



Sham Idrees announces break in his marriage with wife

Tuesday 31 January 2023

59 killed, 157 injured in blast at Peshawar Police Lines mosque

SYED HARIS

PESHAWAR: A blast inside a mosque shook Peshawar's Police Lines area on Monday, with officials saying that at least 59 people were killed and 157 were injured.

Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) spokesperson Mohammad Asim confirmed the number of casualties. Peshawar Commissioner Riaz Mehsood said a rescue operation was under way inside the mosque as a number of people were buried under the rubble.

"An emergency has been imposed at hospitals across the city and injured persons are being provided the best medical facilities," the senior official

said. The outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the blast. Speaking to the media, Peshawar Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Muhammad Jaz Khan said that the roof of the mosque collapsed after the blast. "A number of jawans are still stuck under the rubble and rescuers are trying to pull them out."

He said the main hall of the mosque — which had a capacity of 250 to 300 people — had collapsed but the rest of the building was still intact.

In response to a question about the nature of the blast, the official said: "The smell of explosives has been detected but it is



too early to say anything substantial." Khan said between 300

to 400 police personnel were present in the area at the time of the blast. "It is

apparent that a security lapse occurred," the CCPO told the media.

He added that the bodies and injured persons had been moved to the

LRH. Standing alongside Khan, KP Governor Haji Chulaim Ali condemned the blast and urged the people of Peshawar to donate blood for the injured, saying that it would be a "huge favour for the police".

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on PML-N workers to donate blood for those injured the blast, especially those with O negative blood group. At the same time, he also urged the nation to reach LRH without any delay and play a role in saving precious lives.

Over the past few months, the law and order situation in the country has worsened, with terrorist groups executing

attacks with near impunity across the country. Since the talks with the TTP broke down in November, the militant group has intensified its attacks, particularly targeting the police in KP and areas bordering Afghanistan. Insurgents in Balochistan have also stepped up their violent activities and formalised a nexus with the outlawed TTP. On January 22, a police vehicle narrowly escaped a bomb blast in Peshawar's Badaber area. A day earlier, a policeman was martyred and two others were injured when unidentified assailants attacked a police post in Dheri Zardad locality of Charsadda.

Law enforcement agencies to uphold law and order situation: Babar Awan

SEHRISH NAZ



ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Babar Awan condemned the recent terrorist attack in the Peshawar mosque and asked the law enforcement institutions to maintain safety in the country.

Speaking to media, Mr Awan said the nation had given many sacrifices due to terrorism and now the institutions should improve the security environment of the country.

PTI's stalwart added Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief Imran Khan were not detained as there were not enough reasons, and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo was in London due to fear of his arrest.

Mr Awan said the incumbent coalition government was busy only on the looting of the country's resources because they had no intention to improve the economy.

Mentioning the arrest of PTI's leader Fawad Chaudhry, he said Mr Chaudhry was treated inhumanely and all legal paths were followed so that the court grant him.

UAE President's visit to Pakistan postponed: Marriyum

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that due to weather conditions, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit to Pakistan scheduled for today had been postponed to a later date.

In a statement, she said, the UAE President was scheduled to pay an official visit today to Pakistan to discuss the friendship, cooperation and relations between the two brotherly countries and ways to enhance them in various fields.

Pakistan will continue to be a leading voice for vulnerable, oppressed: Hina

PEAK POINT

GENEVA: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabhani Khar on Monday said that with the country's human rights progress on an upward trajectory, Pakistan will continue to be a leading voice of the vulnerable and the oppressed.

"From drafting the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Convention on Racial Discrimination to establishing the Human Rights Council, Pakistan has remained and will continue to be a leading voice of the vulnerable and the oppressed," she stated here at the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Pakistan.

The Minister of State



said that as an ardent supporter of multilateralism, Pakistan has consistently advocated dialogue, consensus, cooperation, and mutual respect as preferred vehicles to advance the global human rights agenda.

"Today, I am pleased to report that my country's human rights progress is overall on an upward trajectory. We continue to aspire for a progressive and pluralistic society, which puts a high premium on respect for

the human rights of everyone, in the words of our founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah and I quote "as equal citizens of one State", she maintained. The Minister said that Pakistan's 4th national UPR report was prepared through an inclusive, consultative process involving all national stakeholders. Critically, this report was an outcome of their extensive efforts during the last five years to implement the recommendations emanating from the country's 2017 UPR, she added. To implement these recommendations, Ms. Khar said that the Federal Government closely consulted with all provincial stakeholders, civil society, and academia.

Sheikh Rashid's Lal Haveli residence sealed over 'illegal occupation'

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) on Monday sealed former interior minister and Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid's Lal Haveli residence over "illegal occupation".

According to ETPB Deputy Commissioner Asif Khan, two units of the Lal Haveli and five adjoining units were sealed after teams of the board along with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrived at the spot early morning today. Khan said Rashid's ownership of



these Lal Haveli units had been cancelled over illegal occupation of land. Several notices had also been issued to Rashid and his brother in this regard, he added. Meanwhile, the former minister has claimed that Lal Haveli

was his "personal property" and a "central secretariat for public service". The ex-minister tweeted that he did not receive a notice prior to the action, adding sealing Lal Haveli was an act of fascism and terrorism.

Zardari serves legal notice to Imran over assassination allegations

IQRA ZAHOOR ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chair Asif Ali Zardari on Monday served a legal notice to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan regarding allegations that he was conspiring to assassinate the former premier.

Last week, Imran Khan claimed that a new plan was hatched for his assassination, and accused the former presi-



dent of being a key conspirator.

Holding a news conference from his Zamam Park residence in Lahore via a video link, and deposed prime minister

termed the alleged conspiracy "Plan-C" for which he accused Zardari of paying money to a terrorist outfit to carry out the assassination attempt on his life.

The notice served by Zardari today stated that Imran, through a video link address broadcasted on all news channels and reported internationally, made "false, fabricated and scandalous remarks".

PM strongly condemns Peshawar blast; resolves to eliminate terrorism

IRFAN SADOZAI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday strongly condemned the attack that took place in a mosque at Peshawar Police Lines, reiterating the national resolve and unity to eliminate terrorism from the country. The prime minister, in a statement, said that the killing of Muslims while they worshipped, was in violation of Islamic teaching and that the attack on a mosque evidenced that the perpetrators had nothing to do with Islam.

He said the terrorists wanted to create panic by targeting those safeguarding the country and reiterated his resolve to eliminate such elements waging "war against Pakistan". "The killers of innocent people will be made an example. The whole nation including the institutions was united against terrorism," he remarked. He said the nation saluted the martyrs and that the government would formulate a strategy regarding the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The prime minister said that the federal government would extend support to the provinces for their capacity-building against terrorism. He instructed the federal interior minister to support the counter-terrorism departments of the provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to enhance their capability.

Pakistan urges diplomatic resolution of Ukraine conflict as developing world faces negative economic impact

PEAK POINT

MOSCOW: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday called for the resolution of the Ukraine conflict through diplomatic means saying that developing countries like Pakistan were facing consequences in terms of its economic impact.

"We have a firm belief that all conflicts can be resolved peacefully and there are no obstacles which diplomacy cannot surmount. Ukraine conflict is no exception. Developing countries like Pakistan are facing negative consequences of the conflict in terms of economic impact," the foreign minister said addressing a joint press conference with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov during his visit to



Moscow.

He expressed that hope that the "strong tradition of diplomacy of Russia would help achieve the peaceful resolution of the conflict."

The foreign minister said that Pakistan considered Russia an important player in West, South and Central Asia and that the country would keep up high-level contact with the Russian Federation.

Apprising the media of their meeting, Foreign Minister Bilawal said that

their "friendly" and "detailed" discussion encompassed all aspects of bilateral relations and regional matters.

He said both countries were celebrating the 75th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations and that Pakistan desired to strengthen its cooperation with Russia in the fields of trade, security, defence, counter-terrorism, education and people-to-people contacts.

He mentioned the summit-level meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Samarkand as well as the 8th Inter-Government Commission held in Islamabad which focused on trade, economy and energy cooperation.

PM visits LRH, inquires after injured of mosque blast

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) here Monday evening to inquire after the injured of the deadly blast that had taken place at the mosque of Malik Saad Shaheed Police Lines during Zuhr prayers.

The prime minister took rounds of different

wards and met the injured. He directed the hospital administration to provide the best medical facilities to all the injured.

He was accompanied by Minister for Defense Khwaja Muhammad Asif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah Khan, and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Earlier on his arrival at the LRH, PM Shehbaz was received by caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Azam Khan, Adviser to the PM on Political Affairs Engr Amir Muqam, and Inspector General of Police Muazzam Jah Ansari.

At least 44 worshippers were martyred and over 157 injured in the blast.



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inquires after the injured of Peshawar Police Lines terrorist attack at Lady Reading Hospital.



Army & PAF to fight for Inter Departmental Basketball C'ship Title



ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Defending champion Pakistan Army entered into the final round to a strong Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in the final encounter of

the ongoing Inter-Departmental National Basketball Championship will be held on Tuesday here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad, Islamabad, Basketball Federation Secretary

General Khalid Bashir, Army Sports Board Secretary Col. Sadaf Akram, Col Nabeel Ahmed Rana, Championship organising secretary Ouj F Zahoor, Pakistan Sports Board

DG Saeed Akhtar, Azam Dar and other dignitaries were also witnessed the championship semi-finals. Army, who is still unbeatable throughout the quarter of the match was thrashed out Wapda in

the first semi final match by securing 92-65 points. Army players were far better against the blue shirts team at half time by leading 14 points as second quarter of the match was concluded with 45-

30 points. Army ace player Tughlab Ammar again led the winning side by scoring 20 points while Abdul Rehman scored 14 points for Army victory. Usman Khan 15 and Salman Butt scored 12 points for

Wapda while Saadat Jehangir, Umair Muhammad, Naveed Ahmed, MM Alam and Choudhry Nadeem were supervised the semifinal match. In the second semifinal match Pakistan

Air Force outclassed POF by 93-68 points to reach the final of the championship. Ahmed Jan was the top player for PAF who scored 28 points with Umair Jan scored 12 points in the match.

2nd Winter Sports Tourism Conference concluded

SAMRA ATHAR
ISLAMABAD: 2nd Winter Sports Tourism Conference concludes here at Islamabad. The stakeholders which includes Federal/Provincial/Regional Governments and actors from sports tourism industry attended this Conference online and with physical presence as well. The purpose of this Conference was to highlight the importance of winter sports tourism among the masses and to allure service providers to improve the service quality for such tourists. Mr. Abu Zafar Sadig, President Alpine Club of Pakistan introduced the concept of sports tourism. He after taken into account brief historical development, reflecting the introduction of National Snow Hikes a decade ago by Alpine Club of Pakistan appreciated the role of Winter Sports Federation. He stressed the need to build synergies among the stakeholders and strategies for long term sustainability and



attract for foreign tourists in winter. The representatives of PTDC Mr. Mukhtar Rana, PSB Mr. Shahid Islam and Aqib Awam AJK Sports Departments highlighted their role for promotion and development of winter sports tourism in the country. Dr. Prof. Salahuddin from MY University stressing the need of engaging youth in healthy activities like Winter Sports Tourism argued that it is the only source to challenge the potential of youth towards healthy society and keep

them away from drugs, intolerance, gadgets etc. AVM R. Ijaz Malik stressed the need to be more systematic and quality conscious while developing winter tourism products. He also visited attention of the participants towards environment care of the winter tourism areas. The national and international athletes from Alpine Club of Pakistan, winter Sports Federation, Bikers Association also expressed their concern about lack of support for their

development by the Government departments. These included M. Javed Ali, Kasrat Rai, International Walker/Hiker, Sagib Rehman, Naila Kiyani, Fazal Wadood, Mian Salim Shah, Nabila etc. E-Expo was also held at the end wherein pictures, clips, V-logs, documentaries and advertisement from tourism industry were screened which were very much appreciated by the participants. Mr. Almaas Ayoub Chairman, Private Schools Association while concluding the discussion advised the participants do not expect from the Government rather try to play their role whatever in the capacity they are working in. He assured that all such endeavours for engagement of students and youth would be encouraged. The event was organized by Institute of Professional Skills Development, Private Schools Association Islamabad and Islamabad Alpine Association.

Both matches West Asia Baseball Cup washed away by rain

IQRA ZAHOOR ABBASI
ISLAMABAD: On the first day of the West Asia Baseball Cup Main Superfour stage, both the matches were affected by rain, now these matches will be held today (Tuesday) and the winning teams of both the matches will qualify for the finals. Pakistan Federation Baseball President Syed Fakhr All Shah said that Casperfour phase of the tournament was to start on Monday in Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad, two matches were to be played yesterday (Monday) and two matches were to be played today (Tuesday). The two matches of the



Superfour stage could not be played due to the accumulation of water in the ground due to rain yesterday, now these two matches will be played today. Today the first match will be played between Palestine and Bangladesh while the second

match will be played between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Today's matches of the Superfour stage have been canceled and now the teams who won the above two matches will compete directly in the finals tomorrow (February 1).

ESP and Talon Signs Off University Sports Commercialization MoU

PEAK POINT
PESHAWAR: Lahore: After a months-long chase up with the concerned organization's team ESP succeeded in signing off another landmark University Sports Commercialization MoU with Talon Institute of Higher Studies, Lahore. Under the auspices of Inter Universities Consortium for the Promotion of Social Sciences, M. Muzammil Khair M. Wazeeri Chief Operating Officer Elite Sports Pakistan signed an agreement with the Prof. Dr. Ijaz A Qureshi Rector of the



said institution. Over the occasion, Mr. Murtaza Noor Chief Executive Officer and National Coordinator of IUCPSS also attended the ceremony. The officials congratulated and vowed to work out for the development of commercialized uni-

versity sports and esports in the country. Mr. M. Jamal Qureshi C.E.O Elite Sports Pakistan also thanked and congratulated Prof. Dr. Ijaz A Qureshi Rector of Talon Institute of Higher Studies officials.

Misbah expresses disappointment over criticism of Babar

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq expressed his disappointment with the recent speculation surrounding Babar Azam's captaincy. Talking to reporters in Lahore, Misbah criticised the way that Babar had been targeted and emphasised the importance of thoroughly assessing situations before making any changes. "No matter who is the captain, a change



should only be made after assessing things thoroughly. Decisions should not be taken just for the sake of putting pressure on others," he said. The former head coach also pointed out that comparing Babar to Indian batsman Virat Kohli is unjust, as

Kohli has much more international cricket experience. Misbah suggested that the two players should only be compared once they have played an equal amount of cricket. Misbah praised Babar's consistency and placed him among Pakistan's greatest batsmen.

'PCB is not an employment agency', avers Najam Sethi

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Najam Sethi, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) Management Committee, has asked people to stop asking him for favours related to hiring or promoting individuals within the board. He took to Twitter to express his request and asked "relatives, friends, acquaintances, and persons in authority" to refrain from making such



requests. "I am flooded with "requests" from relatives, friends, acquaintances & persons in authority to hire or promote people in PCB. Please, Please, everyone, understand PCB

is not an employment agency," Mr Sethi said. "I cannot, will not, follow bad past practices to erode its professional integrity," he added. Mr Sethi was recently appointed to the management committee of PCB as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He has received numerous requests for employment and promotions, as well as requests for passes for the Pakistan Super League and player selections.

Games strengthen the positive thinking of students, Dr. Mukhtar

BY UMER SHAHEEN
KARACHI: Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has said that the promotion of sports in educational institutions strengthens the positive thinking of students. He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the All Pakistan HEC Inter Varsity Championships 2022-23

held at NED University as a guest of honour. NED University Vice Chancellor Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodhi, MNA Shahida Rahmani, Director HEC Javed Ali Memon, Dr. Ali Hameed Mehmood and others were also present. The special guest said that All Pakistan Inter Varsity Championships across the country, is the biggest sports event of the universities which all the stu-

dents wait for the whole year, I am very happy that this year the opening and closing ceremonies of this event were held in Karachi and the events were also organized in a wonderful manner. The guest of honor, Vice Chancellor of NED University, Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodhi, said that HEC had shown the trust in the universities of Karachi by hosting several events.

National women cricket team hosted at Pakistan House in Australia



Pakistan Women Cricket Team at Pakistan House, Canberra. The national team is visiting Australia for a One Day Internationals (ODIs) and Twenty-Two Internationals (T20s) Series. During their tour, the team played three ODIs and three T20s against Australia Women's National Cricket Team. In addition, the team also played a friendly match against the Governor-General's XI. Speaking on the occasion, the High Commissioner appreciated the team's performance and called the Green Shirts an inspiration for all young girls and women in Pakistan. He also thanked Cricket Australia for hosting Pakistan Women's Cricket Team and also the Pakistani community in Australia for supporting the Green Shirts. Pakistan Cricket Team's Captain Bismah Maroof and Team Manager Ayesha Asher on behalf of the entire team and the management thanked the High Commissioner for his support and hospitality.

PEAK POINT Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri hosted a dinner in the honour of

1st Sind Ranking Open Squash Championship 2023 Results



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Result: Women, Mehwish Ali bt Mahnoor Ali 11-7, 11-9, 11-

5 Boys Under 11 Muhammad Bin Naseem bt Aman Khan 11-5, 9-11, 11-6 Boys Under 15 Huzafa Shahid bt Abdul

Abad 15-13, 11-5, 9-11, 11-5 Boys Under 19 Muhammad Ali bt Abdul Basmat 14-16, 11-8, 11-13, 11-5, 11-6

Terrorist attacks cannot shake national resolve of peaceful Pakistan: Sanjrani

Senate Chairman



ANF recovers over 16 kg drugs; arrests four

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting four counter-narcotics operations and seized over 16 kg narcotics, 180 intoxicated tablets and arrested four accused, said an ANF spokesman here on Monday.

three charras-filled capsules from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger resident of Bannu going on flight no PA-610. In another operation near Burhan Interchange, ANF recovered 12 kg charras from the possession of a female drug smuggler resident of Mardan. The spokesman informed that in third operation near Faizalbad Bus Terminal Rawalpindi, ANF seized 180 intoxicated tablets concealed in a laptop and netted an accused resident of Khuzer. ANF and Ranger conducted a raid in Kharadar Karachi area and recovered two kg heroin and two kg charras from the possession of a Dubai-based resident of Peshawar. The spokesman said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Police arrest 39 kite sellers, flyers with 3800 kites

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari are conducting raids in different areas of the city and managed to net 39 kite sellers and flyers on recovery of 3800 kites and kite flying

string rolls, said a police spokesman here on Monday. He informed, Rawal Division Police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 28 kite sellers and flyers on recovery of 2500 kites and kite flying string rolls. He said, Potohar Division police in their raids arrested nine accused and recovered 1200 kites and kite flying string rolls. Similarly, Sadder Division police managed to net two kite flying ban violators and recovered 70 kites and kite flying string rolls. District Inspector Superintendents of Police directed the police teams to accelerate operations against kite sellers and flyers.

Motorway Police to host Khuli Kacheri on today

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police would host a "Khuli Kacheri" on Tuesday for giving a voice to road users to highlight their issues, suggestions, and opinions. The event will be led by Additional Inspector General of National

Highways and Motorway Police, Zubair Hashmi while it would be hosted by Patrol Officer Shamsul Islam. The Kacheri will be broadcasted live on Radio FM 95 and the official Facebook page of the Motorway Police https://facebook.com/NHMPofficial. The public can also contact the Kacheri by calling 051-9250737 and sending a text message to the short code 4474. The Kacheri is a step towards improving the overall experience of road users and ensuring the highest standards of safety on the highways and motorways.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf posing for a group photograph along with participants during a ceremony at his residence in Federal Capital.

Commissioner directs authorities to ensure implementation of Murree Emergency Plan

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta has directed the authorities concerned to ensure strict implementation of Murree Emergency Plan formulated for snowfall season. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, newly appointed Commissioner Rawalpindi Division during his visit to Murree reviewed all the arrangements finalized to facilitate the tourists and cope with any emergency situation. He visited different parts of Murree Express Highway, Jinnah Hall Main Control Room, Jhika Gali, Kuldana, Barian and other areas. On the occasion, Deputy

Commissioner Murree Ahmed Hasan Ranjha, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Revenue, Qasim Ejaz and other officers were present. The Commissioner directed the authorities concerned to ensure safety and security of the tourists coming to Murree to enjoy the weather. He also instructed the officers concerned and traffic police to facilitate the tourists by regulating the traffic. The Commissioner advised the tourists visiting Murree and adjoining areas to take all possible precautionary measures. The spokesman directed that the authorities concerned to utilize all available resources to facilitate

the tourists in Murree. The Commissioner was briefed that a control room had been set up in Jinnah Hall Murree and the tourists in case of any emergency could contact the control room on 051-9269015, 051-9269016, 051-9269018. Murree District Administration had set up special facilitation centers at 13 sensitive points for tourist assistance and emergency response, he said. Due to the huge influx of tourists towards Murree, the administration and CTP Rawalpindi had also issued an advisory and appealed to the citizens to strictly follow traffic rules. According to the advisory, the tourists have been requested

to use petrol-based vehicles. In the advisory, families with infants and asthma patients are also advised to avoid travelling to Murree. The visitors are advised to come in warm clothes and full fuel tanks and avoid unnecessary travel after 8:00 pm. Advisory further says that turn on your emergency lights and other lights of the cars as well and use metal chain on tyres. It also asked the tourists to strictly follow one way and do not violate it for the smooth run of traffic. The CTP spokesman said that enhanced number of traffic wardens had also been deployed on the main roads of Murree to ensure smooth traffic flow and avoid traffic mess.

Opinion & Editorial

ChatGPT: the future is already here

Dr Ayesha Razaque
The year 2001 saw the release of Steven Spielberg's film 'A.I.'. Artificial Intelligence' (AI) was accompanied by a website featuring a chatbot, a program that mimicked a human being for people to chat with. It was not very good at it because, a few exchanges in, it would start responding with nonsense but it was an impressive feat for the time nevertheless. In 2005, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Computer Science and AI Lab released SCIGen, an online tool that produces computer science research papers for any user-supplied author names. The papers were properly formatted and structured, complete with graphs and figures but text that, while grammatically correct, was nonsense.

releas of ChatGPT-3 ('GPT-3' stands for Generative Pretrained Transformer version 3). ChatGPT is an impressive chatbot built on the GPT-3 language model. It is a quantum leap from the chatbot from 2001. It is capable of responding to complex text prompts with pages of text if required. In December, early users began posting impressive responses to prompts produced by ChatGPT in seconds that a human being might take hours or days to come up with. As such, many observers consider it to have passed the Turing test. The Turing test is named for Alan Turing and determines if an artificial intelligence is advanced enough to produce responses to fool a person into appearing human. If one had to describe ChatGPT to someone from the pre-computer days, one might describe it as an oracle. ChatGPT is not perfect (yet). Like all machine learning systems, it is trained on a huge dataset from the Internet, articles and books. That means it is only aware of things and events covered in the data it was trained on, which means there is a cutoff date of events it is 'aware' of. That knowledge cutoff date is September 2021. Even then, ChatGPT is not perfect - it is often tripped up by freshmen-level questions of (mathematical) logic.

Putting a tool like this in the hands of the public, you can bet people will find entertaining uses for it - generating poetry and song lyrics, writing fictional stories and dialogue for characters in books, movies, and TV shows, creating 'fake' quotes and speeches for historical figures, chatting with people in a variety of creative and humorous ways, creating madlibs and other word games, generating jokes and puns, creating fake news articles and social media posts, etc. This preceding list of uses was produced by ChatGPT when I prompted it. More serious applications people have put it to use include developing business plans for specific ventures and regions in the world, creating research summaries, translation, writing and debugging code, etc.

A perfect global storm

Maleeha Lodhi
Describing the ongoing global turmoil as a perfect storm, UN Secretary General António Guterres said in his speech at the World Economic Forum that cooperation was urgently needed in a fragmented world. This was also the theme of the annual Davos meeting earlier this month. The perfect storm, he maintained, was raging on several fronts, especially economic, with an unfolding cost-of-living crisis, rising inequality, looming recession, energy crunch, soaring inflation and supply chain disruptions among its many aspects. Yet, when international solidarity was needed most, geopolitical rifts and the deepening North-South divide was undermining efforts to meet global challenges. There is no doubt that the world is at an inflection point and in the midst of an intensely unsettled period. Identifying old and new risks which are converging to shape a fragile landscape, and finds that economic warfare has become the norm, with increasing clashes between major powers and geopolitical cooperation eroding. The report makes for sober reading, even though it expresses the hope that collective and decisive action would help to chart a way towards a more positive, inclusive and stable world. But for now, global stability is nowhere in sight. The major contributory factors to the ongoing geopolitical turbulence and economic disruption are the war initiated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and continuing US-China confrontation. The Ukraine war, which has had global repercussions, will soon enter its second year, with no negotiated end to the conflict in sight. Russian forces are reported to be readying themselves for a spring offensive. Few, if any, diplomatic efforts are underway for a ceasefire or dialogue, which indicates that a prolonged war of attrition lies ahead. Russian targeting of Ukrainian infrastructure and strikes on key cities have not sapped Kyiv's will to resist and fight. Nor has Western unity to help Ukraine weakened. Sophisticated military weapons have been sent to Ukraine given it a qualitative edge over armaments. In what is described as a major policy shift, Germany and the US now plan to send battle tanks to Ukraine to help it counter Russian offensives.

Blatant Islamophobia

Repeated acts of Islamophobia in Europe over the past few days vividly illustrate the fact that the continent has a serious problem as anti-Muslim hate mongers instill the symbols and figures held dear by over 1.5bn people across the world. The latest outrage occurred outside a mosque in Denmark on Friday, perpetrated by Rasmus Paludan, a provocative far-right figure with a history of spewing anti-Muslim hate. This individual burnt a copy of the Holy Quran, a vile act he had also committed a few days earlier outside the Turkish embassy in Sweden. In yet another recent incident, an individual who heads the Dutch chapter of Pegida, a German neo-fascist outfit, desecrated the Holy Book in the Netherlands. For Paludan, meanwhile, the 'justification' for the outrage was Turkey's objections over Sweden and Finland's admission to Nato. However, the true intentions appear to be to insult Islam and its sacred symbols. This is, unfortunately, not the first time Islamic symbols have been targeted in a hateful way in Europe, as the blasphemous caricatures and Charlie Hebdo episodes show. The response by most European leaders and civil society is that while the acts are condemnable, the principle of free speech prevents them from acting against the perpetrators. This position holds no water. Firstly, Europe has a history of anti-Islamic sentiment. For example, much of European literature during the Middle Ages was full of grotesque Islamophobic content. In the modern world, it seems that the same prejudices of Christian Europe have clearly seeped into secular Europe. Moreover, Europeans themselves have proved that free speech is not absolute, as the Holocaust-denial laws show.

Human, natural resources equally essential for socio-economic prosperity: President

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said both human as well as natural resources were essential for the socio-economically prosperity of a country.

The president, addressing the "CB Dream Road Show" organized by the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Government, said intelligence, consistency in policies, railway construction, and actively cooperating with each other would enable the country to tread the path of development.

The ceremony was attended by GB Governor Syed Mehdi Shah, Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid Khan, ministers and others.

The president said he always represented the Gilgit-Baltistan region as its ambassador for pro-

moting its tourist attractions.

The tourists should be facilitated in the area and the biggest charm of tourism for a tourist was easy and the shortest possible access to the destination, he added.

President Alvi said the GB was rich in natural resources like minerals, gems, and fruits. He said using scientific methods for cutting and finishing gems and skills required for such work could be learned in a very short period of time.

Highlighting the importance of IT skills for the GB youth, the president said people with IT skills could earn their livelihood by offering their services in other countries while living in Pakistan through online platforms.

He said the information tech-

employment (IT) sector could provide employment opportunities for women allowing them to work from their homes. Some 2.4 million people from different academic backgrounds had benefited from the Prime Minister's Digital Skills Programme, DigSkills, and such programmes could be replicated to provide critical and marketable digital skills to the youth and women of the country, he added.

He said a GB student who got his training from the DigSkills programme was earning almost \$100,000.

President Alvi said there were enormous opportunities for the GB in the field of agriculture as well by using vertical farming and drip farming.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi visiting different stalls at the "CB Dream Road Show", organized by the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Government.

Initially selected railway stations, few trains to be used for branding: Saad Rafique

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique said on Monday that initially selected railway stations and some trains would be used to implement branding initiative.

Addressing a branding conference at a local hotel, he said that spaces would be offered for branding on few trains and at selected railway stations and gradually this initiative would be implemented in the whole system.

He said, "Branding initiative should be implemented in such a way that it may not affect the aesthetic sense."

In past, he said a lot of efforts had been made to start branding initiative in railways and to use its locations and trains for commercial and publicity purposes.

Khawaja Saad Rafique said that being a Pakistani all of us should make sincere efforts to steer the country out of



existing challenges.

He said that honest officers had been appointed on main posts in railways and there was no political interference within the department, adding that even railways minister could not interfere in the policies of railways. Branding initiative would help private companies to enhance their business and he requested the private and companies to take it as a national cause and play their role in strengthening the railway. He said, "If we look at other countries, railway play a significant role in strengthening economy of any country."

The Minister said that two decades were required to turnaround that

results could not be achieved through hollow slogans.

He said: "Despite financial challenges in the railways we keep our spirit high to uplift the department."

Saad Rafique said that efforts were being made to start Main Line-1 project in a viable situation after cost cutting.

He said that railways wanted to move forward with the support of private sector and in light of professional opinion.

The Railways Minister said that there was a lot of potential in the country and efforts had to be made in right direction to achieve desired results.

Responding to a question, he said that all parameters regarding safety of installations would be decided, adding that company involved in branding and department both had to play their role in this regard. He said: "We have to educate travellers as well to protect installations, in better way."

Maximum relief to be provided to martyrs, Ghazis' families: IGP

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar on Monday said that major decisions had been taken for the welfare and immediate relief for families of police martyrs and Ghazis who were injured and disabled in combating with terrorists or other field operations.

Dr Usman Anwar issued an order to clear the pending dues of all police martyrs within a week. He said that widow's allowance (Rs 800 per month) of the police employees who died in line of duty was insufficient in the current economic situation, so it was necessary to increase the widow's "Guzara" allowance to make it equal to the minimum wage of laborer such as 25,000 approved by the government in order to reduce their financial troubles.

The IGP Punjab said that it had been decided to increase the "Guzara" allowance of widows

of police employees who died before ten years of service to make it equal to available. The provincial allowance of a laborer by the government.

He said the rules for departmental recruitment of children of police martyrs were being simplified and all the children of police martyrs coming on open merit would get to additional marks during the departmental recruitment process, he added.

Dr Usman Anwar said that if seat was not available in the concerned district for recruitment on the Shaheed quota, then the child of martyr should be recruited immediately in any other district of the province where seat was available. The provincial police chief said the children of martyrs should be given full support for admission in the best schools, colleges and universities, and in this regard, RPOs and DPOs had been directed to contact with the families of martyrs.

Imran's decision to contest 33 NA by-polls a 'mockery of Constitution, democracy': Irfan Siddiqui

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Senator Irfan Siddiqui Monday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's announcement of contesting by-polls from 33 constituencies was tantamount to a mockery of the Constitution, law, and democracy.

The PML-N leader, in a statement, said there was no precedent of such "jokes" in any other democratic country. The poor nation's money should not be allowed to be squandered on that stunt, particularly during an economic crisis, he said.

Imran Khan, he said, had won six out of seven National Assembly con-



stituencies in October 2018 by-elections, and he neither taken the oath nor resigned from any of the seats. Consequently, by-elections on those six seats would also be held. The Election Commission of Pakistan spent some Rs 30 to 40 million on a by-election in one constituency. "If re-elections were to be held on 32 seats, it will cost about Rs 1 billion, which should be recovered from the candidate vacating the seats," he added.

India no candidate could contest elections on more than two seats at a time. A proposal was nowadays under consideration that the entire expenditure (from the public exchequer) incurred on the election/by-election on the vacated seats should be charged from the candidates concerned, and he had also written a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in that regard. He said the Election Commission of Pakistan spent some Rs 30 to 40 million on a by-election in one constituency. "If re-elections were to be held on 32 seats, it will cost about Rs 1 billion, which should be recovered from the candidate vacating the seats," he added.

Shazia Marri inaugurates BISP 'Benazir Nashonuma Centre'

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson BISP Shazia Atta Marri on Monday said that the government was cognizant of challenges being encountered by people, particularly the lower and middle-income class due to the present economic situation at various measures were being taken for easing their difficulties.

She was speaking to the media, at the inauguration of Benazir Nashonuma Centre under Health and Nutrition Conditional Cash Transfer Program to prevent stunting growth, at Sindh Government Hospital, Shah Faisal Colony here.

The federal minister



said that an enormous number of children were facing the issue of malnutrition around the country and BISP in collaboration with World Food Program had initiated the program.

Under the program 364 Nashonuma centres would be opened in 110 districts across the country, where pregnant women registered with BISP would be provided facilities of nutrition-rich food supplements, quarterly medical checkups, cash assistance

and health guidance, the minister said. She further apprised that the outreach of the program would be further expanded in more districts as well. She said that the project was initially piloted in the least developed districts of Punjab and Sindh, and later expanded to 15 underdeveloped districts of the country. She apprised that now it was being launched nationwide to deal with issue of mother and child malnutrition that leads to immune deficiency and diseases. Shazia Marri said that Sindh government was also contributing in the efforts, and it was not only supporting BISP's Nashonuma program, but it had also initiated a program that would cover those women who were not registered with BISP.

Pakistan-China to focus on tourism exchanges this year: Pak Commercial Counselor

PEAK POINT

BEIJING: This year is the year of Pakistan-China Tourism Exchanges. We're completely focused on this. It takes as everything it can become one of the world's best travel destinations. The government of Pakistan also identified tourism as a key priority, said Chuliam Qadir, commercial counselor of the Embassy of Pakistan in China.

He revealed that numerous tourism-related activities will be happening between the two neighbors in this year.

He informed that roadshows will be held with all of the cultural festivities, showcasing some of Pakistan's tourist attractions and added, "We want our Chinese brothers and sisters to experience Pakistani cuisine and fashion from our trendy brands in Pakistan. We'll come up with a complete guidebook to facilitate travel from China to Pakistan, and vice versa."

The opening of China's tourism is a very positive sign for Pakistan. Pakistan has

made extensive preparations to welcome Chinese visitors," said Aftab ur Rehman Rana, managing director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

From January 8, 2023, China resumed outbound tourism after downgrading COVID-19 management measures from Class A to B. According to the 2023 Spring Festival Travel Summary Report released by Ctrip, domestic and foreign travel orders of Chinese tourists increased by four times

compared with the Spring Festival of last year.

The popularity of Spring Festival tourism is only a start, and Chinese tourism market will see a remarkable recovery this year.

"International flights within the Asia-Pacific region will recover faster than intercontinental flights for other regions. We plan to gradually expand our international routes," said Qin Ye, deputy general manager of Pudong Passenger Service Center of China Eastern Airlines.

Reason behind increasing policy rate was to address Fida Hussain

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Director of Monetary Policy Department of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Fida Hussain, on the other day, stated key reason behind the latest monetary policy decision raising the policy rate by 200 basis points, taking it to 17 percent, was to prevent inflation to further surge.

On a podcast episode, released on the SBP's YouTube channel, Fida Hussain said the global economy was witnessing a slowdown and there were indications that some major advanced economies may experience recession.

It is pertinent to mention that the Central Bank on January 23 raised the policy rate to 'anchor inflation'. Reasoning on the said decision of raising the policy rate, Fida Hussain said the higher food inflation and core inflation, allowed to entrench, created the risk of a wage-price spiral, and therefore, necessitated a tight monetary policy response. "The SBP recognizes the short-term costs of monetary tightening for economic activity, but also believes that curbing inflation now is essential for ensuring sustainable growth over the medium to long term," he noted. He hoped to benefit from slightly declining commodities prices internationally, saying that if they persist, it would have a positive impact on the country's imports and current account balance.

Polls must be held within 90 days of assembly dissolution: LHC

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Justice Jawad Hassan of the Lahore High Court (LHC) said on Monday that elections must be held within 90 days of the dissolution of an assembly as he vowed to "struggle for democracy". The court was hearing a petition filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Asad Umar, seeking direction from the authorities concerned regarding the announcement of the election date for the Punjab Assembly.

During the proceedings, PTI's counsel requested the court to direct Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman to announce the election date.

Justice Jawad Hassan

agreed on the time frame prescribed for holding the election but said that "the question is who is announcing them" and told the PTI to include the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as a party to the case. The PTI lawyer complied while arguing that the ECP had written to the governor however he was yet to respond to the electoral watchdog. "On this issue, the ECP also stands with us," he said. Calling the governor's lawyer to the rostrum, the court inquired what his stance was over the delay; however, the lawyer requested the court time to prepare his case. Irked by the counsel's response, the judge remarked that the respondent did not appear to be

taking the matter seriously. Justice Jawad then went on to observe that "the important issue has been raised in the PTI's application" and issued notices to Governor Punjab and the ECP seeking their responses by February 3. It may be noted that earlier this month, the ECP had sent letters to the provincial governors of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) and Punjab with proposed dates for elections of the provincial assemblies. According to media reports, the electoral watchdog proposed April 9 to 13 for the elections of the Punjab Assembly and April 15 to 17 for the K-P Assembly and asked the respective governors to select a date within the given timeline.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on the Telecom sector at the Finance Division.