

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
 ابوہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ تم کو جو کچھ تم نے اپنے سے جڑا ہوا ہے اس کو کوئی اس سے اپنے آپ کو جڑتا ہے اللہ پاک نے فرمایا کہ میں بھی اس کو اپنے سے جڑا لیتا ہوں اور جو کوئی اسے توڑتا ہے میں بھی اپنے آپ کو اس سے توڑ لیتا ہوں۔
 (صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 5989)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Pakistan committed to upholding rights of all citizens: President

President Dr Arif Alvi has reiterated to protect the rights of all citizens irrespective of their caste, colour, and creed and said that Pakistan was committed to upholding of their rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other relevant international instruments. In a message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, being observed on December 10, he said... (Details on Page 8)



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

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. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 26, Monday, December 11, 2023

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 16, Issue: 242 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Aggression

A victim of Israeli terrorism who survived alone in her family:



Photo: Mahmoud Ajjour, The Palestine Chronicle

OIC calls for end to human rights 'double standards'

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: The Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has condemned what it describes as double standards in applying human rights norms globally in light of the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip.

The IPHRC voiced its concerns after joining worldwide events to mark Human Rights Day 2023 on Dec. 10, the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In a statement, the commission said that after more than two months of Israeli aggression in Gaza, and more than 17,000 civilian casualties, the international community is failing in its responsibility to act on credible accounts of war crimes being committed by Israeli forces.

The commission urged the international community to intervene for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the enclave.

It also described Israeli orders for civilians in Gaza to evacuate without basic necessities as a violation of International humanitarian law.

The commission voiced concern about human rights violations affecting millions worldwide, and cited the deteriorating conditions for Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, persistent violence and discrimination against Muslims in India, and the continued plight of Palestinians and Kashmiris under oppressive regimes.

The IPHRC called for an end 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 equitable development for OIC member states and other developing nations, and urged the international community to prioritize bridging the technological divide, saying that developing countries face disparities in accessing cutting-edge technologies.

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



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

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 Saturday, 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.

Protecting human rights, a constitutional duty in Pakistan: FM Jilani



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister (FM) 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

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.

Interior Minister condemns blast in Khuzdar



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.

In this hour of sorrow, 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.

Army Chief off to US on official visit



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief

of Army Staff (COAS) has left today for United States of America (USA) on an official visit.

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

During his visit, General Syed Asim Munir is scheduled to meet the senior military and other government officials of USA.

Caretaker PM strongly condemns Khuzdar blast

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday while strongly condemning a blast in Khuzdar Balochistan province, expressed his deep grief and 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

treatment to those injured in the incident. The caretaker prime minister said that such cowardly activities could not deter the high morale of the security forces. The entire nation paid tribute to those who had been sacrificing their lives in the fight against terrorism, he added.

CTD official martyred 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: President 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.

and condemning terrorism in all its forms," the Kremlin said in a 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 Netanyahu, 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.

ECP refutes claims of issuing general elections' schedule

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.

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

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The President Azad Kashmir 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 celebrating the Human Rights Day and 75 years of adoption of the universal declaration of human rights today Kashmiris were



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

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 from Indian occupation. He said that the price of freedom has to be paid with blood.

"The freedom is something that



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 flourish in societies where humanity is alive". While condemning induction of a regime of new laws in Kashmir by the Indian government, he said that

these laws were meant to change the 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.

"Pakistan will give same kind of response if India plans a misadventure in future", he said. He said that the Pakistan armed forces were the

real defenders of the ideological and 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, Ambassador Naila Chauhan, Dean of Islamic University Social Sciences Dr. Amna Mehmood, KIIR chief Altaf Hussain Wani and several others.

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 participated. This three-day training workshop was organized in Multan and Lodhran districts of South Punjab. The trainer, the well-known female legal expert Muazzamma Hasnain, gave the training awareness lecture. The objective of the training workshop was to train



women players, coaches and other members in terms of critical thinking, social cohesion and leadership skills while imparting civic education.

It was also informed that the purpose of these laws is to ensure accountability. Syed Hasan Mujtaba, Acting

Project Manager, Lodhran Pilot Project, in his lecture in the training workshop, said that at the organizational level, everyone should take responsibility for creating awareness among their family and friends. Saira Kashif, Project Coordinator, Lodhran Pilot Project,

said that women and girls face this problem in organizations and with the help of these laws, they will now know what to do to deal with it. She also said that these are exemplary laws that every organization needs to implement to ensure a safe working environment for women.

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

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Social leader Mrs. Tahira Naseem, Asifa Saleem Malik, Ahila Mubasher Classra Advocate, Humira Tariq and Mahnoor Khurshed 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 Zulficar Dua Bukhari, Farah Chaghta, Chaudhry



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

Tasavur 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.

Police constable buried under sand in Attock

Raza Naqvi

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.

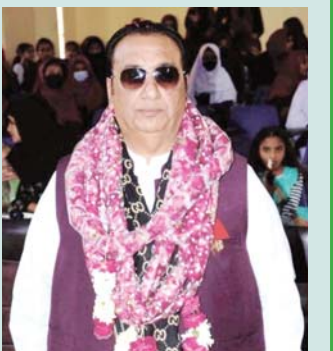
Shields were presented to Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Imran Khan and Assistant Commissioner Dr. Atif Jalib by the Youth Office and wearing a traditional Chitrali cap.

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

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 Sindh Former Provincial 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 Sindh Provincial President Punjab Asim Khan Chairman, Zulfikar 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 Sulhtra 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.



A two-day training workshop on Cultural Heritage Tourism will be held in Jan 2024



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 Cometes.

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.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:32 am
Zohr	12:00 pm
Asr	3:22 pm
Maghrib	5:00 pm
Isha	6:28 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

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 Pakistan 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.

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

Inauguration

Inauguration Ceremony of the Aesthetic Physicians Association of Pakistan

PPA

RAWALPINDI: The Aesthetic Physicians Association of Pakistan (AAPP) marked its official inauguration at a local hotel in Rawalpindi. The ceremony was attended by chief guest Mishal Hussain Malik, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights, along with dignitaries including Shahzad Ali Khan from Vice chancellor Health University, and Dr. Anis Ahmed from Vice chancellor Ripha International University. The event also saw the presence of Dr. Samina Mohsin, President of the AAPP, and Dr. Shumaila A. Khan, General Secretary, along with numerous acclaimed aesthetic experts from across the country.

During her welcome speech, Dr. Samina Mohsin introduced the distinguished guests and showcased a documentary focusing on aesthetic physicians and medicine. Dr. Samina underscored the historical significance of beauty, highlighting that aesthetic medicine is gain-

ing global recognition as a unique blend of art and science, distinct from traditional beauty parlors and salons.

Addressing the audience, Mishal Hussain Malik expressed that this moment is a historic milestone for the intersection of aesthetics and medical science in Pakistan. She lauded the establishment of the first Aesthetic Association in Pakistan as a source of national pride, acknowledging the challenges inherent in aesthetic medicine and extending congratulations to the organizers.

Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice-Chancellor of Health Services Academy, stressed the importance of aesthetic art and cautioned against blindly adopting Western ideals. Dr. Anis Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Ripha International University, emphasized the significance of aesthetic art, noting that everything created by Allah is inherently beautiful.

The inauguration ceremony concluded with the presentation of commemorative shields to the esteemed guests.



Enjoying holiday

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

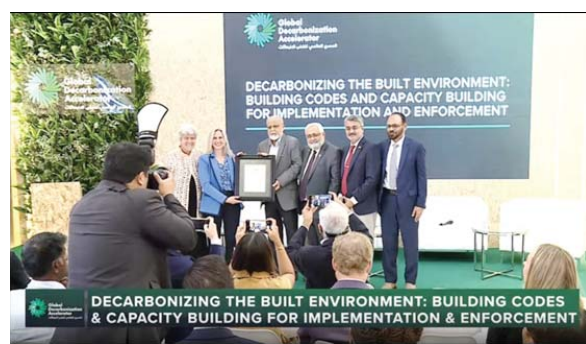


Photo: Online

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 to ICC participated at the event. Marisa Lago, Under Secretary US Department of Commerce



along with Judy Zakreski, Senior Vice President of ICC Global Operations presented the prestigious ICC Global Award -2023 to PEC Chairman and delegation. While congratulating PEC, she appreciated the PEC national role

by updating Building Code of Pakistan along with the development of Green Building Code of Pakistan-2023 including the provisions of Rainwater Harvesting for Buildings. She also acknowledged the serious 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.

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

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 Mutilib (from Jordan).

Price hike situation:

So buying dry fruits is no more a priority for many

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 situation.

The majority of the citizens especially those belonging to the low- and 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

PPA

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 attended by senior representatives from IoBM, graduating students, their parents, and faculty.

The welcome address was given by the Chancellor of IoBM, Mr. Bashir 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, presented 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 the betterment of the nation.

Presenting a progress report for the institution, the President of IoBM, Mr. Talib S. Karim highlighted how his father's passion project has turned into one of the leading educational 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

the year, Dinah Kamal Hamidi reminisced 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.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
Lahore Office: 7-E.Samanberg, Johar Town.
Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Is Israel losing the war against Hamas? - II

The situation in the conflict between Israel and Palestinians has resulted in a tragic loss of life and a humanitarian 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 Emmanuel 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 Hama's military capabilities are eliminated, and said that it will take longer than Western societies are prepared to accept, longer than what

their leaders, and above all U.S. President 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 dreading 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 indiscriminate aerial 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.

Iran has a highly sophisticated stockpile of 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 the media of almost the entire world disapproved of the senseless, brute inhumane and insensitive killing spree by the Israeli air force which completely dominates the skies of Gaza and West Bank without any resistance. Even the obvious, highly calibrated 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

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 reflexes 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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Open burning of waste in Pakistan causing smog

The 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.



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

Real Face of India - II

India 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.

At the core of an ideal country lies effective 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, environmental concerns, and human rights violations 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



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

How Pakistan can increase its exports - I

Exports help countries to boost economic growth and emerge as prosperous economies. According to Statista, China, USA, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Italy, Belgium, France, Hong Kong, and UAE 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. 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 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

billion, there is no reason that Pakistan should set a target of at least US\$ 50 billion for IT exports.

Pakistan is self-sufficient in manufacturing pharmaceutical products and this industry 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 technology.

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 contribution to the country's exports.

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 engineering 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

Incentives To Overseas Pakistanis To Multiply Remittances

Trust building, encouragement and the lucrative incentives to the overseas Pakistanis can multiply 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.

PIAF calls for reversing decision as NEPRA again raises Discos tariff under FCA



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.

Urea shortfall

Artificial scarcity a threat to farmers, agricultural and industrial output

Tariq 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, 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



the government has to spend a lot of foreign 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 a food security crisis should be dealt with iron

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 black fertilizer market forever, arbitrary pricing and smuggling should be stopped, and demand and supply should be balanced.

He said that the ritual of repeating past mistakes should be stopped so that farmers'



rights can be protected, the agricultural economy can improve, and wheat imports can be controlled.

The situation urgently warrants intervention to control the problem, he said.

Rizek-i-Halal

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



Photo: Online

Good sign

Stock market boom is pointing toward economic stability

Tariq 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.

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 the exchange rate looks stable, but increasing debt servicing costs without significant inflows have put the economy at risk, as that Pakistan's economy was stuck in a low-growth trap

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 refinancing did not always work unless associated with sharp and sustained structural reforms. He said the IMF had identified the need for reforms over three to four decades ago, but they were still pending.

NEOM launches sustainable food company Topian

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 institutional governance.

Nadhami Al-Nasr, CEO of NEOM, said: "Topian reflects our dedication to creating a positive,

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

Islam Zafar Vice President 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

EOI would work together with the government authorities to ensure that SMEs and start-ups 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 start-ups and SMEs to meet and



connect with other entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts and build relationships for access to new markets.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice

President ICCI said that ICCI and EOI should also strongly advocate for policies and programs that support start-ups and SMEs.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar,

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

Preparation of Election

KOHAT: Bilawal Bhutto addresses PPP Workers' Convention.



Photo: APP

Pakistan committed to upholding rights of all citizens: President

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has reiterated to protect the rights of all citizens irrespective of their caste, colour, and creed and said that Pakistan was committed to upholding of their rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other relevant international instruments. In a message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, being observed on December 10, he said that Pakistan along with the international community was commemorating the Day under the theme of "Freedom,

Equality and Justice for All".

"This day reminds us of our responsibility to protect and respect the rights of all people. This day also marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which serves as a common standard of human rights for all peoples and nations," President Secretariat Press Wing in a press release quoted the president as saying. The president said that the country's constitution guaranteed fundamental rights, including political, social and economic rights, to the citizens and they were cognizant of their duty to protect the vulnerable and marginalized sections of our



society. "Pakistan has adopted several legal, economic and social remedies to promote and protect the rights of our people, including women, persons with disabilities, and children," he added.

President Dr Alvi said that Pakistan had provided an enabling environment and equal opportunities to all minority groups who enjoyed equal social, political and economic rights. He

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 areas, he added.

Youth is the backbone of Kashmir struggle: Mushaal

PPA

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 United Nations. The event



was organized by the Human Rights Council of Pakistan to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

Mushaal emphasized the need for global attention

to the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights two reports of 2018 and 2019 to stop India's human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir (IIOJK). She expressed deep concern over the restricted access of international human rights observers to IIOJK. She lamented the information and commu-

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 amplifying their voices on the international stage.

Diamer-Bhasha Dam: WAPDA chairman reviews river diversion system

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt 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.

The WAPDA Chairman also reviewed construction progress on different sites of the project.

The CEO, GM and Project Director

Diamer-Bhasha Dam and representatives of the consultants and the contractors were also present during the chairman's visit.

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 mega multipurpose project is scheduled for completion in 2028. It has a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 MAF to irrigate 1.23 million acres of land.

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

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



and subsequent implementation, he 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 brotherly nations.

JI chief demands end of Israeli occupation of Gaza



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 Haque 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

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 Musharraf era, 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 Humaira 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. Samina Ruhi and others also spoke.

Future of aesthetic physicians bright: Solangi

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said that the future of aesthetic physicians is 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 sciences

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.

Saudi Arabia participates in UN High-level AI Advisory Body meeting

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).

The meeting discussed the potential adoption of AI technologies,



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 SDIA, discussing the establishment of this advisory body for AI under the UN.

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

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Sunday asserted that the government of Pakistan and the nation had remained steadfastly united on the issue of Palestine since day one.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Press Information Department, he emphasized that on this International Human Rights Day, he aimed to spotlight Israeli atrocities in Gaza at the global stage.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council under-

lined that both Palestine and Kashmir were not only issues of humanity but also vital concerns for the Muslim Ummah. He stated that Pakistan had consistently shown unwavering



support for Palestine throughout its history. He emphasized the significance of acknowledging the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who advocated for an independent and sovereign Palestine state with Al-Quds as its capital.