



Government of Kazakhstan confers national award upon Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi
The Government of Kazakhstan has conferred its national award upon H. E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University (IIU) in recognition of his services. (Report on Page 3)



Masses to decide in February 8 elections who will rule Pakistan: Solangi
Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that general elections would be held on February 8, 2024 and full preparations were underway to accomplish the task in a fair and transparent manner. Talking to media persons at the inaugural ceremony of the 24-hour regional transmission of Pakistan Television Multan, he said that the people... (Details on Page 8)

Polio Education

ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of Task Force on Polio Eradication on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Sepoy Ahmed Ali laid to rest with full military honours in Charsadda



City Desk
RAWALPINDI: Sepoy Ahmed Ali, who embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting against terrorists in Saragha area of South Waziristan, was laid to rest with full military honours after his funeral prayers held in his native town of Charsadda District on Wednesday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, a large number of Pakistan Army officers, soldiers, relatives and local people participated in the funeral prayer. Sepoy Ahmad Ali Shaheed, aged 26 years, resident of Charsadda, was survived by his parents. "These sacrifices of martyrs strengthen the resolve and morale of Pakistan Army in the ongoing war against terrorism. This war will continue until the end of the last terrorist," the ISPR said.

PM orders emergency polio eradication plan for high-risk areas

Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday directed formulation of an emergency polio eradication plan and launch of integrated programmes in high-risk union councils. Chairing a meeting on Task Force on Polio Eradication, he emphasized monitoring of polio vaccination campaigns by using modern technology. Expressing the recent report of police cases, the prime minister regretted that the crippling disease, which was eradicated from the globe, still existed in Pakistan and Afghanistan. PM Kakar said regarding the use of Inactivated Polio Virus (IPV) vaccine, best international practices and research needed to be taken into consideration. He directed resumption of the regular polio immunization campaign across the country. The prime minister lauded the efforts of international community and development partners in polio eradication. He mentioned that enhanced cooperation on polio eradication was agreed upon in a meeting with Bill Gates, the co-chair of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the sidelines of Conference of Parties (COP28). The prime minister stressed including teachers, scholars and parents for raising awareness on polio eradication. Terming polio vaccine vital for the health, growth and future of children, he said all segments of the society needed to play their role in polio eradication. He directed holding an Ulama Convention and taking onboard scholars to raise awareness on the issue. The meeting was informed that special polio health camps had been set up in the high-risk zone of Dera Ismail Khan, while the same were being established in the vulnerable areas of Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Tank. In the recent polio awareness drives, 44 million children have been administered vaccine. It was highlighted that Punjab, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan are polio-free, whereas some union councils in the southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are more affected. The meeting was told that the polio teams are administering vaccine to the children at the illegal Afghan repatriation camps at Peshawar, Nowshera and Chaman. The meeting was attended by interim federal health minister Dr Nadeem Jan, caretaker chief minister KP Justice (retired) Arshad Hussain Shah, senior officials of National Task Force, chief secretaries and officials of law enforcement agencies.

IM Finance Minister announces kick off meeting of IMF team on digitizing budget



Commerce Desk
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs Dr. Shamsad Akhtar chaired the kick off meeting of IMF Technical Assistance Mission on digitizing budget process at Finance Division, today. The IMF Technical Assistance Mission was led by Mr. Fazeer Rahim and Mr. Sybi Hida, Senior Economists from the Public Financial Management Division, accompanied by the IMF Resident Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Esther Pérez Ruiz. FM underscored the need to tailor the recommendations to the specific needs of the Ministry to improve effectiveness of budget making process through digitisation. TA Mission assured to propose implementable solutions to the Ministry.

ECP to continue contempt hearing against PTI founder at Adiala Jail

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday announced to hold contempt case proceedings against former prime minister and PTI founding chief at Adiala Jail due to security concerns. Last year in August, the ECP had issued notices to Chaudhry, and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral body. In a five-page written verdict, the ECP said the interior ministry denied presenting the former prime minister before it from Adiala Jail due to security concerns.

Army Chief's vision sparks \$9 million donation to NUST

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Tanweer Ahmed, a prominent businessman of American-Pakistani origin, has contributed \$9 million to Islamabad's National University of Science & Technology (NUST), motivated by the dedicated vision for Pakistan's IT sector expressed by Army Chief General Asim Munir. Houston-based businessman Tanweer Ahmed has donated \$9 million to NUST to help students from poor backgrounds gain access to quality education through scholarships. NUST has confirmed that Tanweer Ahmed has entered into a partnership with the university through an Endowment Fund for unprivileged students which will benefit nearly 200 students who would be able to get scholarships every year. University - \$9 million is one of the single largest donations by any overseas Pakistani for any Pakistani. Expressing enthusiasm, Tanweer Ahmed stated, "Learning about the visionary stance of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, particularly his fervour for the IT sector, left me excited and thrilled. I firmly believe that the active involvement of the Army in the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is a brilliant strategy to unleash Pakistan's genuine IT potential." Tanweer Ahmed added: "I have conceived the idea of the NUST Information Technology (IT) Tower for the youth of Pakistan for which COAS General Asim Munir is leading the effort to harmonize our endeavours. The steps taken by General Asim Munir are commendable and inspiring. No army chief has done as much as Gen Munir has done in just one year for the IT sector of Pakistan and a clean national economy. He has taken excellent steps to put Pakistan's economy on the right course." The business entrepreneur said Pakistan has essential infrastructure available along with significant public sector investment in resource development. "Pakistan has untapped digital potential of USD 59.6 billion (PKR 9.7 trillion) and FinTech potential of USD 35 billion by 2025.

IHC rejects PTI founder's withdrawal plea in Toshakhana case

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday dismissed incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's plea seeking withdrawal of a petition challenging his disqualification in the Toshakhana reference. IHC Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict which was reserved on September 13 after hearing arguments of all the parties. On October 21, 2022, the electoral watchdog, in a consensus verdict, had disqualified the former prime minister under Article 63(1)(p) and ruled that the PTI founder was no more a member of the National Assembly.

Newly elected PTI Chairman makes key appointments

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) newly elected Chairman Gohar Ali Khan has made important appointments on key positions in the party. According to the notification issued by the PTI Chairman here on Wednesday, Shah Mehmood Qureshi was appointed as PTI Vice Chairman and Chaudhary Parvaiz Elahi as Central President of the party with immediate effect. Moreover, Firdous Shamim Naqvi, Senator Saif Ullah Abro, Qasim Khan Suri and Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani are appointed as PTI Central Vice Presidents (CVP).

SCO Council of National Coordinators meeting ends in Beijing

Spokesman Report
BEIJING: A meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of National Coordinators was held at the SCO Secretariat in Beijing. SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming spoke at the opening. The meeting included over 20 items on the agenda, according to SCO Secretariat here on Wednesday. The parties discussed the progress on the key activities of the SCO, issues related to Kazakhstan chairing the meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council and the



Council of Foreign Ministers, as well as draft documents concerning international cooperation, ways to improve the SCO's performance and other issues. A final Protocol of the Council of National Coordinators was signed following the meeting.

Three dead in Karachi's Arshi Shopping Mall blaze

Bureau Report
Karachi. As per details, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab said the fire that erupted at the shopping mall is under control now, whereas the cooling process is underway.

PPP ready for election: Faisal Kundi

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The Central Spokesperson of Pakistan People's Party and former Federal Minister of State Faisal Karim Kundi has said on Wednesday.

It is important to provide transparent elections, a level playing field, but what did one person do to the country? While now bringing in another person, what is to worsen the situation.

He expressed these views during a press conference at his residence Kundi Model Farm.

Party district president Malik Farhan Afzal Dhap and other personalities were also with him.

He said that one person was first borne by the nation and now preparations are being made to bring another person.

He said, hardly any party will get the majority in the upcoming elections, the best proof of running a coalition government was provided by the PPP government in the past.

He said that no one should be targeted for political revenge in the



country

The People's Party is ready for the election, some parties want to postpone the election citing cold weather and terrorism.

He said that peace was established after immense sacrifices in the war against terrorism.

After that, why there was unrest again, those who brought this unrest should be exposed and action should be taken.

He said, Regarding security, Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman is right, above all,

even today, the sacrifices of our security forces, people and media workers continue.

He said that free and fair elections are necessary for economic stability in the country.

Pakistan's nuclear power cannot be run adhoc, the will of the people should be voted for the People's Party.

He said that it is the right of the people to vote for Muslim League or Tehreek-e-Insaf.

On the martyrdom of Bibi who assumed power, we raised the slogan

of Pakistan Khape.

But the May 9 tragedy is unbearable, the entire PTI is not involved on May 9, and accepts what the courts decide about those involved.

He said that the vote is not on the mark but on leadership and personality.

He said that PTI's intra-party election is in front of everyone, on which voices are being raised in their own party.

Today he is the chairman of PTI, educated from the university of the People's Party.

He said that 6 conventions have been held in KP, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will start visiting KP from tomorrow, and the election campaign will start after the schedule.

He further said, seat adjustment will not happen with anyone in Dera, the governor of Maulana is sitting, and controlling the situation.

On this occasion, Malik Qasim Khan, a political and social personality of City Two, announced to leave Tehreek-e-Insaf and join the People's Party.

Awareness Walk Regarding Diabetes

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: An awareness walk and clinical session was organized in Nishtar Medical University during the ongoing campaign regarding diabetes. The purpose of the walk was to provide awareness about the causes, symptoms, complications and prevention of this disease. The walk organized by the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes Nishtar Medical University was led by Pro Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani. In charge of Endocrinology Department Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Registrar Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Ghulam Abbas, MS Nishtar Hospital Dr. Muhammad Kazim,



Registrar Dr. Salahuddin Mehmood Rand, Dr. Mehboob Qadir, Dr. Rawad Noor, Dr. Shahzad Alam, Dr. Humayun Riaz and Dr. Muzaffar Nawaz and other senior faculty members of the Department of Endocrinology.

A large number of administrative officers and post-graduate doctors participated. The walk started from Nishtar Administration Block and ended at Nishtar Tower. The participants of the walk carried placards in

their hands with information messages about the symptoms, prevention and treatment of this disease. Apart from this, a clinical session on diabetes during pregnancy was also organized under the auspices of Unit One Nishtar Medical University, Chair Person, Department of Gynecology, Prof. Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani, in which senior registrar, Dr. Nadia Taj, gave a lecture on this important topic. The clinical session was hosted by Professor Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal while the stage secretary was performed by Dr. Salahuddin Mahmood Rand. Pro Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani said that diabetes patients die due to lack of timely and permanent treatment.

Alibaba.com and Sundur Industrial Estate Co-host Seminar to Support Local Businesses in Global Commerce Journey

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, today co-hosted the Sundur B2B E-commerce Seminar with Sundur Industrial Estate in response to the growing interest in digital commerce among Pakistani businesses. The event enlightened the attendees with insights into the transformative potential of B2B platforms like Alibaba.com in helping micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) embark on their export journey and scale their business.

During the seminar, Alibaba.com experts shed light on the advantages of adopting B2B e-commerce, highlighting its benefits of expanding customer reach and boosting productivity. Participants



were also familiarized with Alibaba.com's Verified Member program, the top membership tier on Alibaba.com that provides qualified suppliers with on-site

verification to help them gain global buyers' trust.

In addition to informative sessions, the seminar also offered hands-on training sessions to equip partic-

ipants with the necessary skills and insights to kick-start their B2B e-commerce journey.

This collaboration between Alibaba.com and Sundur

Industrial Estate to present the seminar underscored the two companies' shared commitment to supporting the growth of Pakistani businesses in the digital age.

Zimbabwe Holds Great Potential for Islamic Banking in Southern African Countries

Spokesman Report

DUBAI, UAE: Alhuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) successfully hosted a two-day training workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe, focusing on Islamic banking, finance, and microfinance. The workshop aimed to equip professionals, practitioners, and regulators with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement Islamic financial solutions in Zimbabwe. This event also shed light on the growing potential for Islamic banking in Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries.

Southern African countries, particularly South Africa and Zambia, have witnessed a notable increase in the presence of Islamic banking institutions. South Africa boasts a growing number of Islamic banks and Takaful companies, demonstrating the increasing demand for Sharia-compliant financial services. The government issuance of Sukuk further exemplifies its commitment to diversifying



financial instruments and attracting investment. Other countries like Mozambique, Botswana, and Namibia have also expressed interest in introducing Islamic banking to diversify their financial sectors, attract foreign investment, and cater to their growing Muslim communities.

Regulatory frameworks have been developed to facilitate the establishment of Islamic financial institutions, signaling a positive trajectory for the integration of Islamic finance principles in the region.

Islamic banking and finance in Zimbabwe are on the early stage of development. The

banking sector holds substantial potential for Islamic finance. The presence of a potential market, combined with the government's acknowledgment, creates an environment favorable to the growth of Islamic banking in Zimbabwe. The introduction of Sukuk can play a pivot-

al role in mobilizing funds for essential projects, fostering economic growth, and promoting financial inclusion in the country.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair, CEO of Alhuda CIBE, said that, the development of Islamic banking in Southern African countries, especially South Africa, is promising. Zimbabwe holds a wealth of opportunities for Islamic banking, and Alhuda CIBE is committed to playing a leading role in its development. He added that Islamic finance can play a vital role in driving financial inclusion, economic development, and overall prosperity in the region.

Alhuda CIBE remains dedicated to contributing to the development of Islamic banking and finance in Africa, actively participating in initiatives aimed at promoting ethical and inclusive financial practices. The efforts of Alhuda CIBE in Southern Africa are part of a broader commitment to fostering economic development and financial stability in the region.

Gold Medal and Lifetime Achievement Awarded to VC Nishtar Medical University

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: According to the details, Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed has been honored with Gold Medal and Lifetime Achievement Award by Post Graduate Medical Institute and Amiruddin Medical College in recognition of his medical and teaching services. In the annual dinner held at PGMI and Amiruddin Medical College in Lahore, Punjab Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram gave these awards to Prof. Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed. President College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan and Vice Chancellor Fatima Jinnah Medical University Professor Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, Principal of Ameeruddin Medical College Dr. Farid Zafar, Vice Chancellor of Medical Universities and other important personalities were also present there on this occasion.



Congratulations to Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University on behalf of medical and other circles.

JS Bank partners with SOS Pakistan to provide Employee Banking Solutions

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: JS Bank, one of the fastest-growing banks in Pakistan, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Security Organizing System (SOS) Pakistan. Through this MOU, JS Bank will leverage its financial expertise by providing state-of-the-art transaction banking solutions, including JS Cash Management and Employee Banking services tailored to SOS employees.



The agreement was signed during a ceremony in the presence of Syed Jafar Raza, Group Head of Investment, International & Transaction Banking, JS Bank, Ahmed Ali Usuf, Global Chief Operating Officer and Development, SOS Pakistan, and other team members from both entities.

Syed Jafar Raza expressed his thoughts on the collaboration, "At JS Bank, we are dedicated to simplifying financial services for our partners and customers. Our goal is to provide innovative banking solutions that help them achieve operational excellence. This is a significant step towards achieving our vision of providing best-in-class services and using our expertise to empower the business community."

This strategic alliance with SOS Pakistan underscores the Bank's vision to advance business communities and offer reliable and innovative financial solutions. The collaboration aims to elevate the banking experience for JS Bank's partners and customers and contribute to the country's economic growth and stability.

Quetta hosts UN Women's #Koi Jawaz Nahi 16 Days campaign



Bureau Report

QUETTA: Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, welcomed the arrival of UN Women's impactful campaign titled #Koi Jawaz Nahi, marking the 16 Days Campaign against gender-based violence. This initiative is supported by the Government of Japan and aims to spotlight the persistent challenge of gender-based violence, fostering collective action for prevention and elimination.

Shazia Riaz, Director Women Development Department Balochistan, during her welcome speech said, "The #Koi Jawaz Nahi campaign is a call to action, fostering awareness and unity. Our vision is a Quetta where every individual feels valued and secure."

Ms. Sharmela Rassool, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, stated,

"Throughout this 16-day campaign and beyond, let's underscore the critical pillars: strategic investment to eradicate violence against women, fostering an enabling environment for women and girls, and championing fearless leadership to implement these pivotal elements. Its time to act now."

The #KoiJawazNahi campaign was launched at Mohenjo-Daro and is set to traverse Quetta and Peshawar before culminating in Islamabad. The primary concept behind this initiative involves illuminating historical structures in these cities with the color orange, symbolizing a brighter future free of violence against women and girls.

Roshan Khurshed Bharucha, Former Senator and ex-Member of National Commission on Human Development, emphasized, "Embarking on the UN Women's #Koi Jawaz Nahi 16 Days Campaign in Balochistan, supported by the Government of Japan, we stand united in our commitment to a future free of violence and discrimination. Together, let's build a Balochistan where every individual thrives with dignity and equality."

Concurrently, the campaign actively promotes and advocates for this year's theme, "Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls," aiming to reach the masses.

COMSTECH and the University of N'Djamena, Chad sign MoU

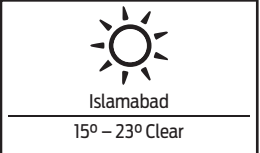
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH and the University of N'Djamena, N'Djamena, Chad signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote and strengthen cooperation between COMSTECH and the University of N'Djamena, provide a platform for collaborative activities in the fields of mutual interest, and encourage mobility and cooperation.



Both institutions agreed to develop and implement joint educational programs and scientific programs in the fields of science, technology and innovation. Students, academic and scientific personnel of will be placed in the University of N'Djamena for training, professional development and improvement of educational activities to strengthen international academic exchange.

Both institutions agreed to cooperate in research activities and development projects, collaborate in organizing national and international events, like workshops, conferences, seminars, and exhibitions. The University of N'Djamena will become the member of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence and will register on the OIC technology and innovation portal. The MoU was signed by the Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the President of the University of N'Djamena, Prof. Dr. Mahamat Saleh Daoussa Haggar in the University of N'Djamena office.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:29 am
Zohr 11:58 am
Asr 3:21 pm
Maghrib 4:59 pm
Isha 6:28 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Enquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHO 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

U Microfinance Bank posted a Net Profit of 1.7 billion



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: U Microfinance Bank Limited, Pakistan's fastest-growing microfinance bank, has announced financial results for the nine months ended September 30th, 2023. The announcement was made during the Board of Directors' meeting held in Islamabad on December 5th, 2023.

The latest financial results underscore U Bank's continued growth trajectory and bear testament to its unwavering commitment to banking excellence and the financial empowerment of its customers. In the first nine-months of 2023, U Bank has continued its performance and reported a total revenue of PKR 33.4 billion, with a promising growth of 135% as compared to the same period of last year. The bank has reported a Profit After Tax of PKR 1.7 billion, with a remarkable growth of PKR 2.2 billion as compared to the corresponding period's nine-month ended loss (Restated) of PKR 513 million. Total Deposits of the bank stood at PKR 103 billion with a growth of 44% YoY, while the Gross Loan Portfolio amounting to PKR 72.5 billion exhibited an impressive growth of 59% YoY.

Mr. Mohamed Essa Al Taheri, President & CEO - U Microfinance Bank Limited stated, "Our latest performance results reflect the hard work and dedication of our teams. We have always had full confidence in our institution's ability to navigate challenges and remain profitable. U Bank remains steadfast in its core mission of promoting financial inclusion for all and contributing to the economic prosperity of the people of Pakistan."

Government of Kazakhstan confers national award upon Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi

Tooba Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Kazakhstan has conferred its national award upon H. E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University (IIU) in recognition of his services.

The award was conferred by Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H. E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin and Dr. Bulat Sarsenbayev, Chairman of the Board of the governors of Kazakhstan's Institute for Development of Inter-civilizational dialogue on the behalf of President of Kazakhstan in the concluding ceremony of a conference on Sirah of Prophet (PBUH) held at the Faisal Masjid campus of the university.

The two day international conference titled Sirah, civic sense and tolerance, was organized

with a joint venture of Pak-Saudi Governments by the International Centre of Excellence for Sirah Studies, Islamic Research Institute, IRI of International Islamic University.

The concluding ceremony of the conference was chaired by Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed. The Minister of Religious Affairs said that the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) teach us peaceful coexistence, mercy and good behavior. Anees Ahmad said that the Quran and Sunnah are the only way that tells the rules of how to build a society and how to live a life.

Addressing the youth, he said that the life of the Prophet (PBUH) is the best role model for them, they should connect with religion that it shows the way to the betterment of this world and

hereafter. He further said that the youth of Pakistan is an omen of the country's bright future.

On the occasion, Chairman of the Board of the governors of Kazakhstan's Institute for Development of Inter-civilizational Dialogue, Dr. Bulat Sarsenbayev shed light on the social aspects of Islam, the Islam's message of love for humanity, and various aspects of the Prophet's (PBUH) biography.

Addressing the conference, President of International Islamic University, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi said that the life of the Prophet (PBUH) teaches the establishment of a peaceful society, while tolerance, mercy and kindness are its prominent features. He said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) forbade the loss of innocent human lives, damage to houses and crops even in the



conditions of war and proved that he has been truly sent as a mercy

for all the worlds.

On this occasion, the chief organizer of the conference and DG Research Institute, Dr. Zia-ul-Haq informed about the objectives, goals and recommendations of the conference and thanked the guests.

The participants of the conference recommended a sustained organization of conferences, seminars, training workshops, research projects, and similar academic activities focusing on civic sense and tolerance in relation to the Sirah of the Prophet (PBUH). They also recommended redesign Sirah studies syllabi across all educational levels to instill values and principles derived from the Sirah of the Prophet (PBUH) into educational curricula, thereby contributing to the reconstruction of society in alignment with these ethical standards.

Competitions

RAWALPINDI: Group photo of the prize winners of live painting competition of 13th Pakistan Mountain Festival with chief guest country head of Snow Leopard Foundation Dr. Jaffar Hussain and Rawalpindi Arts Council Director Waqar Ahmed on Wednesday. Photo



Photo: by Raja Farid

Chase Value inaugurates new outlet in Korangi Industrial Area

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chase Value, a leading retail store in Pakistan, proudly announces the grand inauguration of its new outlet in Korangi Industrial Area. The momentous ceremony was graced by the esteemed presence of Sindh Home Minister Brig Retd Haris Nawaz as the chief guest, along with other dignitaries, media representatives, and esteemed guests.

Established in 2009, Chase Value has been committed to providing high-quality fashion and lifestyle products at wholesale prices, catering to the diverse needs of the people of Pakistan. What started as a humble two-floor outlet on Khalid Bin Waleed Road has now blossomed into a network of branches across the country,



symbolizing the brand's unwavering dedication and success in the retail industry.

During the grand inauguration of Head Office and Outlook, the Chief Guest, Sindh Home Minister Brig Retd Haris Nawaz, expressed his admiration for Chase Value,

emphasizing the company's role in restoring Pakistan's splendor and attracting investments from around the world. He commended the management for their contribution to the country's economy and acknowledged Chase Value as an unparalleled retail store in

Pakistan.

In the Pakistani economy, it is crucial to have businesses that consistently offer high-quality products at wholesale prices to the public. Chase Value is one such retail store that meets the fashion and lifestyle needs of the people at wholesale prices. Said by Mr. Umar Farooq, CEO of Chase Value

Mr. Umar Farooq, delivered an inspiring speech, reflecting on the brand's journey and the realization of the dream to provide quality products at wholesale prices to the people of Pakistan. He highlighted the diverse range of offerings available at Chase Value outlets, including clothing, shoes, cosmetics, jewelry, crockery sets, and more, all of which are accessible at affordable wholesale rates.

Appreciation ceremony of Book 'Suli Tangya Surg' held at PAC

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with Bizm Ahlul Qalam Pakistan hold the appreciation ceremony of famous poet Rifaat Waheed's Punjabi poetry collection "Soli Tangya Surg". The ceremony started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, which by senior producer PTV and poet Ali bin Aziz, while Hafiz Muhammad Jameel natiya kalam. Dr. Farhat Abbas, president of Bazm-e-Ahl-e-Qalam Pakistan, thanked all the guests who participated in the event with his expression. The literary event was presided over by prominent poet and critic Dr. Nisar Tarabi, while well-known poets Safdar Wamiq, Mr. Naseem Sahar and poet Ali Ahmed Gujarati, visiting from Gujarat, were the chief guests. Eminent critic and poet Jamil Yusuf attended as the guest of



honor. "Soli Tangya Surg" is an admirable poetic effort due to its freshness of passion, imagination, language and style.

It has gained nationwide fame by being published under her name. These views were expressed by many prominent poets of the country on the occasion of the introduction ceremony of famous poet

Rifat Waheed's second Punjabi poetry collection "Soli Tangya Surg". Well-known poets and writers Ali Shaar Bangash, Nayar Sarhadhi, Shehbaz Chauhan, Professor Khalilur Rehman, Mazhar Shahzad Khan and Muhammad Akbar Niazi read articles about Rifaat Waheed's poetry and personality and Mubasher Saleem read

a poem written on the poetess. On this occasion, in recognition of the scholarly and literary services of the poetess, she was also awarded the Ahlul Qalam Award by the Ahlul Qalam Pakistan. Many notable writers and artists and officials of literary organizations living in the twin cities attended this literary event.

AIOU ranked in top 300 world greenest campuses.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has been ranked 8th amongst the greenest Pakistani universities while it stood at 293rd position worldwide in ranking of UI's GreenMetric for the year 2023. As for as the federally chartered universities of Pakistan are concerned but AIOU stood 3rd amongst the ranking of these Universities. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has expressed his gratitude for the honor and stated that the credit of this achievement goes to the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) and the gardeners of the university for which they deserve congratulations. He further said that the university will pay special attention to make the campuses greener so that we can get a better position next year.

ICRC and MPRC observe the International Day for Persons with Disabilities



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Muzaffarabad Physical Rehabilitation Center (MPRC), commemorated the International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) on December 6, 2023, in Muzaffarabad. The event aimed to raise awareness about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities (PWD) and promote their inclusion in the society.

In Pakistan, PWDs face many challenges related to limited accessibility to transportation and public infrastructure, barriers to inclusive and quality education, workplace discrimination, limited job opportunities, social stigma, and misconceptions about disability. The IDPD serves as a platform to raise awareness about their rights and promote their equitable inclusion in society.

The event in Muzaffarabad brought together people with disabilities, along with government representatives, organizations of PWDs, disability rights activists, educational institutes, and the local community.

Dr. Farooq Ahmed Noor, Director General Health AJK, also attended the event as the guest of honour. Speaking to the participants, he said, "We should foster a collective commitment to create a society where persons with disabilities can participate fully, equally, and effectively."

Kite industry can earn foreign exchange for country: APKFA

Tahir Amin Malik



LAHORE: Kite industry has the potential to earn millions of dollars of foreign exchange as Pakistani kites are gaining immense popularity in Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, United States, Canada and various other countries. Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi and Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman are requested to help revive this sector as the ban is imposed only in Punjab. Pakistani kites are being exported from KPK and Sindh in bulk.

Little attention and a few safety measures would not only ensure immediate employment for over 1.5 million people but would also attract again those lost tourists who were used to visiting Pakistan just to participate in the kite flying festival.

"Pakistan can have over one million foreign tourist annually, employment of over 1.5 million people only in Lahore circulation of billions of rupees by taking just a few safety measures including just a rod on motorbikes", founder of kite flying festival Khawaja Nadeem Saeed Wayen said while addressing a meeting. Representatives of stakeholders including Prince Ehtisham Khan, Saleh Zia, Sheikh Irfan, Haji Hamid, Malik Nadeem, Goshia, Tayyab Lal and others were present in the meeting.

Kh. Nadeem Saeed Wayen said that the kite flying festival in Pakistan has become one of the most popular events in the world as millions of tourists used to visit Pakistan to participate instead of taking safety and corrective measures, the entire kite industry was killed with a one stroke of pen. He lamented that the ban on the kite industry and associated festivals forced millions of people to starve and a notable number adopted begging for bread and butter.

Prince Ehtisham Khan in his remarks said that imagine a clear sky, adorned with vibrant kites dancing in the wind, as people gathered to celebrate a centuries-old tradition. The Kite Flying Festival holds a special place in many cultures, symbolizing freedom, joy, and the pursuit of dreams. But beyond its colorful spectacle, this ancient practice carries a deeper economic significance that often goes unnoticed.

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Language Dilemma

Daniyal Mubashar Khan

The multiplicity or diversity of languages is considered one of the major factors that divides the (global) community mainly by reinforcing geographical, socio-economic (especially caste or class), political, ideological, professional and religious separatism.

It prevents or hinders communication and the spread of education, and therefore, aggravates misunderstanding and mutual suspicion.

Multilingualism within a country may result in poor communication between the members of different linguistic communities and between those communities and the government officials.

It can lead not only to mistrust and political tension but also poor levels of literacy in some cases.

Coupled with this, language diversity may generate language controversy, which, in turn, can lead to the division or partition.

For example, where the Urdu-Hindi controversy is considered among one of the major factors responsible for the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in the August of 1947, the Urdu-Bengali controversy is deemed one of the leading causes of the partition of Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh in the December of 1971.

Thus, in Pakistan, "the response to linguistic diversity has been a blunt

insistence on the national and foreign languages, Urdu and English.

This has made quality education impossible for the majority of Pakistani children who grow up without exposure to these languages." Carrying this legacy of multiplicity or diversity of language and language controversy, Pakistan is still confronted with the language dilemma.

On the one hand, Urdu has been the only national language until today — whereas, more than 70 languages are

protests against the dominance of Urdu.

Currently, the state run faculties have Urdu as Medium of Instruction (MOI) whereas elite and alternative non-public faculties have English for the said purpose.

These two polarised MOIs lay the premise of a lot of confusion in the education sector that has caused an in-depth gap in achieving our desired goals via the foremost affected toll, education.

Thus, we have failed to work out

teaching our children in their mother tongue, and subsequently, depriving the young minds of an opportunity of learning in their mother tongue.

Instead, they are compelled to learn in English preferably and sometimes in their national language.

Instead of falling prey to the language controversies and dilemmas, Pakistan should have followed Europe's policy for education on language: "mother tongue and two", wherever children's schooling starts in first language and that they acquire a lot of languages before finishing high school.

The effectiveness of MOI is rarely addressed seriously in South Asia in general and in Pakistan in particular.

English, being the language of few (elite and policy makers), enjoys dominance whereas the majority suffers.

Subsequently, the number of school dropout has risen sharply.

Therefore, it has obstructed Pakistan fulfilling its promises, signed with the global organisations and agencies, of education for all and increasing literacy rate—for, it is the signatory of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, the policy makers and the educational practitioners are recommended to adopt a language progression path where the children are initially taught in their mother tongues or regional languages, then in the provincial language and national language before exposing them to an international language i.e. English.

Anjum Altaf, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Faculty of Humanities at Lahore University of Management Sciences, holds that neglecting MOI is deceiving our generation and halting us teaching our children in their mother tongue, and subsequently, depriving the young minds of an opportunity of learning in their mother tongue.

spoken in the country.

On the other, English, despite being a colonial inheritance, is the official language and medium of communication in the South Asian nation.

Therefore, the adoption and promotion of Urdu and/or English as a medium of education has remained a point of controversy.

Apart from the Urdu-English conundrum, the speakers and advocates of other native languages have also been raising voices and recording their

distinction between MOI and an obligatory subject i.e. English.

Due to this failure, we may highlight that the most backward province of Pakistan, Balochistan, is the most affected province or region in the country.

To say, the distinction in MOI and first language creates a lot of confusion.

Anjum Altaf, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Faculty of Humanities at Lahore University of Management Sciences, holds that neglecting MOI is deceiving our generation and halting us



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

Journey from Despair to Hope with General Asim Munir - V

As the world grapples with cybersecurity challenges and information warfare, the military, with its focus on technological advancements, collaborates with civilian authorities to develop robust cybersecurity frameworks, protect critical infrastructure, and counter disinformation campaigns. This joint approach ensures national resilience in the face of evolving threats.

In the first year of General Asim Munir's leadership, the ISPR has been notably active in countering threats, strictly adhering to its professional and technical role.

The Pakistan Army, led by General Asim Munir, adheres strictly to a policy of restraint regarding political issues and maintains a commitment to remaining neutral in such matters. Furthermore, the military, under his leadership, continues the strong tradition of engaging in international peacekeeping missions. Collaborating closely with the civilian government, the armed forces actively contribute to global peace and security. This participation not only underscores Pakistan's dedication to international stability but also enhances its diplomatic standing. General Asim Munir consistently demonstrates this commitment.

On matters concerning Kashmir and Palestine, General Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army have expressed fair and solid stances on multiple occasions, emphasizing their remarkable dedication to these causes.

Furthermore, a Green Initiative program has been launched, aiming to cultivate more than 4 million acres of cultivable wasteland to bolster agricultural production, reduce the import of edible oil and food items (worth over \$11 billion), and enhance the coun-

try's food security. The initiative entails the introduction of smart agricultural practices and modern machinery to reduce production costs, inspiring local farmers to adopt improved agricultural methods. The government envisions attracting approximately \$50 billion in investment under this scheme. The Army Chief has demonstrated remarkable commitment to catalyze an agricultural revolution in the country. Addressing a seminar on agriculture and food security as the guest of honor, Gen Asim Munir praised the talents of the Pakistani nation and emphasized the need for collective contributions to the country's progress.

The 'Green Pakistan Initiative' aspires to fortify food security, boost exports, and diminish agriculture-related imports. Gen Asim Munir assured full support from the army for all initiatives under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), including the 'Green Pakistan Initiative.'

He urged the nation not to despair, citing a verse from the holy Quran about patience and gratitude in the face of challenges. The 'National Seminar on Agriculture and Food Security' at the Jinnah Convention Centre attracted foreign dignitaries, potential investors, and experts from various countries, including the UK, Italy, Spain, China, Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir emphasized the collective determination to navigate Pakistan out of its current crisis. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Khanewal Model Agriculture Farm a few months ago, the army chief expressed the armed forces' pride in serving the nation. The newly opened Khanewal farm spans 2,250 acres, and General Munir asserted that the army and the people are insepara-

ble, affirming the commitment to lead Pakistan out of the prevailing crisis. He praised the Pakistani people as a proud and talented nation, foreseeing that through their relentless efforts, they would overcome economic challenges. Acknowledging the country's abundant natural resources as a divine blessing, he asserted that no external force could impede Pakistan's development. General Munir affirmed Pakistan's determination to achieve an agricultural revolution, envisioning the establishment of model farms like the one inaugurated in Khanewal nationwide. He emphasized the profound connection between the state and its citizens, likening it to a mother-child relationship based on love and respect. The army chief stressed the interconnectedness of national security and the economy, underscoring the symbiotic relationship between the two.

In the pursuit of national security, the Army Chief and the Pakistani Army are resolutely committed to eliminating terrorism, taking stringent measures against groups such as TTP, RAW, and militants. General Munir issued a warning to Afghanistan to cease supporting the TTP, advocating a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. Notably, those responsible for the incidents on May 9th will face strict legal repercussions, signaling a commitment to accountability. Various mafias involved in smuggling, illegal storage, and theft of electricity and gas are under scrutiny, with law enforcement agencies actively pursuing corrective actions.

Pakistan has a lengthy history of hosting Afghan refugees, dating back to the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s. The influx of displaced Afghans has significantly impacted Pakistan, presenting a complex array of challenges. According to the latest available data, Pakistan is home to one of the largest refugee populations globally, with a substantial portion being Afghan refugees.

To be continued

More pace is required to progress Gender Parity in Pakistan

Marium Amjad Khan

Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world, with a population of nearly 227 million people (49.2 percent female; 50.8 percent male). Sixty-four per cent of the population of Pakistan is below the age of 30, making it one of the largest young populations in the world. Gender inequality is of significant concern in Pakistan. According to the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022, Pakistan ranks 145/156 for economic participation and opportunity, 135/156 for educational attainment, 143/156 for health and survival, and 95/156 for political empowerment. Furthermore, Pakistan ranks 130/139 countries on the Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap 2022, ranks Pakistan higher on political participation at 95/146 as more women than ever before are participating in political activity. Women, however, continue to remain underrepresented in leadership roles and are restricted from taking up positions in the political/public sphere due to systemic challenges arising from patriarchal notions. According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), there is a gender gap of around 12.5 million in Pakistan's electoral rolls. Given recurrent natural catastrophes such as floods, droughts, heat-waves, and cyclones, Pakistan has been ranked as one of the top ten countries most affected (currently ranked 8th) by climate change in the past 20 years, with women being affected the most.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan has taken progressive steps towards protection of human rights by ratifying most international human rights conventions and introducing pro-women legislation, including the National Gender Policy Framework (2022), Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance (2020) and the Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act in all four provinces of Pakistan. However, while laws for women's empowerment and protection from violence are in place at national and sub-na-

tional levels, their implementation remains weak. But factors that impede speedy and efficient delivery of justice to women include a low level of understanding of laws among staff of justice sector institutions, the absence of technological solutions to collect data and evidence, patriarchal mindsets and cultural norms that privilege or ascribe higher status to men and lower status to women.

The Global Wage Report 2019-20 by International Labor Organization explains the gender pay gap variation between men and women between countries and for Pakistan it is 34 per cent. The overarching constraints that restrict economically active women in maximizing their income include cultural constraints of free mobility, restricted access to and acquisition of skills pertaining to business management and expansion, and lack of direct access to markets and technology. Challenges remain in achieving SDG 5 of Gender Equality, with backsliding or re-emergent barriers in areas including women's electoral participation and sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Pakistani communities, especially women, are becoming more vulnerable to disaster-driven displacement. Gender-sensitive resilience measures and relief policies must become part of the national discourse. In Pakistan, climate migration has become a growing reality. Pakistan alone is expected to have around 2 million climate migrants by 2050, not including those who will be displaced due to the sudden onset of climate disasters, such as floods and cyclones.

The Government of Pakistan remains committed to the cause of women empowerment. This is reflected in the medium and long term strategic vision documents, the pro-women laws enacted, and the policies of various institutions and ministries to mainstream gender into their planning and service delivery. Gender discrimination is evident in public institutions such as healthcare facilities and schooling systems. Thus, administrative reorganization and improved awareness in public domains and appropriate education in schools for boys and girls will help decrease gender discrimination in the Pakistani societies.

Islamabad Conclave 2023: Pakistan in a Changing World

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Conclave 2023, organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), commenced today with insightful addresses from distinguished speakers, setting the stage for comprehensive discussions on the evolving global landscape.

Chief Guest President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi shared insights on Pakistan's dynamic approach in the face of global challenges. President Alvi stressed the importance of the strategic shift to geo-economics, aligning policies with regional and systemic developments. He called for a conscious rediscovery of Pakistan's vision amid superpower rivalries and interference from neigh-

bouring states.

President Alvi also expressed concerns over the prevailing global scenario, citing the need for a return to principles of morality. He highlighted the appalling situation in Gaza, emphasizing the importance of justice, consistent application of international rules, and respect for rights of Palestinians. The President also called for socio-economic justice, equal opportunities, and the empowerment of women to ensure real progress.

Earlier, in his welcoming remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted ISSI's role in providing research-based policy inputs and serving as a platform for dialogue on issues relating to foreign policy and national security. He emphasized the imperatives of bridg-

ing the gap between the research and policy communities and strengthening collaborations with foreign counterparts and other think tanks. ISSI.

On the theme of Islamabad Conclave 2023, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stressed that throughout human history, change has been the only constant. He added that the speed, depth and breadth of change in the world at this particular juncture, however, is breath-taking. It has been stated that the world is in a "hinge moment" — when one era is ending, and another era is taking shape.

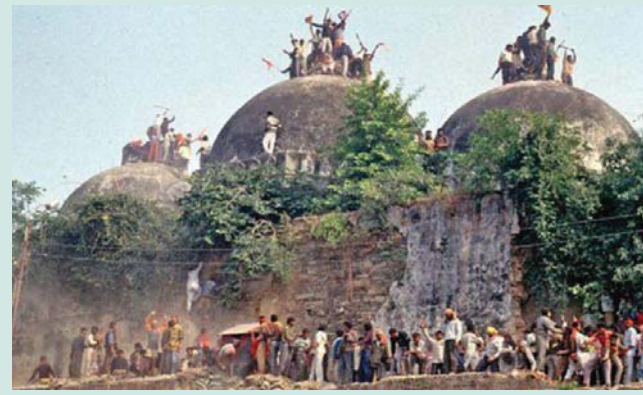
The Islamabad Conclave 2023, themed 'Pakistan in a Changing World,' is poised to be a significant platform for exploring the multiple layers of change and charting the way forward for Pakistan. Over the next two

days, the event will feature sessions on changing regional landscapes, evolving dynamics, geopolitical challenges, the pivot to geo-economics, comprehensive security, and Pakistan's foreign policy in an emerging world order.

Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre, emphasized the Conclave's role as a forum to propose solutions to pressing global issues. He highlighted the significance of fostering comprehensive dialogues to address challenges effectively.

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad remains committed to providing a vital dialogue platform for the research and policy community, facilitating discussions on matters of national, regional, and international importance.

Thirty-first Anniversary of the Demolition of the Historic Babri Mosque by Hindu Extremists



City Desk

Today is a sad reminder of the demolition of the historic 'Babri Masjid' in India. On this day, 31 years ago, a mob of Hindu zealots demolished this centuries-old Mosque in Ayodhya in full view of Indian law enforcement authorities.

It is lamentable that India's superior judiciary not only acquitted the criminals responsible for this hateful act but also allowed the construction of a temple on the site of the demolished Mosque. The temple is expected to be inaugurated in January 2024 — months before the next general elections in India.

The anti-Muslim frenzy that caused the Babri Mosque's destruction remains unabated. A few weeks ago, the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh publicly cited the Mosque's demolition as a template to reclaim parts of Pakistan.

Elements belonging to the ruling dispensation in India continue to incite hysteria and hatred against Muslims. Today, Hindu supremacist groups are demanding conversion of many other mosques into temples, including the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and Shahi Eidgah Mosque in Mathura. Several mosques and shrines have already been demolished under the garb of different administrative measures or judicial processes. Muslim holy sites also remain a target of attacks by the mobs of extremists.

The international community must take cognizance of the growing Islamophobia, hate speech and hate crimes in India.

Pakistan urges the Indian government to ensure safety, security and protection of minorities, particularly Muslims and their places of worship.

EcoPulse aircraft demonstrator makes first hybrid-electric flight



Commerce Desk

TARBES, FRANCE: EcoPulse, the hybrid-electric distributed propulsion aircraft demonstrator jointly developed by Daher, Safran and Airbus to support aviation's decarbonization roadmap, has successfully performed its first flight test in hybrid-electric mode. The demonstrator flew with its e-Propellers activated, powered by a battery and a turbogenerator.

EcoPulse took off from Tarbes Airport on November 29, at 10:32 hrs CEST for a test flight which lasted approximately 100 minutes. During the flight, the crew engaged its electric propellers and verified the proper functioning of the demonstrator's flight control computer, high-voltage battery, distributed electric propulsion and hybrid electric turbogenerator.

EcoPulse's first hybrid flight is the culmination of several technical milestones, including extensive ground tests and 10 hours of flight tests of the aircraft with non-functional electrical system in May and June 2023.

"We confirmed today that this disruptive propulsion system works in flight, which paves the way for more sustainable aviation," said Eric Dalbiès, Safran's Executive Vice President Strategy and Chief Technology Officer. "The lessons learned from upcoming flight tests will feed into our technology roadmap and strengthen our position as leader in future all-electric and hybrid-electric propulsive systems."

"This is a major milestone for our industry and we're proud to have powered the EcoPulse demonstrator first flight with our new battery systems," said Sabine Klauke, Chief Technical Officer at Airbus. High-energy density batteries will be necessary to reduce carbon emissions from aviation, whether for light aircraft, advanced air mobility or large hybrid-electric aircraft. Projects like EcoPulse are key to accelerating progress in electric and hybrid electric flight, and a cornerstone of our aim to decarbonize the aerospace industry as a whole.

"The flight campaign starting today will give Daher priceless data on the effectiveness of the onboard technologies, including distributed propulsion, high-voltage batteries and hybrid-electric propulsion," commented Pascal Laguerre, Chief Technology Officer at Daher. "We're working to converge practical and significant know-how on design, certification and operation to shape our path toward more sustainable aircraft for the future."

TCS Pioneers Green Logistics with 50 Electric Bikes

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: With a bold move towards sustainable practices, TCS has become one of the leading proponents of eco-friendly transportation in Pakistan. By equipping their riders with 50 cutting-edge ezBikes, TCS is not only enhancing delivery efficiency but also significantly reducing carbon emissions.

The handover event, held at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)

Moin A. Malik, Group CEO of TCS, emphasized the necessity of eco-friendly measures, stating, "Our commitment to sustainability and efficiency is not merely a business decision but a responsibility we owe to the environment." This sentiment underscores TCS's dedication to reducing dependence on fossil fuels while optimizing operational efficiency.

Through the adoption of electric vehicles, TCS is not only revolutionizing the logistics industry but also setting an example for others to follow. Their unwavering commitment to integrating more electric vehicles into their fleet is a testament to their vision for a greener and more sustainable future.

In its pursuit of sustainability, TCS remains steadfast in its mission to lead the way in incorporating eco-friendly practices into its operations, setting a new industry standard and inspiring others to join the green revolution.

Factsheet on Kazakhstan's participation at COP28

Spokesman Report

Overview

The Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, or COP, plays a pivotal role as the highest authority responsible for making decisions regarding the world's climate change treaties.

COP28, which is held in Dubai, UAE, this year, brings together government representatives, scientists, international organizations, businesses, indigenous peoples, local communities, youth, media, civil society, and influential figures.

Kazakhstan sent a delegation to COP28 at the highest level, including the country's President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who gave a speech at the event on December 1.

Key points from President Tokayev's speech at COP 28

- Global Climate Vulnerability:
 - Nearly half of the Earth's population lives in regions highly vulnerable to climate change.
 - Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Least Developed Countries are most at risk.
- Challenges:
 - Geopolitical volatility and energy insecurity complicate focusing on the climate agenda.
- Kazakhstan's Commitment to Climate Action:
 - Kazakhstan is first in the region to ratify the Paris Agreement.
 - Adopted a Carbon Neutrality Strategy for 2060.
 - Implemented a new Environmental Code to drive green technology adaptation in all sectors.
- Renewable Energy Potential in Kazakhstan:
 - Significant potential for wind, solar power, and green hydrogen.
- Role in Carbon-Free Electricity:
 - Kazakhstan is the leading global exporter of uranium, providing 43% of the global supply.
- Critical Minerals Supply:
 - Kazakhstan aims to become a major supplier of Rare Earth Metals and other transition minerals.
- Support for Private Green Initiatives:
 - Example: The Kazakhstan-based Plastic Association, working on plastic waste-free projects.
- Approach to Climate Action:
 - Climate action should not hinder the national development of emerging economies.
- Methane Emissions Reduction:
 - Kazakhstan joins the Global Meth-



- ane Pledge to cut methane emissions.
- Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP):
 - Kazakhstan is implementing the first JETP in the region to address coal challenges.
- Adaptation Measures:
 - Focus on adapting to climate impacts like water scarcity, severe heat, and desertification.
 - Advocates for support of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
- International Collaboration:
 - Kazakhstan is planning to co-chair the One Water Summit with France on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in 2024.
 - Kazakhstan is also hosting the Astana International Forum in June 2024 and a Regional Climate Summit in 2026.

Kazakhstan's pledges and announcements

- The Global Methane Pledge
 - Kazakhstan joined the Global Methane Pledge, aiming for a 30% reduction in methane emissions by 2030. This indicates the country's commitment to participate in global efforts to mitigate methane emissions.
 - In a joint U.S. and Kazakhstan statement on accelerating methane mitigation efforts, the sides emphasized the commitment to building on the successful partnership of more than 30 years between the two nations.
 - The joint statement outlined methane reduction priorities that Kazakhstan and the U.S. plan to focus on over the next two years.
 - The sides committed to supporting the utilization of satellite and

other technologies for monitoring and mitigating methane emissions, focusing on preventing and rapidly responding to super-emitter events.

Just Energy Transition Partnership - Kazakhstan also announced the implementation of the region's first Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), which aims to address the significant coal issue in the region. This initiative reflects the country's commitment to a fair and equitable shift away from fossil fuels, in line with global efforts to tackle social and economic challenges associated with energy transitions.

Agreements signed at COP28

President Tokayev oversaw the signing of ten agreements between government agencies and business entities of Kazakhstan and various countries:

- Intergovernmental Agreement between Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates on the implementation of a wind power plant project with a capacity of 1 GW.
- Memorandum between the Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan, Samruk-Kazyna, and the Ministry of Investment of the United Arab Emirates on mutual understanding for the development of low-carbon energy projects with a total capacity of 10 GW in Kazakhstan.
- Memorandum of Understanding between Qazaqstan Investment Corporation and ADQ on a strategic partnership.
- Investment Agreement between the Government of Kazakhstan, Aktas Energy LLP, and TotalEnergies for the development, construction, and operation of a wind power plant with a total capacity of 1 GW, including a 300

MW/600 MWh battery energy storage system, near the village of Mirny, Zhambyl region.

- Agreement between Samruk-Kazyna and ACWA Power for the joint development of a project to construct wind power plants with a total capacity of 1 GW, including an energy storage system.
- Agreement between Samruk-Kazyna and Presight.AI for the establishment of a joint venture to implement projects in digitalization and information technology.
- Agreement on the Principles for establishing a ship repair and shipbuilding enterprise in Kazakhstan between KazMunayGas and AD Ports Group.
- Agreement between Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Abu Dhabi Ports Group for the establishment of a joint venture.
- Memorandum of Cooperation between Atameken, SAFC LLP, and SEFE Marketing & Trading for the implementation of forest climate projects.
- Agreement between Kazatomprom and Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation for the supply of natural uranium concentrates.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan's Kazbeef, a producer of marbled beef; rTek, a provider of sustainable technology solutions; and EcoBalance Global, a U.S.-based leader in carbon storage projects, agreed to launch the first-ever pilot ranch in Kazakhstan. This ranch aims to produce the world's first climate-smart beef, utilizing carbon insets.

Background to Kazakhstan's commitment to sustainable development

Kazakhstan has shown a strong commitment to sustainable development, aligning its national goals with global sustainability objectives.

In 2023, Kazakhstan adopted a Carbon Neutrality Strategy with a commitment to combatting climate change and taking targeted actions under the Paris Agreement. Kazakhstan has pledged to reduce emissions by 15% unconditionally by 2030, with a conditional aim of 25%.

Central to its strategy is the innovative Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading System (ETS), covering industries responsible for 43% of Kazakhstan's national emissions.

In addition, the country's new Environmental Code aims to integrate green technology across its economy, representing a significant shift in national policy.

UK, Canada and UNFPA renew calls to end gender-based violence

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Activists, the international community and politicians came together at the British High Commission on 4 December 2023 as part of the annual 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, jointly hosted a special reception with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Representative, Dr Luay Shabaneh, and Canadian High Commissioner, Leslie Scanlon.

British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said "Today we rightly celebrate the progress we have made towards protecting women and girls from the heinous acts of gender-based violence. But this is no time to be complacent, and the UK will continue to speak out against a worrying rollback of women's and girls' rights, and to support grassroots organisations."



Luay Shabaneh, said "Under UNFPA's transformative results we are working to end gender based violence by 2030. Women are a missed opportunity in Pakistan. If Women are given their chance to prosper, then the country has a chance for prosperity and good future. We have to shame the perpetra-

tors and we must honour and support the survivors of violence.

Canadian High Commissioner, Leslie Scanlon, said "Canada has been a leading advocate for the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, globally. In Pakistan, Canada is supporting more

than to 12 Pakistani women's rights organizations (WROs) to advocate for and advance gender equality rights for women and girls in the country. Additionally, each year, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives supports small scale innovative projects often designed to advance women's rights.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
63,917.72	62,956.02	
Day's High	Day's Low	
64,038.83	63,188.71	
Index Value	Change	
26,321,422,238	+961.70	
Percentage	Time	
+1.53%	6 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,515.38	+25.54	
Percentage	Time	
+0.34%	6 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
36,146.74	+22.18	
Percentage	Time	
+0.061%	6 Dec, 12:03 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,445.90	+670.08	
Percentage	Time	
+2.04%	6 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.2	189
Bahrain Dinar	757.23	765.23
Canadian Dollar	209	211
China Yuan	39.89	40.29
Danish Krone	41.19	41.59
Euro	308	311
Hong Kong Dollar	36.41	36.76
Indian Rupee	3.42	3.53
Japanese Yen	1.39	1.45
Kuwaiti Dinar	921.71	930.71
Malaysian Ringgit	61.02	61.62
New Zealand \$	174.54	176.54
Norwegians Krone	26.05	26.35
Omani Riyal	739.62	747.62
Qatari Riyal	78.22	78.92
Saudi Riyal	76	76.8
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	27.12	27.42
Swiss Franc	324.94	327.44
Thai Bhat	8.06	8.21
U.A.E Dirham	77.4	78.1
UK Pound Sterling	358.5	362
US Dollar	283.3	286

Meeting with British High Commission Delegation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the British High Commission called on the caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad, today at Privatisation Division.

The Minister apprised the delegation of the need for privatization, the current scenario and government's strategy and priorities with regard to privatization.

The minister also shared recent developments in the privatization process of PIACL and Roosevelt Hotel. The delegation was told that PIACL will undergo restructuring thereby improving its appeal for prospective buyers in the aviation industry. The privatization of PIACL will bolster the aviation business in the country which will require some regulatory framework from the government. Possibilities of cooperation with British High Commission in developing regulatory framework for aviation industry and for privatisation in general were also discussed. It was agreed to further



explore the options for cooperation and the capacity building of Privatisation Commission.

FPCCI's Achievement Awards to be held on 23rd Dec

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the much-awaited, most prestigious and annual achievement awards of FPCCI will be held on 23rd December in Islamabad's Serena Hotel; and, this year's USP would be the unprecedented ensemble of ambassadors of major and friendly economies – who will present the awards to winners.

H. E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoun, Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps Islamabad & Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of Morocco, will be the Chief Guest of Honor for the Ceremony. This will be the 11th edition of the annual awards, he added.

It is pertinent to note that FPCCI is the apex body of Pakistan – representing all 250 chambers, associations and trade bodies of the country in trade, industry and services sectors – and, FPCCI's achievement awards ceremony attracts all the major stakeholders of Pakistan's economy.

ICCI for fostering entrepreneurship in students to promote start-ups & economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the youth is the future of Pakistan and there is a dire need that the government should take measures to foster entrepreneurship in students right from the school level to facilitate the growth of start-ups that would help uplift the economy. He said this while addressing students after administering oath as Chief Guest to the Student Council Body of Roots International Schools (RIS), Gulzar-e-Quaid Branch, Rawalpindi.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the entrepreneurship education will develop a range of skills and competencies in students that would help them gain success in their personal and professional lives. He said that the entrepreneurship education at school level will also enable students to think like an entrepreneur and take the skills and



knowledge gained in school or college to apply them in the real-world challenges for becoming successful businesspersons. Fostering entrepreneurship in students would create new businesses and jobs to address unemployment and economic challenges in a better manner, he said.

RIS students vowed under oath to perform their duties honestly and to the best of

their abilities. They affirmed that they will be responsible members of the Student Council Body and will abide by the rules and regulations made by the RIS to guarantee themselves and the student body a better campus life.

Ms Saira Habib of Roots International Schools (RIS), Gulzar e Quaid Branch, Rawalpindi congratulated and advised the students to work

with responsibility and honesty and through this platform learn how to uphold these honorable positions with integrity, and maintain discipline, interact with their peers and aid their fellow students.

The President ICCI interacted with the students and gave them useful tips about how to excel in student life and emerge as a successful professional in various fields.

Federal Minister announces new policy to support maize production



PNP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik on Wednesday said that maize is a strategic crop with respect to national food security needs and the Ministry will make all efforts to promote latest technological innovation and provide an enabling policy for crop's continued growth. He expressed these views during the meeting with CropLife Pakistan delegation.

Crop Life Pakistan delegation apprised the Federal Minister Dr. Kausar Abdul-

lah Malik of his contribution to the seed sector, in particular Maize, where over the past two decades yields have grown four-fold and overall production has increased from a little over 1 million metric tons to an impressive 10.5 million metric tons in 2022/23.

The CropLife representatives further added that its member companies collectively market more than 80% of Pakistan's hybrid maize seed and have invested significantly towards introducing the latest high-yielding hybrids and farmer education programs.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Cui Jun, President China Economic Net called on Ambassador Khalil Hashmi Wednesday at Pakistan Embassy Beijing; discussed different areas of bilateral cooperation including media exchanges between China and Pakistan.



Mobilink Bank reaffirms commitment to gender-responsive climate finance at COP28 UAE

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance institution, Mobilink Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to fostering gender-responsive climate finance at the Conference of the Parties (COP28) held in UAE. Representing the bank, Chief Operating Officer Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary addressed an engaging panel on the importance of gender-intentional green financing for combating climate change.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global

digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives by creating opportunities for increased digital inclusion and driving economic growth across countries home to more than 8% of the world's population. Mobilink Bank's policies align with VEON's strategy, underpinned by a steadfast commitment to sustainability, diversity & inclusion, while fostering digital entrepreneurship, greater digital skills, literacy, and new job opportunities

in its communities.

The event reinforced Mobilink Bank's standing as an environmentally conscious and responsible business entity, besides firmly establishing Pakistan on the map of emerging global discourses on climate finance.

During the panel discussion, Haaris Chaudhary emphasized Mobilink Bank's role in fostering gender inclusivity in climate finance, primarily within the agricultural sector, by providing women with resources, knowledge, and decision-making authority under its flagship Women

Inspirational Network (WIN) program.

He further stated that Mobilink Bank allocated subsidized financing exceeding PKR 12 billion to over 66,000 female customers and continues to provide digital, financial, and Agritech solutions to farmers, enhancing sustainable agricultural practices.

Sharing his thoughts regarding the session, Haaris Chaudhary said, "Representing Pakistan at the COP28 was a unique privilege. As a responsible organization, we aim to drive sustainability through a firm commitment

Dun & Bradstreet Expands Product Portfolio in Pakistan with Finance and Risk Analytics!

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Aimed at streamlining finance operations and reforming third-party risk management for Pakistani businesses, Dun & Bradstreet has announced two revolutionary solutions- D&B Finance Analytics and D&B Risk Analytics. The two flagship AI-enabled solutions are powered by the D&B Data Cloud that comprises 520 million+ data records and contains key insights on 340 million+ shareholders.

The Dun & Bradstreet Finance Analytics is a complete credit-to-cash portal that assists businesses in streamlining financial decisions, reducing credit risk, and minimizing bad receivables. Combining Credit Intelligence with

Receivables Intelligence, this state-of-the-art product reduces company costs and enhances customer experience through credit automation and smooth cash management.

The second platform, Dun & Bradstreet Risk Analytics, helps companies manage regulatory, operational, and reputational risks emanating from their dealings with other companies.

Dun & Bradstreet Risk Analytics monitors and evaluates third party risks through screening, ESG performance, risk scores, and disruption alerts. A key feature of Risk Analytics is restricted party screening that detects third-party threats related to anti-money laundering, politically exposed persons, and adverse media coverage.



to green financing and deploying a gender-intentional lens for fostering financial inclusion and resilience for all.

Haaris affirmed the bank's commitment to expanding its

green financing loan further in the coming years to accelerate the efforts for combating climate change. The strategy entails promoting clean-energy products to mitigate carbon

Update on Naseem Shah's rehabilitation

LAHORE: Pakistan fast bowler Naseem Shah started the final stage of his rehabilitation today at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore.

The young pacer was injured during the Asia Cup in September, after which he underwent surgery in the United Kingdom. Following the surgery, he remained in the UK for two months for rehabilitation and initial training as the

PCB covered his medical costs and he received continuous care from a team of expert medical staff.

Naseem's rehabilitation is being continued at NCA, Lahore under the care of a strength and conditioning coach, a physiotherapist and a doctor. Currently, he is doing light gym exercises and partial bowling practice and will start batting tomorrow.



Leading international cricketers register for HBL PSL Player Draft 2024

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Four hundred and eighty five international players from 22 nations have registered for the HBL PSL Player Draft 2024 scheduled to take place on 13 December at the National Cricket Academy, Lahore. 46 players are in the Platinum category while 76 players have signed up in the Diamond category.

The foreign players roster for the draft is boosted by the presence of England's Dawid Malan and South Africa's Reeza Hendricks, both of whom feature in the top 10 of the ICC Men's T20I player rankings for batters. World No. 5 T20I batter Rilee Rossouw was earlier traded to Quetta Gladiators from Multan Sultans.

Sri Lanka spinner Maheesh Theekshana, Afghanistan duo Fazal-



aq Farooqi and Mujeeb Ur Rahman and West Indies left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein, all ranked among the top 10 T20I bowlers, have made themselves available for the draft. World No. 2 T20I all-rounder Mohammad Nabi is also a part of the draft.

The maximum number of players to register from a foreign country are from England (158). The next on the list—from full member countries—is West Indies (58), Sri Lanka (40), Afghanistan (36), South Africa (30), Bangladesh

(21), New Zealand (18), Australia (16), Zimbabwe (11) and Ireland (nine). A considerable number of players have also registered from associate member countries.

Some of the prominent players in the Platinum category include: Daniel Sams, Ashton Agar (both Australia), Fazalhaq Farooqi, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (all Afghanistan), Ben Duckett, Chris Jordan, David Willey, Dawid Malan, Luke Wood, Reece Topley, Tom Curran, Tymal Mills (all England), Sandeep Lamichhane (Nepal), James Neesham (New Zealand), Rassie van der Dussen, Imran Tahir (both South Africa), Maheesh Theekshana, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Dasun Shanaka (all Sri Lanka), Kieron Pollard, Rovman Powell, Romario Shepherd, Brandon King

and Kyle Mayers (all West Indies)

The notable players to feature in Diamond category include: Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi (both Afghanistan), Ben McDermott (Australia), Litton Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Mahmudullah (all Bangladesh), Dan Lawrence, Gus Atkinson, Jordan Cox, Liam Dawson, Matthew Potts, Ollie Pope, Richard Gleeson, Sam Hain (all England), Tim Seifert, David Wiese, Chad Bowes (all New Zealand), George Linde, Lungi Ngidi, Reeza Hendricks, Wayne Parnell, Sisanda Magala (all South Africa), Dilshan Madushanka, Charith Asalanka, Dushmantha Chameera, Sadeera Samarawickrama (all Sri Lanka), Fabian Allen, Johnson Charles, Rahkeem Cornwall, Roston Chase, Shai Hope, Hayden Walsh (all West Indies)

Moeen Ali, Karim Janat help Samp Army sink Deccan Gladiators in Abu Dhabi T10 League

A Sports

ABU DHABI: Morrisville Samp Army skipper Moeen Ali and Karim Janat played quick cameos to steer their side to an eight-wicket win over Deccan Gladiators in the 24th Abu Dhabi T10 League match at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium.

This was Samp Army's fifth consecutive victory in the ongoing season of the Abu Dhabi T10 League after losing their opening game. Samp Army opted to bowl first and drew first blood with the wicket of Tom Kohler-Cadmore in the first over with ten runs on the board.

Andre Fletcher joined hands with Nicholas Pooran (11) and together they added 36 runs from 11 balls before Karim Janat removed the latter.

Fletcher then waged a lone war as Salman Irshad sent Andre Russell and Imad Wasim back in the same over to reduce Deccan Gladiators to 51-4.

Fletcher counter-attacked Samp Army while wickets kept tumbling on the other end and helped them raise an imposing total of 115 in their ten overs.

He scored an unbeaten 52 from 27 balls with the help of two boundaries and five sixes. Salman Irshad led Samp



Army's bowling attack with brilliant bowling figures of 3-12, meanwhile, Qais Ahmed picked 2-18.

Samp Army had a horrible start to their chase as Imad Wasim reduced them to 17-2 with back-to-back wickets of Andries Gous and Najibullah Zadran.

Faf du Plessis departed in the next over after scoring 13 off 11 with one six.

Gladiators skipper Moeen Ali and Ibrahim Zadran then knitted a blistering 49-run partnership from 20 balls to raise the team's total to 70 before the latter perished. Zadran scored 26

runs from 15 balls with the help of one boundary and two sixes. Ali was joined by Karim Janat and together they helped their team reach the finish line with four balls to spare courtesy of their quick 46 runs partnership from 17 balls.

Moeen Ali scored an unbeaten 39 runs from 15 balls with the help of two boundaries and four sixes, while Janat played a blistering 27-run knock from nine balls, featuring four boundaries and one six.

Imad Wasim topped the bowling charts for Gladiators with bowling figures of 2-11.

Ajay Jadeja's sarcastic comments on Hardik Pandya go viral

Sports Desk

Former cricketer Ajay Jadeja caught cricket fans by surprise with his sarcastic comments on swashbuckling India all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

Hardik Pandya, who was named India's T20I captain following the side's elimination from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022, has not been a regular in the team because of his injuries.

He suffered an ankle injury during the group-stage fixture of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 against Bangladesh.

The all-rounder sidelined him from the rest of the tournament and the home T20I series at home against Australia. He will not be part of the squad that tours South Africa this month.

Suryakumar Yadav will lead the T20I side in his absence. Former India batter Ajay Jadeja passed interesting comments on Hardik Pandya's infrequent appearances in international fixtures. The former all-rounder sarcastically called the latter a "rare talent".

"You did not understand the meaning," he said. "He is a rare talent and is rarely seen on the ground. It is very rare and rightly so."

India are due to play three T20Is and as many ODIs followed by two Tests on the tour of South Africa.

Messi confesses to being 'interested' in joining Cristiano Ronaldo in Saudi Pro League



In a startling revelation, Argentine football star Lionel Messi has said that he was "tempted" to join former Real Madrid striker and Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo in the Saudi Pro League.

Messi said that considered joining the "very powerful" Saudi league after his attempts to return to his former club Barcelona failed, goal.com reported, quoting Time.

"It was Saudi Arabia or the Major League Soccer (MLS), and both options seemed very interesting to me," he said.

His remarks come as the famed striker bid farewell to Paris Saint-Germain and joined Inter Miami in the summer and has since brought notable fame and popularity to the US league.

Since his joining in July, Messi has helped the side to win the Leagues Cup title and also contributed towards persuading other ex-Barcelona players such as Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets to the club to join the David Beckham-owned side.



Lahore: President, Pakistan Sports Journalist Federation Iqbal Harper meet with DG Pakistan Sports Board Shoab Khoso

PCB reaches understanding of lease agreement with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The PCB has reached an understanding of lease agreement with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU), Peshawar for the development of women's cricket.

According to the agreement, SBBWU will offer its cricket ground on lease to the PCB, laying the foundation for establishing a state-of-the-art cricket academy dedicated to women's cricket development.

The collaboration aims at providing top-notch facilities and services to aspiring women cricketers. The availability of hostel facilities at SBBWU enables women cricketers across the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to have convenient access to the cricket ground.

Head of Women's Cricket, Tania Mallick said: "This exciting partnership with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar is in line with the PCB's vision of fostering the growth of women's cricket. The academy will serve as a centre for skill development as we are committed to seeing women's cricket thrive in the region."

SBBWU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Safia Ahmed also welcomed the initiative and looked forward to working with the PCB for the betterment of women's cricket.

Shane Watson appointed as Head Coach of Quetta Gladiators for PSL 9

A Sports

Quetta Gladiators have appointed former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson as the head coach ahead of the upcoming season of Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Quetta Gladiators announced Shane Watson's appointment as the head coach on their official X (formerly Twitter) account.

"The Quetta Gladiators owner and the team management has decided to appoint Former Australian all-rounder and Gladiators' best run-getter in the PSL, Shane Watson as head coach of the team," the 2019-PSL champions posted.

Quetta Gladiators yesterday announced the change in their coaching team with Moin Khan being appointed the Team Director, who served as their head coach since the inaugural season of PSL.

Under Moin Khan's coaching, Quetta Gladiators reached the play-off stage in the first four editions, playing three finals.

Quetta Gladiators became PSL champions in 2019 under the captaincy of Sarfaraz Ahmed, with Shane Watson leading their batting line-up.

Watson was the highest run-scorer with 430 runs at a strike rate of 143.81 and was named player of the tournament during the 2019 edition.

However, since then Gladiators failed to qualify for the play-off stages in the next four editions of the PSL.

Shane Watson has previously served the IPL franchise Delhi Capitals as an assistant coach in 2022, as well as the head coach of the Major League Cricket franchise San Francisco Unicorns earlier this year.

Seiver, Ecclestone star as England brush aside India in first WT20I

Sports Desk

LAHORE: England on Wednesday picked up a comfortable 38-run win over India in the opening game of the three-match Women's T20I series at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

England, made to bat first, amassed 197-6 on the bank of Danni Wyatt and Nat Seiver-Brunts' half-centuries.

The latter top-scored with 77 off 53 deliveries with 13 boundaries to her name. The former struck eight boundaries and two maximums on her way to 47-ball 75.

They put on a 138-run partnership on the third wicket. Pacer Renuka Singh was the pick of the India bowlers with her three-wicket haul.

England restricted India to 159-6 thanks to spinner Sophie Ecclestone's brilliant spell. The left-arm bowler returned with brilliant figures of 3-15 in four overs.

Opener Shafali Verma scored a half-century but her knock went in vain. She struck nine boundaries on her way to 42-ball 52.

Nat Seiver-Brunts was judged Player of the Match for her brilliant batting performance.

England will now play for a series win when they take on India in the second WT20I at the same venue on Dec. 9.

Pakistan-born Uganda player expresses wish to play against Babar Azam, Virat Kohli

Sports Desk

Pakistan-born Riazat Ali Shah from Uganda national cricket team has expressed his desire to play against Babar Azam and Virat Kohli in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Uganda have recently booked their tickets for the T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the USA after a top-two finish in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier.

Uganda's allrounder Riazat Ali Shah, who hails from Gilgit, while talking to ARY News opened up about his wish to play against Azam and Kohli.

"It is an honour for me to play in the T20 World Cup for Uganda," said Riazat Ali Shah.

"I wish that my team [Uganda] gets placed in the same group as India and Pakistan in T20 World Cup," he added.

"I want to play against Babar Azam and Virat Kohli," he concluded.

Upon being asked, Riazat Ali Shah shared which players are his ideals in batting and bowling. "I like Wasim Akram in bowling and Kevin Pietersen in batting."

Notably, this will be the first-ever appearance of Uganda in an ICC World Cup event as they will become only the fifth African nation to feature in the T20 World Cup.

During the T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifiers, Uganda overcame Tanzania in their



opening game by a comfortable margin of eight wickets.

However, in the next game, a brilliant 4/17 from Namibian all-rounder David Wiese handed them a six-wicket defeat.

The African side made a comeback in grand style in the next game, defeating the Test-playing Zimbabwe by five wickets.

While skipper Sikandar Raza's 48* starred for his side, Ugan-

da's bowling effort led by Dinesh Nakrani (3/14), restricted the Chevrons to 136/7.

During the chase, the Cricket Cranes were guided by Riazat Ali Shah (42) and Alpesh Ramjani (40). They won with five wickets to spare in a major cricketing upset.

Lifted by this effort, the side then overcame Nigeria with ease. They followed up with a 33-run win over Kenya, to have one foot into the T20 World Cup.

They ensured the same with a comfortable nine-wicket win over Rwanda. They rendered a top-notch bowling effort, which bowled out Rwanda for merely 65.

The target was then chased down by the ninth over mark.

Security Workshop

LAHORE: Commandant Pakistan Navy War College, Rear Admiral Javid Iqbal addresses the inaugural session of 6th Maritime Security Workshop being held under auspices of Pakistan Navy on Wednesday.



6th Maritime Security Workshop Commences At Pakistan Navy War College Lahore

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Sixth edition of Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-6) commenced at Pakistan Navy War College Lahore. Commandant Pakistan Navy War College Rear Admiral Javid Iqbal inaugurated the workshop.

The Maritime Security Workshop is a national level forum being organized under auspices of Pakistan Navy having theme 'Secure Seas, Prosperous Pakistan'. The Workshop aims at generating understanding on dynamics of maritime security, awareness of the blue economy and exploring the untapped maritime potential of Pakistan. The workshop also seeks to highlight challenges and opportunities available in maritime sector of Pakistan and the manner it may support country's economy. This national level forum organized under the auspices of Pakistan Navy brings together participants from public and private sectors and military which include Senators/ Parliamentarian, senior bureaucrats, maritime sector, business community, academia/think tanks and media.

During his welcome address,

Commandant Pakistan Navy War College welcomed the participants and highlighted rundown of workshop activities including familiarization on maritime potential of Pakistan in the context of policy formulation. He dilated on the need to reposition our strategic gaze towards sea and comprehend the transpiring developments in the wider Indian Ocean which casts bearing on Pakistan's national security. He alluded to wide ranging challenges and formidable role of Pakistan Navy to shield the country's maritime interests.

Maritime Security Workshop is designed in two phases, the first being academic session at the campus and second field tours to various maritime organizations, Pakistan Navy commands and coastal/ creeks installations. The participants will also have an opportunity to visit Gwadar port and witness various on-going development projects under CPEC.

Maritime Security Workshop is being held annually at Pakistan Navy War College since 2017. The workshop aids in cultivating integrated approach in developing the maritime sector and Blue Economy of Pakistan.

President for utilizing mosques to educate 28mn out-of-school children

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for making collaborative efforts with the Masjid to impart education to 28 million out-of-school children and said that Masjid and Madaris could play an important role in promoting ethical values, besides creating awareness about important social and health issues at the grassroots level. The president expressed these views while chairing a follow-up meeting on Masjid and Madaris, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Reli-



gious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Aneeq Ahmad, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology Professor Dr Qibla Ayaz, provincial ministers and representatives of the Auqaf and Religious Affairs departments as

well as the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Speaking on the occasion, the president said that imparting education to almost 28 million out-of-

school children in Pakistan was a huge challenge, which would require thousands of new schools and additional resources. He emphasized the need for innovative and non-traditional solutions and collective efforts by society to provide education to out-of-school children. The authorities of ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training informed the meeting that it had launched an Accelerated Learning Programme to educate out-of-school children. The president said that Masjid and Madaris could play an instrumental role in reforming society and overcoming social evils

by promoting ethical values, brotherhood, tolerance, peace, inter-faith harmony and respect for each other's rights through the Friday sermons. He also underscored the need for raising awareness, through mosques, about mental and general health issues, population welfare, inter-faith harmony, women's rights, and malnutrition at the community level. The president further called for adopting an integrated approach by the ministries of health, education, and religious affairs at the federal and provincial levels by involving the Masjid and Madaris to educate the people about social and health issues.

Masses to decide in February 8 elections who will rule Pakistan: Solangi

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that general elections would be held on February 8, 2024 and full preparations were underway to accomplish the task in a fair and transparent manner. Talking to media persons at the inaugural ceremony of the 24-hour regional transmission of Pakistan Television Multan, he said that the people would ultimately decide the next government of the country and formally give the mandate on elections day through the ballot. He dispelled any doubt by some quarters about the

holding of general elections.

He pointed out that Preamble of the Constitution had indicated that elected representatives would ultimately run the affairs of the country. Answering a question, he said the media was free and the judiciary was independent in the country. Solangi said that multiple voices and slogans were the hallmark of democracy and no one should worry about the democratic norms. "Democracy does not harbour sheer silence just like a graveyard," he remarked. He said at the moment, the performance of the next parliament and government could not be assessed in advance.

To a question, he said that Ministry of Food Security was



doing its job in an efficient manner, and steps were being taken for agriculture sector development under SIFC. He said the Federal government would work with provinces for the development of this sector despite the fact that

agriculture was the provincial subject. He said that Pakistan Television has officially commenced the 24-hour regional broadcasting from Multan Center. The minister said that the PTV Multan Center would broadcast eight

current affairs programmes in a week. Moreover, it would also produce music, literature and children programmes from PTV Multan. He said that PTV Multan broadcasts would be seen in over fifty countries of the world. He said that when he was Director General Radio Pakistan, it initiated Saraiki news bulletin for the first time. He opined that PTV Multan will play an important role in the promotion and projection of regional culture and heritage in addition to promoting the economic and cultural rights of the people of region. "We wish PTV Multan to be the voice of the real problems of the people of this region," he added.

Main suspect involved in Yunan boat accident arrested

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the instructions of Director Faisalabad Zone Rai Ijaz Ahmed, the crackdown is on against the elements involved in human trafficking. He was arrested from Faisalabad in the operation. The accused is a key participant in an organized human trafficking gang. Action was taken against the accused on the basis of suspicious bank transaction. In the bank account used by the accused, money related to human trafficking was transferred. 67 lakh rupees were transferred in the accused's account. The accused could not satisfy the authorities regarding the said amount. The accused was in contact with a human trafficker involved in the boat accident. A case has been registered against the accused.

Samina Alvi for inclusive approach to mainstream persons with disabilities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday emphasized the need for providing opportunities to persons with disabilities to help them become part of mainstream economic activities. Speaking at the graduation ceremony at Network of Organizations Working with Persons with Disabilities Pakistan (NOWPDP), she said it was the joint responsibility of the State and the society to accommodate such people by ensuring inclusive approach.

Samina Alvi said persons with disabilities comprised 10 to 12 percent of the country's population, however, lacked enough representa-



tion in society and public domains. She regretted that due to negative attitudes towards disability, the families restricted their such members to homes and avoided their outdoor activities. Also, the lack of infrastructure such as access ramps at public buildings and parks restricted the mobility of persons with disabilities. Samina Alvi urged providing education to such students at mainstream schools to ensure

their inclusion in society. She stressed training teachers and sensitizing society that persons with disabilities could play a positive role in society if provided with ample opportunities including assistive technology and rehabilitation services. She recalled that a comprehensive awareness campaign was launched from the platform of the Presidency to raise awareness about mainstreaming persons with disabilities.

Meeting with Financial Advisor and Management of First Women Bank

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad, chaired a meeting of the Privatisation Commission with the Financial Advisor and Management of First Women Bank Limited (FWBL). The Minister was briefed regarding the proposed plan of action for the privatisation of FWBL. Mr. Farukh Iqbal, CEO and President of FWBL apprised the meeting on the status of audited accounts and the management accounts. The Minister directed the Financial Advisor and the Management to expedite the process and to ensure that there are no delays. The timelines for completion of necessary prerequisites for prequalification of potential investors were agreed and finalised.

This was the first high level meeting following the extension of Financial Services Agreement with Financial Advisor as approved by Privatisation Commission Board on November 10, 2023.

Lok Sabha passes J&K Reorganisation, Reservation (Amendment) Bills



WEB DESK

SRINAGAR: The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill seeks to nominate two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the legislative assembly.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill seeks to change the nomenclature of a section of people who are eligible for quota in appointment and admission.

The bills, which were moved in the Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister on Tuesday were passed after hours of debate spanning over two days.

Speaking on two Bills in the Lok Sabha, Shah said, "The Bill that I have brought here pertains to bring-

ing justice to and providing rights to those against whom injustice was done, who were insulted and those who were ignored."

He said that in any society, those who are deprived should be brought forward and that is the basic sense of the Constitution of India.

"But they have to be brought forward in a way that doesn't reduce their respect. There is a huge difference between giving rights and giving rights respectfully. So, instead of a weak and deprived category, renaming it to Other Backward Class (OBC) is important," the Minister said.

He said that Jammu and Kashmir has suffered due to two blunders committed by the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru - first announcing ceasefire and then taking the Kashmir issue to the United Nations.

"Had Jawaharlal Nehru taken right steps, PoK would have been part of India now. It was a historic blunder," he said.

China calls for legal instrument on arms control in outer space: Wang Wenbin

Spokesman Report



BEIJING: China on Wednesday called upon the relevant countries to support and participate

in negotiations for a legal instrument on arms control in outer space. Certain countries have long refused to acknowledge the fundamental approach of negotiating a legal instrument on technical grounds and even questioned the basic consensus of preventing an arms race in outer space, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing.

His remarks came after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Monday adopted a draft resolution titled "No first placement of weapons in outer space," introduced by China and Russia, by a recorded vote of 127 in favor. Wang said, safeguarding security and peace in outer space and preventing an arms race is the long-term common aspiration of the international community. The first UN special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 proposed to prevent an arms race in outer space through negotiation, he said.

Mohsin Naqvi holds India responsible for 'plumes of smog' in Pakistan

Bureau Report



DUBAI: Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday held India responsible for 'plumes of smog' in Pakistan, especially in his province, as Lahore topped the list of most hazardous cities of the world yet again, ARY News reported.

Speaking at 28th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, the provincial chief executive emphasised the significance of this platform in addressing Pakistan's climate challenges, particularly those exacerbated by neighboring countries, notably India.

Holding India responsible for the smog, CM Mohsin Naqvi noted that his province suffers from smog due to the burning of crop residues in Indian Punjab, just 20 km from the border. He urged the United Nations to ask India to reduce burning of crop residues and contribute in addressing climate challenges. "Urgent action is imperative for a sustainable future," he added.

Mohsin Naqvi further said that Pakistan, although only contributing 0.9% to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change.