

Pakistan conducts flight test of Fatah-II rocket

Pakistan conducted a flight test of guided multiple-launch rocket system, Fatah-II, which is being developed as a potential challenger to the missile defence systems in the neighbourhood.

While announcing the test, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) noted that the new rocket system was "equipped with state of the art avionics, sophisticated navigation system and unique flight trajectory".

Featuring cutting-edge flight control technology and an advanced pathfinding mechanism, Fatah-II, the enhanced version in the series of Fatah rockets, stands out in its category.

The Fatah-II is distinguished by its advanced precision-targeting technology, utilising a blend of satellite and inertial navigation systems. This integration ensures remarkable accuracy with an exceptionally low

margin of error. Its sophisticated navigation system enables precision-guided strikes with a circular probable error (CEP) of less than 10 metres, exemplifying its high level of targeting precision.

This enhancement firmly positions the Fatah-II within the upper echelons of Pakistan's rocket artillery division, complementing the existing lineup of the Fatah-I, the Chinese A-100, the Yarmouk-series, and the Nasr tactical ballistic missiles.

Its capability to accurately target locations over a distance of 400 kilometers marks a significant advancement in the field of long-range artillery. The range is significantly more than its predecessor, Fatah-I, which has a range of 140 kilometers.

Experts place a special emphasis on the "unique flight trajectory" of the rocket. The Fatah-II's design provides for this feature, giving it an



edge in evading counter measures and hitting targets accurately.

India, it may be recalled, is significantly upgrading its missile defense system, incorporating the advanced S-400 Triumf for long-range threats, the indigenous SAMAR for short-range defence, and the DRDO-developed VSHORADS for very short-range targets in addition to its emerging sea-based ballistic missile defence capabilities.

Though this was the first publicly disclosed flight test of the rocket, it was first unveiled by Global Industrial and Defence Solutions (GIDS), the face of Pakistan's governmental defence manufacturing, at the

IDEF-2023 exhibition in Turkey. Pakistan had been working on two home-grown rocket artillery projects, a base model and an extended-range version for years. Fatah-1 was flight tested in Aug 2021.

This advancement will contribute to Pakistan's strategic endeavor to build a robust and versatile military capability for conducting highly accurate strikes over a wide array of distances and with diverse munitions. The integration of the Fatah-II into its arsenal at a subsequent stage would, therefore, mark a major leap in enhancing the country's terrestrial strike competencies.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan Army - eradicating darkness of illiteracy

'Ilm Sabb Ke Liye" underway to eradicate illiteracy from remote areas of South Waziristan with joint cooperation of KP govt

The Pakistan Army is on a journey to spread education to the country. After successfully uprooting the scourge of terrorism, the campaign 'Ilm Sabb Ke Liye" to eradicate the darkness of illiteracy from the remote areas of South Waziristan with joint cooperation between the Pakistan Army and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is underway in full swing.

In a major success for the campaign, educational activities have been formally started in the Government



Primary School in the Madijan area of South Waziristan district of KP, which was non-functional since 2015. Admissions of hundreds of children have started in the school. A function was organized by the Pakistan Army in the school in which books and stationery were distributed among the children for academic motivation.

Efforts are being made to make the educational infrastructure functional during the ongoing campaign. With the education infrastructure in place, the education delivery chain will be more streamlined.

The local people of Madijan highly appreciated the tireless efforts of the KP government and the Pakistan Army.

Appreciating the campaign, the locals said that if other inactive education centres are activated in the same way, it will not only increase the overall literacy rate, but the youth of the merged districts will be able to play their role in the development of the country.

Transport fares reduced by 7% after POL prices decrease

After the reduction in the prices of petroleum products, transporters have also announced to reduce the bus fares by 7%.

Punjab Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Secretary said that transporters were asked to reduce the bus fares in proportion to the reduction in petrol and now they have agreed to decrease the fares.

The secretary said a new fare list is being prepared and will be provided to the transporters, meanwhile, banners of new fares will also be displayed at bus stands.

Pakistan's consumers received a welcome surprise on Friday as the caretaker government announced a significant reduction in fuel prices, slashing the cost of petrol by Rs14 and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs13.50 per litre for the next fortnight.

The Ministry of Finance attributed the price revision to two key factors: the recent downward trend in international oil prices and an improvement in Pakistan's exchange rate.

The revised prices see petrol now retailing at Rs267.34 per litre, while HSD stands at Rs276.21. This double-digit decrease translates to around a 5% reduction in fuel costs, a welcome change for consumers battling inflation and rising living expenses.



Electoral gender gap falls below 10m after a decade

As the number of voters across Pakistan swells to over 128 million per the latest statistics, the electoral gender gap for the first time in a decade has reduced to less than 10 million, with at least 59.32 million women (46.13pc) registered as voters compared to 69.26 million men (53.87pc).

An analysis of the data showed that out of the total gender gap of 9.94m, Punjab contributes a difference of over five million, followed by Sindh (2.24m), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (1.96m), and Balochistan (0.660m). The total number of registered voters in Punjab stands at 73.20m, including 39.12m (53.44pc) male and 34.09m (46.56pc) female voters.

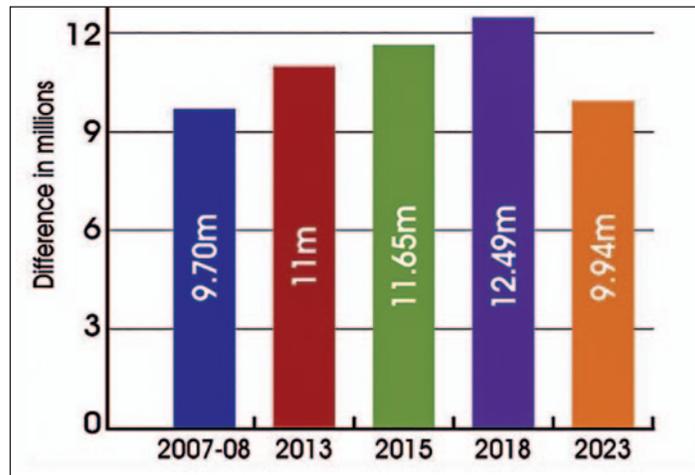
Sindh has 26.99m people enrolled as voters, including 14.61m (54.13pc) male and 12.38m (45.87pc) female voters. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a total of 21.83m voters, out of which 11.94m (54.47pc) are men and 9.98m (45.53pc) are women.

The total number of voters in Balochistan is 5.37m slightly higher than the gender gap among voters in Punjab. This includes a little over three million (56.15pc) male and 2.36m (43.85pc) female. In Islamabad's over one million voters, the number of male voters is 0.568m (53.48pc), while 0.514m women (47.52pc) are registered on electoral rolls.

Difference between proportion of male, female voters lowest in two Balochistan, six Punjab districts

Just seven districts of Punjab contribute to a gender gap of around two million. These include provincial capital Lahore (0.414m), Faisalabad (0.384m), Gujranwala (0.256m), Rahim Yar Khan (0.254m), Kasur (0.221m), Sheikhpura (0.212m) and Sialkot (0.211m). Sheikhpura is the only district in Punjab to have a proportion of female voters below 45pc. The women in the district constitute 44.96pc of the total voters.

Other districts of the province with huge gaps include Bahawalpur (0.17m), Multan (0.17m), Vehari, Sargodha, Okara and Bahawalnagar (0.16m), Khanewal (0.14m), Sahiwal (0.14m), Dera Ghazi Khan (0.13m), and Muzaffargarh (0.12m). Punjab, on the other hand, has the



distinction of having six out of a total of eight districts across the country with more than 48pc women voters.

The other two districts are from Balochistan, where 20 out of 35 districts have a difference of over 10pc in the numbers of male and female voters.

Chakwal is at the top with the proportion of women voters as high as 49.42pc, followed by 49.02pc in Talagang, which used to be part of Chakwal before it was declared a district last year. Jhelum has 48.53pc female voters followed by Rawalpindi with 48.49pc, Attock with 48.31pc, and Khushab with 48.15pc women voters. Balochistan's Soh-b-atpur and Usta Muhammad districts have 48.72pc and 48.07pc women on the electoral rolls.

As many as eight districts of Sindh have a gap of over 100,000 in the number of male and female voters, which includes three districts having less than 45pc women enrolled as voters. In Keamari, the proportion of women among registered voters is as less as 41.87pc, followed by Karachi West (42.30pc) and Malir (43.36pc).

Karachi (Central) had a gap of 0.16m among the male and female voters. The other districts with a gap of over 100,000 include Karachi (East), Karachi (South), Korangi, and Hyderabad.

Khairpur, Matiari, and Umer Kot are the only three out of 30 districts in Sindh to have more than 47pc women among registered voters. Eight of the 36 districts in KP, including the provincial capital, have

less than 45pc women on the electoral rolls. In Peshawar, the gender gap is 0.22m and the percentage of women among voters is 44.71.

The worst is the case with South Waziristan (Lower), where the percentage of women among voters is just 34.54. In South Waziristan (Upper) women make up 44.63pc of the voters. In North Waziristan, the percentage is at 42.09. The other districts with lower percentage of female voters include Mohmand (42.41pc), Hangu (43.98pc), Upper Dir (44.59pc), and Lower Dir (44.67pc). Haripur and Kohistan are the only two districts of the province to have over 47pc of registered women voters.

At the time of the 2007-08 general elections, the gap between male and female voters was 9.70m. In 2013, it increased to 11m. After the revision of electoral rolls in 2015, the gap jumped to 11.65m. After another revision in 2016, it swelled to 13.17m. The gap at the time of general polls in 2018 was 12.49m. The gap was as high as 12.72m in July 2020 but shrunk to 12.41m in October of the same year. In November 2021, the gap was brought to 11.81m.

According to voters' data posted on ECP's website in May 2022, the gender gap stood at 11.30m. The electoral rolls were revised in June, bringing down the number of voters from 124m to 120m. This was done after the disclosure that at least four million voters registered in the rolls had passed away.

Courtesy: Dawn

Ministry of Interior dismisses passport delay rumors, ensures swift issuance

In a recent statement, the Ministry of Interior on Tuesday has vehemently refuted claims of delays in the issuance of passports, dismissing rumors circulating on social media and other platforms.



The ministry clarified that the Directorate General Immigration and Passports (DGI&P) is adhering to its established routine for passport issuance.

Addressing concerns over a speculated shortage of lamination papers causing delays, the ministry spokesperson labeled such reports as "false and baseless."

According to the official statement, the DGI&P has successfully procured a substantial quantity of lamination paper required for passport production, ensuring the smooth and timely processing of applications.

Contrary to the alleged delays, the spokesperson affirmed that passports in the fast-track category are being printed within a remarkable three days, while urgent passport applications are processed and completed within a five-day timeframe.

Even for normal passports, the issuance is guaranteed within a month, assuring applicants awaiting their travel documents.

The spokesperson further highlighted the efforts made by passport authorities to arrange an ample supply of lamination papers, attributing the normalization of passport issuance to this strategic move.

The statement emphasised the Ministry's commitment to efficient service delivery and urged the public to disregard any misinformation circulating on the delay in printing passports.

Army chief backs govt's bid to expel illegal migrants



Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir backed the government's decision to forcefully repatriate undocumented immigrants, terming the presence of 'illegal foreign nationals' in the country "a security and economic threat".

"Illegal foreigners are seriously affecting Pakistan's security and economy. The decision to repatriate them has been taken by the government in the interest of Pakistan," said General Munir during his visit to the provincial capital.

The army chief said the illegal foreign nationals were being repatriated in a "humane and dignified manner as per the established norms", read a statement issued by the military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

On November 17, the Foreign Office rejected criticism from the global community on the government's decision to expel 'illegal immigrants' from the country. Its spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan did not need to provide any explanation on the issue as it was "our sovereign right to implement our immigration laws".

With less than 411 'illegal immigrants' left across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, over 0.25 million illegal Afghan nationals have so far voluntarily left Pakistan since September 17 via three border crossings: 525,883 used Torkham in district Khyber; 3,543 used Angoor Adda in district South Waziristan, and 698 foreign nationals crossed into Afghanistan via Kharlachi border crossing in district Kurram.

During his visit, the COAS was briefed in detail on the overall security situation, the ongoing counter-

terrorism operations, repatriation of 'illegal immigrants' and socioeconomic developments in the newly merged districts.

The COAS interacted with the officers and soldiers and lauded their heroic and exemplary feats during counter-terrorism operations.

"The nation takes pride and acknowledges the accomplishments of its armed forces. Pakistan is destined to succeed and the Pakistan Army will continue to undertake its selfless and sacred duty of safeguarding every inch of the motherland till the last drop of blood," the statement quoted General Munir as saying.

He said: "Nefarious designs of the forces inimical to peace and stability of Pakistan were being foiled through a synergetic and comprehensive strategy." He added the improvement in the security situation, besides progress on socioeconomic projects, was due to the firm support from the KP residents.

"The resolute support of people of KP to security forces has resulted in stability in the province and materialisation of progress on projects of socioeconomic development," General Munir said. He highlighted the importance of economic growth and development in newly merged districts.

General Munir held an interactive session with the participants of the First National Work-shop Khyber Pakhtun-khwa (NWKP-1).

He was received by Commander Peshawar Corps Lieu-tenant General Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat upon his arrival in Peshawar.

Courtesy: Dawn

Army chief for ushering in another 'Green Revolution'



The head of the armed forces assured farmers on Friday that the country wanted to focus on "agriculture first" to regain the lost glory of the Green Revolution, which once saw Pakistan being counted among Asia's fastest growing economies.

"There are rumours and negative things being said about Pakistan... an environment of uncertainty, dependency and anarchy is being created through false reports on social media to portray as if the state is losing its authority," he said during his address at the National Farmers' Convention.

However, he assured the audience that initiatives of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would pay off and allow the country to "come out of economic crisis" and on the path to a progressive and prosperous future, a PM Office statement quoted him as saying.

"Farmers are [the] backbone of our agriculture sector. It is your untiring hard work, toil and determination that plays [a] pivotal role in ensuring food security for millions of Pakistanis," he told the audience, which included, federal ministers, agriculture experts and other senior government officials.

Pledges to suppress all kinds of mafias, with the nation's support "Pakistan is endowed with immense potential and abundant resources. Together, we will navigate through these challenging times, by the grace of Allah, and attain our goals across every sector," he said.

He noted that the country was laden with some of the richest natural resources and could be returned to its former glory by adhering to

the basic principles put forward by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, i.e. unity, faith and discipline, PTV News and the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) quoted him as saying.

Talking about the Green Pakistan Initiative, in which the Pakistan Army would play its role to serve the people and facilitate farmers, he said that a major chunk of its revenue would go to the provinces, while the rest would be allocated for farmers and agricultural research. Vowing to suppress all kinds of mafias, with the nation's help, the army chief revealed plans to make 'agricultural malls' in all districts, where various facilities would be available for farmers.

"Provision of easy agricultural credit, cold storage chain, climate change resistant seeds and genetically engineered livestock will be ensured," APP quoted him as saying.

According to the PM Office, Gen Munir pointed to the challenges posed by climate change and water scarcity in ensuring the country's food security, noting that this necessitated the use of technology and close collaboration between the public and the government, as envisioned under the aegis of the SIFC. While the army chief was the guest of honour at the occasion, a PM Office statement said that caretaker prime minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar were also present on the occasion.

PM Kakar also appreciated the collaborative work of ministries and departments for achieving various milestones under the SIFC umbrella and stressed the need to expedite various initiatives.

Courtesy: Dawn

Special tribunal to deal with cases of privatisation

The caretaker federal cabinet on Friday gave final nod to a presidential ordinance seeking to set up a special tribunal to be headed by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court or a high court to specifically deal with the cases of privatisation of state-owned entities.

Following the approval of the ordinance by the cabinet, the past practice of challenging the decisions of privatisation of state institutions in various courts will come to an end.

A member of the federal cabinet, who did not want to be named, confirmed the approval of the ordinance through circulation. He said the decision was taken mainly to restore the confidence of investors and assured them that the decision on privatisation of state-owned entities could not be challenged in any other court, except the special tribunal.

The minister said the special



tribunal's decision could be challenged only in the Supreme Court.

The cabinet also approved presidential ordinances regarding privatisation of four loss-making state-owned enterprises Radio Pakistan, National Highway Authority, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) and Pakistan Post Office.

President Dr Arif Alvi had on December 1 approved the promul-

gation of the ordinances changing the management and governance structure of these entities.

There was no official word on the cabinet decision, but some private TV channels ran the story about the approval of the ordinances.

Media reports suggested that PNSC, Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Post would now function under independent boards, as the caretaker government kicked off a process to meet another condition set by the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of the next tranche of \$700 million under the \$3 billion Standby Arrangement.

On the advice of caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, President Alvi had signed the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Amendment Ordinance, 2023; NHA Amendment Ordinance, 2023; Pakistan Postal Services Management Board Amendment Ordinance, 2023; and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation Amendment Ordinance, 2023, making these entities independent but under the finance ministry's oversight.

It has been learnt that the ordinances have sought to establish a board of directors for each of these institutions, consisting of six to 11 members, who will be experts from the private sector, instead of civil servants, who will be given salary and other allowances.

Courtesy: Dawn

PIA operating with half its fleet amid financial woes

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is operating at half of its capacity, with only 15 of its 29 modern aircraft currently in service, officials said.

This reduction came as the national flag carrier recently grounded 14 aircraft after financial constraints prevented it from buying necessary spare parts.

According to official sources, PIA's operational fleet now comprises six Boeing 777 wide-body twin-engine aeroplanes, eight Airbus A320 narrow-body jets for short/medium haul routes, and one ATR aircraft.

This ATR has been particularly valuable for PIA, facilitating access to remote destinations across the country. However, the airline's ability to provide such services has been hindered by the ongoing financial challenges.

Adding to PIA's woes, two of its Airbus A320 aircraft were stranded in Indonesia since September 2021 due to a leasing dispute. Recently,



one of these aircraft was retrieved and reintegrated into the fleet following a visit by a high-level PIA delegation and the aviation secretary in October.

The airline anticipates the return of the second stranded Airbus A320 by the end of this month, after settling outstanding payments with the leasing company.

A PIA spokesperson highlighted the acute funding shortages impacting the airline, leading to the grounding of several aircraft needing spare parts and maintenance. "With the government's help, we

hope to secure some crucial funding that will revive the majority of PIA's fleet," he said.

Meanwhile, PIA's operations have been further disrupted by low visibility and heavy fog, particularly affecting flights from and to Lahore, Multan and Sialkot.

The PIA spokesperson advised passengers to check flight statuses with the airline's call centre before heading to the airport.

Bag with Rs4m valuables returned In a separate development, the Islamabad International Airport

management returned a lost bag containing valuables worth about Rs4 million to a passenger.

After arriving in Islamabad from Karachi, a female passenger inadvertently left her bag in a baby changing room in domestic arrivals located at Level 2 of the terminal building, a Civil Aviation Authority spokesperson said.

The bag containing 110 UK pounds (Rs22,830), 10 tolas of gold, two smartphones and a Swiss watch was found by sanitary attendant Sobia Asif and handed over to the Lost and Found office.

Following verification, the bag was returned to its rightful owner, Tabassum Ara, who expressed gratitude towards the CAA management and Ms Asif.

In recognition of her honesty and professionalism, Ms Asif was awarded a certificate of appreciation and a monetary reward worth Rs25,000.

Courtesy: Dawn



Vested interests may spur post-election policy reversals, World Bank fears

The World Bank fears that following the upcoming elections, strong and organised vested interests may spur a number of potential reversals on critical policy reforms committed to multilateral lenders posing 'high' macroeconomic risks to Pakistan.

The possible reversals include the rationalisation of gas and electricity subsidies, lower trade tariffs and better property tax realisation.

"Stakeholder risks are high due to strong and organised vested interests, potentially advocating to reverse critical reforms, particularly trade tariff reforms, increases to property taxation and energy sector reforms," said the Washington-based lending agency in an assessment of its recently approved \$350 million loan under second Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy (Rise-II).

The bank, however, expressed willingness to provide further support in tandem with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under another medium-term loan programme to be signed by the newly elected government, subject to the successful progression of the ongoing reform measures, for even deeper and broader reforms.

"Political and governance risks are high because of the upcoming elections, as associated political pressures may erode fiscal restraint or the commitment to continued implementation of challenging reforms," it said, adding the priorities and commitment to structural reforms of the future government were also unknown.

"Macroeconomic risks are also high, with reserve cover at end of SBA (stand-by arrangement) projected to be below 1.5 months of imports. Additional external support will thus be needed following

completion of the SBA," it said.

Moreover, additional macroeconomic risks also result from weak public finances, the heavy exposure of the banking sector to government borrowing, and curtailed growth due to shortages of critical imports. On top of that, "institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability risk is high due to the need for provincial-federal co-ordination and frequent turnover of senior government officials in critical positions," the bank pointed out.

The bank has shed some light on the "broader and deeper reforms" that the country would have to undertake over the next couple of years once the new political dispensation holds ground following the Feb 8 general elections under the next IMF programme, which is almost a foregone conclusion by now. Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar had also recently confirmed the inevitability of a fresh IMF programme.

"Over the medium term, broader and deeper reforms will be required to support necessary fiscal consolidation, improve confidence, and increase investment," said the World Bank, which has been working closely not only with the IMF but also with other regional multilaterals like the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and Pakistan's bilateral partners, including China and the US.

The long list of required reforms include the reduction of protectionist trade policies, elimination of distortive agricultural subsidies, and rationalisation of federal government expenditures over subject areas that are devolved to the provinces. This has been at the centre of discussions nowadays between the federation and its

federating units, including limiting the federal funding to development projects and schemes of provincial nature.

The reform menu also pertains to "expanding the tax base by increased taxation of assets, property, and sectors traditionally outside the tax net, particularly agriculture, small retail, and real estate, further reduction in tax exemptions and effective implementation of the treasury single account to reduce government borrowing needs.

Also on the agenda are further push for accelerating energy reforms, both electricity and gas, particularly to reduce costs and losses stemming from distribution and transmission. Measures to cut red tape and ease the business environment along with effective steps for reducing losses of the state-owned enterprise (SOEs), particularly via privatisation and concession to the private sector.

"Without such reforms, private external flows will be limited, and import restriction is expected to be required to preserve foreign exchange reserves amid pent-up demand, weighing on economic activity and imposing long-lasting economic scarring. Foreign investment will remain low and the government will continue to lack access to external commercial borrowing," the bank warned adding that gross financing needs will remain elevated, leading to the continued accumulation of domestic debt and associated risks to fiscal and debt sustainability.

The World Bank noted that while progress against this reform agenda cannot be guaranteed in the current political context, ongoing World Bank engagements will support continued reform in key areas, including GST and property taxation reform under provincial and federal revenue and public finance investment projects, besides energy reforms under investment project support for improved efficiency of distribution companies (Discos) and ongoing analytical support for electricity and gas tariff reforms.

On the positive side, the World

Bank noted that there had been broad support for critical fiscal management and revenue reforms across the political spectrum while the private sector had highlighted the importance of a harmonised tax jurisdiction, a single regulatory entity, and a competitive and stable trade policy.

Courtesy: Dawn

104 Hindu pilgrims issued visas

Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on Saturday announced it had issued 104 visas to Indian Hindu pilgrims intending to participate in the upcoming 315th birth anniversary celebrations of Shiv Avtari Satguru Sant Shadaram Sahib at Shadani Darbar.



The announcement was made by the high commission over micro-blogging site X (formerly Twitter).

Shadani Darbar Hayat Pitafi, an important spiritual site for the Hindu community in Sindh, is hosting the birth anniversary celebrations on Dec 12-23, and is expected to attract a large number of devotees from across the region.

The visa initiative, in accordance with the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974, is part of Islamabad's efforts to facilitate religious tourism and cultural exchanges. Annually, this protocol allows thousands of Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India to attend various events in Pakistan.

The high commission said Charge d' Affaires Aizaz Khan extended heartfelt felicitations to the pilgrims and wished them a safe journey.

Last month, a large number of Sikh pilgrims visited Pakistan to attend Baba Guru Nanak's 544th birth anniversary celebrations at Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib Hasan Abdal.

Courtesy: Dawn

UAE unveils \$30 billion for new climate investment venture

A host of dignitaries were in attendance as the two-day World Climate Action summit opened on Friday as part of COP28 where governments, development banks and companies announced initiatives to mobilise billions in climate cash, while the UAE unveiled \$30 billion for a new climate investment venture.

Named ALTRRA, it will aim to mobilise \$250 billion in investment by the end of the decade, in what COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber described as a “defining moment” for climate finance.

Calling it “the world’s largest private investment vehicle for climate change action,” Jaber said it included \$5 billion to be allocated to poorer countries.

Multiple financing commitments were also announced throughout the day, adding to Thursday’s nearly half a billion dollars’ worth of pledges to the loss and damage fund.

The World Bank stepped up with a promise to increase the amount it spends annually on climate-related projects to 45pc of its financing in 2024-25, up from 35pc now, as part of a policy overhaul to better respond to climate change.

Canada pledged \$16m to the fund and France \$100m. Separately, the UK announced \$2bn to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The World Bank also announced plans to increase climate finance contribution to \$40bn by 2025.

In another pledge, the host country has also committed \$200m to the IMF Resilience & Sustainability Trust.

To try to ensure climate funding is not wasted on spurious projects, the World Bank also announced a plan to expand the growth of “high-integrity global carbon markets,” helping five countries in 2024 to develop robust offset credits that they can sell into the market.

To support smallholders in South Africa and other African countries



who face severe consequences from global warming, the Gates Foundation the charity organisation of Microsoft founder Bill Gates and the UAE together committed \$200m.

In a first for blended finance, bringing together public and private lenders, leading climate-focused donors, including the Bezos Earth Fund, joined forces to launch the Allied Climate Partners investing platform. The aim is to generate \$11bn in investments in developing countries.

The transition to electric vehicles also drew impetus as Tata Motors said it would work with affiliated banks under the Climate Finance Leadership Initiative India (CFLI) to boost sales.

As part of broader coalition of Indian and international companies, CFLI plans to mobilise more than \$6.5bn into sectors including e-mobility, green hydrogen, and renewables.

UN chief Antonio Guterres also backed the effort to reform the world’s multilateral development bank system to “leverage far more private finance at reasonable costs.” Leaders’ summit

In a stunning show of technology, the leaders’ summit opened with a hologram of UAE’s late founder Sheikh Zayed addressing the more than 130 world leaders gathered.

Prominent among those in attendance were Pakistan’s Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul Haq Kakar, King Charles III, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Mr Gates and Mr Guterres. The White House had announced in previous weeks that President Joe Biden would not be attending; however, VP Kamala Harris arrived in his place, alongside Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, US Special Envoy on Climate John Kerry.

Similarly, President Xi Jinping of China also skipped the leaders’ summit.

In his speech, King Charles delivered a dramatic and urgent warning.

“We are carrying out a vast, frightening experiment of changing every ecological condition, all at once, at a pace that far outstrips nature’s ability to cope. With what we are witnessing, our choice now is a starker, and darker one: how dangerous are we actually prepared to make our world?”

PM Kakar’s schedule
Caretaker PM Kakar also had a busy day on the sidelines of the summit, meeting King Charles, UK PM Sunak, Danish PM Mette Fredrickson and Dutch PM Mark Rutte,

He was welcomed by UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the UN chief upon his arrival at the Dubai Expo City. He also visited the Pakistan Pavilion, where he was briefed on efforts being made by with regard to negotiations and facilitation in the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage fund.

Courtesy: Dawn

ECP gets Rs17.4bn for polls

The Election Commission of Pakistan has decided to announce the polls schedule within the next 10 days after Rs17.4 billion to cater to the election expenses was released by the federal government, official said. Out of the total allocation of Rs42



billion, Rs27.4 billion has been released. The funds were released a day after the election watchdog summoned the finance secretary to explain the government’s position regarding the delay in funds.

In a statement, the finance ministry said the amount released on Tuesday was in addition to Rs10 billion released in July 2023 for general elections in the country. “Finance Division remains committed to the provision of funds as and when required by the Election Commission of Pakistan,” the statement read on X, formerly Twitter.

Courtesy:

Toyota Yaris latest prices in Pakistan

2023 Toyota Yaris is available in six distinct variants, ensuring there’s a model for every discerning driver

The Toyota Yaris has undergone a remarkable transformation, sporting an aggressive new bumper lip that adds a touch of sportiness and charisma to its appearance.



One of the key features that sets the 2023 Toyota Yaris apart is its ability to adapt to your driving preferences.

By activating the Sports mode, the car accelerates more swiftly, making it an exhilarating experience for those seeking a dynamic ride.

Courtesy: Samaa

Pakistani Dramas: New and Upcoming Releases Worth Looking Out for In December 2023

The year is coming to an end and along with the year, several excellent dramas have come to an end as well. While “Jannat Se Aagay” left a strong impact, winding up two weeks earlier, this past week brought several more finales of stories worth remembering. “Kabli Pulao,” “Jhok Sarkar,” “Fairytale 2,” “Fatima Feng” and “Gumn” have all aired their final episode in the final week of November, leaving audiences wondering will anything worthwhile take their place? Here are five shows which have premiered or are set to premiere in coming weeks which seem promising.

Breaking News

Kashif Nisar is a name associated with quality as a director and brings high expectations in itself. Written by Aamir Raza, “Breaking News” on Green Entertainment stars Hamza Sohail and Amar Khan in lead roles, along with Ali Safina. The show follows Mashal and Hussain, two budding journalists who fight corruption behind the scenes – and we all know the power others wield over journalists. “Breaking News” has promise!



Ek Jhooti Love Story

In 2018, Zee5 was launched in India and produced original Pakistani content with some of Pakistan’s finest talents – unfortunately, the platform was banned in Pakistan in 2020, only weeks after “Ek Jhooti Love Story” made its premiere. Fortunately, Green Entertainment has secured the rights to “Ek Jhooti Love Story,” bringing this excellent show to our television screens for the masses. “Ek Jhooti Love Story” has been written by Umera Ahmed and directed by Mehreen Jabbar, the dream writer-director dream team, which alone makes it worthwhile. “Ek Jhooti Love Story” follows Salma and Sohail,



two individuals from middle class backgrounds from the same neighborhood who have well-off friends and dream big. Fed up of their “small” lives, they create fake profiles and begin chatting with each other under false pretenses. They do not realize when the line between fantasy and reality blurs and their feelings become real. “Ek Jhooti Love Story” tells stories that affect the middle class and passes on many social messages through what is, essentially, a love story – but is so much more than that. This one will be airing in coming weeks and is more than worth a watch!

Khushbo Mein Basay Khat

Transforming audiences into a world of poetry and artist eccentricities, Hum TV’s “Khushbo Mein Basay Khat” aired its first episode last week on November 28. This drama has many things going for it, the first being the cast. Starring Adnan Siddiqui, Nadia Jamil, Kinza Hashmi, Saleem Mairaj, Sidra Niazi, Nazli Mirza and others, the story has been written by the incredible



Amna Mufti (who most recently wrote “Dil Na Umeed To Nahi” and directed by Mohammad Saqib Khan. The show follows Ahmed Saryab (Adnan Siddiqui), a poet who is a victim to his flirtatious nature, a personality trait which becomes a problem for those around him. A story of poetry, art, human flaws, emotion and betrayal, this is a story that will be exciting to watch unfold.

Jaan E Jahan

To say that ARY Digital’s “Jaan E Jahan” is a highly awaited show would be an understatement. After the grand success of “Maula Jatt” in cinemas, “Jaan E Jahan” is Hamza Ali Abbasi’s return to Pakistani television after “Alif” in 2020. Alongside Hamza Ali Abbasi is the beautiful Ayeza Khan, reuniting the lead pair of ARY’s hit show “Pyaray Afzal.” While little is known about the story itself, the first two teasers have recently



launched, complete with flying leaves, sepia tones, soft glances and everything fans of romance love to watch. With a story by Rida Bilal and directed by Qasim Ali Mureed, the only way this show could disappoint is if the makers have not put effort into the script and expect the show to be carried by its lead stars (Example: “Mein” on ARY). Let’s hope this one can live up to expectations!

Pagal Khana

The trailer yet to be released, the previews have given audiences a glimpse into the world of “Pagal Khana,” one which promises an intense, obsessive love story with meaning behind it. Starring the brilliant Saba Qamar and Sami Khan in lead roles, they are supported by an excellent cast including Omair Rana, Mashal Khan, Syed Jibran, Adnan Shah Tipu and others. The story has been written and directed by Iqbal Hussain.

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