



'Ungrateful Khan' keeps on changing colour like chameleon: Marriyum

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum on Monday dubbed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan an "ungrateful person", who would change "his colour like a chameleon" once his motives were achieved. Her remarks came in the backdrop of the current political situation that evolved after Imran Khan's announcement for the dissolution of assemblies in both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

A Leading National Daily



Daily The Spokesman

RAWALPINDI

فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم عید گاہ جاتے تو
برجھلا ڈنڈا جس کے بیچے کو سے کاچل کا
ہو (ہوس) آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کے آگے
آگے لے جایا جاتا تھا پھر یہ عید گاہ میں
آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کے سامنے گاڑیا
جاتا اور آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم اس کی آڑ
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Fawad terms no trust motion 'an escape' from elections

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry no trust motion and trust motion are an escape from elections. Taking to Twitter Fawad slammed the opposition for using no trust motion to escape elections and said "In the past few days Rana Sanaullah and Ahsan Iqbal were willing to dissolve assemblies and hold elections."

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Devising strategy

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to devise a strategy on reduction of circular debt in Energy Sector on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM directs reduction in energy sector circular debt

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to devise a strategy on reduction of circular debt in Energy sector (19 December 2022)
ISLAMABAD, Dec 19 (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday directed officials concerned to reduce the circular debt in the energy sector. The prime minister was

chairing a high-level meeting here regarding the energy sector. During the meeting, the participants considered adoption of a comprehensive strategy to control the present circular debt in the sectors of oil and gas. The PM said the government of Pakistan Muslim League(N) practically completely eradicated the circular debt during its tenure of 2013-2018.

The PM resolved to bring the problem of debt under control with continuous efforts and effective planning. He directed that reforms in the energy sector should be undertaken in a way that the circular debt could be eliminated. The distribution companies of Sui gas should improve the system of recovery of bills, he

ordered adding no additional burden should be put on the gas and electricity consumers. He said the system for payment of bills of gas and electricity should also be made effective. The meeting also reviewed the energy-saving plan, which would be presented before the federal cabinet on Tuesday. Chief Ministers of provinces

were also invited to the cabinet meeting. The prime minister instructed that all possible steps should be taken for ensuring an increase in revenue of the energy sector. He said the energy transmission system should be improved and the losses and theft of electricity and gas should be stopped. Agencies

Opposition throws down no-confidence gauntlet to CM Elahi



Bureau Report

LAHORE: In an extraordinary move, a delegation of PPP and PML-N lawmakers submitted a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Parvez Elahi, Speaker Sibtain Khan, and deputy speaker Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi in the Punjab Assembly. Following their arrival at the Punjab Assembly Secretariat, opposition MPs such as PPP Parliamentary Leader Hassan Murtaza, PML-Khawaja Imran Nazir, and PML-N Chief Whip Tahir Khalil Sind-

hu tabled no-confidence motion. The PML-N and PPP members signed a motion of no confidence, which was accepted by Secretary Punjab Assembly Inayatullah. The resolution stated, "Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi should seek another vote of confidence from the Punjab Assembly because he has lost the support of the House. Governor Balighur Rehman Chaudhary will ask Parvez Elahi to take a vote of confidence following the no-confidence motion".

PTI, PML-Q to contest elections jointly notwithstanding differences: Imran Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former prime minister Imran Khan on Monday reacted to Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's statement in favour of ex-COAS Qamar Javed Bajwa and said the PTI and the PML-Q would contest elections together apart from differences. Sources said the deposed premier told the PTI stalwarts not to change their narrative, and not to get confused with CM Elahi's statement. The PTI chief added that both parties would contest elections together apart from differences, sources added. 'Gen Bajwa solely responsible for ousting me' Earlier, Imran Khan reiterated that former army chief Bajwa was solely responsible for ousting his government

and creating economic and political crises in the country. Mr Khan said he wanted an inquiry into American cypher as he was not certain of its involvement in overthrowing him but the PTI held Bajwa solely responsible. Speaking to international media, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were two independent parties as the PML-Q had its distinctive policy towards Bajwa and it [had the right] to negotiate with the PML-N. He said NAB was controlled by Bajwa who gave everyone an NRO without his (Imran's) consent. "Parvez Elahi has sent me the written advice calling for assembly dissolution and I shall send the advice to the Punjab governor on Friday", he added.

LHC seeks details of all recipients of Toshakhana gifts

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday sought details of all recipients, who have retained gifts from the Toshakhana from 1947 till date, ARY News reported.
Lahore High Court (LHC) Justice Asim Hafeez issued the order while hearing a petition filed by a citizen named Munir Ahmed through his counsel Advocate Azhar Siddique. The petitioner argued that the details of the gifts obtained by the officials from Toshakhana should be made public. The federal government's lawyer while opposing the plea said in his statement that said the details about the gifts could not be provided since they are confidential. The court ordered the federal government to submit the details by January 16, adding that it would be decided then if the details are confidential or not. What is Toshakhana: Established in 1974, Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats and officials.

Role of space technology inevitable for country's socio-economic development: Ahsan Iqbal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said that the role of Space Technology for a country's socio-economic development was inevitable while Pakistan had to achieve a lot to compete with the world. He made these remarks while addressing a Seminar titled, "Role of Space Technologies for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Pakistan", jointly organized by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) and Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives today. The seminar was attended by the secretary of the Planning Commission, the chief economist, the chairman SUPARCO, and officials from the ministries and divisions. "Space Technology has become a centerpiece as every sector whether education, agriculture, health and climate change is linked with it," said the minister, while addressing the participants of the seminar. The minister further said that huge transformation changes were going on in various fields, particularly in robotics and biotechnology, however, space technology played a key role and Pakistan needed to expedite its effort to compete with the world. The minister also underlined several development projects in which Space technology played a



vital role in the saving of cost of the projects. Due to political instability in the country, Pakistan could not achieve such targets which other countries had achieved due to their continuity of policies, said the minister, while stressing the ministries and divisions to get benefit from the information being shared by the SUPARCO. Meanwhile, Secretary Ministry of Planning Commission Syed Zafar Ali Shah in his remarks held that Space Technology had a key role in the country's development and it had been placed in SDGs to get the desired results. "The ministry always takes the initiatives to bring advanced technology and Geo-Spatial Technology Cell was one of the eh example which was recently established at Planning Ministry," he added. He also highlighted that this technology helped the government in

recent floods, particularly, in Post-Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA). Space technology played a vital role in confronting countless challenges in the fields of climate change, resource monitoring, disaster management, and mitigation of health and education, he said. Chief Economist, Ministry of Planning Commission Nadeem Javed gave a detailed presentation while highlighting PSDP projects which had a positive impact on space technology. "The provision of timely and reliable information through satellite would help in better decision making," he remarked. Chairman SUPARCO Maj Gen Amer Nadeem, in his address, highlighted key initiatives related to agricultural monitoring, disaster management, forest estimation and monitoring, environment and GIS-based governance planning.

Rashid wants President Alvi to use constitutional powers as govt avoiding elections

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AMP) head Sheikh Rashid Ahmed urged President Arif Alvi to use his constitutional powers as the coalition government is running away from holding fresh elections in the country. The 72-year-old politician, who served as the interior minister during the PTI government in Centre, is fully supporting Imran Khan's demand for elections in the country. Taking to Twitter, he said the PTI chief had kept his word by announcing the date for the dissolution of assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Apart from it, it is a fact that public was fed up with political uncertainty, he said. People shied away from investing in the country as "dacoits" were ruling, he said, adding: "The country is in grip of inflation and terrorism and they [government] are running away from elections." Meanwhile, the AMP chairman also called on President Alvi on Monday and the discussed political situation in the country.

Usman Buzdar counters CM Parvez Elahi over 'ruining' Punjab

News Desk

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar, while countering Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi over his statements against his (Buzdar's) performance, said on Monday criticising him was equivalent to criticising the narrative of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Speaking to media outside the accountability court, he said he was confident of his performance during his tenure as the chief minister. "I have many secrets but this isn't the time to reveal any such thing," he added. Earlier, the chief minister, in a TV interview, had hit out at Mr Buzdar for "ruining" Gujrat [Mr Parvez's stronghold] during his tenure. In an unexpected move, Mr Elahi openly supported former army chief retired Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, saying he and his party would counter any propaganda against the general.



In a statement on Sunday, he claimed that retired Gen Faiz Hameed had started targeting them [PML-Q] and later, he [Faiz] revealed to the former army chief that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was behind the move. "Gen Bajwa is our benefactor so we shouldn't criticise him. To me, Bajwa has countless blessings on them [PTI]," he further said. Taking a jibe at the PTI chief, the PML-Q leader said Imran Khan used to ignore his son Moonis Elahi during meetings. Despite that the PML-Q always sided with the PTI. He said the PML-Q endorsed Imran Khan's decision to dissolve the Punjab Assembly but "we can't stab our benefactors in the back".

Saudi -Pak relations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shazian Bugti in a group photo with Saudi delegation led by H.E. Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Qarni, Director General of Directorate of Narcotics Control of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Photo: Online

President for further cementing Pak-Italy ties

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday stressed bilateral relationship with Italy in the fields of defence, agriculture, animal husbandry and information technology.

The president made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Italy, Ali Javed, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the President appreciated the idea of establishing manufacturing units by Pakistani diasporas in the industrial-free zone of Italy for manufacturing and exporting Pakistani goods and products in Italy and rest of

the Europe.

He said the avenues for exports of human intellect, knowledge and skills online to Italy by our IT professionals and related fields needed to be explored.

This way, he said, the human resource would be retained in Pakistan whereas their skills and knowledge could be shared.

He said the country needed a skilled workforce for industrial, agricultural and manufacturing development.

The president said that the Ambassador and the entire ancillary staff in Italy should focus their energy on resolving the issues and problems



faced by the Pakistani diasporas in Italy and provide them with the necessary support, and counselling

services online and at their doorsteps.

He further said that the existing trade of around US\$

1.3 billion did not represent the true potential on both sides and there was a need to make concerted efforts to increase the volume.

The president said that a fairly large number of Pakistanis (approximately 200,000) were living in Italy and contributing towards the socio-economic development of the country and urged that the welfare of these Pakistanis should be the most priority.

Apart from working on traditional economic diplomacy, the ambassador-designate should also look for new avenues of cooperation, especially start-ups, he said. Agencies

20m flood victims need urgent humanitarian assistance: Sherry Rehman

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: "Disaster amnesia is not uncommon in a world driven by competing goals and the human tragedy wrought by Pakistan's catastrophic flooding has been forgotten by many where 20 million flood affectees still needed urgent humanitarian assistance," said Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman.

"But the climate-induced crisis in Pakistan has long-term implications for recovery and resilience in a context defined by systemic deficits in climate financing with 20 million people still currently dependent on humanitarian aid, while flash appeals just for the humanitarian gap by the



United Nations have received only 30% of the US\$816 million," the minister said in a news release.

The Minister said, "When a country has people living on relief and multilateral assistance on the shores of vulnerability, with new lakes being created by climate events, it

is not easy to plan for resilient recovery, because building back for complex climate polymerises implies transformational re-sets.

These floods caused Loss and Damage worth US\$30 billion, so just the rehabilitation and disaster-reconstruction needs are at least US\$16.3

billion. This amount does not include investments required to support Pakistan's adaptation to climate change and overall resilience of the country to future climate shocks.

The Minister said, "The UN has warned that 8.4 to 9.1 million people will be pushed below the poverty line. Winter will be harsh on the forgotten arc of climate misery here. The numbers are too huge; 33 million impacted literally meant we were reinventing the lives of populations covering the size of three medium sized European countries at the same time.

Today, after months of humanitarian operations, 14.6 million is the number of people who still need emergency food assistance from Decem-

ber 2022 to March 2023. We should not forget that almost 3.9 million people in Sindh and 1.6 million in Balochistan are facing severe food insecurity, with 5.5 million people no longer having access to safe and clean drinking water.

The UN's ongoing assistance is facing a looming risk of ending prematurely as they are running out of funds to continue the needed support. World Food Programme (WFP) has said that they will run out of funds by mid-January for Pakistan, putting an additional 1.1 million people at extreme risk of food insecurity. Funds are being taken from every sector of the Pakistan government to meet survival needs, but the size of the need is huge."

Gold price in Pakistan hits all-time high

News Desk

KARACHI: Gold price has maintained an upward trend in Pakistan as one-tola rates hit an all-time high of Rs175,500 after adding Rs3,000. According to details, the price of precious commodity jumped by Rs3,000 per tola to settle at Rs175,500.

Meanwhile, All Sindh Saraf Jewellers Association (ASSJA) reported that the gold was trading at \$1,800 per ounce in the international markets.

Moreover, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold rose by Rs1,886, touching distance of another psychological mark - Rs150,000. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold was Rs149,948.

On the other hand, Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) lost ground shed

Saaghir Siddiqui, Perveen Shakir asset to Urdu literature, Baligh-ur-Rehman

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that poets Saaghir Siddiqui and Perveen Shakir are asset to Urdu literature and their works have left indelible imprints on literature.

Speaking at the launch of Monthly journal 'Mah-e-Nau' - Saaghir Siddiqui and Perveen Shakir Number, at the Governor's House here on Monday, he said the services of the great literary figures need to be recognized for posterity, adding these journals will help in a better understanding of the poets for the readers.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications (DEMP), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in collaboration with Department of Urdu, Government College University (GCU), Lahore. The ceremony also



marked launching of "Translation of Book on Nizami Ganjavi - the great Azerbaijan poet" by Dr. Almas Khanam.

Azerbaijan Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, Director General (DG) DEMP Imrana Wazir, Vice Chancellor GCU Dr. Asghar Zaidi, President, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Isa Habibbayli, writers, poets, critics and large number of literature lovers attended the ceremony.

Hailing the services of DEMP for promotion of Urdu literature, he said Saaghir Siddiqui and Perveen Shakir

had contributed significantly to Urdu poetry and 'Mah-e-Nau-Saghir Siddiqui and Perveen Shakir Numbers' - is the just tribute to the two great poets who had influenced the literary scene a great deal.

The Governor Punjab said Pakistan and Azerbaijan have fraternal and friendly relations, adding that both the countries are tied through religious, cultural and social ties. He said that both the nations have common heritage. He said Pakistan has always stood by its brethren in Azerbaijan and wishes them fast progress.

He said both the countries have close relationship of love and brotherhood, adding nothing could derail these ties. He said the Azerbaijan people have great love for Pakistanis and he had witnessed the love during his visit to the brotherly country.

He said Dr Almas Khanam translated book on Ganjavi has been authored by Dr. Isa Habibbayli who introduced the poet to the audiences, adding that Nizami Ganjavi was revered as a national poet in Azerbaijan like poet of the East Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He talked of close religious and cultural ties between the people.

Dr. Isa Habibbayli presented the works of Nizami Ganjavi to Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman besides a memento.

Later, the Governor Punjab presented the Mah-e-Nau Numbers to the visiting guests from Azerbaijan.

Naek lauds Bilawal for taking up Kashmir issue, exposing India's true face at UNSC

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has done remarkably well in not only bringing Kashmir issue in the global limelight but also rightly exposing to the world the true fascist face of India, said Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senator Farooq H. Naek.

According to a press release, he said Bilawal has effectively highlighted the hitherto unresolved issue of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by mincing no words in loudly recalling Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as 'The Butcher of Gujarat' at the UNSC.

He said he fully endorsed the foreign minister's statement wherein he stated that, "He (Narendra Modi) was banned from entering this country (the United States). These are the prime minister and the foreign minister of RSS, which draws inspiration from Hitler's SS." The former Senate Chairman also commended the foreign minister on very pertinently reminding the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to fulfil its



obligation vis-à-vis an agenda item that had been left unaddressed - the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Senator Naek said Bilawal Bhutto, while speaking on open debate 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security - Reformed Multilateralism' in the UNSC, had dexterously used the forum to urge the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to implement its resolutions on the Kashmir issue and deliver its commitment to peace in the region and "prove that multilateralism can succeed".

He also called upon the international community to help Kashmiris exercise their right to self-determination as espoused under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and as per their own wishes.

Soldier among two civilians embrace martyrdom in Miran Shah Suicide blast

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: A soldier of Pakistan Army among two civilians embraced martyrdom on Monday in a suicide blast occurred in general area Miran Shah, North Waziristan

District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the martyred soldier was identified as Naik Abid (age 33 years, resident of Manshra) while a civilian was also injured in the incident.

New UN report warns against 'dehumanizing' migrants

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: No one should have to surrender their human right to migrate in order to find a living wage, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said in a new report, highlighting the importance of temporary migratory labour programmes.

The report, 'We wanted workers, but human beings came,' coincided with International Migrants Day on Sunday, zeroes-in on schemes in operation across the Asia-Pacific region - the largest single migrant-producing region in the world.

"Migrant workers are often dehumanized," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk, reminding that "they are human beings entitled to human rights and full protection of their human dignity".

Every year, millions leave their countries under temporary labour migration programmes that prom-

ise economic benefits for destination countries and development dividends to countries of origin.

The report details how in many cases temporary work schemes impose a range of unacceptable human rights restrictions.

It highlights how migrant workers are often forced to live in overcrowded and unsanitary housing, unable to afford nutritious food, denied adequate healthcare, and face prolonged and sometimes mandatory separation from their families.

Moreover, policies that exclude them from government support in some countries put migrants at a disproportionate risk of COVID-19 infection, the report says.

"They should not be expected to give up their rights in return for being able to migrate for work, however crucial it is for them and their families, and for the economies of their countries of origin and destination", Turk emphasized.

Thai king's hospitalised daughter stable 'at a certain level'

News Desk

BANGKOK :- The eldest child of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn is in a stable condition "at a certain level", with doctors using medication and equipment to support her lung, heart and kidney functions after she suffered a heart problem, the palace said on Monday.

Princess Bajrakitiyabha, 44, a potential heir to the Thai throne, showed no signs of a heart abnormality in a coronary angiography and her condition was being closely monitored, the royal palace said in its first statement since Thursday when it confirmed her hospitalisation.

The princess was taken ill and lost consciousness on Wednesday while preparing her dogs for a competition in northeastern Nakhon Ratchasima province, the palace said. She was treated locally before being taken by helicopter to Bangkok for further treatment.

Princess Bajrakitiyabha is one of

three children of King Vajiralongkorn who have formal titles, making her eligible for the throne under a palace succession law and the country's constitution.

The king has yet to formally designate an heir and there has been no official discussion on the prospect of the princess taking the throne.

In its statement, the palace said her "condition is stable at a certain level" and her heartbeat was being controlled by medicine, but her heart contraction was still weak.

"Doctors administered medicine and the heart, lungs and kidney are being supported by machine," it said.

While the 1924 palace succession law stipulates the heir to the throne should be male, an amendment to the constitution in 1974 allowed for a daughter of the royal line to ascend the throne if a successor had not been named.

The princess was born on Dec. 7, 1978 as the daughter of the king and his first wife, Princess Soamsawali.

At least eight killed, 18 injured in Rajanpur bus collision

Correspondent

RAJANPUR :At least eight people were killed and 18 others were injured early on Monday morning, when two buses collided on the highway near Rajanpur in Punjab.

Police said that the two buses were heading in opposite directions but collided with each other due to the dense fog on the highway. As a result of the crash, eight passengers were killed on spot while 18 others sustained injuries.

The injured and bodies of the dead



were pulled out and rushed to a nearby local hospital. The process of identifying the dead is being carried out. According to the rescue team, one

of the buses was travelling to Karachi from Peshawar and the other one was coming back to Rajanpur from Quetta. The accident happened at Shahwa-

li due to intense fog in the area. The rescue team reached the spot as the accident was reported.

The bodies and the injured were shifted to a nearby state hospital. Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi while taking notice of the incident sought a report.

He expressed his grievance and extended condolences to the bereaved families.

Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman also expressed sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for the early recovery of the injured.

Wahdat-e-Ummat conference

ISLAMABAD: Head of Tehreek Badrai Ummat-e-Mustafa Allama Syed Jawad Naqvi addressing during the Wahdat-e-Ummat conference, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

PM visits Kashmir Colony Lahore

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan visited Lakodir Kashmir Colony Lahore along with the members of the assembly elected from the refugee constituencies.

During his visit the Prime Minister while expressing his concern over the plight of refugee families living in the colony said that it was heartbreaking to see the plight of Kashmiri refugees. The previous governments, he said, did not focus on resettlement and increase in monthly subsistence allowance of the refugees.

While reiterating his government's pledge to solve the problems faced by the migrant community the Prime Minister announced to build houses for the poorest 5 refugee families with his own expenses.

Regarding the settlement of homeless refugees, he said that for the resettlement of 300 refugee families a comprehensive strategy would be devised soon in consultation with the ministry of finance, ministers and legislators who contest elections on migrant



seats. Meanwhile, Legislative Assembly Azad Kashmir from LA 41 Kashmir Valley 2 Mr. Ghulam Mohiuddin Dewan hosted dinner in honour of the AJK premier Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan here on Sunday.

On the occasion Central Vice President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, Minister Mahmood-ul-Rashid and other central

leaders of Tehreek-e-Insaf were also present.

The Prime Minister was warmly welcomed on his arrival at the dinner ceremony. He was accompanied by Deputy Speaker Assembly Chaudhry Riaz Gujjar, Minister for Rehabilitation and SDMA Chaudhry Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Forest Minister Chaudhry Akmal Sargala and others.

Indus Motor temporarily shuts down production plant in Pakistan

KARACHI: Pakistan's leading car assembler, Indus Motor Company (IMC), Monday announced a 10-day plant shutdown — the third time in the outgoing calendar year — due to "hurdles in import and clearance of consignments".

The company, in a notice sent to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), revealed that the production plant will be completely shut down from December 20 to December 30 (both days inclusive).

The IMC management mentioned that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) introduced in May a mechanism, via a circular, for obtaining prior approval for the import of completely knocked down (CKD) kits and components of Passenger cars (HS Code 8703 category) for the auto sector.

Phavur Studios Released song 'Sahiban'

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Phavur Studios just released their song production "Sahiban". Against the backdrop of three melodious voice of Amanat Ali, the gorgeous UrwaHocane and handsome Hassan Khan tell the Punjabi folklore, Mirza Sahiban.

The infamous Mirza Sahiba story is retold by two dynamo women, Hira Yousafzai (Director), Hirra Farooqi (Producer), and pushed forward by the multi-talented ZayanAgha(On-set Producer). The story is retold using a modern language and a female empowering twist.

The song sings to the younger generation who want to hear of strong individuals unwavering in their aspirations. For the first time ever, we see the female lead, UrwaHocane, as Sahiba basks in the essence of love for Mirza (Hassan Khan) AND more importantly, herself.

Phavur Studios is an up and coming production house based in Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Toronto, and now investing in content in Pakistan and under-privileged communities around the world to bring untold stories to life. Spearheaded by a strong team of independent filmmakers, Phavur is launching their first project with the power of music through folkwarestory-telling.

The music video is the first of its kind where we see that old traditional story-telling is being met with empowering values. When two empowering women are the driving force of a story, you can see that reflected on screen and that is definitely the case with Mirza Sahiban. There is no doubt that this catchy song will be a hit, especially since romance is in the air with the wedding season in full swing.

Pakistan is home to many inspiring romantic folk stories that tell the tale of pure love. Punjab is one of the regions within Pakistan that is home to the folk stories of Mirza-Sahiban, Sassi Punnu, Sohni-Mahival and more. We're so excited to see that international platforms like Phavur are focusing on ancient, traditional, and cultural storytelling to capture the essence of story-telling in Pakistan.

The video opens with the beautiful song that plays for the duration as we see glimpses of the blooming of love but by the end, we see why it is important for women to be in full control of their own fate and their are better outcomes for women outside of the 'damsel in distress' trope.

The song is sure to be the song of the season and the go-to song for all the romantic souls!

COMSTECH seeks applications for COMSTECH Awards 2023

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD : COMSTECH bestows biennial awards to distinguished researchers of OIC member states for their important scientific contributions.

The COMSTECH life time achievement awards in basic sciences are given in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. This year's nominations are sought for the awards in the fields of Physics and Mathematics. In this category each award consists of a certificate, shield of honor, and cash prize of US\$8000.

The COMSTECH Awards for Excellence in Science & Technology are classified in four categories: COMSTECH Young Researcher Award (under 40 years), Best Scientific Book (Authorship)—published by an international publisher during the last two years (2021 & 2022), Patent—the patent must have been registered during the past five years (2018–2022). Each of the above three awards carries a certificate, shield of honor, and cash prize of US\$4000.

The Best Research Paper awards are given for the best paper published in an impact factor international journal during the last two years (2021 & 2022) in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. The best research paper award in each discipline carries a certificate, shield of honor, and cash prize of US\$2500.

The deadline for application submission is 31st March 2023, citizens of all 57 OIC states are eligible to apply for the COMSTECH Awards.

A successful operation by the security forces in the Azam Warsak

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Security forces conducted a successful operation in Azam Warsak area of Birmal Tehsil of South Waziristan Lower Sub Division Wana yesterday. As a result, one terrorist was killed and two were injured.

According to the sources, there was no loss of life of the security forces. Officials say that they are not giving a chance to miscreants in the area to disturb the peace and order situation.

Therefore, do not believe in the fabricated and baseless propaganda of terrorists.

Efforts of security forces, civil administration and police are ongoing to maintain peace and order in the area In this regard, local tribal elders and local residents are standing side by side with the government for peace and security.

Habib Oil Mills & Shahid Afridi Foundation join hands to empower girls' education in Pakistan

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Habib Oil Mills (HOM) have joined forces with Shahid Afridi Foundation (SAF) to empower girls' education in the country by establishing a school, Shahina Perveen Campus, in the under-resourced locality of Ibrahim Haidery in Karachi. While the true motif of the school is to encourage girls' education, about 25% boys from the district have also been enrolled in the school where they will be provided quality education. A total of 22.5 million children are estimated to be out of school in Pakistan, the majority of whom are girls.

A total of 32% girls and 21% boys are still not in schools and it gets worse for girls because only 13% make it to the ninth grade. Our youth can only thrive in this constantly changing world if they have access to education. This initiative



aims to bridge the gender gap in education and help the children build a better tomorrow for themselves. Commenting on the partnership, Managing Director Habib Oil Mills, Mr. Moidul Hassan said, "Despite the country's increased demand for girls' education, girls still face barriers to education because of the gendered social norms and poverty. At HOM, we believe that women are economic contributors rather than

economic dependents and to make them economically dependent, education is vital.

The number of girls not in schools is alarming and we are hoping to make a difference in collaboration with SAF." Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Shahid Afridi, Chairman SAF stated, "Education shouldn't only focus on prominent academic disciplines of Commerce, Science, and Arts but should also aim

to foster critical thinking, life skills, value education, analytical skills, and decision-making skills in students. SAF Education is a community-based learning program that promotes 'twenty-first-century skills,' like vocational skills, capacity development, and digital literacy. It benefits students through various academic and skills-based programs to cope with rapidly changing socio-economic scenarios.

The partnership with H.O.M is a step further in uplifting the underserved community of 'Arkanabad' and creating new opportunities for them and their children. We will further expand this partnership to ensure Hope Not Out for all!" The ceremony was attended by the board of directors of HOM and SAF along with dignitaries from the corporate, education and media spheres in Pakistan.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said reaching out the poorest segments in remote locations, like, erstwhile FATA, GB and other such areas is top most priority areas for BISP cash assistance Kafalat programme. During a briefing to Parliamentarians from Ex-FATA at Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety he said that Parliamentarian's role in mobilising and identifying the most deserving beneficiaries is of critical importance and they should actively participate in this important cause of social uplift of the under privileged families.

Parliamentarians of erstwhile FATA districts which included Sajid Khan Toori, Mohsin Dawar, Maulana Abdul Shakoor and Maulana Muhammad Jamal Uddin attended the briefing. Secretary BISP, Yusuf Khan was also present in the meeting.

Director General NSER Naveed Akbar and DG Cash Transfer Noor Rehman briefed the MNAs on the



ongoing projects and coverage of BISP in Ex-FATA districts. 776684 Households have been surveyed through local teachers of those areas and 387000 beneficiaries are eligible for cash assistance under Benazir Kafalat Programme.

The delegates were 27 active registration centre in the merged FATA districts and 24 more centres are being established in near future. The ex-FATMNAs were informed

that those households who are not surveyed can get themselves registered so that they can be included in the quarterly cash assistance of Rs 7000/-

The delegation was also briefed on Nashunama and Undergraduate Scholarship initiatives of the BISP.

The ex-FATA parliamentary delegation vowed to fully support BISP initiatives in their relevant districts constituencies.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:38 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	3:24 pm
Maghrib	5:02 pm
Isha	6:32 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

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

HOSPITALS

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MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHO	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7

Water Resources ministry directed to formulate report featuring measures to deal sedimentation issue at Tarbela dam

News Desk

ISLAMABAD : The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources while discussing sedimentation at Tarbela dam on Monday, directed the Ministry to formulate a detailed report featuring long and short term measures to deal with the issue.

The Committee which met with Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah in the Chair, also discussed plot allocation to the affectees of Tarbela dam and encroachment on it.

Discussing sedimentation and the measures taken to address it, the members of the Committee were of the view that measures must be taken to allow sediment flow to a certain degree, since this ensures land fertility.

The Committee stressed the need for moving closer towards nature and adopting alternative energy solutions crucial for the survival and growth.

The Ministry was also asked a detailed briefing on Diamer Basha Dam in next meeting of the Committee. Reviewing details of plot allocation to the affectees of Tarbela Dam, the Committee was informed that the 1744 affectees have been compensated. Some 450 affectees filed writ petitions before Peshawar High Court Abbottabad Bench for allotment of alternate agricultural land and enhancement of compensation against WAPDA, Federal Government, Governments of Punjab and Sindh.

Sugary drinks are killing our young generation

Government of Pakistan must increase taxes on sugary drinks to save our youth

Husna Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Sugary drinks are major contributors to obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart, kidney and many other Non-communicable diseases. We need to aware youth on health harms of SSBs and engage them in a campaign to make future of Pakistan healthier by reducing the consumption of these unhealthy drinks.

This was said by Heads of departments of Universities, health, economic and policy experts while addressing to the media workshop organized by Pakistan National Heart Association at local hotel in Islamabad.

The workshop was attended by the Professors, civil society representatives, and health, economy and policy experts. The workshop was hosted by PANAHA's General Secretary Sanaullah Ghumman.

The guests included Professor Dr. Abdul Basit, Mr. Naem from Capital

University, Dr. Bhutta from National University of Modern Languages, Ms. Nazia from Punjab group of colleges, Dr. Rashed from RIPAH University, Sajida Feroz, Girl Guides, Mr. Shahid from boys scouts, Dr. Asif from ARID University, Mr. Mubashar from Lasani School, Mr. Munawar Hussain, consultant at global health advocacy incubator, health and economic experts.

While addressing to workshop, Dr. Bhutta said that sugary drinks are among the major causes of diabetes, obesity, heart, kidney and many other diseases. We must aware our youth to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks.

Mr. Ullah Ghumman said that beverage industry is misguiding policy makers at every step and creating barriers to the policy process. PANAHA is working since last 4 decades to save the lives of people specially youth from non-communicable diseases. We are raising our voice with

every segment of society and with policy makers to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy drinks. Increasing taxes on sugary drinks has double benefits. On the one hand it will reduce the diseases in Pakistan and on the other hand government will have more revenue to spend on health care activities.

Mr. Munawar Hussain said that high consumption of sugary drinks is an increasing threat to health and economy of the country. Pakistan has ranked 3rd in the diabetes worldwide with over 33 million people living with diabetes. 10 million more people are pre-diabetic in Pakistan.

He said that PIDE estimated Rs. 428 billion as cost of obesity in 2015. Similarly, as per International Diabetes Federation, the annual cost of managing diabetes in Pakistan has been increased to USD 2640 million in 2021.

Tax is the first and most effective evident bases policy action to reduce



the consumption of SSBs. More than 50 countries in the world have reduced the consumption of SSBs by increasing tax on them. We demand government of Pakistan to increase Federal Excise Duty on SSBs by minimum of 30 % in 2023 - 24 budget to reduce the consumption

of sugary drinks. Professor Dr. Abdul Basit said that Pakistan is number 1 country with fastest growth of diabetes worldwide. Every segment of society must play his role in decreasing the consumption of Sugary drinks to manage diabetes.

National Day of Bahrain

ISLAMABAD: Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan Mohamed Ebrahim Mohamed Aldulager cutting the cake, during National Day of Bahrain ceremony at a local hotel in Federal Capital.

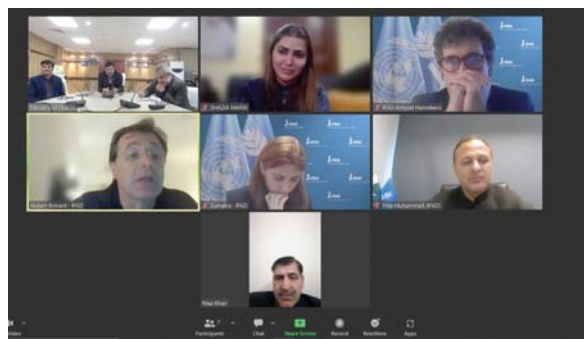


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ms Shazia held a farewell meeting via zoom with Mr. Hubert Boirard

ISLAMABAD : Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Security held a farewell meeting via zoom with Mr. Hubert Boirard, outgoing Country Director International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The opportunity was also utilized to welcome newly arrived country director to Pakistan Dr. Arnoud Hamelers here on Monday.

While appreciating the contribution of Mr. Hubert Boirard, the outgoing country director of IFAD, Ms. Marri said that recent floods in Pakistan affecting 33 million people further necessitate the need for



enhanced cooperation between IFAD and Government of Pakistan. She hoped that IFAD under the stewardship of newly arrived country director would continue support the social

protection sector, particularly the National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP). She emphasised the need of enhanced cooperation with the IFAD, particularly in the

field of strengthening resilience against the climate related calamities.

On his part incoming IFAD country director Dr. Arnoud Hamelers expressed his desire to continue IFAD's support to Pakistan, and extended his gratitude to the Federal Minister for her goodwill gesture of reaching out to him. IFAD has also indicated additional financing of US\$ 54 million.

The Minister of State, Faisal Karim Kundi, Joint Secretary, PASS Ministry, Programme Director NPGP and Team Lead Social Protection Delivery Unit (SPDU) were also present in the meeting.

Public sector finance profession grapples with multiple challenges

Spokesman Report

PAKISTAN : ACCA's Public Sector Conference looks at the challenges facing the public sector and suggests ways forward to transform the sector

The public sector needs to respond to multiple global challenges to create a safe, sustainable, and prosperous future that works for all. ACCA's virtual public sector conference explored the challenges and the solutions that face public sector financial professionals as they work towards transforming the public sector. Such a task would be a challenge at any time but it is made significantly harder by a combination of war, high rates of inflation and a pressing climate change.

Accountancy is at the centre of public sector transformation. Finance professionals need the right skills to improve financial management and drive policy and spending decisions. New thinking in the public sector has never been more important and the conference heard about ACCA's recently published guides on professionalising the public sector, launched with IFAC on 18 November 2022, and green budgeting. Both strong examples of the new thinking required.

The conference also heard about the unenviable choices facing finance leaders in the public sector. In the opening keynote Public Purse Prioritisation - public finance during a cost of living crisis - Vladyslaw Rashkovan, alternate executive director at the International Monetary Fund and former deputy governor of the National Bank of Ukraine, illustrated how tough spending choices were in a war zone, with tradeoffs between funding weapons or protecting citizens. He said: 'Many hard choices exist over budget allocation. While slogans like build back better are great, winter is coming, and people cannot live on the streets. So, for donors and government the hard reality may bring unpleasant tradeoffs between the speed and quality of reconstructing of places where people are housed.'

Vladyslav added that there is a high and increasing demand for finance specialists to help rebuild Ukraine in multiple sectors. In the conference session, he set out 12 points that finance professionals should be addressing in war and post-war situations.

Sustainability reporting and assurance are evolving rapidly and will play an increasingly prominent role in the public sector. The conference looked at the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board's recent consultation aimed at developing overarching guidance on sustainability, with a fruitful discussion between Auditors General on how to provide effective assurance on future sustainability reporting in the public sector.

ACCA president Joseph Owolabi said: 'ACCA's 24,000 public sector members make an extraordinary difference to the lives of so many, playing a key role in the delivery of public services and setting the regulatory environment to meet societies' global challenges.'

Karandaaz Partners with GrowTech to Digitize Agricultural Value Chain

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Karandaaz Pakistan has partnered with GrowTech Services to facilitate digitalized data driven scientific based agriculture practices in Pakistan and facilitate financial inclusion in the agricultural value chain.

Under its "Pilot to Scale" program, Karandaaz has committed a grant to GrowTech Services, testing the impact of digitization of traditional agricultural value chain, on two different crops. The project will foretake the development of an E-Commerce portal, connecting farmers and bulk buyers, and integrates the GrowTech app and e-commerce platform with various payment gateways. This partnership aims to increase the penetration of this App among farmers and promote usage of digital payments through the e-commerce platform.

When speaking about the importance of digitizing agricultural value chains, CEO Karandaaz Waqas ul Hasan said, "Pakistan seriously lags behind its peers in farm productivity. We need to approach complex agricultural value chains from all possible intervention points. Farmers, in general, are hesitant in adopting digital payments and technology due to the often-complicated procedures involved. As a result, their productivity and income has remained low. Digitizing payments will bring previously unbanked farmers within the formal financial sphere. The data collected from their spending patterns can then be used to create additional interventions."

Mr. Shah Nawaz Mahmood, Co-Founder GrowTech Services said: "Our focus is to enhance productivity and decrease input-costs for farmers with the objective to improve per acre yield which is important in an agrarian economy like Pakistan. For this purpose, we remain engaged with farmers throughout the crop cycle. We are excited to partner with Karandaaz to make agricultural commerce more efficient with better price discovery and promote digital payments in this sector while providing trainings to farmers. In future this will be useful to develop innovative credit scoring models based on new data points."

This project, through its solutions, aims to resolve a multitude of problems that exist due to traditional agriculture value chains. The focus will remain on removing the gaps and inefficiencies while digitizing the agricultural value chains resulting in a higher economic activity for all actors of the value chain while also increasing financial inclusion of value chain actors and their use of digital payments.

HSHM hosts its First World Tourism Day International Conference.

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo School of Hospitality Management (HSHM) hosted its first international conference to celebrate the World Tourism Day at Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi on 13th December 2022. The event revolved around this year's theme, "Rethinking Tourism".

The keynote speakers at the occasion were Dr. Syed Habib Ali Bokhari, VC, Kohsar University Murree, Dr. Ali Sajid, Tamgha-e-Intiaz & Director Lahore School of Management and AVM Ejaz Mahmood Malik, Tourism Development Consultant. The speakers from Hashoo Group included Mr. Haseeb A. Gardezi, COO, Brig. (R) Dr. Fiaz Mahmood Qamer, Head of Group Security & Vigilance, and Maj. (R) Faisal Naem Khan, Director Education, HSHM.

The event was attended by several senior executives from CTTI Islamabad, Hashoo Group, faculty members and students from HSHM Islamabad as well as Peshawar Campus. Mr. Simon Cleaver from CTH UK, Dr.



Salomeh Tabari from Cardiff University, UK and Dr. Gul Erkol Bayram from Sinop University, Turkey joined via zoom session as guest speakers. The event included presentations by the keynote speakers, an art exhibition and a photography competition followed by lunch.

On the occasion, Mr. Haseeb A. Gardezi said, "The pandemic high-

lighted the critical need for transformation of tourism industry as a tool for global development and cultural enlightenment, along with its impact on our society." Addressing the HSHM students, he further added "You have chosen a prestigious profession with a bright future. Study well and gain hands-on experience at Hashoo Hotels to polish your skill sets. This will help

you excel and become future leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry."

The closing session of the conference included distribution of participation certificates and prizes for the winners of photography and art competition.

This conference served as the global observance day, fostering awareness towards sustainable tourism development in Pakistan.

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US Muslims being let down

Dalia Al-Aqidi

Do you remember American actor and singer Jussie Smollett? In January 2019, Smollett became known worldwide as the victim of a racist and homophobic hate crime. He reported to the Chicago police that two men had punched him in the face, poured an unknown chemical substance on him and wrapped a rope around his neck. He described his attackers as MAGA (Make America Great Again) supporters, a slogan former President Donald Trump used.

As a result, he immediately received support from celebrities in political and cultural circles and his claims were met with outrage about how the country was divided between the white oppressor and the oppressed minorities.

With tears in his eyes, Smollett suggested to "Good Morning America" that his attackers were white. "If I had said he was a Muslim, or a Mexican, or someone Black, I feel like the doubters would have supported me much more. A lot more," he said.

It did not take the Chicago police long to solve this heinous crime and reveal the shocking truth. The "Empire" actor came up with the plan, staged the attack and paid two Nigerian men, who worked as extras on the show, to pretend to be the racist, homophobic attackers. The police added that Smollett "took advantage of the pain and anger of racism to promote his career."

In March 2022, Smollett was sentenced to 150 days in jail after being



found guilty on five of six counts of disorderly conduct for making false reports to the Chicago Police Department.

This story should have been a good lesson for those who try to incite hatred and racism for their own personal gain. But some do not want to learn or perhaps think they are more intelligent than the rest of us.

In San Diego, California, a local imam who was well known for publicly debating with people about Islam claimed in March that he was attacked by a man who called him a terrorist, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune. In a viral video, Uthman ibn Farooq claimed that a man motivated by Islamophobia stabbed him while he was in downtown San Diego providing information about Islam. "I punched him, and he was too cowardly to fight like a man; he took a knife and tried to cut me," he said, adding that he went to an urgent care clinic for treatment on a wound to

his abdomen.

There was no reason to doubt Uthman's claim, especially with him being a religious leader — except that no records support his claims.

The Islamists' narrative and the victimhood card have become known to many in the Western world, regardless of the support they provide each other to give themselves credibility.

The Questionable Council on American-Islamic Relations hastened to stand by the founder of the One Message Foundation, condemning the "bias-motivated attack." Its statement added: "Hate rhetoric can quickly turn into a hate crime, causing harm to life and property. We call on members of the public to offer any information they have about this attack and for city officials to take immediate action to ensure public safety for all minority communities." The council also wished Uthman a speedy recovery.

Recovery from what?

The police denied any knowledge of an attack. No crime was reported, no charges were brought and nobody was tried or sent to jail, as Uthman claimed in September.

Freelance journalist Ahnaf Kalam was forcibly removed from a mosque in Colorado for asking Uthman to provide the name of the jailed attacker. Kalam was led out of the building by Karim Abu Zaid, imam of the Colorado Muslims Community Center.

Why would Uthman lie? Why wouldn't he answer a simple question? Hasn't he heard of Smollett?

According to its website, the One Message Foundation, a nonprofit organization established in 2014, aims to educate people to bring about better understanding of Islam. However, Islamists continue to portray the US as an enemy of all Muslims; this incident was just one example.

Moderate Muslims who want to live in harmony with the rest of their society should confront this dangerous agenda and refuse to be used and represented by radical ideology-driven so-called religious leaders.

Uthman needs to come clean and apologize for tainting the reputation of American Muslims. He must be held accountable for spewing racism and hatred under the pretext of fighting Islamophobia.

Islamists should have no place in Western societies.

Dalia Al-Aqidi is a senior fellow at the Center for Security Policy.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect newspaper point of view

'India No.1 country in the world likely to witness a genocide'

With the multiple video footages of Muslims being publicly flogged by Hindu fanatics surfacing on the internet, analysts believe that India was fast heading toward the much-feared stage of genocide.

Recently an upsurge in lynching and mistreating of Muslim youngsters has been observed in India, especially during the religious festival of Garba. In multiple incidents, the right-wing Hindu extremist mob maltreated Muslims around the said religious festival.

"India has all of the preparatory stages for more genocidal massacres," according to Dr Gregory Stanton, the founder of Genocide Watch.

Dr. Stanton had predicted a genocide in Rwanda years before it took place in 1994. Now he has warned of an impending genocide of Muslims in India, comparing the situation of the country under the Narendra Modi government to events in Myanmar and Rwanda. In the State of Gujarat, nine Muslim men were publicly flogged by Hindu extremists while the crowd chanted nationalist slogans and the state machinery including police reportedly supervised and supported the torture. The incident happened when a mob of Hindus teased and chanted anti-Islam slogans in the Muslim community area.

In a separate incident in Jharkand, 22 years old Ejaz Ansari was beaten to death by RSS mob with axes and batons.

In Mandasaur city of Madhya Pradesh, 19 Muslim youth were arrested on fake charges of disturbing the Garba festival. The houses of three youths were also bulldozed by the administration.

The International Human Rights Foundation took notice of the incident and asked the Government of India to take notice of the incident.

"Yet another video of a prominent Hindu supremacist singer calling on Hindus to buy weapons and to prepare themselves for a war to turn India into a Hindu nation. The world can no more ignore what's happening in India. Muslims are at the cusp of genocide," the Indian American Muslim Council wrote on Twitter.

The analysts believe that India was becoming a Hindu Rashtra where Muslims will be forced to live as second-class citizens and will be persecuted and murdered.

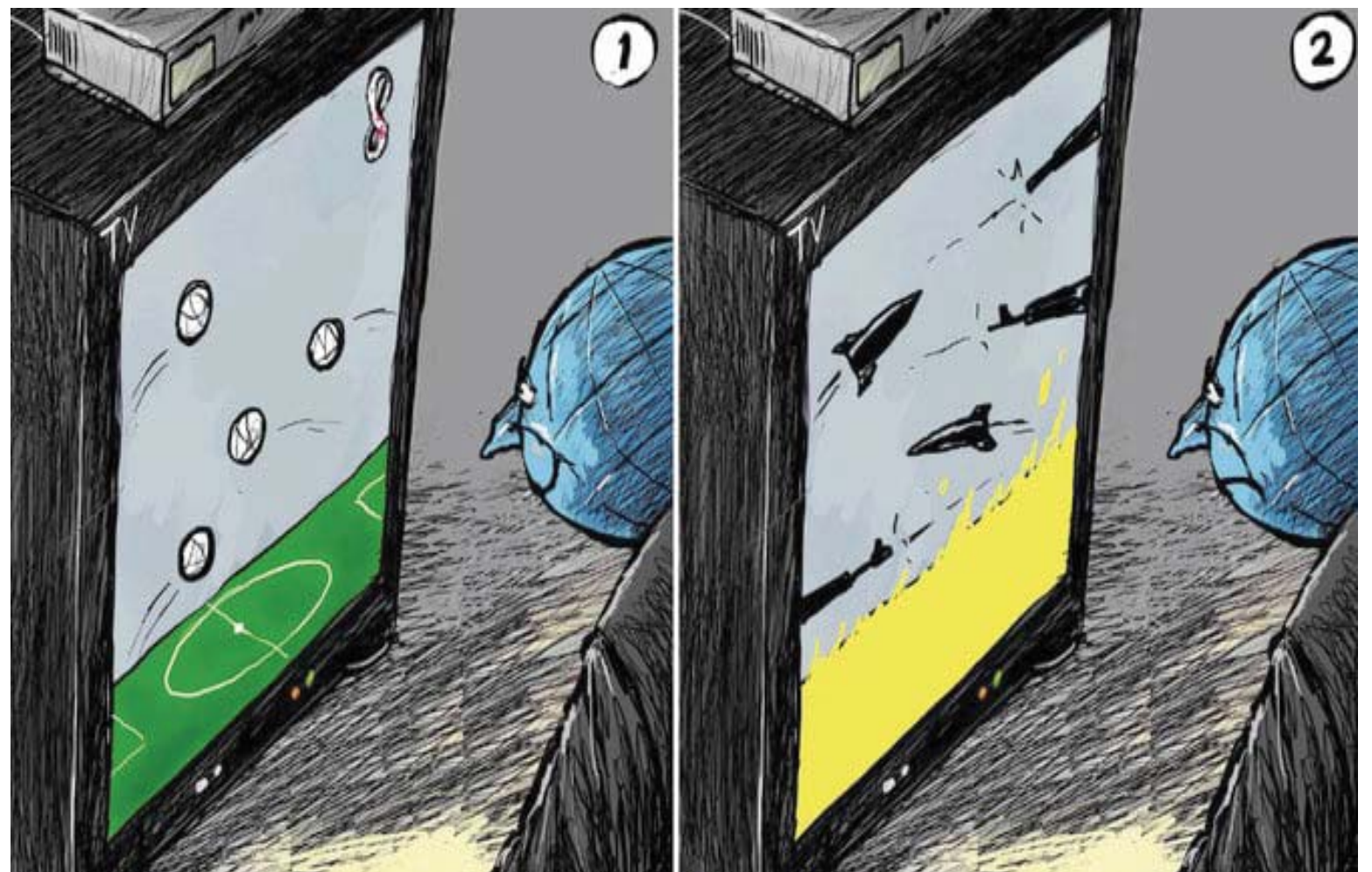
In Narendra Modi's India, the Hindutva hateful ideology is being propagated and supported by Indian media and state machinery. The Muslims are being demeaned and accused of bogus charges with their houses being demolished.

The saner elements in India have urged international human rights organizations to take notice of the human rights abuses and rising Islamophobia in India.

Ironically, the Indian police and justice system remains complicit with the right-wing Hindu nationalist in their agenda of marginalizing and lynching Muslims.

The backing of the Indian state machinery of the human rights violators is evident from the fact that 11 Hindu men convicted of gang rape of Bilkis Bano were released by the court. They were given a heroic welcome and garlanded after their release.

"A Hindu religious leader asking thousands of his supporters to carry arms to support Modi's plan to make India a Hindu country. This is why India is the No.1 country in the world that is likely to witness a genocide," said Ashok Swain, Professor of Peace and Conflict Research at a Swedish university commenting on a video on Twitter.



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

Financial Crunch Deepens

Asrar Raouf

The ongoing financial crisis in Pakistan is almost unprecedented in its nature and content and is exacerbating by the day. At the centre of crisis is the financial crunch owing to the extreme paucity of foreign exchange that has witnessed the entire economic cycle coming to a grinding halt.

Resultantly, the overall business confidence in Pakistan fell to minus four per cent that most observers consider as not surprising keeping in view the highly challenging political and economic situation.

Since after the induction of the coalition government in April 2022 the country is in the grip of intense political turmoil and has been devoid of political stability and has suffered heavily owing to the never-ending political agitation.

The current financial scenario apparently looks untenable and may rattle the overall economic position of the country that is widely forecast to be on the edge of financial default.

Pakistan financial crisis: Though the official circles are vehemently denying the possibility of a default, yet the conditions are ripe for bringing in such an eventuality.

The reputation of the financial czar of the coalition government has been badly besmirched in the process and it is now widely believed that he lacks the wherewithal to counter the mounting difficulties.

One of the most disastrous conse-

quences of political uncertainty is that it has ushered in economic instability with macroeconomic indicators of the economy's health continuing to deteriorate.

This is a nerve-wracking situation and is cyclically affecting all segments of the national economy with policy makers finding themselves in an unenviable fix and feeling encircled in an almost impossible hopeless situation unless something radical is attempted and subsequently achieved.

This situation has arisen due to the fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves of the country. It is pointed out at the end of March 2022, the SBP's reserves stood at \$11.425 billion but they gradually tanked to an almost four-year low of \$6.715 billion in December. A massive decline of \$4.71 billion or more than 41 per cent in a little over eight months — mainly due to external debt payments — has compelled the SBP to restrict all foreign exchange outflows that could be delayed.

The fall in foreign exchange reserves to below \$7 billion level has happened for the first time since January 2019. The current reserves stand at around \$6.7 billion, which is almost equal to \$6.6 billion on January 18, 2019. The \$6.7 billion reserves are not enough to service the \$8.8 billion principal and interest payments during the January-March period of the current fiscal year.

To make situation further complicated is the fact that external financing gaps are getting wider as non-debt-creating foreign exchange

inflows remain low and between July and November exports were down by 3.5 per cent year-on-year basis to \$11.932 billion.

Although imports shrank 20 per cent year-on-year during this period, still the import bill totaled \$26.338 billion pushing the trade deficit to \$14.406 billion that is rated to be large. It is mentioned that home remittances alone cannot adequately compensate as they cannot be expected to exceed \$12.4 billion. During July-October 2022, remittances totaled \$9.9 billion registering 8.6 per cent year-on-year decline.

It is therefore not surprising that the financial managers of the coalition government as well as the State Bank of Pakistan are in a state of fix and are running from pillar to post to remedy the situation.

To begin with, they have requested Saudi Arabia for providing cash support of \$3 billion at their earliest to be deposited with the SBP to help the country meet external financing requirements in the next quarter. In this context the finance minister requested the kingdom for doing this favour and it was also reported that the new army chief on his expected visit to Saudi Arabia may also try to add his weight to the proposition.

Finance Minister made the request during a meeting with the Saudi ambassador and his meeting took place in a string of meetings for two consecutive days when he asked foreign diplomats to seek their financial support and also influence the IMF to soften its stance on

releasing its \$1.2 billion tranche to the country.

The financial managers are also hectically working to arrange an additional \$1.2 billion from Saudi Arabia as oil import facility to tide over the tremendous expense required for importing fuel in Pakistan.

It must be kept in view that Saudi Arabia has recently rolled over a \$3 billion deposit previously placed with the SBP and Pakistani authorities are quite hopeful that Saudi Arabia would come to their assistance although the kingdom is unusually slack in responding to Pakistani request implying that it may not be favourably disposed towards this request.

Feeling their backs to the wall, Pakistan has sought even larger debt rollovers from China and the finance managers expect that Beijing will not do their bidding. In the first week of November Pakistan received assurances of a \$13 billion financial package from China and Saudi Arabia, including \$5.7 billion in fresh loans including \$4.2 billion from Saudi Arabia and \$8.8 billion from China.

However, no progress could be made during the past one month and instead the country paid back two commercial loans of China totalling \$1.2 billion.

It is pointed out that the \$13 billion package is equal to 38 per cent of the estimated gross external financing requirements of the country for the fiscal year 2022-23.

If it materializes then it can remove the threat of default in wake

of the fact that the IMF has not come up with a major financial package despite imposing numerous harsh conditions. Pakistan is again looking towards the friendly countries as it has been unable to revive the \$6.5 billion IMF bailout package that has been derailed for the fourth time in three years.

The IMF has not yet finalised the dates for the staff-level talks that are much needed to acquire the next loan tranche of \$1.2 billion. Pakistan and the IMF teams held discussions about the practicality of the official estimates of \$32 billion foreign inflows during the current fiscal year.

The discussions mainly focused on the \$26 billion inflows estimates by the Pakistani side and the estimates included budgetary loans of \$23 billion and grants of \$1.5 billion. Pakistan has estimated that it would receive \$6.2 billion in foreign commercial loans, down from the previous estimate of \$7.5 billion but this money was not received during the first quarter. Of the estimated foreign commercial loans of \$6.2 billion, \$3.5 billion will come from China.

The remaining \$2.7 billion will be provided by the non-Chinese foreign commercial banks having shorter maturity periods. In the meanwhile, the exact time lag between now and the release of the next IMF tranche would determine how long negative perceptions about Pakistan's economy may persist, how long, even necessary imports may remain hampered and how much more value the rupee will shed.

Is the Taliban-led govt in Afghanistan becoming a threat to peace in Pakistan?

Sofia Fazal

Between July and August 2021, when US soldiers started to leave Afghanistan, the Taliban started to take hold. They now have complete power over the nation and have installed an interim government.

Ever since the Afghan-Taliban came into power, conflicts have increased alarmingly along the problematic border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The regularity of these clashes has only risen since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021. The most recent border conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan took place on December 15, 2022, Thursday. According to Pakistani officials, one person was killed and 15 others were injured in a new round of "indiscriminate" cross-border artillery bombardment by Afghan Taliban fighters on civilian locations. The victims also included women and children. Although the strike provoked a brief exchange of gunfire close to the Chaman border crossing, no information of Afghan side casualties was immediately available. Due to similar clashes last month, Pakistan closed the Chaman-Spin Boldak crossing for more than a week, stranding hundreds of vehicle convoys carrying Afghan commercial cargo on both sides. According to speculation, incidences of militant attacks on Pakistani security personnel have also increased after Gen. Asim Munir, the country's new army leader, took over for Qamar Javed Bajwa on November 29. There was a great deal of celebration in Pakistan following the fall of the Ghani administration in Kabul last year. The security establishment as well as conservative sections of the populace welcomed the withdrawal of Western troops from Afghanistan. However, recent events have shown the unfavourable side effects of a Taliban-led government. Islamabad's shaky relationship with the Afghan Taliban makes the situation extremely dangerous for Pakistan, which is already dealing with multiple crises at home, including a severe economic downturn, political unrest over the confrontation between the powerful army and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, and the ongoing effects of significant flooding earlier this year.

Indonesia keen to strengthen economic, trade relations with Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam M. Tugio here on Monday emphasized on strengthening bilateral economic and trade relations with Pakistan.

During a call on meeting with Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, the ambassador appreciated Pakistan government for supporting joint venture projects between the two countries.

The minister and Ambassador discussed measures to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, according to press statement issued by finance ministry. They agreed to extend full support to enhance bilateral relations between both the countries.

On the occasion, the finance minister



ter Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar highlighted profound historical and brotherly relations between the two countries.

He shared that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Indonesia and expressed satisfaction over the magnitude of economic and trade and investment cooperation and showed desire his government to further deepen the trade and economic partnership between the two countries.

Dar extended sympathy over loss of lives in recent earthquake disasters in Indonesia, the statement added.

He also appreciated the flood relief support of Indonesian government to flood affectees in Pakistan and said that the humanitarian support reflected the spirit of friendship and mutual cooperation.

Pakistan benefited numerous from BRI: SA to PM



Correspondent

GWADAR: "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have significant international influence and can effectively help developing countries promote infrastructure construction and economic development.

Pakistan is the biggest beneficiary of BRI," said Zafaruddin Mahmood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, according to Gwadar PRO on Monday

Zafaruddin Mahmood gave remarks at the high-end academic forum on Sino-Pakistan ties. The forum was hosted online and offline by Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST).

The forum focused on CPEC, China-Pakistan language, culture, and education cooperation, China-Pakistan nonferrous metals cooperation, China-Pakistan economy and trade, and Pakistan hot issues.

The special assistant has studied in China for many years and claims himself a "China-made student". He stated at the forum's opening ceremony that BRI, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative are all very important and have the potential to make the world a better place in the next 100 years.

He specifically affirmed the "2+2" talent training model jointly established by JXUST and the University of Punjab, and expressed his expectation that future exchanges and cooperation between the two parties would be strengthened.

In his welcome remarks, Wen Herui, President of JXUST, expressed his optimism for the forum as an opportunity to build on the momentum and make new and greater contributions to the high-quality development of Sino-Pakistan ties. Luo Lin, Director of Secretariat of International and Regional Studies of the Ministry of Education of China, highlighted that "China and Pakistan have supported and forged ahead with each other in the face of changes and chaos in the world, which demonstrates our unwavering friendship."

He expressed support to the Pakistan Studies Center of JXUST for its efforts to strengthen liaison with various parties and build a distinctive think tank platform by combining the university's superior disciplines.

Tu Anbo, Vice President of the Jiangxi People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, explained that in recent years, Jiangxi has continuously expanded cooperation and exchanges with Pakistan in the implementation of the BRI, and achieved fruitful results in the areas of CPEC construction, the fight against the epidemic, economy and trade, education and culture.

He said the association is willing to work with other parties to expand Sino-Pak cooperation mechanisms and platforms, promote the of establishment Sino-Pak sister cities, schools and hospitals, and add new impetus to the building of an even closer Sino-Pak community with a shared future in the new era.

In his closing remarks, Liu Chengsheng, Secretary of the CPC Committee of School of Foreign Languages at JXUST, proposed to hold similar forums on a regular basis in the future and looked forward to smooth communication channels between the governments, universities and researchers of the two countries to continuously promote exchanges and cooperation.

Zulfiqar Ali, Director of the Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office of Pakistan, Luo Jianxue, President of the Lahore Overseas Chinese Association, Mahboob Hussain, Chairman of Department of history and Pakistan studies, Ma Zhiwei, Deputy Director of the Liaoyuan South Asia Institute, other scholars and over 200 faculty and students also attended the forum.

UNHCR receives €1 million from L'Oréal Group to support flood affected

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, today welcomed the announcement of €1,000,000 [One Million Euro] donation by the L'Oréal Group, the world's leading beauty company, to provide emergency support for flood affected communities in Pakistanis well as help rebuild community infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and shelters.

The donation, which comes as the people of Pakistan continue to grapple with the devastating effects of the 2022 floods, will contribute to UNHCR's response for approximately 8.5 million people in the worst affected provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Key activities include the handover of emergency core relief items including blankets, emergency shelter, hygiene items, mosquito nets and solar-powered lanterns.

UNHCR, in its leadership of protection activities is also working alongside



partners to ensure that critical needs are identified and addressed through prevention, risk mitigation and other services by specialised actors. The grant will strengthen measures to address gender-based violence and child protection risks, to ensure timely

aid for the most vulnerable and delivered in a safe and dignified manner.

The funding will also assist in the early recovery process, including building up the resilience of refugees and their host communities and rehabilitating damaged public service

such as schools, health, and water supplies.

"The L'Oréal Group's contribution demonstrates a firm commitment towards solidarity and responsibility sharing with Pakistan, which is among the world's largest host of refugees," said UNHCR Representative to Pakistan, Noriko Yoshida. "This contribution will support vulnerable families affected by flooding and help them to rebuild their homes, their lives and their communities."

Alexandra Palt, L'Oréal Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer and CEO Foundation L'Oréal said; "As the flood waters recede, every passing day is bringing more challenges for the communities as people continue to be displaced by the catastrophic floods and the scale of the destruction remains huge. The funding awarded to UNHCR by L'Oréal will be directed towards rehabilitation and humanitarian assistance in Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

Grand opening of Pakistani restaurant chain Royal Nawab in East London

Diplomat Correspondent

LONDON :Royal Nawab's opening in East London is a matter of honor for Pakistan. Overseas Pakistanis play an important role in the country's economy and development: M. Akram Farid.

No other Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi restaurant in the UK or Western Europe offers such a varied buffet to its customers: Malik Mehboob

(Staff Reporter) Senior Vice-Chairman of Pakistan Hotels Association Mian Akram Farid while addressing the opening ceremony of Royal Nawab Restaurant in Ilford (UK) Akram Farid said that Royal Nawab Restaurants is a matter of honor for Pakistan, Overseas Pakistanis are our precious capital.

Overseas Pakistanis are the pride of the country and they are playing an important role

in the country's economy along with making the name of Pakistan known around the world. Pakistanis living abroad are the backbone of the country's economy, just like the Pakistanis living abroad are working in England. With the opening of the Royal Nawab Hotel in Elfield, the Pakistani and Asian communities will now be able to enjoy delicious Pakistani cuisine in East London – where Pakistanis and Asians living here had to travel to West London to eat Pakistani food.

He further said that due to the hard work and dedication of Malik Mahboob, the owner of Royal Nawab Restaurant, today Royal Nawab Restaurant is a name in the world. And this is an honor for Pakistan. No other Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi restaurant in the UK or Western Europe offers such a varied buffet

to its customers. The variety of buffet at Royal Nawab is almost endless and customers can eat as much and as much as they want for a fixed price and it is left up to them to decide when to stop. "Our aim is to eat as much as possible and we try to satisfy the consumer's appetite with both quality and quantity," he said. In the last 10 years, Royal Nawab has introduced more than 100 dishes whereas earlier the range consisted of common popular dishes. Malik Mehboob, the owner of Royal Nawab Restaurant, said that he buys all the spices, rice and ingredients from Pakistan.

For 40 years we have used the same buyers and retailers. Today we employ hundreds of people. No other Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi restaurant in the UK or Western Europe offers such a varied buffet to its



customers. He further informed that the number of visitors to the

three places of Nawab every week is in thousands. He said that no

other restaurant offers the range of dishes we offer and no other

restaurant has so many people who enjoy authentic Pakistani food.

The largest Pakistani specialty restaurant with more Pakistani dishes from all parts of Pakistan than any restaurant outside or at least in the UK and Europe. Customers from all backgrounds come to us especially to enjoy Pakistani cuisine. Even British and Europeans come to us every week just to enjoy Pakistani food, he added, adding that every evening there are huge queues outside the restaurant.

Families, groups and couples come to eat at the restaurant. Speaking at the inauguration, Alfredo Leader of the redbridge London Borough Council Jes Athwal said that we are very happy, with the Royal Nawab's opening here, we will enjoy Pakistani food here, for which we had to travel far before.

New Uzbekistan is a reliable partner in a changing and interconnected world

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: A round table organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan was held today in the Amirsoy mountain resort in Tashkent region.

The event was attended by the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, heads of diplomatic missions of foreign countries and representative offices of international organizations accredited in Uzbekistan, ambassadors of our country in foreign states.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov, in his speech during the round table on the topic "New Uzbekistan—a reliable partner in a changing and interconnected world", specifically focused on Central Asia, which is a priority of our country's foreign policy.

It was noted that, having embarked on the path of full-



scale reforms and democratic transformations, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, initiated a new course in foreign policy. It is based on commitment to the principles of international law and the desire for peace, good neighborliness, comprehensive cooperation, strengthening regional stability and interna-

tional security, which fully meet the national interests of Uzbekistan.

"The Republic of Uzbekistan is committed to a constructive dialogue and the development of multilateral cooperation based on taking into account and respecting the interests of each state," V. Norov said. An example of this is the interaction of

Uzbekistan in Central Asia. In recent years, the relations of our country with all the states of the region have been brought to a high strategic level.

Regular Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia have become an important mechanism for achieving such a high level of mutual trust and cooperation. They contribute to the development of common positions on issues of regional trade, economic, transport, environmental interconnectedness, as well as on solving the most pressing intra-regional issues.

Today, through joint efforts, an absolutely new, positive atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation has been formed in Central Asia. Over the past five years, the volume of regional trade has doubled. Work is underway to implement joint industrial cooperation projects, create efficient value chains, and develop transport and energy



infrastructure. The countries of the region jointly confront new challenges and risks.

"We are jointly building a new future for Central Asia as a single, consolidated, stable and

prosperous region, dynamically integrated into world economic relations," the Uzbek Foreign Minister stressed.

Heads of the Embassies of Azerbaijan, Algeria, Germa-

ny, India, Oman, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Tajikistan, Japan, as well as the heads of the UN and UNICEF missions in our country also made presentations during the round table.

