



Government is focusing on the development of construction and housing sector: Federal Minister

The 3rd Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction Exhibition organized by Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry started yesterday at Pak China Friendship Center Islamabad.



Petrol price drops for next fortnight

In a major relief to the inflation-struck masses, the caretaker govt dropped the price of petrol for the next fortnight by Rs14 per litre. In a notification, the Finance Division said the new prices of petroleum products for the fortnight — starting from December 16 and remaining in place till December 31 — were recommended by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra).

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Call on

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir has called on key US Government and Military officials during his ongoing visit to the US.

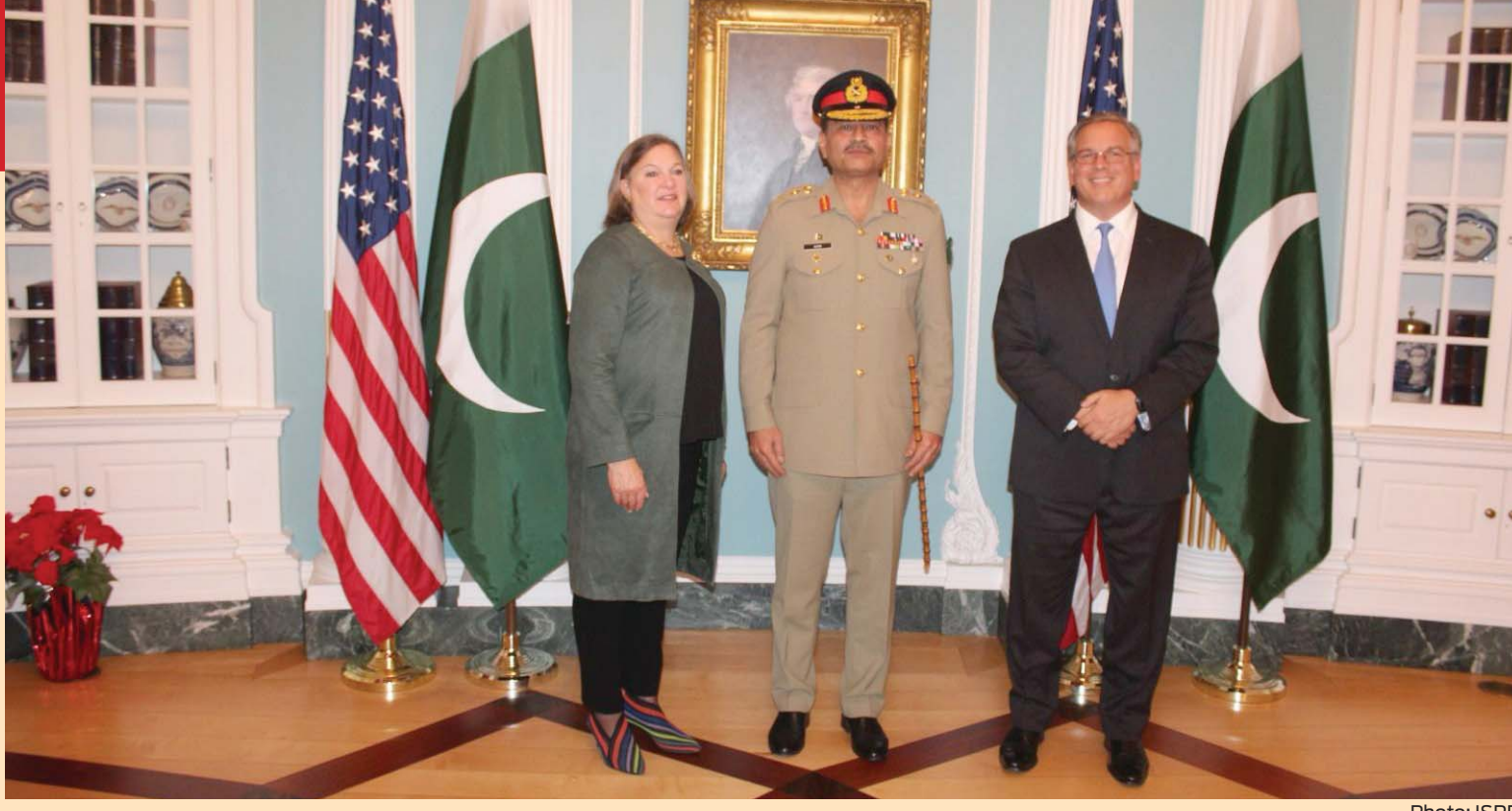


Photo: ISPR

Gen. Asim Munir COAS calls on U. S. officials in Washington to discuss South Asia

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), COAS called on key US Government and Military officials during his ongoing visit to US including, Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, General Llyod J. Austin (Retired), Secretary of Defence, Victoria Nuland, Deputy Secretary of State, Jonathan Finer, Deputy National Security Adviser and General Charles Q Brown, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Matters of bilateral interests, global and regional security issues, and ongoing conflicts were discussed during the meetings. Both sides agreed to continue engagement for exploring potential avenues of bilateral collaboration in pursuit of shared interests.

During the meetings with defence officials, counter terrorism cooperation and defence collaboration were identified as core areas of cooperation. Both sides reiterated the intent to increase interaction and explore ways to expand the scope of mutually beneficial engagements.

COAS underscored the importance of understanding each other's perspectives on regional security issues and developments affecting strate-

gic stability in South Asia. In this context, COAS especially highlighted the importance of resolving the Kashmir issue in accordance with international law and relevant UNSC resolutions.

COAS also interacted with the Pakistani overseas community. In a reception hosted by Embassy of Pakistan, COAS met members of the Pakistani community.

COAS appreciated the positive role being played by Pakistani overseas community towards the country's progress and development.

During interaction, topics of varying dimensions were discussed and COAS appreciated efforts of Pakistani Diaspora. He also welcomed & encouraged the diaspora to invest through SIFC which is already yielding success in various dimensions.

COAS also highlighted that US is the largest export market for Pakistan constituting 21.5 % of our total exports and dispelled rumours about special screening, denial of visas and detentions.

Army Chief said "Pakistani diaspora anywhere around the world is held in high regard as they are ambassadors of Pakistan and contribute significantly to Pakistan in varying domains.

PM-Kashmir

Kashmir issue to be raised internationally with renewed vigour: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday said that the government in consultation with the Kashmiri leadership would raise the Kashmir issue at the international forums with renewed vigour.

The prime minister, in an interview with the AJK PTV, said the Kashmiri diaspora had a vital role to play in raising the Kashmir dispute, and it should come forward and work with the Pakistani leadership to help take the issue to its logical conclusion.

He said he was inspired by the courage of the Kashmiri leadership which was confronting the brutality of Indian forces with bravery and fortitude.

The Kashmiris' desire for free-



dom was very much alive and the whole Pakistani nation stood shoulder to shoulder with them, he added.

The prime minister said during his address to the United Nations General Assembly he presented the viewpoint of Kashmiris.

He stressed that Pakistan would continue to extend moral,

political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris.

He said in his address to the AJK Legislative Assembly he represented the State of Pakistan and reiterated its seven decades old stand on the Kashmir issue.

"I was honoured to address the Assembly in the presence of Kashmiri leaders who are the

heirs of the martyrs of Kashmir, including the martyrs of 1947 and Burhan Wani.

"I held consultation with the Kashmiri leadership to forge a strategy to effectively raise the Kashmir issue at the diplomatic level and at international forums," he added.

The debate on Kashmir was again brought to the mainstream by the Government of Pakistan, he pointed out.

He said Pakistan was not complete without the freedom of Kashmir and grant of right to self-determination to its people.

PM Kakar said Kashmir was an internationally recognized disputed territory and had been on the agenda of the United Nations as an unresolved issue for over seven decades which could only be settled through a

plebiscite.

Without the participation of Kashmiris, no unilateral action by India, including any action of a sham court or an assembly could change reality of Kashmir, he asserted.

Talking about the Kashmiri leadership, he said Mir Waiz and his forefathers had demonstrated impeccable leadership which was known to the whole world.

He was of the view that Kashmir had an indigenous movement which would always come up with a new leadership in the next generation. India was mistaken that the Kashmir movement could be undermined with incarceration of its leaders, he added.

PM Kakar assured that the Federal Government would resolve issues faced by the Government of Kashmir.

PNS Tughril visits Salalah Port during Regional Maritime Security Patrol



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship TUGHRIL visited Salalah Port of Oman for logistics and fueling on return journey to Pakistan after completion of routine operational deployment at Gulf of Aden, as part of Regional Maritime Security Patrol.

During the stay at the port, the Commanding officer of the

ship met with senior naval officials of Oman as part of Naval diplomacy and discussed matters of mutual interest. Navies of Pakistan and Oman enjoy very close relations as both the countries share the same ocean space. Both the Navies cooperate with each other for law enforcement, search and rescue and medical evacuation amongst other areas of interest.

Al Jazeera chief correspondent in Gaza struck by Israeli rocket during Gaza War

Monitoring Desk



GAZA: Palestinian Journalists and their Families are targeted by Israeli Rockets

Jazeera Chief Correspondent, Wael Dahdoh in Khanyounis in Gaza, causing him an injury.

Wael and his cameraman Samer Abu Daqa were targeted by Israeli rocket while they were covering Israeli massacre in Haifa School in Khanyounis.

Israeli forces prevent ambulances from evacuating Abu Daqa from the school to hospital, keeping him bleed in the school.

It is noteworthy that this isn't the first time Wael is targeted in the war on Gaza. Israel killed his wife, son and niece when it targeted his house in Gaza with a bomb during the first two weeks of the genocidal war.

Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti resigns

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has resigned from the post and is likely to join Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), ARY News reported on Friday, citing sources.

Sources told ARY News that Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has tendered his resignation as country's interim interior minister on December 13. Sources claimed that Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar has accepted the resignation today.

Bugti resignation came as he decided to join PML-N ahead of general elections 2024. More resignations from the incumbent caretaker cabinet are possible to become eligible in the forthcoming election, scheduled for Feb 8, 2024.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan halted the Lahore High Court (LHC) order that suspended the appointment of ROs and DROs from bureaucracy and directed the electoral watchdog to issue the election schedule by tonight.

The Pakistan Supreme Court also issued a contempt of court notice to Barrister Umair Niazi - who filed the petition on behalf of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) - seeking the appointment of ROs and DROs from judiciary, not the executive.

ECP issues election schedule after SC order

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday issued the election schedule for the upcoming February 8 general polls in compliance with the Supreme Court (SC) order issued earlier.

According to a notification issued by the electoral watchdog, the public notice would be issued by the Returning Officer (RO) on December 19 with the dates for filing nominations from Dec 20-22.

The ECP said the names of the nominated candidates would be published on Dec 23 and the last date for scrutiny of their nomination papers would be from Dec 24-30.

The development came hours after Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan ordered the ECP to announce the election schedule by tonight as it suspended a Lahore High Court (LHC) order on the appointment of returning officers (ROs) and district returning officers (DROs) from the bureaucracy, which cast uncertainty over holding of general polls.

The Pakistan Supreme Court also issued a contempt of court notice to Barrister Umair Niazi - who filed the petition on behalf of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) - seeking an explanation as to why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against him.

Omar flays Balochistan administration for threatening Shoab of detention

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan strongly denounced the caretaker government of Balochistan for not letting PTI senior leader Advocate Shoab Shaheen to go out of Quetta Airport to address the PTI convention in the province.

PTI Secretary General said that what to talk about level playing field, there is no government in Pakistan but only anarchy.

"Shoab Shaheen sahib landed in Quetta to address PTI workers conventions in Baluchistan over the next 3 days but has been asked not to leave Quetta Airport otherwise he would be arrested under 3MPO, which is condemnable.

US Jewish group demands Gaza ceasefire

Reuters

WASHINGTON: Jewish Voice for Peace, a Jewish group demanding a ceasefire in Israel's war in Gaza, held protests on Thursday in eight US cities on the eighth night of Hanukkah, blocking rush hour traffic on busy streets and bridges in Washington and Philadelphia.

In Washington, the group Jewish Voice for Peace said about 90 protesters blocked the overpass to New York Avenue in the northwestern part of the U.S. capital. Police said the demonstration closed the intersection of New York Avenue and North Capitol Street and urged people to use alternate routes.

"On the 8th night of Hanukkah, 8 cities, 8 bridges," Jewish Voice for Peace said on X, formerly called Twitter. "We



are here, gathering across the country in massive, growing numbers, to say no more."

Demonstrations also occurred in Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle and Portland, Oregon.

In Philadelphia, about 200 protesters briefly blocked the I-76 highway, and more than 30 arrests were made, a Reuters witness said. Protesters held signs and banners that read: "Let Gaza Live" and "Not in our name."

The United Nations on Tuesday demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. On Wednesday, anti-war

Muslim Conference demands Pakistan to formulate Kashmir policy after

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Atique Ahmad Khan has said that a meeting of Kashmir leadership, APHC and representatives of immigrants should be called in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and proposals should be prepared with reference to the Kashmir issue. He said that India is settling 40 lakh Hindus from outside to change the demography of Occupied Kashmir. Thus, India is busy preparing referendums to achieve its nefarious goals. The government of Pakistan should immediately prepare the data of Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and immigrants. He said that at this time we need to prepare a national Kashmir policy so that a clear



and unequivocal stand can be taken on Kashmir. He said that the visit of Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir

There is a need for practical measures in the follow-up of the visit to Azad Kashmir. He expressed these views while talking to the media after

meeting the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He said that the Muslim Conference has the mandate of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim Conference was declared by Quaid-e-Azam as the representative party of the Muslim League in Azad

Jammu and Kashmir. We see the Kashmir issue from Pakistan's point of view. We want Pakistan to be strong and stable. It will have a positive impact on the Kashmir issue. He said that we had no expectation of justice from the Supreme Court of India. At present, India has been politically and morally exposed in the world and India is suffering from isolation at the international level. Sardar Atique Ahmed further said that

The activities of Indian secret agency RAW have been exposed in Qatar, UK, Canada and Australia. He said that we do not want to increase the difficulties of Pakistan, but the government of Azad Kashmir is capable of allowing it to do what Pakistan cannot do due to any compulsion with regard to the Kashmir issue he added.

Meeting with a delegation of HBFC pensioners



PNP

ISLAMABAD: A delegation representing the pensioners of House Building Finance Company Limited (HBFC) called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad, today at Privatisation Division. The pensioners apprised the minister of their issues and concerns regarding privatisation of HBFC. The minister assured the pensioners that their rights will be protected by the government and that their interests will be adequately safeguarded during the privatisation process. The Minister asked the Secretary, Privatisation Commission to seek input from the HBFC management on grievances of the pensioners regarding increase in pension.

MEPCO Multan Circle is Number One in Terms of Safety: Amjad Bhatti

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Superintendent Engineer Multan Circle Engineer Amjad Nawaz Bhatti has said that Line Superintendent Line Man and ALM of WAPDA should stop blindly trusting themselves and if they do not act in haste, accidents can be avoided to a large extent. It is an asset, we all have to work together instead of blaming others, change ourselves



If there is a department, then we are not working at all without complete safety. Make sure to earth the line and climb on top of the pool after comforting yourself. It is for the well-being of your wife, children, family and the department. He expressed these thoughts yesterday in Mepeco Mumtazabad Division. Addressing a safety seminar in the division in collaboration with Hydro Union, he said, adding that the officers should also go to the side and check the work.

Thanks to Allah, Multan Circle is number one in terms of safety. All this has been possible only with the cooperation of workers. XEN Mumtazabad Division Fayyaz Hussain Khokhar said that all the people who have taken PTW before starting the work that cooperation with us will improve working together XEN Shah Rukn-e-Alam Alam Division Muhammad Imran Lodhi said that power concretor must be with all LS and line menu all safety measures before climbing on cement and iron pole.

From the seminar, Central Senior Vice President of Hydro Union Chaudhry Muhammad Khalid and Zonal Chairman Chaudhry Rashid Yameen said that Hydro Union is working together with all officers for the development of WAPDA by developing Mapco under the leadership of SE Amjad Nawaz Bhatti. WAPDA is a big department after the army. We have to take care of it. Our prosperity lies in it. Deputy Director Technical Umeer Qasim, Jam Qayyum, Rana Umeer Akram and others also attended the ceremony. A large number of Circle Actions, SDOs, MILS, LM, ALM and Union officials participated in the seminar.

Closing ceremony of 3rd International Conference on Economic Issues

Closing ceremony of 3rd International Conference on Economic Issues



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The ongoing International Conference "Economic Issues and Sustainable Development" at Women's University Multan has ended. According to the spokesperson Miss Anam Zahra, the announcement of the conference said that along with difficult economic conditions, high prices of energy and food, low income and floods of 2022. Damage to crops and livestock has significantly increased poverty.

Earlier in the day-long conference, there were several sessions on the profound impact of external debt on Pakistan's economic growth, from women's empowerment to inclusion in southern Punjab. Addressing the concluding session where papers were read on topics such as travel, and strategies for advancing sustainability in government hospitals, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kulsoom Paracha said that economic development, creation of good employment, change in energy system and In order to promote sustainable development, new infrastructures have to be changed. People are facing increasing living costs, increasing inequality and the effects of climate change.

This conference is also a link in the same chain that experts share their experiences on a platform. These papers are read and their far-reaching results will come out.

UAJK showcases innovation and excellence at grand exhibition

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) on Friday, hosted a spectacular grand exhibition, where the graduating students of the BS Computer Science and Information Technology (CS&IT) session 2019-23 showcased their remarkable final year projects. The event, organized by the Department of Computer Sciences and Information Technology, garnered significant attention from the academic community, with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, gracing the occasion.



Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, along with principal officers and heads of various academic departments, toured the exhibition, gaining insights into the innovative projects presented by the students. Notable projects included a Fight Detection and Alert System, Smart Trashbin, DEPTH, Distance Estimation App, Real-Time Bus Tracking System, Silence CA Chat Application, Sentiment Indicator, Hyper-Cloud, Smart Cap, and several others.

Condolence

Ambassador of Pakistan to Türkiye Dr. Yousaf Junaid and Mayor Kecioren Turgut Altinok laying wreath at the memorial of APS martyrs in Ankara on Friday.



Tank police line attack, 3 cops martyred, 3 injured while 4 terrorists killed

Adam Khan Wazir

TANK: Attack on police line tank 3 policemen martyred and 3 injured while 4 terrorists were killed, the terrorists entered the police line Tank.

The exchange of fire continued for 14 hours continuously, DPO Tank Iftikhar Ali Shah and DSP Alamgir entered the police line in an armored vehicle immediately after the attack.

However, they continued to fight continuously for 14 hours, during which the sounds of explosions and firing continued.

The new building of the police line Tank has also been severely damaged.

Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and Wana Road was also closed continuously.



ly, the funeral prayers of all martyred police personnel were performed with official honors.

Local sources say that armed men attacked the police line tank from several sides at 2:40 last night.

While the exchange of fire started with the attackers, the fight between the police and the attackers continued for 14 hours.

The terrorists continued to

use hand grenades and heavy weapons.

Meanwhile, as soon as the attack was reported, DPO Tank Iftikhar Ali Shah along with DSP Alamgir and two other policemen entered the police line.

While the exchange of fire started with the attackers, the fight between the police and the attackers continued for 14 hours.

Meanwhile, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and Wana Road was closed for all types of traffic.

In the attack, police constables Ihsan Ullah, Abdul Rasheed and Gohar Zaman were martyred while constable Sakhi Noor Gul, constable Ajmal and constable Mukhtiar were seriously injured.

On the other hand four terrorists were also killed. Later, the funeral prayers of all the martyred personnel were offered at the DPO office tank, while the injured were shifted to the hospital for further medical assistance and treatment.

It should be noted that the attack has seriously damaged the newly constructed building of the police line.

AJK to boost morale of Kashmiris after Pakistan PM's visit

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Spokesperson of the Azad state of Jammu and Kashmir, Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that the morale of Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC has been boosted by the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Anwar Haq Kakar to Azad Kashmir. In the meeting of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, it has been decided to include Ritoshuntar Tunnel and M4 Highway in PSDP, while a five-member committee on Hydrel, Finance, AJK Bank, Food, Mangala Dam and other issues has been formed. A federal ministerial committee has been established. Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman Abdul Majid Khan said that the government and the people of Azad Kashmir are grateful to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for taking a firm and lively stand on the Kashmir issue.

Inaugurates Nestlé Pakistan's 2.5MW Solar Power Plant Near Multan

Asim Tanveer/Waqar Paracha

KHANEWAL: Nestlé Solar powers Plant PKR 2 billion renewable energy investment in Pakistan Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan Georg Steiner inaugurates Nestlé Pakistan's 2.5MW solar power plant near Multan spread over Nestlé reaffirms its commitment to Pakistan's vision for renewable energy with investment of PKR 2 billion in renewable power and sustainability initiatives.

In a first, Nestlé Pakistan inaugurated a 2.5 megawatt solar power plant completed with an investment of PKR 480 million at its Kabirwala Factory that aims to reduce

1,800 tCO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

Nestlé Pakistan's PKR 2 billion investments include two biomass boilers and additional solar power plants at its other manufacturing sites in Pakistan. It is part of its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with a special focus on renewable energy in line with its 2050 Net Zero commitments, as well as Pakistan government's UN climate change pledge.

Inaugurating the facility, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Georg Steiner said, "Nestlé Pakistan's continuous investment and presence in Pakistan for 35 years, shows its confidence in the country, and this solar power plant is a



testament to its commitment to create shared value for the people Pakistan for a cleaner environment. This solar power plant is exactly what can help the Pakistan government achieve its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitment to have 60% Renewable Energy by 2030."

Jason Avanceña, Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé Pakistan, said "As we celebrate 35 years of operations in Pakistan, we are

committed to be a force for good throughout our value chain for the future of the country by boosting investment in renewable energy and sustainability initiatives."

"We are continuing to accelerate the use of renewable energy and this inauguration today is part of our larger renewable energy strategy along with our future plans to introduce biomass boilers and a similar solar plant soon at our Sheikh-

pura Factory and other manufacturing sites," Avanceña added.

Nestlé announced its commitment to reduce its emissions by 20% (versus a 2018 baseline) by 2025, halve them by 2030 and reach Net Zero by 2050 in line with UN SDGs 13 and 15.

Having completed 35 years of operations in Pakistan, Nestlé is also committed to the economic growth by enhancing exports to USD 18 million in 20 countries for earning foreign revenues. Nestlé Pakistan has also further strengthened its localization journey, moving to over 90% of raw and packaging requirements locally in 2023 while strengthening local industry.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:35 am
Zohr	12:02 pm
Asr	3:23 pm
Maghrib	5:01 pm
Isha	6:30 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Treat the minorities well by following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet: Vohra

Abdul Majeed

FAISALABAD: On the occasion of the arrival of Christmas, the chief guest of the event organized at Government College Women University (GCWUF) was the arrival of Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra, the chief guest of the central president of the Kalat Board Ittehad Group of Pakistan, and the Christian employees of the university warmly welcomed him and offered flowers. Nashawar, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli presented a bouquet of flowers to Naseer Yousuf Vohra and Professor Asma of the Urdu Department placed a garland of flowers around his neck. Appreciating the work of the minorities in the university, Naseer Yousuf Vohra gave a dawa address. Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra, Central President of Cloth Board Union of Pakistan, has said in his address that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has taught us to be gentle with minorities. He has further said that the minorities have complete freedom in Pakistan, they are worshipping their religion freely. Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra together with the Vice Chancellor gifted warm suits to all the Christians and guards of the university. Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli in her final speech thanked all the guests and the Christian workers and guards present in the hall and wished her Christmas and said that Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF), which Located in the heart of the city of Faisalabad, it was established in 1934 and was upgraded to its present status in January 2013. Since its inception, it has continuously strived to empower female students with academic potential. Offers BS, MA, MSc, MS/ MPhil and PhD degree programs in 25 disciplines. Highly motivated faculty, committed to leveraging all available resources, empowering and empowering women. is contributing substantially to the realization of the dream of making Research is considered as an important indicator of performance that gives an organization a distinguished status.

Pakistan Style and Furniture Expo

Women Empowerment at Grassroots Level Essential: Mushaal

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has emphasized the pivotal role of women's full-fledged participation in driving economic prosperity. She delivered these remarks at the inaugural ceremony of the "Pakistan Style and Furniture Expo," a three-day expo that showcases articles from all provinces, capturing the richness of their respective cultures.

Mushaal expressed admiration for the Expo, acknowledging its impressive presentation of the intricate and diverse cultural lifestyle trends inherent to Pakistan. She articulated that the Expo serves as an invaluable platform, offering an opportunity for artisans, designers, and businesses to showcase their most exquisite creations. She said that artisans and designers had poured their creativity and dedication into crafting these articles, creating pieces that resonate with the diverse and dynamic global design



landscape.

Touring various stalls, Mushaal Hussein Mullick and Sabein Hussein Mullick (Focal Person to SAPM) were deeply moved by the remarkable craftsmanship and innovative spirit showcased by the artisans. They were of the view that every exhibit stood as a powerful testament to the nation's rich heritage, artistic ingenuity, and contemporary innovation. Mushaal expressed her delight and specifically applauded the participation of women and transgender entrepreneurs in the expo.

Mushaal remarked that the nation's economy was demonstrating signs of

stability, with the stock market displaying positive indicators. She specifically commended the personal endeavors of the Chief of Army Staff, acknowledging and appreciating his significant contributions to the overall economic stability of the country.

Expressing deep concern, Mushaal conveyed the distress her family is experiencing due to the persecution of her husband Yasin Malik by India. Critiquing the recent Indian Supreme Court's verdict on the abrogation of Kashmir's special status, she emphasized the verdict had no legal standing. Mushaal also unveiled her initiative to establish a Kashmir Advisory Committee under her leadership. She elaborated that the committee would offer comprehensive recommendations to the Government in response to the Indian Supreme Court's decision. She also drew attention to the demographic changes being made in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by the Modi-led Indian government to influence any future plebiscite.

Sunnat-e-Nabvi

ISLAMABAD: A street vendor is arranging "Misvak" and other stuff on his stall along the road side in Sector G-6 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal implements World Bank's Project Management & Tracking Design for Early Clearance of Applications

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is taking extensive measures to provide relief to the deserving and marginalized people despite its limited resources. The Managing Director, Amir Fida Paracha, highlighted various initiatives during a detailed press briefing in PBM Head Office, emphasizing transparency and merit. The organization has implemented the World Bank's PMTD (Project Management and Tracking Design) to ensure international standards in service delivery.

MD mentioned the eradication of traditional red tape in Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, facilitating swift processing of requests such as medical assistance, educational support, special friends, cochlear implants, individual financial aid, and more through paperless e-filing. The use of digital systems enhances administrative efficiency, and the organization has established a new Directorate for donation management under the Bait-ul-Mal Act.

Amir Fida Paracha emphasized the use of digital cameras for effective monitoring

of projects, bringing about improvements in organization and facilities. Pakistan Sweet Homes has provided free accommodation, food, and education to over 4,700 children, with additional support for higher education through the OWSP (Orphan Widows Support Program).

For the first time in history, a grand exhibition was organized at E-9 Park to showcase the achievements and functioning of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, aiming to garner support and trust from donors and stakeholders. Despite financial challenges, the

organization remains committed to its projects, refraining from discontinuing any beneficial initiatives or laying off daily wage employees.

Mr. Paracha said that vocational training is important to prepare the children of sweet homes of PBM be able to earn their living in dignified manner. For that, He said, We are in contact with TEVTA and NAVTEC for their training.

To a question, MD shared that strict action has been taken against corruption and mismanagement of funds in Balochistan.

Arab Novel

Int'l moot on Modern trends in Arab Novel concluded at AIOU



PNP

ISLAMABAD: A two-day international conference on "Modern Trends of the Arab Novel in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century" has been concluded at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The conference resulted in 9 recommendations, which included the resumption of yearly international Arab conferences, collaboration between universities to promote the Arabic language, research on the Arab novel, analysis of Arabic literature, and exploring different aspects of Arabic language and literature. Ambassador of Algeria in Pakistan, Dr. Brahim Romani was the chief guest while Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi presided over the closing ceremony.

Dr. Brahim Romani mentioned that the participation of scholars from 15 Islamic countries is a testament to the dynamic and capable leadership of Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and the Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Dr. Romani expressed his hope for academic collaboration between Algerian universities and Allama Iqbal Open University, which would include joint Arabic language courses. The Envoy also congratulated the Vice Chancellor and the entire team for organizing the successful International Conference.

Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi provided a detailed overview of the promotions of Arabic language services offered by the Faculty of Arabic. He mentioned that the university frequently hosts conferences, but this conference was a part of the university's golden jubilee celebrations. The Federal Minister of Education, Madad Ali Sindh, participated in the opening session, recognizing the importance of this conference. Dr. Wahab Ghazali presented the conference proceedings, while Dr. Mazhar Moin from Punjab University, Lahore praised the conference as a great initiative for the interpretation of the Arabic language.

The conference coordinator, Dr. Haris Saleem, presented a summary of the topics included in the conference. Chairman, Department of Arabic, Dr. Abdul Majeed Baghdadi, thanked the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and the Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohiuddin Hashmi for providing patronage and support in organizing the conference.

Digital Rights Foundation's Conference on Countering Digital Threats and Building Resilience of Communities



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) held a conference titled, 'Countering Digital Threats and Building Resilience of Communities' on Friday, 15th December 2023 in Islamabad. DRF's conference addressed the lack of discourse relating to online freedoms in the country particularly with the rise of hate speech and disinformation against vulnerable and at-risk communities in Pakistan. The conference brought together experts from across the country with two panels that highlighted DRF's engagements and redressal mechanisms available in the country for at-risk communities in Pakistan.

The event started off with welcome remarks by Seerat Khan Programs Lead at DRF in which she highlighted the particular vulnerabilities face in the country, especially with respect to rising hate speech and disinformation. Nighat Dad, Executive Director at Digital Rights Foundation also noted that "With the upcoming elections we see how harmful content pertaining to religious minorities in the country is increasing, particularly (the elements of) disinformation and hate speech.

The first panel of the conference, 'Navigating Digital Boundaries: Combating Online Hate Speech and Disinformation' was a conversation about the challenges posed by online hate speech and disinformation targeting at-risk communities. The panel was moderated by Senior Program Manager Zainab Durrani and included NCHR Secretary Mr. Kamran Rajar, Dr. Shoaib Suddle, One Man Commission for Minorities, Academic Dr. Ayra Patras, Journalist Sajjad Azhar and Director of Bolu Bh, Usama Khilji. The panelists shed light on how online hate speech and disinformation manifest online and how to combat these as a community together.

Dr. Ayra Patras said, "When religious minority communities are ostracized in real life then you see the replication of this behavior online as well. We see more hate speech and there are no recompense mechanisms in place that actually work."

The second panel of the event was on 'Bridging the Digital Divide: Ensuring Equal Access for All' which was moderated by Programs Lead Seerat Khan. The panel was joined by NCHR Member Minorities Manzoor Masih, Former Senator Farahatullah Baber, Community Leader and Activist Sunil Gulzar Khan and Cyber Harassment Helpline Manager Hyra Basit. The panel addressed mechanisms needed to ensure safe spaces for at-risk communities, particularly in light of the upcoming elections and the need for community building and resilience.

Senator Farhatullah Babar said, "The discussion around digital divide is very timely in light of the upcoming elections. In Pakistan, media has played a great role in elections and online disinformation is a very real issue." He added, "It is very important to consider all actors complicit in the online disinformation campaign and more than most, its the state is complicit".

Nilofar for enhanced media role in raising awareness on child marriage & gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD: National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar on Friday stressed on strengthening the role of the media in raising awareness on issues related to child marriage and gender-based violence. She was speaking on the inaugural day of the Journalist Refresher Training Workshop on "Social Norms, Gender, Prevention and Health Consequences related to Child Marriage".

The workshop has been organized by the NCSW in collaboration with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Some 45 journalists from across Pakistan are being trained on different aspects and dimensions of the issue of child marriage.

They are part of the National Media Fellowship (NMF), a flagship project of NCSW, that sensitizes the media on responsible reporting for the prevention and elimination of child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV). So far, two cohorts of 40 journalists each have been trained in two fellowship programmes in 2022 and 2023. Under the first programme, held in 2022, 162 media stories and two documentaries were produced on GBV, child marriage and impact of climate change on women.

LUMS Energy Institute launches report on energy efficient buildings

PPA

KARACHI: In a milestone event, the LUMS Energy Institute (LEI), a research and capacity building centre with a focus on Pakistan's energy sector, has unveiled a report titled Sustainable Architecture: Advancing Energy Efficient Buildings. The report addresses the acute energy challenge and how adopting energy-efficient practices in residential construction can drastically reduce loads.

While addressing policymakers, regulatory bodies, and key stakeholder, Dr. Fiaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director, LUMS Energy Institute, said, "Pakistan's expenditure of nearly USD 100 billion on power plants, predominantly for summer cooling loads, is unsustainable. By adopting the energy-efficient practices we can



reduce cooling loads by at least 50%, saving billions of dollars."

The seasonal variation in electricity usage, pronounced by cooling loads during hot summer months, necessitates an additional 18,000 MW of power plant capacity. This extra capacity, largely underutilized for the rest of the year, imposes a staggering cost of nearly \$100 billion on the national economy. This opera-

tional inefficiency has led to capacity payment obligations surpassing PKR 2 trillion, a financial weight bearing down on a sector that contributes minimally to the country's GDP growth.

A large gathering of policymakers, regulatory bodies, and key stakeholders related to energy and construction sectors witnessed the momentous ceremony and commended the

efforts of the LUMS Energy Institute. Concluding his observations at the event, Dr. Chaudhry highlighted, "This report is not just an academic exercise; it is a blueprint for the future of sustainable architecture in Pakistan. We aim to inspire change in how buildings are designed and constructed, focusing on environmental sustainability and energy efficiency."

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Indian SC, A Facilitator of Hindutva - II

Article 370, a constitutional provision, bestowed special status upon the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This unique status granted the state the authority to have its own constitution, autonomy over internal matters (excluding defense, foreign affairs, and communications), and a distinct set of laws governing various facets of the state's affairs. The intention behind this arrangement was to honor the cultural, religious, and political diversity of the region. The abrogation of Article 370 was purportedly framed by the Modi-led Indian government as a step towards integrating Jammu and Kashmir into India. However, the decision encountered opposition both within India and from the global community, with critics viewing it as a violation of the distinctive identity of Jammu and Kashmir and a peril to its demographic and cultural fabric.

quences, leading to heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Pakistan condemned the move, exacerbating the already strained relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbors and resulting in increased military activities along the Line of Control.

Post the abrogation of Article 370, India initiated a process that people perceive as an attempt to alter the demographic majority. Drawing inspiration from the models of Palestine and strategies employed by Israel, India pursued actions to suppress the voice of Kashmiris through forceful means. Despite these efforts, India has been unsuccessful in silencing the voices of the Kashmiri people. Continuous reports of human rights violations and media restrictions underscore the ongoing challenges in the region.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Following the abrogation, the region underwent substantial changes. The state was restructured into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. The removal of Article 370 resulted in the forfeiture of the special autonomy that had defined the region for decades. While the Indian government pledged economic development, investment, and opportunities, apprehensions arose due to a communication blackout, movement restrictions, and allegations of human rights violations in the aftermath of the decision. These concerns triggered discussions on the delicate balance between security measures and fundamental rights.

The abrogation of Article 370 also had far-reaching geopolitical conse-

quences, leading to heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Pakistan condemned the move, exacerbating the already strained relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbors and resulting in increased military activities along the Line of Control.

In a recent development, the Supreme Court of India has affirmed the controversial decision made by the Hindu extremist Modi government on August 5, 2019, to abrogate Article 370. Simultaneously, the court dismissed petitions advocating for the restoration of the special status of Occupied Kashmir. Chief Justice DY Chandra Chadha, in delivering the verdict, asserted that, following India's recognition, Jammu and Kashmir lacks internal autonomy, and the application of Article 370 was temporary. According to Articles 1 and 370 of the Constitution, occupied Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part

of India. The judgment clarified that the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly did not aim to create a separate entity, and Article 370 does not freeze the integration of Jammu and Kashmir. The court upheld the Modi Government's decision of August 5, 2019, stating that the President possesses the authority to abrogate any constitutional provision.

Supreme Court of India rejected petitions seeking the reinstatement of the special status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, the court mandated the holding of elections for the Occupied Kashmir Assembly by September 30, 2024. It is noteworthy that the Supreme Court had reserved its decision on September 5 regarding petitions challenging the revocation of Article 370, which granted special status to Occupied Kashmir, by the Modi government. These petitions called for the restoration of Article 370 and the statehood of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, while also contesting the division of the region into Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, led a 5-member bench that heard the case on a daily basis, spanning 16 days.

The recent verdict by the Indian Supreme Court serves as a wake-up call for those who champion the cause of an Independent Kashmir. The Government of India, along with its Supreme Court, is being accused of openly disregarding human rights and steadfastly adhering to the principles of Hindutva ideology. The feasibility of establishing

an Independent Kashmir is questionable in the face of India, viewed as an adversary that considers Kashmir an integral part. India, from a security perspective, is unlikely to allow Kashmir to function independently. The alignment of religion, culture, language, and other characteristics with Pakistan makes coexistence with Pakistan the most viable solution. The historical treatment of India towards its neighboring countries and minority groups within its borders is evident. Advocates of an Independent Kashmir need to acknowledge and understand this reality.

Readers, it is essential to emphasize that the courts and judicial systems in civilized societies are expected to uphold human rights and factual accuracy. The undeniable fact is that Kashmir has never been, nor will it be, a legitimate part of India. The recent decision by the Supreme Court is disheartening for human rights advocates, as it appears to grant the Modi government unchecked authority to continue violating human rights in Kashmir. Furthermore, it contradicts United Nations regulations on Kashmir, which unequivocally designate Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and direct India to afford Kashmiris the right to self-determination. The Indian Supreme Court, in this context, seems to align itself with the Hindutva ideology, which aims to suppress the rights of minorities. The international community, led by the United Nations, must intervene to compel India to adhere to UN resolutions, granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to self-determination and putting an end to these repeated actions that defy international norms.

Afghan Refugees

Highlighting that Pakistan is still hosting over 1.4 million Afghan refugees, a senior Pakistani diplomat has called on the world community to continue providing Islamabad with the necessary support to take care of them. Speaking at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Asif Durrani said that Pakistan, for over four decades, shouldered the global responsibility of hosting, protecting, and assisting Afghan refugees.

"We reaffirm this pledge to Afghan refugees, who enjoy equal access to basic facilities of life at par with Pakistani citizens," he told the Forum, the world's largest international gathering on refugees and host communities. "This is despite the fact that like many other developing countries, Pakistan continues to grapple with the triple crises of food, fuel and inflation." Ambassador Durrani said. "We sincerely hope that the international community will continue to demonstrate its responsibility by providing sustained and adequate support to Pakistan as a host country," he added.

In his opening speech, UN refugee agency (UNHCR) chief Filippo Grandi told delegates that a record 114 million forcibly displaced, around the world, represent a "crisis of humanity". The Global Refugee Forum — co-hosted by UNHCR and Switzerland and convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan and Uganda — brings together member states, civil society, financial institutions, private companies and more than 300 refugee advocates. Setting the tone for the discussion, Grandi said that 114 million "represents the number of refugees and displaced people whom persecution, human rights violations, violence, armed conflict, serious public disorder have forced from their homes: 114 million shattered dreams, disrupted lives, interrupted hopes." In his remarks, Ambassador Durrani pointed out that international burden and responsibility sharing was disproportionate, inequitable, and unpredictable while developing countries continue to host around 80% of refugees population out of their own meager resources.

"Regrettably," the Pakistani envoy said, "International support to the displaced and the distressed has become most scarce when it is most needed." On its part, he said, Pakistan has recently launched a third tranche of 4500 education scholarships for Afghans including refugees. Pakistan provides 100 percent medical facilities to Afghan refugees while 95 percent of secondary and tertiary health support to Afghan nationals, visiting Pakistan. "Pakistan has, therefore, led by practice," Ambassador Durrani said. The very act of hosting over 1.4 million Afghan refugees was Pakistan's continued pledge to addressing safety and protection needs of people in vulnerable situations, he said, adding this was besides the 0.9 million Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, staying in Pakistan with equal rights. Stressing the need for advancing durable solutions for refugee situations, the Pakistani envoy said the absence of war in Afghanistan after four decades of conflict, provides a window of opportunity.

"Addressing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan must remain a top priority," he said. Economic revival and international support for development, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities were also needed to create conditions conducive for voluntary returns. After the withdrawal of US/NATO troops from Afghanistan in August 2021, he said, Pakistan received additional 0.7 million Afghan nationals, presumably to settle in third countries. However, so far, a maximum of 150,000 have been repatriated to third countries. The promise of third-country resettlement has largely remained a distant dream for Afghans, he pointed out. "The slow pace of resettlement process is a source of concern for Pakistan," Ambassador Durrani said. "We look forward to an impactful, multi-year, and well-resourced commitment by global partners for Afghan refugees and their host communities in all these areas."



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

Supreme Court summons spymasters

In a historic move for Pakistan, the Supreme Court summoned retired Lt. General Faiz Hameed, a former spy chief, and Brigadier Irfan Ramay. However, it declined to summon former army chief Qamar Javid Bajwa and Brigadier Faisal Marwat. Additionally, notices were issued to Arbab Mohammad Arif, former registrar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and former Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court Anwar Kansi. This action came after allegations made by Mr. Shaukat Siddique, a former Judge of the Islamabad High Court, accusing them of manipulating judicial proceedings, influencing bench formations favorable to the ISI, and seeking their approval for court decisions. The Supreme Court is seeking their responses and perspectives on these allegations.

While the appearance of these retired army officers in court remains uncertain, historical precedent suggests that Supreme Court summonses have often faced challenges in securing compliance. Past cases have been stalled or dismissed due to diverse factors, including political influence and military resistance to cooperation.

In the present political landscape, where there's a widespread perception that the military exerts significant influence across all state domains, including the judiciary, the act of issuing summonses to these officers represents a substantial leap forward in the country's judicial history.

During an open hearing, the Chief Justice issued these summonses, and the live telecast of the proceedings offered the entire population an engaging experience in the said case.

To better understand this significant case, it's essential to delve into its background. Mr. Shoukat Siddique was unceremoniously removed from service under Article 209(6) of the Constitution of Pakistan.

The President acted upon the recommendation of a five-member Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), which found the Judge guilty of misconduct and

behavior unbecoming of a Judge due to a speech he delivered before the Rawalpindi District Bar Association in July 2021.

During his speech, Justice Siddique alleged that the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) personnel were interfering in judicial proceedings. He claimed that the ISI was exerting pressure on Chief Justice Muhammad Anwar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to form benches with judges influenced by the intelligence agency. Moreover, he asserted that non-compliant judges were being removed from these benches under ISI's influence. He further alleged that the ISI compelled the IHC Chief Justice to prolong the imprisonment of Nawaz Sharif and his daughter until the 2018 elections and excluded Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui from the bench handling Sharif's appeals. Following this speech, a reference was filed on July 31 before the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), charging Justice Siddique for accusing the establishment of manipulating judicial proceedings.

There were additional references filed against the judge. One was filed by a retired Capital Development Authority (CDA) employee, alleging the refurbishment of the judge's official residence beyond entitlement. Another show-cause notice was issued to Justice Siddiqui under Article 209 (5)(6) of the Constitution by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) based on a reference moved by Advocate Kulum Khalid, representing former National Assembly member Jamshed Ahmed Dasti. This reference alleged that the high court judge objected to a compromise between the federal government and the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah during a hearing on a case related to the 20-day Faizabad sit-in. The compromise had been facilitated by the armed forces. Following scrutiny of the reference, a meeting of the SJC on Feb 6 determined that the judge was guilty of misconduct and should be issued a show-cause notice in this regard.

The timing of the appeal's scheduling after a prolonged delay holds significant weight. Back in

2018, there was a perceived alignment between the judicial system and the army leadership to bring Imran Khan to power. During that time, anyone perceived as an obstacle to this alignment was either removed, marginalized, or silenced.

However, the current tide seems to favor Nawaz Sharif and is against Imran Khan. In this scenario, there's speculation that individuals involved in Nawaz Sharif's removal will face consequences, while those who supported him will be rewarded. This could potentially mean that Mr. Shoukat Siddique might be in line for recognition or reward, whereas General Faiz Hameed and his associates could face repercussions.

This situation aligns with Nawaz Sharif's recent national address, where he emphasized his return not for seeking retribution but to hold accountable those judges and bureaucrats, both civilian and military, who he claims were instrumental in his ousting from power. He highlighted the imprisonment of himself, his daughter, and close associates based on what he believes were unjust and fabricated charges.

During the proceedings, the judges adamantly pledged not to favor any party, yet they guided the lawyers to connect the case with a broader cause rather than framing it solely as absolving the judge from charges of misconduct.

The Supreme Court bench, comprising all five members, maintained a stern approach, often reprimanding and intimidating the lawyers who displayed remarkable restraint. The session seemed at a standstill at one point, with the Chief Justice suggesting that the case might not revolve around a significant national issue but rather the restoration of the judge's pension. He even summoned the attorney general for input on this matter.

The proceedings took a turn when the Chief Justice and another judge urged the lawyers to explicitly name the individuals and institutions allegedly involved in manipulating court proceedings in their favor. They emphasized the need for clarity instead of using vague terms like "establishment" or "certain elements."

To be continued

The Ongoing Gaza Crisis: A Call for Global Action

Zaheer-ud-Din Babar

The relentless series of brutal bombings by Israel on Gaza has not only shocked the world but has also raised serious concerns about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region. In the latest development, the United States' decision to veto a ceasefire resolution in the United Nations has once again brought into question the international community's commitment to addressing the plight of the Palestinian people. Addressing the Doha Forum in Qatar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressed deep regret over the failure of the ceasefire resolution in the Security Council. In unequivocal terms, he stated, "The United Nations is paralyzed; it is regrettable that they failed to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza through the Security Council."

This statement comes at a critical juncture, with the Secretary-General invoking Charter Article 99, historically reserved for matters posing a significant threat to international peace and security. As the diplomatic efforts falter, the situation on the ground worsens. The Israeli military's widespread killings and looting in Gaza have created a dire humanitarian crisis. Shockingly, Israel has directed over two million oppressed and impoverished Palestinians to "seek shelter in humanitarian zones." It is alarming to note that this designated zone is a mere eight square kilometers, smaller than London's Heathrow

Airport. The scale of the atrocities is staggering, with over 17,000 Palestinians, including more than 7,000 children, having lost their lives in Israeli attacks. The recent wave of violence has exposed the world to the distressing reality of extremist actions perpetrated by some factions within Israel. The indiscriminate killing of Palestinians has drawn attention to the urgent need for a global response to prevent further loss of innocent lives. Equally troubling is the perceived silence of the Muslim world in the face of such brutality. Self-proclaimed Muslim leaders, particularly those in the Islamic world and Muslim Brotherhood, are accused of doing little to address the crisis.

The author argues that only a handful of Muslim countries out of more than fifty have shown a willingness to take concrete steps to halt Israeli atrocities. Drawing a parallel to historical events, it suggests that, akin to the long-term impacts of the Nine-Eleven incident, Israeli atrocities could have far-reaching consequences. The fear is that extremist elements in Muslim countries may gain strength in the aftermath of such violence. The Muslim ruling elite is portrayed as being acutely aware of the negative exposure brought about by social media, which has fueled resentment against them in Western countries supporting Israel. The comparison is drawn to the transformative impact of the Nine-Eleven incident, implying that recent events, including the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, have the potential to reshape the global political landscape.

S&P Global Pakistan mentors 20,000 Women across Pakistan through its Million Women Mentors Program

PPA

ISLAMABAD: S&P Global Pakistan has successfully mentored 20,000 women across the country as part of its Million Women Mentors (MWM) programme. Initiated in 2020, the program is designed to ignite curiosity and boost the self-assurance of women to thrive in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers and leadership positions, leveraging the transformative influence of mentorship. The program culminated in a grand event held at a central location in Islamabad. The event was graced by Andrew Schofer, the Chargé d'Affaires of the U. S. Embassy in Pakistan, who served as the Chief Guest. His presence underscored the importance of the Million Women Mentors (MWM) programme and its impact on promoting women in STEM fields in Pakistan.

While applauding the Million Women Mentors (MWM) programme, Andrew Schofer, the Chargé d'Affaires of the U. S. Embassy in Pakistan said, "Mentoring is a powerful way to encourage and equip women and girls to pursue their career in all sectors. We are incredibly excited that S&P Global joined with us in this initiative and has been trailblazer in reaching their mentoring commitments. Mentorship nurtures our next generation of professionals in the workplace and can enable women to rise to positions of leadership".

Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director, S&P Global Pakistan, said, "This landmark achievement highlights our commitment to progress and equality, embodied in the Million Women Mentors (MWM) initiative.

To honor their commitment, S&P Global Pakistan, teamed up with the Society for International Education (SIE), The Indus Entrepreneurs

(TIE), She Means Work (SMW), National Incubation Center (NIC), Epiphany, Caterpillars, and xCircle Women.

Under the MWM program over 250 sessions were conducted, engaging 150+ S&P Global mentors who dedicated more than 1170 volunteer hours. Covering a diverse range of STEM-related topics, the program mentors provided critical support to women entrepreneurs and professionals. The mentorship covered areas such as STEM Awareness, Upscaling Business using Technology, Growth Mindset, Confidence and Imposter Syndrome, Freelancing, Digital Marketing, Building Resumes, and LinkedIn profiles. The commitment to mentor 20,000 women, and girls over three years has reached fruition. The MWM initiative has been lauded for the impact it has had and won the Vanguard Award in 2020 while earning an Honorable Mention in 2021.



Nepal PM calls for revival of SAARC—President Dhakal

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: "SAARC has enormous potential to alter our region's development landscape," stated Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal during a call-on by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry delegation led by President Md. Jashim Uddin in Kathmandu, Nepal.

During the two-day visit, the delegation also met Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal, Hon'ble Narayan Prakash Saud, and the Secretary General of SAARC, Md. Golam Sarwar followed by the celebrations of the 39th SAARC Charter Day and the 82nd Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI.

The meeting with the Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon'ble Pushpa Kamal Dahal focused on the revitalization of the SAARC mechanism and the importance of strengthening regional cooperation despite the great difficulties and emerging challenges. He stated that to ensure South Asia's progress towards development goals, all member states in SAARC should explore and work on the potentials and emerging opportunities.

Hon'ble Prime Minister emphasized that as Nepal is the Chair of SAARC, the intervention of Nepal together with all SAARC member states would be significant in the revival of SAARC for the betterment of people in the region.

Mr. Chandhi Raj Dhakal, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) and Mr. Shafquat Haider, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) were part of the delegation from their respective countries.

During the meeting with the



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal, Hon'ble Narayan Prakash Saud, he underscored the importance of effective multilateral cooperation among SAARC states. Md. Jashim Uddin, President SAARC CCI, highlighted the significance of governments' support for the South Asian business community in achieving economic goals of the region.

Adding to the discourse, Mr. Chandhi Raj Dhakal, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) and Mr. Shafquat Haider, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) provided valuable insights into the pivotal role of South Asian states in advancing the vision of SAARC. Whereas, Dr. Mariyam Shakeela, President, MWCC, emphasized the need for collective efforts to achieve regional prosperity, urging the fostering of public-private partnerships.

Mr. Zulfikar Butt, Secretary

General SAARC CCI stressed the need to explore the untapped potentials in regional development, connectivity, and economic collaboration, highlighting SAARC CCI's relentless commitment to the revival of SAARC.

On the occasion of 39th SAARC Charter Day, Md. Jashim Uddin, President SAARC CCI, and his delegation called on H. E. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC focusing on strengthening socioeconomic cooperation and economic integration in South Asia. President SAARC CCI, Md. Jashim Uddin, emphasized South Asia's potential to become a robust economic bloc and urged a revival of cooperation among all South Asian nations.

H. E. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC, stated, "The SAARC Secretariat is fully committed to supporting the socioeconomic initiatives that will

contribute to the collective achievement of sustainable development goals in South Asia." He further added that the SAARC Secretariat would expedite the process of taking necessary measures to organize the SAARC Committee Meetings, Ministerial Level Meetings and the SAARC Summit in coordination with all SAARC member states.

During the meeting, the EC and GA members reviewed the previous year's activities, discussed upcoming events and initiatives in 2024, addressed the recognition matter of SAARC apex and allied bodies, approved the nominations for the SAARC CCI Councils and Committees, reviewed the annual plan and budget, approved audited accounts, and provided updates on the SAARC CCI headquarters building project and life memberships. Mr. Zubair Ahmad Malik, Vice Chair of the SAARC CCI

Headquarters Building Committee and the EC Member SAARC CCI (Pakistan) stressed on financial aspects involved in completing the headquarters project.

The delegation from Pakistan

comprised of Ms. Hina Mansab Khan, Chairperson, SCWEC, Mr. Safdar Zaman, Executive Member (Pakistan), and Mr. Zulfikar Butt, Secretary General, and Mr. Bader Munir, Director, SAARC CCI. Similarly, the delegates from South Asia who attended the meetings were Mr. Shafquat Haider, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Mr. Desh Bandhu Basnet (Ajit) Executive Committee Member, FNCCI, Ms. Jyotsna Shrestha, Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI (Nepal), Dr. Mariyam Shakeela, President, WCCI Maldives, Ms. Shaira Saleem, Vice Chairperson, SCWEC (Maldives), Mr. Bandula Egodage, Executive Committee Member, SCCI (Sri Lanka), Mr. Wansapriya Gunaseela, General Assembly Member, SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Tilan Wijesooriya, Associate Director, SAARC CCI.

In conclusion, the two-day program in Nepal undertaken by the SAARC CCI delegation from South Asian countries reflected a steadfast commitment for regional cooperation and socioeconomic growth while highlighting the pivotal role of SAARC CCI in achieving common goals of South Asia.

SAARC CCI delegation led by Md. Jashim Uddin, President SAARC CCI called on Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on December 8, 2023, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Taste Fest to plant 1,500 trees at Gulberg Greens in 2023



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad based organisation has been working with the US Embassy in Pakistan to help develop youth environmental leaders across the country. As part of the initiative, ELF in collaboration with the participants of Taste Fest will be planting 1,500 trees at Taste Fest Islamabad on 17th of December, 2023 at Gulberg Greens.

The 7th edition of Taste Fest is happening on 15th, 16th and 17th of December, 2023. Taste fest is the ultimate family, food and musical festival. Taste Fest is a product of Eleven Productions in collaboration with ICCI and Gulberg Greens as partners. This year's lineup features some of Pakistan's biggest musical acts including Ali Zafar, Young Stunners, Asim Azhar and Sahara UK.

As part of the next phase of this training, ELF is conducting plantations in different cities with participation of the youth.

Speaking at the launch event, Adeel Abid, COO said, "Over the past year, ELF has been working with 2,000 plus students in 36 educational institutions to help develop young environmental leaders and raise awareness of environmental challenges facing the country but also how youth can play their part in combatting them. The tree plantations we are conducting are an important way of developing good environmental habits among the youth that they must follow and also encourage others to do the same."

ELF is also working with Taste Fest on how food wastage from the event can be minimized and provided to the underprivileged.

President Ilham Aliyev chaired meeting regarding hosting of COP29 in Azerbaijan next year

PPA / Spokesman Report

BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has chaired a meeting regarding the holding of the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - COP29 in the country next year.

The head of state made a speech at the meeting.

Speech by President Ilham Aliyev

A few days ago, our country achieved another great success - the COP29 international conference will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan. This decision was made by all countries of the world a few days ago. Thus, great confidence and great respect have once again been shown for Azerbaijan. We fully deserve that. As a result of our policy, we have secured very strong positions on the global scale. Respect for Azerbaijan in the international arena is growing by the day, and we have earned this respect with our actions, work and policies. Our independent policy, our principled position, our compliance with and commitment to international law and, at the same time, the restoration of sovereignty on the territory of our country have further boosted respect for us.

The importance of this event,



among other things, also consists in the fact that this decision was made two and a half months after the anti-terror operation. Thus, the entire world community has once again expressed support for Azerbaijan. I should also note that the decision to hold the COP29 conference in Baku has been made with the consent of every member of the international community. The unanimous position has been demonstrated here again.

True, certain Western countries made baseless allegations against Azerbaijan after the anti-terror operation. These accusations against us have no basis whatsoever. Because Azerbaijan has once again secured

the supremacy of international law by conducting the anti-terror operation against separatists and occupiers in our sovereign territory. At the same time, we have restored our sovereignty by restoring all humanitarian norms. Certain Western countries, traditionally including France, of course, are not going to put up with that. However, the international community already sees that even Armenia has come to terms with this situation, and the decision to hold the COP29 conference in Azerbaijan is further evidence of that. But some political leaders of France are trying to be more Armenian than the Armenians themselves. However, they will also have to

come to terms with this situation.

Also, the concept of international community and international unity is sometimes distorted in the West. The international community is not about 30-40 countries. The international community includes all countries of the world, and these countries have unanimously shown their great support for Azerbaijan. This is not the first time this has happened. We have been successfully chairing the Non-Aligned Movement for four years, and here too, our chairmanship has been possible with the support of 120 countries. In fact, our chairmanship has been extended by one year. This was a great indicator in itself. A total of 120 countries of the world have expressed their support for Azerbaijan. This time, all countries of the world have shown this support.

Of course, the hosting of large-scale international events places a great responsibility on us. However, we have already hosted a number of major international events so far. In fact, we have hosted the International Astronautical Congress with great success this year. Everyone knows that this prestigious international event has been held in Baku for the second time. This



event was first held in Baku, the capital of Soviet Azerbaijan, 50 years ago, and this year it was held in Baku, the capital of independent Azerbaijan, again. Of course, COP29 does not compare with any of the events held so far - even if we recall the European Games when 5,000 athletes and about 3,000 guests accompanying them came to Azerbaijan. However, tens of thousands of foreign visitors will come to our country for COP29, and Baku will become the center of the world for two weeks. According to some estimates, about 70,000-

80,000 foreign visitors will come to our country during this period. I believe that COP29 is one of the most prestigious international events in the world. From the point of view of the number of countries represented, it is no inferior to the UN General Assembly. Therefore, we should immediately start all preparatory work. We don't have too much time - less than 11 months. Therefore, I thought that I should chair the first meeting and give all the necessary instructions. I will be regularly updated on the progress in the implementation

of these instructions. I have no doubt that we will hold the COP29 international conference at a high level and that it will be yet another great success for our country and people. At the same time, Azerbaijan will assert itself in this field as an oil and gas country and everyone in the world will see again that our agenda is related to green energy. The creation of green energy and the transportation of green energy to world markets are currently the priorities of our energy policy. This is a reality and the whole world will see it again.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
66,130.02	65,450.18	
Day's High	Day's Low	
66,346.76	65,559.48	
Index Value	Change	
21,982,685,768	+679.84	
Percentage	Time	
+1.04%	15 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,576.36	-72.62	
Percentage	Time	
-0.95%	15 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
37,268.82	+20.47	
Percentage	Time	
+0.055%	15 Dec, 12:06 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
32,970.55	+284.30	
Percentage	Time	
+0.87%	15 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.2	189
Bahrain Dinar	754.94	762.94
Canadian Dollar	209	211
China Yuan	39.6	40
Danish Krone	41.86	42.26
Euro	310	313
Hong Kong Dollar	36.35	36.7
Indian Rupee	3.41	3.52
Japanese Yen	1.39	1.45
Kuwaiti Dinar	923.49	932.49
Malaysian Ringgit	60.32	60.92
New Zealand \$	176.54	178.54
Norwegians Krone	25.98	26.28
Omani Riyal	737.37	745.37
Qatari Riyal	77.98	78.68
Saudi Riyal	75.7	76.4
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	27.17	27.47
Swiss Franc	328.62	331.12
Thai Bhat	8.16	8.31
U.A.E Dirham	77.7	78.4
UK Pound Sterling	361	365
US Dollar	283.4	286.2

Property Exhibition

Government is focusing on the development of construction and housing sector: Federal Minister

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction Exhibition organized by Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry started yesterday at Pak China Friendship Center Islamabad. Chairman Khurshid Barlas and Fahad Barlas, Convener Exhibition PAEI, executive committee members, foreign diplomats, members associated with housing and construction sector, government officials and a large number of business community associated with the tourism industry participated in the opening ceremony.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Education Minister Madad Ali Sindhi said that the government is focusing on the development of the construction and housing sector as it will create employment opportunities in the country, promote growth and economic development and increase the population. It has



played an important role in meeting the housing needs. Emphasized the need to adopt environment-friendly, energy-saving and cost-effective construction and housing practices to provide quality housing to the people.

Education Minister Madad Ali Sindhi congratulated the Chairman PAEI and his team for organizing the wonderful exhibition and appreciated their efforts. Pakistan should organize such exhibitions to become economically stable and to increase investment Chairman Khurshid Barlas while addressing the event said that our aim is to bring investment in the country and increase exports. And about 500 different events, conferences, seminars and expos have been organized at the international level. He said that Pakistan needs investment, foreign exchange and economic activities and the business community of the country is playing an important role in this regard.

SECP's awareness session at ICCI about amendments to the Companies Act

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized an awareness session about the Incorporation of Companies, Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess (LEAP), and the Latest Amendments in the Companies Act for ease of doing business.

Faisal Lateef Khawaja Joint Registrar, Muhammad Naeem Khan Additional Registrar/Incharge Company Registration Office Islamabad gave a detailed presentation to the business community about the role of SECP and the latest amendments in the Companies Act in promoting ease of doing business.

The presentation covered the role and functions of SECP, registration & and regulation of companies, modes of doing business, kinds of companies, benefits of a company, companies established outside Pakistan, and establishment of businesses in Pakistan.

They said that SECP has envisioned a



digital transformation program named "Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess (LEAP)" to position itself as a role model regulator and to deliver a world-class experience to its shareholders. They said that the concept of "startup companies" has been introduced to promote innovation and technological development. Earlier, the buyback of shares was restricted to only listed companies, however, all companies have now been allowed to buy back their shares.

Faod Waheed, Senior Vice President,

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry welcomed the SECP team and said that its role is very important in private sector development in Pakistan by ensuring transparent laws and good governance.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, ICCI thanked the SECP team for organizing an awareness session at ICCI for the business community. He said that SECP should organize such awareness sessions in chambers of commerce regularly to educate the business community and help them in business promotion.

SECP initiates public consultation on simplifying the licensing process for online brokers and trading only brokers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: To facilitate the brokerage industry and improve investor participation in the equity market, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has initiated public consultation on simplifying the licensing process for online brokers and trading-only brokers.

The public consultation aimed at eliminating the two-stage licensing process for online-only and trading-only brokers, making the application process for licenses significantly easier for applicants.

The SECP had recently introduced the concept of a new class of securities brokers, namely "Online Only Brokers." Presently, applicants for the license in

the Online Broker or Trading Only Broker category are required to obtain prior permission from SECP, which is followed by company incorporation and finally submitting a license application.

Online-Only brokers offer significant advantages in terms of considerably improve market participation by exploiting technology and tapping the underserved demographic devoid of conventional brokerage services. This category is subject to less stringent compliance requirements since majority of compliance burden and the custody services are handled by a Professional Clearing Member and the brokers can therefore focus on the core competencies of providing brokerage services and increasing investor base.

NBP digital app is now available in Urdu

PPA

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) has introduced Urdu language support in its digital app to cater to a diverse customer base across the country. The move reflects NBP's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring accessibility for customers from all regions. The NBP Digital app offers convenient services, including card activation, secure bank transfers, and a platform for trading and investment. With this initiative, NBP aims to provide a more personalized and inclusive banking experience. The app is now available for download on major app stores, promoting seamless financial transactions in the national language.

OPPO unveils A58 Smartphone

ABC

LAHORE: OPPO, a global technology leader, unveils the highly anticipated OPPO A58 smartphone, set to redefine the mobile experience in Pakistan. Available for pre-order at all OPPO platforms, the A58 promises to set new benchmarks in performance, design, and user experience.

Cutting-Edge Features: Designed for tech-savvy consumers, the OPPO A58 boasts a 6.72-inch FHD+ Sunlight Display and upgraded Dual Stereo Speakers, delivering an immersive entertainment experience. With 33W SUPERVOOC charging, a long-lasting 5000mAh battery, and ColorOS 13.1, the A58 blends style with excellent battery life and reliable performance for dynamic lifestyles.

Performance Redefined: Powered by the MediaTek Helio G85 platform and 8GB RAM, the A58 offers ample memory and storage space. The RAM expansion technology doubles capacity to 16GB, ensuring smooth multitasking.

Captivating Display and Design: Featuring a 6.72-inch FHD+ Sunlight Display with a 2400x1080 resolution and support for 100% DCI-P3 color gamut, the A58 provides vibrant visuals. Available in Glowing Black and Dazzling Green, the smartphone's sleek design weighs 192g and measures 7.99 mm for a comfortable grip.

Bank Alfalah joins forces with IFC to embark on its green banking journey

PPA

LAHORE: Bank Alfalah, a leading commercial bank in Pakistan and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) formalised a Green Banking Advisory Agreement. This agreement underscores Bank Alfalah's dedication to fostering sustainable and accountable green banking practices. It follows the Bank's successful adoption of the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM) framework, aligning with the Green Banking Guidelines introduced in October 2017.

The collaboration with IFC will encompass several key initiatives. Through this engagement, IFC will leverage its global expertise in supporting Bank Alfalah in develop-



ing a green banking roadmap and own-impact measurement capabilities and exploring avenues for sustainable financing. Additionally, the partnership will empower Bank Alfalah to explore avenues in sustainable finance, leveraging IFC's global network.

Expressing commitment to

advancing sustainable development in Pakistan, Atif Bajwa, the President and CEO of Bank Alfalah, stated, "Bank Alfalah is committed to playing a leading role in promoting sustainable development and looking forward to embarking upon the journey towards green banking. This partnership with IFC

will reinforce our green banking capabilities, contributing to a greener future for the nation."

Hela Cheikhrouhou, IFC's Regional Vice President for the Middle East, Central Asia, Türkiye, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, commented, "IFC is pleased to partner with Bank Alfalah to support its ambitious green banking agenda. With this engagement, we hope to highlight the potential of green banking in Pakistan and help encourage greater climate financing led by the country's private sector."

Bank Alfalah's decision to engage IFC as its green banking advisor stemmed from various factors, including IFC's extensive track record in shaping green banking business models and its adeptness in policy development, including collaborations with SBP.

FFC clinches first position amongst top 25 listed companies

PPA

ISLAMABAD: FFC has been declared as FIRST for 13th consecutive time amongst the TOP 25 Listed Companies for the Year 2022 in a ceremony held at Karachi. Brig Irfan Khan (Retd), Company Secretary and Syed Imran Rizvi, Manager Corporate Affairs represented FFC at the occasion. The award was received by Brig Irfan Khan from H. E. Mr. Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan. Brig Irfan Khan (Retd) stated that this award is the recognition of FFC's excellence in corporate and financial performance that speaks of highest standards of professionalism and dedication of our all stakeholders and particularly the unwavering trust and confidence of our



worthy shareholders in FFC's leadership and management.

Daraz and NAVTTC join forces to empower Pakistani youth with e-commerce education

PPA

KARACHI: Daraz, Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform, and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) have formalized a strategic partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in Karachi.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Hafeez Abbasi, Director General of SS&C, NAVTTC, and Mr. Ehsan Saya, Managing Director of Daraz. Mr.



Aamir Jan, Executive Director NAVTTC, was also present remotely. The collaboration aims at empowering individuals by improving their skills commerce, thereby enabling them to become successful sellers on the Daraz platform and boost entrepreneurship in the country.

Sarah Mahboob, Amna Ali to clash in Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan Tennis C'ship final

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: Sarah Mahboob will face Amna Ali Qayum in the final of Ladies Singles of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2023 on Saturday at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad. In the first semifinal on Friday, Sarah beat Amna Ali Qayum 6-4, 6-2, while Sheeza Sajid overcame Esha Jawad 7-6(5), 2-6, 5-1 (ret'd).

In Boys Singles 18 & under semifinals, Ahmed Nael outwitted Hamid Israr 6-0, 6-0, while Hamza Roman thrashed Hamza Aasim 6-4, 6-1. In men's doubles semifinals, Yousaf Khalil and Barkatullah beat M. Abid and Waqas Malik in an exciting contest 7-6(3), 7-6(4), whereas Shahzad Khan and Jalil Khan overpowered Mudassar Murtaza and Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-4.

Following are the results of all categories: Mens Doubles Semifinals: Yousaf

Khalil / Barkatullah bt M. Abid / Waqas Malik 7-6(3), 7-6(4); Shahzad Khan / Jalil Khan bt Mudassar Murtaza / Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-4. In Boys Singles 18 & under semifinals, Ahmed Nael outwitted Hamid Israr 6-0, 6-0, while Hamza Roman thrashed Hamza Aasim 6-4, 6-1. Boys Singles 18 & under semifinals: Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Hamid Israr 6-0, 6-0; Hamza Roman bt Hamza Aasim 6-4, 6-1. Boys Single 14 & quarterfinals: Abdul Basit bt Syed Mahd shehzad 5-3, 4-2; M. Hazik Aasim bt Nabeel Ali Qayum 2-4, 4-0, 4-0; Haziq Areejo bt Razik Sultan 4-0, 4-0; M. Hassan Usmani bt

Muzammil Bhand 4-0, 2-4, 4-2. Boys / Girls Singles 12 & under quarterfinals: Rashid Ali Bachani bt Ziyad Zaman 5-4(4), 5-4(4); Ahmed Hussain bt Zohaib Amjad 4-2, 4-1; Shayan Afridi bt S. Shakeeb 4-1, 4-2; Razik Sultan bt Ali Bachani 4-1, 4-1. Schedule for Saturday is as under: Ladies Singles Final: 01:00 PM - Sarah Mahboob Khan vs Sheeza Sajid. Mens Singles Semi-Finals: 10:00 am - Muhammad Shoaib vs Mudassar Murtaza. 11:15 am - Aqel Khan vs Muhammad Abid.

Fatima Sana's all-round show in vain as New Zealand win a thriller

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: New Zealand defeated Pakistan in a thrilling contest by one wicket at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch on Friday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match ODI series, according to information made available here by Pakistan Cricket Board. Chasing a target of 221 runs to win, New Zealand women's team, also known as White Ferns, lost two wickets for 13 runs due to brilliant bowling from captain Fatima Sana, leading her side for the first time in the absence of regular captain Nida Dar. Nida was ruled out from Friday's game after being hit on her face in the first ODI and experiencing symptoms of concussion.

Set to chase a modest 194, Pakistan's batting unit unfolded on a mere 182 despite a gritty half-century by their captain Saad Baig. Pakistan, after having a dismal start to the run chase when they were reduced to 22/2 in the sixth over, managed to recover well, courtesy of a sensible partnership between Baig and Azaan Awais. The pair took Pakistan past the 100-run mark and had put their side in command for a comfortable victory before both perished in successive overs. Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel. Baig remained the top-scorer for Pakistan U19 with a 52-ball 50, laced with four boundaries and a six while Awais struck five boundaries amid his cautious 41-run knock in 71 deliveries.

and knitted a 90-run partnership for the fifth wicket. After the departure of Natalia (39, 73b, 3x4s), wicketkeeper-batter Najiha Alvi joined Fatima in the middle, and the pair stitched a 65-run partnership for the sixth wicket. Right-handed batter Najiha scored a 38-ball 32, which included three fours. Twenty-two-year-old Fatima, who became the 10th ODI captain to lead the Pakistan women's team, led from the front and scored her second half-century in her 34th ODI. Fatima's unbeaten 90 off 104 - also her highest score in this format - included seven fours and a six. Her innings helped the touring side post 220 all out in 50 overs. For White Ferns, captain Sophie Devine bagged three wickets for 25 runs and also completed her 100 ODI wickets. Molly Penfold and Jonas each took two wickets. The ODIs are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25. The third game of the series will be played at the same venue on Monday, 18 December, with the first ball to be bowled at 2 pm local time. Scores in brief: New Zealand women

beat Pakistan women by one wicket. Pakistan 220 all out, 50 overs (Fatima Sana 90 not out, Natalia Parvaiz 39, Najiha Alvi 32; Sophie Devine 3-25, Fran Jonas 2-36, Molly Penfold 2-43) New Zealand 221-9, 48.5 overs (Maddy Green 83, Suzie Bates 74, Lea Tahuhu 21 not out; Ghulam Fatima 4-47, Fatima Sana 2-52) Player of the match - Maddy Green (New Zealand) Series schedule: 3 Dec - 1st T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by seven wickets) 5 Dec - 2nd T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by 10 runs) 9 Dec - 3rd T20I, Queenstown (New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by six runs on DLS) 12 Dec - 1st ODI, Queenstown (New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by 131 runs) 15 Dec - 2nd ODI, Christchurch (New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by one wicket) 18 Dec - 3rd ODI, Christchurch (2pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

Pakistan crashed out of U19 Asia Cup 2023 after shock UAE defeat

A Sports

The back-to-back dismissals sparked a collapse in Pakistan's batting lineup and they soon slipped to 121/7 in 29 overs. Ali Asfand and Amir Hassan then put together a cautious partnership for the eighth wicket and added 44 runs to the total. The duo, however, conceded a whopping 94 deliveries in the process, causing the required run-rate to skyrocket. The dire need to go big saw Hassan falling victim to Dhruv Prashar in the 45th over. He scored 27 in 47 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and a six. Asfand, on the other hand, held his ground firm but his efforts went in vain as the UAE bowlers ran through Pakistan U19 tailenders to wrap up a historic victory in the final over of the run chase. Asfand remained stranded at the crease with an unbeaten 16 in 61 deliveries. Hardik Pai and Ayman Ahmed led the bowling attack for the UAE with two wickets each while Omid Rehman, Prashar and Ammar Badami made one scalp each.



Putting UAE into bat first, Pakistan U19 did well to restrict the home side to 193 in 47.5 overs despite Aayan Afzal Khan's half-century. He played a captain's knock of 57-ball 55 with seven boundaries to his name. Opener Aryansh Sharma chipped in with his 46 from 70 balls with the help of six boundaries. Ethan D'Souza played a handy knock of 37 off 63 balls with two fours and a six to his name. Ubaid Shah, younger brother of star Pakistan pacer Naseem Shah, was the pick of Pakistan's bowlers with his 4-44 in 9.5 overs. Ali Asfand and Arafat Minhas

took two wickets each. In another semi-final clash, Bangladesh outclassed India by four wickets and also made it to the U19 Asia Cup final. India, after being sent to bat first, scored 188 in 42.4 overs on the back of Murugan Abhishek and Musheer Khan's fifties. The former top-scored with 74-ball 62 with six fours and two maximums to his name. The latter struck three fours on his way to 50 off 61 balls. Maruf Mridha was the pick of Bangladesh bowlers with his 4-41 in 10 overs. Rohanat Doullah Borson and Sheikh Paevez Jibon bagged two wickets each. Bangladesh successfully chased the 189-run target at the loss of six wickets in 42.5 overs. Ariful Islam was the star performer with his 94 off 90 balls. His knock included nine fours and four sixes. He was supported by Ahrar Amin who stuck three fours on his way to 101-ball 44. Naman Tiwari picked three wickets for India.



Prizegiving 2023
AUCKLAND: The philanthropist citizen of New Zealand, Mr. Sher Jawan and Mam Sofia's granddaughter received the award of 2023 by performing brilliantly in Zayed College, New Zealand.

Little, Campher star as Ireland win Zimbabwe ODI



Sports Desk
LAHORE: Josh Little claimed a national-record six wickets for 36 and Curtis Campher hit a brisk 66 as Ireland beat Zimbabwe by four wickets on Friday to take a 1-0 lead in the ODI series.

Having won the toss and opted to bat first, Zimbabwe slumped to 70-6 before a middle-order revival led by Wellington Masakadza (40) saw the hosts all out for 166 in 42.5 overs. Seamer Little wreaked havoc in the fourth over, claiming three wickets off five deliveries at Harare Sports Club. He dismissed Zimbabwe star Sikandar Raza, deputising as captain for injured Craig Ervine, soon after for just two. Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel. Ireland lost Andy Balbirnie to a golden duck and fellow opener and captain Paul Stirling (14) fell cheaply as the visitors stumbled to 29-2 in an innings briefly halted by rain. Campher then took charge, striking 10 fours off 71 balls, and stands of 52 with Harry Tector and 43 with Lorcan Tucker set up the tourists to reach 170-6 with 59 balls remaining. Victory gave Ireland the lead in the three-match series after the first was abandoned due to rain on Wednesday. The final match is scheduled for Sunday. Player-of-the-match Little said: "It was nice that the team won and I enjoyed some personal success. "I managed to beat the bat today on a few occasions and it kept the ball new, allowing me to swing it. "My in-swingers were a decent option to the right-handers, so that is definitely a plan. I was quite sore after my spell so I want to get into an ice bath and be ready for Sunday." Stirling, captaining Ireland for the first time on the white-ball tour of Zimbabwe, described the 10 overs of Little as "one of the best spells I have seen". "We wanted to go 1-0 up and ticked that box. There is a series to win and we will come back hungry on Sunday." Raza said: "We have had too many top-order collapses this year. We needed at least 200 runs to be competitive."

Pak vs Aus: Aamir Jamal creates record on Test debut against Australia

PERTH: Fast bowler Aamir Jamal became the 14th Pakistani cricketer on Friday to achieve a 5-wicket haul on his Test debut. Aamir finished with 6 for 111 - 6th-best bowling figures by a Pakistani player on debut - on day 2 of the Perth Test as Australia was bowled out for 487, moments after lunch. Before Aamir Jamal, Arif Butt, Mohammad Nazir, Shahid Nazir, Mohammad Zahid, Shahid Afridi, Mohammad Sami, Shabbir Ahmed, Yasir Arafat, Wahab Riaz, Tanvir Ahmed, Bilal Asif, Nauman Ali and Abrar Ahmed had also taken a five-wicket haul on their test debuts.

President's Trophy set to begin from 16 December

A Sports

LAHORE: President's Trophy is set to begin from 16 December 2023. The first-class tournament will be played till 31 January 2024 across three venues - National Bank Stadium, UBL Sports Complex and SBP Sports Complex - in Karachi. Seven departmental teams will play one another in a round-robin format. The tournament will comprise 22 games, which will be divided into seven rounds of league-stage matches and a five-day final between the top two teams from 27 to 31 January 2024. The President's Trophy marks the return of departmental cricket in the domestic structure, as was devised after the reinstatement of the PCB 2014 Constitution. Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel. The last edition of the President's Trophy was held in the 2018-19 domestic season, which was won by the State Bank of Pakistan. Departmental cricket will provide players an extra earning opportunity, as they will get to participate in additional tournaments following the conclusion of the regions-based domestic tournament cycle, which included the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (Winners: Karachi Whites), Pakistan Cup (Winners: Peshawar) and National T20 Cup (Karachi Whites). The seven teams participating in the tournament are as follows: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), Pakistan Television (PTV), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Ghani Glass. Nadeem Khan, Director of Domestic Cricket Operations, said that "the return of departmental cricket will benefit all the stakeholders." "We are hoping that the President's Trophy will bring even more depth and competition to our domestic circuit," he added. "We have added HEC and Ghani Glass to this first-class tournament on a probationary basis. We will closely monitor the performances of these two teams in this edition and make deci-

sions about their involvement in the preceding season based on their competitiveness at the first-class level." **President's Trophy 2023 Schedule:** 16-19 December: SNGPL vs Ghani Glass at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. PTV vs SBP at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. KRL vs WAPDA at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. 22-25 December: PTV vs SNGPL at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. KRL v Ghani Glass at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. WAPDA vs HEC at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. 28-31 December: SNGPL vs SBP at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. Ghani Glass vs PTV at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. KRL vs HEC at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. 03-06 January: SNGPL vs KRL at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. Ghani Glass vs HEC at UBL Sports Complex Karachi. SBP vs WAPDA at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. 09-12 January:

SNGPL vs WAPDA at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. HEC vs PTV at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. SBP vs KRL at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. 15-18 January: WAPDA vs Ghani Glass at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. KRL vs PTV at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. SBP vs HEC at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. 21-24 January: SNGPL vs HEC at SBP Sports Complex, Karachi. Ghani Glass vs SBP at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi. PTV vs WAPDA at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. 27-31 January: Final between the top two teams. **Team Squads:** PTV: Muhammad Uzair Mumtaz, Humayun Altaf, Muhammad Shahzad, Muhammad Suleman, Muhammad Hassan Nawaz, Nasir Nawaz, Muhammad Taimoor Khan, Waqar Hussain, Muhammad Junaid, Faisal Akram, Aliyan Mahmood, Ahmad Safi Abdullah, Daniyal Hussain Rajpoot, Adil Naz, Muhammad Ibtisam Rehman, Sudais Ulfat,



Israr Hussain, Jahandad Khan, Muhammad Hassan Mohsin, Muhammad Sadaqat. SNGPL: Sahibzada Farhan, Shahzaib Khan, Saim Ayub, Azhar Ali, Asad Shafiq, Saud Shakeel, Omair Bin Yousaf, Mubasir Khan, Ali Waqas, Muhammad Rizwan, Haseebullah, Abbas Afridi, Mir Hamza, Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Waseem, Bilawal Bhatti, Awais Anwar, Hunain Shah, Yasir Shah, Mehran Mumtaz. Ghani Glass: Shan Masood, Sharjeel Khan, Kashif Ali, Taysab Tahir, Mohsin Raza, Farhan Sarfraz, Hussain Talat, Shadab Khan, Saeed Malik, Noman

KRL: Abdul Faseeh, Ali Zaryab Asif, Muhammad Imran Dogar, Imran Rafiq, Sarmad Bhatti, Muhammad Sharoof Siraj, Waqar Ahmad, Israrullah, Maaz Ahmad Sadaqat, Kashif Ali, Ahmad Bashir, Sirajuddin, Muhammad Imran Jr., Muhammad Amir Khan, Arshadullah, Rohail Nazir, Jamal Anwar, Rohan Qadri, Umar Khan, Shayan Sheikh. WAPDA: Muhammad Saad, Bismillah Khan, Ayaz Tasawar, Umer Abid Kiyani, Khalid Usman, Tahir Hussain, Irfanullah Shah, Ahmad Shahzad, Ifthikhar Ahmad, Muhammad Saleem, Umar Akmal, Muhammad Basit Ali, Nageeb Masood, Muhammad Naveed, Muhammad Arif, Hassan Abid Kiyani, Ali Raza, Ahmad Khan, Asif Afridi, Muhammad Ikhlaq. SBP: Usman Salahuddin, Umar Amin, Agha Salman Ali, Zain Abbas, Rizwan Hussain, Muhammad Mohsin, Rameez Aziz, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Ali Shan, Ameer Hamza, Nisar Ahmad, Kashif Bhatti, Muhammad Imran, Sameen Gul, Zahid Mahmood, Muhammad Ilyas, Ali Usman, Aftab Ibrahim, Muhammad Abbas, Affaq Afridi

Group Photo

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the participants of 46th Specialized Training Program of Pakistan Administrative Service on Friday.



Photo: PID

Congratulations

Three Pak Navy officers promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Three Commodores of Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect.

Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood Malik was commissioned in Marine Engineering Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1992. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad and qualified Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering from National University of Science and Technology (NUST). During his illustrious naval career, the Admiral has served on various key appointments. His prominent appointments include



Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood Malik (left) Rear Admiral Shahzad Hamid (middle) Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood (right)

Fleet Marine Engineering Officer at Fleet Headquarters, Deputy MD Pakistan Navy Dockyard and Chief Staff Officer to Commander Logistics. Currently, Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood is appointed as Managing Director Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. The Admiral is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Rear Admiral Shahzad Hamid was commissioned

in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993. He is a Naval Aircraft Pilot by profession. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore and National Defence University Islamabad. The Admiral has a vast experience of Command and Staff appointments which include Command of P-3C aircraft Squadron and Command-

er Naval Aviation. He also served as Chief Staff Officer to Commander North as well as Naval Attaché of Pakistan in United States. Rear Admiral Shahzad Hamid is appointed as Director General Naval Intelligence in his new rank. The Admiral is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Basalat.

Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, Defence Services Command and Staff College Bangladesh and National Defence University Islamabad. The Admiral has an illustrious naval career covering vast experi-

ence of various Command and Staff appointments. His command appointments include commands of PMSS BARKAT, PMSS KASHMIR, PNS TARIQ, Commander 9th Auxiliary and Mine Warfare Squadron and Commander 25th Destroyer Squadron. He also served as Chief of Staff to Commander Combined Task Force-150 at HQ NAVCENT Bahrain, Director Studies at National Defence University Islamabad and Director Foreign Military Collaboration at NHQ. Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood has been appointed as Commandant PN War College at Lahore in his new rank. The Admiral is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Learned from the past?

Fall of Dhaka and our past, present and the future

Naveed Ahmad Khan

The creation of Bangladesh is one of the most sensitive and tragic chapters in the history of Pakistan. On Dec 16, 1971, Pakistani troops laid down their arms and surrendered for secession of East Pakistan. It is considered the darkest day in our history. The grievances of Dhaka were political one: it should have been handled with a political approach. Thousands of innocent civilians lost their lives in this tragedy.

On Mar 25, 1969, Gen Ayub resigned and handed over govt to General Yahya Khan. After that, first democratic election in history of Pakistan took place in Dec 1970, in which Awami League won a majority. Awami League did not get a single seat from West Pakistan and PPP met the same fate in the East wing.

Awami League had full rights to form a govt and rule over Pakistan. However, the leadership of West Pakistan denied the transfer of power to Awami League. Despite political issues, the external factor still played a major factor in fall of Dhaka.

Interestingly, it was the first time in the history of the world that a majority got separated from a minority. There were several reasons behind the disintegration of Pakistan and no single institution or person can be held responsible for this irremediably tragic event. Every year military and civilian Institutions remember this tragic event and shed some crocodile tears. Intellectuals write and speak about it, and lamentable and woeful songs are sung over it.

Civilized and visionary leaders and nations do not just keep such tragic events in songs for specific days, but learn from such incidents and



mark weaknesses by revisiting both sides of their history, in order to make better future strategies and to never repeat the mistakes again. Unfortunately, our stance on the 1971 national disaster is very vague and ambiguous, and till today, we have failed to explain the facts of this incident before the nation. Our policy-makers do not identify and address the reasons of the East Pakistan Crisis, and our youth can only wonder in mind or settle for guesses on this issue. Why

have our policy makers not been able to unveil the facts before the nation till today? Are we not going to repeat the same mistakes?

Today one can look around and find that all the shades which East Pakistan was facing prior to 1971 are still existing today as well with varying intensities: identity, language and racial crises, deprivation of basic citizen and other rights, abductions, mistreatments, extra-judicial killings, influence-peddling, frauds, neglect-

tion and sidelining, embezzlement and nepotism, the consequent separatist movements, Indian interventions, political repression and unethical and insane politics. Mismanagement, exploitation of resources and sidelining of local people are the elements which had produced the separation movement of Bengalis. Masses are not satisfied with civil-military policies, and almost all policies are elite-centric. People are deprived of basic human needs, corruption and nepotism has been penetrated in our political system, and the extrajudicial killings and missing persons' issues are on peak, and there is no voice for marginalized communities. Keeping this dismal continuation of the state of affairs in view, the ultimate message of the Fall of Dhaka is to ultimately eradicate these issues, promote national unity and harmony, and to save Pakistan from any further damage or disintegration.

IMF denies intentions of asking Pakistan to raise taxes on salaries

KARACHI: The IMF has denied media reports that the lending body is planning to ask Pakistan to increase taxes on salaries and business income, and increase the maximum threshold for petroleum levy. Media reports had been circulating stating that the IMF asked Pakistan to cut the number of tax slabs for the salaried and business class from the existing seven to four, increasing tax incidence on the middle and upper-middle income group.

ECP to announce action plan in light of law, Constitution: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would announce its action plan in the light of the Constitution and law.

Talking to the media outside the ECP he said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, the only constitutional body responsible for conducting elections in the country was the Election Commission.

"We neither can question the Election Commission, nor we can supervise it, in fact, the Election Commission supervises



the caretaker government," Murtaza Solangi maintained.

He said if anyone had a complaint with the ECP, he could contact the Election

Commission.

The ECP under the Constitution enjoyed the power to appoint District Returning Officers, Murtaza Solangi remarked.

The present caretaker regime was appointed under the constitutional process.

He said everyone had the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 and 19A of the Constitution, media was free, and there was no restriction on it.

To a question, he said that the caretaker government was providing equal opportunities to all registered political parties and leaders of political parties had the right of criticism.

President urges int'l community to play role to resolve Palestine issue

Bureau Report

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that international community should play its role for durable solution of Palestine. He deplored that vested interests were stopping the countries across the world to condemn the brutalities being committed against the innocent children, women and people in Palestine.

He made these remarks in a ceremony in which gold medals were conferred upon those who made significant efforts for creation of Pakistan.

Addressing the 29th annual gold medal distribution ceremony organized by Tehreek-e-Pakistan Workers Trust at Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust here, he said that those who had received medals their services were valuable and it was of utmost importance to recognize the history.

He said, "We are very fortunate that we are living in a free and independent state."

Arif Alvi said that vision behind the creation of Pakistan was very big and added that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had stressed on acquiring education while Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal talked about Muslim Ummah. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah always trusted in

students and he never talked about sectarianism, he added.

He said, "Efforts and vision of our forefathers was to get a piece of land from where resurgence of Muslims could take place in light of the Holy Quran and Sunnah."

He said, "Unfortunately today those signs are not visible which can help materialize the dream of our forefathers." Dr Arif Alvi said that there was a need to trace history to accomplish the vision behind the creation of Pakistan.

He said, "The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) taught us about forgiveness, unity, justice and all these elements are very essential for establishing a welfare state."

He said that justice was highly needed all over the world so that value of human life became equal. The President said that human mind without ethic and morality would lead to failure, adding that a united community always moved ahead with objective while hatred ruined everything.

He said that power of social media could not be denied but it was very regretful that it was a cause of spreading fake news. Mian Farooq Altaf, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed also spoke on the occasion.

Right to Information Act Applicable on Islamabad High Court: Shoaib Siddiqui

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui has rejected the observation of the registrar of Islamabad High Court that right to information act is not applicable on the high court according to the ruling of the Supreme Court. The registrar IHC was asked to provide the information in appeal No 2550-02-2023 titles Ali Mujtaba Vs IHC filed before Pakistan Information Commission.

The registrar IHC refused to provide the information referring to the ruling of SCP on 27 Sep 2023 in a petition Mukhtar Ahmad Ali Vs The registrar SCP. The ruling was "Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 is inapplicable to the Supreme Court."

The registrar IHC in response to the letter of registrar information commission that "Pakistan Information Commission constituted under the act 2017 lacks jurisdiction to entertain appeals against IHC, a constitutional body in



terms of section 2(ix) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017."

CIC, dismissed the stance of registrar IHC and passed the order in the appeal on 7 Nov 2023. CIC further noted that SCP in the judgement has not excluded IHC from the application of Right to Information Act 2017.

The petitioner Ali Mujtaba has withdrawn his appeal on which the CIC disposed it off.

Delegation of Telenor, Etisalat Group meets IT minister



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation comprising of the heads of Telenor Etisalat Group met with Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif here Thursday. The discussion focused on advancements in the telecom sector and the transition of Telenor's operations to PTCL, said a news release.

The delegation included Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO International Etisalat Group; Abdulrahim Al Nooryani, Chairman Etisalat International Pakistan; Hatem Bamatraf, CEO PTCL/Ufone; Petter-Borre Furberg, Head of Telenor Asia and Khurram Ashfaq, CEO Telenor

Pakistan. The minister expressed positivity about PTCL's acquisition of Telenor operations in Pakistan. The merger would strengthen digital connectivity and contribute to the overall growth of the telecom sector, he added.

The Ministry of IT, he said, is committed to enhancing telecom services, with a focus on improving quality and accessibility across the country.

Dr Umar Saif asked telecom companies to proactively take measures to deliver superior services to consumers, emphasizing the sector's significant contribution to the nation's progress. He also announced that spectrum auctions would be held soon.