



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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دن نگے اور (عید گاہ) میں دور کعت نماز  
عید پڑھی۔ آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے نہ  
اس سے پہلے نفل نماز پڑھی اور اس کے  
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(تجلی گاہی: حدیث نمبر 989)

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## Saad categorically rejects propaganda about sale of Roosevelt Hotel

Federal Minister for Aviation and Pakistan Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has categorically rejected the propaganda that the PIA-owned Roosevelt Hotel in the United States is being sold out. Addressing a press conference at the PR headquarters here on Saturday, he alleged that a news channel was telecasting fake news about the Roosevelt Hotel. (Report on Page 8)



## Pak counter-terrorism operations critical to region's stability: CENTCOM chief

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) chief General Michael E. Kurilla has said that Pakistan's counter-terror operations remain critical to maintaining stability and security in the region. The CENTCOM chief, who concluded his two-day visit to Pakistan from December 14-16, said he looked forward to continuing efforts with Pakistan's new army chief General Asim Munir in combating the shared threats to regional security.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 23, Sunday, December 18, 2022

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 15, Issue: 254 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

# PM terms political stability vital for economic prosperity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday termed political stability a vital condition for economic prosperity and ridding the people of price hikes.

"It is required for the sake of loyalty to Pakistan and allegiance, that there must be economic stability," he said. In a press statement shared by PM Office Media Wing, the prime minister said it was the desire of someone that Pakistan might be pushed into default, but neither it would happen, nor they would let it happen, Insha'Allah.

"The people who had laid land mines in the economic foundations of the country, are out to do the same in the political foundations of the country," the prime minister in a veiled reference to

the political opponents of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, said. The people who had hurt public confidence, were now out to dissolve assemblies, he said, adding their objective was to create political instability.

"Political stability and economic charter can only strengthen Pakistan's national solidarity," he opined. The prime minister vowed that they would rid the public of the problems of food inflation and employment like the way they delivered by removing a liar and corrupt government with the power of the constitution.

The political miscreants by spreading anarchy wanted to force the world not to invest in Pakistan, besides hampering the efforts for rehabilitation of the

## Mian Javed Latif calls on PM

LAHORE: Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif on Saturday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

During the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation of the country, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.



flood-affected people, he added. He said these political mischief makers were not concerned about the plight of the flood-affected population and the efforts to save them from winter, hunger, and diseases, as they were only self-centric and interested in

their political interests. The prime minister said for providing employment to the youth, it was necessary to get rid of the politically unemployed.

He called upon the nation to ponder whenever the country was taken on the path of econom-

ic prosperity, why the wrongdoing junta suddenly swung into action.

"There is no doubt that economic havoc was brought under an agenda and the political instability is a continuity of that action," he opined.

The prime minister advised the political opponents to take pity on the condition of the people of Pakistan. To bring the public out of the curse of poverty and unemployment was the real politics, he observed.

He further said that during the past four years of the previous government's tenure, the people had braced for the economic upheaval and exhorted the PTI leaders not to create hurdles in the economic prosperity of the public. Agencies

## President summons NA session on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday summoned a session of the National Assembly on Tuesday in the Parliament House.

The president summoned the session to meet on December 20 at 5:30pm under the powers conferred by Clause (1) Article 54 of the Constitution of Pakistan,



President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

## Caretaker setup to take over if PTI dissolves assemblies: Sanaullah



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Saturday said that caretaker governments will take over if Imran Khan dissolves Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23.

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan today announced to dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on Friday 23 December.

Speaking to a private channel, Rana Sanaullah said that if Imran Khan is serious about dissolving assemblies, he should have done it by now but if he does, caretaker setup will take over and "it will be the best" for both provinces to get rid of PTI government.

Rana questioned Khan's ultimatum, saying, "If you want to dissolve the assemblies, why are you waiting for

more six days?" He said he feels Imran Khan will take a u-turn on this announcement too and that it is just a false alarm.

Speaking to his party supporters via video link today, Imran Khan announced that the decision of Punjab and KP assemblies dissolution will be held on 23 December Friday. Imran Khan maintained that the ruling coalition has nothing to lose if Pakistan goes bankrupt as all their assets are abroad and their looted money is safe.

Imran emphasized that a strong and independent nation is necessary for any country to advance and slave mentality will never lead to success.

It is pertinent to mention here that several meetings regarding assemblies dissolution held today headed by PTI chairman Imran Khan with CM Punjab attended by senior leaders of PTI and PML-Q.

# Imran Khan announces to dissolve Punjab, KP Assemblies on Dec 23

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has announced to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23, ARY News reported on Saturday.

According to details, the former premier announced the decision while addressing the nation alongside the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief ministers (CM), Pervaiz Elahi and Mahmood Khan, respectively.

Imran Khan thanked the two provincial chiefs for their cooperation with his party, and said he had consulted PTI's lawyers about the move, adding that the Constitution did not allow elections to be delayed beyond 90 days of an assembly's dissolution.

Giving details of PTI's plan of action, the PTI chief said that after dissolving the assemblies, the party would prepare for elections. "We will go to National Assembly and demand with NA speaker to accept our resignations instead of picking a few," he added.

The former prime minister said that a "lesson should be taught through elections" to the government and deal it "such a defeat that the names of these thieves are wiped out forever".

"Pakistan on the verge of default" At the outset of his address, Imran Khan criticized the federal government over the current economic situation and reiterated his demand for 'transparent and immediate' elections.

The PTI Chairman regretted that unemployment and inflation were on the rise and



foreign confidence in the country had eroded. "Skilled people and professionals were leaving the country in droves," he added.

He claimed that Pakistan witnessed 50-year high inflation after the incumbent government came into power. "During our tenure, the economy — including industries, taxes, exports, and agriculture — witnessed a boost," he added.

However, he said, the incumbent government failed to progress in one sector. The former premier said the hundreds of thousands of people who left Pakistan were skilled workers and their deprivation will hurt the country in the long run.

He further said that he feared the "gang of thieves" was taking the country towards destruction. "Ask any labourer, farmer, and businessman, there is disparity between income and expenditures," he added.

Imran said that Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif had left Pakistan 'on the verge of default' in 2018 during their previous tenure as well.

He said that there is a 100 per cent chance today that if someone gives loan to Pakistan it will not be returned, adding that this figure was at 5 per cent during PTI's tenure.

Imran Khan expressed concern that the

government might not hold general elections even in October 2023. "The election commission is conniving with them. A very dishonest man is involved with the government, who will tell them ways to delay elections," Imran said, referring to Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja without naming him.

He also warned the government against employing tactics to delay the elections and said: "I have also spoken to my lawyers and it would be against the Constitutions to delay the polls past 90 days."

Earlier in the day, Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi reaffirmed his support for Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, acknowledging that he owed his government to former prime minister.

According to details, the chief minister made these remarks during a meeting with former premier and PTI Chairman Imran Khan at the latter's residence in Lahore's Zaman Park.

Moonis Elahi and MNA Hussain Elahi were also present on the occasion. Moreover, the meeting was attended by KP Chief Minister (CM) Mahmood Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Pervez Khattak and other PTI leaders.

During the meeting, matters related to dissolution of assemblies came under discussion. Imran Khan will announce the date of dissolution of assemblies along with Chief Ministers of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking on occasion, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leaders vowed to support 'every' decision made by the former prime minister. CM Pervaiz Elahi noted that he owed the Punjab government to Imran.

## CM Pervaiz Elahi vows to back 'all decisions' of Imran Khan

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi Saturday vowed to back "all decisions" of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan as the allies are all set to move towards dissolving the assemblies of the provinces where they rule — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

"I will support all of Imran Khan's decisions. I owed the Punjab Assembly to Imran Khan and I have returned my debt to him," the chief minister said in a tweet hours before Imran's scheduled announcement of the dissolution date.

Imran is expected to announce the date of dissolution during the party's public gathering at Lahore's iconic Liberty Chowk later tonight, but there were reports of issues between the PTI and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) on the date of dissolution.

CM Elahi also stressed that Imran has made his political opponents "zero" and said that the people spreading rumours — about a rift between the allies — "have failed once again".

# 'Coward Imran' does not need to give dates but should have courage to dissolve Punjab & KP assemblies: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said Imran Khan would never dissolve the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which gave protection to him, his wife Bushra Bibi and her friend Farah Gogi against their corruption, loot and plunder.

"The coalition government is not afraid of Imran Khan who is a coward, liar and hypocrite person and does not have courage to dissolve the assemblies which he believes will help him save his skin in foreign funding, Toshakhana and other cases," she said while addressing a news conference here.

She dared Imran Khan to dissolve the assemblies of both the provinces instead of just giving dates just like the 2014 sit-in when he only kept himself limited to giving dates of toppling the then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government.

"We have all the options before us and have every right to exercise them as the country does not and cannot afford political instability at this time," Marriyum said,



reiterating that the coalition government would complete its constitutional term and the general elections would be held in October 2023.

She said it was out of question that Imran Khan would dissolve the assemblies

which helped him run his kitchen and arrange the public gatherings with pomp.

Imran Khan just had one point agenda which was to get an NRO like concession from the coalition government, she said, adding these tactics would not help

him pressurize those who had faced his brutalities during his "fascist" and "autocratic" regime.

"He believes that he can blackmail or put pressure on us with such threats, but he should know that we did not bow to his pressure at that time when he put us in the death cells," Marriyum remarked.

At the outset of her presser, the minister said Imran Khan again wasted time of media and nation today by repeating his old speech which proved that his mental condition was not good. The faces of the chief ministers of Punjab and KP, who sat beside him, clearly showed that they lacked interest in what he was saying during his address to the PTI workers.

She said Imran Khan seemed confused and frustrated which showed that the loss of power had badly impacted his mental health. "The National Assembly has been vacated from the propaganda group through the vote of no confidence motion and days are not far when Imran Khan's governments in provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will also fall," she added. PID / APP

## All efforts under way to put country on road to progress: Ahsan Iqbal

News Desk

KASUR: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said on Saturday the government is making sincere efforts to put the country on the road to progress and prosperity.

Addressing a ceremony at Akhuwat College here, he said that struggle was being waged to develop the national economy on strong footing and secure a place for it among 20 developed economies of the world till 2030.

Ahsan Iqbal said: "We want to provide a platform to talented and intelligent youth of the country so that Pakistan could get a place among the first 10 strong economies of the world till 2047." He said Pakistan has been bestowed with immense resources and a hardworking nation, which could take the country to the peak of progress and prosperity.

The minister said: "We have to carry on the journey of progress and development for betterment of people, which should not be stopped at any cost", adding that "We have to save ourselves from politics of chaos

and divide for a bright future of the country. We should learn a lesson from history and we should compare our performance with other countries, which sustained their policies. However, we are still struggling, as we failed to maintain continuity of policies." The minister said that all developing nations were struggling to make progress and it was a need of the hour that Pakistani nation should also make concerted efforts for development and prosperity of the country, with consistent policies.

The federal minister said the PML-N government in the past weeded out terrorism from the country with the help of armed forces, united the nation and restored peace in Karachi.

Akhuwat Foundation Patron-in-Chief Dr Amjad Saqib said the students of the Foundation College would bring about reforms in society, adding that they were getting free education at its campuses in Chakwal, Faisalabad and Karachi.

Earlier, students briefed the minister about the Akhuwat Foundation and the patron-in-chief welcomed him.



## Preparation for Christmas

ISLAMABAD: Visitors look Santa Claus model prepared for Christmas celebration ceremony at a local hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Pakistan's counter-terrorism operations critical to region's stability: CENTCOM chief

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) chief General Michael E. Kurilla has said that Pakistan's counter-terror operations remain critical to maintaining stability and security in the region.

The CENTCOM chief, who concluded his two-day visit to Pakistan from December 14-16, said he looked forward to continuing efforts with Pakistan's new army chief General Asim Munir in combating the shared threats to regional security.

"I greatly look forward to working with General Asim Munir. This is a strategic relationship that underpins security and stability across the region," the CENTCOM chief told APP in an exclusive interview.

General Kurilla held meetings with Pakistan's military leadership to reaffirm security ties between the two nations. He also visited Torkham border crossing to discuss the security situation along the border with Afghanistan.

The CENTCOM chief termed his visit "great" as he met General Asim Munir and Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza.

"I came away very impressed with the leadership of the Pakistan armed forces and their professionalism," he said. "We discussed opportunities to address key mutual defence interests."

During the engagements in Pakistan, General Kurilla said, he was able to strengthen his previously established relationship with General Asim Munir.

"Personal and face-to-face visits to

Pakistan are critical to building my understanding of the opportunities and challenges for the Pakistan armed forces and to building on our security cooperation," he said. "The objective of visit was to further the partnership and relationship that the United States and Pakistan built over the last 75 years."

The CENTCOM chief expressed commitment to strengthening the Pak-U.S. military-to-military ties and said, "Our relationship has long been viewed as critical to U.S. interests and the region."

Asked if the U.S. still looks at Pakistan through the prism of Afghanistan, he said, "The CENTCOM views the US-Pakistan relationship through its own bilateral merits and its potential to improve stability across the region."

"It is broad-based and important for our countries, for region and the world," he said.

In the wake of recent regional developments, he said the relationship must be "preserved". "It is so important for the region," he stressed.

In response to a question on the U.S. military assistance to Pakistan, he said the partnership aimed at building defence capacity.

"For example, this year, the U.S. agreed to maintain and upgrade Pakistan's F-16 fleet. Maintaining and upgrading this fleet is critical to Pakistan's air power," he said.

General Kurilla also mentioned the grant assistance to Pakistan for the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme, which he said was "beneficial to both militaries".



The IMET's professional military education, operational and technical courses strengthen Pakistan's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism capabilities, and the skills courses improve institutional capacity and resource management, he said.

He said the U.S. would seek to continue and even increase opportunities for the IMET programme.

The CENTCOM chief also outlined the U.S. support to Pakistan through numerous development and assistance projects in areas of health, agriculture, education, entrepreneurship, and energy. "These are all important components of the broader U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship," he emphasized.

On recent flash floods in Pakistan, he said the U.S. provided over \$97 million in assistance while its troops delivered supplies to the government. The U.S. is actively assessing the situ-

ation to determine additional needs, he said.

To a query about the scope of Pak-U.S. intelligence sharing and joint military exercises, he said, "The information sharing is vital to achieving sustained action against all militant and terrorist groups."

He mentioned in this regard the Falcon Talon 2022, a major bilateral aerial training event this February and March, which he said showed the United States' enduring commitment to maintaining a shared understanding of threats in the region.

General Kurilla highlighted that Pakistan held command of a Combined Maritime Forces Task Force longer than any other nation.

"The Pakistan armed forces are a participant and a leading force within the Combined Maritime Forces, the world's largest multinational maritime partnership, which exists to uphold the Rules-Based International Order at sea," he said.

He mentioned that Pakistan Navy commanded two of the Combined Maritime Forces four task forces. This includes command of Combined Task Force 150 by Pakistan Navy Commodore Vaqar Muhammad on maritime security operations outside the Arabian Gulf, from January to July of this year. Also, Commodore Ahmed Hussain commanded Combined Task Force 151 on counter-piracy operations from April to August this year.

"We are grateful for Pakistan's leading role in this important international maritime partnership," he said. Agencies

## Saad categorically rejects propaganda about sale of Roosevelt Hotel

News Desk

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Aviation and Pakistan Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has categorically rejected the propaganda that the PIA-owned Roosevelt Hotel in the United States is being sold out.

Addressing a press conference at the PR headquarters here on Saturday, he alleged that a news channel was telecasting fake news about the Roosevelt Hotel. He said that no such thing was even under consideration. He also rejected that Pakistan's flag had been removed from the hotel and clarified that national flag was hoisted at the hotel only when any head of state of the country stayed over there. Otherwise, he clarified that only two flags were displayed at the hotel including one of the US and the other one of the hotel in routine days. He said that the hotel had been closed during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government tenure due to some reasons. He said that the current administration of the PIA had asked for permission to repair the rooms of the hotel so that financial burden of US\$25 million of the hotel could be reduced. He said that decisions would be made only in the interest of the country. The minister said that the current government, with concerted efforts,

saved the hotel from status of a landmark by the US government.

Talking about the Pakistan International Airlines, he said that the government was struggling to save it from downfall. He said that discussions with the European and American institutions were under progress to get rid of sanctions, imposed by these countries after an uncalculated statement of a former minister.

"The PIA is facing loss of Rs 40 billion per year due to an irresponsible statement of the former minister," he said.

The minister said that ineligibility was as much damaging as corruption.

He said that the PIA had recently earned Rs 2.14 billion from a joint venture with the Turkish Airlines, adding that a proposal from the Emirates Airline for a joint venture was under consideration and he hoped it would be beneficial for the PIA as well as the country if the plan was materialised with the Emirates. He said that during the current fiscal year, a revenue of Rs 170 billion was expected from the PIA. Unfortunately, he said that the number of aeroplanes had been reduced from 43 to 27 and the current administration was trying to increase the number as at least 40 planes were required to make the airline feasible.

## Shazain expresses resolve to eradicate curse of narcotics from society



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti performed the destruction of narcotics in the 'Drug Burning Ceremony 2022' organized by Anti-Narcotics Force Sindh at Rangers Shooting Club on Super Highway here on Saturday.

Sindh Minister for Excise, Taxa-

tion and Narcotics Control Mukesh Kumar Chawla, ANF Director General, Major General Mohammed Aneequr Rehman, actors and other dignitaries attended the ceremony.

Shazain Bugti, while addressing the ceremony, said all-out efforts were being made to control narcotics in the country. Narcotics were a curse and they would be eradicated from society, he added.

## Indonesian Housing Project for Flood Victims in Sindh completed



Spokesman Report

SUJAWAL: The Muslim philanthropic organization of Indonesia, Dompot Dhuafa has completed the construction of 10 climate resilient model houses for Pakistani flood victims in District Sujawal, Sindh Province. The Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam M. Tugio chaired the hybrid session of project completion ceremony and symbolically handed over the keys to Mr. Muhammad Hasan Rind, representing the flood affectees. "As brotherly nations, Indonesia shares sorrows of Pakistani people caused by recent floods and the reconstruction of these houses are manifestation of our solidarity," added the envoy.

The housing program for flood victims in Pakistan by Dompot Dhuafa provided 10 brick houses, 4 public toilets and one water well. Each house has a size of 15x20 feet with two bed rooms and one living room. This model housing project worth around USD 35,000 has been completed in 27 days. In October, Dompot Dhu-

fa also built two model houses in the nearby area.

Indonesia and Pakistan have strong bonds of brotherhood and this humanitarian aid reflects the strong partnership and mutual cooperation to support each other in difficult times. "We hope that assistance from the government and people of Indonesia will reduce the sufferings of flood affected communities and support the rehabilitation and reconstruction process", Ambassador Tugio said in his concluding remarks.

Earlier, in September 2022, the Indonesian government dispatched the first batch of flood relief aid weighing around 90 tons followed by sending the team of 29 Indonesian health professionals to Sindh Province. The fourth batch of Indonesian additional logistic assistance is expected to arrive in Pakistan next week. President Joko Widodo also pledged to provide humanitarian grant of USD 1 million which will be sent directly to NDMA of Pakistan. The disbursement process is expected to be finalised before the end of the year.

## Hamdard Pakistan organized a session on 'Philosophy of Hikmat'



KARACHI: Hamdard Pakistan organized a session on Friday at Hamdard's Corporate Head Office on the topic: "Philosophy of Hikmat", presided over by Ms Sadia Rashid, President Hamdard Foundation Pakistan. Prof. Dr. Abdul Wahab Suri, head of the Philosophy Department, University of Karachi was invited as a guest speaker.

Dr. Arshad Saleem explained the aims and objectives of the initiatives taken by Hamdard Pakistan to promote the philosophy and vision of Hikmat. He said that in order to further strengthen our relationship with Hikmat, it is imperative that people become aware of the basic concept

of Hikmat. This will enable them to effectively convey and spread the message of Hamdard in society. In order to keep pace with the modern fast-paced world, the wider meaning of wisdom and thoughts should be defined in line with current needs.

He further said that Hamdard was primarily a healthcare organization. However, the focus of our business was to promote a healthy lifestyle with awareness of general health among the masses. "The modern allopathic healthcare system is actually the Sick care system that we use only when we are sick, whereas, an ideal healthcare system should be that which

you can refer to in the state of health or infirmity to get useful health advice for yourself. It is also worth mentioning that health is not a state of wellness alone in its literal sense. In fact it is wellness and wellbeing. If wellbeing is not available, then health does not exist in its entirety. That is why Hamdard Pakistan adopted a new theme: Aafiyat Se Jeetay Raho! Which clearly reiterates our commitment to health and wellness of our country," he said.

Prof. Dr. Abdul Wahab Suri said: "Spirituality has not been taken into account in the present-day healthcare system, due to which diseases are increasing continuously. It would be unfair not to acknowledge the value of modern medical sciences in understanding details about human body parts. We must benefit from their findings and research. However, we also need to keep in mind the fact that in modern medical sciences, a human is just a psycho-chemical organism like other living beings."

He further said: "Hikmat offers a much more comprehensive healthcare system than conventional medicine, based on its approach to addressing health issues holistically. That is why Hikmat should be presented to the international community as an alternative healthcare system. Hikmat's methods of diagnosis and prevention are concrete, detailed and comprehensive."

The senior staff and management along with employees of different divisions attended the session in large number.

## Uzair Baloch acquitted in two more cases



News Desk

KARACHI: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Karachi has acquitted Lyari gang warfare kingpin Uzair Baloch in two more cases over "lack of evidence" against him, ARY News reported on Saturday.

According to details, Uzair Baloch – the chief of proscribed Peoples Aman Committee (PAC) – was exonerated of the charges of attempting to commit murder and planting explosive materials.

During the hearing today, Baloch's lawyer Abid Zaman claimed that the allegations levelled against his client were based on "lies". He noted that the cases were registered at Kharadar Police Station and Napier Police Station.



# Around 1.8m children enrolled under Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A total of 1.8 million children have been enrolled under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme with disbursement of Rs. 15 billion among the beneficiaries from May till October 2022, APP reported.

The Programme is being executed by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

According to an official source, since inception of the Programme, 10.5 million children had been enrolled under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme which is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) intervention.

The source conveyed that since inception of the Programme, 10.5 million children had been enrolled.

The Programme was launched, recognizing that many children in BISP beneficiary households were not attending school, in the year 2012 through provision of additional cash per quarter to BISP beneficiary families for pursuing primary education.

Since July 2021, the scope of the Programme has been expanded from primary to secondary and higher secondary level, and is currently operational all over the country.

Giving update on the statistics of Benazir Kafalat disbursements, the source told that an amount of approximately Rs. 49.84 billion has been disbursed among the beneficiaries of Benazir Kafalat Programme from May till October, 2022.

The number of beneficiaries of the Kafalat Programme, which is an

Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) initiative, have been increased from 7.2 million to 8.5 million during this period (May-October).

Currently, the number of enrolled/registered beneficiaries of the Kafalat programme is around 8.58 million. However, the present government has set a target to enhance this number up to 9 million by June 2023.

The BISP Board has recently approved a policy to include transgender under the Programme for which they are required to obtain a CNIC form NADRA clearly mentioning their gender as 'transgender'.

About the Targeted Petroleum Subsidy Programme, the source told APP that an amount of approximately Rs 17.35 billion had been distributed among around 8.67 million beneficiaries under the initiative from May-October, 2022.

The initiative was launched in order to protect the poor and the vulnerable families from the effects of rising fuel prices by providing an additional cash subsidy of Rs 2,000 to existing regular BISP beneficiaries as well as additional beneficiaries using National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) database.

About the Flood Relief Programme, the official source disclosed that from August till October 2022, an amount of approximately Rs 69 billion had been distributed among around 2.76 million families affected by the catastrophic floods this year, under the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Cash Assistance Programme.

The immediate cash relief of Rs

25,000 per family was disbursed among the affected families due to the recent floods across the country through BISP.

About the CCT Benazir Nashonuma Programme, the official source highlighted, "A total of Rs 162,964,000 has been distributed among the enrolled beneficiaries from May to October, 2022".

The Programme aims to address stunting among pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and their children under the age of 2 years through the provision of additional cash of Rs 2,000/- per quarter per PLW for boy child and Rs 2,500/- per quarter for girl child of BISP beneficiary families.

In return, mothers must commit to attend regular antenatal health checks and awareness sessions during preg-

nancy, consuming specialized nutritious food (SNF), and taking their children for immunization and regular health checks.

About the current status of the Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Project (BUSP), the source revealed that the process of enrollment had been completed by enrolling 10,000 students for the scholarship.

The entire budget of Rs 7.346 billion, earmarked for FY 2021-22, was released in May 2022. In September 2022, a further amount of Rs 2.24 billion was released out of the total budget of Rs 9.27 billion earmarked for CFY.

Higher Education Commission (HEC) is in the process of disbursing the amount to all 132 participant universities across Pakistan.

## Drugs Cruashing

A roller machine being used to crush the illegal drugs seized by Anti Narcotic Forces.



## A state-of-the-art Foreign Students Hostel will be set up at UAF

### Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: A state-of-the-art Foreign Students Hostel will be established at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, said UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan.

He was addressing the annual function of the Office of Adviser Foreign Students Affairs. He said that being the pioneer agricultural institution in subcontinent, UAF has played the vital role in the agriculture development of the country with trained manpower, research and outreach work. He said that the UAF is the only institution in Pakistan which is ranked in the top 100 universities of the globe in any category. He said that the university was having good relations across the globe with the different institutions. He lauded the efforts of the Office of Adviser Foreign Students Affairs for facilitating foreign students. He added that the Punjab Government had allocated the funds for the establishment of another mega girls hostel in UAF for 1000 students.

Dr Zain ul Abideen said that more than 100 foreign students from the different countries are studying in the UAF. He said that University was taking all possible measures for providing all facilities to the students.

Treasurer Umar Saeed Qadri, Chief Hall Warden Dr Jaffar Jaskani, Dr Muhammad Younus, Ahsan Akram and other notables spoke on the occasion.

### Battling Climate Change

## Experts Highlight Key Interventions for a Sustainable future

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: A "Climate Change and Karachi - Building Coastal Resilience" Conference was held in Karachi, sponsored by TPL Properties, which highlighted the interventions needed to help the city in adapting to climate change impacts. The Conference focused on highlighting the impacts of Climate Change on Karachi and the measures that can be taken to mitigate the effects. The event was welcomed by Shah Murad Aliani, former Country Representative of IUCN and member of the Prime Ministers Climate Change Committee, who stressed the need for "collective action". The conference started with an opening address from Racha Alkhwaja, CEO, TPL Investment Management, Abu Dhabi, emphasizing the role of our country's business and government fraternity towards environmental protection. "We have gathered here to contemplate possibilities, pledge towards sustainability, and commit our efforts to the generations ahead. The conference included professionals from both private and government sectors who could play a vital role in encouraging sustainable practices. We are looking forward to building green buildings to help diminish water waste and eliminate carbon footprints."

## JUI-F Village Council Chairman and ANP workers joined PTI

### Spokesman Report

SWABI: Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is the only federal party in the country which has representation in all provinces, including AJK and GB. He said that political workers and social activists are preferring to join PTI in Swabi. He expressed these views while addressing joining ceremony of Village council Chairman of JUI(F) and political workers of ANP into PTI at Swabi.

Former Speaker National Assembly said that the public's life has become miserable due to inflation and unemployment. He said that the PDM government is engaged in retaliation against political opponents instead of focusing on the solution of public problems.

## 'Clean Today Safe Tomorrow

### Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: It is need of the hour to refurbish the God-given abilities of the youth so that they can effectively handle the odds in life and work for the development of the country.

It was stated by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan while inaugurating an Exhibition titled "Clean Today Safe Tomorrow" arranged by Department of Entomology in which the MSc students displayed the projects based on innovative ideas. The themes include vector borne diseases, environmental degradation and others.

He was flanked by Department Chairman Dr Sohail Ahmad, Dr Waseem Akram and other notables.

Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad

Khan said steps were needed to sharpen the abilities of the young people. He said that the university was taking all possible measures to provide a platform to the students. He said that vector borne diseases, environmental degradation were posing serious challenges.

He said that the country was facing the challenges of food security. He said that there is tremendous tangible research work done but it was not converted into goods and services.

He added that enhanced academia-industry linkages were the need of the hour to benefit from the research work and convert it into goods and services. He said that the UAF experts had paced up their efforts to reach out to the farming community in order to disseminate the



modern techniques.

Dr Waseem Akram said that the country was bless-

ed with tremendous talents and it is a need to give them proper guidelines. He said

that if we keep our environment safe, it will decrease the health burden in hospital.

## Embassy of Bulgaria will have co-working to promote women empowerment: Envoy

### Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: Embassy of Bulgaria will have co-working to promote women empowerment and growth of women led businesses with Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FWCCI) to venture for export, B2B meetings and interaction with the Chambers of Commerce in Bulgaria will be facilitated, said Her Excellency Ms. Irena Gendaieva Gancheva, Ambassador of Republic of Bulgaria. She was addressing to the members of Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

She said that there are ample opportunities for improving the volume of bilateral trade between Bulgaria and Pakistan where women businesses can contribute a lot with export to Bulgarian markets. She said that Bulgaria

is member of European Union and Pakistan also enjoys GSP Plus status under which a lot of export opportunities are available to Pakistan women led businesses particularly in textile products. She elaborated that she is very much impressed to the FWCCI women products and Bulgaria being cross road country in South Eastern Europe, there are ample opportunities for Pakistani women business to explore the market potential in Bulgaria and other adjacent markets.

As regards, huge trade deficit between both the countries, she said that it could be overcome with diversification of export products from Pakistan particularly for enhancement of textile exports as Bulgaria imports 50 percent of their textile consumption. She said that Embassy of Bulgaria in Islamabad will be more happy to organize events

for women entrepreneurship development and may facilitate in arranging B2B meetings in various areas of women products. She also offered for participation in various trade fairs held in Bulgaria. She said that tourism development is a potential area between both the countries. She was hopeful for promotion of Youth Exchange program for students higher education in Bulgaria. She also showed sympathy with the flood affectees in Pakistan.

Earlier in her welcome address, Mrs. Rubina Amjad, President Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry introduced FWCCI as one of the premier Women Chambers in Pakistan. She said that FWCCI has provided them a vibrant platform where they are facilitated to get resolved their business problems and particularly we have



exerted our energies and resources for women empowerment and growth of women led businesses, she added.

She said that Pakistan and Bulgaria have traditionally enjoyed friendly and coopera-

tive relations.

She said that Pakistan exports to Bulgaria in 2021 were US Dollar : 15.00 million while imports from Bulgaria were US Dollar : 92.00 million. She said that the huge trade deficit needs

to be reduced by encouraging more exports to Bulgaria particularly of women products. She said that FWCCI has first-ever set up 'Women Incubation Centre' and also in process to establish '100 Acres Women Cluster' and 'Tech-

nical Training Centre' at M-3 Allama Iqbal Industrial Estate.

Vote of thanks was offered by Mrs. Abiha Hamid, Vice President FWCCI while a large number of women were present at the occasion.



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:37 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	3:24 pm
Maghrib	5:02 pm
Isha	6:31 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
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
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249

# Every religion uplifts sanctity of human rights: Murtaza Javed

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Monday said that every religion uplifts the sanctity of human rights.

Addressing a ceremony regarding human rights, he said the main component of the last sermon of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was human rights which erased the difference between a master and a slave. Protection of the fundamental rights of the citizens is the prime responsibility of the government of which the incumbent government was fully aware.

The minister said our constitution guarantees the protection of the fundamen-



tal rights of the citizens and a Standing Committee on Human Rights had been established to monitor the protection of these rights.

Murtaza Abbasi said the silence of international human rights organizations on the ongoing human rights violations in Palestine and Occupied Kashmir is incomprehensible, atrocities and brutality on the people of Occupied Kashmir are a humiliation of humanity.

He said that the massacre of thousands of innocent children and rape of women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is very sad, and human rights organizations need to take immediate steps to end these violations.

## Removing Tinted Sheets

ISLAMABAD: Police removing tinted sheets from vehicles during a campaign at Srinagar Highway in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Aga Khan University Hospital Receive Safe Care Certification

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Aga Khan Hospital for Women in Karimabad, Karachi and Aga Khan Maternal and Child Care Centre in Hyderabad, part of the Aga Khan University Hospitals (AKUH) network; and Aga Khan Medical Centre in Gilgit, part of the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) network, are the first hospitals in Pakistan to receive Level 5 SafeCare certification.

An initiative of Pharm Access, Joint Commission International (JCI), and Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA), SafeCare is a methodology with international accredited standards, aiming to improve quality care in low- and middle-income countries, where 3.6 million people die every year because of low quality care. Level 5



status is given to institutions that demonstrate high-quality standards across the SafeCare Service Elements.

"SafeCare certification is an endorsement that a health facility has met certain internationally recognized quality and safety standards for patient care," said Dr Farhat Abbas, interim Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan University (AKU) Health

Services in Pakistan. "In addition to the SafeCare certification, AKUH is also accredited by JCI, and its clinical laboratories are accredited by the College of American Pathologists for fast and accurate testing. These accreditations are a true testament to the high-quality of healthcare and patient safety we provide."

The French Medical Institute for Mothers and Chil-

dren (FMIC) in Kabul is the first hospital in Afghanistan to receive the SafeCare certification. The facility is managed by AKU.

While acknowledging the tireless efforts and dedication of the FMIC team, CEO Aziz Ahmad Jan termed SafeCare certification as a reward for the high-quality healthcare services being offered by FMIC over the past 16 years.

Speaking on what it means to receive the accreditation, Syed Nadeem Husain Abbas, Chief Executive Officer of AKHS, Pakistan commented, "We are very excited about receiving the SafeCare certification, as it brings us one step closer to the level of excellence in healthcare that we believe our communities need and which we aspire to deliver."

PharmAccess CEO Nicole Spieker welcomed the newly SafeCare-certified hospitals in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## LHC maintains PMC decision on 2021 merit calculation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has upheld the decision of the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) on the calculation of elective subject marks for 2021 candidates for the purpose of admission in medical and dental colleges.



According to PMC spokesperson, fresh candidates along with students who had completed their FSc in 2020 had challenged the PMC public notice.

The notice stated that candidates who passed their FSc pre-medical /HSSC or equivalent exam in the year 2021 and now are applying for admission in medical or dental college for session 2022-23 are informed that only their elective subjects marks and percentage will be considered for merit calculation for admission in medical and dental colleges for session 2022-23.

As per PMC regulations, the admission process for medical education is based on a prescribed weightage formula in which MDCAT holds 50% weightage FSc (Pre-Medical)/HSSC/Equivalent holds 40% weightage and SSC/Matriculation/Equivalent holds 10% weightage.

The PMC notice was contested on the grounds that the decision to only count elective subjects for candidates who completed their FSc in 2021 was discriminatory towards the candidates who had completed their FSc in 2020 and or post 2021.

The Lahore High Court, dismissing the petition said that the policy decision of PMC to the extent represented by the public notice as such fully stands to reason and suffer from no inherent or illegal discriminatory feature being based on tenable classification and, therefore, warrants no interference in extraordinary constitutional and discretionary jurisdiction of this Court.

## MC elects Sardar Attique Ahmed party president

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: The All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference endorsed the recommendations of the party electoral college. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan elected President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The new president will take his oath of office on Sunday (today), December 18, at the shrine of the Quaid-e-Millat Ch-



ghulam Abbas. He has been the president of Muslim Conference for 12 consecutive years from 2003 to 2019.

According to the press release issued by the Information Department of the Muslim Conference, in addition to the swearing-in of the new president, the election of other officials of the party can also be carried out in the general council meeting held at the Quaid-e-Millat's shrine on December 18. However, according to tradition, the power to nominate/appoint other officials is delegated to the new president so that he can nominate suitable officials in consultation with other colleagues.

The meeting of the executive committee was held under the chairmanship of the current president Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jaral on Saturday under the cover of Mazar Quaid Millat in Faizabad. Former Minister of Government Ms. Shamim Ali Malik, Former Advisor to Government Sardar Abdul Raziq Khan Advocate, Raja Saqib Majeed Khan, Sardar Usman Atiq, Major Khizur Rahman Raja, Muhammad Sajid Qureshi Advocate, Sardar Asim Zahid Abbasi, Raja Ifthikhar Ahmed Khan, Sardar Abdul Sami Advocate, Muzaffar Ali Zafar Advocate, Sardar Mushtaq Nair, Raja Zafar Maruf, Sardar Kamal Khan, Sardar Tahir Akram Khan Advocate, Syed Ghulam Nabi Shah, Raja Muhammad Latif Hasrat, Saleem Awan, Syed Anjad Gurdizi Advocate, Mehmun Kayani Advocate and Sardar Abid Razak and others addressed. On this occasion, Raja Muhammad Latif Hasrat, through a resolution, paid tribute to the young men and women who have been associated with the Muslim Conference in extremely unfavorable conditions, who have shown perseverance, and who have held the flag of the Muslim Conference wholeheartedly. Presented.

## HEC conducts hockey trials for female players of GB

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, in collaboration with Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi organised Hockey trials at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS), Lahore for the female players of Gilgit-Baltistan residing in Lahore.

The hockey trials were held in five phases, while women from Gilgit-Baltistan living in Lahore were given a special opportunity to appear in trials in Lahore, said a press release yesterday.

Before this, these trials were held in five stages in Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Gilgit, Skardu and Islamabad, in which young female athletes of 15 to 25 years participated. It is pertinent to mention that the Government of Pakistan is organizing hockey trials under the Talent Hunt Youth Sports League in 25 districts of the country and is providing equal opportunities to the country's youth.

After holding these trials, provincial leagues will be organized between the teams of the best players and the best players of provincial leagues will be given an opportunity to participate in the national league after getting coaching and mentoring in training camps.

# UN experts call on Taliban to halt public floggings, executions

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: The resumption of public floggings and executions in Afghanistan must stop immediately, a group of UN human rights experts said in an appeal to the ruling Taliban leadership on Friday.

"We call on the de facto authorities to immediately establish a moratorium on the death penalty, prohibit flogging and other physical punishments that constitute torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and guarantee a fair trial and due process in accordance with international standards," the experts said in a joint statement.

Since 18 November, more than 100 men and women have reportedly been publicly whipped in several Afghan provinces, including Takhar, Logar, Laghman, Parwan and Kabul, according to the UN.

The floggings took place in stadiums in the presence of Taliban officials and the public.

Each person received between 20 and 100 lashes for alleged crimes such as theft, "illegitimate" relationships,

or violating social behaviour codes.

"While criminalization of relationships outside of wedlock seem gender-neutral, in practice, punishment is overwhelmingly directed against women and girls," said the experts.

Last week, Taliban authorities carried out what is believed to be the first public execution since they seized power in August 2021, it was pointed out.

The UN human rights office, OHCHR, described it as a "deeply disturbing" development.

The man put to death had been charged with murder, and was shot by the father of his victim, according to media reports.

The execution took place on 7 December in a crowded stadium in Farah province, located in southwestern Afghanistan.

Senior Taliban officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Justice, were in attendance.

The UN experts said public floggings and executions began after the Supreme Leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, on 13 November ordered the judiciary to implement Hudood



(crimes against God) and Qisas (retribution in kind) punishments.

"Public floggings and public executions violate universal principles

prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or

punishment," they stated.

"The public spectacle of these punishments make them especially distasteful and undignified," they added.

The experts recalled that Afghanistan is a party to a UN covenant that prohibits torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

"We are additionally raising doubts about the fairness of the trials preceding these punishments, which appear not to satisfy basic fair trial guarantees," their statement added.

"International human rights law prohibits the implementation of such cruel sentences, especially the death penalty, following trials that apparently do not offer the required fair trial guarantees," they said.

The 10 experts who issued the statement were appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, which is based in Geneva.

Among them are several Special Rapporteurs, whose mandates cover the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, or issues such as discrimination against women and girls.



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# Growing encroachments creating mess for Pindites

## Spokesman Research

**A**midst oblivious interest of the city managers to clear roadsides and pavements from encroachers, the city residents face traffic mess and heavy rush in almost all busy and commercial areas.

Ever-increasing encroachments in various localities of the city have become a permanent source of nuisance for commuters with roadside bazaars, street hawkers and pushcarts coming up along every main or connecting road. This tendency results in frequent traffic jams, create hurdles for pedestrians and often results in accidents and brawls. It is sometimes difficult for pedestrians to walk through Raja Bazaar, City Saddar Road, Bara Bazaar, Trunk Bazaar, Kishmiri Bazaar, Jamia Masjid Road, Narnkari Bazaar, Adiala Road, Dalgara Bazaar, Fawara Chowk, Sadiqabad, Commercial Market and several other localities of the city.

The situation is no different in Cantonment Board jurisdictions where encroachment mafia freely ruling several commercial areas including Trench Bhatta, Chungi No 22, Tulsa Road, Sher Zaman Colony, Saddar, Scheme-III and other areas.

As the bazaars offering a budget alternative to the public already experience heavy footfall particularly throughout winter season, the encroachers leave minimum space for them to tread from one shopping center to another.

The situation is also not different at Circular Road, Banni, Gawalmandi, Saddar, Murree Road and Commercial Market as residents are often seen complaining about the spread of this menace.

"It feels like free for all. They are everywhere encroaching busy roads, pavements and footpaths leaving no space for pedestrians," said Faheem Ahmed, a resident of Gawalmandi. "Even the vehicles cannot move smoothly on important roads of the city. We also see roadside accidents and brawls due to this tendency."

Faheem also complained about the attitude of concerned authorities demanding strict action against encroachers. "Authorities continue to turn a blind eye on encroachments. TMA should remove the encroachments and reclaim the pavements for the commuters."

He said some commercial establishments have also extended ramps on to pavements and permit customers to park vehicles there. "This practice spoils peace of mind of the residents as well as result in anxiety and intolerance among them."

Couple of years back, even the Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench had also directed the officials of district administration and cantonment boards to remove encroachments in the city within one week. But, after taking some cosmetic measures, the authorities once again went oblivious to this phenomenon.

"After the displeasure expressed by the LHC, a campaign was launched in the city's cantonment areas. The encroachments (temporary and permanent) were removed but to no vain as these

re-emerged after sometime," Faheem said. "Besides mental agony, the encroachments also result in waste of time and fuel and damages to costly vehicles of passing by owners," he added.

Most of such roadside businesses in Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas have been set up without permission from relevant authorities.

The residents stated that pavements on both sides of the roads in Raja Bazar, Bani have been gobbled up by hawkers of all hues and illegally parked vehicles and several vital roads turned from residential areas into a commercial hub over the past few years.

Many residential areas were no longer residential because of the heavy vehicular movement and commercial establishments. Moreover, with the expansion of commercial areas to the residential, the encroachers get more and more space for illegal business by installing carts and tuck shops on footpaths and narrow roads leading through the thickly inhabited areas.

Tehsil Municipal Authority (TMA) came up with traditional mantra and a stereo type statement of taking action against encroachers. "An operation was underway to remove all such encroachments from the city's streets," said a TMA spokesman. "We take action against them but they reappear. Rising population and shrinking business spaces also result in encroachments," he stated and claimed that the authorities were fully aware of their responsibility and they frequently take action against encroachers.

The spokespersons of Rawalpindi

and Chaklala Cantonment Boards have claimed of continuous efforts to remove encroachments. "We are often on the move to remove temporary and permanent encroachments and operations to clear roads were being conducted on daily basis," said Incharge of anti-encroachment drive at RCB. "We have confiscated 39 truckload goods during last month," he added.

Although, these small outlets provide for a source of earning for some very poor and deserving pushcarts and stalls owners, yet encroaching space illegally cannot be acceptable in any society. Some shopkeepers deliberately provide space for illegal installations for the sake of rent they receive from vendors.

Some residents believe that there is certain mafia backing such illegal operators and the main reason behind their re-emergence.

"Such illegal markets widely set up in different areas are seemingly operated by some kind of mafia as they continue operating despite the government orders to uproot them," said Muhammad Mush-taq, a resident of city area. "Seeing them doing all this bravely also raises doubt of alleged involvement some TMA officials who could provide them shelter."

Although, the City Traffic Police also collaborate with the administration to remove illegally erected stalls from roads, streets and sidewalks, yet instances of rampant encroachment are all around and need serious efforts by authorities to provide a congenial living environment to people.

## Energy-Water-Food security for Balochistan

**F**ederal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch said that energy conservation and efficiency is the need of the hour during these testing times for the national economy. The potential of energy conservation and efficiency has not been fully realized while approaching the challenges of Energy-Water-Food security in Balochistan where agriculture sector is under tremendous pressure due to high energy costs and natural calamities.

He said this while chairing a seminar here on 'Promoting Conservation and Efficiency in Energy-Water Nexus of Balochistan organized by the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. The Federal Minister appreciated the institutionalization of energy efficiency and conservation in the country and directed that NEECA and relevant federal departments shall work hand in hand with the provincial departments of Balochistan to conduct solarization of tube-wells across the province.

He also appreciated the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations for launching a five-year programme worth 40 million Euro in Balochistan on revival of water resources of Balochistan. He also directed that development programmes shall be designed and launched for the agriculture and water sector of Balochistan and a donors' conference shall be launched in Balochistan to finance these development programmes especially tube-well solarization and development of water reservoirs.

It was informed that the agriculture tube-well consumers are only 4% but they consume 74% electricity. He said that there is a need to rally support at federal and provincial level to focus on improving energy efficiency and access to renewable energy (solar, wind) for agriculture tube-wells. This will reduce energy costs to the farmers. Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department Balochistan Mr. Qurban Ali Jatoti said that there is a gap between ground water storage and recharge which is widening day by day and stressing the water security of the province. He said that government should devise some regulatory measures which shall strictly govern the efficient use of water resources in the province.

Regional Head of Food and Agriculture Organization Mr. Waleed Mahdi recommended that efforts shall be made for improving the water resources planning and regulation of energy subsidy in the province. He said this will greatly help the province in achieving a resilient agriculture sector. Regional Chief ZTBL, Mr. Muhammad Jan Kakar said that ZTBL is extending various credit lines for promotion of agriculture sector of Pakistan especially Balochistan. He confirmed Secretary General Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee Mr. Haji Abdul Rahman Bazai, while representing the farmers of Balochistan, appreciated the efforts of Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch for highlighting the challenges of agriculture sector in the country.

The government shall invest in the solarization of the tube wells which will save billions of rupees in energy subsidy along with promotion of tunnel farming and drip irrigation. He said that government was unable to build dams in the past 70 years and yearly 13.5 MAF water is disposed of in the sea which requires building the dams on strategic level especially in Balochistan. Central Labor Secretary, Mr. Moosa Baloch appreciated the objectives of the Seminar and extended full support of his office to the cause of energy efficiency and conservation in Balochistan.

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



## 'Human Trafficking & Migrant Smuggling'

### Adeela Mushtaq

**H**uman Trafficking is a grave issue that we face both on a global and national level. Unfortunately, not much attention has been given to the issue. The main culprits of this heinous act are criminal organizations and networks, and the country's organizations struggle to put an end to such crimes due to which the situation remains as grave as ever.

Human Trafficking is defined as the recruitment and transportation of people by force, fraud, or deception to gain a profit from exploiting these people. The trafficker may make false promises, and give them hope for great employment opportunities, or free education to trick and abduct them. Types of Human Trafficking include sex trafficking, forced labour, and debt bondage. Sex trafficking victims are mostly sexually exploited, forced to marry, or made to do prostitution. Forced Labour victims mostly include children, who are forced to beg, do labour, and in extreme cases used as soldiers who commit crimes for criminal organizations. Debt Bondage victims are made to work to pay off a debt, or their limbs and organs are removed and sold for money.

All this exploitation of the victims leaves them with scars and trauma. Migrant smuggling is the facilitation of irregular entry for a migrant into another country. This business is highly profitable as individuals exploit the people who are in dire need of employment, or they need to escape political turmoil or persecution in their own

country. Violence, abuse, and exploitation are major traits of this business, and many immigrants die due to the harsh conditions during the smuggling i.e., many migrants die of thirst in deserts, perish at sea, or suffocate in containers.

Therefore, there are a lot of routes that have been established for reaching Iran. The most popular one now starts from Punjab, reaches Quetta, and then leads to Noshki by train, bus, or car. From there, it leads to Yak Much, then Mashkail, and then to Iran. A total of 8 other routes have also been observed apart from this. The international routes have also been observed that are used for migrant smuggling; the most popular one leading into Iran from Pakistan, then Turkey, and finally Greece. Additionally, due to Pakistan being a Third World country facing sociopolitical and economic issues, the youth of this country tend to seek ways to survive and are attracted to the idea of illegally crossing borders into well-developed countries with more employment opportunities. Without ample security, women and children are kidnapped and subjected to forced marriages, prostitution, rape, and sexual assault.

This proves to be extremely harmful to the country and its people, as illegal immigration into other countries results in the loss of skilled labor from the country. The people and families affected by the smuggling become traumatized and cease functioning normally in society. It indeed is a huge problem for Pakistan and the rest of the world which is why many steps have been taken to intercept attempts at human trafficking and illegal immigration.

In Pakistan, the FIA in collaboration

with the UNODC has set up a blueprint on how to halt such crimes in Pakistan, with support from many other partners such as the International Organization for Migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, Law Enforcement Agencies, and other relevant stakeholders including Provincial Departments. Some of their plans include the Country Program III, which aims to strengthen the legal framework to better implement Human Trafficking and Immigrant Smuggling Laws, and the National Action Plan which intends to apprehend criminal organizations which facilitate human trafficking and illegal immigration while also helping and rehabilitating their victims.

The Victim reception and facilitation-center have also been put into place where deportees from Iran are accommodated, and dangers of smuggling and trafficking are taught to the populace. A "Consolidated Training Manual and Standard Curricula" for the FIA Training Academy were also created with great effort by the FIA and UNODC which is used to train officials in the constable to assistant director cadres. A "Victim Referral Mechanism" was also introduced in a few areas of Pakistan which offer direct help to victims of trafficking and smuggling. Seminars have also been held across the state to spread awareness about the dangers of Human trafficking and illegal immigration, both face-to-face and online, using LMS. These steps are necessary to be able to discourage the vices of Human Trafficking and illegal immigration that are a plague to our society.

Writer is Assistant Registrar in HITEC University, Taxila

## Qatar offers World Cup visitors an introduction to Islam

### AP Research

**F**atima Garcia donned a headscarf and a black abaya — a long, loose-fitting robe — over her clothes as she walked into a mosque in Doha to learn about Islam.

In Qatar to enjoy the World Cup with friends, the Salvadoran visitor took a day off from soccer to go sightseeing at the Katara mosque, where preachers have been introducing Islam in multiple languages to curious fans from around the world.

"Qatar is my first exposure to Islam," Garcia said inside the house of prayer, also known as the blue mosque for its beautiful turquoise tiles. "Qatar has been a life-changing adventure because it gives you a perspective on different cultures."

Hundreds of thousands of visitors have come to Qatar during the World Cup. For many it's their first visit to a Muslim country. Those who don't venture far beyond the stadiums and Doha's glitzy hotels will have only limited exposure to the country's religion, such as hearing the call to prayer at a distance or witnessing Muslims prostrate at prayer rooms in stadiums, airports and hotels. But for those who are curious to find out more about Islam, Qatari authorities and religious officials are eager to help.

Local mosques are offering multilingual tours to visitors and the Islamic Cultural Center in Doha offers a virtual reality tour of the holy city of Mecca. Booths at tourist sites hand out free copies of the Quran and brochures about Islam are available in hotel lobbies. Billboards have been set up across Doha featuring U.S. Olympic fencer Ibtihaj Muhammed and other Muslim personalities as part of a campaign encouraging people to explore Islam.

Nearby, Sergio Morales, a Guatemalan who had come for the whole tournament, finished listening to a tour and walked out of the mosque to a booth located at the entrance where he asked for a free copy of the Quran. "Today I became interested because the guided tour was in Spanish and I could understand it all," he said. "There should be guides in Spanish in every

mosque because there are so many Latin American people coming to these countries."

Booths with free Qurans and booklets introducing the religion in several languages are also available in the winding cobbled alleys of Souq Waqif, the capital's oldest bazaar where stores hawk spices and perfumes, scented oils and silk scarves. Just steps from there, World Cup visitors walked into the spiral-like building of the Abdullah Bin Zaid Al-Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center, for a tour and a visit to the mosque, where people gathered for Friday prayer.

Carlos Bustos, Mireya Arias and their sons, 8-year-old Jacobo and 13-year-old Matias toured the cultural center. The Colombian family found information on large placards about the contributions of the Islamic world to medicine, science, math and architecture.

"What we've seen is that they've made an effort to change the image that we have in the West of seeing Islam. It's breaking that barrier," said Carlos Bustos, who along with his sons had dressed in traditional Qatari clothes. "They've told us that we're very different but we see more similarities than differences," he said.

His wife, Mireya Arias, admired the devotion of Muslims to their faith and how they follow the call to prayer. She also appreciated the efforts made by Qatar to introduce visitors to Islam.

"They've used a lot of strategies to get closer to visitors, for us to understand and learn," she said. "When you're on the buses that take you to the (World Cup) stadiums, you point to a QR code and it gives you explanations about the Quran."

Doha's Museum of Islamic Art also offers glimpses into religious beliefs and rituals. Visitors can read about the five pillars of Islam — the profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting and hajj or pilgrimage — or learn about hajj rituals and different funerary practices in the Islamic world.

"The more you understand this Islamic culture, the more fascinating it is," said Jose Antonio Tinoco, a Brazilian museum visitor, who wore his country's soccer jersey. "The most important part of the museum for me was the part on Islam."







**OGDCL, Tehzibul Akhlaq Trust collaborate to promote education**



**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Aiming to revolutionize the education system of Pakistan, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tehzibul Akhlaq Trust for sponsoring education with the concept of transforming societies.

The seven-year program mainly focuses on providing free education to 25 students in the Baluchistan province's OGDCL operational areas. These students will complete their studies up to grade-12 education at one of the schools run by the Tehzibul Akhlaq Trust in Lahore.

While commenting on the collaboration, OGDCL Spokesman said, "The project aims to enable financially needy students of operational and concessional areas of OGDCL to continue their education. OGDCL is playing an important role in promoting education in different parts of the country. We believe that training and education are essential for national development."

The project will provide a chance for deserving students of Baluchistan to get quality education and exposure to create a bright future for themselves and will play a role as transforming agents among their communities.

OGDCL has launched a number of projects for promoting education in the country. The company is effectively performing its social responsibility and providing education to the need-based students of remote areas across the country.

**British Airways, Virgin Atlantic Limit ticket sales to heathrow**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: British Airways and Virgin Atlantic will limit ticket sales for flights to London's Heathrow Airport during planned strikes by border agents over Christmas and New Year's Eve to reduce disruption, the airlines said on Friday.

UK Border Force workers at several major British airports including the country's busiest, Heathrow, will go on strike for eight days this month in a dispute over pay, threatening to slow processing of passengers arriving from abroad during the holidays.

A BA spokesperson said the carrier was working with the government and airport "to ensure that we play our part in ensuring our customers are able to travel as planned at this important time of year."

A Virgin Atlantic spokesperson also said it was working closely with government to "minimise the impact of Border Force strikes on our customers' journeys."

The strikes, from Dec. 23-26 and 28-31, come at one of the busiest periods for airlines, and the flights affected were already busy. Heathrow is a hub for both airlines, and BA is the dominant carrier.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic have also given customers the option of extra flexibility to shift their travel to a non-strike day, and flight schedules - as well as restrictions on tickets - are being kept under review.

"We intend to operate our schedule as planned, with additional flexibility to allow customers to change their flight dates if they wish to avoid arriving on strike days," the Virgin Atlantic spokesperson said.

**Gas supply to industries suspended for two days**

**Monitoring Desk**

KARACHI: The gas crisis has further deepened in the economic hub of Pakistan as the duration of gas loadshedding to Karachi industries was increased for up to two days, ARY News reported on Friday.

The industrial sites in Karachi will be facing two-day gas loadshedding instead of one day as the crisis deepened in the metropolis.

It was learnt that an announcement was made for two-day gas closure to all industrial units and captive power plants in Karachi.

Seven industrial zones and captive power plants were directed to not use gas supply from Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) from December 17 to 19 (Saturday and Sunday).

Sources said that the relevant authorities will take legal action against the violators and SSGC monitoring teams will also conduct surprise raids in all industrial sites.

On December 13, Sindh Energy Minister Intiaz Shaikh criticised the gas loadshedding and said that the province is producing more natural gas than its demand but is being deprived of its legitimate right.

**Govt puts priority to address issues of energy sector: Dar**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that the government was putting priority to address the issues of energy sector including circular debt in order to bring financial sustainability of the sector and ensure the economic growth of the country.

While chairing a meeting on reforms in energy sector, the minister further directed the concerned authorities to make viable solutions for the settlement of all issues of energy sector, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The meeting discussed introducing various reforms in energy sector and issues of stock and flow of circular debt in the sector.

The Finance Minister highlighting the importance of reforms in energy sector, said that reforms were crucial in energy sector for the economic growth of the country.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Ayesha Ghous Pasha, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance



Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Finance, Secretary Power and senior officers attended the meeting.

**Pakistan Business Forum demands continuity in economic policies**

**Monitoring Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has demanded the political parties to present their economic manifestoes before elections, ARY News reported.

"The economic policies' continuity has become necessary now," Vice President PBF Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said.

"Pakistan required an economic plan for 15 year. The country could not afford repeated changes in economic policies," Ahmad Jawad said. He said the Business Confidence Index in the country has dropped to minus-4. "Dollars were being smuggled and flying to Afghanistan in fruit crates", he said.

In an earlier statement the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), had demanded from the central bank to take necessary measures to stop market speculation and resolve the issue.

In a statement Ahmad Jawad said, "Pakistan's economy continues to slump despite resumption of the IMF programme".

**Pakistan will import 20000 tons Gas cargo from Azerbaijan: Musadik**

**Monitoring Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik has said that the country is going to import 20 thousand ton of additional Gas cargo from Azerbaijan in the month of January and February 2023 to meet the demand of the masses who suffer from acute Gas shortage. He expressed these views while talking to a private TV channel on Friday.

Responding to a question, he said that Imran had talked about the pipeline not about the petroleum oil products during his visit to Russia and informed that Russian Petroleum Minister is visiting Pakistan in the second week of January 2023 to hold further negotiations with Pakistan and enter into an agreement to import crude oil from Russia.

Musadik observed that our government is expecting Russia will export crude oil to Pakistan on a discount as compared to rest of the world, as it had expressed its persuasion during my visit to Russia and things would be settled when Russian Energy Minister will visit to Pakistan.

To a question regarding the contradiction of statements between the ministers



on Russian oil trade issue, he clarified and said that foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto probably was not aware about the technicalities and wouldn't have proper information in this regard.

The state Minister apprised that we are working on TAPI pipeline to import 1300 billion MF Gas yearly from Azerbaijan to Meet the Gas crises in the country and said

that access of Furnace oil import is being stopped to maintain the balance.

He informed that PM with his cabinet is working to manage the circular debt issue in order to get out the masses from its burden and said that our Gas reservoirs are decreasing every year that causes additional pressure to import maximum Gas to meet the demand.

**PINDI EATS kickstarts at Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi**



**News Desk**

RAWALPINDI: In celebration of the vibrant Pearl-Continental culture, Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi is hosting PINDI EATS from 16th-18th December, 3:00-11:00 pm. Sponsored by D1 Capital Park City and Wonder World, PINDI EATS is a family-oriented food and music festival aiming to bring people together through the collective love of good food, fun-filled activities, and great music.

The festival was inaugurated by Mr. Saqib Mannan, Commissioner Rawalpindi, on Friday, in the presence of Mr. Haseeb Gardezi, COO, Hashoo Group, Mr. Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, General Manager, Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi and Mr. Muhammad Farooq Dar, Chairman D1.

**PSX witnesses bullish trend, loses 121 points**

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Friday, gaining 121.72 points, a positive change of 0.30 percent, closing at 41,301.48 against 41,179.76 points on the previous day.

A total of 139,659,870 shares were traded during the day as compared to 245,017,196 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 4.167 billion against Rs 7.595 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 330 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 124 of them recorded gains and 185 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 21 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Bank Al-Falah with 17,468,556 shares at Rs 30.75 per share, World-Call Telecom with 12,449,827 shares at Rs 1.27 per share and Dewan Motors with 8,107,500 shares at Rs 14.55 per share.

**Start of crushing**

FAISALABAD: Laborers busy in loading sugarcane on delivery Tractor Trolleys at Jhang Road in the city.



Photo: Online

**Pakistan is facing challenges to meet increasing food needs. Chairman PARC**

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) Pakistan jointly launched the Plant Wise Plus Program at the National Agricultural Research Center to help improve food security in Pakistan through more sustainable methods of food production. The launch ceremony was attended by senior officials of provincial agricultural departments, extension and research wings besides national and provincial agricultural institutes. Vice chancellors, deans and senior management and private sector representatives were also present on the occasion. Dr. Daniel Elgar, CEO, CABI also participated in the event virtually.

Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, in his opening remarks said that the dynamic challenges faced by agriculture need to be tackled through concrete measures. He highlighted that Pakistan is facing many challenges to meet growing demands of food and fiber owing rapid population growth. Climate change is turned to be the leading factor affecting our agriculture sector. A great lesson for us is the recent floods which destroyed our most productive lands and crops. For this, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council is playing its role with its partners to implement government policy and need-based research for agricultural development. Chairman PARC appreciated CABI for successfully conducting Plant Health Clinic. Dr. Ali said that

PARC and CABI have been working for a long time to implement various projects and programs in the country. Chairman PARC urged the scientists to work on innovative projects. Finally, Chairman PARC thanked CABI Senior Regional Director Babar Ihsan Bajwa, his team and all provincial stakeholders for launching the Plantwise-Plus program which aims to reduce crop losses to farmers and use artificial intelligence to identify pests and ensuring food security by helping to manage diseases in an integrated manner.

Dr. Babar Ehsan Bajwa, Senior Regional Director Asia, (CABI) said that the government is convinced and enthusiastic about the quality assurance of operations, processes and outcomes of the Plant Clinic under the Plant Wise Plus programme. He added



that the government believes that a network of plant clinics would be run in the country to provide pest diagnosis and advisory services to farmers. Dr. Bajwa said, "Furthermore, this program is helping to identify pests and diseases with new and existing exten-

sions, especially introduction of digital tools and certified diagnosis will be helpful to farmers. (CABI) Project Coordinator Dr. Mohammad Naeem Aslam highlighted the PlantwisePlus program features and said that researchers and

extension workers can take advantage of CABI's online resources like Crop Protection Compendium, Invasive Species Compendium, etc. CABI Compendium brings species, pest and disease data and research together in a comprehensive form.



# Pakistan to host T20 Blind Cricket World Cup next year

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host the 4th edition of the T20 World Cup Cricket of the Blind from November 18 to December 3, 2024, Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) announced on Saturday.

The decision to award hosting rights to Pakistan was taken in the 24th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of World Blind Cricket Ltd (WBCL), held in Bangalore, India on Friday.

"Due to the non-issuance of visas on political grounds, Chairman PBCC Syed Sultan Shah, who is also the president of WBCL, presided over the meeting via video link, a PBCC press release said.

The WBCL unanimously passed a resolution to regret the Indian government's insensitivity to refuse Pakistan blind cricket team visas for the Blind Cricket T20 World, held in India from December 5 to 17.

"The WBCL is of the view that Pakistan is currently top ranked T20 blind cricket team and the Indian government's insensitivity has deprived it to



exercise equal rights to take part and win the title. Visa denial on political grounds has caused an irreparable loss to WBC in particular and global blind cricket in general because Pakistan was a serious contender to win the title.

"The WBC urges the states that sports should be kept above regional politics,

particularly the special persons' mega sports events should be treated fairly and all teams must be given equal chances to compete in the event. Most states have ratified United Nations Charter for Persons with Disabilities, which induces states to provide equal sports playing opportunities to persons with disabili-

ties, hence this charter should be implemented in letter and spirit."

The elections of the Executive Committee of WBCL were also held during the AGM. Nine out of 10 full member countries' representatives participated in the meeting.

Sultan Shah was elected unopposed WBCL President for a term of two years i.e. 2022-24. He has become the WBCL President for the fourth time in a row.

The other office-bearers of the newly elected body include, First Vice President Bhawani Persad (West Indies), Second Vice President Rajnesh Henry (India), Secretary General Raymond Moxly (Australia), Director Technical Maher Yousaf Haroon (Pakistan), Director Finance Pawan Ghimire (Nepal), and Director Global Development David John (India).

Meanwhile, the WBCL reassured its participation in the World Blind Games to be organized by International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) from August 18 to 27, 2023 in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Blind cricket has been added for the first time in the Games.

## Selfless cricketer' Ramiz praises Azhar Ali on farewell Test

By A Sports -

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Ramiz Raja has praised the retiring veteran batter Azhar Ali for his services to Pakistan Cricket, calling him a selfless player and an inspiration for young cricketers.

Azhar, 37, scored 45 in the first turn of his farewell Test at National Bank Cricket Arena on Saturday.

Pakistan Cricket Board held a brief ceremony to pay homage to the retiring batter during the lunch interval on the opening day of the third test between Pakistan and England.

Chairman Ramiz presented a souvenir to Azhar for his illustrious career spanning over 12 years and lauded the middle-order batter for taking the bold decision of announcing retirement decision at peak of his career.

"Very rarely do you see such cricketers retiring on a high," he said, would have



liked him to play 100 Test matches but just to let you know Azhar, I also ended up with 198 ODIs. It doesn't matter, it's just a number."

He called Azhar 'a true ambassador for Pakistan cricket', saying the presence of such a 'selfless cricketer' in the dressing room meant a great deal to our cricket system and team.

"What you have achieved is truly amazing. You lifted us all and stood up in crunch situations. You are a great example. I want people to play cricket like you, with

a smile on their faces and just enjoying the game," said Ramiz.

Azhar made his Test debut at the age of 25 in England against Australia at Lord's cricket stadium and scored his maiden Test half-century in only his second match. He scored 34 half-centuries and went past the 100-run mark on 19 instances.

With 7,097 runs in 96 matches at an average of 42.49, Azhar is Pakistan's fifth leading Test run-getter behind Younis Khan

(10,099), Javed Miandad (8,832), Inzamam-ul-Haq (8,829) and Mohammad Yousuf (7,530).

Azhar, 37, is the only Pakistan batter to score a triple-century in a pink-ball Test – a feat that he achieved against the West Indies in Dubai in 2016. That unbeaten 302 remains his highest score in Test cricket.

Over the course of his 12-year career, Azhar also made 2 double-centuries – 226 against Bangladesh in Dhaka (May 2015) and 205 not out against Australia in Melbourne (December 2016) – and has, at least, one century in Australia, Bangladesh, England, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

It is pertinent to mention here that the top order batter retired from One-Day Internationals (ODIs) in 2018 – a year after helping Pakistan win the ICC Champions Trophy 2017.

## England dismiss Pakistan for 304 on opening day of third Test

KARACHI: England dismissed Pakistan for 304 on the first day of the third and final Test of the series at Karachi's National Stadium on Saturday, with home side skipper Babar Azam and Agha Salman putting on defiant half-centuries.

Babar hit a superb 78 at the top of the order while Salman made 56 later in the innings to take them to a respectable total as wickets fell regularly around them. England were 7-1 at stumps with Ben Duckett (4) and Ollie Pope (3) batting together after Zak Crawley was trapped in front of the wicket for a duck in Agha Salman's opening over.

Pakistan, who have already lost the series with defeats in Rawalpindi and Multan, won the toss and opted to bat on another flat track. But the hosts were rocked by England, who made early inroads in the first session in their bid for a clean sweep.

Spinner Jack Leach (4-140) first removed Abdullah Shafique with the new ball and took the catch that sent back Shan Masood off the bowling of paceman Mark Wood to leave Pakistan at 46-2 inside 13 overs, before Azhar Ali steadied the ship.

The top-order batsman, recalled for one last appearance announcing his retirement from international cricket following the Karachi Test, scored a fluent 45 in the company of Babar before he fell on the stroke of lunch.

## Ahmed Baig appears as leader in 49th Pakistan Open Golf going into final phase



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The 49th Pakistan Open Golf Championship moves into the final phase at the Lahore Garrison Greens Golf Course that has offered a challenging time over the past three rounds to the merited golf professionals and other categories of participants who seek honors and lucrative cash prizes. At the conclusion of the third round in this four rounds National Golf Event, the spirited twenty four years old, Ahmed Baig (PAF Skyview) occupies the top of the leaderboard upstanding position which makes him a probable aspirant for the Pakistan Champions Golf Title 2022-23 challenged intently by another young one, Muhammed Alam (Lahore Garrison) and an exceptionally seasoned and battle hardened one, Matloob Ahmed (Lahore Garrison). As far as scores are concerned, Ahmed Baig has a three rounds aggregate of 206, ten under par achieved through three rounds scores of 72, 68 and a luminous 66 on the third day. For the animated Ahmed Baig this represents a remarkable moment in his career and though the final round on Sunday could be a frightful affair, the experts of the game including his mentor Brig Bajwa hope that Ahmed Baig will apply his capabilities in a potent and fruitful manner.

During the course of third round Ahmed Baig managed to upgrade his position by playing superbly. Eight birdies during the course of 18 holes golfing is morale boosting and enlivening for the confidence level.

While Ahmed Baig enjoys the spotlight in the ongoing combat for honors and lucrative prize money, there are other contenders who look relentless in making a mark. The dominant ones in this category are Muhammed Alam and Matloob Ahmed. Through a gross 69 on Saturday, M. Alam is placed at a three rounds aggregate score of 211, five under par and intensely poised for a majestic show in the final round on Sunday. Another battle hardened one Matloob Ahmed, though placed six strokes behind Ahmed Baig, is all determined to put up a resplendent effort in the final round. His round of gross 65 on Saturday has elevated his standing from 12th position to 3rd position.

Other performers are Anser Mehmood at 215, Waheed Baloch at 217, M. Saqib at 217, Arif Ali at 218, M. Waqas at 218, Khalid Khan at 218 and M. Shahzad at 218.

Following them are M. Munir 219, M. Zubair 219, and M. Shabbir at 219. In the race for honors amongst amateurs, the outstanding one is Saad Habib of Rumanza. Two others in line are Ali Amin and Irtaza. As for the senior professionals, M. Akram is the leader while M. Tariq is second and Tariq Mehmood, third.

The final session will be contested on Sunday and one expects a fierce battle between the top seven professionals.

## Croatia down Morocco 2-1 to finish third in FIFA World Cup



News Desk

AL RAYYAN: Luka Modric's Croatia edged brave Morocco 2-1 to end their FIFA World Cup 2022 campaign on a winning note that propelled them to finish third in the mega event.

The third-place play-off of the ongoing world cup started with a bang as the first nine minutes of the match witnessed Croatia opening the scoring and Morocco neutralizing.

Josko Gvardiol was the man for Croatia to put them in an early lead in just the seventh minute with a sensational header. Last edition's runners-up Croatia surged after Ivan Perisic glanced Lovro Majer's cross into the box back towards a diving Gvardiol, who buried his header into the corner.

Croatia's early lead, however short-lived as spirited Morocco came up with an astonishing equalizer just two minutes later when Hakim Ziyech's free-kick looped up off the head of Croatian midfielder Lovro Majer, and fell kindly for Achraf Dari; allowing him to head past Dominik Livakovic.

Mislav Orsic's then curled the ball magnificently via the post from the corner of the box and put Croatia back on top before half-time after Moroccan debutant Bilal El Khannouss lost the possession deep in his half.

Orsic's sensational header late in the first half turned out to be enough for Croatia to sink Morocco 2-1 and finish their campaign with a bronze medal.

Croatia's triumph over Morocco marked the 11th instance in a row when a European team finished in the world cup.

## Shaheed Benazir Bhutto National Tennis Championship

ISLAMABAD: Aqeel Khan returns a shot against Muzammil Murtaza during men single tennis match during Shaheed Benazir Bhutto National Tennis Championship in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## How Argentina can beat France in the World Cup final

DOHA: Lionel Messi stands of the brink of a long-awaited World Cup winner's medal as Argentina faces defending champions France in Sunday's final.

One of soccer's greatest players of all time is within touching distance of the one major trophy that has eluded him in his storied career.

But having experienced defeat in the final of 2014 in Brazil, when Argentina lost 1-0 to Germany through extra time, Messi knows all too well the pain of having his World Cup dreams shattered.

If Argentina is to win the tournament for the first time since 1986, here is how it might do it:

There is no escaping the sense that it is Messi's destiny to emulate soccer great Diego Maradona and lead Argen-

tina to the World Cup title. The 35-year-old Paris Saint-Germain forward has been in inspired form in Qatar, scoring five goals on the way to the final and producing some magical assists for his teammates. Maradona, who died in 2020, also scored five times in 86 and was an iconic figure for his team and country. Messi does not dominate games over 90 minutes in the way he did during his peak years. Instead he decides them with moments of brilliance that showcase the talents that have led many to describe him as the finest soccer player in history. He has carried the expectations of his nation throughout his career, but never truly delivered at a World Cup. While he may be past his best, he has been more influential in this tournament than in any of his previous four World Cups.

Argentina's fans seem convinced they will win the trophy for a third time and that there is more than just Messi guiding them on. "Maradona," they sing, "is cheering Lionel on" from heaven.

Assessing his team's semifinal loss to France, Morocco coach Walid Regragui provided a fascinating observation. "I believe any country that plays France believe they are close to winning," he said. "But when you're close to winning, actually you are quite far from winning." After putting France under pressure for long periods, Morocco eventually lost 2-0. It was a similar story for England in the quarterfinals.

France won 2-1 in that game, despite England's players believing they had been the better team. The warning is there for Argentina. Both teams have been comfortable giving up possession

of the ball and attacking on the break. Perhaps the winner will be the team that manages to stick to those tactics, rather than being sucked in and pushing too far forward. Maintaining that concentration and discipline will be vital for Argentina — especially with the threat of Kylian Mbappe's speed when France breaks.

It has been emotional for Argentina and its supporters, who have lit up the tournament in Qatar. The mass outpouring of feelings has been a feature after every win. That can take a lot out of players — but in this instance, it has felt like the opposite has been true. Messi and Co. look like they are being driven on by the weight of expectation, rather than burdened by it. There is a sense that the players and the fans are in this together, and



if, as expected, Argentina's supporters outnumber France's at Lusail Stadium on Sunday, that could give the edge to Messi and his teammates. That being

said, Morocco's fans totally dominated the atmosphere in their country's semifinals match against France and still ended up on the losing side.