

Petrol price increased

According to a notification issued here, the petrol price has been hiked by Rs1.35 to Rs 248.38 per litre. The price of high-speed diesel has been fixed at Rs 255.14 per litre after an increase of Rs3.85. Meanwhile, prices of other petroleum products have been reduced. The new price of kerosene will be Rs161.54, down by Rs1.48 from Rs163.02 per litre.



PIA stake sale attracts sole bid below govt's expectations

The final bidding process for the privatisation of PIA attracted just one bid of 10 billion Pakistani rupees (\$36 million) for a 60% stake in the national flag carrier, the Privatisation Ministry said on Thursday. The government had pre-qualified six groups in June, but only real-estate development company Blue World City participated in the bidding process, placing a bid that is below the government-set minimum price of 85 billion Pakistani rupees.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rabi-us-Sani 27, Friday, November 1, 2024

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman

f

Daily Spokesman Vol: 18, Issue: 199 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Meeting

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM, Amir of Qatar visit gallery of Pakistani artworks at National Museum of Qatar

Spokesman Report

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani visited the gallery of Pakistani artworks titled "Manzar: Art and Architecture of Pakistan from 1940s to Today" in the National Museum of Qatar on Thursday.

After attending bilateral delegation level meetings, the

Amir of Qatar and the Prime Minister traveled together to the museum.

The Amir of Qatar and, his sister Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani who is also Chairperson of Qatar Museums showed the prime minister the artworks in the exhibition and introduced organizers and the Pakistani artists in an informal and friendly atmosphere.

PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed

gratitude for holding the art gallery titled "Manzar" and promoting the Pakistani artists.

He said holding of this exhibition was a matter of pride for every Pakistani.

The prime minister emphasized that establishment of "Manzar" art gallery based on Pakistani artworks reflected the strong brotherhood and social bonds between Pakistan and Qatar.

During the visit, the prime

minister met with renowned Pakistani architect Nayyar Ali Dada, Pakistani photographers, painters, calligraphers and other artists. Pakistani paintings, photography, calligraphy and other artworks were displayed in the exhibition.

The artworks of Shakir Ali, Sadeqain, Gul Ji, Zubaida Agha, Kamil Ali Mumtaz, Nayyar Ali Dada and several other Pakistani artists were exhibited in the exhibition.

Meanwhile, in his post on X, the prime minister said that he was deeply touched by the warm reception accorded by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar. "Pakistan greatly values its special bond of friendship with Qatar! In this visit, we are adding momentum to Pak-Qatar ties."

He said he looked forward to the visit of the Amir of Qatar to Pakistan soon.

Govt to postpone legislation on increasing number of SC judges until next week

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to postpone the legislative process concerning the increase in the number of Supreme Court judges and amending the Practice and Procedure Act until next week, sources said on Thursday.

Earlier, the ruling coalition planned to present the aforementioned bill in the National Assembly on Friday. But the legislative process related to judges has been deferred for a few days.

Further consultations would



take place regarding new legisla-

tion related to the higher judiciary,

they added.

The government intends to bring JUI-F Chairman Maulana Fazlur Rehman on board before presenting the 27th constitutional amendment or any bill related to the judiciary.

On Wednesday, JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri stated that if the number of judges was insufficient and the government believed it should be increased, attention should first be given to the number of judges in the high courts.

He was of the view that if the goal was to provide relief to the

people, the government should prioritise filling the vacancies in the high courts before addressing the situation at the federal level.

Ghauri pointed out that the government's intentions must be "scrutinised—whether it seeks relief for itself or for the people." He stressed that the government's motives behind any constitutional amendment must be genuinely focused on public welfare.

In the National Assembly meeting scheduled for Friday, the bill concerning the number of judges is not included in the agenda.

Court hints at cancellation of Bushra Bibi's bail

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail has indicated the potential cancellation of bail of Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi who recently got freed after spending nine months in prison.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana said this while hearing the ₹190 million reference on Thursday. Former prime minister

Imran Khan was presented in the courtroom while Bushra Bibi was represented by her associate lawyer Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry.

Bibi was released on October 24 from the Adiala Jail following the Islamabad High Court granting bail to her in the new Toshakhana case. Special Judge (central) Shah-rukh Arjumand had issued the release orders after her lawyers

submitted a surety bond worth Rs1 million to the court.

A faith healer who has rarely been seen in public, Bibi wedded Khan shortly before he was elected in 2018 after becoming his spiritual guide.

She was arrested on January 31 — one week before Pakistan went to the polls. The charges against her in the illegal marriage case sparked uproar both among PTI supporters

and wider society.

At the outset of the hearing, Chaudhry filed a request for Bibi to be excused from appearing in court on medical grounds, which was opposed by the prosecution team.

National Accountability Bureau prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz stated that neither the former first lady nor her lawyers appeared in court, despite the hearing being scheduled with

their presence in mind. He added that if the lawyers were busy in the high court, they should have informed the court.

He stated that the application for exemption from attendance lacked signatures from Bibi and her lawyers. The prosecution has "no desire" for Bibi to appear at any hearing, but if she does not wish to attend, she should appoint a pleader, the NAB prosecutor added.

President suffers foot fracture on arrival in Dubai

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: President Asif Ali Zardari, suffered a foot fracture last night upon disembarking a plane at Dubai Airport, a President House Spokesperson said on Thursday.

He was immediately taken to the hospital for initial medical assistance. After examination, doctors applied a plaster to his foot, the spokesperson said, adding that the plaster will remain for four weeks.

President Zardari has been



advised to rest completely at home.

Pakistan to again conduct bidding process for PIA



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission decided on Thursday to again conduct the bidding process for the Pakistan International Airlines after attracting only worth Rs10 billion bids for the national flag carrier against the valuation of Rs85 billion.

A second bidding round for the PIAs privatisation is set to take place shortly.

Cash-strapped Pakistan is looking to offload a 51-100% stake in debt-ridden PIA to raise funds and reform bleeding state-owned enterprises as envisaged under a \$7 billion International Monetary Fund programme.

The bidding process began at 1:30pm and bids opened at 6:30pm in Islamabad.

The Privatisation Commission had requested a minimum bid of Rs85 billion, but the only bid submitted amounts to just Rs10 billion.

Initially, the commission had deemed six bidders eligible, allowing them to participate in the bidding for the loss-making national carrier. But five of such bidders have opted out of the process. The government had short-

listed the following companies for majority shares in the national airline: Air Blue Limited, Arif Habib Corporation Limited, Fly Jinnah, YB Holdings Private, Pak Ethanol Private, and the Real Estate Consortium Blue World City.

Sources told that no other group submitted documents for bidding apart from the Blue World City Consortium, which has placed a bid of Rs10 billion for the national flag carrier's privatisation.

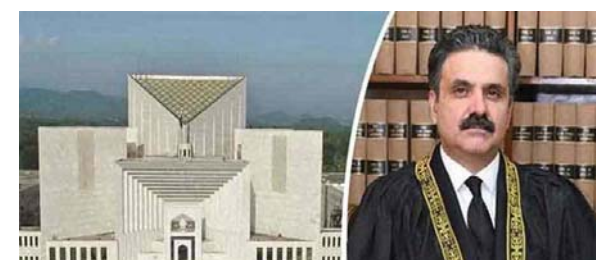
After a detailed review, the Privatisation Commission's board shortlisted companies based on their technical, financial, and documentary requirements, qualifying them for the next stage of the bidding process.

Successful bidders would be eligible to acquire between 51% to 100% of PIAs share capital.

It merits mentioning that the national carrier is a public limited company, with approximately 96% of its capital owned by the government.

PIA operates in various business sectors, including passenger services, ground handling, flight training, cargo, engineering, and in-flight catering.

CJP Justice Yahya Afridi 'appoints' staff to his office



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi Thursday appointed important staff to his office, citing sources.

As per details, senior private secretary Muhammad Yasin has been appointed secretary to CJP

Justice Yahya Afridi, while senior private secretary Muhammad Arif has been appointed executive officer to CJP Afridi.

The sources further said that a new registrar SC will also be appointed soon.

Justice Yahya Afridi was sworn in as the 30th chief justice of Pakistan, last week.

Balochistan Chief Minister condemns attacks on laborers in Panjgur, Musa Khel

✉ Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressed his condolences to the relatives of the laborers who were martyred in the attack of terrorists in the Panjgur tragedy and the Musa Khel tragedy in Balochistan and prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the labor martyrs. Expressed sympathy and patience to the heirs of the martyrs and prayed for Jameel. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti said on this occasion that the heirs of the martyrs share their grief equally. May Allah Ta'ala allow the holy blood of the martyrs to be avenged. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti gave relief checks of Rs. 15 lakh to the families of the martyrs and Rs. 5 lakh per person to the injured workers.

On this occasion, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti while talking to the media said that he strongly condemns the incidents of terrorism. No Baloch involved any Punjabi or Saraiki brothers. Terrorists do not belong to any nation or religion.

Every conspiracy against Balochistan will fail. Every single drop of holy blood of innocent people will be counted. Terrorists martyred innocent Pakistanis. Baloch is a hospitable nation. Terrorism



is not our tradition. He further said that people coming from Punjab play a role in the development of Balochistan. We will root out terrorism and establish peace and order. All Baloch tribes have condemned the terrorist incident. We will end terrorism by making grief and sorrow the basis. Not a single terrorist involved in this incident will survive. Mir Sarfraz Bugti further said that the

government of Balochistan will bear the educational expenses of the children of Punjab martyrs who were martyred in Balochistan for up to 16 years. The support of the martyrs' families will also be the responsibility of the Balochistan government.

Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Balochistan Saleem Ahmad Khoso, Chief Secre-

tary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Secretary Interior Shahbaz Ali Shah were also present on this occasion, Member National Assembly Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani, Deputy Commissioner Multan Wasim Hamid Sindhu, City Police Officer DIG Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar and Assistant Commissioner Shujaabad Salman Zafar were also present.

Governor Punjab pays tribute to late former minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan



✉ Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan paid tribute to the late former provincial minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan, describing him as a great person whose personal and political services could be documented in books. He expressed these sentiments during a memorial reference held in a private wedding hall in Fateh Jang to honor Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan.

The event was also addressed by former Federal Minister Haji Ghulam Sarwar Khan, host Akhtar Hussain Butt, former MPA Sardar Itikhar Ahmed Khan, Zulfiqar Ali, and the late Sardar Sikandar's son, Muhammad Ali Hayat Khan. Governor Punjab further said that Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan belonged to a distinguished family in the region, known for its contributions before and after Pakistan's establishment.

He stated that Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan had struggled alongside Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and, during his ministry in the PPP government, initiated development projects in his constituency and across Attock District.

He respected and valued the party workers, and even today, PPP workers remember him with admiration for his dedication and kindness toward the underprivileged and laborers. He affirmed that, as Governor Punjab, he stands firmly beside Sardar Sikandar's family on every platform.

Body of newborn found outside Civil Hospital Thatta

✉ Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: A woman secretly gave birth to a baby boy in the gynecology ward of Civil Hospital Thatta on Wednesday evening and then abandoned him in a garbage dump outside the hospital, allegedly with the connivance of hospital staff.

A hospital peon, speaking anonymously, revealed that the woman arrived late Wednesday evening and gave birth, then abandoned the baby. Local citizens discovered the corpse and reported it to the police.

The hospital administration denied admitting any patient with labor pain that evening, but civil society members claimed similar incidents occurred at the hospital in the past with staff involvement. Police recovered the newborn's body from the garbage dump, indicating hospital staff's potential involvement.

Police are investigating from multiple angles, but the woman's whereabouts remain unknown. No FIR was registered at the time of filing this report.

Provincial Government appoints junior dentist as Medical Superintendent



✉ Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHTE BHAI: The provincial government has disregarded merit by appointing a junior Grade-17 dental surgeon as the Medical Superintendent (MS) of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Takhte Bhai, bypassing senior medical officers. Backed by provincial government support, this dental surgeon has held the position for an extended period.

According to details, despite claims of merit and justice, the provincial government has severely compromised merit in the health department by appointing a favored Grade-17 dental surgeon as the MS of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Takhte Bhai.

This individual has occupied the post for the past six months, even though the hospital has two Grade-20 doctors, three Grade-19 doctors, four Grade-18 doctors, and fourteen Grade-17 doctors. Senior doctors of Grades 18, 19, and 20 are now forced to work under a junior Grade-17 MS, in violation of health department rules, which do not allow a dental surgeon to be appointed as the MS of a hospital.

New procedure for sports support to be implemented in Sindh: provincial sports minister

✉ Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Provincial Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Abdul Aleeem Lashari has said that Provincial Sports Minister Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar has instructed that all resources should be used for sports activities and he wishes that the quality of sports here should be improved. It should be of international level.

In the meeting, held at Sindh Sports Board Hostel, the Provincial Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs said that we want youth to be exposed to the talents in sports activities. He added that the National Games will be organized in the month of February, the date of which will be announced soon. He said that Sindh Games will start from Hyderabad, in this regard, they are going to start a program called Youth Hunt.

The Meeting was attended by the Director Sindh Sports Board Imdad Ali Abro, District Sports Officer Maryam Keerio and different district sports officers of Division.

Love for Kashmir

MUZZAFFARABAD: An expression of love for Kashmir by the Local Government Department, a model installed at Chhatar Chowk.



Photo: Online

University to award scholarships for merit-based admissions: Dr. Madiha Akram

✉ Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Women's University's Evaluation and Verification of Meritorious Scholarship Committee meeting was held. He said that under this program, 30,000 students in 68 disciplines will be given scholarships annually, 50 public sector universities, 16 medical colleges and 131 graduate colleges will be given scholarships, and top private universities will also be given scholarships. This initiative is commendable. This program will ensure access to quality education for deserving and talent-



ed students. It will remove the financial barriers of intelligent students for higher education. Therefore, all the chairpersons should mobilize their students for this scholarship so that worthy students can get these scholars. However, no compromise should be made on merit and students should be selected on merit by adopting all the rules. In the meeting, Dr. Madiha Akram (Chairperson Admission Committee), Basit Nadeem (Deputy Director Students Affairs BZU), Muhammad Kamran Bhatta and Sundus Hashmi. The Assistant Registrar was present.

Tree plantation is an Ongoing Charity and the Best Way to Serve Humanity

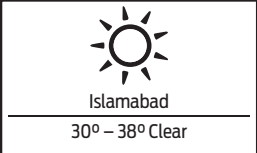
✉ Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Member Cantonment Board and District Peace Committee Multan Yaqoob Shera has said that planting trees is an ongoing charity and the best way to serve humanity. Planting more trees is very important to keep the environment clean. You should partic-

ipate in this good action. He expressed these views while planting saplings on Mall Road and said that President Cantonment Board and Executive Officer Syed Farast Ali Shah has issued instructions to Canton Garden Superintendent Chaudhry Zaheer to keep the environment clean and green. Plants have an important role

in making. Plant more plants. Local people and others were also present on this occasion. Member Yakub Shera said that keeping the environment clean and de-polluted is beneficial for humans, it is also a natural source of more rains, so there is an urgent need to raise awareness about the usefulness and importance of trees in the public.





SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr 5:02 am
 Zohr 11:51 am
 Asr 3:38 pm
 Maghrib 5:16 pm
 Isha 6:40 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
 Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
 Met Office 9250360-6
 TMA 5770886
 Cantonment Board 9270151-3
 Islamabad Metropolitan
 Corporation 9209224
 Potohar Town 9209224

Foundation University Islamabad holds Convocation for MBBS session (2019-2023)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foundation University celebrated its MBBS Convocation at Jinnah Auditorium, Foundation University School of Health Sciences (FUSH). Chief Guest Lieutenant General Anwar Ali Haider, HI (M), (Retd), Managing Director, Fauji Foundation, was joined by Major General Muhammad Kaleem Asif, HI (M), (Retd), Rector Foundation University Islamabad, Maj Gen Imran Fazal HI (M) (R), Director of the Foundation University School of Health Sciences, Major General Tassawar Hussain, HI (M), (Retd), Associate Dean (Clinical Sciences), Foundation University Medical College, and Brig Muzamil Hasan Najmi, (Retd), Associate Dean (Basic Sciences), Foundation University Medical College.

A total of 148 degrees were awarded, with 5 gold medals for top performers, 2 gold medals for best graduates, 6 silver medals for second position holders, 25 certificates of distinction, and 92 merit certificates. The Director of FUSH delivered an inspiring address, celebrating the graduates achievements and highlighting the university's legacy of nurturing adaptable, compassionate medical professionals since its founding in 2000. He encouraged graduates to embrace their roles with expertise and empathy, emphasizing their potential impact on lives.

Japanese envoy bids farewell to Pakistani people at end of three-year tenure

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on 30th October 2024, hosted a reception at his Official Residence in Islamabad to bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries and friends. Ambassador WADA is going to leave Pakistan on 19th November and will take up his new assignment as Ambassador of Japan to Croatia.

Ambassador WADA assumed his office in October 2021, since then he has served as the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan for more than three years. Looking back on his tenure, Ambassador WADA said, 'Pakistan is a country that is very friendly to Japan. But I've tried not to take this for granted and have made various efforts in economic cooperation, cultural exchange and personal interaction to further deepen the historical ties between our two countries.'

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan. Ambassador WADA reiterated the importance of

human aspects in Japan's ODA, saying, 'we always seek to work together with the local people and eventually encourage them to stand on their own. Rather than just providing money or goods, JICA tries to run alongside the Pakistanis and help them become the driving force of development. The key is the people, and Pakistan is blessed with such talents.'

He also mentioned the significance of cultural and people-to-people exchange and hoped that the cultural organizations such as Pakistan Japan Cultural Association (PJCA), Lahore Arts Foundation Trust, Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and Lahore Bonsai Society, as well as those who had studied in Japan including the MEXT Scholarship alumni, will continue bridging the gap between Pakistan and Japan.

Ambassador AKAMATSU Shuichi, former Consul-General of Japan in Shanghai, will arrive in Pakistan in late November to succeed Ambassador WADA. In addition, Minister TAKANO Shuichi, now Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Brazil, will



also succeed Minister ITO Takeshi in late November. Ambassador WADA hoped that his friends in Pakistan will extend their generous support to Ambassador & Mrs. AKAMATSU and Minister & Mrs. TAKANO as they have done for himself.

Gift from Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD: Palm trees gifted by Prime Minister of Azerbaijan to Pakistan are being planted from Convention Center to Airport at Srinagar Highway.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

FAO Celebrates World Food Day, Advocates for 'Right to Foods for a Better Life and Future'

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in partnership with Provincial stakeholders, commemorated World Food Day (WFD) under the theme, "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future," at its office in Peshawar. The event emphasized the global right to food and spotlighted the urgent need to address hunger, as over 783 million people worldwide currently face food insecurity despite ample food production. FAO and its partners stressed a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to



ensure food security and resilient food systems. This approach calls for agrifood policies that prioritize food rights, support equitable resource distribution, and establish robust safety nets for vulnerable populations.

The private sector was also encouraged to increase the availability of nutritious foods, maintain international food safety standards, and invest in sustainable practices that bolster food security for low-income communities. Additionally, consumer empowerment remains crucial, encouraging informed and health-conscious choices and advocating for policies that uphold food rights.

The World Food Day celebrations featured impactful activities designed to raise awareness of food diversity, accessibility, affordability and security, engaging students, staff, and farmers.

Over 30 bottled/mineral water brands unsafe for human consumption: PCRWR

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has directed PCRWR for quarterly monitoring of bottled/mineral water brands and publicizing the results for awareness of public health. For the 3rd quarter of the year 2024 (July to September), 205 samples of mineral/bottled water brands were collected from 21 cities. Comparison of test results with the bottled water quality standards of Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) has revealed that 30 brands were unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination. Twelve brands (Natural pure life, Bro H2O, Purify Spring Water, Aqua health, Meher natural, Mountain pure, Oslo, Smart pure, Fiji, More plus, Qudrat, Natural) were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of sodium, two brands (Black Seed Water, Natural) were found unsafe due to presence of high level of Turbidity than the permissible limit, while, one brand (Black Seed Water) was found to be unsafe due to presence of lower level of pH. Nineteen brands (D Nova Pure Drinking Water, Afra, Aqua Slim, Rupal, Essentia, Jel Bottled Water, Water Plus, A2Z, Heavens Spring, Dr. Sahil Healthy & Pure Premium Drinking Water, Mountain Pure, Neo, Black Seed Water, Best Natural, Deer, Lincoln, Clear, Gull, Aqua Hygienic) were found contaminated with bacteria and thus were unsafe for drinking purpose. General public is encouraged to look at the detailed report to know about the status of water quality of bottled water brands they consume.

EstateX.com launches a series of Partner's Connect Events



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: EstateX.com proudly launches a series of Partner Connect Events, kicking off the pre-launch phase for Urban Enclave—a sustainable, forward-thinking living community in Lahore. This initiative invites partners to engage directly with the project, showcasing its eco-friendly vision, innovative amenities, and smart living solutions. The first event of this series took place at the Urban Enclave Project Site. Mr. Muhammad Moin Safdar, CEO of Apex Group, shared his inspiring vision for developing happy places, starting at the event: "Urban Enclave was born from the idea of creating more than just a residential space. Our goal is to build a community that champions green living, blending nature and modern amenities in harmony. We envisioned a lifestyle where residents could enjoy beautiful green spaces, maintain a healthier way of life, and live in an environmentally responsible setting." He also highlighted the buyer-friendly payment plans: "Our 3-year payment plan enables buyers to manage their property investment in instalments. Excitingly, possession will be available in just one year, allowing buyers to move into their new homes while continuing to pay off the remaining balance over the next two years. This flexible approach makes homeownership accessible and achievable." Stay tuned as we work towards a greener, smarter future with Urban Enclave!

World Food Day 2024 Event in Islamabad Highlights Innovation and Policy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Today, stakeholders from government, academia, industry, UN agencies and civil society gathered in Islamabad for a National Policy Dialogue in observance of World Food Day, centered around the theme "Advancing the Right to Food: Promoting Innovation and Food Systems to Inform Policies." Organized by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) in collaboration with the National Alliance for Safe Food (NASF), Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN) and the SUN Business Network (SBN). This event highlight-

ed the urgent need for inclusive, policy-driven solutions to ensure accessible, nutritious, and sustainable food for all in Pakistan. Leading voices, including Dr. Ghulam Sadiq Afridi, Member of Social Sciences at PARC and Rana Awais Khan, Chairman of NASF, addressed the importance of collective responsibility for action among both public and private sectors. Distinguished guest speakers representing the Pakistan Halal Authority, the Pakistan National Accreditation Council, the Punjab Food Authority, and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) emphasized innovation in food systems

as critical to combating malnutrition and achieving sustainable food security. In her keynote address, Farah Naz, Country Director of GAIN Pakistan, shared GAIN's commitment to enhancing food access for vulnerable populations, presenting strategies focused on resilience, accessibility, and promoting biofortified crops and supporting farmers in climate-smart agricultural practices. She underscored how GAIN's work aligns with Pakistan's broader food security goals through efforts in policy advocacy, biofortification, and initiatives like the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), aimed at



bridging climate action and nutritional improvements.

Faiz Rasool shared the food security situation of Pakistan, commitment of Government of Pakistan towards food system transformation and particularly gave orientation on Initiative on Climate Action & Nutrition (I-CAN).

The agenda also featured presentations on advances in food production

technology by GAIN's Portfolio Lead, Tannaza Sadaf, alongside an impactful overview of GAIN Pakistan initiatives, regarding innovation in food production and the importance of the GAIN in country projects to support the reduction in post-harvest losses and address the challenge around food diversity.

Dr. Ijaz Ahmed of PCSIR Lahore shared findings from recent testing of

biofortified zinc wheat, highlighting its potential to improve micronutrient intake and combat deficiencies. Additional presentations by industry leaders, such as Dr. Muhammad Nasir from FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan, emphasized nutrition's pivotal role in public health, advocating for cohesive policies to combat malnutrition and hunger in Pakistan.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Head Office: **AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.**
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
 Karachi office: **A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,**
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
 Lahore Office: **7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.**
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Transforming Education - A Roadmap to Progress

With the revolutionary changes in global education system, Pakistan is also focusing to modernize its educational landscape by improving infrastructure, access to education and fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity.

This transformation in education sector is hoped to improve quality of education through a series of strategic initiatives and programs under implementation for reshaping education in the country to make our students compatible to international standards.

Under its National Education Emergency Program, the government is equipping institutions in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) jurisdiction with state-of-the-art computer labs, fully furnished libraries, smart classrooms, tech fellow programs, foreign language courses and mind games.

Besides, extensive renovation would be carried out at public sector schools with new gyms, dispensaries, updated washroom facilities, refreshed exterior of main buildings, school meal programs, e-Rozgar schemes, football courts, clean drinking water, boundary walls and playgrounds.

"Education Ministry is initiating a range of actions like education technology, teacher education and assessment reforms and tackling foundational learning issues to transform educational sector," remarked Federal Secretary Education and Professional Training Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani.

"One of the most notable additions is providing students the latest technology and software. This facility would ensure to enhance their technical proficiency and digital literacy making our students compatible to international workforce demands," he informed.

Mentioning to establishment of IT labs in rural schools to promote digital literacy and bridge technology gap between rural and urban areas, he said, the government was upgrading curriculum to align student with modern era demands.

Since Pakistan lags behind in contemporary education curricula and skills, the government has made this subject a part of its top implementation agenda focusing not only the teaching techniques but also providing conducive and healthy environment for students and the teaching staff. Therefore, numbers of projects have been initiated to bring our education system at par with international standards and prepare skillful workforce.

In this regard, the officials at the Education Ministry, besides other initiatives, mention to establishment of 11 modern Daanish Schools at ICT, AJ&K, GB and Balochistan to impart education to children of underprivileged families, address illiteracy and bridge educational gaps.

Similarly, 100 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centres being established in urban and rural areas of Islamabad would provide quality education and enhance cognitive and social development of young children in line with SDGs 4 and 5.

The Prime Minister's Health and Hygiene Initiative for education, also aims at improving health and nutri-

tion of students, teachers and community members with establishment of 100 health centers in girls' schools of ICT rural areas also hoped to go a long way in improving health and academic performance of girl students.

"Software Technology Parks (STPs), e-Rozgar Centers established to support freelancers would enhance their skills in digital economy and promote entrepreneurship and innovation in digital sectors," the officials remarked. "Provision of Telescopes to 110 schools and colleges would boost students' interest in astronomy and science."

National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE) has been launched to train teacher through latest digital modes and AI-powered tools for improving their performance. Recruitment of Tech, Coding and Robotics Fellows would support schools in teaching coding and AI while financial literacy would equip both students and teachers for fiscal management.

Provision of Foreign Language Labs to teach students Korean, German, Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese languages would also help broaden students' global outlook ensuring better career opportunities and cross-cultural competence.

As launching of mind sports, arts and podcast rooms would encourage strategic thinking, creativity and communication skills, the indoor and outdoor gyms would ensure better health of students.

Establishment of gyms in 16 FDE Colleges, schools up-gradation and solarization and launching of Chromebook are the other important components of infra-

structure development at public schools in rural areas under this project as well as bridging rural-urban digital divide.

Different other initiatives like environment and entrepreneurship curriculum, kitchen gardening program to promote environmental awareness and healthy eating habits, national wellbeing hotline to provide students mental health support and counseling services, regular student leadership and outreach initiatives for their participation in co-curricular activities and development of national open-source data portal to ensure transparency and access to standardized data for educational stakeholders are also part of PM Educational Reforms Program.

The Education Ministry also offers performance grant mechanism to backward districts under its Aspire Program to improve their educational outcomes and its Global Gold Standard Training Institute will provide Pakistani teachers access to global best practices in education, focusing on modern pedagogy, digital learning and subject matter expertise.

The officials at the Ministry have expressed hopes that all these initiatives would pave way for a modernized education system, facilitating both the students and teachers with latest teaching and learning techniques and preparing a well-equipped workforce to compete globally.

"We hope that with these initiatives Pakistani students would benefit from latest teaching techniques with the country grooming a skilled lot to bridge the technology gaps within the country and secure better slots in international market," noted the officials at the Ministry.

Saudi Arabia launches 'Global Harmony' initiative

Saudi Ministry of Media launched the 'Global Harmony' initiative as a part of the Kingdom's 'Quality of Life' Program, a key pillar of the Vision 2030 objectives at the Al-Suwaidi Park on Wednesday night.

This initiative will help illustrate the diverse lives of residents across Saudi Arabia, reflecting the social and cultural integration of communities from various backgrounds and showcasing the Kingdom's commitment to creating an inclusive and vibrant society.

Through Global Harmony, the ministry intends to provide a holistic picture of life within the Kingdom by sharing stories from a range of cultural and social perspectives.

Residents' experiences are highlighted, including their professional achievements, family lives, social engagements, recreational activities, and economic contributions, providing a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Saudi society.

This initiative further spotlight efforts by government and private sectors to enhance the quality of life in Saudi cities, from improved public services to expanded recreational facilities and opportunities for cultural exchange.

The initiative also includes a special partnership with the General Entertainment Authority, which has introduced a series of cultural and artistic events as part of the ongoing Riyadh Season.

These events have drawn attention to Saudi Arabia's cultural openness and hospitality, inviting international media from resident countries to experience and document the vibrancy of life in the Kingdom.

As a significant component of the initiative, Riyadh Season - a cultural and sporting event held annually in Saudi Arabia from October to March - is currently featuring the cultures of nine nations with prominent resident communities in Saudi Arabia: India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh, and Egypt. This 49-day event series, which began on October 13, includes diverse cultural, musical, and recreational showcases for fostering intercultural understanding and mutual respect.

The events celebrate traditional foods, handicrafts, and a range of performances that introduce Saudi residents and visitors to a unique blend of cultural heritages. From family-friendly festivals to interactive art exhibitions and live concerts, the Riyadh Season's cultural showcase offers both Saudis and expatriates a unique opportunity to connect and engage across cultural lines.

Saudi Ministry of Media's 'Global Harmony' initiative, in alignment with Vision 2030, underscores the Kingdom's vision for a prosperous and inclusive society where people of diverse backgrounds can contribute to and thrive within Saudi society.

The ongoing Riyadh Season and its rich array of multicultural activities symbolize Saudi Arabia's commitment to international cooperation and intercultural dialogue as the Kingdom continues to open its doors to the world.

As this initiative gains momentum, it is expected to provide a lasting impact on the Kingdom's social and cultural fabric, reflecting Saudi Arabia's ambitions to build a more harmonious and culturally enriched society under the goals set by Vision 2030.



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

Islamic Fintech Experiences Rapid Growth

Zubair Mughal

The Islamic Fintech sector is rapidly evolving, reshaping financial landscapes by blending technology with Shariah-compliant financial services. As digital platforms and innovative tools gain traction globally, Islamic Fintech stands out as a vital force for economic inclusion, offering ethical and inclusive financial solutions to underbanked and unbanked populations across both Muslim and non-Muslim regions.

Currently, the 512 Islamic Fintech companies worldwide are segmented into several categories, reflecting the industry's diversity and wide-ranging capabilities. Key categories include 72 companies focused on P2P, Payments, Remittance, and FX; 56 companies in Trading and Investment; 59 in Robo Advisor AI and Metaverse; 65 in Neo, Digital, and Challenger Banking; 58 in Crowdfunding; 44 in Blockchain, NFT, Cryptocurrencies, and CBD; 33 in Islamic Enablers, Data, and Analytics; 109 in Personal Finance and Alternative Finance; and 16 in Takaful and Banca Takaful. These categories illustrate the breadth of Islamic fintech and its dedication to providing comprehensive, Shariah-compliant financial services that cater to the unique needs of consumers worldwide. Islamic fintech stands as a bridge, connecting traditional finance with digital innovations that emphasize ethics, transparency, and inclusivity.

A recent report by Dinar Standard highlights the booming nature of this sector, showing that the global Islamic

fintech market size reached USD 138 billion in 2022/23. It is projected to expand further at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.3%, aiming to hit USD 306 billion by 2027—a rate significantly higher than the conventional fintech industry's CAGR of 12.3%.

"Finance" sector holding the largest volume at 224 companies, followed by "Save & Invest" with 103, "Give & Protect" at 31, and "Other" at 59. This categorization reflects the sector's strong foundation in financial services, with increasing diversification across various financial solutions. Within the top sub-sectors, "Alternative Finance" leads with 64 companies, indicating high demand for crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending. "Payment" services follow closely with 63 companies, demonstrating significant activity in digital payment solutions. The "Raising Funds" category, at 62 companies, shows growing interest in capital-raising mechanisms, while "Wealth Management" includes 57 companies focusing on Shariah-compliant investments. "Deposit & Lending" records 49 companies, showing the rise of Islamic banking solutions worldwide.

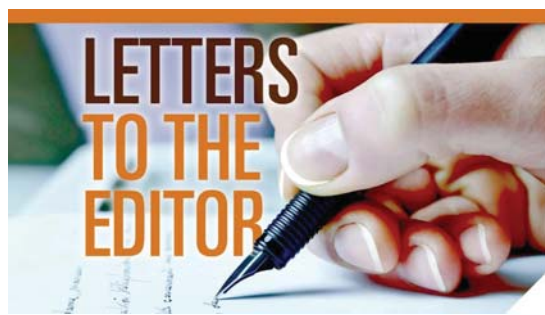
During the Money 20/20 event meetings and various dialogues, Mr. Zubair Mughal, the CEO of AlHuda CIBE, emphasized the transformative potential of Islamic fintech, stating, "The Islamic fintech industry is poised to reshape the future of finance by offering sustainable and inclusive financial solutions. This industry enables ethical innovation across sectors such as alternative finance, Blockchain, crowdfunding, and digital banking, enhancing financial inclusion

while adhering to Shariah principles."

Mr. Zubair Mughal further emphasized, "Islamic fintech is not only a financial solution; it is a bridge to a more inclusive economy. By combining ethical standards with technological advancements, we can create opportunities that extend beyond borders, foster entrepreneurship, and promote responsible investment."

To support this industry's growth, AlHuda CIBE has established a department specializing in Islamic fintech that provides comprehensive consultancy and Shariah advisory services for financial institutions and start-ups looking to develop Shariah-compliant fintech solutions. This department offers support in areas such as blockchain, digital banking, cryptocurrency, AI-driven robo-advisory, central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), regtech, and insurtech. With a focus on innovation and ethical financial solutions, AlHuda CIBE helps institutions build secure, efficient, and compliant Islamic fintech products, empowering them to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

In further efforts to foster industry growth and collaboration, AlHuda CIBE is organizing the Global Islamic FinTech Forum 2024 on December 9, 2024, at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Dubai, UAE. This event will bring together industry experts, innovators, and stakeholders from around the world to discuss key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Islamic fintech sector. The forum aims to serve as a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and developing new strategic partnerships, strengthening the Islamic fintech ecosystem at a global level.



Loss of biodiversity subject international environmental politics

The loss of biodiversity is a pressing issue in international environmental politics, one that impacts not only ecosystems but also human societies. Biodiversity encompasses the variety of life on Earth, including genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity, which supports critical functions like food security, climate stability, and ecosystem services. However, human activities such as deforestation, pollution, climate change, and overfishing are accelerating the rate of biodiversity loss, pushing many species toward extinction. This decline threatens the natural systems that sustain life, making biodiversity conservation a focal point of international environmental efforts.

Internationally, biodiversity loss is addressed through frameworks like the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), established in 1992, which aims to conserve biological diversity, promote sustainable use, and ensure fair sharing of genetic resources. The CBD has developed protocols, such as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which guide countries in managing genetic resources responsibly. Through these frameworks, the CBD emphasizes the need for cooperation across nations, given that biodiversity loss is a global challenge that transcends borders.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Many countries struggle to balance economic development with environmental protection, especially in biodiversity-rich regions. The Global South, home to a significant portion of the world's biodiversity, faces pressure from international corporations seeking to exploit natural resources. Developing countries often argue that wealthy nations, whose

industrial activities have historically contributed to environmental degradation, should shoulder a greater responsibility in financing conservation. This disparity has led to complex negotiations, with issues of equity and accountability at the center of global biodiversity politics.

International environmental politics on biodiversity conservation is further complicated by competing interests, such as national sovereignty and economic growth. While countries agree on the importance of biodiversity, they differ on methods and commitments, making it difficult to enforce global standards. Nonetheless, biodiversity loss remains a critical issue, and the international community's continued collaboration through treaties, financial commitments, and sustainable practices is essential. Only through these efforts can we hope to mitigate biodiversity loss, preserve ecosystems, and ensure a sustainable future for all species.

Mohamed Anwar, student at University Of Baluchistan. He can be reached at manwarbrohi3@gmail.com

A moment of Shame

These days, I am concentrating on Indo-Pak history on the demands of exams, unfortunately not for enlightened or awarding myself about the facts and struggles of our forefathers. Meantime, I was remorseful and degraded for understanding concepts at the wrong time. I would be well known about the history of my homeland in grade eight. Simultaneously, I considered myself blind about the history of our sovereign state. However, such subjects must be taught at an elementary level. Here, both the students and teachers should be criticized. At times teachers hold responsibility and irregularly fault is not in our stars but in ourselves. Apologetically, my current stage is banning me from looking through and understanding the very basics of history but this time I should have advanced in such subjects that could be constructive to my future.

Surprisingly, only a few are not facing it but the majority of the students are nail-biting. So, it would be of great importance if teachers teach such subjects effectively but also at the right time and students should be concentrated. Significantly, teachers should enter into the classroom with updated minds, essential plannings, and productive modules. Sometimes, students should be forced by teachers to do research and should have critical lenses. Also, collaborative and communication based classes can play leading role. Keep remember, change always comes within.

Tajdar Munir, Shahdadkot, Sindh

U. S. Agency launches three-year project to support Pakistani youth, faith leaders

Asim Tanveer / Kiran Asim

MULTAN: U. S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin Hawkins and USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri inaugurated a three-year project titled "Subh-e-Nau" to support Pakistani youth, women, community leaders, and faith leaders in their efforts to foster peace, unity, and development. The project will be conducted in partnership with Lodhran Pilot Project NGO and will take place in Multan, Lodhran, and Bahawalpur.

"Development initiatives succeed when local communities are directly involved in designing and executing them," stated USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri.

Youth, civil society, academia, government, media, and faith-based representatives attended the launch event, highlighting the broad-based support for this initiative.

The Subh-e-Nau Project represents our commitment to driving positive change and creating lasting impact within local communities," shared Dr. Abdul Saboor – Chief of Party Subh-e-Nau Program.



OSCE reports on Uzbekistan's parliamentary elections after landmark turn-out

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: The reforms in Uzbekistan reflect the desire for a more open and inclusive political system, which is the key to the country's further development

Tashkent hosted a press conference of international observer missions representing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) structures at the October 27 elections.

Azay Guliyev, Special Coordinator and Head of the OSCE short-term observers, Sargis Khandanyan, Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation, and Douglas Wake, Head of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election observation mission shared their impressions of the monitoring.

As noted at the meeting with journalists, Uzbekistan held parliamentary elections on October 27, which became a landmark event against the backdrop of large-scale reforms implemented in the country. These elections



demonstrated significant changes in the electoral system and strengthening of democratic processes.

One of the most notable innovations was the expansion of women's representation in parliament. The gender quota for candidates was increased from 30% to 40%, allowing women to occupy 47 of the 150 seats in the Legislative Chamber. This fact emphasizes the growing contribution

of women to the political life of Uzbekistan.

It was also emphasized that the Central Election Commission (CEC) demonstrated a high level of reliability in preparing for the elections. Transparency of the electoral process was ensured by regular broadcasts and timely decision-making. Approximately 20 million voters were registered and the management of elec-

toral processes was made accessible for public scrutiny. Legislative reforms in 2023 removed restrictions on voting rights for certain groups, demonstrating the country's commitment to international standards.

The CEC also paid attention to inclusion, holding consultations to increase the participation of people with disabilities. Materials were available in Braille and translated into sign language during debates. Ballots were printed in Uzbek and local languages, facilitating accessibility of the electoral process for all groups.

Election day was calm and organized, with a voter turnout of 74.7%.

This indicates a high level of interest of citizens in the political life of their country. The 2024 parliamentary elections were an important step forward in strengthening democratic processes and improving women's representation in politics. These reforms reflect the desire for a more open and inclusive political system, which is key to further development of Uzbekistan.

Use of force against peaceful protesters in Bagh strongly condemned: Nisar Shaiq

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZZAFFARABAD: Prominent political and social leader Raja Nisar Ahmad Shaiq has vehemently condemned the use of tear gas, baton charges, and excessive state force against peaceful protesters advocating for their legitimate demands in Bagh. He called upon the AJK Prime Minister, Chaudhry Anwar Haq, along with ministers Sardar Zia Al-Qamar and Ms. Imtiaz Naseem, to ensure the allocation of funds for the construction of the Hanu-

manpura-Rangla-Dhirkot Road.

Addressing media representatives, Mr. Shaiq reminded the Prime Minister and relevant officials that the Naumanpura-Bees Bagla-Dhirkot Road is the sole route connecting dozens of villages in the Bagh district, providing essential transport access to thousands of residents. Despite repeated appeals by local representatives over the years highlighting the deteriorated state of this road, the project remains overlooked, even after multiple assur-



ances from government officials.

"It appears our leaders are unwilling to address public demands without protests," Mr. Shaiq lamented. He expressed regret over the unnecessary use of tear gas and force by the Bagh police against peaceful protesters. Mr. Shaiq noted that on October 26 in Ghaziabad, Commissioner Poonch Division Sardar Abdul Waheed and Deputy Commissioner Bagh Raja Sadaqat assured the public they would bring the matter to the Prime Minister's attention, yet no action has been taken.

Mr. Shaiq further stated that he has personally discussed the issue with the Prime Minister and other government ministers, who, in the presence of public delegations, committed to addressing this important concern. He also thanked DIG Poonch Division Raja Shehryar Sikandar for engaging with protest leaders Mufti Abdul Rashid, Maulana Idris, Raja Shahzad Hasrat, Raja Arif Advocate, Sardar Abid Shaheen, Sardar Abid Chaghatai, and others to seek a negotiated solution.

Diplomat Activities



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. Misuturo Wada, called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema in meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Khazar Farhadov on Thursday.



ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi and CEO of Al-Ansari Exchanger, Rashed Al Ansari inaugurated the consular halls at Pakistan embassy on Thursday.



NEW YORK: Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh along with Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly Phil Ramos attending screening of "Sister States: Pakistan and New York" Documentary on Wednesday.

DFP concerned over grim situation, killing of youth in IIOK

Bureau Report

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has expressed grave concern over the continued bloodbath of innocent civilians in occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal in a statement issued in Srinagar said that the Modi-led fascist regime had intensified its brutalities against the Kashmiri people. "Despite the government's claims of normalcy there is no change on the ground", Iqbal said, adding that civilians, particularly young boys were being killed day in and day.

The situation in the troubled region, he said, has worsened further following the recently concluded elections, which the Modi regime presented as a panacea to all the problems related to Kashmir.

"Innocent people particularly youth are being harassed, humiliated and killed during cordon and search operations", the spokesman said, adding that extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, and killing of youth in fake encounters were being used by India as a war tactic to suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for right to self-determination".

Provision of safe reproductive healthcare must be a priority: Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho

City Desk

KARACHI: "It is imperative that health facilities nationwide integrate contraceptive and post-abortion care services. Lack of counseling is a major contributor to unsafe abortions, so it's essential to educate people about contraceptive options and make them widely accessible," stated Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Sindh. Dr. Pechuho was speaking at the Karachi launch of the Population Council and Guttacher Institute's report, "Safeguarding Women's Health: Trends, Inequities, and Opportunities in Pakistan's Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services."

Dr. Pechuho highlighted the need to significantly increase the number of community health workers, underscoring

how this shortage affects the quality and reach of healthcare. She also raised concerns about the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, suggesting that it should better incentivize health and population welfare improvements by rewarding provinces with strong health indicators with legislative representation.

The report is especially timely as Pakistan faces significant reproductive health challenges, with a population growth rate of 2.55% annually and stagnant contraceptive use. Approximately 17.3% of women report an unmet need for family planning, leading to high rates of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director of the Population Council, stressed that while Pakistan has made health-

care advancements, ensuring women's access to family planning and safe reproductive health services remains critical. "Empowering women with access to family planning and safe healthcare services is key to not only improve health outcomes but also to broaden social and economic progress," she remarked.

The event included a panel discussion, "Safeguarding Women's Health in Pakistan," moderated by Dr. Yasmeen Sabeeh Qazi, CEO of QZ Catalyst. Esteemed panelists, including Prof. Dr. Azra Ahsan, President of the Association for Mothers and Newborns (AMAN); Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah, Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University; Dr. Bushra Liaqat, Head of Department at Kohi Goth Hospital

Karachi; and Ms. Sara Malkani, Reproductive Health Rights Legal Advisor, discussed barriers to reproductive healthcare and the stigma surrounding abortion. They emphasized the importance of education, healthcare reform, and policy advocacy to create a safer, healthier environment for women.

Provincial health and population welfare representatives from Sindh and Balochistan participated in a panel moderated by Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Vice Chancellor of SZABIST University. Sindh's Population Welfare Secretary, Hafiz Abdul Hadi Bullo, highlighted that promoting family planning can reduce abortion rates, while Balochistan's Population Welfare Secretary, Abdullah Khan, discussed his department's efforts to introduce child



marriage restraint legislation and expand family planning services at the community level.

The event reflected a shared

commitment to strengthening reproductive healthcare in Pakistan and underscored the critical role of collaboration among the

government, international partners, and health organizations in addressing urgent health needs for women across the country.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
88,966.76	90,286.56
Day's High	Day's Low
90,700.23	89,063.34
Index Value	Change
18,495,660,459	-1319.80
Percentage	Time
-1.46%	31 Oct, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,110.10	-49.53
Percentage	Time
-0.61%	31 Oct, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
41,962.16	-179.38
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	31 Oct, 1:24 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,081.25	-196.14
Percentage	Time
-0.50%	31 Oct, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.75	185.00
Bahrain Dinar	731.21	739.21
Canadian Dollar	200.07	202.47
China Yuan	38.88	39.28
Danish Krone	39.82	40.22
Euro	298.30	301.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.36	35.71
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.92	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	897.37	906.87
Malaysian Ringgit	63.34	63.94
New Zealand \$	165.23	167.23
Norwegians Krone	24.98	25.28
Omani Riyal	715.71	724.21
Qatari Riyal	75.54	76.24
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.20
Singapore Dollar	208.64	210.64
Swedish Korona	25.82	26.12
Swiss Franc	318.62	321.42
Thai Bhat	8.18	8.33
U.A.E Dirham	75.30	75.95
UK Pound Sterling	357.15	360.65
US Dollar	277.40	278.90

SECP issues a position paper to enable a startup friendly ecosystem

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Recognizing the importance of a strong Startup friendly eco system in Pakistan, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has published a comprehensive Position Paper aimed at fostering a supportive start-up ecosystem in the country. The paper seeks to gather feedback from stakeholders and highlights the critical role of start-ups in driving economic growth and innovation. The paper provides a glimpse into successful start-ups in Pakistan, outlines the importance of a robust start-up ecosystem, and identifies key factors that hinder its development.



The Position Paper delves into various aspects of the start-up landscape, including a comparison of definitions of start-ups adopted in Pakistan and internationally, an overview of the start-up financing life cycle, and the funding status of start-ups over the

past four years. It also reviews the regulatory facilitation provided by the SECP and presents case studies from international jurisdictions where start-ups have significantly contributed to economic growth. By addressing the challenges faced by Pakistan's start-up ecosystem, the paper opens avenues for constructive dialogue aimed at bridging existing gaps.

To streamline the start-up ecosystem, the paper proposes several consultation avenues, including the establishment of a unified definition of start-ups across key institutions, the creation of a government-backed fund to enhance liquidity, and the introduction of tax reforms to attract private equity and venture capital investments. Furthermore,

it emphasizes the need for entrepreneurial support organizations, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, to bolster infrastructure and resources for emerging businesses.

SECP encourages all stakeholders, including government bodies, private sector representatives, and academic institutions, to engage in this important conversation. By fostering collaboration and implementing a dynamic policy framework, Pakistan can build a thriving start-up ecosystem that not only promotes innovation but also contributes to sustainable economic development. Stakeholders are invited to provide their comments and insights on the Position Paper, which will be instrumental in shaping the future of start-ups in Pakistan.

Shifting

KARACHI: Staffers of a private company are seen moving a decommissioned Boeing 737 to Hyderabad, on Thursday.



Photo: Online

NEPRA concludes hearing for KE's PKR 247 million relief requests for September FCA

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) concluded a public hearing on October 31, 2024, on the petition submitted by KE regarding provisional monthly fuel charge adjustments (FCA) for the month of September 2024. The expected relief of proposed FCA is PKR 247 million which will translate to PKR 0.16 per unit. Following the public hearing the regulator will issue a decision clarifying the FCA amount to be

passed on to customer bills and the period for which they will be applicable.

Fuel charge adjustments are incurred by utilities due to global variations in fuel prices used to generate electricity, and the changes in generation mix. These costs are reflected in customer bills following NEPRA's scrutiny and approval. Customers also benefit from negative FCA in their bills when global fuel prices decrease. Rates charged to customer bills are determined by NEPRA and notified by the Federal Government.

ASEAN and CARs well on radar to boost exports: DG TRAP



Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: Director General of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Rafia Syed has said that ASEAN and Central Asian states are well on the radar as these are key markets to boost Pakistani exports.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry also spoke on the occasion

and underlined the need for collaborative efforts to enhance Pakistan's export capabilities. Former Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar, former Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry and Executive Committee Members were also present.

DG TDAP invited the LCCI members to participate in the exhibition organized by TDAP, scheduled for February 2025 in Saudi Arabia and January 2025 in Ethiopia.

She said that TDAP is committed for

policy advocacy and highlighted the role of value-added products in boosting export. She said that TDAP is utilizing all available marketing tools including delegations and webinars for the exports promotion.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad spoke about the critical issues affecting exports, citing rising business costs, particularly high energy prices, increased policy rates and inconsistencies in economic policies as major hindrances.

London Smart Expo

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, planning to hold first ever "Pakistan Tourism & Hospitality Investment opportunities Summit & Smart Expo" on 15th Feb 2025 at Thistle Marble Arch Hotel off Oxford Street, the event will be catering religious, Medical, in bond Tourism and investment in resort and Hospitality industry, we plan to register investors for the respective sectors we will have a summit along with Smart Expo with booths a



full day event having at least three sessions with around 150-200 invitees in each session.

Wafi Energy becomes the majority shareholder of Shell Pakistan Limited

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Wafi Energy Holding Limited (Wafi Energy) becomes the majority shareholder of Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL) after The Shell Petroleum Company Limited, a subsidiary of Shell plc (Shell), completes the sale of its 77.42% interest in SPL.

Wafi Energy, an established Saudi company and affiliate of the Asyad Group, now holds approximately 87.78% of the total issued share capital of SPL. The Shell brand

will remain in Pakistan through retail and brand licensing agreements, with SPL as the exclusive brand licensee.

"Wafi Energy is excited to announce its entry into Pakistan by acquiring majority ownership of Shell Pakistan Limited. This marks a significant milestone in the Asyad Group's commitment to expanding its presence in Pakistan and the region," Ghassan Amoudi, CEO of Asyad Holding Group and incoming Chairperson of SPL, said.

Jazz Secures PKR 15 billion Sukuk, Strengthening Market Leadership and Investor Confidence

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, has successfully concluded its second unsecured, privately placed short-term Sukuk issuance of PKR 15 billion. This milestone strengthens investor confidence in Jazz's market leadership and innovative approach to financing within Pakistan's telecom sector.

Commenting on the successful conclusion of the second Sukuk issuance, Farrukh Khan, CFO of Jazz, stated: "The successful issuance of this Sukuk not only marks a significant milestone in our journey towards becoming a leading ServiceCo but also underscores the strong investor

confidence in our strategy and vision. With this funding, we are poised to enhance our digital infrastructure and accelerate the expansion of our 4G network. Our commitment to bridging the digital divide is rooted in our mission to transform lives and livelihoods through technology, ensuring that every Pakistani can access essential digital services and contribute to the country's socio-economic development."

Building on the success of Jazz's previous Sukuk issuance, which earned two prestigious global awards from Euromoney 2024 (Best Sukuk Deal - Pakistan) and Asian Banking & Finance 2024 (Innovative Deal of the Year - Pakistan), this issuance



further solidifies the company's leadership in innovative financing solutions.

Over \$10 million in business deals signed at Food Asia 2024



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The 17th edition of the Plastic Packaging, Corrugated, and Food Asia International exhibition and conferences recorded over \$10 million in business deals between foreign and local companies in different segments at Expo Center-Karachi, according to the organizers.

Various exhibiting companies from Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey, China, and Iran have received overwhelming responses from local delegates and visitors in the food and allied sectors, signing different business deals and MoUs for strategic partnerships in the future.

President Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan, Dr. Khurshed Nizam, said food security is essential for every country and nation to achieve a self-sustainable level on a priority basis. Without technology and

innovation, the development of the food and allied sectors remains out of the question; however, the event continues to contribute a significant role in providing a platform to all stakeholders for developing the food and allied sectors at an advanced level in Pakistan, he added.

Sheikh Muhammad Tehseen, President Karachi Association of Sweets and Nimco and President Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industries (FBATI) said Pakistani food producers have immense potential to export their traditional made-ups to foreign countries and earn foreign exchange for themselves and country, alike.

The 17th edition of Plastic Packaging, Corrugated, and Food Asia International began on October 29 and was inaugurated by the Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dahrejo. Over 225 exhibitors from seven countries are participating in this trade fair. The event was supported by All Pakistan Restaurant Association and Karachi Association of Sweets and Nimco as strategic partners.

Malik Faisal to inaugurate Khelta Punjab Games today

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar will inaugurate the district level competitions of Khelta Punjab Games at a grand opening ceremony scheduled to be held at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on November 1 (Friday).

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Pervez Iqbal and a large number of sports enthusiasts will also be present on this occasion. The opening ceremonies of Khelta Punjab Games will be conducted in all districts of the province.

In the first phase of Khelta Punjab Games, the competitions of six games athletics (boys/girls), badminton (boys/girls), football, hockey, kabaddi and tape ball cricket will be conducted at district level from Nov 1 to 14 under the auspices of Sports Board Punjab.

The division level competitions of Khelta Punjab Games will be organized from November 17 to 26 while the provincial level competitions will be played from November 30 to December 5, 2024. Overall, 120,000 players have



been registered to participate in Khelta Punjab Games, the biggest games in the history of Punjab province.

A huge prize money of Rs 10 crore will be distributed among the promi-

nent performers and position holders of Khelta Punjab Games. An amount of over Rs 4 crore will be awarded to top athletes in the shape of cash prizes in district level competitions.

The competitions of special children will also be conducted during Khelta Punjab Games. The competitions of 12 games will be organized at divisional level of Khelta Punjab Games.

Imran Khwaja reappointed as ICC Deputy Chair

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board has reappointed Imran Khwaja as Deputy Chair of the ICC, with the new tenure beginning on December 1.

Khwaja currently holds an Associate Member Director position on the Board having been re-elected at the ICC Annual Conference in July 2024. Mr Khwaja was first elected to the ICC Board in 2008 and has served as Deputy Chair since 2017, said a press release.

In addition, the ICC's Members supported the ICC Board recommendation to change the terms of the ICC Chair and Independent Director in the Constitution to now be a maximum of two terms of three years (from three terms of two years, with the six-year limit remaining).

PSB constitutes interim committee to oversee PWF's affairs

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has formed an Interim Committee to manage the affairs of the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation (PWF).



This decision follows the suspension of the PWF, headed by Hafiz Imran Butt, due to serious irregularities, corrupt practices, and anti-doping code violations, said a notification issued here.

The Interim Committee, chaired by Brig (R) Zahid Iqbal, comprises Col. (R) Hafiz Dr. Zafar Iqbal and Nuzhat Jabeen as members.

The PSB has issued a notification informing Provincial Sports Boards and relevant government departments responsible for sports to refrain from corresponding or cooperating with the suspended PWF. Instead, they are requested to facilitate the Interim Committee in weightlifting affairs.

The PWF was suspended in July 2022 in PSB's 25th meeting, after a report from the delegate (appointed by PSB on the directions of Lahore High Court) citing serious irregularities in the Federation's functioning, corrupt practices, and violations of the anti-doping code.

Six T-20 Cricketers to Participate Training Camp in Karachi

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Six members of the Pakistan T-20 squad for Australia series will Training camp at the National Bank Cricket Stadium in Karachi from 2 to 6 November. The three-match T20I series between hosts Australia and Pakistan will take place from 14 to 18 November.

Jahandad Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Omair Bin Yousaf, Sahibzada Farhan, Sufyan Moqim and Usman Khan will take part in the camp and will assemble later on Friday evening.

Coach Saeed Bin Nasir will head the five-day camp where the players are scheduled to take part in training sessions.

At the conclusion of the camp, the players will disperse to their cities before departing to Australia on 10 November.

AM Sports, Colony Gymkhana, Korangi Friends Colts secure victories in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket,"

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Three More Matches were decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at various Grounds.

The highlights of the days play was dashing Century by Gohar Ali 196 with the help of 15 boundaries and 17 Sixes just 92 balls.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricant.

Scores in Brief: A. M. Sports beat Ghaziani Cricket Club Colts by 156 runs at Afza Ground. A. M. Sports 395/6 in 40 overs. Gohar Ali 196 15x4 17x6, Imran Sheikh 39, Mohsin Shah 37 not out, Zahid Nawaz (rls) 3/58.

Ghaziani CC Colts 149 all out in 24.3 overs. Raiyan Khan 65 12x4, Daniyal Shafi 21. Manzar Khan (ob) 3/29. Shoaib 2/11, Salman Khan 2/23.

The Second Group of Pakistan Men's Cricket Team and Officials departure for Melbourne

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: The second group of Pakistan men's cricket team will depart for Melbourne from Karachi on Tuesday evening. At around 6pm on Tuesday at the Marriott Hotel, Karachi, Pakistan's white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan will be available for brief stand-up interviews. Pakistan team media manager Syed Naeem Ahmed (+923174242097) will be the contact point.

On Monday morning, seven members of the ODI left for Melbourne. These included: Babar Azam, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Player support personnel (for Australia, Zimbabwe and South Africa): Naveed Akram Cheema (team manager), Jason Gillespie (head coach, for Australia tour), Azhar Mahmood (assistant coach), Tim Nielsen (high-performance coach, for Australia tour), Mohammad Masroor (fielding coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Drikus Saiman (strength and conditioning coach), Talha Butt (analyst), Irtiza Komail (security manager), Syed Naeem Ahmad (media and digital manager), Muhammad Imran (masseur, for Australia only) and Sergio Mullins (masseur, for Zimbabwe and South



Africa).

Asad Shafiq will be on the three tours as a national selector but will not be part of the support staff.

Jason Gillespie and Tim Nielsen will rejoin the Pakistan side in Johannesburg for the two red-ball matches against South Africa.

Schedule of Pakistan's white-ball matches against Australia and Zimbabwe:
4 November: ODI, MCG, Melbourne
8 November: ODI, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide
10 November: ODI, Perth Stadium, Perth

14 November: T20I, The Gabba, Brisbane
16 November: T20I, SCG, Sydney
18 November: T20I, Bellerive Oval, Hobart

24 November - ODI, Bulawayo
26 November - ODI, Bulawayo
28 November - ODI, Bulawayo

1 December - T20I, Bulawayo
3 December - T20I, Bulawayo
5 December - T20I, Bulawayo

Pakistan squads for Australia and Zimbabwe tours:
ODI SQUAD FOR AUSTRALIA: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman

Ali Agha (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi

T20I SQUAD FOR AUSTRALIA: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Jahandad Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Omair Bin Yousuf, Sahibzada Farhan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim, Usman Khan

ODI SQUAD FOR ZIMBABWE: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Saim Ayub, Shahnawaz Dahani and Tayyab Tahir

T20I SQUAD FOR ZIMBABWE: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Jahandad Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair bin Yousuf, Qasim Akram, Sahibzada Farhan, Sufyan Moqim, Tayyab Tahir and Usman Khan

Two Matches decided in Touchme Trophy U-15 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two Matches decided in the Touchme Trophy Under-15 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at various cricket Grounds.

The highlights of the days play was deadly bowling right arm leg spinner

Hamza Salman captured 5 for 34, Hafeez 4 /3, M. Azam Abbasi 4/6, Muhammad Uzair 4/24 and Hussain Abbas 4/25.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief: Zone-I Whites beat Zone-II Blues by 9 Wickets at KCCA Stadium. Zone-II Blues 59 allout in 20 overs. Syed Ayan Rizvi 11. Muhammad Azam Abbasi (rlb) 4/6, Kabib Muhammad 2/1, Areeb Danish 2/10. Zone-I Whites 60/1 in 6 overs.

Zargham Mehmodd., Abdullah Naseem 48 4x4, Hafeez 39. Hamza Salman (rls) 5/34, Abeer Javed (mf) 3/28, Salman Ali 2/40.

Zone-III Whites 83 all out in 26.2 overs. Salman Ali 22. Hafeez (sla) 4/3, Hussain Abbas (mf) 4/25, S. M. Jarar 2/12

On Karachi's coast, a group of surfers chases waves and their dreams

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Attiq Ur Rehman is determined to follow his dream to become Pakistan's first professional surfer despite his father's concern for his future, a lack of equipment and the messy waves near Karachi.

"I don't care about the money right now. I just want to compete," the 21-year-old says, shrugging off his father's plea to take up fishing so he can get married and support his family.

"It's my surfer attitude." Rehman's family are part of a poor coastal community in southern Pakistan that usually makes a living from fishing or as lifeguards watching over more affluent residents of Karachi when they come for a day at the beach.

Surfers warm up and stretch as they prepare to surf at Turtle Beach in Karachi, on Sept 4, 2024. Reuters

His father makes the equivalent of \$100 a month to feed a family of 10 through fishing.

"I told him a thousand times (to stop surfing) but he still doesn't listen," said Rehman's father, Muhammad Rafiq.

Rehman was a lifeguard but gave it up to concentrate on his surfing, which he started aged nine, and founded a new community that calls itself "Surfers of Bulleji".

The group has grown to around 50



and has gone viral on social media in a country where cricket and hockey are the main sports.

The group consists of surfing enthusiasts from surrounding coastal villages, some aged as young as eight.

Surfers check their boards as they prepare to surf at Tushan Beach in Karachi on Aug 28, 2024. Reuters

On a sunny day, their passion for surfing is on display with the right window for waves to surf along a nearly-empty beach close to the metropolis of 20 million.

One of cohort, Mujahid Baloch, a 24-year-old fisherman, first saw surfing on social media and instantly took a shine to it.

"Slowly, through watching, we learned. No one taught us," he said.

Though Sri Lanka and the Maldives to the south are on global surfers' hit lists, Pakistan's arid 1,000km (620 miles) of coastline is usually poorly suited for surfing, relying on local winds to generate waves that are often small and messy, or rare cyclone swells.



Mujahid rides a wave at the end of surfing season, at the Turtle Beach in Karachi, on Sept 4, 2024. Reuters

"When all of Karachi was being given an advisory to stay away from the sea, and a cyclone was approaching, me and the boys were getting ready to go to the beach," said Rehman. "The waves were ideal for us."

While an occasional visiting surfer might join them for a paddle and some other villages along the coast have small surfing groups, competition with global peers is a challenge.

The International Surfing Association has 116 member countries, including places such as Ukraine and land-locked Switzerland, but Pakistan is not on the

list. A surfer rides a wave, as another looks on, at Turtle Beach in Karachi, on Sept 4, 2024. Reuters

Still, members of "Surfers of Bulleji" idolise American professional surfer Kelly Slater, whose videos they often watch awe-struck, and wish to emulate his skill.

But access to surfing equipment is limited in Pakistan, with the group sharing about 25 surfboards and pitching in for repairs when they are needed.

They sometimes find discarded boards in large containers of junk brought to Pakistan from around the world. They buy these junked boards for as little as \$35 and repair them using basic materials like glue and resin.

Meeting on CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal Chairing a meeting to review the progress of on-going projects under the CPEC on Thursday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan, Qatar PMs discuss trade, investment cooperation, high-level exchanges

Spokesman Report

DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani wherein they discussed avenues to further strengthen bilateral relations, particularly focusing on enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, energy, and cultural exchange.

In the "very extensive and productive" meeting, two leaders agreed on the importance of continuing high-level exchanges to promote understanding, foster cooperation, and identify new areas for

growth, according to a PM Office press release.

The prime minister, who is currently on a two-day official visit to Qatar, acknowledged Qatar's contributions to Pakistan's economic growth and expressed his gratitude for Qatar's continued support in various sectors.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening economic ties and emphasized the potential for expanded collaboration.

He also thanked his Qatari counterpart for hosting a large number of Pakistani diaspora acting as a human bridge between the two brotherly countries.

The leaders discussed global and regional issues, underscoring the need for peaceful solutions and mutual cooperation to address challenges.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also commended Qatar's principled stance on the Gaza conflict and its persistent efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

He praised Qatar's humanitarian initiatives and diplomatic engagements aimed at resolving the conflict and easing the suffering of the people of Gaza, and also the role as an advocate for dialogue and an advocate for a just resolution to regional conflicts, recognizing its efforts as vital

to promoting lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Qatari prime minister highlighted Pakistan's strategic importance in the region and expressed his enthusiasm for strengthening ties with Pakistan in line with Qatar's vision for economic growth and regional stability. He also showed his resolve to work with Pakistan for peace in the region including Afghanistan.

Additionally, Prime Minister Shehbaz extended an invitation to Qatari investors to explore Pakistan's diverse economic sectors, including agriculture, information technology, and tourism.

He outlined the Pakistani

government's commitment to providing a conducive environment for foreign investors and discussed potential incentives to facilitate their entry into the Pakistani market.

The prime minister expressed his deep appreciation to the Emir of Qatar and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation.

He emphasized that the visit would further solidify the strong bonds of friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar, bringing mutual benefit to both nations.

Islamabad, Tehran explore new partnership in urban development

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and Iranian Envoy Reza Amiri-Moghaddam, Thursday underscored the shared vision to advance urban sustainability, marking a promising chapter in the relationship between the two neighboring countries.

Both sides in a high-level meeting on World Cities Day, discussed avenues for mutual cooperation in urban development.



The Iranian Ambassador praised Islamabad's status as a green, beautiful, and meticulously

planned city, noting that Pakistan and Iran share a deep cultural connection.

Highlighting this bond, he referenced streets in Iran named after Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal and appreciated Pakistan's gesture of renaming a road in Islamabad as Iran Avenue.

The ambassador emphasized Tehran's municipality's interest in collaborating on projects with Islamabad, particularly in infrastructure development and solid waste management, where Iran has considerable expertise.

Chairman Randhawa responded with enthusiasm, describing the CDA's ongoing

efforts to enhance Islamabad's beauty and modernity.

He expressed a keen interest in learning from Tehran's urban management practices and welcomed the opportunity for collaborative projects in solid waste management and infrastructure.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening ties between Pakistan and Iran, with hopes that this cooperation would lead to valuable knowledge-sharing and sustainable development in both cities.

IHC disposes off Gandapur's petition for meeting with PTI chief

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday lifted restrictions that previously limited Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, from visiting the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Adiala Jail, citing that security concerns have been addressed.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) heard the case.

During the hearing, Deputy Superintendent of Adiala Jail informed the Islamabad High Court that there is no restriction on Chief Minister Ali

Amin Gandapur meeting the PTI founder, as earlier imposed security restrictions have been lifted. The Deputy Superintendent clarified that the Home Department had imposed the initial restrictions due to security concerns, but meetings are now allowed. The deputy superintendent explained that coordinators, including Barrister Gohar, Salman Akram Raja, and previously Intazar Hussain Panjutha, ensure the orderly arrangement of meetings within the prison.

The court subsequently disposed of Gandapur's request following the assurances given by the prison administration.

Smog declared 'calamity' in Punjab amid worsening air pollution

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government declared on Thursday smog calamity in the province amid worsening air pollution and its threat to the citizens.

Deputy commissioners have been delegated powers of relief commissioners to take all necessary measures to control and mitigate smog, according to a notification.

On Thursday morning, Lahore recorded a concerning Air Quality Index of 201, making it the second most polluted city globally, as reported by the air quality monitoring platform iqair.com.

An AQI score below 50 is deemed safe for respiratory health; however, Lahore's current reading falls within the 'very unhealthy' range.

Earlier this week, Lahore was identified as the most polluted city in the world, with AQI levels soaring to 708 points on Monday night.

The provincial government has issued a notification imposing a ban on various activities that contribute to pollution across the province.

The restrictions include the burning of all types of crop residues, solid waste, tires, rubber, and plastics. Additionally, vehicles that emit visible



smoke and pollutants exceeding acceptable limits are also prohibited.

Industries operating without emission control systems have been banned, as they significantly worsen the AQI.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

Pakistan Navy Ship Saves Stranded Fishing Dhow With 23 Fishermen In Gulf Of Aden



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship ZULFIQUAR while deployed on Regional Maritime Security Patrol rescued an Iranian Fishing Dhow AL MUHAMMADI with 23 fishermen onboard, stranded over 1200 Nautical Miles from its home port.

PNS ZULFIQUAR promptly responded to the distress call of Fishing Dhow AL MUHAMMADI. Upon communication with Pakistan Navy Ship, Fishing Dhow reported a seriously injured crew member as well defective engine and requested for necessary assistance. PNS ZULFIQUAR swiftly responded and dispatched its medical and technical teams

which provided First Aid to the injured fisherman who had severely injured his hand while repairing the boat's engine. Two more sick crew members were examined and provided medical assistance. In addition, the ship's team also repaired the boat's engine.

In line with the national objective of ensuring peace and stability in the region; Pakistan Navy regularly deploys its assets on Regional Maritime Security Patrol. During deployment, PN ships also provide assistance to ships operating at sea. The humanitarian assistance operation displays Pakistan Navy's unflinching resolve towards safety and security of seafarers playing in the Indian Ocean Region.

Mohsin Naqvi congratulates newly elected PBA's officials



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi congratulated the newly elected officials of the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) on Thursday, expressing confidence in their ability to serve the association and its members effectively.

Minister Naqvi praised the newly appointed Chairman Mian Amir

Mahmood, Senior Vice Chairman Salman Iqbal, and Vice Chairman Mir Ibrahim Rahman, acknowledging their commitment and leadership within the media industry. In his message, he conveyed best wishes for Secretary General Shakeel Masood, Joint Secretary Ahmed Zuberi, and Finance Secretary Athar Qazi, who will also be assuming key roles in the association.

AJK PM announces reforms in public sector for uplift of remote areas

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar Haq has said that reforms in public sector was one of the key reform agendas being introduced by his government to ensure development and prosperity of people living in remote areas of Azad Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference along with government ministers here today the AJK premier said that the government was working on a comprehensive plan to reform different sectors including health, education, road infrastructure, electricity, tourism, hydel power, technical education, IT, etc. "Reforms are being introduced in all sectors so that basic amenities of life can be provided to the people at their doorsteps", the PM said, adding that the region would progress by leaps and bounds if state resources were spent without any prejudice or regional bias. He said that full imple-

mentation of the rule of law in the state would be ensured at all costs.

He said that since the demand for cheap electricity and cheap flour has been met, the government won't allow any person or a group to hold the state hostages under any circumstances. On this occasion,



Senior Minister Colonel Retired Waqar Ahmed Noor, Government Ministers Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Sardar Javed Ayub Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Raja Muhammad Siddique Khan, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Amir Altaf Khan and Sardar Zia Qamar were also present.