



Oman to Celebrate 53rd National Day today

The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate the 53rd glorious National Day this Saturday, 18 November 2023, marking milestone accomplishments made in all aspects of life under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. The Royal speech of His Majesty the Sultan at the opening of the first annual sitting of the 8th term of the Council of Oman... (Details on Page 5)



Poster Exhibition to highlight Palestine's struggle for right to self-determination

Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah and Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan His Excellency Dr. Reza Amir Moghadam on Friday inaugurated a three-day Poster Exhibition with theme Palestine: Oppression, Resistance, Victory here at Lok Vira Art Gallery. The exhibition was organized by Cultural Consulate Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Islamic scholars attend a meeting with COAS Munir at GHQ on November 17.



Photo: Courtesy ISPR

Islamic Scholars, COAS call for tolerance, moderation in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Leading Islamic Scholars (Ulema o Mashaiikh) of all schools of thought interacted with General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

Ulema and Mashaiikh unanimously condemned extremism, terrorism and sectarianism and pledged their continued support for untiring efforts of State and security forces for bringing tolerance, peace and stability in the country. They underscored that Islam is a religion of peace and harmony and any skewed and distorted interpretations of religion by certain entities is for their vested interests only and has nothing to do with Islamic teachings.

COAS while lauding 'Paigham-e-Pakistan' Fatwa by religious scholars to nullify misleading propaganda disseminated by extremists and terrorists called upon Ulema o Mashaiikh for its propagation and implementation in letter and spirit and shun internal schisms.

COAS signified the role of Ulema in harnessing youth towards understanding of Quran and Sunnah and character building alongside other

academic knowledge and technical skills.

COAS said that, there is no space for intolerance and extreme behavior by any entity against anyone, particularly against minorities and vulnerable segments of the society.

The forum unanimously supported Government's measures to harden the State including repatriation of illegal foreigners, implementation of One Document Regime, anti-smuggling and hoarding measures and anti-power theft drive. It also fully acknowledged Pakistan's position and concerns on terrorism emanating from Afghan soil and urged serious actions by Afghanistan to address Pakistan's concerns.

The forum also expressed anguish on the ongoing conflict in Gaza and atrocities being committed against hapless people of Gaza and termed them as crimes against humanity.

"Pakistan belongs to all Pakistanis without any religious, provincial, tribal, linguistic, ethnic, sectarian or any other distinction. Use of force and armed action by any militia, entity or group other than State is unacceptable", COAS concluded.

Caretaker setup to remain impartial, ensure free & fair elections: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday, reiterating the government's resolve to fulfill its duty of ensuring free, fair and transparent elections, said the caretaker setup would remain fully impartial. Dispelling the impression that a certain political party was being favoured by the caretakers, he said the political parties normally tried to attract their voters in different ways and such allegations might be their tactics.

"We are fully focused on holding the elections in a free, fair and transparent manner and are fully supporting the Election Commission for the purpose," he added PM Kakar, in an interview with a private news channel (Sun News), also denied the impression that his cabinet member Fawad Hassan Fawad, had affiliation with a certain political party.

"He is one of the best cabinet members and an able former bureaucrat. Due to his talent and abilities, he used to become a

favorite choice of every ruling party during his service." He said Fawad was fully justifying his appointment as Minister for Privatization. The caretaker government would hopefully succeed in achieving the set target of privatization of state-owned enterprises at the its tenure due to his untiring efforts, he added.

As regards the recent depreciation of rupee against dollar, the prime minister said due to the government's actions, the artificial demand for the dollar had significantly reduced and now the rupee value was being adjusted according to the actual demand and supply of the greenback.

He expressed his satisfaction that the country's economy had now almost become stable.

Pakistan had also reached the staff level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he added.

"We have achieved our target of 'economic health' which was a very big challenge for the caretaker setup," he remarked.

To a question, PM Kakar maintained



that it was for the courts to decide about the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

The caretaker government would be bound to follow court orders regarding the PTI chairman's participation in the elections, he added.

To another question, he said the state would not, in any case, allow any group or party to resort to mob violence in the country.

With respect to the prevailing situation in Gaza and the West Bank, the prime minister said the recent emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) gave a unanimous strong message with collective wisdom to ensure ceasefire

in Palestine that would hopefully be implemented soon. He said Israel was committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza had rather become a humanitarian issue as millions of people in Europe and rest of the world, belonging to different faiths and religions, were on the roads in protest.

As regards the relations between China and the United States, the prime minister said both the countries were economic powers and they had opted the right choice of engaging each other. Pakistan could neither remain in isolation nor choose any bloc.

There were many countries like Pakistan which were closely related to China and had also good relations with the US.

To a question about the repatriation of illegal Afghan immigrants, the prime minister clarified that there was no outside pressure in the matter.

"Afghanistan or Afghans are not our enemies as we have centuries old good brotherly relations," he said.

Gaza communications down as Israel searches main hospital

AFP

GAZA: Israeli troops carried out building-by-building searches at Gaza's main hospital, as a new communications blackout in the territory on Friday compounded fears for Palestinian civilians trapped inside the facility.

Al-Shifa hospital has become a focal point for Israeli operations in northern Gaza since soldiers raided the complex on Wednesday, hunting for a command centre they say militant group Hamas operates there.

Hamas and hospital managers deny that charge, and there has been international concern about several thousand people — including wounded patients and premature babies — believed to be trapped inside.

Israel's air bombardment and ground operation has killed 11,500 people, including thousands of children, according to Hamas-run local authorities in Gaza.

Israeli authorities have defended their operation, and the military said Thursday it found rifles, ammunition, explosives and the entrance to a tunnel shaft at Al-Shifa.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Netanyahu alleged hostages may even have been held at the medical facility.

"We had strong indications that they were held in the Shifa Hospital, which is one of the reasons we entered the hospital," he told "CBS Evening News".

"If they were [there], they were taken out," he said.

Allegations about the hospital have not been verified, and on Friday communications with the Gaza Strip were severed once again.

Network provider Paltel group said all telecommunication services were down because "all energy sources sustaining the network have been depleted, and fuel was not allowed in".

The UN warned that the blackout would compound the misery of civilians, complicating efforts to distribute aid and possibly triggering looting of its supplies.

"When you have a blackout and you cannot communicate with anyone anymore... that triggers and fuels even more the anxiety and the panic," said Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA.

"Immediate possibility of starvation" Israel said its forces were searching Al-Shifa "one building at a time," and announced the discovery of the body of a woman hostage at a building nearby.

Yehudit Weiss, 65, was kidnapped from her home in the border kibbutz community of Beeri, one of the areas worst-hit by the brutal Hamas assault.

Her husband was killed in the attack, a hostage support group said.

On Thursday, Jews and Arabs came together for the funeral of another casualty of the Beeri attack — peace activist Vivian Silver, who was hailed as an "extraordinary woman".

Negotiations are ongoing for the release of the hostages, some of them just infants, in exchange for a pause in fighting.

Qatar, where Hamas has political offices, and Egypt have been mediating what Egypt's foreign minister described Thursday as "very delicate" discussions.

Govt challenges SC military court order

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Defence has filed intra-court appeal challenging the Supreme Court's October 23 judgement, declaring as unconstitutional the trial of May 9 rioters in military courts.

On October 23, the Supreme Court (SC) announced its verdict by 4-1 in pleas against civilian trials in the military courts. The PTI chairman and others moved the top court challenging the military trial of civilians named in the May 9 riots triggered by the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The bench, led by Justice Ijazul Ahsan and including Justice Mumib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyid Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik heard the petitions that had challenged the trial of civilians in the military courts. The petitioner appealed to the apex court to declare the five-judge bench's order null and void, as well as grant a stay on the implementation of the order till this appeal is decided.

The latest petition comes a day after the caretaker Sindh government challenged the Supreme Court's decision against trials of civilians in the military courts.

The plea moved by the Sindh government has stated that 'SC did not review the law and circumstances.'

Earlier, the federal government informed the Supreme Court that military courts have initiated trials of civilians.

President phones families of army soldiers martyred in terror incidents

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday telephoned the family members of the soldiers of the Pakistan Armed Forces who were martyred in different terrorist incidents.

The president held telephonic interactions with the families of the soldiers martyred in the attacks that took place on November 6, and October 18 and 29 respectively in different parts of the country.

The president paid tribute on behalf of the whole nation to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country.

"The whole nation owes to the families of the martyrs for sacrificing their dear ones for the homeland," he remarked.

President Alvi phoned the family of Lt Col Muhammad Hassan Haider, who was martyred in an attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on November 6.

He interacted with the fami-



lies of Naik Khushdil Khan, Lance Naik Abdul Qader Khan and Rafeeq Khan.

He also telephoned the family members of Naib Subedar Asif Imran and Sepoy Irfan Ali, who embraced martyrdom in Awaran district of Balochistan on October 29.

He also spoke to the family members of Sepoy Farman Ali, who sacrificed his life in an attack on October 18 in South Waziristan.

President Alvi sympathised with the families and prayed for patience to them and the elevation of ranks of the martyrs in paradise.

US Ambassador Donald Blome visits at South Punjab Secretariat and meet with officials

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The US Ambassador in Pakistan Donald Blome visited South Punjab Secretariat and met Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar.

Consul General Ms. Christin Hawkins, Public Diplomacy Officer Karl Rogers, Economic Officer Douglas Justin, Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel, Secretary Primary and Secondary Health Maher Muhammad Hayat Lak, Secretary Services Engineer Amjad Shoaib Khan Tareen and Secretary Specialized Healthcare Afzal Nasir Khan were also present in the meeting. The Additional Chief Secretary briefed US Ambassador about the profile, issues, history and culture of South Punjab and the objectives of establishing the South Punjab Secretariat. He told that the establishment of the Secretariat has accel-

erated the pace of development in the region but still there was a long way to go. He said efforts are on to increase the standard of living and literacy rate of the people and to eradicate poverty. Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar said South Punjab is an important region in terms of food security and measures to increase agricultural production are yielding excellent results. He said South Punjab has vast potential in agriculture and livestock sector. The Additional Chief Secretary said launch of Green Book in schools on climate change and establishment of transgender schools are distinctive initiatives of the Secretariat. He holding of School Olympics games among schools has gained a lot of acceptance and it has become a very popular event in the region. Captain (Rtd) Saqib Zafar also told about the first rowing competition in the history of South Punjab held in Bahawalpur and said next boating

competition will be held at the level of Punjab Province. He informed that a plan has been drawn up to restore the historic forts located in Cholistan to their original shape. Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar also briefed about the Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally and Thal Jeep Rally.

American Ambassador Donald Blome declared the launch of Green Book about climate change in schools and the establishment of transgender schools as a wonderful initiatives. He said

Climate change and food security are international issues and collective efforts are required to overcome on these issues. He further said Pakistan has the capacity to meet the food needs of the world. The American Ambassador expressed his happiness on visiting the historic city of Multan and thanked the administration for hospitality.

On this occasion, Secretary Agri-



culture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel gave a detailed briefing about the steps taken in the agriculture sector. The Additional Chief Secretary also presented a commemorative shield to the US Ambassador.

ISSI Concludes MoU on Cooperation with South Africa's Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

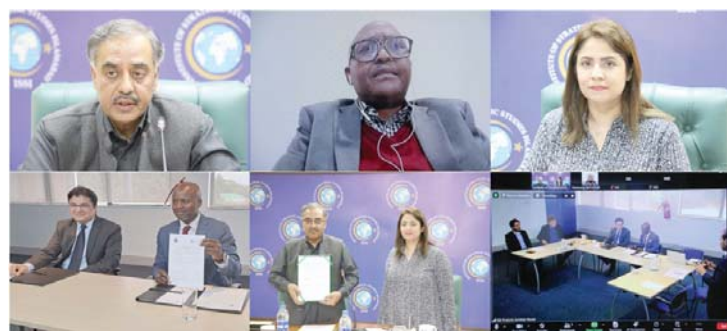
Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A virtual ceremony took place today to sign a MoU on cooperation between the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), South Africa, which was facilitated by the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA). The ISSI was represented by its Director General, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and Ms Amina Khan, Director, CAMEA.

The ISS was represented by its Executive Director, Dr. Fonteh Akum and Dr. Piers Pigou, Head of Southern African Program at ISS.

The MoU signing ceremony was also attended by H. E. Aftab Hassan Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to South Africa; and H. E. Mthuzuzeli Madikiza, High Commissioner of South Africa to Pakistan.

Director CAMEA Amina Khan, while giving introductory remarks, stated that the signing of the MoU was a reflection of warmth and desire on both sides to expand the scope of bilateral interaction. She hoped that the MoU would help further the relationship between Pakistan and South Africa, through institutional linkages for collaborative research and dialogue on issues of mutual interest.



Welcoming the conclusion of the MoU, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted that ISSI highly values its relationship with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) which had long focused on vital issues such as human security. He added that the concept of comprehensive security with human security at its core had been embedded in Pakistan's national security policy. Amb. Sohail Mahmood emphasized that this MoU would not only strengthen institutional linkages between the two think-tanks but also contribute to enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. He recalled that ISSI had the proud privilege and honour of hosting iconic South African statesmen Nelson Mandela during one of his visits to Pakistan.

'Engage Africa' Policy, as vast opportunities continued to emerge in various domains.

The ISSI's Executive Director, Dr. Fonteh Akum, emphasized the crucial importance of the friendly ties between Pakistan and South Africa, considering them as vital countries in their respective regions. He highlighted the longstanding history of solidarity between the two nations. Stressing the significance of such linkages, Dr. Akum mentioned that this relationship will enhance engagement between Pakistan and Africa at a higher level, fostering policy debates within the circle. Regarding the MoU, he said that it will play a key role in comprehending the various areas of importance for both Pakistan and Africa as a whole.

High Commissioner of Pakistan to South Africa, H. E. Aftab Hassan Khan, noted that diplomatic ties between Pakistan and South Africa were established in 1994. Highlighting the historical significance, he mentioned that Nelson Mandela visited Pakistan in 1992, emphasizing the importance of the relationship between the two nations. He pointed out that both Pakistan and South Africa are pivotal countries with untapped potential in various domains that requires exploration.

High Commissioner of South Africa to Pakistan, H. E. Mthuzuzeli Madikiza, remarked that the MoU is a significant step forward. He emphasized that the MoU will facilitate the establishment of diverse linkages and cooperation between the two institutions. This, in turn, will enable both sides to achieve improved interaction and fruitful cooperation through the exchange of knowledge, people-to-people exchanges, business-to-business collaborations, and government-to-government consultations. High Commissioner Madikiza expressed optimism about the positive impact of this MoU, highlighting its role in fostering greater understanding and collaboration between South Africa and Pakistan.

Sindh Adbi Board confirms 16 employees promoted to 18th grade

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: 16 employees have been promoted to the 18th grade in Sindh Adbi Board contrary to the rules and regulations. According to the ongoing list of promotions by Sindh Adbi Board, some employees were given direct 18th grade from 16th grade and one employee was given 18th grade immediately from 14th grade. Among those who promoted in grade 18 are Ayaz Hussain Soomro, Ghulam Haider Kachhi, Muhammad Raheem, Samina Memon, Najma Panhwar, Pir Ali Muhammad, Saleem Akhtar Pirzada, Khizr Khan Vighio, Abdul Samad and Mir Ali Shah of grade 17. While 16th grade Mian Jaam Supar, Gulbano Mirza, Gibran Zaib and Niaz Muhammad were also promoted to 18th grade.

Mirza Dabir Hussain Baig was awarded directly from 14th grade to 18th grade. Writers of Sindh have expressed their concern and demanded an investigation.

Wazir tribe & traders protest regarding facilities at Angoor Adda border

Adam Khan Wazir



WANA: At Pak Afghan border Angoor Adda gate, four major tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir held a Jirga and protest on Friday, about the suspension of trade at the gate and all other legitimate demands.

It was unanimously decided in the Jirga that from 4 o'clock today, the traffic of vehicles from both sides will be stopped at Angoor Adda Gate in protest.

Apart from Zali Khel, Toji Khel, Gangi Khel and Khojal Khel, tribe all political parties, Wana councilor alliance, business community, trade union participated in the protest in large numbers.

On this occasion Malik Muhammad Umar Wazir, VC Chairman Angoor Adda Maulana Muhammad Sharif, Maulana Tasbih Ullah, National Democratic Movement South Waziristan Lower Said Muhammad Wazir, Wana Councilors alliance President Sahib Khan Wazir, and Malik Bobrai Wazir said.

That last year unanimously presented 18 demands to the local authorities and the authorities assured to resolve them soon and but it has not been resolved still date.

Malik Bobrai announced that all entrances and exits of Wana Angoor Adda Bazar will be closed from today, and also made it clear that Angoor Adda Customs office will be closed in protest.

There will be no public relations with government officials, in case of violation, a fine of 50,000 will be imposed.

A committee consisting of 200 people was formed by the protesters. The protesters presented 18 demands to the government through the media, which are as follows.

Functional all government educational institutions in Angoor Adda and steps should be taken to make health centers functional within 15 days.

Web-based App for Bilingual Idioms and Proverbs launched at AIOU



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) marked a significant milestone with the inauguration of its innovative Web-based App for Bilingual Idioms and Proverbs. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, presided over the launch ceremony while Deans, Directors, and principal officers of the university were also present at the event.

During his inaugural speech, Dr. Nasir Mahmood highlighted the crucial role that technology plays in promoting linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. He stressed that the younger generation cannot be complete without technology, and this web-based app will help facilitate language learning for them. This app shows the university's commitment to promote linguistic diversity and technological innovation in the field of education. He also commended the efforts of the Center for Languages and Translation Studies (CeLTS) for this groundbreaking initiative.

Earlier, Director CeLTS, Dr. Ghulam and Dr. Lubna Umer gave a detailed presentation on the importance, need and usefulness of this app. They said that this app will serve as an educational tool and machine learning for the conservation of endangered languages. This initiative is an invaluable asset for researchers and language learners. Vice Chancellor announced the coming year as a celebration as AIOU will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. He also unveiled the Golden Jubilee logo.

Polio eradication is a national duty' Commissioner Dera

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A meeting of the Divisional Task Force for Anti-Polio was held on Friday under the chairmanship of Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Zafarul Islam.

In which Regional Police Officer Dera Range Nasir Mehmood Satti, Deputy Commissioners of various districts, District Health Officers including, Police, EPI, Local Government officials, N-Stop Officers, WHO and other relevant departments participated.



Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Zafarul Islam presided over the meeting online, during which the Commissioner was given a briefing regarding the anti-polio measures and the security situation. On which the commissioner issued instructions and said that anti-polio is a national duty, therefore, all the concerned

departments should perform their duties diligently while negligence or negligence will not be tolerated in any case.

He directed the police department to ensure the security of the anti-polio teams in every way, so that they don't face any problem in paying their duties.

He further directed that during every anti-polio campaign, not only goals should be achieved, rather, maximum refusal coverage should be attempted, so that no child is deprived of anti-polio drops and suffers lifelong disability.

SCO promotes the idea of one earth, one family, and one future

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: SCO is considered a lynchpin for regional cooperation to promote creating one earth, family, and future.

Widely recognized for its crucial regional and international role, the SCO addresses significant regional challenges, fosters cooperation among member states, and promotes stability in a complex geopolitical landscape.

The significance of the SCO's outcomes and challenges, with a particular focus on its role in the context of Pakistan and the broader region, has been emphasized by the speakers during the seminar on Post SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting: Outcomes, Challenges, and Opportunities organized by Centre for SCO Studies- Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, Riphah Institute of Public Policy (RIPP), Riphah International University, and Pakistan-SCO Friendship Forum.

Dr. Farhat Asif, President of IPDS, highlighted the institute's impactful



initiatives, including the establishment of the Centre for SCO Studies, Pakistan-SCO Friendship Forum, a SCO-focused diploma course, Pakistan-SCO Business Council, and various other endeavors aimed at advancing Pakistan's interests in the region. Ambassador Ulanbek Totuiaev of the Kyrgyz Republic discussed the

outcomes of the Summit of Heads of Government in Bishkek, shedding light on significant agreements resulting from the recent joint ministerial commission between Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

The ambassador said that both Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are pivotal in promoting the essence of the Shang-

hai Spirit.

Dr. Rashid Aftab, Director of Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, emphasized the institute's achievements and underscored the colossal potential inherent in the 40 percent of the world's population residing in the SCO region.

Dr. Muhammad Munir, Dean of Social Sciences at Muslim Youth University, shared key steps and approvals outlined in the joint communiqué and said that the communiqué had covered all the requirements that are making the SCO a strong regional organization.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Taraq Waheed, Dean of Social Sciences at SZABIST, illuminated the importance and opportunities presented by the SCO.

The event witnessed a substantial turnout of ambassadors, diplomats, and media personnel, further solidifying the SCO's impact in fostering collaboration and understanding on a global scale.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:15 am
Zohr	11:53 am
Asr	3:26 pm
Maghrib	5:04 pm
Isha	6:30 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

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	9203383
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80

Iftikhar Naqvi, demands end Israeli aggression on Palestine



Arif Chaudhary

LONDON: Palestine is bleeding, hospitals have also been targeted. The Supreme Guardian of Inter-religious and Religious Tolerance, Deputy Secretary General Majlis Wahdat al-Muslimin Punjab, Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Naqvi, became the voice of innocent Palestinian children, women, old men and immediately united all Muslim countries. Emphasizing on doing Jihad, he said that Al-Aqsa Mosque is our Qibla and the protection of Bait-ul-Maqdis is our religious, religious and moral duty. We should immediately go to Palestine to help our brothers. The unfortunate Jewish lobby is bent on erasing Palestine from the page by fully supporting Israel. What has happened is that the Gaza Strip hospitals and those carrying aid are being targeted, which is not visible to the Security Council UNO. The religion of saving is to keep the lodge of Islam.

Poster Exhibition to highlight Palestine's struggle for right to self-determination

Jamal Shah and Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam inaugurates Poster Exhibition

Naveed Ahmad Khan
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah and Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan His Excellency Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on Friday inaugurated a three-day Poster Exhibition with theme Palestine: Oppression, Resistance, Victory here at Lok Virsa Art Gallery.



The exhibition was organized by Cultural Consulate Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in collaboration with National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage - Lok Virsa.

Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan H. E. Ramez Alraee, H. E. Mr. Ehsan Khazaei the Cultural Counselor Embassy of Iran, Adviser National Heritage and Culture Division Muhammad Kashif Irshad, Executive Director Lok Virsa Muhammad Uzair Khan were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of exhibition, Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah said the Palestinians are valiant people and they will succeed in their legitimate struggle for right to self-determination.

He said responsibility rests with the world community and the United Nations to play their role in getting stopped the Israeli atrocities against Palestinians.

The Minister for National Heritage regretted that the cowardly Israel is target-

ing armless Palestinians and their schools and hospitals. He said Israeli forces are not even sparing the children.

He said we feel the pain and agony of Palestinian people.

"Pakistan and Iran Supporting the Palestinian cause we express our solidarity the oppress the People of Gaza," he said.

He said that Pakistan does not recognize the state of Israel and has repeatedly called for an independent Palestinian state based on "internationally agreed parameters".

H. E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan expressed his condolences

to the Palestinian nation for the martyrdom of more than ten thousand innocent men, women and children.

"I would like to appreciate the government of Pakistan for the strong positions taken by the high official and different authorities, scholars and other walk of life for supporting the innocent people of Palestine and against the atrocities and genocide committed by the Zionist and fascist regime of Israel", he added.

He said that the fact is that the Zionist regime broke its own records of barbarism, war crimes and genocide.

that the crimes which are committed by the Zionist regime against the civilians from men, women and children of Gaza, is shocking along with the deafening silence of the westerners.

He said that one of the duties of the Muslims world and all the free thinkers round the world should be focused to show to the people of the world what's really happening in Palestine and Gaza.

He said that in the current status quo, the Muslim world should take meaningful and tangible measure in order to first guarantee ceasefire, opening a humanitarian corridor to Gaza, then get united

to exercise due leverages against Zionist regime, and then guarantee the right to defense and the right of self-determination for the original people of Palestine through a free election.

He thanked the organizers of this exhibition, the participants and all those who somehow contributed in holding this event.

Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan H. E. Ramez Alraee, H. E. Mr. Ehsan Khazaei the Cultural Counselor Embassy of Iran and Executive Director Lok Virsa Muhammad Uzair Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Photos by Raja Farid

Book Launching

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia H. E. Mr. Jemal Beker Abdula hosted a Launching Ceremony of a Book Titled: Medemer Generation written by H. E. Mr. Abiy Ahmed Prime Minister of Ethiopia at Ethiopian embassy. Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry Federal Secretary Education & Professional Training, Saudi ambassador H. E. Mr. Nawaf Saeed Al -malkiy, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan -Africa Friendship association, Kenya Ambassador H. E. Ms Mary Nyambura Kamu, Somalia Ambassador H. E. Mr. Shirwa Abdullahi Ibrahim, Portugal Ambassador Mr. Frederico Silva, TRNC ambassador H. E. Ms Dilsad Senol, are cutting ribbon after formal book launch ceremony.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Spotify moderates a dynamic chat with leading artists at +92Disrupt

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: +92Disrupt, a national tech and innovation conference designed to offer startups a comprehensive launchpad and bring together visionaries as well as innovators, recently hosted a captivating panel moderated by Khan FM, Spotify's Artists and Label Partnerships Manager for Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh titled 'Pakistani Tunes

on the Global RADAR'. The star-studded lineup accompanying him during the discussion included prominent artists Natasha Baig, and Maria Unera, both EQUAL Ambassadors designated by Spotify as well as Taha G, the RADAR artist for the last quarter, and Faisal Kapadia, a legend who needs no introduction.

The conversation delved into pivotal aspects of the music industry, shedding

light on Spotify's transformative impact and the collective efforts to shape Pakistan's musical landscape.

In this insightful discussion, Khan FM passionately conveyed Spotify's mission to unlock human creativity, emphasizing the platform's unprecedented support for Pakistani artists. This commitment represents a paradigm shift in the industry, setting new standards and fostering a

thriving creative environment.

On the subject of EQUAL Pakistan, Natasha Baig, the program's Ambassador for July 2022 highlighted the transformative impact of Spotify on Pakistani musicians, expressing gratitude for the platform's global recognition. She emphasized the lack of a proper portal in Pakistan for artists and credited Spotify for giving the lime-light to every artist, regardless of fame.

Al-Shifa documents 1600 incidences of paediatric eye cancer in a single year

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Four hundred children with eye cancer have been successfully treated at the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital in one year.

Every stage, from evaluation to chemotherapy, was carried out under one roof at the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi. This facility is exclusive to it, said Dr. Tanzeela Farah, a paediatric oncologist.

She informed a media team that the eye cancer centre has 1600 youngsters registered and that as more people become aware of the significance of the issue, the number of patients



is rising. She said that Pakistan is seeing an alarming rise in pediatric eye cancer cases when compared to other nations in the area. She said that the occurrence of eye cancer needs early

ure to consult an expert, most eye cancer patients may suffer vision loss or loss of an eye, or it may prove fatal in some cases.

She added that the treatment of eye cancer is a lengthy and very costly process. Still, Al-Shifa is determined to treat poor patients free of charge with the help of experts and the latest apparatus.

After chemotherapy, follow-up sessions continue every six months; the patients are observed for 5 to 7 years, she said, adding that eye cancer is sometimes diagnosed at birth and that we are fully equipped to treat children from zero to 15 years old.

Dr Tanzeela Farah said that most of the children who have eye cancer belong to low-income families living in remote areas, and their parents are unaware of the specialised facilities needed to provide proper treatment. The eye cancer needs more time and effort to be treated, she said.

It is pertinent to mention that Al-Shifa Trust has set up a chain of five eye hospitals of international standard in the last three decades, including those in Rawalpindi, Kohat, Sukkur, Muzaffarabad, and Chakwal. Al-Shifa Rawalpindi is Asia's biggest children's eye hospital.

VC AIOU shares vision, roadmap for next four years

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, after assuming the charge of office, shared his vision and roadmap for the university's development over the next four years. During a welcome reception given by the principal officers, he highlighted the need to revise the current curriculum and add new courses to meet the requirements of the modern job market. He also emphasized the importance of establishing new departments to cater to the students' evolving needs.

Dr. Nasir added that we will work together to strengthen the university financially. He added that the former vice-chancellors rendered valuable services to bring AIOU to its present proud position and we will strive hard to improve them further. The Vice-Chancellor said that increasing student facilities and enrollment, faculty development, promotion of research culture and welfare of employees are priorities.

VCAIOU stated that his office is always open for teachers and staff to approach him with their problems. Four deans and principal officers of the university welcomed the appointment of Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and assured him of their full support. In addition to this, a web-based app of bilingual proverbs and idioms, as well as the Golden Jubilee logo of AIOU, were also launched on the occasion.

LHC stops authorities from taking adverse action against Eighteen

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Eighteen (Elite Estate Pvt Ltd) filed two writ petitions against the Punjab Revenue Authority and its relevant officers for taking unlawful action against Eighteen and alleging Eighteen of tax fraud.

Eighteen, in its petitions, maintained that the action by Punjab Revenue Authority is a clear violation of its own notification passed by Punjab Revenue Authority on 10-05-2016. The said notification states that all officials working in enforcement or audit, not below the rank of assistant commissioner can exercise powers and carry out functions to have full access to any business premises. However, in violation of their own official notification, the officers and assistants involved in the raid of the Eighteen premises were unauthorized, as per the gazetted notification.

The Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court in its order, and whilst relying on judgements of the superior courts that recognize the importance of ease of doing business and foreign direct investment in the country, directed the PRA to refrain from any adverse action against the petitioner till the next date of hearing and issued notices to the respondents, including the Government of Punjab through its Secretary Finance, Chairperson PRA, Commissioner, additional commissioner Rawalpindi, enforcement officer and audit cum risk compliance officers of the Punjab Revenue Authority.

The next hearing of the case will be held on 20-11-2023.

World Bank tells Government of Pakistan to bring Taxes on Cigarettes upto 0.4% of GDP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Health Advocates have called for immediate implementation of the recent recommendation by the World Bank for an increase in the federal excise duty (FED) on cigarettes. In a press release shared by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), health advocates emphasized that implementation of this recommendation will ensure a healthier and more prosperous future for Pakistan's youth.



Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Director, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK) said in its latest report titled 'Pakistan Development Update', the World Bank highlighted that a significant revenue gain of 0.4 percent of GDP could be achieved by applying the current rate on premium cigarettes (Rs. 16.50 per cigarette) to standard cigarettes as well. The report underscores the potential for economic and health benefits through this measure.

The federal excise duty collection on cigarettes in Pakistan is currently below its potential, contributing only 0.5 percent of GDP in revenue during FY21. Cigarette taxation, representing 0.19 percent of GDP, has remained relatively stable in recent years.

Imran added that aligning cigarette taxation with the World Bank's recommendation is a crucial step toward safeguarding the health and well-being of Pakistan's children. Higher excise duty on cigarettes not only deters smoking but also generates much-needed revenue for essential public services.

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Bestowing of PhD Degrees

A few days ago, the Governor of Punjab awarded two honorary PhD degrees at the ceremony of Islamia University Bahawalpur, which is well discussed on social media.

Firstly, it's clear that we don't harbor envy for those obtaining honorary degrees, as the recipient is likely pleased. However, such accolades neither enhance one's educational standard nor add to their awareness or capabilities. The practice of awarding honorary PhD degrees in Pakistan has persisted for an extended period. Generally, it is employed by authorities and political leaders to confer an academic and educational status upon themselves. There are no explicit guidelines or standards for granting honorary PhD degrees. These degrees can be bestowed upon anyone, regardless of whether they possess professional qualifications in education or not. Bestowing honorary PhD degrees in Pakistan has several advantages:

Firstly, these degrees assist authorities and political leaders in bolstering their image. Secondly, they aid in presenting them as knowledgeable and educated peoples at the international level. However, there are also drawbacks to awarding honorary PhD degrees. Firstly, it may diminish the importance of education. Secondly, it can compromise the standard of academic degrees.

Criticism is directed towards the trend of awarding honorary PhD degrees in Pakistan. Some argue that it is unacceptable and that these degrees are solely used for political purposes. To curb the trend of honorary PhD degrees, measures can

be taken. One approach is to establish clear guidelines and standards for awarding such degrees. Another option is to reduce the number of honorary PhD degrees conferred. The prevalence of honorary PhD degrees can adversely affect the educational standards in Pakistan. "This trend conveys the message that education is merely a paper formality and doesn't require practical qualifications"

Scholars obtaining honorary PhD degrees often fail to grasp the true meaning behind the degree. They view it merely as a title that enhances their image. The trend of awarding honorary PhD degrees poses a hurdle to improving the educational standards in Pakistan. To eliminate this trend, collaboration between the government and universities is crucial.

The prevalent trend of awarding Honorary PhD Degrees in Pakistan has emerged as a significant hurdle to the improvement of educational standards in the country. This practice, often characterized by conferring prestigious degrees without the recipients undergoing traditional doctoral programs, has raised concerns about the integrity of academic standards.

The awarding of Honorary PhD Degrees in Pakistan is frequently observed as a means for authorities and political leaders to bolster their academic credentials. However, this practice has faced criticism due to its potential to undermine the educational system.

Critics argue that the lack of clear guidelines and standards for conferring these degrees diminishes the value of education and compromises the overall quality of academic achievements.

The adverse impact on educational standards arises from several factors. Firstly, the awarding of Honorary PhD Degrees may convey the message that academic qualifications can be obtained without the rigorous academic pursuit required by traditional doctoral programs. This perception has the potential to diminish the importance

of genuine educational efforts and undermine the value of authentic academic achievements.

Moreover, the prevalence of Honorary PhD Degrees might contribute to a culture where educational attainment is perceived more as a symbolic formality than a reflection of practical qualifications and expertise. This misrepresentation of academic achievement can erode the foundational principles of education and hinder the development of a robust and merit-based educational system in Pakistan.

To address this hurdle and elevate educational standards, there is a pressing need to reevaluate and regulate the practice of awarding Honorary PhD Degrees. Implementing clear guidelines, criteria, and standards for conferring such degrees could help ensure that they are granted based on substantial contributions to society or exceptional achievements, rather than being used for polit-

ical or symbolic purposes.

The prevailing trend of awarding Honorary PhD Degrees in Pakistan poses a substantial challenge to the enhancement of educational standards. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive reevaluation of the criteria for conferring such degrees, with a focus on preserving the integrity of academic achievements and fostering a culture that values genuine educational pursuits. "This trend

Implementing clear guidelines, criteria, and standards for conferring such degrees could help ensure that they are granted based on substantial contributions to society or exceptional achievements, rather than being used for political or symbolic purposes.

conveys the message that education is merely a paper formality and doesn't require practical qualifications" To promote the importance of education and degrees at both the international and national levels, there should be a cessation of conferring honorary educational credentials; granting a doctoral degree to an anchor like Javed Chaudhry undermines the sanctity of universities and scholars.

UNSC, failure to end Israel's war against Gaza

Highlighting the UN Security Council's failure to stop Palestinians' "slaughter" in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip, Pakistan has underscored the need to make the 15-member body more representative, transparent and accountable to ensure world peace and security. "For more than a month now, a brutal war has raged in Gaza, with blatant war crimes and genocide being perpetrated by Israel against innocent Palestinian women and children," Ambassador Munir Akram said in the UN General Assembly's debate on how to reform the Security Council, pointing out that inability of its permanent members to agree on decisive action is the primary reason for frequent failures to respond effectively to conflicts.

In this regard, the Pakistani envoy said that adding new permanent members to an enlarged Council would statistically multiply the prospects of its paralysis. "The problem cannot be the solution," Ambassador Akram said. The Italy-Pakistan-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group, he added, remains "staunchly opposed" to any proposals for the creation of additional permanent seats in the Security Council. "Any country seeking a more frequent presence on the Security Council should do so by subjecting itself to the democratic process of periodic election by the General Assembly," the Pakistani envoy said. The Security Council is currently composed of five permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and 10 non-permanent members elected to serve for two years. In his address, Ambassador Akram said the UfC's proposal to add 11-12 new non-permanent seats would offer greater representation to the vast majority of small and medium States, 59 of which have never served on the Security Council. Besides ensuring "equitable geopolitical" representation, he said, a larger number of non-permanent members could balance the inordinate influence of the 5 permanent members. Moreover, the periodic election of the non-permanent members would ensure both the accountability of Security Council members as well as the democratization of the United Nations. The African demand for two permanent seats was different from the quest of "4 individual States" (G-4) for permanent membership, as they would be filled by States selected by Africa and "accountable" to Africa and could be replaced by Africa, Ambassador Akram explained. The "four individual aspirants" would be accountable to no one and seek to advance their own national interests and ambitions. "In any case," he added, "there are more than 4 or 6 States — perhaps over 20 — which can, based on their size, defence capability, economic status, peacekeeping role and contributions to peace and security, claim the mantle of more frequent representation on the Security Council," adding that the UfC's offer for longer-term seats could accommodate them. Ambassador Akram warned that no model of Council reform can be developed until member states reconcile the key divergences within the five clusters of issues. Consideration of the Council's reform must remain exclusively within the intergovernmental negotiations process, he said, cautioning against duplication at the forthcoming Summit of the Future.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Is there a need for building more inclusive systems for international cooperation?

Laiba Ijaz

After the end of the World War 2 a decline in the number of wars and major conflicts between the states had been seen. The states began to prioritize non-traditional security measures. International organizations were created to foster collaboration. For instance, the UN plays a significant role in preventing conflicts from turning into war, in aiding in the restoration of peace if hostilities break out, and in fostering long-lasting peace in post-conflict communities. So, in the recent years there had been seen a shift of focus from traditional security to non-traditional security threats such as Climate change, Resource Scarcity, Food shortages. The States were focusing on these issues.

However, Conflicts did exist, nevertheless, albeit. But In 2022 the Russian invasion in Ukraine and the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine pose a danger to global security norms. Significant breaches of international humanitarian law and widespread crimes against human rights have occurred in recent years, and Those responsible feel more justified in their actions. While the interstate wars had been reduced intrastate armed conflict has drastically increased. Despite having such strong organizations, there are still two significant wars going on? Does creating more inclusive systems make sense? Or is multilateralism nearing its demise? Alternatively, there could be a change in the nature of security threats from non-traditional to traditional once again?

There has been significant loss as a result of these two wars. The invasion of Ukraine by

Russia has increased the already record levels of displacement and humanitarian need worldwide. The Israel-Palestine conflict has since contributed to it. Roughly 274 million people globally were in urgent need of humanitarian aid in 2021—a 17% increase from the previous year. By 2023, that figure has been soar once again, bringing the number of people in need to 339 million, more than the population of the United States. This means 1 in every 23 people on the planet will need emergency assistance just to survive. The source of these crises is nothing new: conflicts, both protracted and proliferating, and the increasingly dramatic effects of the climate emergency have intensified both the suffering of innocent civilians and the pressure on our multilateral system to deliver lifesaving support and solutions. These two ongoing wars have not only affected the region but the world as a whole. Every state is dealing with the fallout, which includes the sharp rise in energy and oil costs and many more.

To cope up with these challenges, It is essential that the global community and our multilateral system learn from the lessons of this year. A reframing effort of norms of international system is overdue. The world needs a legal instrument to aim at encouraging and supporting peace negotiations for the peaceful settlement of armed conflicts.

First and foremost, the continuing war between Israel and Palestine needs to end. There can be an immediate end to hostilities. Then, a suitable resolution to this dispute ought to exist. The solution can be either one state and two state. According to the "one state solution," Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs should live in a single state with equal rights for both groups. The 'two state'

solution is the division of Israel and Palestine into two independent nations. The confederation may be an additional option. Consider Israel and Palestine to be similar to a smaller version of the European Union. Although each side would have its own administration, they would cooperate on matters pertaining to economics, security, and resources. Citizens on both sides could only vote in their own elections, but there would be unrestricted movement and even residency between the two states.

However, the Multilateral Peace Treaty aims to broaden the system's acceptance and prevent future conflicts from escalating into war. The aim of this treaty is to establish an effective peace between the conflicting parties and devise a proper solution to the conflict to which the conflicting parties can agree upon. All state should be invited to a conference that the UN could call, and there may be a discussion about how to create more effective rules for the international system, such as how to stop existing disputes from escalating into global wars. And appropriate penalties would be applied to any state that violated these regulations.

Therefore, by improving our dispute resolution procedures and developing new guidelines we may prevent such problems from happening. These peace initiatives may just be the new beginning of a protracted conflict settlement process. Furthermore, rather than returning to more conventional security concerns, the states should concentrate on working together to develop stronger responses to non-traditional security risks like climate change, which is one of the biggest threats to global security.

Writer is student of Fatima Jinnah Women University

A Silence Too Loud: The Psychology of Genocide

Khadijah Javed Butt

The diligent executors of inhuman orders were not born torturers, they were not, with few exceptions, monsters — they were ordinary men.

-Primo Levi

In this age of globalization typified by modern information and communicative technologies we are made more aware and yet surprisingly uneducated; now we cannot just say "we did not know what was going on" to the future generations. This self-defense mask has been incorporated into the public narrative; the objective is to do good, do what is right and to "play fair" and never to hurt; or to only hurt the bad ones.

The international arena demonstrates a lesson we all get from history is that no one learns. While occasionally power projection is deemed as evil, at times the same kind of approach by leaders is supported and glorified as wise and tacit. The invading, murdering, and occupying military is hailed as the liberator, the savior and benefactor of democracy. Israelis have gone so far off track that Netanyahu claimed Hitler did not want to harm his race, he was manipulated to do so.

In the current war between Israel and Hamas, in the span of a few weeks from October 7 till date the death toll of Palestinians is above 10,000 in which most are children. Genocide is so effective that it obviates a state's claim to self-defense and sovereignty. Fiction is placed above fact in public discourse, including general public, media, academic, and increasingly in the judicial dialogue. Globalization's apparent failure to live up to the conception of not being a zero sum game is a result of the impact of the only super-power's global

politics.

The psychology of genocide pertains the fact that bystander behavior of individuals and players in international arena may be significantly influenced by rewards for complicity, rational (cost/benefit) considerations, turning a blind eye to violence, as well as the preservation of a feeling of normalcy. Which is the trend we can see currently prevailing, how systematic campaigns are setup for those who start to speak up.

Social psychologist Phil Zimbardo identified factors in a social construct that influence behaviors such as ideology-driven reasoning, nurturing-to-authoritarian leadership, and the adoption of gradual measures to intensify violence are all factors that contribute to the commission of extraordinary evil acts. In this case the dark umbrella of the pro-Israeli cabinet and industry looming over not just in the USA but also in other parts of the world is a perfect silencing tool.

Those supporting a massacre of children seem to believe that the world will forever be intimidated by them and remain silent; and yet we have seen that the humanitarian crimes of today are the conflicts of tomorrow. Where the hubris of dominance can lead to war; it can just as easily lead to self-destruction from within; the Icarus syndrome shall prevail.

Where there is a lack of law and the places that are war zones you cannot expect that this will end anytime soon. Especially in a place like Gaza, where not many signs of it being a state are granted, while the world witnesses it at stand by. But having the monopolized luxury of freedom of speech and a platform to raise awareness to end these CRIMES and start a cause for justice to the abused. The world is indeed a stage and we are still the audience.

Writer is Student of Fatima Jinnah Women University

53rd National Day of Sultanate of Oman

Oman to Celebrate 53rd National Day on Nov 18

Milestone accomplishments made in all aspects of life under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

Spokesman Report

The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate the 53rd glorious National Day this Saturday, 18 November 2023, marking milestone accomplishments made in all aspects of life under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The Royal speech of His Majesty the Sultan at the opening of the first annual sitting of the 8th term of the Council of Oman constituted a new future approach that strengthens the existing efforts made by various State institutions.

The Sultanate of Oman considers that the Council of Oman and its integration with institutions of the State harness the main factors for implementing approaches aimed at achieving accomplishments that benefit citizens.

His Majesty the Sultan's audience to the chairmen of the State Council and Shura Council—separately, in December 2022—underscores the fact that partnership in shaping the country's present and future constitutes a basic pillar of national action in strengthening this integration in a way that serves its future directions and policies aimed at pressing ahead with the comprehensive development march. It also underlines the need to unify efforts and advance the supreme interest of the State, secure the sustainability of development and safeguard the country's gains and accomplishments.

Last month (October 2023), the Sultanate of Oman conducted the Shura Council's 10th Term Elections during which Omani citizens cast their votes for the first time via "Antakhib" electronic app.

The app, which was used for the first time in the elections of municipal councils, boasts high security and confidentiality standards. Its use requires the availability of a smartphone equipped with the NFC feature, a valid ID card and enrolment in the electoral register. The participation rate via this app stood at 65.07 percent, and the voters selected 90 members to the Shura Council.

The Royal interest in the advancement of this homeland and its honourable people was demonstrated through many achievements, most notably the promulgation of the Social Protection Law, which guarantees the implementation of Oman's vision and policy of adequate insurance coverage for various segments of society.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed this attention during his Royal speech at the opening of the first annual sitting of the 8th Term of the Council of Oman, as His Majesty said, "We envisage that the Social Protection System, recently introduced, will be comprehensive, extending its benefits to all segments of society, thereby guaranteeing a dignified life for all".

Among other duties, the Social Protection Fund encompasses a number of programmes, which will be implemented next January 2024. Most of these programmes do not require social research, like endorsing cash benefits for the elderly, children, people with disabilities, orphans and widows.

The scheme also includes family income support, social insurance programmes that secure support for the elderly, cases of disability, death, work-related injuries, occupational diseases and job security, in addition to maternity, sick, and unscheduled leave.

The Social Protection Law achieves well-being for the people of Oman in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law of the State and the goals of Oman Vision 2040 that pertain to social aspects.

Since the outset of its blessed renaissance, the Sultanate of Oman has advocated the view that education constitutes the edifice that secures and fortifies nations' present and future. Therefore, Oman accorded top importance to education so that it could tap its benefits and reap its fruits.

To this effect, Oman proceeded with bolstering education by introducing the latest instruments and methods to expand its scopes. Oman Vision 2040 gives priority to "education, learning, scholarly research, and national capabilities". Acting within the context of the vision's first theme titled "Man and Society", Oman embarked on implementing comprehensive education, sustainable learning and scholarly research that leads to the evolution of a knowledge-based



society and competitive national human resources.

The Royal philosophy stems from the fact that educational institutions, research, and cultural centres at all levels constitute the foundation of society's scientific and intellectual advancement, and act as drivers for our technological and industrial progression.

The overall approach is to continue empowering the education sector, linking educational curricula to the requirements of economic growth and broadening opportunities for our youth to help them engage in scientific expertise, and immersing themselves in the broad realms of science and knowledge. The youth of Oman are encouraged to utilize their cognitive and intellectual abilities for contesting creative and innovative endeavours, thereby laying a robust groundwork for authentic investment and establishing themselves as leaders in economic growth.

This approach was evidenced by the issuance of the School Education Law in May 2023. The law states that "The greatest goal of school education in the Sultanate of Oman is to achieve comprehensive and integrated development of the learner's personality in terms of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects."

The law also establishes the advancement of the teaching profession and the necessity of enhancing the status of the teacher. It recognizes the teacher's effective role in grooming the generations of this nation. This was emphasized by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, when he chaired the Council of Ministers meeting in February 2023.

The Council of Ministers approved the allocation of an annual day titled "Omani Teacher's Day", which falls on 24 February every year. It is an official holiday for all teachers and related jobs in public and private schools.

The Council of Ministers gave directives for the implementation of an advanced vocational and technical education system to enable students in 11th and 12th school grades to choose their preferred educational tracks. The educational system offers a host of professional and technical specializations, including engineering and industrial specializations.

The Cabinet also approved new educational channels and curricula prepared to keep pace with the requirements of sustainable development and future skills. The new vocational and technical education system began to be applied in the current school year (2023-2024) in a number of schools.

Since Oman has placed the development of national human resources among its priorities, the Council of Ministers approved a programme to consolidate the foreign scholarship programme for the years (2023-2027). The move includes the grooming of graduates who are capable of assuming leadership roles in economic sectors. It comprised the endorsement of 150 scholarships in innovative specializations in the best international universities over a period of five years, starting from 2023. The programme, which cost RO 36 million, seeks to empower the academic educational process.

His Majesty the Sultan also accorded attention to preserving the national identity and demonstrating pride in the Omani culture. His Majesty the Sultan cautioned against the challenges facing society and their unacceptable impacts on the moral and cultural system. In this context, His Majesty stressed the need to confront these challenges and enhancing society's ability to address them, notably by invigorating the national identity, incul-

cating authentic values and principles and promoting the role of the family.

In this context, His Majesty the Sultan said, "It is imperative to accord paramount attention to the family, the cornerstone of our society, which acts as a bulwark in safeguarding our progeny from harmful ideologies that are in direct opposition to the tenets of our venerable religion and core values. Such detrimental trends also conflict with our Omani traditions, which are deeply ingrained in our history and national character."

His Majesty the Sultan also urged families to provide extra support to their children and raise them well, bearing in mind the changes posed to their behaviour in terms of negative concepts pervading the world. These include the exploitation of human rights principles and other justifications to impose visions, programmes and behaviours that are not consistent with the prevailing tenets and principles.

Regarding the Royal support to youth, His Majesty gave directives to begin procedures for establishing project to set up an integrated sports city that attracts and hosts tournaments and competitions at the regional and global levels.

He also gave directives to study projects for investment in sports labs and extend incentives to investors, deemed partners in sports development. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the need to advance the sports sector and finalize a sports strategy that is being prepared to ensure furnishing facilities for young people and exploring their skills, right from the early school stages.

Oman also accords great importance to the employment of national human resources, training them and honing their skills to enable them to enter the labour market and explore the business environment. This attention reflected in legislations and laws, including the Labour Law, that provides a safe business climate by defining rights and duties and stabilizing the relationship between production parties.

While chairing the Council of Ministers in January 2023, His Majesty the Sultan urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to establish a proper environment that encourages citizens to take up all types of work. He laid emphasis on the importance of educating young people about global work culture and entrepreneurship.

Oman attaches importance to the development of national administrative leaders, both in the public and private sectors. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan presided over the opening of the Royal Academy of Management, which enjoys the honourary patronage of His Majesty the Sultan.

Oman also accorded priority to sustainable development in governorates and cities, considered as pillars of Oman Vision 2040. The approach focuses on the development of local administration, based on decentralization. It resulted in the issuance of the Governorate System and the Municipal Councils Law, aimed to empower the people of Oman in each governorate and enable them to contribute to the nation-building process.

His Majesty the Sultan encouraged Omani governorates to demonstrate the capabilities that they possess. He urged them to compete to present the best proposals for development projects that can be implemented in each wilayat. Those projects would be evaluated according to specific terms and conditions,

and the first three winning ones receive funding in a bid to enhance the governorates' economic activities. The governorates of Dhofar, Musandam and South Al Batinah won such competitions during 2023.

The Sultanate of Oman also seeks to boost the social and economic prosperity through Oman National Spatial Strategy, which is the prime driver of the development sectors. It targets seven main goals, themed as: "Developing cities and communities that are suitable for living", "Preserving Omani identity", "Responding to climate change and the need to adapt to it and alleviate its impacts", "Promoting growth and economic diversity based on the components of each governorate", "Sustainable use of resources, the production of power and the management of renewable resources", "Water and waste management", "Protection of the environment through control of impacts on environmentally-delicate areas" and "Developing a sustainable transport system and the creation of transport alternatives that include walking and use of bicycles".

In this context, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over the inauguration of Sultan Haitham City. The city, which occupies an area of 14,800,000 square metres, has been planned to reflect sound and sustainable urban planning based on the utilization of green spaces on an area of 2,900,000 square metres. It is designed to house 100,000 people and it will have 20,000 housing units ranging between separate villas, semi-attached villas, townhouses and flats.

The new city translates 12 international criterions of luxury and welfare—ranging between affordable cost, integrated utilities and sustainable systems—all of which played a role in drawing out the city's masterplan.

The Sultanate of Oman continues to implement economic plans, financial and investment programmes within the framework of the tenth five-year plan (2021-2025), guided by the priorities of Oman Vision 2040. The outcomes of these plans have contributed to enhancing the GDP growth, raising financial and economic indicators, improving credit ratings, and achieving some financial surpluses that were directed to economic and social priorities.

The economy of the Sultanate of Oman witnessed a growth in fixed prices by 2.1 percent during the first half of 2023. Oman managed till the first half of 2023 to reduce public debt to RO 16.3 billion, thanks to rationalizing and raising the efficiency of spending, as well as the increase in public revenues as a result of the rise in oil prices. It was also attributed to the financial measures taken to increase non-oil revenues, in addition to managing the lending portfolio by repurchasing some sovereign bonds at less than their issuance value, repaying high-cost loans and replacing them with lower loans, and issuing local bonds for trading on Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) at a relatively low cost.

Meanwhile, the contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP reached RO 1.070 billion in 2022. It is hoped that it will reach 2.75 percent during the next two years, compared to 2.4 percent at the end of last year (2022).

Foreign direct investments (FDI) recorded a 23.3 percent increase at the end of the first quarter of 2023, to stand at RO 21.27 billion.

Oman strives to attract investments for projects in various fields, including renewable energy and clean hydrogen, as many

land plots were allocated for this purpose. In this framework, two agreements were inked last June 2023 with an investment value of approximately USD 10 billion, to develop two new projects for the production of green hydrogen in the Governorate of Al Wusta, as the total expected production will reach 250 metric kilotons of green hydrogen, equivalent to 6.5 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity.

Within the same context, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth met with some CEOs of global companies who participated in Duqm Economic Forum last month (October 2023). During the meeting, HH Sayyid Theyazin highlighted the investment opportunities available in the fields of renewable energy and clean energy, such as green hydrogen and green ammonia. These sectors come in line with Oman's approach towards zero carbon neutrality by 2050. The meeting also spotlighted the incentives offered to investors and the investment milieu in Oman.

At the behest of His Majesty the Sultan, a fund named "Oman Future Fund" was launched last May 2023 with a capital of RO 2 billion.

The fund is aimed at enhancing economic activity and encouraging the private sector to enter into partnerships or finance feasible investment projects in the sectors of economic diversification targeted by Oman Vision 2040.

The Sultanate of Oman accords a priority to digital economy to be a contributor to the national economy. To this end, His Majesty the Sultan gave instructions in this regard to design a national programme to implement and localize artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, and to accelerate the devising of legislation to position these technologies as basic enablers and catalysts for these sectors.

The National Digital Economy Programme works to build and develop a prosperous digital economy in the Sultanate of Oman based on several principles that include establishing national industries in the digital economy, enhancing in-country value (ICV), and generating sustainable opportunities.

The Sultanate of Oman seeks to maximize the benefit of its geographical location through the special economic zones and free zones. It also strives to utilize the maritime transport routes to connect markets in the GCC, Europe, Asia and Africa. For this purpose, Oman has established Khzaen Economic City that includes two free zones in the Governorate of South Al Batinah. The city has managed to attract local and foreign investments worth RO 300 million.

Khzaen Economic City and the rest of economic zones and free zones in Sohar, Duqm, Salalah and Al Mazunah are regulated by legislations and systems that encourage investment and offer low taxes and advanced infrastructure.

This economic mobility in the Sultanate of Oman and the subsequent positive results towards improving financial and economic indicators and reducing the state's public debt made credit rating institutions raise and modify their credit outlook for Oman. Standard & Poor's raised the credit rating for Oman to "BB+" with a stable future outlook, Fitch raised the credit rating of Oman to "BB+" with a stable outlook last September, and Moody's raised the credit rating of Oman to the level of "Ba2" while maintaining a positive outlook.

Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Oman has made progress in several global indicators, as it ranked 56th globally and 5th in the Arab world in the Industrial Competitive Performance Report for 2023, issued by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Oman also advanced 10 places in the Global Innovation Index for 2023 to obtain the 69th rank globally, out of 132 countries.

During giving audience to businesspersons and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), His Majesty underscored the importance of building an effective partnership between the government and private sectors. This partnership will empower the private sector in setting up projects and investments to support targets of economic diversification, growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and generating job opportunities for citizens.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
57,063.15	57,397.02
Day's High	Day's Low
57,750.92	56,977.02
Index Value	Change
16,166,540,231	-333.87
Percentage	Time
-0.58%	17 Nov, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,504.36	+93.39
Percentage	Time
+1.26%	17 Nov, 3:57 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,926.81	-18.66
Percentage	Time
-0.053%	17 Nov, 10:57 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,585.20	+160.79
Percentage	Time
-0.48%	17 Nov, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	185	186.8
Bahrain Dinar	766.33	774.33
Canadian Dollar	208	210
China Yuan	39.59	39.99
Danish Krone	41.91	42.31
Euro	306	308
Hong Kong Dollar	36.76	37.11
Indian Rupee	3.45	3.58
Japanese Yen	1.6	1.68
Kuwaiti Dinar	934.16	943.16
Malaysian Ringgit	61.45	62.05
New Zealand \$	173.44	175.44
Norwegians Krone	25.83	26.13
Omani Riyal	748.42	756.42
Qatari Riyal	79.1	79.86
Saudi Riyal	76.1	76.8
Singapore Dollar	208.5	210.5
Swedish Korona	27.15	27.45
Swiss Franc	326.36	326.86
Thai Bhat	8.08	8.23
U.A.E Dirham	79.5	80.4
UK Pound Sterling	353.5	356
US Dollar	287.3	290.2

The country needs IMF oversight for next two years: 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 Friday that the staff-level agreement with the IMF is a great achievement of the caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamsad Akhtar and the present government.

Tough decisions were necessary to save the country, from which the economy shrank, compounding problems for the masses and the business community, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the condition of Pakistan's economy is now improving. Still, it needs to remain under IMF supervision for at least two years so that funds are well-spent.

Talking to the business community, the veter-

an business leader said that the current IMF program should be completed in accordance with the professional recommendations of the IMF, and preparations for the new program should be initiated.

The IMF will soon pay seven hundred million dollars to Pakistan after the approval of its board, which will improve the value of the rupee and increase the confidence of investors. In comparison, the other three international organisations will soon pay 950 million dollars to Pakistan, he added.

These include the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, which were awaiting the IMF's decision to disburse the loan.

Apart from this, commercial loans of three and a half billion dollars are also being arranged, which will improve the financial situation of the country.



Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the government should stop theft, default, and line

losses in the electricity and gas sectors so that their prices can be reduced. It has become difficult to continue business at current prices, while interest rates are also skyrocketing.

He noted that legislation should be enacted to stop the loss of funds; otherwise, the country will be in the same situation after a few years.

The business leader noted that the decision to increase gas prices once again is expected, which will prove disastrous for the people and the industrial sector. In order to eliminate the circular debt of the electricity and gas sectors, instead of continuously increasing the tariff, changes in the energy basket, reforms in capacity charges, and other options should also be explored.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that if the economic indicators continue to improve, Pakistan's global ranking will also improve soon, which will make it possible to get relatively cheap loans.

Donation

ISLAMABAD: Almas Ayub Saber, Chairman AIMS handed over a cheque of 1 million rupees to the Vice President Al Khidmat Foundation for the children of Gaza. Ghafran Elahi, President Private Schools Association Islamabad was also present on this occasion and appreciated the students of AIMS Education System for their generous contribution.



Photo: Spokesman

National Bank on-boarded new billers in NBP Digital App

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In continuation to its digital banking services, NBP has onboarded new billers in NBP digital app features. NBP custom-

ers can also pay their utility bills for FESCO, IESCO, and QESCO through NBP digital app easily. This will not only enhance customers' experience but also facilitate to make payments swiftly.

FINCA Bank explores potential merger or acquisition with TPL Corp, Abhi Limited

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: FINCA Microfinance Bank is taking initial steps to explore a potential merger or acquisition with TPL Corp, Abhi Limited, with a non-binding letter of intent, subject to the approval of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The two organizations share a commitment to financial inclusion in Pakistan and believe that a combination could create a more effective force for good.

"FINCA Microfinance Bank, Ltd. is committed to spreading financial inclusion across Pakistan, enabling more low-income Pakistanis to invest in their futures and their communities," said FINCA Pakistan CEO Jahan-

zeb Khan. "We are excited to investigate how a combination of our two institutions can add value to the services we provide our customers."

FINCA Pakistan is part of FINCA Impact Finance (FIIF), an international network of 16 microfinance banks, with nearly 40 years of experience in empowering tens of millions of people to build their financial health. TPL Corp is a diversified financial services company with a presence in insurance, investment banking, and asset management.

Both parties will work diligently to explore the potential combination and to reach an agreement that is in the best interests of all stakeholders, customers, employees, and shareholders.

SSP Traffic assures to address traffic issues in business areas



Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: SSP Traffic Police Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk along with SP Chaudhry Abid and DSP Tariq Mehmood visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed various options with the business community to control the traffic issues in the Capital.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that traffic accidents are increasing, so a police-citizen committee should be formed to work together to address this issue. He said that appropriate measures should be taken to tackle the issues of overspeed and violation of traffic rules. Minor children should be banned from

driving, seat belts should be strictly enforced, one-wheeling and other violations of traffic rules should be curbed, which will reduce accidents and improve the traffic system in the city. He said that Islamabad is expanding rapidly and the current traffic police force is proving insufficient. IG Police Islamabad should increase the strength of traffic police to control the traffic issues in business areas and other busy places. He highlighted the need of improving the traffic system at the entrances of Islamabad like Rawat, Tarnol, Bara Kahu as the business hubs located in these areas are facing the worst traffic problems.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, SSP Traffic Islamabad emphasized for close cooperation between the business community and the traffic

police to address issues and promote disciplined traffic in the city. He said that a special mechanism has been made to enhance traffic police in big commercial centers to maintain smooth traffic flow. He underscored the need to install cameras in all the markets to control car theft and other incidents. He said that despite the lack of resources, the traffic police is trying to perform better.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that the police should arrange training programs on traffic rules for the citizens. He said that the issue of excessive e-challans should be looked into.

Saif ur Rehman Khan Convener ICCI Police Committee and Presidents of various markets also highlighted various traffic related issues gave useful suggestions to address them.

Pakistani stall captivates visitors at Dhaka Int'l Charity Bazaar

Spokesman Report



DHAKA: The Pakistani Stall established by Pakistan High Commission, Dhaka at the International Charity Bazaar, emerged as a major attraction, drawing enthusiastic visitors and members of the diplomatic community. The International Charity Bazaar, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh in Dhaka, witnessed participation of dozens of diplomatic missions and organizations.

The meticulously curated Pakistani stall showcased a diverse array of offerings, including exquisite Pakistani dresses, handicrafts,

artifacts, and a delectable spread of popular Pakistani cuisines like Biryani, Kabab, samosa, Channa Chaat, Kashmiri Chai and more.

The Ladies Club of the Pakistan High Commission led by Syeda Shazia Nahid, spouse of the High Commissioner, orchestrated Pakistan's representation at the event. All High Commission officers and officials along with their families actively participated in the event and made it a resounding success.

PSA aims to propel country towards 60% renewable electricity by 2030

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) Chairman Amir Chaudhry has said that they are thrilled to announce their commitment to collaborate with the Government of Pakistan in realizing the ambitious vision of achieving 60% renewable electricity by 2030.

Addressing an event titled Lets Grow Together on Friday here, he said that the PSA recognizes the significance

of recent initiatives, such as the 10 GW Fast Track projects launched by the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) and the Energy Ministry last year.

Senior Vice Chairman PSA, Zakir Ali said that the solar industry in Pakistan provides employment opportunities for a diverse range of workers, from semi-skilled and low-skilled laborers to graduates and technicians involved in system design and deployment.

Former Chairman, Muhammad Farhan emphasized the need for enhancement in skillset of existing installers to improve quality of installation and importance of keeping the solar panels clean and periodic checkup of solar system to avoid any mishap.

PSA is confident that by working closely with the government and local stakeholders, the solar industry will play a pivotal role in propelling Pakistan toward a sustainable, clean energy



future, fostering economic growth and job creation along the way.

FBR establishes District Tax Offices all across the country to broaden the tax base

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As part of restructuring measures, Federal Board of Revenue has established 145 District Tax Offices which will focus on bringing 1.5 to 2 million new taxpayers into the tax net till June, 2024. The Prime Minister has stressed the importance of revenue and increasing the existing number of tax filers during recent meetings.

Federal Board of Revenue today notified the establishment of these offices, a new initiative that will help broadening the tax base and ultimately raising tax-to-GDP ratio to a desired level. These offices would be headed by District Tax Officers entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing Income Tax Returns from non-filers and stop filers.

Establishment of these offices heralds a new chapter that would expand tax net to fill a critical tax gap on the path to bring all potential taxpayers into the tax net. These new offices would be headed by dedicated Inland Revenue Officers in BS-17/18 which would obtain and utilize third party data acquired from multiple departments and agencies that hold critical information regarding investment in assets and incurring of huge expenditures by potential taxpayers who till now have managed to escape and stay away from the taxation system including registration and filing of tax returns.

One of the tools to be utilized for this purpose would be invoking recently introduced section 114B in the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 which authorizes the department to disconnect utility connections including electricity and gas connections and blocking of mobile sims, if return is not filed in response to notices issued.

Federal Government is committed to utilize all measures and provide assistance to FBR. A new Documentation Law is also being introduced to obligate various agencies / departments to provide data to Federal Board of Revenue through automated common transmission system. Collaboration and assistance from National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has also been sought.

Pak-Saudi football fever sweeps federal capital as fans unite for spectacular match viewing

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a heartwarming display of camaraderie, people from diverse backgrounds, including diplomatic and journalist communities, gathered at a local hotel in the federal capital to celebrate the football match between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Thursday evening.

The event, masterfully organized by Saudi Press Attaché Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi, aimed to strengthen people-to-people connections and foster appreciation for cultural diversity.

The atmosphere buzzed with joy as fans from both nations came together to witness the intense competition on a big screen. An intriguing element of the event was the display of posters reading 'Pakistan crossing 'vs' Saudi Arabia' with the word 'with' cleverly inserted, emphasizing unity over rivalry.

The vibrant crowd passionately supported their favourite teams, marking the celebration with the spirited burst of firecrackers.



ing the celebration with the spirited burst of firecrackers.

The football match, a pivotal clash between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia teams, unfolded at the Al-Fateh Club

Stadium in Al-Ahsa.

This encounter marked the commencement of the second stage of the Asian qualifiers for the prestigious World Cup 2026 and the Asian

Cup 2027.

The anticipation and excitement surrounding the match were palpable, creating a memorable experience for attendees. As a goodwill gesture, the Saudi Press Attaché, Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi, extended gratitude to the attendees by presenting thoughtful gifts.

The event culminated with the Saudi national team emerging victorious, adding an extra layer of jubilation to the festivities.

This football extravaganza not only showcased the sporting prowess of both nations but also highlighted the power of sports in bringing people together.

The shared enthusiasm and support for the teams transcended borders, creating a sense of unity and camaraderie among the attendees. As the cheers echoed through the night, the event served as a testament to the potential of sports to bridge gaps and build lasting connections.

Enabling Women Through Meaningful Collaborations

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Situated near the Pak-China border in northern Pakistan, Shimshal is home to the AlShams Women's Football Club. Founded in 2016 by Coach Munawar Spicher, the club is open to girls of all ages and abilities with ambitions beyond football alone. While Shimshal is generally regarded as a forward-thinking community with exceptional talent, the remote location of the area limits the community's ability to participate in regional activities, events, and tournaments.

This week, 16 girls from the club visited Islamabad for an interactive program centered around sports, education, and culture. The program was organized by Charles Barker, Chairman of Hospitality Support & Consultancy Services, and facilitated by several sponsors including the country's leading hospitality operators, Hashoo Group, as well as Samson's Malam Jabba Ski Resort & Five Star Hotel, Magnus Sports, Right to Play, Discovery Pakistan, Margalla Meridian Hotel, Elements Interactive, Shams Alpine and Snow Lake Adventure Tours.

Beaconhouse Newlands hosted the team for basketball and football matches against teams of the school and interactive sessions on women empowerment. AWFC's itinerary also included a campus tour of Quaid-e-Azam University, engag-



ing discussions on relevant topics, visits to historical sites, and much more.

As one of the core sponsors for the visit, Hashoo Group's Pearl Tours and Travels was instrumental in ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience for the team.

Ali Ahmad, General Manager of Pearl Tours and Travels addressed the collaboration, "Our core strategy emphasizes meaningful initiatives such as this to help promote greater opportunities for cultural synergies across Pakistan."

Hashoo Group, a trailblazing hospitality entity, boasts an impressive portfolio of five-star, four-star, and select service hotels spread across Pakistan. Committed to growth and excellence, Hashoo

Group is not only a leader in the hospitality sector but also champions the cause of quality hospitality education through Hashoo School of Hospitality Management, offering education opportunities across the country at its campuses in Islamabad, Peshawar, and Karachi. The company has a dedicated focus towards furthering the women empowerment cause through a myriad of impactful initiatives, integrated within Hashoo Group's philosophy.

Team Captain, Sania Parveen said, "This has been a truly wonderful experience for us all and we have surely benefited from the networking opportunities. We look forward to maintaining

these new relationships with our peers and mentors."

Coach Spicher remarked, "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this wonderful opportunity possible."

The AWFC actively encourages young women to build their literacy and skills at par with their male counterparts and become independent contributors to the economy and society as a whole.

"This trip was a testament to Shimshal's enlightened and supportive culture," stated Charles Barker. "They are breaking traditional cultural norms and empowering their daughters for more fulfilled lives."

Karachi Whites beat Multan to set up Pakistan Cup final clash with Peshawar

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: Karachi Whites defeated Multan Region by 43 runs in the second semi-final of the Pakistan Cup and will now face Peshawar in the final.

The match was ended due to poor light and the result was decided by the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method.

Multan opens Zain Abbas and Sharjeel Khan fared poorly with Zain being caught out after making six off 13 and Sharjeel being ducked off eight balls.

Left-handed batter Haseebullah however, delivered a power-



house innings making 106 off 108 deliveries with 12 fours and two sixes and continued to play until the last ball.

Sohaib Maqsood made 32

off 35 before being caught by Sarfaraz Ahmed off the bowling of Nauman Ali in the 15th over.

Sharoon Siraj lost his wicket via a run-out at seven off

15. Muhammad Shehzad and Muhammad Imran ended their runs at 26 (31) and 28 (25) respectively.

Sohaib Khan registered a four-fer claiming the scalps of Imran, Zahid Mehmood, Faisal Akram and Mohammad Sadaqat while conceding 44 runs.

Ghulam Mudassar claimed two wickets and conceded 31 runs. Noman Ali and Asad Shafiq took one wicket each.

Earlier, the partnership between Karachi Whites openers Shan Masood and Saim Ayub had managed to yield a collective score of 106 runs.

Shan Masood's wicket fell earlier in the 15th over and he ended his run at 41 off 38. Saim Ayub became Karachi Whites' highest run-getter with 95 off 86 deliveries featuring 12 fours and one maximum.

He continued to play till the 26th over and lost his wicket to Zahid Mehmood.

Right-handed batter Habibullah managed to pull off 40 off 45 deliveries before losing his wicket to Muhammad Imran.

Asad Shafiq registered a dismal performance and was sent to the pavilion after scoring only four runs off eight deliveries.

PCB announces schedule of Talent Hunt Programme

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Cricket Board today announced details of U13, U16 and U19 trials for the selection of regional and Inter-District teams.

The players selected in the U13 and U16 categories will be eligible to take part in regional tournaments for the 2023-24 season, while those selected for the U19 category will feature in inter-district tournament for season 2024-25.

Players born on or after 1 September 2010 and before 1 September 2014 will be eligible for selection in the U13 squads, while players born on or after 1 September 2007 and before 1 September 2011 will be eligible for selection in the U16 sides.

For the U19 category, players born on or after 1 September 2005 and before 1 September 2009 will be eligible for selection.

The players of all age-group are required to carry their B-forms at the trials. At the time of wrist tests, the selected players are required to present their smart cards for age verification.

The following 16 regions (districts in brackets) will participate in the three age-group tournaments.

Abbottabad Region (Abbottabad, Buneer, Dir Upper, Haripur, Mansehra, Mardan and Swabi)

AJK Region (Bagh, Kotli, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Poonch) Bahawalpur Region (Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Pakpattan, Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur)

Faisalabad Region (Bhakar, Faisalabad, Jhang, Kasur, Mianwali and Sargodha)

FATA Region (Bajour, Bannu, DI Khan, Khyber, Kohat, Kurram, Mohmand, North Waziristan, South Waziristan and Tank)

Hyderabad Region (Badin, Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Thatta)

Islamabad Region (Central Zone, East Zone, Gilgit Baltistan, North Zone and West Zone)

Karachi Region (Zones I - VII)

Lahore Region (East, North and West Zones)

Larkana Region (Dadu, Jacobabad, Khairpur, Larkana, Shikarpur and Sukkur)

Multan Region (DG Khan, Khanewal, Lodharan, Multan, Okara, Sahiwal and Vehari)

D. M. Jamali Region (Jaffarabad, Lasbela, Loralai, Nascera and Sibi)

Peshawar Region (Charsadda, Dir Lower, Nowshera, Peshawar and Swat)

Quetta Region (Chaghi, Gwadar, Kalat, Khuzdar, Killa Abdullah, Noshki, Panjgur, Pishin, Quetta and Turbat)

Rawalpindi Region (Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum and Rawalpindi)

Sialkot Region (Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Sheikhpura and Sialkot)

Pakistan's Ahmed Nael loses in ITF Pakistan J30 World Junior C'hip final

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Japan's Yoshito Oda beat Pakistan's Ahmed Nael Qureshi in the Boys Singles final to lift the ITF Pakistan J30 World Junior Tennis Championships-II 2023 title at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Friday.

The highly talented Pakistani rising star, who had outwitted top seed Tadpong Kamonpanyakorn of Thailand in a thrilling three-set semifinal on Thursday, went down fighting hard against his Japanese opponent 6-4, 6-2.

In the Girls' Singles final, Viktoriia Sedova of Russia beat Saajida Razick of Sri Lanka. She lost the first set but came back strong 4-6, 6-1, 6-3 to win the title.

In the Boys' Doubles final, Thailand's Thanathip Poti and Kamonpanyakorn Thadapong beat Japan's Toki Adachi and Yoshito Oda 6-4, 7-6(3) and annexed the title.

In the Girls' Doubles final, Russian pair of Victoria Sedova and Anastasia Melnikova beat Bihar Kilic of Turkey and Saajida Razick and of Sri Lanka 6-2, 2-6 (10-6) and won the title.

Wazirabad to host School Football Championship in November

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Muslim Hands is organising the Schools Football Championship 2023 in Wazirabad with teams from all over Pakistan to promote the game as the fever of football continues to grow in the country.

Muslim Hands, a charity organisation, has been heavily active for years and has done a lot to promote football on the grassroots level and their latest step of holding a school championship is taking their efforts to the next level.

A total of 12 teams from all over Pakistan are competing in the championship at Mohammad Rasheed Football Ground.

The matches are being broadcast live on their Facebook page named "Maidaan" with great quality.

About five matches on a daily basis are being played in the four-day championship which is set to conclude on November 19 where two teams will go head-to-head to clinch the title.

It must be noted that Muslim Hands has been greatly contributing to promoting football in Pakistan.

In July 2023, they gathered and formed a team which competed in the Norway Cup in Oslo, Norway where Pakistan's team participated with the name of "Muslim Hands FC".

Notably, the Muslim Hands FC finished as the runners-up of the Norway Cup after falling to a 9-10 defeat on penalties against Sola FK in Oslo.

Fatima Sana returns to Pakistan women's squad for New Zealand tour

A Sports

LAHORE: Fatima Sana, Omaidha Sohail and Shawaal Zulfiqar stage a comeback in the Pakistan women's team as the national selection committee headed by Saleem Jaffar announces a 17-member squad for the New Zealand tour scheduled to take place later next month.

The side will play three T20Is in Dunedin and Queenstown from 3-9 December, before taking on New Zealand in three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 ODIs from 12-18 December in Queenstown and Christchurch.

Iram Javed, who was part of the 15-member squad for the Bangladesh tour this month, was omitted from the squad.

The experienced Omaidha Sohail comes into the Pakistan

women's squad after an all-round performance for Pakistan A in the recently held T20 tri-nation series and bilateral series at home.

18-year-old Shawaal Zulfiqar, who made her international debut against South Africa in September this year, makes a comeback after topping the batting charts in the tri-series with 106 runs including one half-century.

Right-arm fast bowler Fatima Sana, who was ruled out of the bilateral series against Bangladesh due to injury, has recovered and is available to the side for the six white-ball matches.

The 17-member Pakistan women's squad will assemble in Karachi on Saturday, 18 November and will undergo a four-day camp in Karachi at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance

Centre. The team will depart for New Zealand from Karachi via Dubai in the wee hours of 24 November.

Chief Selector Saleem Jaffar: "Given the challenges our batters faced in Bangladesh, the selection committee have made strategic changes for the New Zealand tour."

"Omaidha Sohail and Shawaal Zulfiqar's consistent performances for Pakistan A recently have earned them a well-deserved spot in the squad, addressing the concerns we identified in the previous series in our batting department."

"Looking at the conditions in New Zealand, we have also focused on strengthening our fast bowling department. With the return of Fatima Sana, we are hopeful her experience and skill set will be invaluable, particularly

in the challenging conditions we expect in New Zealand."

Pakistan Women's squad for New Zealand tour

Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Bismah Maroof, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najjha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaidha Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar

Player support personnel: Nahida Khan (manager), Mahtashim Rashid (interim head coach), Saleem Jaffar (bowling coach), Taufiq Umar (batting coach), Muhammad Asfand Yar (strength and conditioning coach), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager), Rifat Asghar Gill (physiotherapist) and Zubair Ahmed (analyst)

Series schedule of Pakistan



Women vs New Zealand Women
12 Dec - 1st ODI, Queenstown (ICC Women's Championship)
3 Dec - 1st T20I, Dunedin
18 Dec - 3rd ODI, Christchurch (ICC Women's Championship)
5 Dec - 2nd T20I, Dunedin
15 Dec - 2nd ODI, Christchurch (ICC Women's Championship)
9 Dec - 3rd T20I, Queenstown

Guardian-2023 Culminates

Group photo of Pakistan and Chinese Navy senior officials after closing ceremony of Bilateral Exercise Sea Guardian 2023.



Pak-China Joint Naval Exercise Sea Guardian-2023 culminates

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Closing Ceremony of bilateral exercise Sea Guardian-2023 between Pakistan Navy and Peoples Liberation Army (Navy) of China was held at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. The exercise was conducted at Karachi and North Arabian Sea, in which six Chinese Navy units

including Destroyer, Frigates, Submarine, Oil tanker and Rescue ship along with a detachment of marines participated.

The Exercise included a wide range of operational manoeuvres encompassing major facets of Anti-Surface, Anti-Air, Mine Warfare and Special Operations in simulated multi threat environment

to provide optimum training value. The aim of exercise was to further enhance maritime cooperation and defence relations through mutual exchange of maritime experience and interoperability between the two navies.

Concurrent to Chinese PLA (Navy) ships' visit, Commander Qingdao Naval Base Rear Admiral Liang Yang also visit-

ed Pakistan. Besides attending the closing ceremony, the Flag Officer called on Commander Coast, Commander Pakistan Fleet and other senior PN officials. During interaction matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed.

Exercise Sea Guardian-23 proved mutually rewarding

to hone professional skills of participating navies and a forum to learn from each other's experiences. Regular conduct of bilateral naval exercise is a manifestation of mutual resolve to further enhance bilateral cooperation between the two navies. The closing ceremony was attended by a large number of officials from both the navies.

Pakistan, Russia agree to collaborate on counter-terrorism

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia have agreed to strengthen collaborative efforts to effectively combat terrorism, underscoring the mutual benefits of such cooperation, the Foreign Office said Friday. The two sides discussed the various forms of radicalization, the spread of terrorist ideologies, and the misuse of information and communication technologies for terrorist purposes, the FO said in a statement.

Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, Additional Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, and Ambassador Sergey Vershinin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation co-chaired the 10th meeting of the Pakistan-Russia Joint Working Group on 'Combating International Terrorism and Other Challenges to Security' held here on Thursday. The two sides resolved to work together in

combating the financing of terrorism and in other key areas of counter-terrorism. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both Pakistan and Russia to continue their cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The sides recognized the importance of their partnership in maintaining regional and global security. The two sides discussed at length the global and regional terrorist threats, with a particular focus on the situations in Afghanistan, Central and South Asia, and North Africa. The dialogue underscored the complexity of the terrorism landscape and the need for continued vigilance. Both sides outlined their respective national strategies and measures in combating terrorism. Pakistan and Russia shared their experiences and best practices, highlighting the importance of national efforts in the broader fight against terrorism.

Sanam Javed sent on 14-day judicial remand

Bureau Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore has sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed on 14-day judicial remand in the police attack case, ARY News reported on Friday.

The ATC Admin Judge Abher Gul Khan heard a case related to an attack on police officials against PTI activist Sanam Javed today. Javed was produced before the ATC by police after the completion of her physical remand.

The investigation officer (IO) told the court that Javed's photogrammetric test had been conducted.

The prosecutor apprised the ATC that Sanam Javed and other PTI activists hurled petrol bombs outside Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence in Lahore.

The DIG had been tortured and several police vans were torched, whereas, the accused incited the protestors to attack police officials, he added.

However, the police did not seek an extension in the physical remand. Later, the ATC sent the accused on 14-day judicial remand and adjourned the hearing.

AJK blessed with huge opportunities of investment in different fields: President Sultan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry Friday said that AJK offers huge opportunities for investment in different sectors. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of business community.

Referring to the region's favourable climate and investment-friendly environment, the president said that the private sector can invest in various sectors of AJK, besides its natural resources has huge human resources. The president said, "About 1.5 million people from AJK working in Europe, Middle East and North America." He said there was no law and order problem in Azad Jammu Kashmir while the literacy rate was higher than in other provinces of Pakistan. He said that the proposed gigantic triple M plan

of Muzaffarabad, Mansehra and Mirpur motorway and Dry port in the lake view city would further increase the scope of investment in the region. President Sultan said that some of the key sectors for investment in the State included hydel power generation, tourism, minerals, IT and small-scale industries. He assured the investors that they would be provided with all support and facilities at the government level. He said that the AJK has the potential to produce nine thousand megawatts while at present about 2500 megawatts of electricity are being generated from different power projects. "Azad Kashmir also has immense potential in tourism. We have lush green forests, meadows and captivating snow-clad peaks in the north and Mangala Lake at Mirpur in the south, which is good for water sports", the president said.

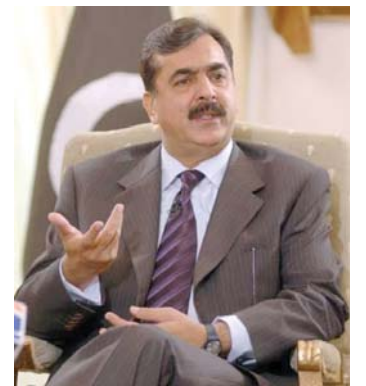
PPP to participate in the general election with full strength: Gillani

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The special meeting of Pakistan People's Party Multan Division was presided over by the President of Pakistan People's Party South Punjab and former Governor of Punjab Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood. Chief Coordinator South Punjab, Khawaja Rizwan Alam Senior Vice President South Punjab, Natasha Daultana General Secretary South Punjab, Haider Zaman Qureshi, Mahmoud Hayat Tochi participated. On this occasion, Former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said that People's Party participated in the election 2024 with full strength. The manifesto of the party shows that the poor people are a symbol of prosperity.

During the meeting, the local leadership and workers of the PPP including

Malik Iqbal Randhawa, Babu Nafees Ahmad Ansari, Naveed Amir Jeeva, Saroor Abbas Chaudhry, Khalid Hanif Lodhi, Amdadul-



lah Abbasi, Malik Naseem Labar, Rao Sajid Ali, Usman Bhatti, Mir Wasiq, AD Baloch Rana Khalid Mahmood, Syed Ijaz Shah, Masood Javed Daha, Dr. Waqar Daha, Rana Abdul Rehman, Sardar Wahab Sultan, Chaudhry Shahid Bashir, Ali Raza Khakwani, M Saleem Raja, Chaudhry Yasin, Imran Shabbir, Sajid Khan Baloch, Hamid Ali Bhatti, Altaf Khan Chanar, Fawad Ijaz Khan, Malik Altaf Advocate, Irshad Ghazi, Zulfiqar Masoumi, Pir Jameel Shah, and others were present

Pak, Kenya resolves to strengthen health sector cooperation



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kenya on Friday agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the health sector. This was decided in a meeting held between the Ambassador of Kenya and the Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan.

Both sides agreed to ensure signing of MoU for cooperation in health sector between the two countries on a speedy basis. The MoU will include the promotion of laboratory medical tourism in the pharma sector, health systems integration and emergency response. The minister said that the Global Health Security Summit is being held in January. He presented an invitation to the Ambassador for

his participation in the Summit. He said that the aim of the conference was to prepare low-income countries to face the next global pandemic. The minister said that health was the basic right of every human being. We have to create such a system that no one is deprived of this right, he expressed.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the access to fair distribution of vaccines should be made possible. He said that developing countries would have to work together so that vaccines are not manipulated, adding that Pakistan had shown excellent performance in the Corona epidemic.

The international organizations should benefit from our experiences, he added.

Solangi felicitates Maldives newly elected President, Vice President during official reception

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Friday congratulated the newly elected Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu and Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan. He extended the felicitation in person during an official reception hosted after their oath-taking ceremony in Maldives, a news statement said.



The minister also greeted both the leaders during his meeting with them at the reception and extended the best wishes. The meeting between the Information Minister and the President of the Maldives is scheduled for Saturday.

KPCM inspects services delivery outlets in Swabi district

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Friday paid a surprise visit to Swabi district and inspected various public services delivery outlets including Bacha Khan Medical Complex, Government Higher Secondary School Kunda, City Police Station, and Patwar Khana Shah Mansoor. During his visit to Bacha Khan Medical Complex, he went around various sections of the hospital including OPD, Emergency, ICU, Medical Wards, and Laboratory.

Food Security Education, Technology Innovation Alliance inaugurated



Spokesman report

BEIJING: The Food Security Education and Technology Innovation Alliance was inaugurated in Chengdu, China. Initiated by Sichuan

Agricultural University (SAU), a total of 27 universities and institutes from China, Pakistan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Laos, Greece and Argentina joined the alliance, will deepen exchanges

and cooperation in food security, agricultural science and technology, and education among the countries along the Belt and Road route, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

It is learned that sharing educational resources, establishing joint laboratories and setting up international scientific projects in key areas of the agricultural sector are being planned in the alliance.

NIMA lectures on maritime affairs at National Defense University(NDU)



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), Islamabad organized lectures on Maritime related topics for students and members, Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS),

National Defense University Islamabad on 16 Nov 23. The lectures were attended by 60 x FCS / NDU students of BS, MPhil & PhD and faculty members. Director NIMA, Islamabad Cdre. Bilal Abdul Nasir extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guests.