

Sindhi Cultural Day celebrated with enthusiasm by Soormiyun at PNCA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Soormiyun, a cultural organization, in collaboration of Sindh Cultural Department and Takori hosted a vibrant and colorful celebration of Sindhi Cultural Day at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad. The event, held on December 3, 2023, aimed to showcase the rich heritage of Sindhi culture while emphasizing the importance of cultural harmony and empowering women belonging to diverse backgrounds and fields.

The event was presided over by Federal Education Minister Mr Madad Ali Sindhi. Federal Minister Information and Broadcasting Mr Murtaza Solangi graced the event as the chief guest, adding prestige to the Sindhi cultural program.

The theme of the event revolved around providing a platform for promoting cultural harmony, women role in mitigating the hazards of Global warming, and empowering women from various walks of life. The highlight



of the program was the performance of the captivating Soormiyun song, which beautifully encapsulated the spirits of Soormiyun working in Islamabad.

Throughout the celebration, various activities were organized to foster cultural understanding and importance of unity. Tabloos showcasing the diversity of Sindhi culture, as well as panel discussions, were conducted to promote cultural harmony, peace, women role in climate change and

gender equality by women empowerment.

Gulnaz Sheikh, the founder of Soormiyun, expressed that these programs extend beyond a one-day event. According to Sheikh, Sindh is the land of Sufism and we being Shah Latif's Soormiyun are spreading the main message of cultural diversity, love, peace, and gender equality within cultural values by empowering women. Sheikh emphasized, "Soormiyun

envisions a society where there is no place for extremism but cultural diversities flourish and are celebrated and today's event is a testament to our commitment to fostering these ideals."

In this event people from all communities were invited and it not only showcased the vibrant Sindhi culture but also served as a reminder of the power of cultural exchange in promoting understanding and unity among diverse communities.

Nazim Shah was one of the founding members of Pakistan People's Party: Former PM

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that Nazim Hussain Shah is one of the founding members who not only brought the existence of the party together with Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto but also kept his party active in the democratic struggle. He (deceased) has the honor of not only working under the leadership of all the leaders of Pakistan People's Party including Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed, Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari, but also elected as a member of the Provincial Assembly. I have had a long political journey with Syed Nazim Hussain Shah when I joined the Pakistan People's Party.

He stood by me and my son Abdul Qadir Gillani from 1988 to 2018 till his life. That is why he is recognized as a prominent politician of the region in South Punjab. He expressed these



views during his speech at the anniversary gathering of former Provincial Minister of Punjab Syed Nazim Hussain Shah.

On this occasion, Syed Jawad Murtaza Naqvi prayed, Barrister Mudassar Shah Naqvi, Syed Liaqat Ali Shah, Syed Ali Yasir Shah Naqvi, Syed

Ahmed Mujtabi Geelani, Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Kamran Mudal, Malik Naseem Labar were in the prayer.

Rao Sajid Ali, Shamail Shah, Arif Shah, AD Baloch, Iftikhar Ahmed, Sajid Baloch, Mumtaz Noor Tyingra and others are participating. At the end, Barrister Mudassar Shah Naqvi

thanked all the guests and Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani. He said that my father had started his political journey with you and I am lucky that I am starting my political journey with you, now this political journey will continue with you and the people of the constituency.

Pakistan is providing full support to stabilize the economy: Mahesh Mishra

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Mahesh Mishra, Head of Economy and Trade, British High Commission, Islamabad, said that Pakistan is providing full support to stabilize the economy. Various programs are also ongoing in the provinces of Pakistan. They are also providing assistance to increase employment opportunities in the SME sector and to eliminate the problems faced by Pakistani businessmen in accessing British markets. On this occasion, Senior Economic Adviser of British High Commission Islamabad, Mr. Louis Denny, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan, Mian Rashid Iqbal, Senior Vice President Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh, Khawaja Muhammad Hussain,



Khawaja Muhammad Usman, Sheikh Faisal Saeed, Dawood Muhammad Tariq Khan, Elahi, Aurangzeb Alamgir, Syed Saqib Ali, Chaudhary Muhammad Azam, Saleha

Hassan, Muniba Almani and Secretary Ewan Muhammad Shafiq and others were present. Mahesh Mishra said that our mission is to stabilize Pakistan economically. They are in touch with the business community and are also visiting different cities. The visit to Multan is also a link in the same chain. Regarding Multani mango, he said its aroma and taste is unique. On arrival in Multan, visited the Blue Pottery Institute where the masterpieces of the artisans were seen. Multani Blue Pottery has a unique position in the world today, which is very popular. Mahesh Mishra further said that Pakistan is providing support in increasing the tax net so that the pressure on existing tax payers can be reduced and new tax payers can be attracted.

14 terrorists arrested from banned organizations: CTD spokesman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Punjab province has foiled a major terror plot by arresting 14 suspected terrorists linked with a banned out-fits during operations in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 147 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 147 suspected persons were interrogated and 14 alleged terrorists were arrested with weapons, explosives and other prohibited materials.

Among the arrested terrorists are Muhammad Safin Ahmed, Ansar Ali, Waheedullah, Saad Habib Al-Madani, Abdul Salam, Qamar-ul-Zaman, Muhammad Zahid Asad, Khair Din, Hafiz Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Amjad, Bilal Usman, Ali Akbar, Shahab.

And Imran, he said and added that they belong to the banned organizations Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Daesh and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The arrest of these alleged terrorists was carried out during intelligence-based operations in Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Sargodha and Lahore, he added.

He said that the 1580 grams of explosives, 08 detonators, 13 feet of safety fuse wire, 02 mobile phones and 6480 rupees in cash have been recovered from the possession of the terrorists.

He said that explosive material 2843 grams, hand grenades 03, IED bombs 04, detonators 12, safety fuse wire 19.5 feet, prima card 6.5 feet, pamphlets of banned organization 39, stickers 10, receipt books 04, a mobile phone and RS. 43440 in cash were recovered from the possession of terrorists.

The spokesman said that the terrorists had planned to sabotage across the province and wanted to target important installations. The police have registered 13 cases against the terrorists and shifted them to an unknown location, he added.

He said that 588 combing operations were also conducted during this week with the help of local police and security agencies, 25360 persons were checked, 79 suspects were arrested, 78 FIRs were registered and 29 recoveries were made during these

Review of arrangements of 6th convocation at Women's University: Dr Kalsoom

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Sixth convocation of Women University will be held today, participation of students and faculty members in full dress rehearsal, arrangements completed. According to the spokesman, the 6th convocation of Women University will be held tomorrow at Monday on November 4, at Women University, Matlail Campus, the arrangements of which The final shape has been given and the security has also been tightened. The management committees have been instructed to take steps according to the prescribed SOPs. The convocation was rehearsed last day, in which Vice Chancellor Dr. Kulsoom Pracha and Registrar Maimoona Khan. Attended by the Controller and all faculty members, the students were briefed about the seating arrangements and instructed to maintain discipline and maintain the sanctity of the convocation.

And will get up from the seat only when the name is called. At the end of the convocation, they will go out of the hall according to the instructions. The controller of examinations said that in this event, the students of the four-year BS program session 2021-23 and session 2019-23 will be included in all the scholars. Degrees will be awarded while 50 gold medals will be given. Vice-Chancellor Kulsoom Pracha said that discipline should be maintained to make the main event memorable and the prescribed SOPs should be followed.

PESCO Dera 1050 FIRs registered, 890 thieves arrested & 73 crore recovered



Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: On the instructions of the federal government and the Ministry of Energy, operations are taking place in Dera Ismail Khan as well in the country under the leadership of Superintendent Engineer Sardar Aslam Khan Gandapur in PESCO Dera Circle.

The campaign against electricity thieves and recovery of PESCO arrears started from 7th September 2023 is continuing rapidly without any pressure.

Superintendent Engineer Sardar Aslam Khan Gandapur told the media that PESCO customers pay their PESCO arrears on time. Power theft is a crime, PESCO customers should install their meters and get your bills fixed.

He told that till now 1412 letters have been sent to the respective police stations in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan against electricity thieves in this campaign which has been going on since September 7.

He said, Out of which 1050 cases were registered and 890 electricity thieves have been arrested.

He said, on the basis of more than 80% losses, 22 feeders of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan have been completely shut down from the grade station.

Students Celebrate Sindhi Culture Day in Changsha City of China

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

CHANGSHA: The colours of Sindhi culture were witnessed in Changsha a historic city of China where Sindhi students studying in different Universities of the city celebrated Sindhi culture day on Sunday. Different segments were organised at the event to mark the Sindhi culture day that has been commemorated across the world since 2010. The event was participated by a considerably large number of students hailing from China, India and other countries of the world who were apprised about



the importance of Sindhi culture in South Asia and its historical significance. Speakers at the event shed light on the importance of culture for nations and the thing that people should learn from Sindhi culture. The event commenced with the cake-cutting ceremony and different cultural performances by the participants, question answer sessions regarding Sindh, s history

and dance performances. The event was sponsored and organised by a team of Sindhi students seeking education in different institutions of China since 2018. The team led by Khawaja Ashfaq included Sain Buux Jamali, Ahsan Nizamani, Basit Mangi, Shafat Jatoi, Fazal Khoso Nek Muhammad Katpahr and others. They told this correspondent on a video call that they have been instrumental in organising cultural events in China and supporting Pakistani students in China to continue their studies without any hurdle. They said that representing their culture abroad was an honour to them.

Kashmir Council Europe to organize Kashmir's EU Week in Brussels in 2023

Sohail Anjum Malik

BRUSSELS: Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) will organize the Kashmir's EU Week from 5th to 15th December 2023 in the European Headquarters Brussels.

This was announced by Chairman of KC-EU Ali Raza Syed in a statement in Brussels today. The events include seminars, discussions, a media conference, a photo exhibition at European Press Club Brussels and European parliament. Beside these international events, there would also be several meetings with the European officials, members of European parliament and representatives of civil society and human rights organizations during the



Kashmir EU Week.

Chairman Kashmir Council Europe Ali Raza Syed said, the weeklong programs of Kashmir's EU week are being organized by Kashmir Council

EU for many years and purpose of such events is to highlight the beauty of the Kashmir's culture side by side the focusing on miseries of oppressed Kashmiris in Europe.

He expressed fear that as the world is currently focused on the tense situation in Europe (Ukraine) and the Middle East, the Modi government will take advantage of this situation to carry out some heinous act in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. So that India can maintain its illegal possession of this region for a long time. Genocide of Kashmiris, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests and crude tactics like amendment of domicile laws to change the Kashmiri population ratio are part of Indian nefarious motives.

IS National Day of Thailand Marked

Minister IT hails Thai leadership for 'branch of ancient civilization'



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology (IT) & Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif paid tributes to the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand for leading the country and the masses on the path of unprecedented economic growth in diverse sectors such as Food Industry, Tourism, Information Technology and aviation, etc.

He was speaking as Chief Guest at a reception hosted by Ambassador of Thailand Mr. Chakkrid Krachaiwong and Mrs. Pornrat Krachaiwong to celebrate the National Day of Thailand in Serena Islamabad.

The national day also coincided with the Birthday Anniversary of the late King Bhumibol and Thailand's Father's Day. It is my great honour to address the reception of a country I have always wished to visit and have indeed visited it on many occasions, said Dr. Umar Saif adding Thailand served as a case history for being a country of unique potential and huge economic growth.

"Today, 70pc of computers' hard disks are manufactured in Thailand besides the country is also home to thousands of years' ancient civilization," he said.

Pakistan too he said boasts of Indus Civilization that is around 5,000 years old and its ancient sites such as Taxila and Swat are respected and revered in Thailand for being the cradle of Buddhist civilization, said the Minister.

The reception was designed by the organizers to showcase the rich Thai culture, Thai food and Thai colours, reminding one of the reasons why Thailand is the no.1 tourist destination in the world.

"Thai culture, Thai food and Thai colours, reminding one of the reasons why Thailand is the no.1 tourist destination in the world"

Earlier in his welcome address, Ambassador Chakkrid Krachaiwong explained it was in fact December 5, the national day of the country and is commemorated as the National Day of the Kingdom.

December 5 is also recognized by the UN as the World Soil Day to acknowledge the late King



lute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. However, in 1920, the country declared its national day as April 6, or Chakri Memorial Day, which commemorates the establishment of the current Chakri Dynasty when King Rama I ascended the throne in 1782.

Following the Siamese Revolution in 1932, then-prime minister Phraya Phahon Phonphayuhasena issued an order on July 18, 1938, to designate June 24 as national day to commemorate the country's transformation from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.

A grand inaugural celebration of the new national day was held the following year on June 24 under the government led by Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram.

In 1939, Plaek marked national day by declaring a change in the country's name from Siam to Thailand.

Between 1939 and 1948, the national day was celebrated for three consecutive days, from June 23 to 25. From 1949, the day was marked on June 24 only.

Another change came two decades later when then-prime minister Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat announced his government's decision to recognize December 5, King Bhumibol's birthday, as "the nation's day of celebration", in place of the June 24 national day.



Bhumibol's contributions in soil science for the improvement of livelihood of people.

Throughout his 70-year reign, His Majesty dedicated himself to improve the wellbeing of his people under the "Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy" which uses knowledge and virtue as guidelines in living.

About bilateral relations, he said Thailand and Pakistan enjoyed diplomatic relations for the last 72 years but these ties have been established for more than 2,000 years through the Gandhara route.

He also referred to the historical visit of the venerable Monk Phra Anil Sakyia and said Phra Anil Sakyia belonged to the same family that Lord Buddha himself was from. He was here in Pakistan to attend the Gandhara Symposium in July this year. I am confident that these unique ties would grow stronger as we move forward with our relationship, he said.

He said, the year 2023 is an exciting year for Thailand - Pakistan relations. Many historical moments have happened that reflect our strong ties/ and promising future.

He said, while Thailand is always proud to host visitors from Pakistan for tourism purpose, he wished Pakistanis to consider Thailand's world-class health care and wellness services and internationally recognized educational institutions.

We can also benefit from skillful IT experts from Pakistan /and Thailand's advanced IT infrastructures/ to create a powerful global IT powerhouse supporting world businesses.

I am excited to meet a team of Thai cyclists who biked from Islamabad to Gilgit for 2 months. They came back with unforgettable memories of the locals/ they met along the way. With the shared values we have in living in peace and harmony, is the reason why we feel very connected and are able to create bonds with the Pakistanis in no time.

He added, another historical event that happened this year is that, for the first time, Thailand, a country with no history in Cricket has set foot in Pakistan when the Thailand Emerging Women Cricket Team came here to compete in T20/ with West Indies and Pakistan. Having the

opportunity to compete in this tournament not only helps them gain more experiences but also help create bond and friendship among the players.

As an active member of ASEAN, Thailand has worked closely with our ASEAN family in Islamabad to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in 3 pillars of ASEAN which are Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural.

About bilateral trade, he said Pakistan Thailand total trade had reached US\$ 1.65 billion in 2022 but there was much more both countries could do to enhance trade under the Pakistan National Single Window.

History of Thai national day

December 5, the birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, has been marked as Thailand's national day since May 1960. But the day is often celebrated as Father's Day and the birth anniversary of the highly revered monarch.

But Thai national day is now a topic of hot public debate after Move Forward MP Rangsiman Rome said recently that his party - now leading an effort to form a

new coalition government - will push to change its date to June 24.

Rangsiman said the change was originally proposed by Move Forward's predecessor, the now-dissolved Future Forward Party, when it was in opposition.

On June 24, 1932, during the reign of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII), Khana Ratsadon (the People's Party) - a group of mostly foreign-educated bureaucrats, military officers, and civilians - seized power in a bloodless coup. What later became known as the Siamese Revolution transformed Thailand from an abso-

Sarit's announcement stated that it was "improper" to designate June 24 as the national day since many countries with a monarch as head of state recognize their birthday as national day while Thailand had also recognized a royal birthday as national day before.

In February 2017, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha issued a PM's Office announcement that His Majesty the King's command called for December 5 to be marked as the previous king's birthday, Father's Day, and the national day.

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Caring disables a national obligation-II

If we consider the neoliberal economic model at the household level, consumerism has been spreading like a virus in the West for years – a philosophy of excessive consumption and commodifying fetishism propped up by the vicious practice of “easy” loans and aggressive marketing. This model of consumer behaviour is deliberately introduced through the so-called international and independent media so that Western manufacturers can monopolise global markets. In the pursuit of profit, corporations use sophisticated advertising to promote unnatural and excessive needs among consumers.

2. Politics.
 The partisans of neoliberalism have been trying to make it look as if the United States and West European countries are based on the principles of “liberal democracy.” That dubious assertion is not the subject of this article. We will look at the component parts of the “democracy” which the West is trying to spread around the world.

It has been apparent for a long time that democracy in its neoliberal interpretation is not power or government by the people or even power by the majority of people. It is power by a minority of society over the rest of it, allegedly for its benefit. There are no clear criteria for a “democracy for export,” which has a narrow explanation as a set of pseudo-democratic “rituals,” such as the dogmatic principle of the “alternation of power.” It is imposed on sovereign states when they try to pursue a nationally-oriented policy. Blinded by their political and propaganda aspirations, they overlook an “insignificant trifle,” that is, the decision of the majority expressed during elections or a plebiscite to keep a certain politician in the leading position. At the same time, they prefer to “forget” about simi-

lar precedents in the Western democracies, such as the four terms of US President Roosevelt or the 16 years of Angela Merkel’s leadership in Germany.

Democratic procedures in Western countries long ago turned into a way of legalising power and they have nothing to do with the rotation of elites in the leadership of these countries. Political dynasties have been holding the reins in many countries, from Belgium to the United States, for decades. It is not surprising that the term “deep state” has become popular or that big monopoly business has dominant positions in Western governments, because pseudo-democracy is designed to serve its interests.

Another Western “democratic value” is “free and fair” elections. The level of “freedom” depends on the existence of “independent” media foreign agents who are controlled by the West, and “fairness” depends on allowing “independent,” that is pro-Western, candidates or parties to take part in elections and on ensuring results that will satisfy the West. One more prerequisite of “freedom and justice” is the certification of the election process and results by Western-appointed missions of foreign observers under the umbrella of the ODIHR, the OSCE or other tame organisations. It goes without saying that no truly independent country permits such external diktat in relation to elections, as a crucial backbone institution.

Another neoliberal method is to distort the concept of human rights by prioritising political and civil rights and at the same time depreciating socioeconomic and cultural rights. The West has no regard whatsoever for the rights of “non-Westerners,” despite the fact that

human rights are declared an absolute value in the West, that is, even more important than national security. The United States and its satellites are using this approach to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. There is a long list of “colour revolutions,” none of which improved people’s lives. Western experts working in the interests of defence industries say that it is necessary to lend international legitimacy to these technologies and have invented various concepts towards this end, such as the right of non-systemic opposition in “authoritarian regimes” to receive foreign assistance. [2]

Contrary to the proclaimed principle of freedom of speech, the neoliberal West is implementing a “digital Gulag” project, that is, total control by IT giants and oligarchic clans over public opinion and historical memory. They are using mechanisms of covert censorship and deleting “undesirable” accounts and their content to suppress dissent, turning a blind eye to the fact that this amounts to a flagrant infringement of the right to freedom of opinion. The reality of life in the West includes the electronic surveillance of politically “unreliable” people and the use of virtual algorithms in the media sphere to manipulate the public.

A vivid example is the campaign of Russophobia unleashed in the West. Anti-Russian racism, meaning the broad use of hate speech towards Russia and the Russians, has become a fact of life that is regarded as politically correct in the West. The Western media and public opinion leaders are promoting chauvinistic tales about Russia based on the use of dehumanising and alienating rhetoric with regard to Russian people and false ideas of “collective responsibility”

for the security crisis created by the West itself and, consequently, about the need for “collective punishment” of Russians. This media campaign is being fostered by modern-day Western politicians and has all the elements of totalitarian propaganda.

The rampant encouragement of the neoliberal ideology has turned the Western institutional media and social networks into a hornets’ nest of biased journalists, promoters, lobbyists and pseudo-activists, who are helping the authorities to wage an information war against Russia. The once “independent journalism” is no more. The few exceptions, such as Tucker Carlson and Seymour Hersh, only prove the rule.

The neoliberal “moral compass” of the West even allows the forms of ethnic and language hatred that was outlawed after WWII and the Rwandan genocide. It is notable that this approach has not been condemned, not to the least degree, by the passive international organisations whose executive bodies have been “privatised” by the West. For more than nine years, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) turned a blind eye to the death of Donbass children during Ukrainian armed attacks. UNESCO did not react to the assassinations of Russian public figures such as Darya Dugina and Vladlen Tatarsky, or to the attempt on the life of Zakhar Prilepin. The information provided by the few Western journalists working in the zone of the special military operation and who are able to report the truth is not allowed to reach the Western societies, and these journalists are blacklisted.

3. Society.
 Neoliberal views on ethics and culture, as well as on history and social relations, are in conflict with the worldview of those who adhere to traditional values.

To be Continued



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

Pakistani-American entrepreneurs’ contribution to Pak economy

Pakistan’s Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, Saturday met top Pakistani-American entrepreneurs and professionals from Washington metropolitan area, saying he was proud of their successes in running their enterprises in the U. S. “You have been making direct and indirect contributions to Pak-US relations in different roles and you have been contributing directly to Pakistan’s economic development,” the Ambassador told them, according to a press release from the Pakistani embassy.

The diverse group was composed of Pakistani-American businessmen who have excelled in various fields including tech, finance, banking, and services and sectors. Presidents, CEOs and senior executives of noted companies, including KabaFusion, Deloitte, Organization of Pakistani Entrepreneurs of North America (OPEN), The Citizen Foundation (TCF), Sirhandi Companies, TRG Group, Novacloud, Facebook and others were present on the occasion. “Your success,” said the Ambassador, is a common denominator that makes us proud here in the United States and Pakistan.” Dr. Sohail Masood, CEO KabaFusion and holder of the Entrepreneur of “The Year 2023 National Award”, and Ms. Ambreen Mirza, President & CEO of OPEN Global, were recognized on the occasion, the press release said. Dr. Masood narrated how KabaFusion became one of the leading healthcare providers of the United States, and said that his firm was in the process of acquiring another company, taking its worth to \$4 billion. He told the gathering that he had provided jobs to 70 people in Pakistan in the past few months and that this number will grow. Ms. Mirza, CEO of OPEN Global, said that her firm, established 25 years ago by a small group of technology entrepreneurs in Boston, has grown to a network of over 100,000 people across 5 continents with chapters in eight countries. She said that OPEN comprised entrepreneurs and professionals who were undertaking various initiatives in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, climate change and others. “Not only are we getting the attention of the Pakistani government, but we have become a brand among non-Pakistanis,” Ms. Mirza told the cheering gathering. Zaina Bankwalla, Chairperson of OPEN, Washington DC chapter, also spoke on the occasion and invited Pakistani-American entrepreneurs and professionals to reap the benefits of the organization by becoming part of the OPEN fraternity.

Journey from Despair to Hope with General Asim Munir - I

Pakistan, a nation boasting a rich history and diverse cultural heritage, confronts an array of challenges spanning economic, social, political, and security realms. While commendable progress has been made in various areas, persistent issues continue to impede the country’s advancement.

Economically, Pakistan grapples with challenges such as inflation, unemployment, and a sizable informal economy. Fiscal deficits and concerns about the balance of payments persist, hindering sustained economic growth. Obstacles like energy shortages, inconsistent policies, and challenges in tax collection further complicate development efforts.

The energy crisis, marked by insufficient power generation capacity, transmission losses, and circular debt, remains a longstanding challenge. Addressing this requires comprehensive and sustained efforts in enhancing power generation and distribution infrastructure.

Political instability and governance issues are recurrent themes, with political unrest, leadership changes, and corruption allegations impacting long-term policy implementation. Strengthening democratic institutions and promoting good governance are pivotal in overcoming these challenges.

Security challenges, both internal and external, encompass terrorism, extremism, sectarian violence, and regional tensions, particularly with India. Ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and establish regional stabil-

ity are vital for Pakistan’s security. Water scarcity, exacerbated by population growth, inefficient water management, and climate change, poses a pressing issue. Sustainable water management practices and infrastructure development are imperative to address the implications for agriculture, a significant component of the economy.

Despite recent progress, challenges persist in providing quality education and healthcare. High dropout rates, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and disparities in access to services contribute to overall developmental challenges. Social issues, including gender inequality, poverty, and limited social services in marginalized areas, continue to affect the well-being of the population. Efforts to promote social inclusion, gender equity, and poverty alleviation are essential for fostering a more equitable society.

Pakistan has grappled with severe financial crises, particularly in recent years. During this period, the Pakistan Army has emerged as a key player in the country’s economic development, extending beyond its traditional role in national security. The military has strategically engaged in various initiatives aimed at revitalizing the economy, showcasing a broader commitment to fostering national prosperity and stability.

One noteworthy initiative involves the Pakistan Army’s active participation in infrastructure development projects. The military has played a pivotal role in constructing roads, bridges, and other critical infrastruc-

ture, enhancing connectivity and stimulating economic activity by generating employment opportunities and facilitating the movement of goods and services.

Additionally, the Pakistan Army has been instrumental in disaster response and relief efforts, swiftly providing assistance during natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes. This proactive approach not only saves lives but also aids in the reconstruction of affected areas, injecting funds into local economies.

Recognizing the importance of a secure environment for economic activities, the Pakistan Army has actively secured economic zones, creating a safe space for local and foreign businesses to operate. This not only safeguards investments but also promotes economic growth and job creation.

Beyond disaster response, the military has engaged in various humanitarian assistance programs, including healthcare initiatives such as establishing and supporting medical facilities, conducting health camps in remote areas, and contributing to disease prevention efforts. These endeavors significantly contribute to the overall well-being of the nation by ensuring a healthy population, crucial for economic productivity.

Understanding the pivotal role of education and skill development in economic growth, the Pakistan Army has initiated programs to empower the youth. Educational initiatives, vocational training, and scholarships aim to equip the younger generation with the skills needed to contribute effectively to the workforce and, consequently, the economy.

To be continued

Challenges for SMEs in Pakistan and Way Forward

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) represent the bulk of businesses around the world and are a major source of job creation, export promotion, and global economic development. SMEs account for 90 percent of businesses and over 40 percent of employment worldwide. SMEs in Pakistan are also considered the backbone of the economy as they represent over 90 percent of businesses, employ over 80 percent of the non-agricultural workforce, and contribute to over 40 percent of Pakistan’s total exports. They are doing business in a wide range of sectors, including textiles, leather, sports goods, surgical instruments, steel, marble, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, edible oil, food processing, and many others.

However, SMEs in Pakistan are facing many challenges that hinder their growth and development. One of the biggest challenges being faced by SMEs in Pakistan is limited access to finance. Most of these businesses have to struggle to secure loans due to the high collateral requirements and complicated application processes. This leads to a lack of investment, which consequently limits the ability of SMEs to expand and innovate.

Another major challenge SMEs face in Pakistan is inadequate infrastructure such as poor roads, limited access to energy, and outdated technology. This makes it difficult for SMEs to transport goods and get easy access to markets domestically and internationally. The high energy cost and frequent interruptions in energy supply often cause disruption in the production process of SMEs and reduce their profit margins. The regulatory environment in Pakistan is also not conducive for SMEs as these businesses have to contend with high taxes, bureaucratic hurdles, and a lack of transparency. This not only increases the cost of doing business for SMEs but also gives rise to uncertainty and discourages investment. Finally, SMEs have to face the challenge of inadequate human resource development in Pakistan as lack of skilled labor, limited access to training & development opportunities, and poor labor productivity create obstacles in their growth. Therefore, addressing these challenges is very important to ensure the smooth growth and development of SMEs in Pakistan.

Way Forward
 There are several ways to create an enabling environment for SMEs and facilitate their better growth in Pakistan.

Easy Access to Finance: The first key requirement is to

provide SMEs an easy access to finance by providing them cheaper loans and other financing options. This can be done by reducing collateral requirements, simplifying the application process, and providing loan guarantees and other forms of support to SMEs.

Better Infrastructure: The other key requirement is to invest in infrastructure for SMEs including better roads, uninterrupted energy supply, and the latest technology. This can be achieved by promoting public-private partnerships, encouraging foreign investment, and government initiatives aimed at improving the country’s physical and digital infrastructure. Improving infrastructure will not only help SMEs in transporting goods and accessing markets but will also increase their competitiveness and productivity.

Simple Regulations: Simplifying regulations, cutting down lengthy regulatory requirements, and reducing bureaucratic hurdles will make things easier for SMEs to do business. This can be done by reducing taxes, streamlining the registration process, and improving the transparency of government procedures. Such measures will definitely reduce the cost of doing business for SMEs and create a more business-friendly environment for them to flourish.

Focus on Human Resource Development: Skilled manpower can put SMEs on the path of fast growth. Investing in human resource development would make the availability of skilled workforce easier for SMEs and boost their growth. The government provide training and development opportunities to ensure skilled labor for SMEs and promote entrepreneurship. This can be done through partnerships with educational institutions, industry associations, and government agencies.

Supportive Measures: Promoting exports and developing international markets can help SMEs to grow and expand. This can be achieved by providing support for market research, trade missions, and export promotion activities.

Pakistan’s fragile economy badly needs an ecosystem for SMEs to increase exports and improve the insufficient foreign exchange reserves. In short, facilitating the growth of SMEs in Pakistan would bring multiple benefits to the country as it will create more jobs, increase exports, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, and pave the way for sustainable economic growth and a prosperous future for Pakistan.

The writer is working for a trade association in Pakistan

COMSTECH International Workshop on Biosafety Kicks Off



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: An International Workshop on Biosafety and Biosecurity, titled "Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Biosafety and Biosecurity Regimes for a Secure Future", jointly organized by the Government of Kazakhstan and COMSTECH, was inaugurated at the COMSTECH Secretariat on 3rd December. COMSTECH is the OIC Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation and is hosted by Pakistan.

The inaugural session was addressed by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, the Coordinator General of COMSTECH; the Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin; the representative of the OIC General Secretariat, Mr. Arman Tynybek; Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, Chair of Workshop Technical Committee, and Prof. Dr. S. Khurshid Hasanain, Focal Person of the Workshop.

The speakers highlighted the urgent and timely nature of the Kazakhstan initiative in the wake of emerging threats to biosecurity and biosafety, and detailed the background of the Workshop and the continuing cooperation between COMSTECH and Kazakhstan in various fields of science and Technology.

Government's initiative to increase federal excise duty on cigarettes



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Health activists in Pakistan express their gratitude to the government for taking a crucial step in safeguarding both public health and the economy by raising 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), the health activists underscored the need of proactive steps by government to address the dual challenge of public health and economic sustainability.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, emphasized the economic benefits associated with higher tobacco taxation. He stated, "The increase in Federal Excise Duty on cigarettes is a commendable move by the government, reflecting a commitment to promoting public health and strengthening the nation's economy. Higher taxes on tobacco products not only discourage smoking but also contribute significantly to revenue generation."

Dr. Khalil Ahmed Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, highlighted the impact of tobacco consumption on child rights. He urged the government to stay resolute in its efforts to secure the future of Pakistan's youth, stating, "Tobacco consumption is undeniably a child rights issue. By taking decisive actions such as increasing taxes on cigarettes, the government plays a crucial role in protecting the well-being and future prospects of our children."

Meher Kashif highlights Kuwait's investment to strengthen economic activities, boost bilateral relations

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said that Kuwait's \$10 billion investment in Pakistan will boost economic activities besides cementing bilateral relations between the two Muslim brotherly countries. Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Ch Faran Shahid Arain, he said this substantial financial commitment not only marks a milestone in the economic landscape of Pakistan but also stands as a testament to the enduring bonds, said a news release here.

Meher Kashif said this investment into Pakistan's economy is poised to act as a catalyst for robust economic activities.

Stock market performance is highly satisfactory

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Sheikh, said on Sunday that the Pakistan stock market is performing very well, which indicates improved confidence in the economy of the business community.

The stock market is outperforming the stock markets of many countries due to the confidence reposed by the IMF in Pakistan's economy, which has been handled well in the past few months, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also served as VP FPCCI, Chairman PVMA, and President ICCI, said in a statement issued here today that the crucial IMF package, commitment and action for fiscal discipline, and high corporate profits helped investors earn far higher returns than from investing in regional exchanges.

He added that investors who put their money in the Pakistan Stock Exchange just five months ago would have seen investments grow on average by percent, compared with a 3 to 5 percent growth in regional stock markets.

The business leader said that the performance of the KSE-100 over the last few months has been remarkable, and it closely coincides with several significant developments, including a deal with the IMF, foreign exchange-related agreements with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and a corporate rebound.

The data also shows that the stock market rally in Pakistan is driven by companies operating in the manufacturing and industrial sectors and those catering to the consumption economy, such as carmakers, he informed.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said that this optimism in the stock market was buoyed by reports saying



that Saudi Arabia and the UAE were releasing \$2 billion and \$1 billion, respectively, so Islamabad could shore up foreign exchange reserves.

Mitchell's Fruit Farms saw its stock price rise 142 percent over the year ending 29 November 2023. Similarly, the stock price of apparel seller Image Pakistan jumped 60 percent over the same period. Three auto companies, Honda Atlas Cars, Ghandhara Industries, and Hinopak Motors, were also among the top gainers during the last year.

On the manufacturing and industrial side, companies like Baluchistan Wheels, Leiner Pak Gelatine, National Silk & Rayon Mills, Kohinoor Power, and Macpac Films were among the top gainers.

However, he said, the consensus still seems to be that the Pakistani economy is still in some tough times, with the October 2023 update of the IMF's World Economic Outlook predicting a 0.5 percent contraction in GDP in 2023 and 2.5 percent growth.

Annual Christmas Market

ISLAMABAD: Diplomat women are busy buying clothes in a stall during Annual Christmas Market organized by German Embassy at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

77 Lakh 53 thousand 473 cotton bales arrived in the ginning factories

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) has released the data of arrival of cotton factories, according to which 77 lakh 53 thousand 473 bales of cotton arrived in the ginning factories of the country till November 30, 2023. Till November 30, 2022, 42 lakh 80 thousand 500 bales of cotton came to the factories. Compared to the same period of last year, 34 lakh 72 thousand 973 bales of cotton came to the factories more. The rate of increase was 81.13%. 37 lakh 36 thousand 749 bales of cotton have arrived in the factories of Punjab province, which is 12 lakh 21 thousand 582 bales more

the 2023-24 season. 286 ginning factories are operational in Punjab province and 35 lakh 98 thousand 680 bales of cotton have been produced. 60 thousand 653 bales of cotton in Multan district, 88 thousand 347 bales of cotton in Lodhran district, 2 lakh 12 thousand 710 bales of cotton in Khanewal district, 76 thousand 266 bales of cotton in Muzaffargarh district, 3 lakh 26 thousand 266 bales of cotton in Dera Ghazi Khan district, 31 thousand 56 bales of cotton in Rajanpur district. 5 bales of cotton in Leh district 2 lakh 13 thousand 58 bales of cotton, district 2 lakh 8 thousand 872 bales of cotton in Wahari, 1 lakh 80 thousand 666 bales of cotton in Sahiwal district,

People impacted by ongoing LPG price rises

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the price of LPG is continuously increasing, which is affecting the people.

He said LPG cylinders are out of reach for the ordinary person; if their price cannot be controlled, taxes should be abolished in winter so that domestic consumers can get cheaper fuel.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that poor people are no longer able to afford LPG cooking and heating; they will start using wood again, which will be harmful to their health and environment.

Due to the continuous increase in the price of LPG, people living in the northern part of the country are more affected because the winters are consistently more

severe there, he observed.

The business leader said that due to the decrease in the price of crude oil in the global market, the cost of diesel, light diesel, and kerosene has been reduced in Pakistan, but the price of petrol



has been maintained, which is surprising and contrary to expectations.

The price of natural gas has also been increased excessively, so the industrialists are protesting, and he demanded that these issues be seriously considered.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that Pakistan is among the 54 coun-

tries that need debt relief because poverty is increasing rapidly due to inflation. At the same time, the government cannot relieve the people due to IMF restrictions.

The government is not allowed to relieve the masses but is free to increase the burden on the public.

Pakistan has not been able to pay its debts at this time. New loans pay old debts, and the debt is increasing quickly. By 30 June 2024, the obligation imposed on Pakistan will reach 820 trillion rupees, which will be impossible to pay.

Pakistan needs to attract FDI and climate financing as it is one of the worst affected countries facing acute climate changes, extreme temperatures, disappearing of glaciers, rain, and floods.

The floods affected more than 35 million people and blew a nearly \$20 billion black hole in the economy, and we will need foreign funding by 2030.

PFC to explore new markets at Gulf Expo Dubai

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq announced that PFC delegation was set to participate in 5-days Gulf Expo Dubai starting from February 19 to explore new market and promotion of bilateral trade.

Chairing board of directors meeting, he said, "The primary purpose of this visit is to explore and enhance the possibilities of expanding trade relations, fostering joint collaboration, and identifying potential investment avenues between two countries," said a news release issued here on Sunday.

He said, "During the visit, the delegation aims to engage in meaningful discussions with key stakeholders, government officials, and business leaders in United Arab Emirates (UAE)."

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said, "We are enthusiastic about the prospect of building lasting partnerships that will not only boost the furniture industry but also contribute to the overall economic development of both countries."



than the crop of 25 lakh 15 thousand 167 bales of cotton coming in the factories in the same period of last year.

The rate of increase in Punjab was 48.57 percent. 40 lakh 16 thousand 724 bales of cotton came to the factories in the Sindh province, which is 22 lakh 51 thousand 391 bales more than the 17 lakh 65 thousand 333 bales of cotton coming to the factories in the same period last year. The rate of increase in the province of Sindh was 127.53 percent. Till November 30, 2023, 75 lakh 30 thousand 392 bales of cotton were produced from the cotton coming into the factories. 415 ginning factories are operational in the country. Exporters/traders have purchased 290,626 bales of cotton this season, while the textile sector has purchased 67,55,905 bales of cotton.

The Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has not purchased cotton for

5 lakh 49 thousand 485 bales of cotton in Rahim Yar Khan district,

4 lakh 49 thousand 731 bales of cotton in Bahawalpur district, 9 lakh 26 thousand 337 bales of cotton in Bahawalnagar district have come to factories. 16 lakh 71 thousand 43 bales of cotton in Sanghar district, 1 lakh 35 thousand 900 bales of cotton in Mirpur Khas district, 1 lakh 78 thousand 615 bales of cotton in Nawab Shah district, 3 lakh 19 thousand 85 bales of cotton in Nau Shahr Feroze district, 3 lakh 44 thousand 439 bales of cotton in Khairpur district, 5 lakh 31 thousand 1 bales of cotton in Sukkur district. 02Gant Cotton, Distt 63 thousand 200 bales of cotton in Jamshoro and 2 lakh 21 thousand 95 bales of cotton in Hyderabad district and 1 lakh 85 thousand 421 bales of cotton in Balochistan province. There is unsold stock of 76,942 bales of cotton and cotton.

ICCI urges Pakistani Diaspora to play a role in reviving the economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan-US Alumni Network (PUAN) led by Salman Wahab, Alumni Engagement Coordinator of US Embassy visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed possibilities for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and the USA. The delegation represented various sectors including academia, engineering, entrepreneurs, and IT professionals.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry welcomed the PUAN delegation and urged that the Pakistani diaspora in the US should bring modern technology and invest in Pakistan to contribute to the economic revival of the country. He said that many members of the Pakistani diaspora have achieved good expertise, best business practices, and modern technology by doing business in the US and this is the time that they should explore Pakistan for joint ventures and investment to help the country achieve better growth.

Speaking on the occasion, Salman Wahab, Alumni Engagement Coordinator of the US Embassy said that

in 2008, the US Embassy Islamabad had launched the Pakistan-US Alumni Network, which is committed to making meaningful contributions to Pakistan through community service, conferences, mentoring future generations, and reaching out to inspire and recruit new exchange participants.

The delegation members reiterated their commitment that they would continue to strive to bring positive changes in Pakistan and would try to make a difference by contributing for the betterment of Pakistan.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the PUAN



delegation for visiting ICCI and stressed that both organizations should develop close liaison to bring the US investors including the Paki-

stani diaspora to invest in Pakistan and work for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and USA.

Exhibition reveals historical resonance of Uzbekistan & Pakistan: Jamal Shah

Uzbek Envoy expresses hope to advance bilateral ties

Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Mr. Jamal Shah inaugurated a captivating photo exhibition aiming to celebrate the 31st Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The splendid event was held in PNCA (Pakistan National Council of Arts) premises, and marked as a testament to the enduring cultural ties and shared heritage between the two nations. The Ambassador of Uzbekistan H. E. Oybek Usmanov, DG PNCA M. Ayoub Jamali, Dean of the diplomatic corps Amb Atajan Mavlamov, Ambassadors of Turkiye, Azerbaijan, Jordan, Chief of Mission TRNC, and a large number of visitors were present on the occasion.

Federal Minister Jamal Shah emphasized the exhibition's role in revealing the beauty, diversity, and historical resonance embedded within the joint cultural heritage of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He termed it as a visual narrative, weaving together the threads of shared traditions, artistic expressions, and the enduring legacy that continues to foster friendship and collaboration between the two countries. He reiterated the importance of cultural diplomacy in strengthening bonds and promoting mutual understanding between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He expressed confidence in the exhibition's role as a bridge, connecting the shared history and cultural affinities of both countries.

The exhibition, a collaborative effort, presented a retrospective collection of historical photographs displaying the active and dynamic interactions between leaders of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. It notably highlighted the contributions made by leaders, ministers, dignitaries, diplomats, and officials from both countries over the past three decades, fostering stronger bilateral and friendly ties. Federal Minister also appreciated Mr. Ramzan Mughal Photojournalist and Fazal Rabi Senior photographer work and contribution to the photo exhibition.

"Federal Minister also appreciated Mr. Ramzan Mughal Photojournalist and Fazal Rabi Senior photographer work and contribution to the photo exhibition".

In his opening remarks, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan Oybek Usmanov expressed his gratitude to participating guests and dignitaries and paid homage to the historical significance of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Ambassador extended heartfelt appreciation to the Federal Minister Jamal Shah, for his unwavering support and guidance in organizing the beautiful event. He also appreciated DG PNCA, and his team for their indispensable efforts, contributions, and excellent cooperation in arranging the exhibition. He said together we can show the Pakistani public and Diplomatic corps



ma Muhammad Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib are considered as a richest and common heritage of our religion. He particularly mentioned the brilliant work of Rahman Baba, Khushhal Khan Hattak, Allama Iqbal, Jalaluddin Rumi, Makhtumquli Fraghi, Sadridin Aini, Mirza Gholib, Alisher Navoi in the world's history, science, and culture.

The period of our interactions was brightly manifested during the era of the Ghandhara, Harappa civilizations, with the civilizations Saikhun and Jaihun rivers, Moghulistan and Khorasan cities -Samarqand, Bukhara, Khwarazm, Termiz which are the well-known centers of Islamic cultural enlightenment and sciences. He expressed hopes that all Pakistanis would be aware of the common great heritage of such dynasties as Amir Taymur's, and Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babar's. The great successors of Bukhari, Mughals, Barlas, Termizi, and Mirsas in Pakistan are bright followers of our connectivity, promoting mutual understanding among our nations. Adding further on bilateral ties he said during the last 3 years' bilateral trade increased via brotherly Afghanistan based on Transit and Preferential trade agreements. Every year the bilateral trade



the retrospective and historical photos demonstrating the very active dynamic interaction of Uzbek and Pakistani leaders – Presidents, Prime Ministers, federal ministers, Secretaries, additional secretaries, generals, DGs, ambassadors, and diplomats of our countries had made great input in cementing our ties through the 3 decades. Meanwhile, the Ambassador warmly greeted two distinguished Pakistani diplomats, Mr. Irfan Yusuf Shami and Mr. Riaz Ahmad Bukhari, acknowledging their tireless efforts in promot-

ing mutual relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The ambassador also extended warm appreciation to prominent experts, researchers, experts, and highly skilled journalists from both countries for their immense contribution to strengthening the connectivity of Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The Ambassador said after 3 decades of active interaction we should focus on the connectivity strategy of our two regions South Asia and Central Asia – implementation of the projects for boosting trade and economics, transport linkages-cultural

and people-to-people re-connectivity. Our connectivity logically emanates from the closeness of cultures and religious traditions-carawan's roads of Central Asia with South Asia-Pakistan, China, Afghanistan Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. He further added that the rich scientific and cultural legacy of such great Ulemas like Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam At-Termizi, Al-Motruadi, and Marghinani scholars as Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Al-Ferghany, Abu Raihan Al-Beruni, and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Allo-

is growing at 40-50% (\$317 million in 10 months 2023) and no doubt that our teams along with our colleagues will reach the goals of the recently signed 1 billion trade record.

In his conclusive remarks, he expressed confidence that with the valuable and tireless efforts of both countries, we will be able to gain remarkable results – strengthening people-to-people contacts and business-to-business forums while developing region-to-region connectivity.

Photos by Raja Farid

Xinhua president meets foreign media counterparts in Guangzhou

GUANGZHOU (XINHUA): Fu Hua, executive chairman of the World Media Summit (WMS) and president of Xinhua News Agency, held meetings with heads of several international media outlets on Saturday in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province.

The media leaders — Ahmed bin Saeed Al Rumaihi, director general of Qatar News Agency (QNA); Sakai Katsuhiko, president and CEO of Japan's Jiji Press; Fahd bin Hassan Al Aqran, president of Saudi Press Agency; Vugar Aliyev, chairman of the board of Azerbaijan State News Agency (AZERTAC); Koh Hyun Kohn, president and executive editor of the Joong-gang Ilbo of the Republic of Korea — are in China to attend the 5th WMS.

Extending a welcome to the media leaders, Fu stated that the summit is the largest offline media forum convened in China post-pandemic, as well as a grand event for global media.

Fu stated Xinhua's readiness to focus on the summit theme of "Boosting Global Confidence, Promoting Media Development" with media guests, and

jointly discuss how the global media industry can address global challenges and contribute to world peace, prosperity, and progress.

Ahmed bin Saeed Al Rumaihi said that the QNA valued its friendly cooperation with Xinhua and is willing to expand their collaboration to jointly embrace opportunities and tackle challenges, thus promoting the friendship between the peoples of Qatar and China.

Lauding the long-term and productive collaboration between Jiji Press and Xinhua, Sakai Katsuhiko said that Jiji Press is willing to make additional efforts to enhance mutual understanding between the peoples of China and Japan and contribute to safeguarding peace in Asia.

Fahd bin Hassan Al Aqran noted China's crucial role in international affairs and expressed the willingness of the Saudi Press Agency to strengthen exchanges with Xinhua, enhancing practical cooperation in various fields to better serve the development of relations between the two countries.

Vugar Aliyev noted that fruitful

results have been yielded since the establishment of cooperation between AZERTAC and Xinhua 20 years ago, and AZERTAC will continue to play an active part under the WMS mechanism.

Koh Hyun Kohn, on behalf of the Joong-gang Ilbo, expressed the hope to deepen bilateral and multilateral exchanges with Xinhua to promote the friendship between the two countries and the common development of the region.

The 5th WMS, which runs from Dec. 2 to 8 in the cities of Guangzhou and Kunming, gathers over 450 participants from 101 countries and regions, including representatives of 197 mainstream media outlets, think tanks, government agencies, diplomatic missions to China, as well as UN agencies and international organizations.

Earlier this week, Fu also met with leaders of TASS Russian News Agency, Kyodo News, and Reuters respectively in Beijing and held a high-level meeting with executives of Reuters, The Associated Press, and Agence France-Presse.



Noor, Asim moves in Int'l Squash C'ship final

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Noor Zaman and Muhammad Asim Khan have qualified for men's event final of the Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship to be held at Mushaf Squash Complex on Monday. Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with Pakistan Air Force (PAF)



and Serena Hotels was organizing Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship for Men & Women. Besides Pakistan, a group of 23 world ranking Men and Women players from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Egypt & Spain were participating in the extravaganza.

Meanwhile in the men's event semi-finals played on Sunday, Noor Zaman

outplayed Ibrahim Elkabbani of Egypt by 13-11, 11-6, 11-4, (40 min) while Asim Khan downed his country mate Nasir Iqbal by 12-10, 2-0 retired hurt (18 min).

However in the women event, Nadien Elhammy of Egypt beat Nour Ramy also of Egypt by 11-2, 11-6, 11-2 (20 min) while Egyptian Amina el Rihany also defeated her country mate Nour Khafagy by 4-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-8 (48 min).

Fatima Sana, Shawaal Zulfiqar lead Pakistan women to a historic victory

Sports Desk

DUNEDIN: Pakistan's women's team created history on Sunday, defeating New Zealand women by seven wickets in the first T20I at the University of Otago Oval in Dunedin.

This marked the first win for Pakistan's women's team over the New Zealand women, also known as the White Ferns, in the T20I format. Chasing 128 to win, Pakistan's opening pair of Shawaal Zulfiqar and Muneeba Ali provided a decent 40-run start to the innings.

Muneeba scored 23 off 24 balls with four dashing boundaries and was the first batter to return to the pavilion. At that stage, captain Nida Dar promoted herself up in the order and knitted 51 runs for the second wicket with right-handed batter Shawaal.

The 18-year-old Shawaal, playing her sixth T20I and first on New Zealand soil, scored her highest T20I score of 41 off 42 balls, smashing seven boundaries all around the ground with great confidence.

Following Shawaal's departure at the end of the 13th over with 91 runs on the board, Nida too was dismissed after a quick-fire 23 off 14 balls, including a four and a six.

With back-to-back wickets falling, the experienced pair of Bismah Maroof and Aliya Riaz got together and guided the team to a seven-wicket win with 10 balls to spare. Aliya returned unbeaten on 25 of 12 balls. Her innings included two fours and a six, the latter of which she struck on the second ball of the 19th over to finish the match. Bismah was defeated on 13 of 18 balls, hitting a four.

Earlier, after opting to bat first, the White Ferns were restricted to 127 for six courtesy of a fine bowling display by the touring side.



Right-arm fast Fatima Sana, who missed the Bangladesh tour due to injury, capitalized on the overcast conditions and bowled a spell of four overs, giving away only 18 runs and bagging three wickets. Nida, Diana Baig, and Aliya took a wicket each.

For New Zealand, Maddy Green was the top run-getter, scoring 43 off 28 balls and hitting five fours. Pakistan will now take on the White Ferns in the second T20I on Tuesday, December 5, at the same venue. The match will begin at 1300 local time, while the third and final T20I of the series will be played in

Queenstown on Saturday, December 9. Scores in brief:

Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by seven wickets.

New Zealand 127-6, 20 overs (Maddy Green 43 not out, Suzie Bates 28; Fatima Sana 3-18).

Pakistan 132-3, 18.2 overs (Shawaal Zulfiqar 41, Aliya Riaz 25 not out, Muneeba Ali 23, Nida Dar 23; Sophie Devine 2-23)

Player of the match: Fatima Sana (Pakistan)

Series schedule: 3 December: 1st T20I, Dunedin (Paki-

stan women beat New Zealand women by seven wickets)

5 December, 2nd T20I, Dunedin (1 p.m. local time)

9 December, 3rd T20I, Queenstown (1 p.m. local time)

12 December: 1st ODI, Queenstown (11 a.m. local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

15 December: 2nd ODI, Christchurch (2 p.m. local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

18 December: 3rd ODI, Christchurch (2 p.m. local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

David Miller's 50 helps Bangla Tigers sink Northern Warriors in a last-over thriller

A Sports

ABU DHABI: David Miller's half-century in the first innings trumped Hazratullah Zazai's half-century as Bangla Tigers edged Northern Warriors by a close two-run margin in a thrilling Abu Dhabi T10 League clash at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium.

Bangla Tigers after being invited to bat suffered an early blow when Sultan Ahmed removed Avishka Fernando after he scored 11 runs off four balls.

Kusal Mendis then joined hands with Jordan Cox and together they attacked Northern Warriors' bowling lineup to raise 52 runs from 20 balls for the second wicket.

However, James Neesham halted their progress by removing both batters in the



same over reducing the Tigers to 70-3 in five overs.

Cox scored 35 runs from 16 balls with the help of three boundaries and as many sixes, while his partner Mendis scored 20 off 10 with three boundaries.

David Miller and Dasun Shanaka were then involved in a blistering partnership adding 67 runs from 29 balls to push the total to 137 before Miller got out

on the final ball of the innings.

Miller scored 50 runs from 24 balls featuring four boundaries and three sixes, while Shanaka scored 14 off seven with two sixes.

James Neesham was the only notable contributor for the bowling side with figures of 2-22.

Northern Warriors had a flying start to their chase of the mammoth total as Kennar Lewis and Hazratullah Zazai raised 54 runs in three overs before the former got caught behind.

Lewis played a quick-fire knock of 22 runs from nine balls, laced with two boundaries and as many sixes.

Zazai then played a rapid knock of 57 runs from 20 balls, featuring five boundaries and as many sixes before departing with 100 runs on the board in the

sixth over.

This was Zazai's third half-century in the ongoing edition of the Abu Dhabi T10 League. He is also the highest run-scorer in the tournament with 200 runs.

Carlos Brathwaite then bowled a double-wicket over to slip Warriors to 110-5.

James Neesham held on to one end amidst tight bowling by the Tigers' bowlers but failed to get his team across the line as the Warriors needed four off the last ball and managed only one.

Neesham remained unbeaten at 23 off 14 with the help of three boundaries.

Brathwaite returned with figures of 2-26, while Josh Little, Daniel Sams and Rohan Mustafa picked one wicket each for Bangla Tigers.

Zadran's blitz powers Morrisville Samp Army to edge Delhi Bulls

A Sports

ABU DHABI: Jason Holder and Salman Irshad picked three wickets each before Najibullah Zadran's last-over heroics guided Morrisville Samp Army to a four-wicket win over Delhi Bulls in a thrilling Abu Dhabi T10 League clash at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium.

This was Delhi Bulls' first loss in the ongoing edition of the Abu Dhabi T10 League, who are sitting at the top of the points table, followed by Samp Army.

Morrisville Samp Army opted to bowl first and gained an early advantage with the wicket of Johnson Charles in the third over at a total of 19.

Quinton de Kock was the next batter to depart after scoring 11 off 9 in the fifth over with 44 runs on the board.

James Vince then played a 14-ball knock of 24 runs for Delhi Bulls but Qais Ahmed ended his brief stay on the pitch.

Samp Army's Salman Irshad then dismissed Rowman Powell (19) and Rilee Rossouw (8) in the span of three balls to further halt the Bulls' progress.



Delhi Bulls failed to recover from there and ended up scoring a meagre 95-8 in their ten overs as Irshad picked his third

wicket on the final ball of the innings.

Irshad and Jason Holder picked three wickets each, whereas Moeen Ali and

Qais Ahmed managed one scalp each. Morrisville Samp Army suffered an early blow as Ibrahim Zadran got out in the second over with only 11 runs on the board.

Samp Army further slipped to 14-2 in the next over with the wicket of Moeen Ali, who got caught off Wasim Akram's first ball of his spell.

Andries Gous and Faf du Plessis then knitted a 47-run partnership from 26 balls, however, Fazalhaq Farooqi removed them both in the same over to dent Samp Army's pursuit.

Gous scored 20 off 13 with the help of one boundary and one six, while Du Plessis played a quick knock of 30 runs from 17 balls, featuring three sixes and one four. Dwayne Bravo picked back-to-back wickets of Karim Janat and Holder in the ninth over to keep the Bulls in the match.

However, Najibullah Zadran (25) held on to his nerves and hit 12 off four balls in the final over to finish the match in style.

Bravo and Farooqi topped the wickets chart for Delhi Bulls with two wickets each.



KARACHI: President Sindh Kho Kho Association Dr. Arif Hafeez is presenting the shield to DPE Government Degree Girls College Al Noor Batool Kazim, Organizing Secretary of the first Students Girls Kho Kho Championship. Madam Asma Ali Shah, Dr. Rizwana Siddiqui, Arif Waheed and Shahroz Alvi are also present.

51st National Athletics Championship



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The 51st National Athletics Championship begin at Artillery Centre, Attack. On the first day 110 Meter Muhammad Ismail, Army 15.10 first, Tariq Farid, Punjab, 15.56 2nd, Abu Bakar, HEC, 15.64 got 3rd position. In 200 meter, (Women) Esha Effan HEC 26.40 Safinaz Khan, Sindh 26.70 2nd and Khoula Umer HEC was 3rd 27.20 with distance. In Long Jump category (Men) Usmana Zafar, Punjab with 6.78 first, Muhammad Mohsin, Army with 6.20 and Zain Ali, Punjab with 3rd 6.15. In 1500 Meter (Men) Bahaawal Khan, HEC 4.10.70 first, Abdul Wahab, Army 4.13.69 2nd and Usama Hassan HEC 4.14.20 got 3rd position on first day, While in 1500 Meter (Women) Mumtaz Naimat, Sindh 5.40.38 first position, Bushra Farman, Punjab, 5.42.28 2nd and Sapna from HEC got 3rd position with 4.14.20. Following are the detail of medalist. Mumtaz Naimat (Junior) 1500 Meter Gold Medal. Iqra Riaz (Youth) 400 M Gold. Iqra Riaz (youth 200 meter) (Gold), Dua (Youth) 100 meter, (Silver), Safinaz (Junior) 1200 meter (Silver), Anaya (Youth) 400 meter (Bronze), M. Sharif (Youth) 110 meter hurdle (Bronze), Alyana (Youth) 400 meter (Bronze), Habib Piracha (Junior) high Jump (Bronze) and Aiz Ahmed in discus throw (Youth) got Bronze medal.

PU wins women table tennis championship

Sports Desk

LAHORE: A team of the Punjab University has won the women table tennis championship organised by Sargodha University.

In the team event, PU bagged gold while silver in double and gold and silver in the single event. PU team manager Tahira Saleem and Sargodha University's Director Mahar Ahmad Haral appreciated the performance of the players.

Badminton League for Person with Different Abilities held in Dir Lower

Sports Desk

DIR LOWER: As per the directives of the Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Muhammad Fawad and compliance with the policy of provincial government regarding the celebration of International Day for Persons with Different Abilities, District Sports Officer Dir Lower Ibrar Ahmad arranged Badminton Championship at Badminton Hall Mayar Tehsil Samarbagh here Sunday.

On the occasion, leaders of the Persons with Different Abilities Muhammad Rehman, Hayat Muhammad, Abdur Raziq were present and players from all over the district participated in the event.

The District Sports Officer distributed trophies, medals and awarded cash prizes to the winner and runners-up teams.

Ronaldinho says Mbappe could win Ballon d'Or with PSG

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Star French striker Kylian Mbappe can win the Ballon d'Or in "any team", Ronaldinho told AFP Sunday, but the Brazilian would like him to win it with Paris Saint-Germain, "a big club".

"A great player like him can have the opportunity to win the Ballon d'Or in any team, but as I love PSG, I would like him to do it with PSG," the 2002 World Champion said.

"I hope he will win it. He is a good friend and a very great player. I like his style of play," he said during an interview with AFP in Thailand.

The prestigious award still eludes the French captain, who finished this year in third place — his best ranking to date.

"Winning the big competitions will help him a lot," said Ronaldinho, who wore No.10 for PSG from 2001 to 2003.

"PSG is a great club," the Brazilian said during a visit to Bangkok as an ambassador for Teqball, a novelty sport combining football and table tennis.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel Next year promises to be both busy and potentially uncertain for Mbappe.

The 24-year-old could see a possible run to the finals of the Champions League, as well as the Euro 2024 with PSG.

"As every year, it is very difficult (to win the Champions League). But PSG has a great coach, very great players, and therefore, everything is possible," the former Barcelona and Milan player said.

Israeli airstrikes

The everyday reality in the besieged Strip just hours before the resuming of Israeli airstrikes.



Photo: Mahmoud Abu Hamda, via Social Media

Israel strikes Gaza as pressure mounts to protect civilians



AFP

GAZA: Israel carried out bombardments in Gaza on Sunday as international calls mounted for greater protection of civilians and the renewal of an expired truce with Hamas.

The Israeli army said it has conducted more than 400 strikes in Gaza since a ceasefire collapsed on Friday, while Hamas announced "rocket barrages" against multiple Israeli towns and cities including Tel Aviv.

Israeli strikes hit the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza late Saturday, killing at least 13 people, according to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

United States Vice President Kamala Harris sharply rebuked on Saturday the rising civilian toll in Israel's eight-week war, which was sparked by an unprecedented attack on October 7.

"Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed," she told reporters at UN climate talks in Dubai.

"Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering and the images and videos

coming from Gaza are devastating." According to the United Nations, an estimated 1.7 million people in Gaza — more than two-thirds of the population — have been displaced by eight weeks of war.

Fadel Naim, chief doctor at the Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza City, said his morgue had received 30 bodies on Saturday, including seven children.

"The planes bombed our houses: three bombs, three houses destroyed," Nemr al-Bel, 43, told AFP, adding he had counted 10 dead in his family and "13 more still under the rubble".

Gazans are short of food, water and other essentials, and many homes have been destroyed. UN agencies have declared a humanitarian catastrophe, although some aid trucks did arrive Saturday.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said Israel had told NGOs not to bring aid convoys across the Rafah border crossing from Egypt after the truce expired.

But on Saturday, the charity said its Egyptian colleagues had managed to send over a number of trucks

Adapting Indus Basin key to adapt Pakistan to climate change: PM

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday said adapting Pakistan to climate change was vital to adapt the Indus Basin to the impacts of climate as majority of the population was linked with the river. He said Pakistan's climate challenge was primarily a water challenge which needed immediate actions to be addressed.

Addressing an event on "Living Indus Initiative" held here at the Pakistan Pavilion at the venue of United Nations' 28th Conference of Parties (COP 28), the prime minister said Pakistan was the 8th most vulnerable country in the world to the impacts of climate change. He said Living Indus was as an umbrella initiative aimed at restoring the ecolog-



ical health of the Indus within the boundaries of Pakistan, which was most vulnerable to climate change. He maintained that the government of Pakistan was clear on its priorities with Living Indus. "This umbrella initiative emerge from extensive consultation with stakeholders, resulting in a set of 25 living interven-

tions that emphasize nature based solutions and ecosystem based adaptation approaches."

The prime minister said more important was that the Living Indus initiative sought to mobilize a moment that prepared and restored a healthy Indus for today and tomorrow. "And we are here to collaborate and give voice

to our rivers.

The Indus river needs a voice and we are here to give that voice. The Indus feeds us and if we do not take care of it, it will not be there to take care of us," he remarked. This initiative, he said suggested that "we need a minimum indicative investment between US\$11 to 17 billion over the next 15 years to mobilize from the public sector, private sector, citizens and communities". He said Pakistan launched "Recharge Pakistan" that was the first concrete step towards the Living Indus. "This flagship project with an international climate finance of nearly \$78 million is central to our efforts in reducing future flooding and drought impacts," he added. The Recharge Pakistan project under the Living Indus framework will not only

benefit millions of our citizens but also serve as a model for climate innovation on a global scale. PM Kakar on the occasion also called upon various stakeholders including scholars, architects, poets, literary people to contribute towards the global efforts of addressing the climate change issue by raising voice in their articles, sermons, addresses and poetry. Later, talking to the students of Pakistan's orphan school KORT Education who won the prestigious Zayed Sustainability Prize here at COP28, the prime minister said the students had made every Pakistani including himself proud as they have done a wonderful job. He said the new generation was very talented and it will make the future of the country, hence they needed proper attention.

World's first 'Supply China expo' concludes in Beijing

News Desk

BELJING: The first China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE) concluded in Beijing.

Themed "Connecting the World for a Shared Future," the five-day expo resonates with China's emphasis on the importance of stable industrial and supply chains.

It also aims to connect upstream, midstream, and downstream enterprises in the industrial chain, and to contribute to building a stable and

smooth global supply chain. "China is moving up the global value chains. Its technology can lead to a new wave of economic growth at home and abroad, benefiting both the country and the world," Chris Pereira, CEO of iMPact said at the expo. Wang Lei, AstraZeneca's global Executive Vice President, also showcased deep experience. "In the past year, we have invested USD 1 billion in China to vigorously strengthened our supply chain system. The results have been remarkable at this expo, espe-

cially in zero-carbon emission reduction. Facing numerous challenges, companies in different countries must never be decoupled from each other, but cooperate for win-win results."

"CISCE brings unlimited opportunities, not only to China but also to all Arab countries. As we all know, we are each other's indispensable trading partners," Ahmed Shaaban Hassan, an Economic Researcher at the League of Arab States, told the China Economic Net.

"In order to become a more



important link in the global supply chain system, the trade field between China and Arab states should expand further," he added.

Except for traditional trade, China-Arab e-commerce cooperation also has great potential.

Big data, 5G, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence our cooperation should

occupy an indispensable position in the global trading system. Besides, it's a sincere hope that China will build more logistics hubs in Arab states to help them be more integrated in the Belt and Road framework," the researcher added. "China's economy has become deeply integrated into global value chains.

Italy's ambassador calls on CM Mohsin Naqvi

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Italy's Ambassador Andreas Ferraris met caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, here on Sunday.

In the meeting, they discussed increasing cooperation in the fields of culture, tourism and mutual trade.

CM Naqvi said that the time had come to turn the mutual relations between Pakistan and Italy into a useful economic partnership, mutual exchange of trade and cultural delegations will give a new dimension to the relations.

Mohsin Naqvi said that through an one window operation, all NOCs will be



available under one roof, there are immense investment opportunities for Italian investors in Punjab.

The Punjab CM also thanked Italian Ambassador for Italy's support to Pakistan over GSP Plus status.

Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferraris said that he would promote ongoing cooperation with the Punjab government in various fields.

ISSI to hold its annual flagship event next week

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) is holding its annual flagship event, "Islamabad Conclave", next week. The thematic focus of this year's Conclave would be on "Pakistan in a Changing World."

The Islamabad Conclave embodies a 1.5-track initiative designed to converge the highest tiers of foreign and Pakistani leadership, policymakers, and academia onto a singular platform. The event serves as a forum to evaluate the intricate political, security and economic issues as well as traditional and non-traditional threats affecting Pakistan and the region and to suggest responses and innovative solutions.

The Conclave's third iteration



is scheduled for December 6-7, 2023. Comprising a sequence of high-level interactions in the Plenary and 5 Working Sessions, the Conclave focuses on five distinct sub-themes.

The first working session, titled "Evolving Geopolitical Dynamics, Emerging Technologies, and Shifts in Strategic Thought," is being organized by the Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at ISSI. It

will delve into the transformative changes at the international level, marked by major power rivalries, military modernization, and the surge in emerging technologies, accompanied by a decline in arms control and disarmament norms.

The second working session, "Changing Regional Landscape: From Afghanistan to Middle East," is being organized by the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at ISSI. It will concentrate on the evolving relationships between Pakistan and key neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan and in the Middle East. It aims to analyze shifting non-traditional security dynamics, challenges, and the imperative to fortify economic and regional connectivity for sustainable growth.

Over Rs863m collected from 48,619 dead, running defaulters: IESCO spokesperson

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Asim Nazir Raja on Sunday said that over Rs 863 million has been collected from 48,619 dead and running defaulters so far during the ongoing recovery drive.

Sharing details, Asim Nazir told that a sum of Rs 456 million has been collected from 34,509 running defaulters, while Rs 412 million from 14,110 dead defaulters since September 7, 2023.

He said electricity dues collection campaign continued successfully in all operation circles of IESCO adding that the amount of each unit of electricity used would be recovered from defaulters.

He went on to say that timely payment of electricity bills was the moral and national responsibility of consumers while timely collection of electricity dues from consumers was the primary responsibility of IESCO.

Chrysanthemum show blooms for Lahore residents

Bureau Report

LAHORE: With a wide array of colorful flowers on display, the annual chrysanthemum show organised by the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) of Lahore will open today (Monday) in Jilani Park, a spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, during the two-week long event, more than 50 colorful chrysanthemum varieties, some of them exotic, will be on display. The main attraction is the innovative use of flowers to craft topiaries of animals such as peacock and giraffe.

Celebrated as the "Festival of Happiness" in Japan, the demanding exhibition dates back to its establishment in 910 AD during ancient times when odd numbers held significance as symbols of good luck.

Over the weekend, as the event setup entered its final stages, Jilani Park witnessed a steady stream of visitors arriving to discover an alternative world of blooms of rare size, color, and form.

The blooms range from delicate, thread-like flowers suggesting spreading tentacles of coral to enormous globes of feather-like petals.

According to the spokesperson, the PHA had decorated around 35,000 plants, including Marigold, on the Jilani Park premises. He mentioned that the exhibition is the only time of the year when so many varieties of chrysanthemums are on display in one place. The PHA has also set up a shop at Jilani Park to enable visitors to purchase plants at government prices.

Director General Muhammad Tahir Wattoo said the annual exhibition had become a trademark of PHA, helping it revive the golden tradition.