

left today for United States of America (USA) on an official visit.

This is General Sved Asim Munir's first visit to USA as COAS.

During his visit, General Syed Asim Munir is scheduled to meet the senior mili-RAWALPINDI: General Syed tary and other government

## **Caretaker PM** strongly condemns Khuzdar blast

#### 😂 City Desk

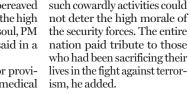
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-

sorrow over Shahadat of Counter- Terrorism Department, SHO Muhammad Murad. The prime minister expressed his condolence with the bereaved family and prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also directed for provision of all possible medical ism, he added.

treatment to those injured in the incident. The caretaker prime minister said that such cowardly activities could

#### Haq Kakar on Sunday while strongly condemning a blast in Khuzdar Balochistan province, expressed his deep grief and



CTD official martyred



## **OIC calls for end to human rights** 'double standards'

#### 跨 Spokesman Report

Permanent Human Rights Rights. Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has human rights norms globally in light of the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip.

75th anniversary of the Univer-

sion said that after more than ate without basic necessities

intervene for an immediate and against Muslims in India, and RIYADH: The Independent sal Declaration of Human lasting ceasefire in the enclave. the continued plight of Pales-In a statement, the commis- for civilians in Gaza to evacu- oppressive regimes.

It also described Israeli orders tinians and Kashmiris under

The IPHRC called to double standards in applying human rights norms globally, and reaffirmed its commitment to promoting good governance, the rule of law, and safeguarding fundamental freedoms. It also highlighted the need for technological equality and

Rights Day 2023 on Dec. 10, the international community to tent violence and discrimination equitable development for OIC member states and other developing nations, and urged the international community to prioritize bridging the technological divide saving that developing countries face disparities in accessing cutting-edge technologies.

The IPHRC voiced its concerns after joining worldwide events to mark Human

double standards in applying in Gaza, and more than 17,000 civilian casualties, the internaits responsibility to act on credible accounts of war crimes being

committed by Israeli forces.

condemned what it describes as two months of Israeli aggression as a violation of International humanitarian law.

The commission voiced tional community is failing in concern about human rights violations affecting millions worldwide, and cited the deteriorating conditions for Rohing-The commission urged the ya Muslims in Myanmar, persis-

Protecting human rights, a

The commission urged member states to adopt innovative, rights-based approaches to address economic, social, and cultural challenges.

Solangi rebuts social media reports about GB, vows legal action against rumour mongers



#### 腾 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday strongly rebutted different rumours circulating on social media regarding Gilgit-Baltistan. The rumours suggested that a proposal to hand over GB to another country for 50 years was under consideration.

Arab-Islamic ministerial committee calls for immediate end of Israeli occupation of Gaza Strip

#### 腾 News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Members of the Ministerial Committee assigned by the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit under the chairmanship of His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, met on Satur day, December 9, 2023, with the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. The committee members who participated in the meeting are the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, Riad Malki, and His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan.

During the meeting, they discussed the accelerating events and dangerous developments in the Gaza Strip and their repercussions.





ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister (FM) Jalil Abbas Jilani on Sunday reiterated the commitment to protect and promote human rights saying it was a constitutional duty and a guiding light in Pakistan.

"Pakistan's democratic traditions, civil society, media, and legal institutions underpin our unwavering commitment to the rights and freedoms of all citizens," he said in his message on the occasion of International Day of Human Rights.

#### IPP to hold power show in Karachi on Jan 7

#### 腾 🛚 Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) to hold a public gathering at Nishtar Park in Karachi on January 7 (Sunday).

According to party's spokesperson, IPP has formed committees to organize the public gatherings.

The spokesperson said that a series of public gatherings will be held in the next phase in Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Sukkur.

Earlier, the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IIP) appointed individuals in major positions for its Karachi office.

According to the official notification, Nadeem Polani was appointed as the president, Javed Jilani as vice president, and Rizwan Khan as general secretary of IPP-Karachi division.

Meanwhile, Musarrat Shah had been appointed as the general secretary of IPP Women Wing Sindh division.

#### Interior Minister condemns blast in Khuzdar



#### 腾 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker Federal Minister for Interior, Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, strongly condemned the explosion in Khuzdar on Sunday. He expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of CTD SHO Muhammad Murad in the explosion while expressing his condolences to the martyr's family.

we stand with the family of the martyred police officer," the minister said, adding that the best medical facilities will be provided to the pedestrians injured in the blast.

### in Khuzdar blast



#### 😂 🛛 Bureau Report

KHUZDAR: The station house officer (SHO) of the Khuzdar Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) was martyred in an explosion targeting his vehicle.

According to police, the incident took place on Ibrahim Road in Khuzdar when a vehicle of SHO CTD Khuzdar Muhammad Murad was targeted.

A bomb had been fitted in the CTD official's vehicle, said police.

Police and security forces promptly arrived at the location of the incident along with the bomb disposal squad which was assessing the scale of the blast.

Martyred SHO's body has been shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, said CTD police spokesperson.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir

Ali Mardan Khan Domki condemned the incident and expressed his grief at the CTD official's martyrdom.

Last month, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) killed three terrorists associated with a banned outfit during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Khuzdar district.

The CTD spokesperson said that an IBO was conducted in Balochistan's Khuzdar district in which three terrorists of a banned outfit were killed.

A large cache of arms and explosive material was recovered from the terrorists. The CTD team recovered two sub-machine guns, pistol, hand grenades, magnetic IED and rounds during the IBO.

According to the CTD spokespersons, the terrorists were travelling on a motorcycle and opened fire at the officials who attempted to stop them near the Kank area.

## Russia calls for international monitoring mission in Gaza

#### 😂 Monitoring Desk

**ISLAMABAD:** Vladimir Putin says Russia is ready to give all possible assistance to alleviate the suffering of Gaza's civilians and help de-escalate the conflict. Moscow says an international monitoring mission should go to Gaza to monitor the humanitarian situation.

"Vladimir Putin reaffirmed the principle position of rejecting

and condemning terrorism in all its forms," the Kremlin said in a President statement. "At the same time, it is extremely important that countering terrorist threats does not lead to such grave consequences for the civilian population."

Russia backed a UN Security Council resolution for a Gaza ceasefire that was vetoed by the United States on Friday.

Yesterday, the death toll in Gaza reached to over 17,700 in the



war-ravaged Palestinian territory, the health ministry says. Another 48,780 people have been wounded in Israeli attacks No captives will be released

without negotiations: Hamas In a pre-recorded message, the

spokesperson for Hamas's Qassam Brigades says Israeli captives will not be released by military force. "We tell the Israelis that Netan-

yahu, Gallant, and others in the war cabinet cannot bring back their captives without negotiations. The latest killing of a captive they tried to take back by force proves that."

Abu Obaida was referring to an

Israeli man held captive, whom Israeli special forces in the Gaza Strip tried to rescue. He said the group repelled the attempt, inflicting several military casualties, and the captive also died in the assault.

"The crimes and genocide against the people of Gaza are beyond any description ... Ending Palestinian existence with American and European support is inhuman," ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-Qudra said.

## of issuing general elections' schedule

**ECP refutes claims** 

#### 腾 City Desk

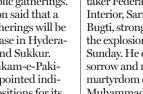
ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorically denied the issuance of any schedule for the upcoming general elections. A spokesman of ECP, strongly denied a news item published in daily Jang is unfounded and having no basis.

The spokesperson clarified that the schedule circulating

#### on social media is fraudulent. The Election Commission spokesperson noted that false information about the election is consistently appearing in both print and electronic media.

He said pay attention only to statements from the official spokesperson of the Election Commission, and disregard any others claiming to be from the Commission.

## In this hour of sorrow,





## National

Monday, December 11, 2023

## AJK president calls for urgent end to Indian rule in occupied Kashmir

#### 🐞 Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has urged the international community to play its much needed role to bring an immediate end to gross human rights violations being committed against Kashmiris by the Indian forces in the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In his statement issued on the occasion of World Human Rights Day, today, the AJK president, while referring to the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the IOJK, said that it was high time that the world community should shun its duplicity and policy of indifference towards the plight of Kashmiris.

He said that while world was celebrat-



reeling under the India's brutal suppression and belligerent occupation. He ing the Human Rights Day and 75 years said that there was a dire need that the of adoption of the universal declaration human rights watchdogs should redouof human rights today Kashmiris were ble their efforts to highlight the precar-

ious situation in the troubled region and help stop bloodshed and violence in the region. He said that the India's belligerent military occupation has been the major cause of unrest and human

rights violations in the occupied Kashmir. Referring to the revocation of article 370 and 35-A by the Indian government in 2019, the president said that since then the rights situation in the region has deteriorated to an alarming level.

He said that Indian government was trying to change the region's demography and its political landscape. Settling non-state Hindus in the IOJK, he said, was a deep rooted conspiracy aimed at converting Muslim majority into a minority. On the other hand, the president said that after redrawing the electoral boundaries and granting additional seats to Jammu region a stage has been set to bring a Hindu Chief Minister in the state. Terming these moves as a undemocratic, illegal and unconstitutional, the president said that Indian government's actions were not only against the spirit of the UN charter but also the UDHR and other human rights treaties.

## India is violating human rights in occupied Kashmir: PM AJK

#### 腾 🛚 Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that India was committing serious violations of human rights in Occupied Kashmir. Prime Minister Haq expressed these views while addressing a seminar, which was organised by Kashmir Policy Research Institute to mark world human rights day, today. Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that India can not suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle by the dint of force. He said that the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for right to self determination would continue till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from the Indian occupation. Referring to the Kashmiris' unwavering commitment to the noble cause, he said, "The torch of freedom shall remain alight as long as a single Kashmiri is alive". He said that Kashmiris can go to any extent to get their motherland freed

blood. freedom is something that "The



cannot be achieved through any intellectual debate", he said. Citing to rising ties of xenophobia, religious extremism and persecution of religious minorities in the Indian society and utter disregard for human rights, the PM said, "Human rights and values from Indian occupation. He said that flourish in societies where humanity the price of freedom has to be paid with is alive". While condemning induction response if India plans a misadven- Islamic University Social Sciences Dr. of a regime of new laws in Kashmir by ture in future", he said. He said that Amna Mehmood, KIIR chief Altaf the Indian government, he said that

these laws were meant to change the real defenders of the ideological and region's demography and to convert Muslim majority into a minority in Kashmir. He said that India must realize that it cannot hold the Kashmiri nation hostage for a long on the basis of oppression.

the Pakistan armed forces were the Hussain Wani and several others

geographical frontiers of the country. Whenever there are elections in India, the Indian government creates a war hysteria on the LoC", the PM said. The seminar was attended and addressed by Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan, "Pakistan will give same kind of Ambassador Naila Chauhan, Dean of

#### Police constable buried under sand in Attock 腾 🛛 Raza Nagvi

ATTOCK: A Police constable has lost his life as he buried under sand near Sanjwal Factory in the limits of Wah Sadadr Police station on Sunday, police sources said.

Police and hospital sources said that constable Muhammad Jaffar was going on his motorcycle on Attock- Sanjwal road when he was crossing a tractor trolley filled with sand it turned turtle resultantly he came under the sand and buried under it. Later he was taken to district headquarters hospital where he pronounced dead. Police registered a case against the tractor driver and launched further investigation.

#### Youth Office Lower Chitral held program on Human Rights Day



#### 😂 🛛 Adam Khan Wazir

LOWER CHITRAL: District Youth Office Lower Chitral organized a program on "Human Rights Day" at Youth Center of Lower Chitral on Saturday. It should be remembered that December 10 is celebrated as International Human Rights Day in country.

While the special guest of this program was Deputy Commissioner of Lower Chitral Muhammad Imran Khan.

Assistant Commissioner Dr Atif Jalib, Deputy Director NCHD Maqsood Shah and District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir were also present with him. He spoke in detail on various topics of human rights, and female youth also actively participated in the program.

Shields were presented to Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Imran Khan and Assistant Commissioner Dr. Atif Jalib by the Youth Office and wearing a traditional Chitrali cap.

Youth Officer Sardar Ali was also given a traditional Chitrali cap by the Youth of Chitral at the end of the program, everyone also walked with the posters.

Religious minorities throughout Pakistan have complete freedom to perform their rituals. Vohra 腾 🛛 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A Christmas ceremony was organized in Government Special Girls' School D Ground under the auspices of EPCA Special Education. The chief guest was Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra, President Central Cloth Board, Ittehad Group Pakistan, while the guest of honor was Mian. Abdul Manan Former MNA, Khalil Tahir Sindhu Former Provincia Minister, Madam Khalida Parveen DO Special Education, Kashif Zia CO Education, Haji Khalid Saeed Former MPA, Mian Muhammad Riaz Provincial President APCA Special Education, Shafaq Rasool Sindhu Provincial President Punjab Asim Khan Chairman, Zulfiqar Kahlon Division President, Ghazanfar Abbas Shah General Secretary EPCA Punjab, Muhammad Irfan President NFC, Mian Maqsood President CBA, Rana Abid Ali Program Organizer Division President EPCA, Babar Sulhatra Senior Vice President, Faisal Islam Bhatti, Khadim Gujjar former president, Principal Nadeem Anjum, Majbeen, Nazia Jabeen and the presidents and secretaries of various departments were also present. The passionate music of Bened, flower leaves and garlands around the neck, the arrival of Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra. But everyone stood up and welcomed. The program began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. The stage secretary introduced the guests. On this occasion, the central president of Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan, Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra said in his speech that religious minorities throughout Pakistan have complete freedom to perform their rituals. A message was also sent to the merchant for special attention to the children. Finally, the Christmas cake was cut and a special prayer was also offered for the Pakistani forces, the country of Pakistan and the people.



## Lodhran Pilot Project and under Powered by Women Project

#### 😂 Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Organized by Lodhran Pilot Project and under Powered by Women Project, a training workshop was organized for 6 teams of Elite Women's League on life skills, civil and legal rights, gender discrimination, anti-harassment act 2010, in which more than 100 women cricketers, Qualified coaches and other members participatworkshop was organized in Multan and Lodhran districts of South Punjab. The trainer, the well-known female legal expert Muaz- education. zamma Hasnain, gave the The objective of the train-



ed. This three-day training women players, coaches and Project Manager, Lodhran other members in terms Pilot Project, in his lecture of critical thinking, social in the training workshop, cohesion and leadership said that at the organizaskills while imparting civic

It was also informed that is to ensure accountability. ing workshop was to train Syed Hasan Mujtaba, Acting tor, Lodhran Pilot Project,

said that women and girls face this problem in organizations and with the help of these laws, they will now tional level, everyone should know what to do to deal with take responsibility for creatit. She also said that these are ing awareness among their exemplary laws that every training awareness lecture. the purpose of these laws family and friends. Saira organization needs to implement to ensure a safe work-Kashif, Project Coordinaing environment for women.

ECP should take action against the illegal inauguration ofdevelopment projects

#### 🐞 Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The former federal minister Malik Amin Aslam Khan has drawn attention of the election commission of Pakistan (ECP) towards illegal inauguration of deve- lopment projects in Attock and demands action under election rules 2017.

Malik Amin Aslam Khan who is aspirant candidate of national assembly constituency NA-49 from Attock while talking to newsmen at his native town of Hazro on Sunday has called upon ECP to take stock of the inauguration of different development projects by PML-N aspirant candidates especially Sui gas supply project in the constituency. "On December 6, his contesting candidate from PML-N Shiekh Aftab Ahmed inaugurated sui gas supply scheme in Bolianwal and Peerkot area of tehsil Attock in sheer violation of EC rules

## Massacre of women and children by merciless chemical weapons attacks in Palestinian: Tahira Naseem

#### 腾 Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Social leader Mrs. Tahira Naseem, Asifa Saleem Malik. Ahila Mubasher Classra Advocate. Humira Tariq and Mahnoor Khursheed Siddiqui have stated that violence against women and children is actually the worst form of human rights violation and the recent massacre of women and children by merciless chemical weapons attacks in Palestine has been reported by international human rights organizations. There are question marks for these views expressed by the Consciousness Development Organization. In collaboration with Awaaz Foundation, in connection with the elimination of violence against women and children and the World Human Rights Day (Civil society Consultation), while Madam Dr. Zahid Zulfiqar Dua Bukhari. Farah Chaghta. Chaudhry



Mansoor Advocate. Malik Muhammad Yusuf. Malik Amir Nawaz Iqbal Baloch Rafiq Mumtaz. Khalid Chhata. Adil Mahmood Wajahat Chaghata. Tariq Bilal. Mubasher Classra Advocate.

Tasawur Hayat, Mehboob Ahmed and others were participants.

The speakers in the ceremony added that today, in our society, the establishment of a favorable environment for

women and children is no less than a challenge in the context of human rights.

From the point of view of human rights, we are suffering from a complete decline in the provision of rights in the environment of intolerance, especially women and children. From the regional level to the global level, it seems to be failing in providing a violence-free environment for girls. In the current digital world, if we look at the global level, there are clear evidences of atrocities in Palestine and Occupied Kashmir, and if we look at our own regions, various types of violence against women and children are hiding in the face of humanity. We are in these situations where the international institutions have to wake up from the negligence, but we also have to promote practical measures to prevent women and child violence, along with the trends of human rights.

A two-day training workshop on Cultural Heritage Tourism will be held in Jan 20224



#### 腾 PNP

ISLAMABAD: A two-day training workshop on Cultural Heritage Tourism, Art of Storytelling and Interpretation Skills will be organized in the month of January 2024 at Comsetes.

Museum Association of Pakistan (MAP) and COMSATS University Islamabad will jointly organize the 3rd International Harappa Conference in March 2024 to mark the centenary of the discovery of this civilization. Mian Attique Ahmad

Faisalabad: Rector Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar, Mr. Naveed Ahmed Khan, GM Prof. Zainul Abidin, Mian Attique Ahmad Secretary General Museum Association of Pakistan and Mr. Muzaffar Chaudhry held a joint meeting in COMSATS University Islamabad. A two-day training workshop on cultural heritage tourism, storytelling and interpretation skills will be conducted. Museum Association of Pakistan (MAP) and COMSATS will jointly organize the 3rd International Harappa Conference in March 2024 to mark the centenary of the discovery of this civilization and jointly at COMSATS University Islamabad on cultural heritage till March 2024. A research center will be established. The above three decisions will relaunch the new joint project for the improvement of heritage and heritage management especially in the field of museology. On this occasion, archaeologists made decisions after a thoughtful discussion.

## The Spokesman 3

Inauguration Ceremony of the Aesthetic Physicians Association of Pakistan



Islamabad 15º – 23º Clear

#### SERVICES

Namaz	Timings	
Fajr	5:32 am	
Zohr	12:00 pm	
Asr	3:22 pm	
Maghrib	5:00 pm	
lsha	6:28 pm	
EMEDGENCV		

#### EMERGENC

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

#### **Women Police** Stations

Islamabad ... 9222596 . 9270601-20 Rawalpindi

#### **ENOUIRY** Edhi Ambulance

.115 **PIA Flight Info** ... 114 PIA Cargo. . 9280979 Railway Inquiry . .... 117 ...9270831-5 Railway Exchange ..5555489 WASA Rawalpindi .9281092

HOSPITALS		
CMH	56111	
MH		
MH		
Cantt Hospital		
DHQ		
RGH	9290301	
Holy Family	9290322	
PIMS	9261170-7	
Polyclinic	9218300-0	
Shifa International		

#### DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropol	itan
Corporation	9209224

#### PTDC

announces substantial progress in tourism app development 😂 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) announced substantial progress in the development of the tourism app by emphasizing its potential to significantly boost both local and foreign tourism in the country.

Official told APP that akistan has amazing and rich recreational sites and scenic valleys that not only promote tourism across the country but lead to a substantial increase in the generating revenue as well. He highlighted the app's status as Pakistan's largest tourist information platform by providing comprehensive details on archaeological sites and tourist destinations with a single click. He emphasized the app's potential to make information on Pakistan's tourism, history, and cultural heritage easily accessible to people worldwide, anticipating a remarkable surge in domestic and foreign tourists. The official apprised that Information Technological (IT) companies had already given a detailed briefing on the app's features to the Minister of State for Tourism and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Wasi Shah.

#### ing global recognition as a unique blend of art and science, distinct from tradition-RAWALPINDI: The Aesthetic Physicians al beauty parlors and salons.

Association of Pakistan (AAPP) marked Addressing the audience, Mishal its official inauguration at a local hotel in Hussain Malik expressed that this Rawalpindi. The ceremony was attendmoment is a historic milestone for the ed by chief guest Mishal Hussain Malik, intersection of aesthetics and medical Special Assistant to the Prime Minister science in Pakistan. She lauded the estabfor Human Rights, along with dignitarlishment of the first Aesthetic Association ies including Shahzad Ali Khan from Vice in Pakistan as a source of national pride. chancellor Health University, and Dr. acknowledging the challenges inher-Anis Ahmed from Vice chancellor Ripha ent in aesthetic medicine and extending International University. The event also congratulations to the organizers. saw the presence of Dr. Samina Mohsin,

Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice-Chancellor of President of the AAPP, and Dr. Shumaila Health Services Academy, stressed the A. Khan, General Secretary, along with importance of aesthetic art and cautioned against blindly adopting Western ideals. Dr. Anis Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Ripha International University, emphana Mohsin introduced the distinguished sized the significance of aesthetic art, noting that everything created by Allah guests and showcased a documentary focusing on aesthetic physicians and is inherently beautiful.

The inauguration ceremony concluded with the presentation of commemorative lighting that aesthetic medicine is gain- shields to the esteemed guests.



### Enjoying holiday

numerous acclaimed aesthetic experts

During her welcome speech, Dr. Sami-

medicine. Dr. Samina underscored the

historical significance of beauty, high-

from across the country.

**Inauguration** 

🐌 PPA

ISLAMABAD: Children's are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Japanese Park in the Federal Capital.



#### AIOU to host Int'l moot on Modern trends in Arabic Novel 腾 PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Arabic (Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies) of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is organizing a two-day international conference on "Modern Trends in the Arabic Novel" on December 13th and 14th as a part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations. According to Chairman, Department of Arabic, Dr. Abdul Majeed Baghdadi, the conference will feature 13 scholars from countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Thailand, Malaysia, Oman, Algeria, Nigeria, and Syria who will be physically present, while 15 international scholars will participate online. In addition, faculty members, experts, researchers, and intellectuals from all over the country will also be participating in this conference.

The Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, along with the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Al Maliki, will be the special guests at the conference's opening session. Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, will preside over it. The keynote speakers for the conference will be Prof. Dr. Habibur Rahman Asim, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Jafari (from Algeria), and Prof. Dr. Fawad Abdul Mutalib (from Jordan).

### Price hike situation: So buying dry fruits is no more a priority for many

#### 腾 🛛 Tooba Khan

ISLAMABAD: Dry fruits as the most popular and consumed delight of the winter season have turned into a lavish commodity for a common man to buy due to the exorbitant rates amid the prevailing price hike

He said that Wasi Shah expressed confidence that the ongoing efforts, combined with digitalization would revolutionize Pakistani tourism.

Pakistan Engineering Council Honored with ICC Global Award-2023

🐞 PNP

ISLAMABAD: International Code Council (ICC) honored Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) with the ICC Global Award-2023 during United Nations COP28 Climate Conference in Dubai on Friday, December 8th 2023. A four member PEC delegation led by its Chairman Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan. Registrar PEC, Prof. Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodi, Convener PEC Technical Committee and Mr. Faiz ul Sibtain Secretary to Committee PEC/ Focal Person US Department of Commerce



along with Judy Zakreski, by updating Building Code of Senior Vice President of ICC Pakistan along with the devel-Global Operations present- opment of Green Building ed the prestigious ICC Global Code of Pakistan-2023 includ-Award -2023 to PEC Chairing the provisions of Rainwater to ICC participated the event. man and delegation. While Harvesting for Buildings. She Marisa Lago, Under Secretary congratulating PEC, she appre- also acknowledged the serious ciated the PEC national role efforts put-forth by Pakistan

to contribute for the global sustainability agenda to decarbonize the built environment in Pakistan by adopting and implanting these standards. The Chairman PEC ensured with his commitment that PEC being a global partner of ICC is very much conscious to work further with local stakeholders in public and private sector including the financial back support of national/ international organizations to enforce these codes through capacity building, policy making to incentivize the society by the government for conservation of energy, water and to reduce adverse impact of climate change on built environment in Pakistan.

The majority of the citizens especially those belonging to the lowand middle-income groups are finding it hard to buy their daily eatables like vegetables, fruits, wheat flour etc. due to the price hike situation so buying dry fruits is no more a priority for many.

The nutritional benefits of dry fruits cannot be ignored in terms of increasing the immunity level to fight diseases due to the cold weather in the ongoing winter season.

Sajid Khan, a dry fruits seller at Karachi Company, said the price of dry fruits has increased along with inflation. "Selling dry fruits is the only source of income for me and it would be difficult to feed my children and run household expenditures if I didn't earn maximum profit", he said.

'The trend of offering discounts on special occasions is no longer limited to the clothes, food items and other accessories of daily life but also being adopted by sellers like me to attract buyers due to its high price", Sajid Khan added.

He said that he sells almonds (without shell) at Rs. 2800 per kg, Walnut (without shell) at Rs. 2200, Pistachio for Rs. 3600, apricot for Rs. 1200, dried apricot for Rs. 1600, dried figs for Rs. 3200 and Raisin for Rs. 1700, dates Rs.1200, Afghani Rewari for Rs. 1200 and Cashews for Rs. 3600.

Since the Pine nuts are not purchased at all by most of the customers due to their sky-rocketing price of around Rs. 14,000, I also cannot afford to keep that in my stock, he said.

Zahida Amin, a customer at a dry fruits shop at Apbara Market said, "It was my routine from the last many years to buy the whole stock of dry fruits especially almonds and walnuts for the season so that my family can enjoy these with tea".

But now due to the exorbitant rates of dry fruits and limited purchasing capacity amid the prevailing price hike situation, it is not possible to buy the most wanted nutritional dry fruits which are good for the health, she said.

Asim Azhar, a government employee said, "It seems that dry fruits will become a commodity of a certain segment of society that would

# 1,446 graduates receive degrees as IoBM hosts 26th annual convocation

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KARACHI: The Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi, held its 26th Convocation at its campus on Saturday, December 09, 2023. 1,446 graduates from more than 40 disciplines including Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph. D. were conferred degrees at the ceremony this year that was the betterment of the nation. attended by senior representatives from IoBM, graduating students, their parents, and faculty.

The welcome address was given by the Chancellor of IoBM, Mr. Bashir into one of the leading educational Janmohammad while the keynote address was delivered by Mr. Rizwan Ahmed Sheikh, CEO, Saudi Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company who is an IoBM alumnus from the first-ever batch to graduate from the varsity. Mr. Talib

S. Karim, President IoBM, present- the year, Dinah Kamal Hamidi remied a progress report on behalf of the varsity at the event.

Guiding the graduates with his extensive knowledge and experience, Mr. Bashir Janmohammad stressed the need for intellectual minds to trust in their country and dedicate their efforts toward contributing to

Presenting a progress report for the institution, the President of IoBM, Mr. Talib S. Karim highlighted how his father's passion project has turned entities in the country. He noted: "Of the many achievements of IoBM, the Shahjehan Syed Karim Incubation Centre (SSKIC) established in November 2020, requires a notable mention.

In her speech, the Valedictorian for

nisced on the memories and learning she had accumulated over the years. She reminded her batchmates how, from asking themselves what they wanted to be when they grew up, to this day, "all grown up", a new journey awaited them. She stressed not to forget "how exceptional we are! And just what all we are capable of!"

The Keynote Speaker, Rizwan Ahmed Sheikh lauded the graduates, imparting key learnings for them by saying: "I will leave you with my secret to success in life that is summarized by four acronyms, D, C, B, and A. These stand for Dream, Create, Believe, and Achieve. Stick to the principles of discipline, consistency, and hard work as these are the elements that will lead you to fulfill your biggest ambitions.



## **Editorial/Opinion**

Monday, December 11, 2023

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### **Open burning of waste** in Pakistan causing smog

he opening burning of agricultural, industrial and municipal waste in Pakistan is posing a serious risk to air quality and public health as it was causing smog in the region. Hazardous emissions, including particulate matter, dioxins, and Volatile Organic Compounds, contribute to smog, leading to respiratory issues and cardiovascular problems.

Recognizing the urgency, the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE) jointly organized an X (formerly Twitter) Space to highlight the impact of open waste burning on smog and its threats to health and the environment. With 48.5 million tons of annual municipal waste, cities like Islamabad face challenges in sustainable waste management. Inefficient waste collection strategies result in waste accumulation and open burning, especially in areas lacking proper services. The open burning of waste is a prevalent practice in numerous cities across Pakistan. However, there is a scarcity of documented data pinpointing the areas where this practice poses the most significant issues or the underlying reasons for burning municipal waste. A recent survey conducted by IoU in Islamabad and Lahore revealed that a majority of respondents were uninformed about any existing laws against this practice, as well as the environmental or health hazards associated with it, said Ayesha Majid, Senior Program Coordinator at IoU, in her introductory remarks. Waste burning, a major source of toxic gases and black carbon, occurs in diverse settings, posing health and safety risks. Often hidden and seasonal, it lacks clear regulations and enforcement. The Royal Academy of Engineering addresses this with 19 global projects, focusing on vulnerable groups and promoting improved waste management, citizen reporting, and regulatory enforcement. Dr. Mansoor Ali, RAE's Theme Lead, further stated that RAE's programs aim at various levels, including national policies, city frameworks, and grassroots practices, recognizing the link between waste burning and livelihoods, especially for waste pickers. Once known as the "city of gardens," Lahore has transformed into a "gas chamber." Over the past decade, the city has witnessed a worrisome 75% reduction in greenery, accompanied by a significant 10-degree rise in temperature. 60% of diseases in Lahore are linked to air pollution. The roots of Lahore Bachao Tehreek can be traced back to a case 16 years ago when a Motorway construction project proposed cutting 30,000 trees and converting 23,000 acres of green land into a road near the Lahore canal. The Supreme Court's historic judgment led to the introduction of the Canal Urban Heritage Path Act, which was passed through Parliament, recognizing the environment as a vital heritage and public trust for the first time. Imrana Tiwana, Environmental Activist, highlights how she started the Lahore Bachao Tehreek, a movement aimed at addressing the escalating issue of smog in Lahore. Exposure to pollutants from open waste burning, especially during the smog season, poses serious health risks, including respiratory and cardiovascular issues, skin and eye irritation, increased cancer risk, and compromised immune systems. Vulnerabilities vary across demographics, with children, the elderly, and low-income communities facing higher risks.

## Is Israel losing the war against Hamas? - II

between Israel and Palestinians has resulted in a tragic loss of life and a humanitar-

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ian crisis. The violence has led to the deaths of 17500 and wounding of 46,000 innocent civilians, including children, elderly individuals, women, and unarmed young people. A significant number of Palestinians have been displaced, lacking access to essential necessities like food, water, medical assistance, fuel, and secure shelter. This ongoing crisis is exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation for the 2.3 million affected individuals.

But the question is how many Hamas, Hizb and Houthis fighters have been neutralized so far?. The answer is almost negligible, whereas an unprecedented 418 armed to the teeth Israeli soldiers have been killed by Hamas resistance. In fact, laden with protective gears, having the world's finest and most powerful airforce at their beck and call, world's most feared spies agencies on their back, the world's most sophisticated military technology at their disposal have failed to make any dent into the prowess of Hamas, Hezbollah or Houthis which prompted the French President Emmauel Macron to say that if Israel continue to pursue its war mongering policies in Palestine, the war would go as far as for ten years without any end in sight and added that Israel has erred to set the target to continue war until Hamas's military capabilities are eliminated, and said that will take longer than Western societies are prepared to accept, longer than what

Joe Biden, a close friend of Israel, is willing to tolerate it. Did Israel achieve its prime objective of securing the release of hostages?. Answer is a big No. Israel has miserably

failed to liberate even a single hostage by the combined forces and might of world dreaded Israeli Mossad, USA's CIA and UK IM-6 and India infamous Raw agencies. They failed to get even a slightest trail of the whereabouts of the hostages and

all their reconnaissance apparatus were blunted completely. Instead the ิเว indiscriminate aerial Analy bombing by Israeli air force, guns and tanks on the civilian targets put the lives of the hostages in greater danger than the threat imposed by Hamas.

Has Israel succeeded in stopping the missiles attack by Hamas, Hezbollah attacks from the north and Houthis attack from the south on Israeli cities and settlements?. The reply is a big No. Have Israel neutralized the threat of full scale attacks from Iran?. The answer is a big No. Hezbollah's arsenal includes roughly 150,000 offensive rockets and missiles, including ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones. Its weapons have been employed to a limited degree since Oct. 7, but in full force they could be catastrophic.

Direct conflict with Iran would be equally or more catastrophic for Israel.

short-, medium-, and long-range missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads to Israel and beyond. Its program poses a threat to both Israel and other American allies. The new kinds of indigenous missiles used by the Hizb and Hamas have broken the formidable "Iron Dome" air defense system and have successfully been hitting the intended targets.

Have Israel won the media war?. A big No. Even Israel's own media, US, UK



and biased coverage and reporting by US and European media could not stop the turning of the public opinions in US and European countries against Israel's insensible war crimes against unarmed civilians.

The demonstrators in huge numbers around the world are expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian People and condemning Israel's war on Gaza and calling for a permanent ceasefire. Large scale protests were held New York, London, Paris, Manila, Tunis, Tehran, Karachi, Beirut, Harare, Tokyo, Stockholm, Johannesburg, Quezon City, Milan and elsewhere putting pressure on their respective government to change their

he situation in the conflict their leaders, and above all U.S. President Iran has a highly sophisticated stockpile of rhetoric and condemn Israel's senseless killing spree and support and aid of Palestinians stressed civilians, and to pursue permanent peace by implementing UN Resolution 181, passed by the UN General Assembly in 1947 calling for partition of Palestine into two states.

The world leaders with a view to pacify their agitated publics which are appalled by the horrific images and videos coming out of Gaza in large number depicting the horror inflicted upon civilians especially children are now calling upon Israel to offer a political horizon for the end of the military campaign, announce the beginning of talks with the Palestinian Authority based on a two-state solution-offering stability, cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, and cooperation between Israel and the moderate Arab states within the framework of the Arab League peace initiative.

Did Israeli justification for attacking hospitals, refugee camps, offices and storage facilities of international organizations as hideouts of Hamas proven right?. The Big reply is No. The Israeli occupying soldiers had nothing to offer after the capturing of Al Shifa Hospital but to stage only a few army boots, a few rounds of ammunition and some outdated refiles of almost no significance as a proof of using hospitals as hideouts by Hamas. This proved Israel and its master US wrong in the same manner as the narrative injected by the USA in the media to wage war in the middle east was proven baseless, immoral, excessive and false.

To be continued



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

## **Real Face of India - II**

ndia asserts itself as an exemplary secular State, a claim that stands in stark contrast to the prevailing truth. The concept of an ideal country transcends borders and cultural disparities, embodying a vision shared globally for a society characterized by justice, prosperity, and harmony. While achieving perfection may be an ambitious pursuit, certain attributes delineate the contours of an ideal nation, offering guidance to countries endeavoring to cultivate environments conducive to the flourishing of their citizens.

governance, characterized by transparent and accountable leadership, a robust legal framework, and institutions upholding the rule of law. Leaders in an ideal nation prioritize the best interests of the people, striving to minimize corruption, while policies are crafted with due consideration for their impact on all segments of society, ensuring

inclusivity and fairness. Fundamental rights, including freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, are safeguarded, with a commitment to combating discrimination. The ideal country actively works to ensure the well-being and dignity of all individuals, fostering an atmosphere of tolerance and respect.

Sustainable economic development is a cornerstone, providing opportunities for employment, education, and upward mobility. Social welfare programs support the vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind. Striking a balance between economic growth and social equality is paramount, acknowledging the interdependence of these factors. Environmental sustainability is a commitment, with policies in place to protect natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, and promote renewable energy sources.

Investment in education is viewed as crucial for societal progress, with accessible and quality education equipping citizens with the skills needed for personal growth and national development. A robust healthcare system ensures the well-being of the population, contributing to a productive and resilient society. Celebrating cultural diversity and protecting minority rights are essential, fostering a national identity that is inclusive and welcoming.

Internally, India falls short of embodying these traits of an ideal country. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, injustice, environ-At the core of an ideal country lies effective mental concerns, and human rights viola-

tions against minorities are glaringly evident on the global stage. The actions of India and its military in Occupied Kashmir are particularly concerning. Recent controversial bills passed in the Lok Sabha, including the Jammu and Kashmir Poll Amendment Bill 2023 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Amendment Bill 2023, have

raised eyebrows.

Under the Revival Amendment Bill, 2023, reserved seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly have been allocated for persons belonging to Pakistan Kashmir and displaced Kashmiri Pandits, including women candidates. The Reorganization Amendment Bill, 2023, incorporates the territory of Ladakh into the Union of Jammu and Kashmir. Home Minister Amit Shah, during his Lok Sabha address, linked Article 370 to separatism, claiming a 70% reduction in violent incidents. He also criticized Prime Minister Nehru's decisions regarding the Kashmir issue, leading to a walkout by the opposition Congress party.

These developments reflect the BJP government's Hindutva approach, suggesting a divergence from truth and reality.

In an interconnected global landscape, a

nation's foreign relations play a crucial role in shaping its international standing and influencing the trajectory of global affairs. An exemplary nation recognizes the importance of cultivating positive and cooperative relationships with other countries, acknowledging that collaboration on a global scale is vital for addressing shared challenges.

At the heart of an exemplary nation's foreign relations lies diplomacy grounded in open and constructive dialogue. Instead of resorting to confrontation, such a nation seeks peaceful resolutions to conflicts, engaging in meaningful discussions to address differences. Skilled diplomats strive to build bridges, finding common ground and creating an environment conducive to cooperation.

An ideal country understands that many global challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, and poverty, necessitate collaborative solutions. It actively participates in international organizations and initiatives aimed at addressing these issues, recognizing that by pooling resources, sharing knowledge, and working collectively, nations can amplify their impact and contribute to the well-being of humanity.

A commitment to humanitarian assistance on the global stage is a fundamental characteristic of an exemplary nation. Whether responding to natural disasters, conflicts, or public health crises, it extends a helping hand to nations in need, reflecting not only compassion but also an understanding that global stability is linked to the well-being of all nations.

Upholding international law and adhering to established norms is a cornerstone of an ideal country's foreign relations. It respects the sovereignty of other nations, refrains from aggression, and abides by treaties and agreements. By setting an example of responsible behavior, an ideal country contributes to the maintenance of a rules-based international order.

To be continued

## How Pakistan can increase its exports - I

prosperous economies. According exports. to Statista, China, USA, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, were the export leaders in 2022. India's exports in 2022 were over US\$ 450 billion and Bangladesh's were over US\$ 59 billion. Even Vietnam's exports were over US\$ 370 billion in 2022. technology. However, Pakistan's exports in 2022 were just

around US\$ 39 billion even though Pakistan has great potential to fetch billions of dollars from exports due to its various sectors, diverse resources, skilled labor force, and strategic geographical location.

Pakistan is faced with the chronic issue of low foreign exchange reserves due to

which the country has to often go to IMF for bution to the country's exports. bail-out programs. In its short journey of 76 years, Pakistan has resorted 23 times to IMF to get loans. This approach has burdened the country with a huge external debt of over US\$ 128 billion as of September 2023. The best way to get rid of foreign loans and boost foreign exchange reserves is to make a significant increase in exports.

Pakistan is one of the largest producers of textiles and garments products and has great potential to export value-added textiles and garments including high-quality fabrics and fashion apparel. Being an agricultural country, Pakistan can export many agricultural products including rice, fruits & vegetables, and seafood.

Information Technology is a growing sector in Pakistan and offers great potential to export IT and IT-enabled services and products. If India can achieve IT exports of over US\$ 175

xports help countries to boost billion, there is no reason that Pakistan should economic growth and emerge as set a target of at least US\$ 50 billion for IT

Pakistan is self-sufficient in manufacturing pharmaceutical products and this indus-Italy, Belgium, France, Hong Kong, and UAE try has been growing in the country. Therefore, this is another potential sector to make a significant contribution to the country's exports with better focus and introduction of modern

Pakistan's automobile industry contributes



2.8% to the GDP and Rs.30 billion to the national exchequer in taxes and duties. With better focus, this sector has the potential to export vehicles and auto parts.

Pakistan's chemicals and petrochemicals are key sectors of its economy. If close attention is paid to these sectors, they can make a good contri-

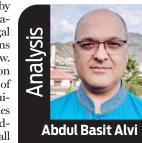
The global sports equipment market is estimated at around US\$ 15 billion while the global sports apparel market is at around US\$ 200 billion, However, Pakistan earns US\$ 1 billion from the export of sports products. With better planning and effort, Pakistan can increase its share in the global export market of sports equipment and sports apparel.

Pakistan has a well-established leather industry and it can export many leather products including leather jackets & coats, footwear, and accessories.

The market size of the global light engineerng industry is estimated at US\$ 7 trillion, but Pakistan's share in it is quite nominal. With determination and good effort, Pakistan can capture better market share in this huge potential market for exports.

#### To be continued

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Monday, December 11, 2023

International

## The Spokesman 5

## Azerbaijan's rapid economic development is mainly driven by reforms: President

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev was interviewed by Euronews channel on November 23. The interview was broadcast on Euronews on December 9.

 $The {\it full \, text \, of this \, interview \, is}$ being published here for the information and interest of Daily The Spokesman readers Correspondent: Hello, Mr. Presi-

dent.

President Ilham Aliyev: Hello. Correspondent: Azerbaijan and the countries of the Central Asian region experience significant economic growth in 2023, according to the estimates from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This strong growth is attributed to a high-level of migration and the remittances originating from Russia, which is under sanctions. Additionally, there has been an increase in regional export and imports, including business with China. The outlook for 2024 shows the same positive trend. What does this growth mean for your country?

President Ilham Aliyev: As far as Azerbaijan is concerned. our economic development and growth are mainly generated by our reforms rather than those factors, which you mentioned. We managed to diversify our economy, and to reduce the dependence on oil and gas sector, though, oil and gas sector continues to be the main part of our economy. This year, our economic growth is a little bit modest, because of the slight decline of the oil production. But if we look at the past years, the GDP of Azerbaijan grew more than four times for the last 20 years, and that was a very remarkable achievement. At the same time, we managed to conduct a very sophisticated, social policy. We managed to reduce the level of people who lived in poverty during the last 20 years from almost 50 to 5.5 percent. This demonstrates that the wealth generated by energy projects was fairly distributed between all segments of our population.

order to reduce the level of foreign debt, and now, it is below 10 percent of our GDP. The target for that is 7 percent of GDP next diminish these risks. And, that's vear. So, this actually demon- why Azerbaijan now is a country strates the sustainability of Azer- with big international potential, baijan's economy. Next year, we good international reputation, hope that the growth of economy will be higher. But, those figures do not actually reflect 100 percent of the economic performance or the living standards of the people. We know the countries, which had very low economic growth, but the very developed economy. So, the bigger your GDP is, the more difficult it is to add to that growth, especially in today's geopolitical situation, where two of our neighbors and main trade partners Russia and Iran are under the sanctions. Therefore, we need to take that into account. But our target and our strategy of 2030 is based on our own resources, our own financial capability, as well as foreign and local investments in the areas, which will provide economic growth in the coming years.



Correspondent: Do you see competition in your region or rather a cooperation?

President Ilham Aliyev: Well, as far as Azerbaijan is concerned, I see cooperation. That is mainly because of the policy of our country. We always wanted to protect Azerbaijan from any kind of a rivalry, from any kind of a geopolitical struggle or battle between big powers, and I think we managed to achieve that. Azerbaijan is considered as a reliable partner to many big international actors, and we see a real result of that cooperation. If you look at the energy development in Azerbaijan, you'll see a broad international presence. If you look at the transportation sector, you'll see that both corridors-East-West and North-South – cross our country and our neighbors and many countries in different regions are benefiting from that.

If you see the situation with respect to the political development, Azerbaijan is also a country with the independent foreign policy, which conducts its policy based on national interests. One of the important factors is not to transform your country into the area of confrontation or competition but We also worked actively in rather to protect the state from bad influence and attempts to interfere into its domestic affairs. So, we successfully managed to

al integrity and sovereignty and we are implementing large-scale economic reforms, which allow us to accumulate more funds into our budget. We have conducted very successful reforms in the customs and taxes administration issues. We created a corporate management system in all our state-run companies, and we see the benefit of that.

Of course, a lot of wealth will be generated from the connectivity projects. As I already mentioned, we expect additional tens of millions of cargo through North-South and East-West transportation corridor crossing Azerbaijan's territory in different directions. It means employment, it means additional funds, and it means geopolitical importance of Azerbaijan. If you look at the map of our region and Eurasia, you'll see that all the major transportation routes cross our territory. We've developed the most modern transportation infrastructure. That will create additional opportunities. Plus, liberated territories of Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur, where we plan to resettle hundreds of thousands of former refugees, will also be an additional driver. So, frankly speaking, I don't see any potential risks neither in economic area, nor in any other area of our country. **Correspondent: No risks at all?** 

President Ilham Aliyev: For today, I don't see. Maybe potential risks may come from beyond our borders. Inside Azerbaijan, we don't have it. We have a very stable political system, we have the very

now-Azerbaijani investments in Central Asia, Central Asian investments in Azerbaijan. We have connectivity projects of the East-West Trans-Caspian transportation route, which for Central Asian countries is now one of the most attractive transportation connections with the Black Sea, with the Mediterranean and with Europe through the integrated connectivity projects. We see a lot of positive dynamics on the political track, because countries of SPECA in this difficult geopolitical situation today demonstrate stability. This is one of the most important factors. Because without stability, there is no investments, no econom-

ic development and no security. If you look at today's SPECA members, you will see that Central Asia and Azerbaijan is an area of geopolitical stability, though the risks are just next door. For countries of Central Asia, these risks are even higher than for Azerbaijan. So, this might be taken as an important factor of success of

these countries. 25 years ago, all of us, we were in a completely different situation with respect to the economic development, large-scale social problems, and also we were just in the first phase of our journey on the path of independence. Now, we can already report about the success. We organized an exhibition in Baku Expo Center. I think it is very illustrative to demonstrate what our country is. It is a small part of our achievement, but nevertheless, very illustrative demonstration for what we have done. One of Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities is more active cooperation with the countries of Central Asia, and we consider the SPECA Summit in Baku as one of the factors, which is part of that policy.

#### Correspondent: With its strategic geographical position between East and West, Azerbaijan places itself in a pivotal location. What is the country's strategy on the international stage?

President Ilham Aliyev: We will policy on international stage. We are chairing for the fourth year the second largest international institution after the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement. According to the overall opinion of many member states-120 member states-Azerbaijan played an important role in bringing a new dimension and dynamics to the Non-Aligned Movement. We made a lot of steps on institutional development of the Non-Aligned Movement creating a parliamentary platform, youth platform, working on the creation of the women's platform. We were very active on COVID pandemic issue providing assistance to more than 80 countries. So, our championship in the Non-Aligned Movement allowed us to demonstrate our policy, our capability, and, by the way, our chairmanship was extended for one year by unanimous decision. 120 countries, not all of them are in good terms with each other, but when it comes to Azerbaijan, all of them unanimously supported us. So, this is the best demonstration of international support. Sometimes when some politicians talk about international community, they mean only, maybe, several dozens of countries. But, international community is more than 200 countries, and majority of those countries support Azerbaijan. This is only one dimension.

tation of Azerbaijan, a country, which on the battlefield defended its territory, its dignity, and implemented the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council itself, is, of course, skyrocketing now.

Correspondent: In an interview with the Euronews back this summer, you said that you had hoped that peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan but nevertheless could be achieved by the end of the year. Do you still maintain this position that peace can be achieved, especially after tens of thousands had to leave their homes and what is next for the dynamics of this region?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, I was optimistic about the timetable, because we exchanged several times with Armenia the comments on the original draft peace treaty, which Azerbaijan elaborated itself. After that, there have been six times of exchange of comments between the two countries, and when I was talking about that the last time to Euronews, I hoped that Armenia will not prolong the process of evaluation of our comments. We submitted the last comments to them on September 11, and received a response from them only two days ago. So, almost two months and a half, they had been evaluating the draft, which consists of several pages. What does that mean? That means that end of November and the hopes peace treaty by the end of the year are not very optimistic. But, I think that the timetable is not so important. Important is the agenda of both countries. It was Azerbaijan, who suffered occupation and ethnic cleansing. Million Azerbaijanis were deported by Armenian government. Devastation of the territory of almost 15,000 square kilometers. Nevertheless, we were the country, which made a proposal to sign a peace agreement, and to start working on the delimitation. So, Armenia, now after Karabakh portfolio is closed, I think, will be more willing to come to an agreement with us. Because after the restoration of our sovereignty and elimination of the illegal separatist regime in Karabakh, I think, the main factor, which prevented Armenia to be more courageous on negotiation track, don't exist any longer. So, we will evaluate their latest proposals, which as I said, we received two days ago, and will comment on that. In the meantime, we are maintaining the contacts on the working-level between different officials and through different channels. I think there's no alternative for peace. If peace agreement is not signed that will be very bad for the whole region. We want a region of the Southern Caucasus to get rid of any risks. Of course, we want Armenia, today and in the future, never put under ques tion our territorial integrity, and abandon completely any territorial claims to Azerbaijan. Correspondent: So, what are

bakh. Our position was that this multi-ethnic country, multi-conis our internal business. If they want to reflect the issue of Armenian minority in Azerbaijan, then, let us reflect the issue of Azerbaijani minority in Armenia, which was expelled thirty years ago. And, there were much more Azerbaijanis in Armenia than Armenians in Azerbaijan-almost 300,000. So, our position was that it must be reciprocal. Either we reflect these two issues of national minorities, their rights and security, including the right to return not only Armenians to return to Azerbaijan, but Azerbaijanis to return to Armenia. It doesn't matter that Azerbaijanis were expelled 30 years ago, and Armenians decided to leave two months ago. The fact is just it must be reciprocal, or we do not comment in our peace ate act of former so-called "leadagreement about this issue. So, until now, we did not get from Armenia any clear understanding on that. So, if Armenia agrees to have either the same language for both national minorities or not to reflect it at all, then the peace is reachable, because this was a were either killed 30 years ago or main obstacle for Armenia, when they were negotiating with us. So, we will see how it goes. Frankly speaking, I don't see now any serious obstacle to sign a peace agreement from a logical point of view.

We say we need to sign it, they say it, but we need to deliver. Our entered Armenia. So, all was done proposal was made public. Those famous five principles, which I'm ards. But again, coming back to continue to conduct independent they want to artificially delay the talking about, we made it public. the question, they can come back. process. Now, we are talking at the It is known. There is no objection from any responsible internationfor achieving peace and signing al actor, because all these principles are fundamental principles of international law. Armenia just need to comply with that. They zenship. Several of them already should put an end to all those attempts to contest our territorial integrity, and to sponsor separatism on our territory, because Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, and all, including Armenia itself, recognize this. The Armenian Prime Minister is the person who in 2019 in Khankendi at the big rally said: "Karabakh is Armenia". That was the end of negotiation process, because after that, there was nothing to negotiate. So, actually, the reason for the Second Karabakh War was exactly Armenian government. Now the same person says "Karabakh is Azerbaijan". So, it's good, it's evolution. We always support evolution, but now saying "Karabakh is Azerbaijan", they need to put a signature under that, and we are waiting for that.

fessional country. We have many ethnic groups in Azerbaijan. Some of these ethnic groups, the number of these ethnic groups, people who belong to them is much bigger than Armenian population in Karabakh. All of them live in peace, they enjoy all the rights and security. In our proposal to Karabakh Armenians, which was, by the way, published, we also covered their rights. Their right for their language, for their education, religion, municipal rights. They can elect their representatives through municipal elections and continue to live there. The decision to leave was their own decision, and according to information, which we now have access to, that was a deliberers" of so-called "nagorno-karabakh republic". There was no need for them to leave, but when they decided to leave, we could not stop them. We provided maximum comfort for them to leave in peace, unlike Azerbaijanis, who deported, tortured, arrested, and some of them had to cross high mountains, and were just frozen to death in those mountains. All that was documented en route. All that was also documented when Armenians of Karabakh region in line with humanitarian stand-

Of course, they need to register in the electronic portal, which



#### **Correspondent: What are your** future areas of development and investments?

President Ilham Aliyev: As far as our governmental policy is concerned, our state investment program will be mainly directed to the liberated areas of Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur. First, because we need to resettle former refugees as soon as possible. We plan to resettle more than 140,000 people by the end of 2026. For that, we need to invest largely in infrastructure, housing projects and social infrastructure project. At the same time, this area, which has been for 30 years under occupation, possesses a big potential in the area of agriculture, hydro energy, solar and wind energy and tourism. That will be a main area of the state investment program.

With respect to foreign investments, of course, investments in fossil fuel project will continue. Because there is a big potential in Azerbaijan with respect to resources and big demand for Azerbaijani gas in Europe. It is a growing demand, but very remarkable development is related to renewable sources of energy. I think, this will be the main direction of direct foreign investments. We already inaugurated last month the 230 MW solar power plant, the biggest in the region, fully invested by foreign investors. Up to 10 gigawatts of solar and wind power generation is planned to be implemented within next five-six years. I think, these will be the main areas of investments along with our agenda on digital

to attract more than 300 billion US dollars of investments during the last 20 years.

and a country, which managed

#### **Correspondent: Energy supply has** been a major topic for Europe over the last two years. What is your outlook for your country's energy business?

President Ilham Aliyev: Our energy development transformed from oil to gas. At the same time, oil production and export still is an important part of energy security for many countries. Completed almost three years ago, the Southern Gas Corridor, the major gas infrastructure project, which is an integrated pipelines system of 3.500 kilometer in length, created an opportunity for Azerbaijan to increase the geography of its gas supplies. Today, we export gas to Georgia, Türkiye, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, and we signed contracts with Hungary and Serbia. Albania will also be part of our gas distribution plans.

So, you see how many countries in Eurasia, mainly European countries, are our partners, and demand for Azerbaijani gas is growing. We positively responded to the request from the European Commission to increase the for those who want to do somegas supply to European continent with respect to the sanctions on Russia. This will continue to be important part of our business. At the same time, I already

mentioned the renewable sources of energy. We have a very windy weather today in Baku, which is actually the normal weather condition and we have a huge potential of wind, especially in the Caspian. So, 10 gigawatts of solar and wind power generation projects have already been signed as contracts and MoUs. That will allow Azerbaijan to have a very smooth transition from fossil fuels to renewables, at the same time, to provide European consumers with the green energy.

#### **Correspondent: What are your** concerns about the risks to your country's economic development?

President Ilham Aliyev: Frankly speaking. I don't see any risks. Because, our economic development was so far very positive, even in a much more complicated geopolitical situation, even during the times of occupation, our economy grew. And now when we totally restored our territori-

well based unity of our people, especially after liberating our occupied territories in the historical Victory. Our economic performance is successful. Our economy is self-sufficient, we do not depend on foreign loans. As I said, next vear it will be 7% of GDP only If you look at our hard currency reserves and foreign debt, you'll see that our hard currency is 10 times bigger than the debt. So, in other words, we can within one month level our foreign debt. Not many countries in the world can do this. The self-sufficient economy with good political connections, with major international actors and the political stability and unity in the country - all these factors demonstrate that internal risks we do not have. External, yes, but that will depend on the situation beyond our borders. We have war beyond our borders to the North, we have an unstable situation in the Middle East. we have potential tensions in the neighborhood. So, it could be a potential risk for Azerbaijan. For that purpose, we need to pay more attention to the protection of our borders, but our borders are open for friends and closed

#### thing harmful. **Correspondent: How SPECA Programme is important for the** economies of the participating countries?

President Ilham Aliyev: SPECA

Programme today commemorates the 25th anniversary, and I'm grateful to our colleagues from Central Asia for supporting our initiative to hold the Summit. which is the first Summit in the history of the SPECA Programme. Actually, this programme is based on the economic interaction between Central Asia and Azerbaijan, and today we see the new dimension of that interaction. If you look at the economic data, if you look at the dynamics of the bilateral visits, you will see that during the last two years, active interaction between Azerbaijan and all the Central Asian countries as well as between Central Asian countries is an unprecedented level high. So, this is a new reality, and we need to capitalize on that.

We have excellent relations with all countries of SPECA. We have a lot of investment projects

Our relations with our neighbors are well balanced and based on friendship and mutual interest. Our relations with European institutions also have its own positive dynamics. I already mentioned energy projects, how we support Europe, when Europe asked us to provide that support. We did it, because we always try to help those who ask us for that. Our relations with the Muslim countries is an example of solidarity and partnership. Azerbaijan is considered as one of the most active members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. So, this covers actually almost all the members of international community and our policy was always aimed at providing support when somebody needs it, and to demonstrate a friendly approach to all the countries. And now-after restoration of our territorial integrity and sovereignty,

the ability of Azerbaijan on international arena, of course, will be much bigger. International repu-

#### the conditions for peace to be achieved finally?

President Ilham Aliyev: Well, we elaborated five basic principles, which should be the basis for peace agreement: mutual recognition of each other's territorial integrity; no use of force; no territorial claims to each other; opening of the communications between both countries and normalization of relations; and several other important factors. All of those have been based on international law. During almost three years of negotiation process, Armenia always wanted to incorporate into peace agreement a provision with respect to the Armenian minority in Kara-

#### **Correspondent: And what about** those people who have left their homes?

those people who left their homes, first of all, that was their own decision. Our public communications with Karabakh Armenians, and what we did after, demonstrated that we wanted them to stay. We openly announced that and I, during my appeal to Azerbaijani people after the end of anti-terror operation, said that they could stay. We opened the electronic portal of registration. All of those who want to come back have this right. Their property is duly protected. All the historical and religious sites are duly protected.

In order to come back they need to comply with certain regulations, and I was saying that many months before the anti-terror operations, those who want to stay need to apply for the Azerbaijani citizenship. Because how can people live in Azerbaijan being a citizen of another country? Either citizenship or work permit, or residence permit. They cannot live in Azerbaijan saying that they live in so-called "nagorno-karabakh republic". Because so-called "nagorno-karabakh republic" doesn't exist. They invented it in their dreams in their mythology. If they want to live in Azerbaijan as citizens of Azerbaijan, of course, they can. Azerbaijan is a you.

we opened and which is available, that they want to come back, they want to take Azerbaijani citiapplied for citizenship, and it is now in the process. Some Armenians decided to stay in Karabakh, and now they've been taken care of by our Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population and Migration Service, they are registered. Not completely everybody left. But in order to live in Azerbaijan, for instance, if you want to live in Azerbaijan, what should you do? You should get a work permit, residence permit if you want to live for a long time or citizenship. So, how can you live in Azerbaijan being a citizen of other country? It's not possible. The same is here.

If an Azerbaijani refugee, who was expelled from Armenia wants to come back there, how he will come back? He will not come back and say I'm here resident of Western Azerbaijan Republic. No. He will come and apply President Ilham Aliyev: As to for citizenship or work permit. Why should it be different here? And that's how it will work only. Through municipal elections, they can elect their representatives, which will be in charge of municipalities. All this information was delivered to Armenian representatives of Karabakh just after the anti-terror operation, and then when we realized that they did not make it public to the population of Karabakh, we made it public, we published it.

So, this is a legal process based on international norms and standards. Again, I'd like to say that Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic country and no ethnic group in Azerbaijan ever had any concerns or any problems based on their religious or ethnic grounds. Anyone who knows Azerbaijan can confirm this. By the way, today, we have Armenian population living in different parts of Azerbaijan without any problems. Armenians and Azerbaijanis are living side by side in Russia, living side by side in Ukraine, and even in the same villages in Georgia. Why they cannot live in Azerbaijan or in Armenia? I think they can.

#### **Correspondent: Thank you very** much, Mr. President.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank

## **Economy/Commerce**

Monday, December 11, 2023

### Incentives To Overseas Pakistanis To Multiply Remittances

Trust building, encouragement and the lucrative incentives to the overseas Pakistanis can multiple the foreign remittances which are the major part of our economy.

President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said that the overseas Pakistanis are playing a great role in the economy of Pakistan through their remittances.

They said that the remittances in 2022-23 dropped by around four billion dollars to 27.3 Billion Dollars. It is worth mentioning that in 2021-22, the remittances stood at 31.3 Billion Dollars. One of the main reasons of drop in remittances in 2022-23 was the difference between the inter-bank and open market dollar rate. Since this issue is resolved now, it is expected that remittance will pose a sound growth in 2023-24. In the first three months of the financial year (July-September 2023-24), the remittances stood at 6.3 Billion Dollars.

They said that the government should take measures to ensure that these remittances are invested in productive sectors. They said that foreign remittances could easily reach \$ 50 billion in the next few years if the government announces incentives on the investment made by expatriate Pakistanis. They said that the government should encourage the expats to invest in energy, agriculture, telecommunication and Information Technology. They said that a large number of overseas Pakistanis are keen to invest in Pakistan. They said that the government would have to discourage the Hawala system as annually billions of dollars are being sent through this illegal way.

The LCCI office-bearers said that at a time when the country is experiencing various economic challenges, rise in home remittances would provide much-needed support. They said that increase in home remittances would be a great help in narrowing down current account deficit of the country, building foreign exchange reserves, imparting stability to the exchange rate, softening inflationary pressures and reducing the need of the country to borrow

They said that the increase in foreign remittances, would pave the way for a self-reliant economy. They said that overseas Pakistanis are an asset for the country therefore the government should acknowledge their services for the country. They hoped that the government would have to make policies more conducive and announce lucrative incentives to attract maximum investment from the overseas Pakistanis.

#### 😂 Urea shortfall

## Artificial scarcity a threat to farmers, agricultural and industrial output

#### 🐞 Tarig Khattak

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Sheikh, said on Sunday it is regrettable that urea has vanished from the marketplace. The artificial scarcity of urea will affect millions of farmers and agricultural and industrial production.

He said those pushing the nation toward a food security crisis for quick profit should be held accountable as they play with the country's future.

Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also served as VP FPCCI, Chairman PVMA, and President ICCI, said that the hoarders are increasing the problems of millions of farmers for profit.

He demanded that immediate action should be taken against the hoarders and profiteers to save millions of farmers.

The business leader informed that every year, the government has to spend a lot of foreign as soon as the wheat cultivation season begins, urea fertilizer disappears from the market, and the farmers have to buy it from the black market at high prices.

He said that due to the high cost of urea, its use is reduced, which affects production, and a food security crisis should be dealt with iron mistakes should be stopped so that farmers' to control the problem, he said.



exchange to import wheat.

Now, he warned that farmers are protesting all over the country, and the food security situation is feared to be affected.

He said those pushing the country towards

hands, adding that it is necessary to stop the distributors and dealers from milking poor farmers, for which immediate steps should be taken.

Atif Ikram Sheikh noted that despite the decline in local production, urea is not being imported, which is surprising.

The country is facing a urea shortfall of around half a million tonnes. Current consumption estimates of urea were about 6.7 million tonnes

He said that the full production capacity of the industry needed to be utilized, which is contributing to the shortfall of providing opportunities to intermediaries for exploitation.

The country witnessed the same shortage situation last year due to irregular gas supply to urea plants, and the deficit was bridged through expensive imports.

He said there is a need to end the country's and smuggling should be stopped, and demand and supply should be balanced.

He said that the ritual of repeating past



black fertilizer market forever, arbitrary pricing rights can be protected, the agricultural economy can improve, and wheat imports can be controlled.

The situation urgently warrants intervention

### Rizek-i-Halal

MUZAFFRABAD: A young gypsy girl carrying a scrap sack on her head on her way at a road in the city.



#### Mian Anjum Nisar says economic conditions leave economy highly vulnerable

#### 😂 PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has denounced the government for not keeping a check on foreign exchange market, as the State Bank's foreign exchange reserves dropped by \$237 million to \$7 billion in the week ending Dec 1, because debt servicing on foreign loans continues to eat up SBP's holdings.

FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar said that rhe exchange rate looks stable, but increasing debt servicing costs without significant inflows have put the IMF had identified the the economy at risk, as that Pakistan's economy was to four decades ago, but they stuck in a low-growth trap were still pending.

### **NEOM launches** sustainable food company Topian

with poor human development outcomes and increasing poverty.

The country's total liquid foreign reserves stood at \$12.1bn, including \$5.09bn held by commercial banks, the central bank said. The SBP has now lost more than \$1.7bn since mid-July.

Mian Anjum said the economic conditions leave Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate shocks with insufficient public resources to finance development and that international experience suggests that domestic debt reprofiling did not always work unless associated with sharp and sustained structural reforms. He said need for reforms over three

PLAF calls for reversing decision as NEPŘA again raises Discos tariff under FCA



腾 PNP

ISLAMABAD: While criticizing the government's decision to make another raise in electricity tariff, the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol on Sunday urged the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to reverse the proposed jump in power charges, as it has increased tariff of power Distribution Companies (DISCOS) by Rs3 per unit for Oct 2023 to recover Rs32 billion from consumers under monthly Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) mechanism.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the PIAF Chairman said the government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the PIAF strongly condemns the government's move and calls on it to rescind it. He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system.

It is to be noted that the Authority conducted the hearing in the matter on November 29, 2023, wherein the data submitted by the CPPA-G came under scrutiny. According to reports, the Nepra reviewed the request by CPPA-G seeking monthly FCA and due diligence was done accordingly. From perusal of the information so provided by CPPA-G, the actual pool fuel cost for the month of October 2023, as claimed by CPPA-G, is Rs.11.4277/kWh, against the reference fuel cost component of Rs.7.8938/kWh. The actual fuel charges, as claimed by CPPA-G, for the month of October 2023 increased by Rs.3.5339/kWh as compared to the reference fuel charges.

#### Sood sign

## Stock market boom is pointing toward economic stability

#### 🐞 Tarig Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the boom in the stock market is a good sign of the stability of the economy.

He said that tax, energy, and agricultural sectors should be prioritized to increase the speed of economic stability.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that incentives, government expenditure, and tax on the industrial sector should be reduced.

In contrast, taxes on agricultural income and the wholesale, retail, and real estate sectors should be increased to improve the economy.

The loss-making government institutions should be sold; taxes should be increased on the rich and reduced on the poor for an economic turnaround.



The business leader noted that the government had taken several measures showing positive effects, including control of smuggling, speculation, and other shady businesses.

However, he said, the fertilizer mafia's activities are on the rise, which amounts to playing with the lives of millions of farmers and the country's food security, which warrants urgent action.

He said that to improve the economy, there would have to be an increase in foreign investment and remittances. This will increase the foreign exchange reserves and reduce the difficulties in debt repayment.

Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, and Qatar are interested in investing in agriculture, refinery, and mineral projects, and it is the authorities' job to remove bottlenecks.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that the FBR is taking steps to bring new people into the tax net and prevent tax evasion, which needs to be increased.

Nevertheless, this time around, instead of making people with low incomes a scapegoat, it has to target the elite who are getting annual benefits worth seventeen and a half billion dollars, and no government is willing to reduce this amount even a little bit, which is surprising.

#### 😂 Commerce Desk

RIYADH: Food production systems in Saudi Arabia are set to see a sustainability push as NEOM announced the launch of its company Topian.

According to a release by the giga-project, NEOM's newest subsidiary aims to redefine the methods of food production, distribution and consumption within the Kingdom by developing sustainable and innovative solutions.

These solutions will hinge on five pillars focusing on climate-resistant agriculture, regenerative aquaculture, novel foods, personalized nutrition, sustainable food supply, and environmental, social, and institu-

tional governance. Nadhmi Al-Nasr, CEO of NEOM, said: "Topian reflects our dedication to creating a positive,

TOP NEOM

long-lasting transformation to lives in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world. Topian's innovative approach will be a key driver in shaping the future landscape of a sustainable and secure food industry."

He added: "We look forward to working closely with investors, partners, and food industry experts in turning ambitious ideas into reality, supporting economic diversification in the Kingdom and aligned with Saudi Vision 2030.

Topian has signed several local and international strategic partnership agreements with organizations that can aid in reshaping the future of food.

### ICCI and EOI forge partnership to promote SMEs and Start-Ups

#### 😂 Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the Entrepreneurs Organization Islamabad (EOI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to forge a partnership for promoting SMEs and Start-Ups with joint efforts. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Taimur Adil, President, Entrepreneurs Organization Islamabad signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar

ul Islam Zafar Vice President EOI would work together with ICCI, Ahmed Jalal Global Student Entrepreneurs Awards Chair at EO Islamabad Chapter, and others were present on the occasion.

By signing the MoU, both organizations pledged to work together to promote the growth of SMEs and start-ups by helping them scale their businesses.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that access to finance is a major hurdle for the growth of SMEs and start-ups in Pakistan, therefore, ICCI and

the government authorities to ensure that SMEs and startups are ensured easy access to credit so that these businesses could flourish in the country and play an active role in the economic development of the country. Taimur Adil, President,

**Entrepreneurs** Organization Islamabad said that in the competitive global business environment, networking is key for SMEs and startups to achieve better growth. He said that EOI in collaboration with ICCI would provide networking opportunities to startups and SMEs to meet and



connect with other entrepre- President ICCI said that ICCI Vice President ICCI said that neurs, investors, and industry experts and build relationships for access to new markets.

and EOI should also strongly advocate for policies and programs that support startups and SMEs.

easy access to markets can help SMEs and startups to connect with potential customers and both organizations should focus on this area as well.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar,

### **Sports** Monday, December 11, 2023

# **Azan Awais hammers century** to help Pakistan U19 beat India U19 by eight wickets

ISLAMABAD: The fifth game of the ACC U19 Asia Cup saw Pakistan U19 inflict an eight-wicket defeat on India U19 at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai on Sunday. Azan Awais, following an undefeated half-century against Nepal, scored an unbeaten century to take the team over the line while chasing 260, according to information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Pakistan won the toss and elected to field first. Indian opening batter Adarsh Singh hit a half-century (62, 81b, 4x4s,  $1 \times 6$ ) to recoup the momentum for his side following the loss of two wickets inside the first 12 overs. A 93-run stand between the captain Uday Saharan (60, 98b, 5x4s) and Singh helped restore control in the innings. However, when Singh fell to left-arm spinner Arafat Minhas in the 32nd over, the innings once again faltered. Pressure mounted on the Indian batting as successive wickets fell. A quick half-century by Sachin Dhas (58, 42b, 2x4s, 3x6s) took India U19 to a respectable total as they finished



at 259-9 in 50 overs. The Pakistan pace attack delivered well with right-arm quick Mohammad Zeeshan picking up four wickets, having taken a six-wicket haul in the previous game.

His fellow fast bowlers Amir Hassan and Ubaid Shah returned with two each as well. Pakistan U19 cruised to the target with much ease, doing so in 47 overs and eight wickets in the bag.

Despite losing opening batter Shamyl Hussain cheaply in just the fifth over, Pakistan U19 remained in control of the chase. A 110-run partnership between Shahzaib Khan and Azan Awais ensured that Pakistan U19 dominated the Indian bowling after the first wicket fell. The partnership was broken in the 28th over when Shahzaib was caught off Murugan Abhishek's bowling, after scoring (Pakistan U19)

a half-century (63, 88b, 4x4s, 3x6s). Pakistan captain Saad Baig, replacing Shahzaib at the crease, produced a quality half-century (68 not out, 51b, 8x4s, 1×6). Azan and Saad put up an undefeated partnership of 125 runs to see Pakistan U19 through. Azan was the star of the match as his superb century (105 not out, 130b, 10x4s) ensured that Pakistan U19 remain in a commanding position throughout the chase. For his extraordinary batting display, he was awarded Player of the Match. Pakistan U19 will now face Afghanistan U19 on 12 December at the same venue. The first ball will be bowled at 1030 PKT.

Scores in brief: Pakistan U19 beat India U19 by eight wickets India U19 259-9, 50 overs (Adarsh Singh 62, Uday Saharan 60, Sachin Dhas 58; Mohammad Zeeshan 4-46, Ubaid Shah 2-49, Amir Hassan 2-56, Arafat Minhas 1-40) Pakistan U19, 263-2, 47 overs (Azan Awais 105 not out, Saad Baig 68 not out, Shahzaib Khan 63; Murugan Abhishek 2-55) Player of the match - Azan Awais

## M. Shoaib acquires Millat Governors Cup Golf Title 2023

#### 🐞 Sports Desk

LAHORE: The 40th Millat Tractors Governors Cup Golf Tournament was contested over 54 holes at the par-72 Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course. Being a prestigious golf title a large number of aspirants had converged to Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course with the intention very proficient and dexterous adversaries, but somehow the yearning was not backed by intense zeal and hence end result was dispiriting and even upsetting.

Champion of the occasion who savored glory by play- yielded the glory that came Rehan Asif, second and net 72 on Sunday which gave Governors Cup title holder third; Ladies ; Bushra Fatihim a three rounds aggregate with net scores of 72,67 and his final putt on the closing golfing hero, edging past his lam Qadir (Okara)72,71 and closest rival Nadir Khalil by 72, aggregate being 215, and

a margin of two strokes. No he secured the third position.

doubt Nadir Khalil (Lahore Gymkhana) played well enough and succeeded in putting up a great fight but a couple of missed putts landed him in the runners up slot. It goes to Shoaib's advantage that he displayed awesome power and grappled well with tension causing moments. His big plus of prevailing over some point was that the putting to Muhammed Arsalan prowess on the greens never got diluted. Added to that. itive race was so intense that most admirable were his fairway shots and on all the par all three had similar aggrefours and par fives he ended gate score of 228 but posiup within four to six feet of tions were awarded based on the hole. Throughout the best scores over last 36 holes. turned out to be Muhammed final day his dynamics were Shoaib of Lahore Gymkhana clear; play solid golf and this iors ;Zayd Omar, first,

Malik, third gross; Brig Tahir In the gross event the first Saleem, first net ;Ejaz Malik gross was won by Sameer second net ;Col Abdul Iftikhar with gross scores Ghaffar, third net ;Seniors of 78,76 and 74, aggregate ;Col Raja Asif Mehdi, first gross;Asim Tiwana, second tournament score being 228. Indeed a praise worthy gross;Omar Javaid Zia, third effort from this skilled golf gross;Rana Usman, first net player. Second gross went ;Maj Fida Tiwana, second to Hussain Hamid of Royal net ;Ahsan Ghias, third net with an aggregate score of ;Local Professionals;Robin Bagh, first ;Safdar Gill, 228 and third slot belonged second;Shawan Pervaiz, (Gymkhana) who also aggrethird: gated a score of 228. Compet-At the conclusion of the

40th Millat Tractors Governors Cup Golf Tournament, the prizes were awarded to the top performers by Governor Punjab, Balighurrehman and Sikandar Musta-Events; Junfa Khan, Chairman Millat Group of Companies and ing a superb final round of his way and he is now the Muhammed Ali Khan, present on the stage were Salman Siddique, Chairman, Lahore Gymkhana, Miar Misbahurrehman, Shaukat Javed, Convenor Golf, Ahsan ment, and Raheel Asghar, CEO, Millat Tractors. The ceremony was attended by participating golf players and families.

### Which cities will host PSL-9 clashes?

The Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 9 matches will be played in four major cities – Karachi, Lahore, Multan, and Rawalpindi - said well-placed sources on Sunday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has finalised the cities to host the much-awaited league where more than 450 overseas along with many home-grown players would be showcasing their talents.

According to the proposed schedule by the national cricketing body, the first match would take place on February 19 in Lahore. However, an objection has been raised by the franchises that the cold weather and the possible fog situation may make it difficult for the teams to stay, train, and play there.

Peshawar Zalmi continues to press the cricketing body to add Peshawar to its venue list while consistently assuring PCB that the remaining work on the stadium will be finished within two months.

Despite their reassurances, the PCB has not yet made any decision on the inclusion of the city in their list of host cities.

Another matter was being raised by the franchises, and that was the proposed final scheduled to take place in Karachi on March 19. The teams fear that the crowd may not show up at their full capacity which Iqra University H-9 Campus Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Sports Arena



#### 😂 Sports Desk

The Spokesman

ISLAMABAD: Iqra University's H-9 Campus proudly unveiled its cutting-edge sports arena on Saturday, December 9th, 2023, marking a significant stride in providing a holistic educational experience for its students.

The state-of-the-art facility encompasses spaces for football, badminton, and basketball, aimed at promoting physical well-being and fostering a culture of sportsmanship among the student body.

H. E Ms. Irena Gancheva- Ambassador of Bulgaria, the distinguished chief guest, commended the university's commitment to providing top-level sports facilities to its students. She emphasized the positive impact such initiatives have on the overall development of individuals. She also highlighted the importance of women in sports and appreciated Iqra university for dedicating "Saturdays for women" in sports. She showed her interest over the academic and cultural exchange programs between Iqra University and Bulgaria.

Dr. Nassar Ikram, Vice Chancellor of Iqra University, expressed his enthusiasm for the new sports initiatives, highlighting the university's dedication to creating an environment that nurtures both academic and athletic excellence.

The inauguration of the sports arena marks a momentous occasion for Iqra University, reinforcing its commitment to holistic education and student development. The university looks forward to seeing its students thrive in the dynamic sports culture fostered within this state-of-the-art facility.

Sindh Softball felicitates Dr. Farhan Essa for his honour in achieving the Honorary Rank of Commander of the Pakistan Navy

#### 😂 Sports Desk

KARACHI: Sindh Softball Association has felicitated CEO Dr Essa Laboratory and Diagnostic Centres, Prof Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah, who is also the President of Sindh Softball Asso ciation and a renowned sports patron and organiser, for his honour



ing to elevate him to trophy while Nadir Khalil had scores 18th hole, he emerged as the their mark but failed areGhu-

Others who tried to make

ma, first gross;Ana James of 211, five under par serv-72 and a net aggregate of 211 Gill, second gross; Aleesa Rashid, third grosss;Saand title winning esteemed of 70,72 and 71 and a Tour- giba Batool, first net; Zaib Imran, CEO, Millat Equippedestal. As Shoaib stroked nament aggregate of net 213. un Nisa, second net ;Sobia Waseem, third net;

Other

Veterans ;Javed A Khan, first gross;Col M. Shafi, second gross;Dr Tariq Habib could affect the ticket revenue.

Multan Sultans, the winners of the 2021 PSL, suggested a possible solution to this concern by offering to host the final in the Multan Cricket Stadium, they have also shown their confidence that they would be able to attract enough audience to fill the ground.

# Week-long training course of Punjab's divisional coaches concludes

#### 🐞 Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail distributes certificates among the participating divisional coaches at the closing ceremony

The week-long training course of Punjab's divisional coaches concluded with a closing ceremony here at National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail was the chief guest at the closing ceremony where he distributed certificates among the participating divisional coaches. Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Punjab Institute of Sports Sciences Principal Chand



Parveen, Chief Instructor Hafeez Bhatti, and Instructors Shaista Qaiser, Sajid Ali and Deputy Director Atta ur Rehman were also present on this occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that it is the first badge of coaches

who were trained under the supervision of qualified experts and master trainers. "The training of the second badge of divisional coaches will start from January 1, 2024," he added.

the one-week training programme of

divisional coaches was conducted under Punjab Institute of Sports Sciences as per directions of Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail.

On the last day, senior medical expert Dr Asad Abbas delivered a highly informative lecture on the topic of Anti-Doping. He also shared valuable tips regarding suitable and harmful nutrition for athletes belonging to different games.

Dr Asad taught the divisional coaches about doping and destructive effects, dope test procedures, doping methods, intentional and unintentional doping, doping substances, and the permitted It is pertinent to mention here that and non-permitted medicines under doping rules.

to achieve the Honorary Rank of Commander in Pakistan Navy. Dr Farhan Essa was awarded this Honorary Rank of Commander Pakistan Navy by the Chief of the Naval Staff for his extraordinary philanthropic work for the underprivileged.

The rank-wearing ceremony was held at PNS Shifa's wardroom. Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem H(I)M Commander Karachi was the Chief Guest.

The ceremony was attended by senior Naval officers, family and friends of Honorary Commander Farhan Essa.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Softball Association management said in a statement that Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah Abedin should be awarded the Presidential Award for his selfless love for the country and service to humanity.

"Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah Abedin has a special place among those who serve humanity in Pakistan. His services for humanity and sports are matchless. It is the pride of Pakistan that Dr. Farhan Essa and his family are a sports-loving family who are extending matchless support to sports. He has been sponsoring more than ten sports for the development of the society and giving opportunity to young athletes to express their talents at the national and international level", the SSA management said.

A great honour for Rotary International in general and Past District Governor Prof Dr Farhan Essa Abdullah in particular who was conferred the Honorary Rank of Commander Pakistan Navy by the Chief of the Naval Staff for his extraordinary philanthropic work for the underprivileged.

It is a great honour for sports in general and Softball Association in particular, it added.

## Saleem Jaffar expects women's team to take winning momentum in ODI series

#### 😂 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: After making history in New Zealand by defeating the hosts 2-1 in the T20I series, the Pakistan women's team is now gearing up for the ODI series, part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25. The Pakistan women's team, following the third T20I on Saturday, took part in an optional training session on Sunday at the John Davies Oval in Queenstown, according to information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

During the training session, the batters and bowlers honed their skills under the guidance of former Test cricketers Taufeeq Umar and Saleem Jaffar, who serve as batting and bowling coaches, respectively.

take place at the John Davies Oval in Queenstown on Tuesday. The first ball will be bowled at 11 a.m. local time. The second and third ODIs will be day-night matches played in Christchurch on December 15 and 18. The first ball of both matches will be bowled at 2 p.m. local time.

After Sunday's training, Saleem Jaffar, while talking to PCB Digital, said, "The credit must be given to the players for adapting to the conditions here. It's commendable for the bowlers to adapt to the wind conditions. The batters have

complemented the bowlers well, playing to their strengths, and the fielders have excelled in the fielding department.

"We are now focused on the

part of the ICC Women's Championship. Following our T20I series win, we will try to win the ODI series as well.

"Fatima Sana has put in tremendous effort after returning from injury. She has bowled long spells in training and prepared for the T20I series through practice games. It was heartening to see her receive the player of the series award for her outstanding perfor-

mance in the T20I series. Commenting on Sadia Iqbal being shortlisted for the ICC Player of the Month for November, the bowling coach said, "It is a proud moment for Sadia and an achievement for the Board. The spin bowling department is our strength, and as a bowling coach,

The first ODI is scheduled to ODIs, which are crucial as they are I believe that regardless of the pitch conditions, bowling in the right areas makes it challenging for the batters. Our spinners have displayed discipline and bowled according to the field placements, which is very good."

The former fast bowler, who is also chairman of the women's selection committee, when asked about his perspective on the development of young players, said, "The PCB and Women's Wing are dedicated to the growth of

women's cricket. Camps are organized for emerging and U19 cricketers, and currently, a camp for 29 probable U19 women cricketers is underway. I foresee a significant number of talented batters and bowlers emerging for the women's side in the next three



#### to four years. Pakistan squad for the ODI series:

Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Bismah Maroof, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaima Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Umm-e-Hani, and Wahee-

da Akhtar Series schedule: 3 December: 1st T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by seven wickets) 5 December: 2nd T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by 10 runs) 9 December: 3rd T20I, Queen-

stown (New Zealand women beat

Pakistan women by six runs on

DLS)

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

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

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



# The Spokesman

### Preparation of Election

KOHAT: Bilawal Bhutto addresses PPP Workers' Convention.



## Pakistan committed to upholding rights of all citizens: President

#### 😂 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President responsibility to protect and Dr Arif Alvi has reiterat- respect the rights of all people. ed to protect the rights of This day also marks the 75th all citizens irrespective of anniversary of the adoption oftheir caste, colour, and creed the Universal Declaration of and said that Pakistan was committed to upholding of as a common standard of their rights as enshrined in human rights for all peoples the Constitution of Paki- and nations," President Secrestan, the Universal Declara- tariat Press Wing in a press tion of Human Rights, and release quoted the president other relevant international instruments. In a message on that the country's constituthe occasion of Internation- tion guaranteed fundamenal Human Rights Day, being tal rights, including political, observed on December 10, he social and economic rights, said that Pakistan along with under the theme of "Freedom, marginalized sections of our children," he added.

Equality and Justice for All". "This day reminds us of our

Human Rights which serves as saying. The president said to the citizens and they were the international community cognizant of their duty to people, including women, to all minority groups who



society. "Pakistan has adopted several legal, economic and that Pakistan had providsocial remedies to promote ed an enabling environment and protect the rights of our was commemorating the Day protect the vulnerable and persons with disabilities, and enjoyed equal social, politi-

President Dr Alvi said and equal opportunities cal and economic rights. He areas, he added.

also called upon the government organizations, civil society, and the international community to play their role in protecting and promoting human rights. As the international community observed International Human Rights Day, he said it was unfortunate that the people of Palestine were being deprived of their rights and had been subjected to the worst form of state terrorism and ethnic cleansing by Israel. The Israeli Defence Forces had killed thousands of innocent people, including women, children, and healthcare and aid workers, besides bombing hospitals, schools, and residential

### JI chief demands end of Israeli occupation ofGaza



腾 Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Sirajul Haque has said that 2.5 million of our daughters, mothers and brothers of Gaza are burning in the fire of American, Israeli, French, Japanese and German bombs and missiles. So far, 21 thousand Palestinians have been martyred by Israeli bombing, while the Muslim rulers are not using their powers to protect their ships and weapons. I ask them to go ahead and act to save the Muslims of Gaza and Palestine. He was addressing the Women's Convention at the Bahawalpur Hockey Stadium. Sirajul Haq while speaking said that Jamaat-e-Islami stands with its Palestinian brothers and sisters and very soon. Palestine will become the graveyard of Israel.

He said that Jamaat-e-Islami wants the system of Quran in Pakistan, if we get government. We will enlighten Pakistan with the light of this book. This is the message of today's women's convention. Sirajul Samina Ruhi and others also spoke.

Haq said that today all three crore children are deprived of education, the youth are unemployed, the child born is in debt to the IMF, today the country is in debt. 31% educated young people. PML-N, People's Party and PTI are responsible for all this. Where is the law? Pakistan is a slave of only two families, Zardari and Nawaz. The nation asks the rulers that they ruled for years but they did not implement the system of Islam in this country even for one day, what did they do for the freedom of Kashmir? Dr. Aafia Siddiqui was handed over to America during the Musharrafera, if our government comes, Dr. Aafia will be brought back first.

From the Women's Convention, the Central Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami Women's Wing Humira Tariq, Ameer South Punjab Rao Muhammad Zafar, Deputy Ameer South Punjab and candidate PP 253 Syed Zeeshan Akhtar, candidate PP 254 Nasrullah Nasir, candidate NA 168 Malik Kamran, Dr.

### Future of aesthetic physicians bright: Solangi

#### 腾 City Desk

**RAWALPINDI:** Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said that the future of aesthetic physicians was bright, everyone wants to look good. Addressing a function organized by the Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan here, the minister congratulated the management for organizing the event.

He said that aesthetic physicians and their businesses had a prominent position in the health scienc-

es because looking good was everyone's desire. He said that the expansion of the scope of the Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan will significantly improve the aesthetic health scenario in Pakistan and it will also benefit the people at the grassroots level.

He said that the mandate and duration of the caretaker government were limited, but it would try to address the complaints of the Aesthetic Physicians Association of Pakistan and provide it with all possible facilities within the legal framework.

## Youth is the backbone of Kashmir struggle: Mushaal

Saudi Arabia participates

ISLAMABAD: SAPM to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has asserted that India had consistently thwarted every chance for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. Advocating for a just and transparent trial for her husband and Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader, Mohammad Yasin Malik, Mushaal emphasized that Prime Minister Modi's entire election narrative revolves around the prospect of imposing a death sentence on Yasin Malik. These remarks were delivered during the Kashmir Conference, which focused on the violations of human rights in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and the role of the



commemorate International Human Rights Day. Mushaal emphasized the rights violations in the Indi- ers to IIOJK. She lamented

United Nations. The event need for global attention an Illegally Occupied Jammu the information and commu-

was organized by the Human to the United Nation High and Kashmir (IIOJK). She Rights Council of Pakistan to Commissioner for Human expressed deep concern over Rights two reports of 2018 and

the restricted access of inter-2019 to stop India's human national human rights observing their voices on the international stage.

nication blockade imposed by India, stating that it has prevented the true extent of human rights abuses in IIOJK from reaching the international community.

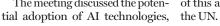
Mushaal highlighted the shortcomings of the United Nations, an institution initially created to peacefully address global conflicts such as those in Kashmir and Palestine. She expressed disappointment, asserting that the UN has not been successful in compelling India to adhere to its own passed resolutions and human rights conventions in Jammu and Kashmir. She also demanded the representation of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in the UN General Assembly, underscoring the importance of amplify-

## in UN High-level AI Advisory Body meeting

腾 SPA

NEW YORK: The United Nations High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, composed of 38 members from various countries worldwide, has held its first in-person meeting in New York City, with the participation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Kingdom was represented in the UN Advisory Body by the Shura Council's member Dr. Latifa bint Mohammed Al-Abdulkareem, with the participation of a delegation from the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA).



addressing challenges arising from their misuse, and delving into the governance mechanisms of AI at both the national and global levels.

In 2020, the Kingdom hosted a consultation session during the Global AI Summit organized by the SDAIA, discussing the establishment The meeting discussed the poten- of this advisory body for AI under

lined that both Palestine and Kash-

mir were not only issues of humanity

### Founder's legacy upheld: Pakistani govt, nation stands firm on Palestine issue; says Ashrafi

#### 腾 City Desk

that the government

of Pakistan and the

nation had remained

steadfastly united on

the issue of Pales-

tine since day one.

at the global stage.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Ummah. He stated that Pakistan ra in the Middle East and Islam-

tional Human Rights Day, he aimed

to spotlight Israeli atrocities in Gaza

but also vital concerns for the Muslim PAKIST ic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Sunday asserted



Speaking at a press conference held support for Palestine throughout its at the Press Information Department, history. He emphasized the signifihe emphasized that on this Interna- cance of acknowledging the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who advocated for an independent and sover-Ashrafi who is also the Chairman eign Palestine state with Al-Quds as of Pakistan Ulema Council under- its capital.

### **Diamer-Bhasha Dam:** WAPDA chairman reviews river diversion system

#### 😂 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Water and Power Develop- tors were also present during the chairment Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt man's visit. Gen (R) Engr. Sajjad Ghani visited the Diamer-Bhasha Dam Project to review the river diversion system, which has been operational for a week after partial diversion of the River Indus at the Diamer Basha Dam Project site.

According to the WAPDA spokesman here Sunday, the diversion system consists of about one kilometre (Km) long diversion tunnel, 0.857 Km-long diversion canal and two coffer (starter) dams - one at the upstream and other at the downstream of the main dam site.

WAPDA succeeded in diverting the River Indus partially last week through the diversion system constructed for the purpose. Now-a-days, the mighty River Indus is flowing mainly through diversion tunnel and diversion canal, while partly through its natural course.

construction progress on different sites of the project.

The CEO, GM and Project Director gate 1.23 million acres of land.

Diamer-Bhasha Dam and representatives of the consultants and the contrac-

He was briefed about the test-run of the diversion system. The diversion tunnel and diversion canal are functioning satisfactorily. At present, construction work is continuing smoothly on 13 sites simultaneously. he was further briefed.

It is pertinent to mention that WAPDA is all set to achieve the land mark of Indus River diversion at the Diamer Basha Dam Project next week by plugging the upstream coffer dam. The River Indus will, then, be flowing completely through the diversion system, bypassing the main dam site and rejoining its natural course after about a distance of 800 meters.

The Diamer Basha Dam Project is being constructed on the River Indus, 40-Km downstream of Chilas town. This The WAPDA Chairman also reviewed mega multipurpose project is scheduled for completion in 2028. It has a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 MAF to irri-

Saudi Arabia assessing advancements in FTA to enhance trade with Pakistan: **Commercial Attache** 

#### 腾 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Commercial Attaché in Pakistan, Mubasher bin Abdullah Al-Shohri on Sunday said the Kingdom's officials were currently assessing advancements in the initial Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aimed at enhancing trade with Pakistan, with the anticipated commencement of the third phase in the near future. Talking to media, he said following the initial trade agreement reached in Riyadh on September 28, involving Gulf Cooperation Council member countries and Pakistan, the pertinent legal committee was meticulously scrutinizing progress on various issues.

Mubasher said upon the completion of this review, the legal committee would formulate a comprehensive action plan, paving the way for the initiation of the third phase. This phase would specifically address legal matters, ensuring their organization erly nations.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi



added. He highlighted the presence of specialized institutions facilitating trade exchanges between the two fraternal nations, adding that these entities meticulously were assessing the opportunities and facilities offered by both countries, strategically leveraging them to augment the volume of bilateral trade. The Saudi commercial attaché stated that the trade volume between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan had surged to 61 billion riyals (\$16.3 billion) from September 2020 to 2023, underscoring the trust and cooperation between the two broth-

and subsequent implementation, he