



Japan awards Special Persons' Association of Pakistan commendation for FY 2023

The Government of Japan has awarded the Foreign Minister's Commendations for FY 2023 to Mr. Muhammad Shafiq ur Rehman, President of Milestone Society for the Special Persons, in recognition of his significant contribution towards the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan. (Details on Page 5)



Haj 2024: Is coronavirus vaccine required?

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony provided an update for people aspiring to perform the religious obligation of Haj next year. In a statement on X, formerly Twitter, the ministry said: "The condition for corona(virus) vaccine has been abolished. Haj pilgrims do not need to submit their coronavirus (vaccination) certificates." The Saudi authorities revoked major restrictions this year in June for the Haj pilgrimage, which returned to its maximum capacity for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Inauguration

GAWADAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar unveils the plaques to inaugurate the completed Pak-China Friendship Hospital Project and the China-Aid Gawadar Seawater Desalination Project on Monday.



Photo: PID

Tribute to Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider on his 52nd Shahadat Anniversary

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJCsSC & Services Chiefs pay glowing tribute to Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider on his 52nd Shahadat Anniversary today.



MAJOR MUHAMMAD AKRAM SHAHEED (Nishan-e-Haider)
5 December 1971 (Gawadar, East Pakistan)

Displaying valour against all odds, Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed heroically repulsed innumerable attacks by enemy inflicting heavy losses in the battle of Hilli during 1971 War. This epic resistance demonstrated by Major Akram did not allow Indian army to capture even an inch of the motherland till he embraced Shahadat. Such exemplary courage is the hallmark of

defenders of our motherland.

Major Muhammad Akram's martyrdom anniversary serves as a powerful reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by the Armed Forces of Pakistan to defend the motherland.

Let us remember these heroes who have laid down their lives in defence of our motherland. The nation is proud of its gallant sons.

CPEC journey to move forward; detractors to lose relevance very soon: PM

Spokesman Report

GWADAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday urged the people of Balochistan, particularly, the youth to avail the historic opportunity of development in their province as the detractors of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) were about to lose their relevance very soon.

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration ceremony of Pak-China Friendship Hospital and Gawadar Seawater Desalination Plant here, said the journey of CPEC would surely move forward, not the backward, so joining the development course would be a prudent decision.

"Those who think to change the course (of CPEC) by force, violence or any other means are

committing historic blunder as their relevance will be over very soon. The prudent decision in the nation's fate is to join the course of development, instead of resisting it and miss the opportunity," he remarked.

The ceremony was attended by federal ministers Sami Saeed and Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Mardaan Domki, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and the Chinese and Pakistani officials attended the event.

The prime minister said the ease in the form of reduced travel durations across the province was just due to CPEC intervention.

He told the gathering that trade worth \$36 trillion was expected to take place in and

around China in the near future, therefore it was a must to join the journey through skill development and claim the share, instead of showing hostility.

He said the journey of China's modernisation was significance and steering millions of people out of poverty was unprecedented.

The prime minister said that the development of China had a positive impact across the region, particularly Pakistan and its Balochistan province.

He said the clean drinking water had been an issue faced by the Gwadar people and the desalination plant project would address it to a great extent. Besides, the construction of a 150-bed hospital would provide quality healthcare to the people, he added.

The prime minister also thanked the Chinese ambassador for announcing the solar power project and emergency services for Quetta.

Prime Minister Kakar assuring the all-out support of the federal and provincial governments on the matter of security, reiterated that the Pakistan Army, police and law enforcement agencies would safeguard the Chinese workers even at the cost of their lives.

He expressed the hope that Gwadar would complete its course of development soon to become a trade hub with the Pak-China cooperation for the benefit of future generations.

He directed the authorities concerned to connect Northern Zone with main grid to address the electricity issue.

Earlier, the prime minister, along with the Chinese ambassador and Balochistan chief minister unveiled the plaques to inaugurate the projects which followed the presentation of the souvenirs to the prime minister as well as the envoy.

PM Kakar, later talking to reporters on the occasion, said the direction of the progress of Balochistan was set forth and expressed confidence that the province would witness a new era of development.

He thanked the provincial government on completion of the development projects, which he said, would facilitate the locals of Gwadar.

The prime minister hoped that the financial crunch would be over with the steps taken by the interim government.

PTI supremo says will choose death over 'deal'

Web Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo on Monday said he is ready to 'die but will not strike any deal or compromise', ARY News reported.

In his informal conversation with the journalists in Adiala Jail during the open hearing of the cipher case, the former prime minister ruled out speculations about any deal or compromise.

Commenting on the allegations raised by Khawar Maneka against Bushra Bibi, the PTI supremo said he was used to slander the former first lady.

I saw Bushra Bibi on the day our marriage took place, Imran Khan said and added he can say this under oath.

Speaking to the media person today, the former prime minister predicted that his party would win the February 8 polls, adding that he was arrested under the London Plan, which was aimed at bringing Nawaz Sharif back to the country and putting me in jail.



May 9 riots were also part of the London Plan, the former prime minister claimed and added he was 'illegally' arrested on that day and later a crackdown was launched on PTI and more than 10,000 workers were arrested.

He also shared that he did not face any difficulties in jail.

On cipher 'conspiracy', the former prime minister stated that he would include former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa and US embassy officials as witnesses in his defence in the case.

Referring to his reign, he said that the country's growth has brought zero from 6.17%.

Earlier in the day, special court formed under the Official Secrets Act decided to indict the PTI supremo and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a cipher case on December 12.

Cipher case: Court to indict PTI supremo, Qureshi on Dec 12



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The special court formed under the Official Secrets Act on Monday decided to indict the PTI supremo and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a cipher case on December 12.

The hearing of the cipher case was conducted by Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain in the Adiala Jail. During today's hearing PTI lawyers raised the issue of not allowing international media to cover the trial.

PTI lawyers in their arguments before the court said the trial is underway under the Criminal Act 1952, however, it was amended in 1958. They claimed the court could not continue with the trial until clarification on the matter.

Saudi minister engages global aviation leaders at ICAN 2023

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistic Services and Chairman of the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), Eng. Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser on Monday participated in the ministerial session themed "Impact of air transport on economic development" at the 15th International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Air Services Negotiation event, ICAN 2023.

According to SPA, the event, hosted by GACA, drew participation from aviation industry leaders spanning over 100 countries and witnessed discussions among ministers and heads of civil aviation agencies.

He underscored the integral role of Saudi Arabia's aviation strategy in advancing economic development, aligning with the ambitious objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

Pak-Türkiye to finalize, OIC (TPS-OIC) accord



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Türkiye on Monday underscored the imperative to finalize the implementation of the Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC (TPS-OIC) agreement, emphasizing the need for a clear and achievable deadline.

This strategic move is anticipated to unlock the full transformative potential of the agreement, fostering increased intra-OIC trade and propelling both nations towards a more prosperous future, said a press release issued here.

Commerce and Industries Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz engaged in a meeting with Turkish Trade Minister H. E. Dr. Ömer Bolat on the sidelines of the 39th Ministerial of COMCEC.

German Development Bank boosts support for power transmission

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and KfW, the German Development Bank on Monday signed an agreement for enhancing the capacity of the power transmission sector in Pakistan and supporting the health sector, particularly in areas affected by floods. Sebastian Jacobi, Country Director of KfW and Dr Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs inked the agreements that signify Germany's commitment to furthering the development goals of Pakistan.

Managing Director NTDC, Engineer Dr Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan was also present on the occasion, said in a press release. Under the accompanying Measures to support the "Promotion of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency" program, KfW, representing the German Government, will provide an additional grant of Euro 2.5 million to the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC).

No crisis in meeting ECP's financial needs for holding general elections: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday ruled out any "crisis on meeting the financial needs of the ECP" in order to hold free, fair and transparent general elections in the country.

"The Cabinet had approved Rs 42 billion for the budgetary needs of the ECP. An amount of Rs 10 billion was already released," the minister wrote on X formerly Twitter.

He said the Election Commission of Pakistan had approached to release Rs 17.4 billion, out of the budgeted amount.

"Whatever budgeted amount is needed by the ECP, will be released as per its needs accordingly," Solangi added.

Pakistan emerging as hub of ICT, digital innovation in the region: Dr. Saif

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT), Dr. Umar Saif, has said that Pakistan is emerging as the hub of information and communication technology (ICT) and digital innovation in the region. During his address at the Pak-Qatar IT Conference in Doha, Qatar, he highlighted Pakistan's abundance of talent and success stories in innovation and entrepreneurship.

He said Qatar is home to abundant Pakistani knowledge workers, urging Pakistani IT companies to leverage this resourceful Qatar diaspora to establish a foothold in the Qatari market. Earlier, Dr. Umar Saif inaugurated the Pak-Qatar IT Conference, a collaborative effort mainly involving the Ministry of IT and Telecom (MOITT).

Governor Punjab awarded degrees during 6th convocation of Women's University Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Up to 1,663 graduates were awarded degrees at the 6th convocation of the Women University Multan at Matital Campus. Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman presided over the convocation while representative of South Punjab secretariat, Members of Syndicate, Academic Council, Directors, Principal Officers, Controller of Examinations, political and social personalities, media representatives, and students along with their parents participated in a large number in the convocation.

In the convocation, governor conferred degrees to 1663 female students including 55 gold medalist 26 PhD scholars.

Universities are primarily tasked with fashioning a culture of research and innovation. Apart from imparting knowledge, they must focus on character building of the youth," said the governor.

He called upon the youth to have a meaningful goal or purpose of their endeavours in life and to always think positively. He said that a country cannot make any progress without

investing in education. The governor expressed his satisfaction over the progress made by the university under the visionary leadership of Prof. Dr Kalsoom Pracha after taking over the office of vice chancellor a few months ago. He also appreciated remarkable achievements made by the faculty and students of Women University Multan. He advised the students to embrace themselves with qualities of honesty, integrity, faith, hardwork and good character it plays a key role in achieving progress and development in every field of life.

There is no shortcut to success, said Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha while addressing the 6th Convocation of Women University Multan. She said that students always need the best institutions to secure their future. By leveraging its capabilities, the Women University Multan has now become a hub for scientific, technical, business and humanities education in the region, preparing students for the challenges of the future. She briefly presented University progress report highlighting main features of research and development. She said that Women University Multan has

always been committed to the principle since its inception that we have to cultivate fresh knowledge, and promote by looking forward for excellence in the field of research. That is the reason why many honors have been given to our university today. For example, in the list of Times Higher Education, our university has been declared as the best university for women in Pakistan. Chancellor and Governor Punjab laid the foundation stone of Digital Hub in Women University Multan According to the spokesperson, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of Digital Hub was held at Matital campus. This project estimated worth is 1 billion 50 crores. On this occasion, Chancellor Engineer Balighur Rehman said that with this project, will provide opportunity to the students of South Punjab to be able to get education with the help of modern equipment regarding digital media technologies. He said we This project will have far-reaching benefits on our youth.

At the end, the Registrar, Prof Dr Mamoona Khan thanked all the participants, particularly all the media representatives for the awesome coverage of the Convocation event. The convoca-



tion was attended by prestigious dignitaries including VC Emerson University Dr. Ramzan, Dr. Hayat Awan (Pro-Rector ISP), VC Okara University Dr. Wajid Khan, Dr. Atta ul Rehman

Additional Secretary Higher education South Punjab), Mr. Tariq Awan (Additional Secretary South Punjab, Higher Education) Dr. Fareed Sharif (DPI, South Punjab), Mr. Khurram

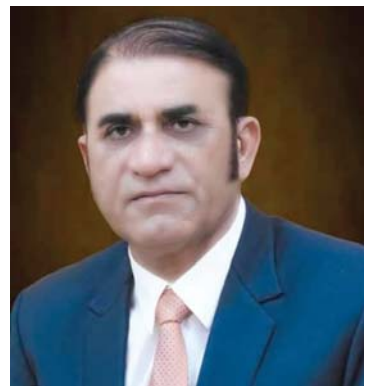
Shahzad (Secretary Board Multan) Mr. Hafiz Qasim (Chairman Board) and Mr. Asif Rana (President, High court) MPAs, Principals of girl colleges, faculty members and students.

Billions of Rupees have been collected from 67 thousand 656 defaulters: Bharwana

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: According to MEPCO spokesperson Jamshed Niazi, an operation against running and dead defaulters is underway in South Punjab on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. From November 1, 1 billion 47 crore 57 lakh 70 thousand rupees have been collected from 67 thousand 656 defaulters.

MEPCO Chief Executive Officer Mahar Ullah Yar Bahrawana said 71 crore 39 lakh 40 thousand rupees have been collected from 58 thousand 660 domestic consumers. Rs.5 crore 35 lakh from 3 thousand 694 commercial defaulters, Rs 8 crore 94 lakh from 408 industrial defaulters, Rs 61 crore 46 lakh from 4 thousand 789 agricultural tube wells while Rs 42 lakh 70 thousand from 105 defaulters of other categories.



In the category of running defaulters in South Punjab, 1783 million rupees from 11755 defaulters with a period of 2 to 3 months, 5 crore 40 million rupees from 2082 defaulters with a period of 4 to 6 months.

1 crore 30 lakh 10 thousand rupees from 316 defaulters with a

period of 6 months to one year, 7 lakh 50 thousand rupees from 24 running defaulters with a period of one to three years and deposited in the treasury.

In the category of deed defaulters from one month to deed defaulters, 12 crore 46 lakh rupees from 8277 defaulters with a period of one month, 9 crore rupees from 4067 defaulters with a period of two months, 10 crore 36 lakh rupees from 5729 defaulters with a period of three months, 4 crore 97 lakh rupees from 2687 defaulters with a period of 4 to 6 months, 4 crore 97 lakhs from 6 months to one year.

961 Insolvents 2 crores, 1 crore 80 lakh 80 thousand rupees from 632 defaulters with a tenure of one to three years and 1 crore 41 lakh rupees from 481 permanent defaulters with a tenure of more than three years.

Multan Range Police Providing a Better Environment for Employees: Capt Sohail

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: With the efforts of Regional Police Officer Captain (Rtd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhary, Quran recitation was organized in the RPO office on the timely completion of the Regional Investigation Branch. In which SSP Regional Investigation Branch Jalil Imran, SP Legal Shaban Mehmood, ADIG Mansoor Alam, Assistant Director Mian Abdul Rahim Long, Personal Staff Officer Muhammad Yusuf Bhatti, Private Secretary Chaudhry



Muhammad Khalid and other senior officers and office staff participated.

be to Allah Almighty who appointed me for the welfare of the employees and to provide a better environment for them.

On the completion of which, he also appreciated the day and night hard work and efforts of the office staff, who played an important role in the timely completion. He further said that the timely completion of the Regional Investigation Block will increase the efficiency of the police employees and create a spirit in them to work with more hard work and dedication.

National Security Workshop KP members visits to NW

Adam Khan Wazir

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Members of the National Security Workshop Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visited Miran Shah tehsil of North Waziristan District on Monday.

During this visit, well-being of the local people, lasting peace, development plans and far-sighted strategies to create positive impact were thoroughly reviewed in North Waziristan.

The National Security Workshop team was also shown the Mobile Infotainment School, which is not only equipping the children of remote areas of North



Waziristan with the jewel of education but also making up for the absence of schools.

A mobile health unit developed for the welfare of the people of North Waziristan

District and promoting mutual harmony with the local people was also shown, and

which is providing free medicines and satisfactory treatment in remote areas of North Waziristan.

On this occasion security officials briefed the members of the National Security Workshop about the historical background of North Waziristan, while Tochi Museum was also visited to inform about the eternal sacrifices of the martyrs for the establishment of peace.

The members of the National Security Workshop Khyber Pakhtunkhwa appreciated the efforts made by the Pakistan Army for the establishment of peace and development and prosperity in North Waziristan tribal District.

DC Faisalabad review price control mechanism after sales of fruits and vegetables

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: In Faisalabad division last month 9 thousand 81 wholesalers were fined one crore 81 lakh 65 thousand rupees, 36 cases were registered, 37 shops were sealed. This was told in a meeting chaired by Commissioner Silwat Saeed, in which the implementation of the price control mechanism across the division was reviewed. RPO Dr. Abid Khan, Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Nair Sheikh, Additional Commissioner Coordination Maswar Ahmed Khan Niazi and other district deputy commissioners participated in the meeting through video link. The commissioner urged the deputy commissioners to focus on controlling the prices and said that Providing relief to the consumers is a priority.

Three medical, veterinary stores sealed by district drugs controller in Attock: spokesman

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Three medical including a veterinary medicines stores have been sealed by the raiding party of Health Department Attock on Monday. A spokesman of Health Department Attock told media on Monday that Health authorities in Attock took action on Monday against the medical and veterinary outlets and sealed two medical and one veterinary medicines store running within the purview of tehsil Hazro.

Spokesman further said that, a team of health authorities carried out the crackdown against the medical and veterinary outlets in various parts of Hazro.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain meet with members PERA

News Desk

LAHORE: Chaudhry Salik Hussain Speaking at a meeting with members of the Pakistan Economic Reporters Association (PERA), Hussain emphasized that this uncertainty has compounded the economic challenges faced by the government and the nation.

Hussain presented a trio of options, suggesting the government either makes a strategic decision on elections, takes over governance, or grapples with the existing challenges. During his address, he underscored the potential economic benefits of securing cheap gas and energy from Iran, estimating an annual revenue generation of up to 10 billion dollars.

Addressing the current political landscape, he called for a level playing field, asserting that all political parties, including the ruling PTI, should have the freedom to participate in elections without hindrance.

Responding to queries about reconciliation efforts with Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, Hussain revealed past attempts by Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to persuade Elahi during jail visits, but these efforts were unsuccessful due to disagreements with Elahi's son, Munis Elahi.

Shifting the focus to the upcoming elections, Hussain expressed concern about the lack of visible election activity. He highlighted that until the collection of nomination papers commences, the anticipated fervor for elections remains elusive.

Ahmad Shah visited Karachi Press Club



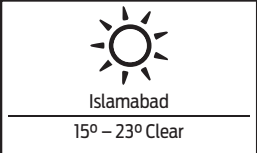
City Desk

KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Information Minister, Minorities Affairs and Social Protection President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Muhammad Ahmad Shah paid his first visit to the Press Club after oath taking. At this occasion he said that Karachi Press Club is one of the distinctive press clubs in the world. It combats with the aggressive force with bravery. He emphasized that the journalists will not have to take an appointment with the Information Minister's PA. My relation with Karachi Press Club is old, I sit in this club at my spare time and this will continue even now. He expressed these views while talking to the media at Karachi Press Club. Earlier, Press Club Secretary Shoaib Ahmed Khan and President Press Club of Karachi Saeed Sarbazi addressed and said that Ahmad Shah has a long relationship with Karachi Press Club and this relationship has become stronger with time. The problem of plots of journalist will be solved. Ahmed Shah further said that the work on ongoing projects in the province will be accelerated. He said that not to be offended by the media's criticism of the government, the media provides guidance and points out mistakes.

In support of students, police launch 'Friends of Police' in Punjab

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: According to the vision of Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Friends of Police Seminar was held at DPO office, the students of Cometes University Islamabad Campus Attock participated in the event. They will be recognized as Friends of Police in the institution. In the event, District Police Officer Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan, in-charge traffic school and in-charge branches gave lectures on policing, Friends of Police in their educational institutions and surroundings. will help and assist in community policing, the participants of the seminar, students were visited DPO Office, Command and Control Center, Misaq Center, Police Service Center, Police Protection Center and Traffic Office, Friends of The purpose of the police is to help citizens, especially young students, for effective policing, crime prevention, drug prevention in educational institutions and other social problems, and community policing. As responsible citizens can play a better role, on the orders of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Friends of Police have been launched across Punjab, with the support and consultation of students and youth to further improve policing. Help will be provided, in the next phase of this initiative, an internship program in the police has also been started for students.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:28 am
Zohr	11:58 am
Asr	3:21 pm
Maghrib	4:59 pm
Isha	6:27 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	9270831-7
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Reaching out on behalf of Malala Yousafzai's press team at Malala Fund

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Malala Yousafzai will deliver the 21st Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in Johannesburg, South Africa. As the youngest-ever speaker in the lecture series' history, she will focus on gender apartheid in Afghanistan and the need for a stronger global response. The lecture will be livestreamed here.

Malala's lecture will raise visibility of a growing effort to expand the definition of apartheid to include gender-based oppression. In Afghanistan, the system of gender apartheid upheld by the Taliban bans girls and young women from secondary school and university and severely restricts their daily lives. In a dialogue following her remarks, Malala and guest panelists will reflect on lessons from South African activism against apartheid in order to draw attention to the crisis in Afghanistan and demand a more robust global response.

Guest panelists for the panel discussion include legal scholar Karime Bennoune, Afghan human rights defender Metra Mehran and South African activist and parliamentarian Nompandolo Thobile Mkhathshwa.

UBG & BMP (P) to play role for reviving economy after winning FPCCI elections

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the business community is passing through a difficult phase, however, the alliance of UBG and BMP (P) have a clear vision to address the key issues of the business community, increase exports, strengthen foreign exchange reserves and boost industrialization to revive the economy after winning the upcoming elections of FPCCI. He said this while addressing a reception hosted by Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG at his residence in honor of the candidates of UBG & BMP (P) alliance for the President, Senior Vice President and Vice Presidents of FPCCI. Over 40 General Body and Executive Committee members of FPCCI from Rawalpindi/Islam-

abad, Rawalpindi Division, Gilgit Baltistan and other areas were present in the reception.

Atif Ikram Sheikh, Presidential candidate of UBG & BMP (P) alliance for FPCCI said that they have a 2-year plan to address the key issues of the business community and steer the economy out of troubles. He said that they would realize the mission of late SM Tanveer after winning the elections of FPCCI to make Pakistan a strong economy of the region.

Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, alliance candidate for Senior Vice President of FPCCI said that after winning elections, they would work hard to revive the honor and dignity of FPCCI and make it a strong apex trade body of the country.

Asif Inam, candidate for Vice President and current Chairman APTMA said that high energy cost is a major hurdle for business and



industry and after winning FPCCI elections, they would work on cheap energy solutions to reduce production cost and facilitate the growth of business and industrial activities.

President from Customs Agents Association said that he would play a role to address the customs and FBR related issues of the business community from the platform of FPCCI after winning the elections.

Aman Paracha, candidate for Vice President and former Chairman of Pakistan Tea Association said that the current leadership of FPCCI has failed to deliver and after elections, they would work hard to address the key

issues of the business community and revive the economy. Ahmed Chinoy, Ms. Samina Fazil and others also spoke on the occasion and expressed full support for the candidates of UBG & BMP (P) for FPCCI elections.

Hardworking

ISLAMABAD: A street florist is arranging flowers on his road side setup to sell and earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Google Celebrates Success of App Growth Lab Program

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Last week at Google's Apps Growth Lab Graduation event, Google celebrated 94 Pakistani game and app development studios graduating from the second edition of Google's App Growth Lab program. Expanding their impact beyond mobile game developers, for the first time in 2023, this initiative included app developer studios and companies eager to accelerate their growth with Google. The total number of studios participating this year was 254, up from 54 last year, showcasing the program's augmented impact on Pakistan's app and gaming ecosystem.

Farhan Qureshi, Google Regional Director for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, while addressing the attendees, said, "The rise of Pakistan's app economy is a story of inspiration for the world. Apps developed in



Pakistan were downloaded 4 billion times globally in 2022. Also, in 2022, 65 apps from Pakistani developers reached the top 10 charts in Gaming and Apps verticals on Play Store and App Store.

Ehtisham Malik, Head of Marketing at MicZon who joined the Growth Lab program in 2022, also shared,

"The Growth Lab program is an important initiative that will take Pakistan's gaming industry to the next level." Shoaib Ali, CEO of Al Basir Technologies Private Limited, a 2023 Apps Growth Lab participant, also said, "The impact of the training and support received from Google Apps Growth Lab is reflected in the record growth we have made in the last couple of months. The growth achieved in this short span surpasses what we were able to accomplish in the past six years. For this, we are extremely thankful to the entire Google Apps Growth Lab team for their firm commitment to our success."

Neem, Mastercard strike multi-year partnership to help Pakistan's underserved

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Neem, a leading embedded finance platform in Pakistan, has entered a multifaceted partnership with Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry. The strategic multi-year collaboration will enable financial wellness for Pakistan's underserved communities. The Partnership marks Mastercard's first view into the embedded finance space in Pakistan.

"Our partnership with Mastercard marks a significant milestone for Neem and the embedded finance movement in Pakistan. It will advance us further on our mission to



enable financial wellness for underserved people and businesses. It also emphasizes our commitment to sustainability, and as pioneers in the country, we are introducing eco-friendly debit cards. We hope to

inspire the wider industry towards sustainable finance solutions," said Vladimira Briestenska, cofounder at Neem.

Our partnership will help expand our reach to the underserved segments in our markets and drive financial inclusion in line with our commitment to bring 1 billion people across the globe into the digital economy," said Arslan Khan, Vice President and

Country Business Manager, Pakistan at Mastercard.

"In Pakistan, the level of financial wellness is notably low, with less than 30% of its 230 million population having access to any form of financial services. This is where the embedded finance model can help address the financial wellness gap," said Fawwad Raza, Head of banking operations at Neem.

Pakistan's market remains largely untapped, and initiatives like this one have the potential to create a substantial impact. By adopting globally proven models tailored to local use cases, this strategic partnership aims to position Pakistan on the global map of

ICT Police & IMCG hosted an enlightening session on "Social Responsibilities of Students."

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a proactive initiative, the Islamabad Territory Police, in collaboration with Islamabad Model College for Girls (Post Graduate-Margala) F-7/4, hosted an enlightening session on "Social Responsibilities of Students." The event aimed to instill a sense of civic duty and awareness among students. Distinguished speakers from the police force, including SHO Ms. Nazia Rafiq, ASP Saud Khan, and Constables Zaryab and Shiza, highlighted the crucial role student's play in fostering a safer and more responsible society.



The interactive session delved into various aspects of social responsibility, emphasizing community engagement, adherence to laws, and promoting a culture of respect. Students were encouraged to actively participate in community service projects and be vigilant citizens. The event served as a platform for open dialogue between law enforcement and the student community, fostering a positive relationship for the betterment of society. The Islamabad Territory Police's commitment to community education, as demonstrated by these esteemed resource persons, was evident, fostering a sense of shared responsibility among the future leaders at Islamabad Model College for Girls (Post Graduate-Margala) F-7/4, Islamabad.

Pakistan's Markings Publishing, gets honoured at the global Gourmand Awards in Riyadh

City Desk



RIYADH: Markings Publishing, Pakistan's premier publishing house renowned for its exquisite coffee table books and exceptional publications, was honoured with four awards at this year's Gourmand Awards in Riyadh. Competing against 198 countries, Markings has already distinguished itself by being a five-time winner since 2014 and representing Pakistan at a global platform through the premier cookbook recognition authority.

This year, 'Flavours of the Frontier' by Pushpa Baga, 'Deliciously Yours' by Lal Majid, 'Virsa: A Culinary Journey From Agra to Karachi' by Shehar Bano Rizvi, and 'A Taste of Pakistan in Fusio' by Shazia Zuberi, all published by Markings, were celebrated for their outstanding contribution to Silk Road food culture and history.

The prestigious award ceremony commemorated the diversity that enriches the region, and featured four compelling presentations by Markings Publishing and its authors who showcased their work. Atul Bagai, the son of Author Pushpa Baga, and Kiran Aman, the CEO of Markings Publishing, shared their insights on the Flavors of the Frontier - a unique blend of Pakistani and India recipes that bridge cultural divides, showcasing the unifying power of culinary diplomacy.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO Kiran Aman remarked, "The Gourmand Awards are not just an award ceremony, but a vibrant opportunity to engage with the best culinary giants of the world. More than that, it is a platform which celebrates talent, a primary objective of Markings Publishing as well.

As the only independent publishing company from Pakistan that nurtures self-publishing authors, helps produce superb cookbooks and remarkable coffee table books, Markings Publishing has consistently given a platform to voices that look to explore and celebrate the rich culinary traditions of the region.

Students paint endangered species of mountain ecosystems

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The students from different universities and colleges of the twin-cities enthusiastically take part in a live painting competition on the theme "Restoring the Mountain Ecosystems" on Monday at the Rawalpindi Art Gallery. Over twenty students take part in the competition organized by Devcom-Pakistan in connection with ongoing 10-day long 13th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival (PMF). The collaborating partners included the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi and the Snow Leopard Foundation.

Speaking on the occasion, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed said: "Mountains are the hub of valuable natural resources that are being compromised because of irrational practices. Different organizations with the participation of communities are playing their key role in environmental protection and socioeconomic development in the mountain areas. We need to put every effort into keeping the mountain ecosystems intact. The communities are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians of biodiversity, keepers of traditional knowledge, custodians of local culture and experts in traditional medicine. Somehow, mountain women's potential and contribution to conservation has been undermined."

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Caring disables a national obligation-III

In the West, for example, the decriminalisation and legalisation of drug use is openly advocated. It is about blurring the line between soft and hard “substances,” destigmatising drug use and positioning drug addicts as normal, healthy members of society. There are plenty of examples. They include “coffee shops” in Amsterdam, “recreational smoking” in the United States and Canada, medically controversial “harm reduction” and “substitution therapy” programmes implemented through neoliberal NGOs in various parts of the world. The Hollywood film industry is working to popularise the habit of drug use. Statistics confirm that all these efforts are bearing fruit. According to reports from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction[3], the number of people who use marijuana on a daily or almost daily basis has increased over the past 10 years from 3 to 3.7 million people and already accounts for about 1.3 percent of the EU population. The number of drug addicts in treatment has almost doubled in just two years, from 55,000 to 97,000. There is a steady increase in seizures of illegal products containing cannabis (555,000 cases in 2020, and 566,000 in 2021). And this is just the beginning.

Phenomena that were once marginalised and that lead to a fracturing of people’s consciousness, such as the obsessive LGBT agenda, radical feminism, the cult of social political correctness to the point of absurdity, and “critical race theory” (based on the assumption that race is not a biological but a socially engineered characteristic to oppress non-whites) have become a standard of everyday life in Western countries. Any understandings that refer to tradition or that contra-

dict “progressive” theories are declared archaic, outdated at best.

It is important to emphasise here that sexual minorities are part of all societies. They should not be discriminated against and they should have the same civil and socio-cultural rights as all other citizens. Of concern is the propaganda of non-traditional values, which is becoming more and more aggressive. Thus, according to IPSOS, one of the major international companies specialising in sociological research, in a number of countries where the neoliberal paradigm has taken root (Germany, Sweden, Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain), the share of LGBT representatives is two to four times higher than the corresponding world average (the medical standard is about one percent of the population). And in some countries, in surveys among young people, up to 18 percent of respondents admitted to same-sex attraction.

Neoliberals do everything to make those who adhere to classical (normal) ethics feel discomfort and shame, to make them feel “unfashionable.” The methods of oppressing those who openly express disagreement with deviations that aggressively make their way have already been tested. These are “cancellation culture” and “deplatforming,” encouraging reports to the authorities, collective bullying and unsubstantiated stigmatisation with insulting labels: racists, fascists, communists, sexists, homophobes, gender haters and the like. Adherents of traditional views, now declared “wrong,” are forced to publically repent.

Representation of women, as well as of newly emerging sex minorities in government and even in business, is addressed through artificial, absurd quotas that undermine fair professional competition and the essence of meritocracy inherent in classical capitalism and liberalism. All this is being done with the thunderous and pervasive support of the neoliberal mass media and the tireless work of specialised foundations and non-governmental entities.

At the same time, work is underway to include the concept of the “third sex” in the World Health Organisation’s guidelines on gender issues in health care; calls are being made to revise ethical standards regarding reproductive choice, the medical alteration of human nature, and the sexual integrity of children (in fact, a step towards the legalisation of paedophilia). In Spain, it has even come to the point of decriminalising bestiality. There, relevant amendments to the legislation were introduced in February 2023.

The developments are aggravated by the deep crisis that has hit the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant associations. Their reputation has been damaged by numerous scandals. Today, the church in the West faces accusations of spreading “white Christian nationalism” and “white supremacy” as well as attempts to marginalise the LGBT community. The clumsy attempts by some religious communities to win sexual minorities to their side, even to the point of willingness to allow same-sex marriages, have left many people aghast. As a result, many in the West are unable

to find peace and solace in the church. There is a rapid decline in the statistics of church attendance (especially of traditional denominations) in Europe and the United States, and excuses with references to the post-pandemic period do not stand up to scrutiny. A growing social group of people indifferent to matters of faith could radically change the socio-political landscape.

It is clear to a sober-minded observer that the “renewal” part of the West has deviated greatly from the generally recognised standards of human morality, which, incidentally, were not rejected by classical liberalism. However, neoliberalism is already aimed at breaking the spiritual, cultural and social heritage of various civilisations. The values of the Enlightenment, Christianity, other monotheistic religions and even post-Christian atheism are being supplanted by the tenets of the “new ethics” under the supposedly plausible pretext of fighting discrimination against minorities. To replace humanism, neoliberal ideologues promote the concept and practices of posthumanism, posthumanism and posthumanity.

4. Technology.

Neo-liberal Western ideologists actively promote individualism and the priority of an atomised individual over any other factors and considerations. They advance ideas of constant self-perfection and individual inner and outer transformation regimens, including with the use of modern technologies. They always note that technologically advanced people alone can be considered more progressive than everyone else. In reality, this smokescreen conceals multiple commercial or political interests.

To be continued



Analysis

Alexey Drobinin

Gaza war creates ‘to be or not

The all-too-brief ceasefire is already a dim and distant memory and the systematic killing of civilians in Gaza has resumed. Hence, this is the moment to question: Where does this all end and what are the long-term implications for Palestinians and Israelis?

Israel has already signaled that the carnage is destined to move south, where it previously dispatched Gaza’s entire population. “If (Palestinian civilians) stay in Khan Younis or Rafah, a similar fate awaits to what happened in Gaza City,” one Israel Defense Forces spokesman gruesomely stated. The baffling check-board maps of Gaza’s tiny 363 sq. km territory that Israel has distributed assume that 2 million people will endlessly scamper from one square to another, while warplanes bomb everything around them. QR code warnings would be a terrible idea even if everybody had not long since lost electricity and internet access. About 80 percent of the population has already been displaced, and we are just getting started.

Israeli politicians make no secret of their desire to see Palestinians permanently excluded from Gaza. The stated objective of bottling the entire population in a tiny quartile adjacent to the Egypt border resembles a textbook example of population transfer — for those not killed in the bombing first. If not, why have Israel’s Western allies not extracted public assurances that this is not the case?

Israel is gripped by existential fear, in a manner the country has not experienced for decades. It is not just vast regions to the north and south, but Tel Aviv also lies within easy reach of both Hamas and Hezbollah’s rockets. While the Oct. 7 attacks unleashed an overwhelming hunger for vengeance, wiser heads recognize that they must find an amicable modus vivendi with neighbors if Israelis are ever to enjoy safety and peace. The crisis has fueled debates hardly heard in decades, with progressive voices blaming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the extreme right for marching Israel into catastrophe; while also floating proposals for how the peace process could be revived from the dead, including mooted the idea of a Canada-style federal system.

More enlightened Israelis are highly disconcerted at how Israel’s global standing has plunged due to the Gaza atrocities. And not just among the world’s Muslim communities — young people throughout the Western world have been particularly galvanized by this human tragedy, along with demographics that normally pay scant attention to foreign affairs. In this transformed political climate, for how much longer can Israel take unqualified Western support for granted?



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

Journey from Despair to Hope with General Asim Munir - II

The military’s active involvement in energy and resource management projects, including water resource management, renewable energy development, and improvement of overall energy infrastructure, addresses critical economic challenges. These initiatives ensure a stable and sustainable supply of resources necessary for economic activities.

Undoubtedly, the position of an Army Chief holds immense importance in any nation’s defense and security apparatus. The responsibilities and decisions made by an Army Chief have far-reaching consequences, impacting not only the military but also the overall well-being and safety of the entire nation.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

The highest-ranking military officer, known as the Army Chief, assumes a paramount role in providing strategic leadership to the armed forces. This encompasses the formulation of military policies, establishment of objectives, and development of long-term strategies to address potential threats and challenges. The ability to make well-informed decisions in the midst of intricate and dynamic situations is a crucial facet of the Army Chief’s responsibilities.

Their strategic expertise is indispensable in ensuring the military’s readiness to effectively respond to diverse scenarios, including conventional warfare, asymmetrical threats, and emergencies. The Army Chief plays a pivotal part in plan-

ning and executing national defense strategies, collaborating with other military branches and government agencies. This collaboration contributes to the creation of comprehensive defense plans, involving resource allocation, coordination of joint military operations, and the integration of technology to bolster defense capabilities.

A well-conceived and executed defense plan is fundamental to deterring potential adversaries and safeguarding a nation’s sovereignty. In times of crisis, whether due to natural disasters, internal unrest, or external aggression, the Army Chief takes a forefront role in managing and responding to the situation. Their ability to swiftly and efficiently mobilize and deploy forces is critical in minimizing the impact of crises on the nation. Additionally, the Army Chief often collaborates with civilian authorities to ensure a coordinated and effective response, highlighting the significance of civil-military relations during emergencies.

Internationally, an Army Chief serves as a key representative of the military, engaging in diplomatic efforts and fostering international relations. Collaboration with counterparts from other nations contributes to building alliances, promoting peacekeeping initiatives, and participating in multinational military exercises. These diplomatic endeavors not only enhance a nation’s security but also contribute to global stability.

Beyond strategic and operational duties, an Army Chief plays a crucial role

in mentoring and fostering the professional development of military personnel. They inspire discipline, integrity, and dedication among the ranks, cultivating a culture of excellence within the armed forces. The mentorship provided by an Army Chief contributes to the growth of future leaders, ensuring a capable and well-prepared military for the years ahead.

In Pakistan, Army Chiefs have played a crucial role in supporting civilian governments to ensure the smooth functioning of the country. The current Army Chief has particularly stood out, demonstrating remarkable dedication and utilizing his full capacity to assist the government in overcoming challenges. It has been a year since General Syed Asim Munir assumed command of the Pakistan Army on November 29, 2022, succeeding General (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa as the 17th Chief of Army Staff.

During the tenure of former Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, the appointments of General Asim Munir as Chief of Army Staff and General Sahir Shamsah Mirza as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee were approved. General Syed Asim Munir, a Hafiz Quran, underwent training at the Officers Training School and received a commission in the Frontier Force Regiment of the Pakistan Army. His career path included significant roles such as Commander Force Command Northern Area in 2014, DG Military Intelligence in 2017, and DG Military ISI in October 2018. He was appointed Corps Commander Gujranwala in June 2019 and served as Quartermaster General in GHQ from October 2021 until assuming the role of Army Chief.

To be continued

Every person’s actions and choices matter

Haleema Saadia (Kallar Syedan)

Currently, the world is facing great challenges; endless wars, rampant militarism, pandemics, global warming, violent crimes, migrant crisis etcetera. Despair looms large everywhere. Humans need to act fast to get out of this abyss but most seem inactive. They are waiting for a ‘superman or Übermensch’ of Nietzsche or a ‘world-historical individual’ of Hegel to come and save them all.

Since time immemorial, people believe that all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are the realization and embodiment of thoughts that dwell in great men. A 19th-century Scottish philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle put forward the ‘Great Men Theory’ which gives credit to a handful of great men for universal history or history of what man has achieved in this world. But it’s wrong. Common people and masses matter too. The choices that we all make have influenced and are influencing world history. Hitler and Napoleon were in power positions and were able to alter world history because common people were behind them. No man stays in power for long if the masses are not supporting him. History is the sum total of every individual action, from that of the poor peasant to the most decorated general. Nowadays, it has become a norm to blame the people in power for all the country’s woes but the truth is that we are all culpable in some way or another after all we put them in the saddle.

If people like Hitler were in the driving seat, it’s the masses’ fault. As the destructive power of the states increased, the character and personality of the people who controlled them also became very important. If the masses choose a misogynist, selfish, greedy, shameless and ignorant person as their leader, they shouldn’t expect him to make their country great. These days we see little people who are small in intellectual stature rising to greater heights. Little men and women of today are attracting millions of followers.

Not just a few countries, but the whole world is on the brink of collapse. Our imperfect societies, which we all formed, are wasting the lives of the best of its members. The truly exceptional men and women are not chosen as leaders by us. Hence their intelligence, sensitivity and strength of character are neither rewarded nor used. One reason for world problems is that these great humans’ superior talents languish unused as they were not used for the betterment of the world.

Some say that there are other personal and impersonal

factors which are responsible for the rise of men like Trump. There is no doubt that Trump’s personal characteristics such as self-confidence and unrestrained spontaneity attracted millions but they didn’t alone cause his personal rise. The free-market liberal democracy was looking ragged and the economic divide between wealthy elites and the rest of the population had increased. Economically vulnerable masses became hostile to elites and fearful of outsiders. All this phenomenon was called populism. Trump presented himself as a man who will get rid of elites and migrants and will do whatever he has promised to do. Populism more than personality explains Trump’s ascent. Common masses were behind the rise of populism. It’s the actions of the masses who create overwhelming waves of smaller events which carry the leaders along with them. Disregarding the contribution and role of common people and thinking that only a few leaders wrote world history is like giving too much significance to the not-too-significant foam tossed up by the ocean currents on its surface. Oppenheimer and Truman were able to annihilate hundreds of thousands of people in World War II because most of their countrymen were supporting their actions.

Common people today have become too pessimistic. They don’t believe that they can make much difference in today’s world. They are timidly waiting for a Superman or a great man to rise and lead them all. People have become part of a herd that is ready to do what it is told. Herd animals want somebody else to find the solutions to the problems they face. They are reactionary, cowardly and desultory. They blame the corrupt system for their inability to make a difference. Environmental forces are important but many people changed the world for the better despite a hostile socio-economic and political environment. Muhammad Bouazizi was a street vendor who became a fermentor and initiator of the movement against autocratic regimes. Every person’s action can cause a change. We all need to break out of the straitjacket of worn-out ideas and think of new ones that can work. Instead of believing that only a few handful of leaders will change the future of our country which currently looks bleak, we should start trying to effect change ourselves. Moreover, we need to be receptive to the ideas of truly talented and great people of our time. The pigeons, who were ensnared in a net by a hunter, were able to free themselves because they were receptive to the advice of a wise pigeon. A community stagnates without the impulse of an individual and impulse also dies away without the sympathy of the community.

Promotions of education

Ambassador of Somalia calls on IIUI President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H. E. Shirwa Abdullahi Ibrahim along with the Rector of Somalia National University, Prof. Dr. Hassan Osman Gaal and the Rector of Somalia's Benadir University Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mohamud Hassan, Monday, called on H. E. Dr. Hatahl Homoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) at his office at New Campus.



During the meeting issues pertaining to mutual interests including promotions of education and enhancement of educational ties between higher education institutions of both countries were discussed. It was agreed that cooperation from IIUI in various faculties can pave the way for further improvement in Somali Higher educational Institutions. On this occasion they agreed to strengthen bilateral educational ties

between IIUI and Somali universities.

During the meeting mentioning the auspicious services and significant role of Prof. Dr. Hatahl Homoud Alotaibi, President International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), the Somali Ambassador appreciated the university's vision of quality education, students centric approach and progress in research. Somali Ambassador said IIUI is a source of attraction

for a large number of students in Somalia. He thanked the IIUI President for taking good care of the Somali students studying at IIUI.

The IIUI President apprised the Ambassador of the university's history, future plans, vision and recent activities and achievements. He said IIUI is eager to welcome and facilitate more Somali students at IIUI. He opined that IIUI has a diversified cultural environment where a large number of

countries are represented by foreign students. He shared that in the previous 3 years, as a result of the reforms under varsity's new strategic plan, the university has gained dynamic place in rankings across the world as well as its achievements have doubled. He assured that IIUI will be available to discuss exchange of professionals with Somali universities and it will also help them to hunt best Somali Alumni of IIUI.

Meeting

PESHAWAR: DEAN Honorary Counsellor Corps Peshawar (KP Chapter) and Honorary Counsellor General KPK Tunisia H. E Mr. Ammad Rasheed had a meeting with the U. S. Consul General H. E Mr. Shante Moore at U. S. Consulate General in Peshawar.



Photo: Spokesman

Illegal cigarettes pose a threat to public health

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The widespread availability of illegal cigarettes in Pakistan poses a significant threat to public health, as authorities struggle to curb their sale. Despite government efforts to crack down on retailers and smuggling, these illegal cigarettes remain easily available at much lower prices than legal brands.

Experts have expressed concerns that the rampant violation of tobacco control laws and the unfettered sale of illegal cigarettes are undermining the government's health policies. With over half of the cigarette market now occupied by illicit cigarettes, Pakistan has become one of the largest hubs for illegal cigarettes in Asia.

Similarly, the lack of regulation on loose cigarette sales and the sale of cigarettes to minors further exacerbates the problem. These easy access points are hindering efforts to restrict tobacco consumption and promoting smoking among minors.

Recognition

Japan awards Special Persons' Association of Pakistan commendation for FY 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has awarded the Foreign Minister's Commendations for FY 2023 to Mr. Muhammad Shafiq ur Rehman, President of Milestone Society for the Special Persons, in recognition of his significant contribution towards the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan.



H. E. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on behalf of the Government of Japan, on 4 December 2023, conferred the Foreign Minister's Commendations for FY 2023 to Mr. Muhammad Shafiq ur Rehman. The commendation ceremony was held at Ambassador's official residence in Islamabad.

Mr. Muhammad Shafiq ur Rehman, himself is a wheelchair user, and due to his strong leadership, he

dedicated his sincere efforts to work for the special persons in Pakistan to expand their opportunities. In

collaboration with Sakura Wheelchair Project, he has been carrying used wheelchairs from Japan and distrib-

uting to wheelchair users in Pakistan. It is a great connection between the special persons in Japan and Pakistan.

In addition, he established a local NGO, Milestone Society for the Special Persons, and under Grant Assistance of Japanese Government in 2018, constructed a special education self-support training center for persons with disabilities in Lahore.

H. E. WADA Mitsuhiro, while speaking on the occasion, congratulated Mr. Muhammad Shafiq ur Rehman on receiving this prestigious commendation by the Government of Japan. H. E. appreciated his dedicated efforts to promote mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan.

H. E. said "I look forward to his continued success in the future, and I hope that his activities will inspire the further mutual understanding and cooperation between the people of Japan and Pakistan."

First International White Tea Conference kicks off

FUDING, CHINA: /Xinhua-AsiaNet/— On November 30, themed "Fuding, the Birthplace of White Tea, Building A Win-win Future Together", the first International White Tea Conference was held in Fuding City. Representatives from various United Nations agencies, experts and scholars from the international tea sector, leading entrepreneurs, embassy representatives, heads of major tea-producing regions and buyer representatives, among other distinguished guests attended the Conference. The event is expected to generate a consensus on global interconnectivity for cooperation, and to chart a new blueprint for Fuding White Tea to go global, according to Fuding City Convergence Media Center.



At the opening ceremony, Fuding City was designated by the International Tea Committee and the China Chamber

of Commerce of Import & Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce & Animal By-products (CFNA) as the sole host of the International White Tea Conference. This is another prestigious honor for Fuding City after it was named the

birthplace of the world's white tea and the world's white tea culture industry and science and technology center.

The event was planned under the guidance of UNESCO, UNIDO and FAO Intergovernmental Group

(IGG) on Tea, co-hosted by CNFA and the International Tea Committee, and co-organized by the CNFA Tea Committee and the Fuding City Leadership Group on Tea Industry Development.

inDrive becomes the first company to integrate EVs into its fleet in Pakistan



PNP

KARACHI: – inDrive, a leading ride-hailing company, is proud to announce its groundbreaking partnership with Vlektra, a cutting-edge electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer, to introduce electric bikes to its fleet in Pakistan. This marks a significant milestone in the nation's transportation landscape, driving the country towards a sustainable future.

Fatig Bin Khurshed, Co-founder of Vlektra, echoed this sentiment, stating, "Vlektra's partnership with inDrive heralds a pioneering move in Pakistan's ride-hailing landscape, introducing electric vehicles for sustainable mobility. This collaboration embodies innovation, setting a new eco-conscious standard in the region. Vlektra's cutting-edge EV technology aims to reduce emissions and promote eco-friendly transport."

This strategic partnership between inDrive and Vlektra is poised to set a precedent in the transportation industry. By combining forces to introduce EV bikes and conducting educational initiatives, they're steering Pakistan towards a cleaner, more sustainable future.

COMSTECH Organizes Int'l Seminar on Advances in Neglected Tropical Diseases

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH Organized International Seminar on "Advances in Neglected Tropical Diseases", on Monday. The seminar was delivered by Prof. Dr. Paul Denny, and Prof. Dr. Ehmke Pohl, Department of Chemistry, Durham University, UK.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH welcomed the participants. He said the experts of the seminar are not only excellent in terms of their education and experience in the field of NTDs but also because of their mission. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that the Leishmaniasis disease burden in Pakistan is increasing. He said that COMSTECH is collaborating with the NTD network since last three years and through this linkage have conducted several activities including a series of online lectures, and a training course in Nairobi.

Prof. Dr. Paul Denny delivered lecture on "leishmaniasis, drugs and diagnostics for a disease of neglect", and Prof. Dr. Ehmke Pohl lecture was on "structure-based and AI supported drug discovery targeting protozoan amino-acid biosynthesis".

Prof. Dr. Denny Paul, Departments of Biosciences and Chemistry, Durham University, has been studying the single-celled protozoan parasites of humans and domestic animals since 1993. Currently his laboratory works on model pathogens from both the trypanosomatid and apicomplexan families.

Five-day workshop

USAID and HEC launch strategic planning at Pakistani universities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Higher Education System Strengthening Activity, organized a five-day workshop to launch strategic planning at Pakistani public sector universities. University administrators and faculty learned how to develop and implement strategic plans to improve their universities' management, market-relevance, and student support services. These strategic plans will support universities to increase students' employability after graduation.

USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri addressed the university leaders, saying, "Higher education institutions are central to Pakistan's development. Your universities shape future leaders. Your degree programs give youth the skills to benefit from and drive Pakistan's economic growth."

In his address, Higher Education Commission Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed appreciated the collaboration with USAID to support higher education in Pakistan. He said, "Strategic planning is essential for universities to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and service." He urged the participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the workshop to their institutions and contribute to the national development agenda.

Pakistan receives invitation to present paper at International moot in Moscow

Commerce Desk



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani hand reader Glulam Murtaza (GM) has received a prestigious invitation to present his unparalleled expertise at the International Conference on Palmistry-Chirology scheduled for September 2024 in Moscow, Russia. This marks a historic moment for Pakistan, as it is the very first time the country has been recognized in this field.

Glulam Murtaza has earned widespread acclaim for his exceptional skills in deciphering the secrets held within the lines and contours of the human hand. His unique approach to palmistry-chirology has not only captivated audiences in Pakistan but has also garnered attention on the international stage.

Usually, it was the first time that he was teaching Indian professionals in this field. He has demystified the superstitious image of palmistry and populated new scientific concepts in this field. He postulated GM and assigned a pole system to every element, an alternative personality measurement method that can be applied right from the birth hood. He has also co-authored a book, "The Divine Prints," which will be published in the United Kingdom in February 2024.

The invitation to the conference is a testament to Glulam Murtaza's outstanding contributions to the field of hand reading and his commitment to advancing the understanding of palmistry-chirology. Attendees at the conference can anticipate an enlightening presentation that will delve into the intricate details of this ancient practice, offering fresh insights and perspectives.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
62,493.05	61,691.25
Day's High	Day's Low
62,912.61	62,061.56
Index Value	Change
22,628,513,687	+801.80
Percentage	Time
+1.3%	4 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,512.96	-16.39
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	4 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
36,148.50	-97.00
Percentage	Time
-0.27%	4 Dec, 12:36 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,231.27	-200.24
Percentage	Time
-0.60%	4 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.72	188.22
Bahrain Dinar	757.72	765.72
Canadian Dollar	209	211
China Yuan	39.93	40.33
Danish Krone	41.59	41.99
Euro	309	312
Hong Kong Dollar	36.46	36.81
Indian Rupee	3.42	3.53
Japanese Yen	1.49	1.56
Kuwaiti Dinar	922.11	931.11
Malaysian Ringgit	60.97	61.57
New Zealand \$	175.89	177.89
Norwegians Krone	26.68	26.98
Omani Riyal	740.01	748.01
Qatari Riyal	78.27	78.97
Saudi Riyal	75.9	76.7
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	27.45	27.75
Swiss Franc	327.65	330.15
Thai Bhat	8.16	8.31
U.A.E Dirham	77.5	78.2
UK Pound Sterling	360	363.5
US Dollar	283.7	286.5

Marine Reef Developments

Dubai launches landmark Dubai Reef project

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Dubai has announced the launch of the Dubai Reef project, one of the world's largest marine reef developments, marking a pioneering step in the journey towards ecological preservation. In line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, the Dubai Reef project will be led by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) and founding partner, the Regulatory Committee on Fishing of Living Aquatic Resources in Dubai, in cooperation with Dubai Chambers, the Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC), and Nakheel.

HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum highlighted that preserving the environment, safeguarding wildlife and promoting biodiversity stand as core priorities for the UAE, aligned with the strategic initiative to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. His Highness also emphasised that safeguarding the continuity and quality of human life requires a concerted and intensified commitment to launching high-impact projects and championing the adoption of best practices that ensure environmental safety and sustainability for generations to come.

'Dubai Can' was launched on 15 February 2022 by HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, along with the 'Refill for life' initiative, which aims to empower communities to reduce the use of single-use plastic water bottles.

Reefing Dubai's Coastlines: A Momentous Milestone

The Dubai Reef project is a monumental endeavour, deploying artificial reef modules of various sizes, spanning a staggering 600 square kilometres of Dubai's pristine waters. The meticulous design of these reefs exceeds 400,000 cubic meters in total volume, with an estimated capacity to capture over seven million tonnes of carbon annually. Beyond carbon capture, this project plays a pivotal role in coral reef habitat restoration, coastal protection and the revival of marine biodiversity along Dubai's foreshore.

Gas Price Hike

Transport expenses dropped due to cheaper oil: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the increase in inflation is a significant obstacle in reducing the interest rate on the part of the Central Bank.

Last month, headline inflation rose by 2.7 percent to 29.2 percent and the price of food items has also increased in the previous month while the cost of many other things has decreased.

Talking to the business community, the veter-

an business leader said that the main reason for inflation is the sharp rise in gas prices. Inflation is estimated to be 25% in the next financial year due to a 194% increase in gas prices, with further hikes likely.

The business leader said that economic experts believed that the Central Bank would reduce the interest rate soon, but it seems complicated after the release of inflation data.

There will be no policy relaxation shortly as inflation in urban areas is more than that of rural areas due to increased gas prices.

Inflation in urban areas has increased more than in rural areas after an extended period because the cost of gas does not affect rural areas, but urban areas are affected.



Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the drop in oil prices has somewhat reduced the cost of transport, which is welcome.

He said that inflation will start to increase rapidly if the rupee depreciates. Some Western institutions have estimated the dollar's value to reach 350 rupees by the end of 2024, which is alarming.

The currency market has been controlled with difficulty, and if speculators are not kept under close watch, they will start playing the old game again for their nefarious interests.

The government should initiate a new IMF program as soon as possible, make every effort to increase remittances, and take steps to bring the budget deficit under control, he demanded.

Agreement

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Sebastian Jacobi, Country Director of KfW, and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, inked agreements aimed at enhancing the capacity of Pakistan's power transmission sector and supporting the health sector, on Monday.



Photo: PID

Opening

JS Bank inaugurates new branch at Hala, Matiari

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Bank, one of the fastest-growing banks in Pakistan, announced the opening of its new branch in Hala, Matiari, Sindh. This strategic expansion is a significant step towards the Bank's annual expansion plan, aimed at increasing its footprint and enhancing customer service across the nation.

The branch was inaugurated by Jahangir Siddiqui, Founder of JS Group, in the presence of key regional customers. JS Bank's President & CEO, Basir Shamsie, alongside senior management, were also present at the inauguration.

This launch underscores the Bank's commitment to financial inclusion and sustainable growth in key markets.

Jahangir Siddiqui, in his address, emphasized the importance of continual expansion and said that through such growth, JS Bank is enhancing its network across underserved areas, bringing cutting-edge banking services closer to customers and enabling financial inclusion.

Basir Shamsie stated: "The new Hala



branch will provide a wide range of financial services designed to meet the diverse needs of both personal and SME clients. This expansion will also contribute to the economic development of the region."

The branch will offer comprehensive services, including retail banking, Agri and SME lending, consumer loans, and more. It will drive local economic activities by providing tailored financial solutions.

Pakistan Water Week 2023 Celebration

Experts discuss ways to improve governance framework at Pakistan Water Week 2023

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Syed Ali Murtaza on Monday highlighted that water governance was a key issue and water management and agriculture practices need to be changed in Pakistan.

Addressing an international conference in connection with 'Pakistan Water Week 2023' he said the event has brought together the experts for an important discussion on a crucial issue being faced by the country.

The conference, 'Transformative Pathways for Water and Food System in a Climate Resilient Pakistan' was organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), and CGIARs Water, Land and Ecosystems Programme.

Secretary Murtaza said water scarcity is due to the usage in the agriculture sector, adding that the Punjab Water Act gives a governance framework to the province for water allocation for different sectors.

Meanwhile, Dr Mark Smith, Director General IWMI, said that climate change



was changing water regimes and Pakistan is also facing the same vulnerability. Smith stressed that global efforts are underway to reduce the swift rise in temperature and the Conference of Parties (COP) currently underway in Dubai is also focusing on the challenges being faced by nature.

Claudia Ringler (Co-Lead NEXUS Gains and Director, Natural Resources and Resilience) said that the number of hungry people has risen from 564 million in 2014 to 735 million in 2022, adding that the number in Pakistan is 43 million.

Elaborating that extreme weather events cause welfare loss, the expert quoted that Pakistan suffered a loss worth USD 2.1 billion as a result of climate

change as per the estimates. Stressing that the First World needs to take steps effectively to stem the tide of extreme weather events, the expert highlighted that countries like Pakistan should also work for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Director, Water, Food and Ecosystems, IWMI, Dr. Mohsin Hafeez said Pakistan has 6th largest population in the world, is 77th in the food security index, and 8th most climate-vulnerable country, which is directly affecting water and food security in the country.

"The Water Week will provide a platform for them to share insights and collaborate in building resilience for Pakistan," Dr Mohsin said.

Finance platform

ABHI partners with Unilever Pakistan



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a significant move towards empowering employees financially, ABHI, an embedded finance platform, has partnered with Unilever Pakistan, a global FMCG company with a presence in 190 countries, to offer AbhiSalary—an Earned Wage Access (EWA) solution. This collaboration aims to empower Unilever Pakistan's workforce by providing them with immediate access to a portion of their earned wages.

Ali Ladhuhai,

Co-Founder and COO at ABHI, stated, "In line with Mr Amir Paracha's vision of financial empowerment through the 'fair living wage' initiative, our partnership with Unilever Pakistan aims to further this goal.

Mr. Umair Rasheed, Country Lead Employee Experience at Unilever, commented, "Unilever Pakistan has always put its people first in everything we do. Our partnership with ABHI is another step in ensuring the financial well-being of our employees in challenging times

COP-28 global conference

Just Energy Transition sans proper finance elusive: Dr Suleri

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD/DUBAI: Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri on Sunday while attending various sideline events at the COP-28 global conference underscored that the developing countries, G-77 plus China need to establish unity for working out indigenous solutions as just energy transition without proper finances was elusive.

The SDPI Executive Director is participating in the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP-28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a special delegate in various plenaries, group discussions and other important deliberations taking place at the critical environmental moot of the world.

He added that the G-77 plus China countries should revive the same spirit as it was demonstrated at the previous COP-27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Dr. Suleri noted that it should be floated as a proposal for the next or the other successive COP meeting to achieve tangible results. "This requires some sort of financing that I call DAI (Data, Action and Investment). So, when we have investment then we require data to understand investment prospects and action again not only by the development partners but also by the recipient country and the people working on it," he added.

Dr Suleri further elaborated that the global decarbonization initiative was being signed by the countries at COP-28 that was basically about carbon removal through capture and sequestration measures that was brought under

discussion under this initiative. "If business as usual continues amid carbon removal then it can be further promoted whereas nuclear technology is being discussed as a potential source of it," he added. Secondly, the negotiation is on Adaptation Fund where developing countries (G77 plus China) are demanding an increase in it.

Third focus of agenda is GST which is indicating that the world is lagging behind its required target that indicate to review the fossil fuel consumption and the discussion is stuck on phase out and phase down of petroleum.

Dr Suleri added that the next agenda much debated point is on climate financing that is having a new dimension where the developing countries are questioning the efficacy of global financial institutions in addressing the climate change demands like the IMF, World Bank and others.

Dr Suleri said the Institute was talking about just energy transition as it is obvious that the developing nations want to phase out fossil fuel but 80% of world energy is coming from fossil fuels and for countries like us it would not be able to do it overnight and no country could do it. "Clean Energy should have just energy transition and SDPI demands a transition financing as well," he added.

Deputy Executive Director SDPI Dr Shafiqat Munir while speaking at just transition, urban, and resilience themes at COP side events today said the world cannot achieve the goal of NetZero unless rapid, equitable and just transition based NDCs are revisited by the countries.

Sarfraz Ahmed upbeat for tough challenge in Australia Tests

Sports Desk

CANBERRA: Former captain Sarfraz Ahmed is ready to face the challenges that lay ahead in the upcoming four-day game against Australian Prime Minister XI.

Sarfraz Ahmed while talking to the media, recalled the inspiring innings of Chris Gayle at Manuka Oval and stressed the importance of the match against PM XI.

"I remember watching Chris Gayle's incredible innings of 200 runs against Zimbabwe at Manuka Oval. Now, as we brace ourselves for a four-day clash in Canberra against Australia, the weather seems to be good," said Sarfraz Ahmed.

"This match holds an immense significance as it kickstarts the three-match test series against the formidable Australian team."

Expressing his confidence, Sarfraz highlighted the strength of the Pakistani lineup.

"Australia boasts good batters, but we are no less. With Abdullah, Babar, Imam, Saud, and Agha in our ranks, we are well-equipped for the challenge," he declared.

Sarfraz further praised the quality



of Pakistan's bowlers in the Test squad.

"Shaheen and Hasan are exceptional, and we have the likes of Mir Hamza, Khurram Shehzad, and Fahim, who have proven their mettle in domestic competitions."

The former captain then took a moment to extend his congratulations to the newly-appointed Test captain Shan Masood and acknowledged his leader-

ship. "It's always an honour to lead your country, and I want to congratulate Shan Masood for his role," said the wicketkeeper batter.

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"The camaraderie between Babar Azam, Muhammad Hafeez, and Shan Masood is a testament to the strong bond

within our camp."

Sarfraz Ahmed concluded with the humble mention that he is ready to play any role for the team in Australia.

"I am happy to play any role - whether as a batter or a wicket-keeper - in contributing to the success of the team."

Pakistan and Australia will square off in the first Test match in Perth from 14-18 December 2023.

The second Test match will be played in Melbourne, from 26 to 30 December, while Sydney will host the last game of the tour from 3 to 7 January 2024.

Pakistan squad

Shan Masood (c), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfraz Ahmed (wk), Saud Shakeel and Shaheen Shah Afridi

Australia squad

David Warner, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Mitchell Marsh, Alex Carey, Pat Cummins (c), Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood, Scott Boland, Cameron Green, Lance Morris

Punjab Institute of Sports Sciences begins one-week training programme for coaches



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The one-week training course of Punjab Institute of Sports Sciences (PISC) has commenced under the auspices of Sports Board Punjab at National Hockey Stadium on Monday.

DG Sports Punjab Dr. Asif Tufail inaugurated the training programme in which all divisional coaches participated. PISC Principal Chand Parveen, Chief Instructor Hafeez Bhatti and Instructors

Shaista Qaiser and Sajid Ali also attended the programme.

On the first day, IAAF Level 4 Athletics Coach Tariq Sidhu and Director Development Athletics Asia Salman Iqbal Butt delivered lectures on Strength and Conditioning and Sports Nutrition respectively.

Addressing the course participants, Dr. Asif Tufail said that this is the first of its kind training programme in the history of Punjab province. "Punjab Institute of

Sports Sciences is the beginning of modern sports in the province. The successful coaches will be awarded certificates at the end of course."

He further said that only a well-trained and qualified coach can produce top level athletes. "All divisional coaches of the province are being given latest and advanced training in this one-week training programme," he added.

In his lecture, Tariq Sidhu told the coaches about

modern training rules and game techniques. He also threw light on the significance of fitness, biomechanics, coaching skills and discipline during his detailed lecture.

Salman Iqbal Butt taught the divisional coaches about the role of vitamins and carbohydrates in the nutrition of an athlete. "All athletes must use their food including fruits and vegetables as per the directions of qualified experts."

Noor Zaman annexes CASerena Hotels Int'l Squash C'ship title



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Noor Zaman defeated compatriot Muhammad Asim Khan in the final to clinch the men's title of Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad on Monday. Noor outwitted Asim Khan by a scoreline of 11-8, 8-2, and retired hurt in 18 minutes.

In the women's event's final, Amina el Rihany of Egypt beat her compatriot Nadien Elhammy in a well-fought contest 13-15, 11-3, 11-7, 11-7 in 48 minutes to lift the title. A group of 23 world-ranking men and women players from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Egypt and Spain participated in the championships.

New York Strikers bundle Delhi Bulls for the lowest Abu Dhabi T10 League total to win by 67 runs

A Sports

ABU DHABI: New York Strikers' Akeal Hosein and Chamika Karunaratne wreaked havoc on Delhi Bulls' batting line to hand them a heavy 67-run defeat in a one-sided Abu Dhabi T10 League match at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium.

New York Strikers bowled Delhi Bulls for a meagre 31, which is the lowest total in the history of the Abu Dhabi T10 League.

Earlier, Delhi Bulls invited New York Strikers to bat first and reduced them to 17-3 inside three overs, including two wickets in the same over by UAE bowler Wasim Akram.

However, the Strikers' opening batter



Rahmanullah Gurbaz stayed firm on his end and kept the scoreboard moving.

Strikers' skipper Kieron Pollard was then bowled by Dwayne Bravo in the sixth over, bringing Odean Smith to the

crease.

Gurbaz and Smith then attacked the Bulls' bowling line and added an unbeaten 63 from 27 balls to raise the team's total to 98-4 in their accumulated ten overs.

Gurbaz scored 49 off 24, featuring five sixes and two boundaries, meanwhile, Smith scored 25 runs from 15 balls with one boundary and two sixes.

Wasim Akram topped the wickets chart for the Bulls with bowling figures of 2-15.

While defending their 98-run total, Strikers' Akeal Hosein gave his side a brilliant start as he sent Johnson Charles and James Vince on back-to-back balls in the first over.

Hosein then bowled Usman Khan in

his next over to further slip Delhi Bulls to 11-4 in the third over.

Chamika Karunaratne then bowled a tremendous over to destroy Delhi Bulls' pursuit by taking three wickets for one run reducing them to 15-7.

Quinton de Kock got caught and bowled before Rovman Powell as well as Dwayne Bravo fell prey to Karunaratne in the same over.

Strikers' bowlers then quickly wrapped the Bulls' innings at 31 before Ravi Bopara showed some resistance with run-a-ball 16.

Bopara was the only batter to reach double figures for Delhi Bulls.

Akeal Hosein and Chamika Karunaratne returned with brilliant bowling figures of 3-7 and 3-6 respectively.

Barcelona loan star Joao Felix makes Atletico Madrid pay in La Liga title race

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Joao Felix's superb dinked finish earned Barcelona a vital 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Sunday in the La Liga title race.

The Portuguese forward, on loan at Barcelona from Atletico, made no secret of his pleasure to escape the Spanish capital this summer and made his parent club pay at the Olympic Stadium.

Felix was criticised by some Atletico players ahead of the game and Barca coach Xavi Hernandez called on him to use those words as inspiration, which he duly did.

The forward's goal allowed Barca to reclaim third place from Atletico, now trailing leaders Real Madrid and second place Girona by four points in the La Liga

points table.

Atletico have not won away against the champions in La Liga since 2006, a run now stretching to 18 matches, but arrived thinking this could be the time to snap that streak.

Since crumbling to a defeat in the Clasico by Real Madrid at the end of October, Barcelona have struggled for form and confidence.

Barcelona started well, carving out chances and Felix broke the deadlock after 28 minutes, taking a brilliant touch to ride Nahuel Molina's challenge and then dinking the ball over Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak.

Felix celebrated with arms aloft, standing on the advertising hoardings in front of the angry visiting supporters, while

Rojiblancos coach Diego Simeone appeared disgruntled as he flashed up on the big screens.

The 24-year-old forward, a club record signing at 126 million euros (\$137 million) in 2019, never settled in the capital and did not click with Simeone's management and playing style.

"It was spontaneous... in the heat of the game and it was like a relief, for everything I lived through this summer," Felix told Movistar about his celebration.

"Every week I'm talked about, whether for good or bad, I do my job, without looking at what they say or think."

Perhaps not coincidentally, Axel Witsel was soon booked for hacking Felix to the ground shortly after.

Felix came close to a second

with a prodded effort from Ilkay Gundogan's cut-back, but this time Oblak denied him.

Gundogan impressed in midfield alongside fit-again duo Pedri and Frenkie de Jong, as Barcelona controlled the game.

Raphinha clipped the post at the start of the second half to get Barcelona fans out of their seats.

Despite their high-calibre opponents, the attendance fell short of 35,000 and was the club's poorest this season, with supporters perhaps chastened by the colder winter evenings and the late kick-off.

Atletico improved in the second half but not by enough to force an equaliser.

Talisman Antoine Griezmann worked hard but could not find the net against his old employers



— he has not netted in 14 games against Barca for the Rojiblancos.

Memphis Depay, another ex-Barcelona player, came closest for Atletico with a free-kick tipped over by Inaki Pena, between the sticks for the hosts in place of the hurt Marc-Andre ter Stegen.



Tandojam Vice Chancellor Sindh Agricultural University Tandojam Dr. Fateh Murri inaugurating inter faculty Futsal championship.

Haris Rauf, Usama and Zaman granted NOCs for BBL

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has issued no-objection certificates (NOC) to fast bowlers Haris Rauf, Zaman Khan and leg-spinner Usama Mir for the Big Bash League 2023-24. The board has issued the NOCs considering the workload of players and the future tours programme of the national men's team.

The PCB understands that this decision is in the best interests of all the stakeholders involved while balancing the importance of game time with workload management.

Haris and Usama have been granted NOCs for a total of five matches whereas Zaman has been granted NOC for four matches. All these games are set to take place from 7 to 28 December.

Temba Bavuma to miss white-ball matches against India

Sports Desk

LAHORE: South Africa's World Cup captain Temba Bavuma will miss two white-ball series against India, Cricket South Africa announced on Monday in naming squads for the multi-format tour.



Bavuma as well as fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will play no part in the limited overs series in order to prepare for two World Test Championship matches, starting in Centurion on December 26.

Fast bowlers Gerald Coetzee, Lungi Ngidi and Marco Jansen will only play in the first two T20Is before returning to their franchises to play in domestic four-day cricket ahead of the Test series.

ODI coach Rob Walter said the decision was made in consultation with Test coach Shukri Conrad.

"We have a busy summer ahead starting with the T20Is and then ODIs against India and we have therefore taken the decision to omit several of our senior players," said Walter.

"This decision was taken together with coach Shukri as we place emphasis on the red-ball leg of the tour, meaning they will instead be preparing for the Test series by playing domestic cricket."

Conrad said: "It is the start of a new ICC World Test Championship cycle and that itself is a huge incentive for everyone. We want to try and ensure we make a strong start to this sequence here at home against one of the best teams in the world."

The Test squad includes three uncapped players in Durban and Western Province batsman David Bedingham, left-arm fast bowler Nandre Burger and batsman Tristan Stubbs.

Burger is set to make his international debut after being named in all three squads. Another newcomer is all-rounder Mhlangeni Mpongwana, who was selected for the one-day series.

The first T20 international will be played in Durban on Sunday. There will be three T20 internationals and three one-day internationals.

India will also be without key players for the white-ball matches, with regular captain Rohit Sharma and former captain Virat Kohli rested ahead of the Test matches.

South Africa T20I Squad

Aiden Markram (c), Ott Niel Baartman, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Lizaad Williams

South Africa ODI Squad

Aiden Markram (c), Ott Niel Baartman, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Keshav Maharaj, Mhlangeni Mpongwana, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreyne (wk), Lizaad Williams

South Africa Test Squad

Temba Bavuma (c), David Bedingham, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee, Tony de Zorzi, Dean Elgar, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Keegan Petersen, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs, Kyle Verreyne (wk)

Schedule of India's tour of South Africa

December 10 - First T20I, Durban
December 12 - Second T20I, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)
December 14 - Third T20I, Johannesburg
December 17 - First ODI, Johannesburg
December 19 - Second ODI, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)
December 21 - Third ODI, Paarl
December 26-30 - First Test match, Centurion
January 3-7 - Second Test match, Cape Town

Addressed

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Biryani Festival organized by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.



Photo: PID

President stresses upon attitudinal change as key to growth of any sector in economy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Monday emphasized that attitudinal change in any sector of the economy could lead to its growth and development including the production and export of world famed Pakistani indigenous Basmati rice. The president,

elaborating his viewpoint, said that technological and scientific research and inputs would pave way for the latest innovations in the agriculture sector and the rice exporters should utilize all available tools to enhance their yield by supplementing the country's exports.

He was addressing the Biryani Festival and presenting of

REAP journal organized by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event was attended by the REAP office bearers, members of the diplomatic corps, exporters, traders and mediapersons.

Earlier, Chairman REAP, Chela Ram Kelwani, in his address, highlighted the

contribution of the association in the country's exports. He said that country's Basmati was renowned worldwide due to its aroma, quality and taste. He apprised that they had arranged rice festivals in 14 countries so far, while Mexico and Russia were the latest rice export destinations for REAP. Convener of REAP

Abdul Rahim Janoo, said that with strenuous efforts, the rice export had jumped from \$300 million to \$3 billion and if they were given further incentives, it could surpass \$5 billion annually. On the occasion, the president also gave away medals among the recipients to recognize the contributions of REAP.

PM invites Emarati investors to explore Pakistan's conducive business market

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East North Africa region with an average annual trade of \$9 billion and urged the UAE investors to explore Pakistani market for new avenues.

In an interview with Gulf Today, he said Pakistan is planning a comprehensive investment promotion strategy in major countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

PM Kakar said Pakistan's exports to the UAE include agriculture products, textiles and manpower, while the UAE exports petroleum, petrochemical products and hi-tech equipment to Pakistan.



The two countries also exchange services with each other. Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Financial-technology are new areas of collaboration with

much greater potential.

He expressed satisfaction that Pakistan's exports to UAE surged to \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2022-23, highest in the last five years.

On prospects of UAE's investment in Pakistan, he said attracting foreign investment in all sectors of Pakistan's economy was the government's top priority.

"Pakistan's Investment Policy has been designed to provide a comprehensive framework for creating a conducive business environment for attraction of Foreign Direct Investment from all parts of the world including the UAE," he said.

Currently, he said, there are over 1,000 multinational companies profitably operating in Pakistan, and for many, Pakistan is the most profitable part of their franchise.

Foreign companies, individuals, multinational corporations can own 100 per cent shares in locally incorporated or unincorporated firms, he added.

Stressing enhanced investment cooperation, the prime minister said the two countries could explore the areas such as agriculture, energy, mining, information technology, logistics and defence.

Pakistan gets \$100m support for polio eradication: Dr. Nadeem Jan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday said that a support of \$100 million had been obtained from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the eradication of polio. Addressing the "Reaching the last mile" forum related to Polio in COP-28 in UAE, the minister said that this was a major accomplishment. He said that the efforts towards the eradication of polio had achieved significant success.

He expressed special gratitude to the IDB, the United Arab Emirates and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their support in providing assistance for the eradication of polio. Dr. Nadeem Jan pledged full



determination for the eradication of polio from Pakistan. He said that the grant allocated for the eradication of polio was being efficiently utilized, ensuring effective expenditure. The minister said, "We are ensuring the fulfillment of the desired objectives for the eradication of polio with utmost certainty." He added that for the eradication of polio, existing resources would be utilized in line with the broader agenda of Global Health Security.

PTI leader Mrs Tahira Naseem joined Pakistan People's Party

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: PTI Leader Chairperson Major Jahanzeb Adnan Shaheed Foundation Ms. Tahira Naseem joined Pakistan People's Party, met former Prime Minister Senator Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, expressed confidence in Yousuf Raza Gillani's leadership and also announced support in the upcoming election. Yesterday PTI leader Chairperson Major Jahanzeb Adnan Shaheed Foundation Ms. Tahira Naseem met former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani and expressed confidence in his leadership announced to leave Tehreek-e-Insaf and join PPP. She also assured full support in the upcoming elections.

On this occasion, Yousuf Raza



Gillani while talking said that the doors of PPP is open for every democratic worker. He said that the history of PPP is full of sacrifices and struggles that is the reason why democratic and political minded people are joining PPP in droves. Employment opportunities will lead the country towards democratic political stability, he added that history is a witness that Pakistan People's Party always got a government in crisis and our governments always worked to bring the country towards stability.

Aafia Siddiqui meets her sister Fowzia

Mentoring Desk



ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated Pakistani neuroscientist Aafia Siddiqui had the second reunion in 20 years with her sister Fowzia at a prison hospital in Fort Worth, Texas, on Monday.

According to details, the meeting between both the sisters continued for 44 minutes in which Senator Talha Mahmood and Aafia Siddiqui's lawyer were also present.

Dr Fowzia was scheduled to meet Aafia Siddiqui on December 2 and 3 but she was denied as the authorities claimed to have 'lost' the key of the prison.

In a video statement, Dr. Fowzia Siddiqui said she reached the jail but could not meet Aafia Siddiqui as the staff 'misplaced' the prison key.

It is to be noted that Fowzia Siddiqui met her sister in May, earlier this year, for the first time after 20 years of imprisonment in US.

Aid access to Gaza's north entirely blocked as Israeli attacks escalate: UN

Mentoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Reports of hundreds of fatalities from the deadly Israeli bombing in southern Gaza over the weekend heightened deep concerns for civilians sheltering there, while UN humanitarian officials on Monday said that aid teams had only "extremely limited" movement and access to the north was "now entirely blocked".

The latest update from the UN aid coordination office, OCHA, confirmed rising casualties and devastation amid "heavy Israeli bombardment from air, land and sea".

"From the afternoon of (Saturday) 2 December to the afternoon of (Sunday) 3 December, at least 316 people were killed and at least another 664 injured in Gaza," OCHA's situation update reported, adding that an Israeli soldier had been reportedly killed in the enclave at the weekend and another had succumbed to wounds sustained previously.

General elections: Army's assistance sought amid 'shortfall' of security personnel

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday sought assistance of Pakistan Army and civil armed forces during the general elections, citing a shortfall of nearly 0.3 million security personnel.

"While the ECP takes all necessary steps to organise an election, [...] it also expects the same commitment from the executive authorities and law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order in the area of the constituencies during the conduct of elections," the ECP said in a letter to Ministry of Interior.

The request invoked Article 220 of the Constitution, emphasising the duty of all executive authorities to support the ECP in fulfilling its functions.

Indonesia-Pakistan collaboration: Religious diversity, youth initiatives, and economic ties take center stage

Spokesman Report

JAKARTA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia facilitated a panel discussion titled "The Role of Youth in Religious Diplomacy and Interfaith Dialogue", fostering dialogue between the visiting delegation of prominent religious scholars and intellectuals from Pakistan, the Santri Diplomacy Academy, and the Indonesian Christian Youth Movement the other day.

In the discussion, a representative from Pesantren (madrasa) highlighted the Santri Diplomacy Academy's efforts in building a peaceful world free from violence. He shared that Indonesia boasts 39,000 madrasas promoting interfaith dialogue through diverse 'Youth Exchange Programs' across various nations.

The representative from the Indonesian Christian Youth Movement provided insights to the delegation, outlining the movement's objectives of fostering spirituality, nationalism, and a sense of national identity among Christian youth. Shedding light on the strength of

Indonesia's cultural and religious diversity, the movement successfully addresses conflicts by adhering to the principles of Pancasila, he added.

He, acknowledging their collaborative role, mentioned active participation in government consultations, with a designated representative conveying the priorities and concerns of the youth to the government.

The Pakistani delegation, consisting of Ulama and scholars, conveyed their appreciation for the invaluable opportunity of mutual learning. Emphasizing that Pakistan, with 65 percent of its population under 35 years, is a youthful nation, they underscored the pivotal role played by the country's youth in advancing peace and progress.

In a similar vein, they expressed their commitment to drawing inspiration from the Indonesian experience and the model of religious moderation, acknowledging the significance of such practices in fostering harmony and progress.

Later, the delegation also engaged with representatives of the



Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation.

Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Chairperson Dr. Fadli Zon who is politically affiliated with the Great Indonesia Movement Party conveyed in his welcoming address that the diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan commenced in 1950 and have flourished ever since.

Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif, representing the Pakistani delegation, expressed his pleasure at the opportunity to meet with

Indonesian parliamentarians. He emphasized the shared goal of exploring avenues for mutual cooperation.

Impressed by Indonesia's religious tolerance, particularly evident in interactions with the country's two largest Muslim movements, he acknowledged Islam's prominent role in Pakistan, marked by both positive and challenging experiences.

Barrister Saif expressed a keen interest in learning from the successful conflict management

experiences of Indonesian brothers and other Muslim nations.

At the conclusion of the event, International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) President Muhammad Israr Madani, presented a commemorative shield to Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Chairperson Dr. Fadli Zon. Additionally, Indonesian parliamentarians extended a souvenir to the delegation.

Putu Supadma Rudana of the Democratic Party, Dr. Sukamta, and Wisnu Wijaya Adi Putra of

the Prosperous Justice Party, and Muhammad Ali Ridha, Golkar Party were also present during this diplomatic interaction with Pakistani delegation.

The diverse delegation included individuals Muhammad Israr, President of IRCRA; Maulana Muhammad Tayyib Tahiri, Head of Jamaat e Ishaat wa Tauheed; Barrister Zafarullah Khan, Politician and Writer/Author; Mufti Nouman Naem, Head of Jamia Binnoria, Karachi; Maulana Rashid ul Haq Sami, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Darul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak; Senator Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif; Beenish Irfan Khan, Social Activist; Malik Habib Orakzai, Chairman of the Pakistan International Human Rights Organization; Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore, Freelance Journalist; Muhammad Ismail Khan, Political Analyst and Policy Expert; Farkhanda Mansoor Zia, Seasoned Academician; Ejaz-ur-Rehman, Socialist; and Syed Rashad A. S. Bukhari, Director of Communication and Development at IRCRA.