zealously endeavoring to establish itself as a regional hub, spanning various sectors from finance and manufacturing to tourism and agriculture.

Its geographical juncture at the intersection of Europe and Asia has played a pivotal role in its regional ascent.

Turkey's unique geographical position bestows a strategic advantage, bridging two continents and serving as an ideal conduit for international trade. This geographic centrality has enticed businesses and investors eager to leverage Turkey's role as a gateway to both Europe and Asia.

The visionary leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been instrumental in steering Turkey's economic transformation. His administration has championed far-reaching reforms aimed at enhancing economic growth and stability. The commitment to creating an environment conducive to investment and innovation remains

unwavering.

Among the most notable milestones in Turkey's recent economic history is the inception of the Vision 2023 plan in 2011. This ambitious plan laid out a series of goals and targets for Turkey to attain by its centennial anniversary. These targets spanned an array of economic facets, from GDP growth to foreign trade, infrastructure development to educational and healthcare reforms.

Central to Turkey's economic transformation is its prowess in attracting foreign direct investment. The Vision 2023 plan, coupled with other reform initiatives, has nurtured an environment that is alluring to international enterprises. This has precipitated a surge in foreign investments, fueling economic growth and job creation.

Moreover, Turkey's economic evolution is underscored by a substantial increase in both domestic and international trade. The nation's enhanced infrastructure, streamlined trade regulations, and strategic geographical position have rendered it an attractive destination for businesses seeking to expand their markets.

While Turkey's economic progress is indeed commendable, it has not been devoid of challenges. Economic stability and growth have, at times, been juxtaposed with the need to address issues such as inflation, fiscal deficits, and currency fluctuations. However, the nation's leadership remains steadfast in their commitment to surmounting these challenges and pursuing opportunities for further growth.

Pakistan, a nation intertwined with Turkey through deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, has played an integral role in this journey of progress. The bilat-

eral relationship between these two nations has burgeoned over the years, encapsulating various sectors, including trade, defense, education, and cultural exchange.

Pakistan and Turkey have joined hands in a plethora of initiatives, forging closer economic ties. The Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement, inked in 2013, has played a pivotal role in augmenting the volume of trade between the two nations, with a shared aspiration to reach \$5 billion by 2023. Furthermore, collaborative projects such as the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) train service and the Pakistan-Turkey Cultural Year have fortified people-to-people interactions and deepened cultural understanding between the two nations.

Turkish businesses have made substantial investments in Pakistan, significantly contributing to its economic development. Turkish companies have played a pivotal role in diverse sectors, including construction, energy, telecommunications, and textiles, imparting valuable expertise and creating employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce.

Furthermore, educational and cultural exchanges have cemented the bond between Turkey and Pakistan. Countless scholarships, exchange programs, and cultural festivals have offered opportunities for students and citizens from both nations to immerse themselves in each other's rich heritage, thus fostering enduring ties.

As Turkey commemorates its extraordinary centenary, we find ourselves compelled to applaud the nation's unwavering dedication to socio-economic advancement. In this remarkable journey, Turkey's partnership with Pakistan emerges as a shining exemplar, epitomizing the immense

power latent within robust international bonds.

With an unshakable sense of purpose, Turkey boldly embarks on its next century, poised to achieve even greater feats. Turkey's epic journey of a century is a guiding light, not just for its people but for nations worldwide. It stands as an enduring testament to the extraordinary outcomes that arise from unwavering dedication to progress, socio-economic growth, and international cooperation. The luminous torch of inspiration ignited by Turkey's journey reaches far and wide, casting a hopeful glow on what can be achieved when vision, determination, and unity converge.

Today, Turkey stands as a vibrant tapestry of diversity and dynamism, a bridge between two continents, effortlessly weaving together a mosaic of cultures. With a thriving economy, a youthful population, and a strategically vital geopolitical position, Turkey emerges as a pivotal force on the global stage. Its role in regional politics, acting as a vital link between Europe and Asia, remains pivotal. Turkey continues to be a key influencer in international affairs, shaping the destinies of nations while cherishing its rich heritage.

The leadership of Turkey, rooted in an unshakable belief in the enchanting power of dreams, unwavering dedication to progress, and an unyielding commitment to modernity, stands as an enduring testament to the limitless potential residing within the hearts and souls of the Turkish people and the great nation they proudly call home.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

[The writer is a Senior Media Consultant based in Peshawar. Can reach him at syed.gilani@gmail.com.]

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
51,482.92	50,943.83
Day's High	Day's Low
51,501.82	50,971.84
Index Value	Change
8,015,921,363	+539.09
Percentage	Time
+1.06%	30 Oct, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,327.39	+36.11
Percentage	Time
+0.50%	30 Oct, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
32,753.05	+335.46
Percentage	Time
+1.03%	30 Oct, 12:50 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
30,696.96	-294.73
Percentage	Time
-0.95%	30 Oct, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	178.25	180
Bahrain Dinar	745.81	753.81
Canadian Dollar	204	206.00
China Yuan	38.51	38.91
Danish Krone	39.7	40.1
Euro	296.3	299.2
Hong Kong Dollar	35.85	36.2
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	1.68	1.75
Kuwaiti Dinar	904.01	913.01
Malaysian Ringgit	58.69	59.29
New Zealand \$	163.07	165.07
Norwegians Krone	25	25.3
Omani Riyal	728.21	736.21
Qatari Riyal	77.04	77.74
Saudi Riyal	75	75.85
Singapore Dollar	202	204.00
Swedish Korona	24.98	25.28
Swiss Franc	310.9	313.4
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	79	79.75
UK Pound Sterling	344	347.4
US Dollar	280.6	283.1

Army has played a major role in improving economy, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the success of the IMF review is very important for the Pakistani economy, therefore it should be given top priority.

Exchange rate unpredictability at this critical juncture is troubling, because of which the importers and exporters are also worried while the profiteers are getting an opportunity, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that immediate action should be taken against those who smuggle dollars so that playing with the value of USD should be stopped.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the current

government has met the expectations of the IMF, so there is a strong hope of getting seven hundred and ten million dollars from the IMF in December.

The IMF tranche would be subject to some strict conditions, which will be a burden for the people already facing inflation and other problems, he added.

The business leader said that the tax and non-tax revenue targets have been achieved. FBR was given a target of collecting Rs 1.98 trillion in the first quarter of the new financial year, against which it has collected a tax of Rs 2.04 trillion, while the volume of withheld refunds has also been reduced from Rs 247 billion to Rs 198.5 billion.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the fiscal deficit for July to September stood at 0.9 percent, down 0.1 percent from last year, while the primary surplus stood at Rs 417 billion, higher than IMF demand.



The reasons for the primary surplus include the surplus of two provinces and the sharp increase in the petroleum levy. Apart from this, various types of subsidies and develop-

ment expenses have also been reduced, which has improved the financial condition of the government.

He observed that due to the unprecedented increase in the price of electricity, the circular debt has also remained within the limits demanded by the IMF and has also started to decrease.

Moreover, salaries have not increased compared to inflation; therefore, the financial affairs of the government are improving, but inflation is also expected to increase.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the army has played a major role in improving the economic situation by discouraging smuggling, hoarding, and speculation and improving the situation wherever possible.

The situation will improve if the crackdown on all types of illegal businesses is continued and no concessions are made to those who destroy the country's economy.

COAS working to stabilize the economy of Pakistan – Governor Sindh

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized an award ceremony. Governor Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting were Chief Guests on the occasion. Hanif Khalid Resident Editor of Daily Jang Rawalpindi was given the Lifetime Achievement Award and ICCI Executive Members were given Business Role Model Awards.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor Sindh said that the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir is a new hope for the country as he is working hard through SIFC to bring the economic stability to the country. He said that Pakistan has all the resources to emerge as a strong economy and stressed that every member of the nation should work hard for the development of the country. He said that implementation and execution of plans is the key to take the country forward. He said that Pakistan needs to get rid of IMF loans and all stakeholders should work in tandem to make Pakistan a self-reliant country.

Murtaza Solangi, Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting said that the business community is the driver of economic growth and the government is determined to help them in business and



investment promotion. He said that facilitation of business community would bring progress & prosperity to the country and the government would take all possible steps to support them. He lauded the services of Hanif Khalid who has been working with the 3 generations of Jang Group. It shows his commitment and dedication to his organization.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the establishment of SIFC by the COAS has created hope in the business community for bringing the economy of Pakistan back on track. He said that SIFC desks should be setup in ICCI and in other major chambers of commerce of the country to help the local and foreign invest-

ment. He stressed for one window facility to promote local and foreign investment in Pakistan.

Faaz Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar thanked the chief guests and the participants for attending the ceremony and commended Hanif Khalid for his great services to the nation as an accomplished journalist.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader said that Hanif Khalid is an institution and role model for young journalists.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan and Khalid Tawab former Senior Vice President FPCCI also spoke on the occasion and paid tribute to the services of Hanif Khalid and ICCI Executives.

TikTok holds Mental Health Awareness Workshop in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: TikTok, the world's leading short-form video platform, held a Mental Health Awareness Workshop in Lahore as part of TikTok's wellbeing campaign, #MentalHealthAwareness-Better Together, aimed at raising awareness about mental health issues and promoting digital literacy in this vital area.

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is observed each year in the month of October, serving as a global platform to address the significance of mental health and the challenges it poses in contemporary society. This year's WMHD theme, "Mental Health is a universal human right," emphasizes the importance of equitable access to mental health services. TikTok took this opportunity to engage its community and promote open dialogue around mental well-being, empowering individuals to discuss and address these

crucial topics. In addition to WMHD, October is also recognized as National Cyber Bullying Awareness month. TikTok extended its campaign to create a safer and more positive digital environment for all users.

The key objectives of the Mental Health Awareness Workshop included engaging with the TikTok community, creating a welcoming space for creators to express their concerns, and generating valuable content related to mental health awareness.

The event featured renowned TikTok creators and mental health professionals, fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and learning. Notable participants included Kazi Akber, Arzu Fatima, Areesha (LittleKhanWanderLust), Danial Sheikh, as well as Ola Doc Psychologist and Sexologist Tahira Malik. Stand-up comedy sessions by Mir Zohair Ali and Shehzad Ghias provided a touch of humor to the proceedings.

Celebrating Bananas for a Sustainable Tomorrow at the Banana Festival 2023

Commerce Desk

TANDO JAM, SINDH: Pakistan is getting ready to embark on a captivating journey into the world of bananas at the Banana Festival 2023, a unique event celebrating the versatility and potential of this beloved fruit. Organized by TechSaeen in collaboration with DURRANI Farms, Event Artist, and M H Panhwar Farms, this extraordinary festival is set to take place on November 6, 2023, at the scenic Sindh Agriculture University in Tando Jam.

The Banana Festival 2023 has been meticulously designed to achieve various crucial objectives. The festival will focus on different aspects of the banana plant, highlighting its significance and potential, such as the nutritional value, culinary versatility, and economic potential of bananas, as well as innovative uses and sustainable practices

related to banana tree trunks, ecological benefits and various applications of banana leaves, value-added products derived from bananas, and the environmental impact and conservation efforts associated with banana cultivation.

At the Banana Festival 2023, attendees can look forward to a wide array of activities and attractions. Explore value-added products of bananas, including fruit, leaves, and tree trunks, while learning about the innovations and economic potential within the banana industry. Witness banana cultivation practices up close, interact with growers, and gain insights into the entire banana production process.

The Banana Festival will welcome a diverse audience,

including banana growers, farm owners, academics, associated industries, startups, students, and alumni. The festival will feature an expansive showcase area exhibiting various products and innovations related to bananas and their by-products, such as compost, liquid fertilizer, tissue paper, food products, beauty products, and other items related to fashion, lifestyle, and household.

The organizers have expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the Sustainable Journey Partners, whose unwavering support has made the Banana Festival 2023 possible. As Agha Zafarullah Durran from DURRANI Farms states, "The partnership between the farm industry and academia is the cornerstone of sustainable agricultural development. We can build a brighter future for

agriculture in Pakistan through collaboration, shared knowledge, and innovative practices." Mohsin Iqbal from TechSaeen adds, "TechSaeen is committed to playing its part in building the partnership between academia and the farm industry. We believe that by bridging the gap between technology and agriculture, we can drive innovation and create sustainable solutions for our farming community's challenges."

This enlightening and immersive experience at the Banana Festival 2023 will be an extraordinary journey for the people of Sindh and Pakistan.

TechSaeen is a technology-driven initiative committed to transforming the agricultural sector in Pakistan through innovation and collaboration. DURRANI Farms is a leading agricultural enterprise focused on sustainable farming practices and value-added products.

CCP sets up a New Department for Robust Market Surveillance

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has launched a new Market Intelligence Unit (MIU). Its objective is to create advanced technological and data analytical capabilities to assess the market data to identify the collusive practices. It's a transition from the previous approach of reactive enforcement to proactive enforcement.

CCP has already signed MOU with the Urban Unit in Punjab. CCP will also be obtaining data on all essential commodities from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. It will also obtain data in all essential products, various sectors of the economy to identify collusive practices

and cartels. The collusions and cartels drive the prices up in the economy maximizing their profit at the expense of poor nation.

The history of market abuse is as old as the markets itself. Unscrupulous players have become sophisticated and leave no smoking guns. In line with international approach, MIU will gather economic data. It will monitor various sectors and industries through market surveys and consumer feedback. It will monitor supply and demand side to identify distortion in natural equilibrium. It will use various software, tools, econometrics models and price movement analysis to curb market abuse, collusion, and cartel in the economy.

Synergy Advertising Wins 2023 Dragons of Asia Awards in Malaysia

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Synergy Advertising, a leading name in Pakistan's advertising industry, has added another feather to its cap by securing the Black Dragon Award for the Best Brand Building and/or Awareness Campaign. This recognition comes as a testament to their excellence in creativity and strategy for the "Quaid Kay Habib" campaign, executed on behalf of Habib Metropolitan Bank Pakistan.

The 2023 Dragons of Asia Marketing Communications Industry Awards, held in Malaysia, celebrated the outstanding achievements and innovations in the world of marketing communications. Synergy Advertising's

remarkable campaign for Habib Metropolitan Bank Pakistan was well recognized, earning them the prestigious Black Dragon Award.

The "Quaid Kay Habib" campaign was a masterstroke in strengthening the legacy of the bank's corporate brand. To celebrate Pakistan's 75th year of independence, this campaign of Habib Metropolitan Bank takes audiences with emotional rides whilst reflecting on Pakistan's journey as a country and Pakistanis' journey as a nation. The highs and lows of this journey have been beautifully depicted, while showcasing the legacy of the Habib family, and how it is intertwined with the story of Pakistan. Synergy Advertising's innova-



the attention of the award panel and made a lasting impact on the audience. Creative storytelling and execution excellence garnered

ence. "We are thrilled and humbled by this recognition," said Ahmed Kapadia, Group Chairman, Synergy Advertising. "The 'Quaid Kay Habib' campaign was a labor of love and a testament to our dedication to our client Habib Metropolitan Bank. We're honored to have played a part in strengthening Habib Metropolitan Bank Pakistan's brand and promoting the values it stands for."

The commitment to excellence and innovation has led to this outstanding recognition on the international stage, and Synergy Advertising remains committed to continuing to raise the bar in the field of marketing communications.

Bank of Khyber achieves remarkable growth with Rs. 4,682 million profit



Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) proudly announces a significant achievement as it posts a remarkable profit before tax of Rs. 4,682 million for 9M 2023. This financial performance was declared during the 182nd meeting of the Board of Directors, held on October 27, 2023, in Karachi. The meeting was presided over by Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Additional Chief Secretary of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chairman of the Board of Directors.

BoK's planning and strategic repositioning of its balance sheet have played a pivotal role in steering the institution successfully through the challenges of the year 2023. Demonstrating an impressive growth trajectory, the Bank reported a substantial increase of 1,165% in profit before tax, reaching Rs. 4,682 million for 9M 2023, compared to Rs. 370 million for the same period in 2022. Moreover, the net profit after tax for 9M 2023 surged by 783%, amounting to Rs. 2,473 million, compared to Rs. 280 million reported for 9M 2022.

BoK remains committed to delivering exceptional financial services to its customers while continuously investing in upgrading the systems and capabilities to meet the expectations of the customers. The rapid growth in traffic on the Bank's digital channels is an affirmation that customers are increasingly engaging with the Bank on its new initiatives. With this remarkable financial performance, the Bank is poised to continue its growth trajectory and contribute positively to the economic landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and beyond.

Asian Taekwondo Open to be held in Islamabad in 2023: PTF

Sports Desk

LAHORE: President, Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (PTF), Lt. Col (Retd) Mohammad Wasim Janjua officially announced that the 5th Asian Taekwondo Open Championship would be kicked off on November 1, 2023, at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Monday.

Janjua was addressing a press conference at a local hotel flanked by the president, the Asian Taekwondo Union (ATU), Professor Kyu Seok Lee, and Omar Saeed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) PTF and further added that martial arts players from 27 countries would take part in the different taekwondo disciplines during the five days international prestigious



showpiece.

"The opening ceremony of the championship will take place on November 2 at the mentioned above venue while the closing ceremony will be celebrated on November 5, 2023. Taekwondo

players from all over the world would chip in the mega event, as it will be a nice occasion for the local players to show their game skills in the mega international fixture," he further said. While responding to a ques-

tion, the head of the PTF said that the same venue had hosted the 4th Asian Open successfully. "Sports events are uplifting the positive image of Pakistan all over the world. This time, a huge number of international players

will fight for medals. We invited India after completing all the requirements for the documentation but now the ball is in Indian court. I think they will not visit Pakistan," he asserted.

"Around 500 to 600 athletes from different 27 nations will compete for gold and different medals in Khyrougi and Poomsae disciplines during the 5-day competitions. The players Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan and The Humanitarian Foundation (THF) have confirmed their participation," Wasim Janjua concluded.

Sports in Pakistan presents Pinktober

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Sports in Pakistan, a leading sports organization, organized its flagship event, Pinktober, in support of the battle against cancer.

This remarkable initiative aims to raise funds for the renowned Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital, serving as a beacon of hope for those affected by cancer throughout Pakistan.

Cancer knows no boundaries and affects individuals from all walks of life. In recognition of this universal challenge, Sports in Pakistan has taken up the mantle by organizing the Pinktober event. Through this event, we aim to bring together individuals, communities, and sports enthusiasts alike, fostering unity and contributing towards this worthy cause.

One of the highlight activities of the Pinktober event is the Annual Pinktober 20K Ride 10K Run and 5K Walk, which has been successfully organized for the past few years. This event not only promotes physical fitness



and well-being but also serves as a platform to raise awareness and funds for cancer research and treatment.

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center is the primary beneficiary of the proceeds from our Pinktober events. With the collective efforts of participants and supporters, our goal this year is to raise 15 million Rupees. These funds will be dedicated to

the construction of a mammography Room at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital, enabling enhanced diagnostic capabilities, and providing vital support to breast cancer patients.

Shoaib Nizami, CEO of Sports in Pakistan, expressed his enthusiasm for the Pinktober event, stating, "We are honored to organize Pinktober and contribute to the fight against cancer. This event unites people from all

walks of life, transcending borders, and boundaries. I urge everyone to join us in this noble pursuit, as together we can make a significant impact and bring hope to those battling cancer."

Sports in Pakistan invites all members of the media to attend and cover the Pinktober event. Your support in spreading awareness and highlighting the importance of early detection and treatment in the fight against cancer is invaluable.

Mari Petroleum T20 Cricket Tournament-POL Wins the Trophy

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mari Petroleum T20 Cricket Tournament culminates with a thrilling final match, played at Islamabad Club Cricket Ground, in which POL cricket team defeated the MPCL team and won the trophy. The event was organized and sponsored by MPCL. The tournament was a grand spectacle, with eight outstanding cricket teams, from oil and gas sector of Pakistan, participating in 15 thrilling pool matches.

Mr. Muhammad Ali, Minister of Energy, was the Chief Guest at the closing ceremony. In his speech, he congratulated the victorious team and mentioned that sports is important in



helping youth to foster comradeship and adopt healthy lifestyle. He commended the MPCL Management for their dedication to developing cricket at the grassroots level and giving local talent a chance to emerge. He also recognized

MPCL's contributions to the development of sports and the promotion of integration within the oil and gas sector. Afterwards, the Chief Guest awarded the winning and runner-up teams with the prizes.

Inzamam-ul-Haq has resigned as a Chairman of National Men's and junior selection committee: PCB



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Inzamam-ul-Haq has resigned as the chairman of the national men's selection committee and junior selection committee. He was appointed as the chairman of the national men's committee on 7 August 2023 and was also appointed chairman of the junior men's selection committee earlier this month.

Inzamam said: "I am stepping down from the post to offer the PCB the opportunity to conduct a transparent inquiry about the conflict of interest allegations raised in the media. If the committee finds me not guilty, I will resume my role as the chief selector."

The PCB appreciates and acknowledges Inzamam's decision to voluntarily step down during this investigation.

Karachi Kings unearth three pacers from talent hunt programme



A Sports

KARACHI: The most-followed franchise of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), Karachi Kings, discovered three pacers from their talent hunt programme, Khiladi Ki Khoj.

The newly-discovered pace trio is comprised of Fawad Ali, Muhammad Suleman and Arsalan Dost.

The selected players will be provided training and career development guidance under Karachi King's Talent Programme.

The pace trio will train in King's Talent Program under the supervision of expert coaches, physios, and trainers. This program is led by Karachi Kings' coach Muhammad Masroor.

Kings' Talent Program coach Mohammad Masroor has put together an integrated training program with the coaching staff to hone the skills of the selected players.

Karachi Kings' Khiladi Ki Khoj programme was launched in 2016. The aim of which is to unearth talented players not only from Karachi but from all over the country and provide them with an opportunity to hone their skills and guide them in their career development.

The PSL 2020 champions will hold a trial, this year too, in order to find talented players.

It is pertinent to mention that the registration window for foreign players has been opened for the upcoming PSL 9.

The upcoming edition of Pakistan's marquee league will tentatively run from 8 February to 24 March.

Notably, the PCB announced last month that the PSL 9 will feature six teams.

The previous edition of the PSL was won by Lahore Qalandars, who defeated Multan Sultans in the final at Gaddafi Stadium to become the first side to clinch two successive PSL titles.

Islamabad United ended the season as third, while Peshawar Zalmi was fourth in the standings, Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators finished fifth and sixth, respectively.

Pakistan squad holds practice session for must-win Bangladesh clash

A Sports

KOLKATA: Pakistan Men's cricket team held a full-strength training session on Monday at the Eden Gardens here ahead of their ICC World Cup 2023 clash against Bangladesh.



According to the details, Pakistan, who are on a four-match losing streak, engaged in a rigorous practice session for a crucial fixture against Bangladesh.

The players partook in several batting, bowling and fielding drills to boost their preparations for their seventh World Cup fixture.

Pakistan is currently in sixth position in the World Cup standings with four points in six matches, with a net run rate of -0.387.

Whereas, Bangladesh currently hold the ninth spot in the standings with two points in six matches.

Watch ICC World Cup 2023 Live on ARY ZAP. In their previous ICC World Cup 2023 fixture, Pakistan suffered a narrow one-wicket defeat against South Africa.

Set to chase 271, South Africa's number nine Keshav Maharaj scored the winning boundary off Mohammad Nawaz on the second delivery of the 48th over.

Aiden Markram top-scored for South Africa in a tricky run chase with a gutsy 91 in 93 deliveries, laced up with seven boundaries and three sixes.

Hard-hitting batter David Miller was the other notable run-getter for the Proteas with a 33-ball 29. Shaheen Shah Afridi led the bowling attack for Pakistan with 3/45 while Haris Rauf, Usama Mir and Mohammad Wasim Jr bagged two wickets each.

Pakistan squad for ICC World Cup 2023

Babar Azam (c), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, M Wasim Jnr, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha.

Travelling reserves: Mohammad Haris, Abrar Ahmed, Zaman Khan

Pakistan's remaining ICC World Cup 2023 fixtures

October 31 - vs Bangladesh in Kolkata

November 4 - vs New Zealand Bengaluru (Day match)

November 11 - vs England in Kolkata

The day matches will start at 10:00 am Pakistan Standard Time (PST) while all other matches will be day-night fixtures, starting at 01:30 pm (PST).

Lahore hockey team wins U-16 title at Mini National Hockey Stadium

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Lahore division boys' hockey team thrashed Multan team by 5-0 to clinch U-16 Inter-Division 'Lahore Lahore Aye' Festival Hockey Championship title at the Mini National Hockey Stadium on Monday. M Yaseen scored two goals while M Adeel, Yahya Ali and Abu Sufyan netted one goal each for the champion team.

The third position of U-16 boys' hockey was clinched by Faisalabad which outplayed Bahawalpur by 3-1.

It is worth mentioning that Sports Board Punjab is holding U-16 Inter-Division Hockey Championship as part of 'Lahore Lahore Aye' Festival on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of U-16 Inter-Division Hockey Championship.

Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Divisional Sports Officer Lahore Rana Nadeem Anjum, Divisional Sports Officer Bahawalpur Amir Hameed, Divisional Sports Officer Sahiwal Rauf Bajwa, Deputy Director Sports Chand Parveen, Tehsil Sports Officer Nasir Malik, provincial coaches Razia Malik, Zarina Waqar and Shaista Qaiser and other senior officials were also present on this occasion.

Besides them, PHF Secretary Olympian Rana Mujahid, Olympian Asif Bajwa, Olympian Shahbaz Senior and Olympian Kh Junaid, former captain national women hockey team Rahat Khan and a large number of young hockey players and officials were also present on this occasion.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail awarded the champions trophy to the Lahore captain Ali Sattar. He along with PHF Secretary Olympian Rana Mujahid, Olympian

Asif Bajwa, Olympian Shahbaz Senior and Olympian Kh Junaid, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Divisional Sports Officer Lahore Rana Nadeem Anjum also distributed medals among the top players.

Later, all the top position holder teams had group photographs with Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail and other guests.

Talking on this occasion, Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said it is a nice feeling to have great Olympians over here at the closing ceremony. "The presence of hockey greats is definitely a great motivation for young male and female hockey players".

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that the holding of U-16 Inter-Division Hockey and Mat Wrestling Championship is just a beginning. "Sports Board Punjab will hold U-16 championships of two games every month under SBP's

2-year Annual Sports Calendar".

Olympian Rana Mujahid, Olympian Asif Bajwa, Olympian Shahbaz Senior and Olympian Kh Junaid highly appreciated the initiative of Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail to hold U-16 championships of two games every month. "It is the right and suitable manner to find talented players in every game and certainly Pakistan can regain its lost glory through this valuable strategy," they said.

Talking to media on this occasion, Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail lauded the exceptional talent of young male and female hockey players. He congratulated team managements including all divisional sports officers for selecting their teams on merit.

"The cities like Faisalabad and Gojra always considered on top when it comes to cities with immense hockey talent but this time cities like Bahawalpur, Multan and Gujranwala also



presented top quality hockey throughout the tournament," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail also congratulated the title winning male and female hockey teams and said that it is their hard work and professional game that earned them coveted SBP Talent Hunt U-16 Inter-Division Hockey Championship titles. "Sports Board Punjab will continue to

take effective steps to revive the game of hockey among youth".

On the girls side, Bahawalpur division girls' hockey team stunned the Lahore team by 3-1 in the final of U-16 Inter-Division Hockey Championship. The third position went to Faisalabad team which toppled Sardogha by 3-0 at the same venue.

DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail was also introduced to the players of both the teams before

the final match. A large number of sports officials and players were also present on the occasion.

In the girls' hockey final, Bahawalpur girls demonstrated wonderful command of the proceedings right from the beginning. Bahawalpur skipper Sobia Afzal gave her team a 2-0 lead through field goals scored in 19th and 23rd minute.

Lahore's Mehek reduced the lead in the 46th minute when she struck a nice field goal. However, Javeria Raheem netted another field goal for Bahawalpur in 58th minute to complete her team's comprehensive victory.

In the 3rd/4th position match, Faisalabad girls' team did not give any room to Sardogha to settle down, winning their lope-sided match by 3-0 goals. Captain of Faisalabad girls' team Shanayz Murad netted two field goals in 18th and 26th minutes while the third goal was contributed by Farwa Haider in 48th minute.

New era

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing during an event on the Spirit of female entrepreneurship and Medical Leadership of female doctors organized by Sehat Kahani on Monday.



Photo: PID

President for promoting tele-medicine and tele-health services in Pakistan

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for promoting tele-medicine and tele-healthcare platforms to improve the outreach of healthcare services to low-income areas of the country. He said that digital platforms could enhance the reach of health services to far-flung areas, besides providing timely advice to people and helping promote preventive healthcare solutions in Pakistan.

The President made these remarks while addressing a ceremony titled "Spirit of Female Entrepreneurship and Medical Leadership of Female Doctors" organised by Sehat

Kahani, in Karachi. Sehat Kahani's CEO, Sara Saeed Khurram, COO & Co-founder of Sehat Kahani, Dr Iffat Zafar, and other medical professionals working in the field of tele-healthcare services attended the event.

Addressing the event, the President said that nations failed due to lack of education and health facilities, adding that Pakistan needed to focus more on disease-prevention rather than curing the diseases. He also regretted that 28 million children were out of the school in the country.

The President highlighted that women in our country faced different hurdles in society towards their participa-

tion in mainstream economic activities. He stressed the role of institutions in creating greater opportunities to empower and educate women.

President Dr Arif Alvi appreciated Sehat Kahani's active role in transforming the society with better opportunities for female doctors. He also acknowledged Sehat Kahani's role for providing a pathway for women to serve their country, besides lauding their focus on tele-medicine and tele-health care services.

The President said that communication was the key to bringing betterment to society. He also emphasized initiating conversations at home as a step towards the solutions

of issues such as mental health and well-being and other health related issues.

He said that the government launched a helpline through an application titled 'Hamraaz' to meet the challenge of mental health and the people, who were facing mental illness or any depression condition could use it. He said that Hamraaz was launched during the tenure of the previous government.

The President also presented shields to the doctors in the field of medicine, from various specialisations, serving all across Pakistan for their exceptional work and dedication to the field of medicine. Sehat Kahani CEO and

co-founder, Dr Sara Saeed Khurram, celebrating the remarkable achievements of Female Entrepreneurship and Medical Leadership of Female Doctors, said that Sehat Kahani was started to provide female doctors with the opportunity to serve their country. She said that Sehat Kahani—the digital healthcare organisation—not only connected patients to the doctors in Pakistan using its app but also had e-clinics nationwide serving underserved communities. The platform provides individual consultations, corporate and mental health solutions, online diagnostics, and e-pharmacy, she added.

Gaza escalation: Senate condemns Israel's brutalities, calls for immediate ceasefire

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday expressed concerns over Israel's atrocities against innocent people of Palestine, urging for immediate ceasefire and providing essential humanitarian aid to alleviate their suffering.

Senate's special session was requisitioned to debate the current situation in Palestine and the House started debate on a motion under rule 218 which was jointly moved by Senators of all political parties in the House.

The motion condemned the Israeli atrocities and aggressive actions against the innocent Palestinians and willing violation of Geneva Convention and UN Resolution on Palestine, and especially barbaric Israeli airstrikes on Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza hence hundreds of innocent people, patients and

Hospital staff were died.

The House reiterated the necessity for international bodies to uphold justice and support the establishment of a free Palestine. It also reiterated the government of Pakistan to describe efforts made by Pakistan in this scenario.

Taking part in debate, Leader of the House Senator Ishaq Dar brought attention to the urgent Gaza issue, underscoring his proactive efforts to address the matter.

He revealed that he had dispatched a letter on October 19, advocating for a Senate session dedicated to the Gaza crisis.

The Senator emphasised the pressing need for immediate action, urging all stakeholders, including the United Nations and other international agencies, to actively engage in resolving the conflict and supporting the people of



Palestine.

Highlighting the escalating humanitarian crisis, he stressed the importance of granting the people of Palestine the fundamental right to live in peace within an independent state.

Expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause, Senator Dar condemned the relentless Israeli bombing, which had led

to the tragic loss of over 8,000 lives, predominantly comprising innocent children and women.

He lamented the recent bombing on a hospital, resulting in the devastating loss of more than 500 individuals, including patients and medical staff, calling it a stark violation of humanitarian norms.

In response, Leader of the Opposition, Dr Shahzad Waseem emphasised Pakistan's deep historical and religious affiliation with Palestine, condemning the atrocities committed against the innocent Palestinian populace.

He echoed the sentiments of the global community, emphasizing the need for unrestricted protests, both within Pakistan and abroad, to highlight the gravity of the situation.

Senator Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani denounced the dual standards employed by certain Western powers, urging for concerted international efforts to achieve an unconditional ceasefire and establish a complete independent Palestinian state.

He criticised the increase in US funding to Israel despite the continued atrocities, highlighting the need for a more balanced and principled approach to the conflict.

Minister calls for collective action to pressing climate change challenges

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik has stressed the need for collective efforts to address the challenges of climate change, water security, and food security in Pakistan.

"Citizens must take steps to protect water resources to achieve sustainable development," the minister said while addressing participants of a Pre-COP 28 conference on "Accelerating the Water-Food-Climate Nexus Transformation Pathways for Pakistan" organised by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in Islamabad on Monday.

He mentioned that efforts were underway to implement laser land leveling technology to minimise water usage in irrigation while also promoting water safety. He also emphasized the need to raise public awareness about the significance of water and its safety.



Mark Smith, Director General of IWMI, pointed out that although Pakistan only accounts for a negligible share of global emissions, the country bears a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change.

In his inaugural address, Dr Mark identified that although Pakistan is responsible for less than 1% of the world's planet-warming gases, it is still ranked as the eighth most vulnerable country to the climate crisis. He explained

that around 92% of Pakistan is classified as semi-arid to arid, and most of the population relies on limited water resources from rivers and aquifers.

On the occasion, British High Commissioner Jane Marriott OBE emphasized the importance of implementing climate resilience strategies in Pakistan, which is considered one of the topmost climate-vulnerable countries and ranks 32nd in preparedness.

She mentioned that the

UK will invest in AI-powered solutions to tackle climate change in Pakistan, where Lahore has been declared the most polluted city and Pakistan ranks third among countries battling this issue.

Ms. Danielle Cashen, Deputy High Commissioner of the Australian High Commission, stated that Pakistan is facing severe water scarcity. By 2025, only 36% of the population will have access to safely managed water and only 1% of wastewater will be treated.

"Australia and Pakistan work together on agriculture within water scarce and salinity affected landscapes. Together we investigate adaptation strategies and tools with communities and farmers to provide transparent & consistent seasonal water allocation within the Indus Basin," she added.

Poland's Ambassador Maciej Pisarski, at the event, stressed the importance of focusing on issues that matter to both Poland and Paki-

stan to expand cooperation between the two countries. He suggested that addressing climate change together could provide a multitude of opportunities for collaboration.

On the occasion, Kate Somvongsiri, Mission Director for USAID, stated that addressing climate change is a global challenge that requires building linkages across populations, geographies, organizations, and sectors. She emphasized that the US government is committed to this approach.

While concluding the conference, Dr Mohsin Hafeez, Director IWMI, said climate change poses a significant threat to our water, food, energy, and environmental systems. Unfortunately, the way our government departments and provinces are utilizing water resources is inadequate to tackle Pakistan's complex range of challenges. Hence, we must improve governance in all sectors to overcome these challenges.

Privatization Minister holds meeting with potential FAs for PIACL

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hassan Fawad on Monday held a meeting with potential financial advisors of Pakistan International Airlines Company (PIACL) transaction.

As many as 46 participants from local and international advisory firms attended the meeting online and in person, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Privatisation.

The minister responded to questions and queries of the participants on various aspects of PIA financial advisory RFP such as the financial and organizational restructuring of PIA, divestment timeframe, data availability and provision to successful bidders.

The minister was accompanied by Secretary Privatisation Division, Secretary Privatisation Commission, DG and consultants.

Earlier, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved a Rs. 8 billion bridge financing package for Pakistan Inter-



national Airlines (PIA).

The financing will be provided through the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) resources to meet PIA's urgent overdue payment obligations.

The ECC allowed the Aviation Division to proceed with the bilateral arrangement between the CAA and PIA.

The Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over the meeting, according to news statement issued by the finance ministry.

The Aviation Division submitted a proposal for provision of financial support to PIACL through the Civil Aviation Authority for certain emergent needs of the airline.

Significant Amendments to Market Treasury Bills, 1998, & Ijara Sukuk Rules, 2008

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In response to the increasing demands of financial market in general and Islamic financial institutions in particular for introducing new instruments, the Finance Division moved a summary for the Cabinet for amendment in the existing Government of Pakistan Market Treasury Bills 1998 and Government of Pakistan Ijara Sukuk Rules 2008.

In a landmark decision, the Federal Cabinet has granted its approval to the summary presented by the Ministry of Finance, leading to substantial amendments to the subject legal instruments.

These amendments are aimed at enhancing the efficiency and provide flexibility for issuance, registration, trading and transfer of Government Securities through any institution.

The implementation of these rules will not only make the participation in Government securities auctions/

issuance simpler but will also expand the investor base. It is also expected that these amendments will help in reducing the cost of borrowing as the greater diversification will significantly enhance the subscription in government securities.

These amendments will also enable the Government to launch its securities through other Capital Market Institutions including Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Central Depository Company (CDC) and National Clearing Company Pakistan Limited (NCCPL), which will bring more transparency and accessibility for investors, aligning with global best practices.

The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will ensure the effective implementation of these amendments. The changes are expected to have a positive impact on Pakistan's financial markets and contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

General elections: ECP takes major decision on FBR's request

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken a major decision on the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) request regarding the upcoming general elections.

The FBR spokesperson said that the ECP exempted all Federal Board of Revenue employees from duties in the upcoming general elections.

The board had made a formal request to the commission for



exempting its employees from election duties. The ECP approved the request and exempted all FBR workers from election duties. The FBR headquarters informed all chief commissioners and field offices regarding the ECP's decision.

Power companies seek nod to charge Rs22.56b from consumers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The power distribution companies (DISCOs) sought NEpra's nod to receive 'capacity', 'use of system' and other charges worth Rs22.56 billion from electricity consumers excluding K-Electric.

Preparations have been started to increase the financial burden on the electricity consumers as the DISCOs lodged a request to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for 'capacity', 'use of system' and other charges in the first quarterly adjustment of the current fiscal year.

The NEPRA will conduct the hearing on DISCOs' plea on November 14.

The power companies sought NEPRA's nod to receive over Rs12.12

billion from consumers in terms of capacity charges and more than Rs10.24 in 'use of system' charges.

According to the NEPRA, the power firms also sought permission to receive operation and maintenance charges worth Rs4.61 billion and Rs6.61 billion in terms of losses.

Additionally, the firms requested to increase financial burden on Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) consumers worth Rs10.3 billion, Rs4.18 billion on Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and Rs5.54 billion on Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO).

