



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
حضرت رضی اللہ عنہما نے بیان کیا تھا کہ  
رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا  
کہ پانچ جانور ایسے ہیں جنہیں مارنے میں  
کوئی گناہ نہیں گوارا ہے، چوہا، بچھو اور کاک  
کھانے والا کتا۔  
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 5128)

Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI

## President urges children to focus on knowledge & character development

President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday urged children to gain knowledge, focus on their character development, uphold morality and truth, and act upon Quaid-e-Azam's principles of "Unity, Faith and Discipline" to make Pakistan a strong and prosperous nation. (Report on Page 8)



## PPP all set to observe 15th death anniversary of BB Shaheed

PPP Rawalpindi Chapter has finalized arrangements to observe the 15th death anniversary of former PM Benazir Bhutto shaheed on December 27 in a befitting manner. Talking to APP here Sunday, former media advisor to ex-PM Yousaf Raza Gillani, Mian Khuram Rasool, said that the city would be decorated with the portraits of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), Benazir Bhutto and Bilawal Bhutto. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jamadi-us-Sani 2, Monday, December 26, 2022

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily\_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 15, Issue: 262 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

# Five Pak Army personnel martyred in IED blast in Balochistan

President, Prime Minister, Bilawal Bhutto and Asif Zardari paid tribute to the soldiers

Bureau Report

QUETTA: An Improvised explosive device (IED) exploded on Sunday while the Army was conducting an intelligence-based clearance operation in Kahan area of Balochistan resulting in the martyrdom of five army men including a captain and four sepoy.

Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR), in its press release, stated "Captain Fahad along with four other brave sons of soil Lance Naik Imtiaz, Sepoy Asghar, Sepoy Mehran and Sepoy Shamoon have embraced Shahadat, laying their lives in defence of the motherland against an externally perpetrated threat of terrorism".

"The operation was underway in Kahan area of Balochistan since 24 Dec 2022", the statement added.

Earlier, a soldier was martyred and two others injured during heavy exchange of fire with terrorists in an intelligence-based operation in Sambaza area of Zhob, Balochistan.

In a statement, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said an operation had been initiated in the area for the last 96 hours to deny terrorists use of few suspected routes to move across Pak-Afghan Border to sneak into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along inter-provincial boundary and target citizens and security forces.

"As a result of continuous Surveillance and sanitisation of the area, a group of the Terror-



ists was intercepted in early hours today. During the establishment of blocking positions to deny them escape routes, terrorists opened fire onto the Security Forces", reads the statement.

During the gunfight, one terrorist was killed, while Sepoy Haq Nawaz embraced martyrdom and two other soldiers got injured. Terrorists were supported by their facilitators from across the border as well through fire, it said.

"The sanitization operation continues in the area to apprehend remaining perpetrators,"

the ISPR said. Political leaders have lauded the anti-terrorism efforts of the army. Former president Asif Ali Zardari said our army personnel were leaving no stone unturned to avert the peace-derailing attempts by terrorists. "They are our hero", he added.

Minister for External Affairs Bilawal Bhutto also paid tribute to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in keeping the country safe. While condemning the attacks, the FM said the sons of the soil were expending their energies in keeping the terror-

ism at distance. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the nation was paying tributes and respects to the five soldiers who embraced martyrdom in Balochistan.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "Heart-wrenching news from Balochistan about the martyrdom of five soldiers including an Army Captain."

"The nation pays its tributes & respects to our heroes who laid down their lives for Pakistan. The perpetrators of terrorism will be brought to justice. Let there be

no mistake about it," he added.

President Dr Arif Alvi also paid tribute to soldiers of the Pakistan army who were martyred during a clearance operation of the security forces in Kahan, Balochistan.

In a statement, the President condoled with the families of the martyred and lauded the martyrs for their services for the defence of the country. He appreciated the efforts of the security forces for the eradication of terrorism from the country.

He prayed for grant of the highest ranks to the martyrs in Jannah.

# PM urges nation to follow footsteps of Quaid for progress, prosperity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on the nation to take guidance from the life of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and follow his principles to ensure the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

In a message on the occasion of birth anniversary of Quaid e Azam, he said the whole nation was celebrating the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with patriotic fervor and zeal.

The founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam valiantly fought the constitutional and political fight for the rights of Muslims of Indian subcontinent, as a result, today all Muslims were living independently in Pakistan, he added.

The struggle of Quaid-e-Azam was against the idea of a majority usurping the rights of minorities on the basis of numerical superiority, he said, adding the Quaid had strived for the restoration of a unique way of life of Muslims and for their separate social, and economic, political and



cultural identity in the comity of nations.

He said Quaid-e-Azam made the Muslims of the subcontinent truly aware of their rights and also ensured that after independence Muslims should live their lives independently and peacefully, while enjoying religious and cultural freedoms, getting equal opportunities for progress.

Shehbaz Sharif said the life of Quaid-e-Azam was a practical demonstration of his steadfastness for principles, constitutional struggle, political sagacity, and of the golden principles of faith, unity, and discipline.

# Development process in KP southern districts to resume after PM visit to Dera: Fazl



D.I.KHAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday vowed that the development process would be resumed in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the expected visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Dera Ismail Khan on Monday.

He stated this during a special meeting of District 'Majlis-e-Amla' held here in a local hotel to discuss various aspects of the expected visit of the prime minister to D.I.Khan. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Communications Mufti Asad Mahmood, Senior Deputy Amir Maulana Obaidur Rehman, Engineer Ziaur Rehman and the Party's

Tehsil Nazims and Ameer.

Fazl said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif would announce mega projects for DIKhan, Tank and Lakki Marwat districts including Yarik to Saggu CPEC project.

He opined that after the visit of the prime minister, the process of development and prosperity in these districts would be resumed which was stopped for the last nine years. The mega projects announced by the premier would be remedy of the deprivations among the people of these areas.

He also hinted that the JUI-F would hold a big public gathering in Dera soon and demonstrate a power show. APP

# Seems as if establishment ready to go for election in April: Imran Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan believed on Sunday that the establishment would go for the elections in April.

Speaking to the delegation of journalists, the deposed premier said the elections will have to happen in the case of the dissolution of two assemblies, adding that it will not bother the PTI if elections delay, once the assemblies will be dissolved.

Clarifying on why the PTI delayed the process of dissolving assemblies, Mr Khan said that to convince the allies, his party did not opt to immediately dissolve



the assemblies.

While avoiding answering the question on Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi, Mr Khan said, "We have no doubt that Parvez Elahi will not dissolve the PA. He

[Elahi] will take the vote of confidence before January 11."

Imran Khan calls party meeting to finalise strategy for Punjab CM trust vote

PTI Chairman Imran Khan

on Sunday called a meeting of the senior party leadership to finalise a strategy regarding confidence vote for Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.

The former premier has also called a meeting of the party's media strategy committee on Sunday at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore.

Mr Khan would also be briefed on latest developments by a committee holding negotiations with Parvez Elahi and Moonis Elahi regarding seat adjustment for next elections. On Saturday, the PTI top brass announced that the Punjab chief minister would take a vote of confidence.

PTI's announcement comes

in the wake of the Lahore High Court's order that, on the condition of bounding the CM to obtain a vote of confidence before dissolving the assembly, suspended Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman's notification barring Mr Elahi from holding the CM office.

Speaking to media persons outside deposed premier Imran Khan's Zaman park residence in Lahore, PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, flanked by provincial minister Aslam Iqbal, said the Punjab CM would dissolve the Punjab Assembly after obtaining the vote of confidence. Fawad while reiterating demand for snap elections said the incumbent rulers had disappointed the masses.

# CM Elahi announces ownership rights for Christians living in slums



News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Pervez Elahi on Saturday announced to give ownership rights to minorities residing in slums.

On the eve of Christmas ceremony held at the CM office, he greeted Christian community over Christmas and said the white color in the country's flag represented minorities. "The quota for minorities in employment sector has been increased from 2pc to 5pc", he added.

# Hamza Shahbaz to return to Pakistan on Jan 5 amid political turmoil in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Punjab chief minister Hamza Shahbaz had decided to return to Pakistan.

The PML-N stalwart would reach back Pakistan on Jan 5 from the US in line with the order from his father, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a spokesperson of the party said.

Hamza Shahbaz would preside over a meeting of the PML-N and coalition partners' parliamentary parties, he said.

The former chief minister is returning to the country at a time when political crisis is brewing in Punjab as the PTI-backed Punjab CM Parvez Elahi aimed at dissolving the Punjab Assembly after securing a vote of confidence from the assembly.



Earlier this week, Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman denotified Mr Elahi in a bid to prevent the dissolution of the assembly. However, his move was suspended by the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday after it was assured by the CM that he would not disband the assembly until

obtaining a trust vote.

On Dec 13, Hamza Shahbaz went abroad and it was told to an accountability court that he could not attend the hearing in a money laundering and asset beyond means case as he was in London for the treatment of his daughter, who is a cardiac patient.

# IHC fixes plea seeking details of foreign gifts for hearing

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Sunday fixed a petition for hearing seeking details of gifts received from foreign heads of state and governments and other dignitaries by prime ministers and presidents.

The IHC Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb will hear the plea of citizen Abuzar Salman on Monday, who named the Secretary Cabinet Division and the Information Commission as parties in his petition.

The plea demanded that the details of the foreign gifts received by the prime ministers and presidents from foreign dignitaries be provided along with their market value.

# Security put on high alert in Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: After the recent suicide blast incident, Islamabad police put security on high alert in the federal capital. Due to the critical security situation in the country, the Islamabad Capital Territory police tightened security at the entry and exit points of the federal capital.

The police officials instructed the citizens of Islamabad to keep important documents with them including computerised national identity cards (CNICs) besides appealing to the residents to cooperate with the on-duty cops during checking process in the Red Zone and other areas.

Earlier this week, a policeman was martyred and six others, including four fellow cops, were injured in a suicide blast reported in Islamabad's I-10/4 sector. The slain officer was identified as Head Constable Adeel Hussain.

Addressing the media at the blast site, Deputy Inspector General of Police Sohail Zafar Chattha said that the police spotted a "suspicious vehicle" with a man and a woman aboard in the I-10/4 area. "When the police stopped the vehicle for routine checking, the man detonated himself," he said in a media briefing, adding that Eagle Squad cop was martyred in the blast while four others were injured.



## 146th Birth Anniversary of Quaid

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, First Lady, Begum Samina Arif Alvi, and children in a group photo at an event titled "Quaid aur Bachay", in connectin with the celebration of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Sunday.



Photo: PID

## Quaid's birth anniversary

## President urges children to focus on knowledge &amp; character development

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday urged children to gain knowledge, focus on their character development, uphold morality and truth, and act upon Quaid-e-Azam's principles of "Unity, Faith and Discipline" to make Pakistan a strong and prosperous nation.

The President expressed these views while addressing an event titled "Quaid aur Bachay", in connection with the celebration of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146th

birth anniversary, at Aiwan-e-Sadr here.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, children from various schools of Islamabad, parents, teachers, and media persons attended the event.

President Dr Arif Alvi addressing an event titled "Quaid aur Bachay", in connection with the celebration of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The speech was also interpreted in

sign language for persons with disabilities.

Addressing the ceremony, the President said that freedom was not easy to achieve or maintain, and children and the youth of the country should play their role to protect this freedom while maintaining unity, faith and discipline in their ranks and striving to make this country a great nation with dedication, commitment and selfless effort.

He said that Pakistan was destined to become a great

nation and to achieve this people should act upon the golden principles laid down by our Founding Father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, for making this country strong and prosperous and focusing on education and proper upbringing of our children and future generations.

President Dr Arif Alvi along with the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, First Lady, Begum Samina Arif Alvi, and children cutting cake

on Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

The President said that although the country was facing economic difficulties, however, we can progress by taking the right decisions at the right time and re-modelling our lives on the cherished moral and ethical values of Islam, sayings and the principles laid down by the Quaid, and working with unity and devotion. Agencies

## Qureshi says 'PDM will be divided soon'

## Spokesman Report

MULTAN: Former foreign minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Sunday that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) alliance will be divided soon.

Addressing the PTI workers during a rally in Multan today, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that the popularity of PTI increases after the regime change. While pointing towards PDM, he added, "Those who want to break PTI and Pakistan

Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) alliance will be divided soon."

He said that the PDM is doing chaotic politics in the country which only led their alliance towards its final destination. He criticises the current government and said, the current rulers drowned the country's economy.

While addressing the party workers, the former FM stated that the current rulers had no concern about the country or the nation, they just want to extend their tenure.

PTI provided relief to the

nation in the hard times over the coronavirus outbreak.

The PTI vice chairman in his address expressed concern over the price hike and said inflation reached its peak within seven months, foreign investors had also expressed distrust in the government and halted investments, meanwhile, the industries are also shutting down.

He further added that the country is currently facing a severe economic crisis, the political instability is making it worst, and fresh elections are the only solution to get the country out of the crisis.

## Maldives former president Yameen gets 11-year jail term



## News Desk

MALE: The Maldives criminal court on Sunday sentenced former president Abdulla Yameen to 11 years in prison and fined him \$5 million after finding him guilty of corruption and money laundering charges relat-

ed to receiving kickbacks from a private company.

He lost power in 2018 but has been declared presidential candidate for the Progressive Party of the Maldives for an election due in 2023.

Already in 2019 he was sentenced to five years in jail and fined \$5 million in 2019 for embezzling \$1 million in state funds, which the prosecution said was acquired through the lease of resort development rights.

After his sentencing, Yameen was shifted to house arrest in 2020 and was freed months later.

## UN chief 'deeply disturbed' by Taliban's ban on women working for NGOs in Afghanistan

## News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed deep concern about the reported ban imposed by the Taliban on women from working for national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Afghanistan.

A statement issued by UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric, said Saturday that the secretary-general was "deeply disturbed by the reported order of the de facto Taliban authorities" and that the UN chief "reiterates the rights of all women to participate in the workforce thus contributing to the greater good."

The Taliban ordered all NGOs in Afghanistan to suspend employing women after reportedly receiving "serious complaints" about their dress code.

## Bajwa tax record leak

## FIA records statements of arrested suspects

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)'s Anti-Corruption Circle (ACC) has recorded the statements of three suspects, arrested in connection with the income tax data leak of former army chief retired Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Shahzad Niaz and Ashraf also deleted tax data, which "they had accessed illegally." Their mobile phones were sent for forensic analysis to enable the investigators to extract data obtained by the suspects, according to the prosecution.

ISPR's statement

On November 27, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) rubbished nefarious campaign launched against Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and

his family related to their tax records.

In a statement, the ISPR said that the reports were "totally untrue and based on blatant lies."

"Misleading data regarding the assets of army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and his family have been shared on social media. These misleading figures are exaggerated and based on assumption," the ISPR said.

The military's media wing said that a certain group has "cleverly and dishonestly" attributed the assets of General Bajwa's daughter-in-law's father and family to the army chief and his family.

The Federal Board Revenue (FBR) on Saturday included three more income tax officers in the investigation of leaked tax record details of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and his family.

Sources said that FBR will carry out an investigation from the chief commissioner, commissioner and additional commissioner in connection with the leaked tax record details of Gen Bajwa and his family.

The leaked tax details were downloaded from the deputy commissioner Lahore's login and then pictures were captured from the deputy commissioner's computer, sources said.

FBR widens probe into tax record leak

## Marriyum Aurangzeb reacts to Imran Khan's prediction of snap polls



## City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's prediction of immediate elections, reiterating that the polls would be held on completion of the constitutional term of the coalition government, ARY News reported on Thursday.

"The election will not be held on mere predictions, rather it will be held on completion of the constitutional term of the coalition government," Marriyum Aurangzeb said in a statement while reacting to Imran Khan's remarks about the snap polls.

Responding to Imran Khan's allegation regarding a deal between a political party and institution, the minister claimed that it was he who "wanted to seal a deal by offering a lifetime extension to former chief of army staff (COAS) Gen ret'd Bajwa."

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the masses continued to suffer the pain of inflation and unemployment even after the ouster of Imran Khan from power.

"Imran Khan pushed the country into an economic quagmire during his four-year misrule which was marred by corruption, bad governance and incompetency", she added.

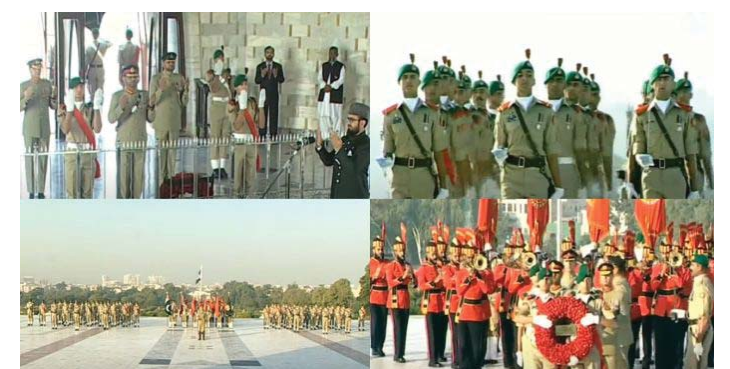
The information minister further said Imran Khan lost the trust of the masses as the historic debt was taken during his government's tenure, as well as false promises of giving 10 million jobs and 5 million houses to the people, were also made.

Earlier in the day, Imran Khan predicted that the next general elections would be held in March or April 2023. He also announced that PTI lawmakers will go to national assembly to verify their resignations on Monday.

Moreover, the PTI Chairman claimed that the former army chief retired Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa thought PTI's popularity will die down but it didn't.

He said that Mr Bajwa had made a deal with PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. He also alleged that the Election Commission of Pakistan was controlled by the Establishment.

## Changing of guard ceremony held at Quaid's mausoleum in Karachi



## Bureau Report

KARACHI: A graceful changing of the guard's ceremony was held at the mausoleum of the Father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to mark his 146th birthday anniversary, here today (Sunday).

Pakistan Air Force cadets handed

over the guards' duty to the cadets of the Pakistan Military Academy.

A smartly turned-out contingent of cadets from Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, took the ceremonial duty of guards at the mausoleum.

Major General Umer Aziz was the chief guest on the occasion. He laid a floral wreath at the Mazar-e-Quaid and offered Fateha.

## PPP all set to observe 15th death anniversary of BB Shaheed

## Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Rawalpindi Chapter has finalized arrangements to observe the 15th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto shaheed on December 27 in a befitting manner.

Talking to APP here Sunday, former media advisor to ex-prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, Mian Khurram Rasool, said that the city would be decorated with the portraits of former Prime Minister Zulifqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), Benazir Bhutto and Bilawal Bhutto.

He said ZAB and BB devoted their lives to the people and democracy. They both created awareness among the people about social, civil, economic and political rights among the masses and stabilized the country by uniting the four provinces, he said.



Meanwhile, Vice-President PPP, Punjab Malik Khalid Boby, said that Quran Khawani would be held at 1:00 p.m. and 'Dua' would be offered at 5:05 p.m. He informed that federal ministers and central local leadership would attend the ceremony.

Talking on the occasion, PPP city president Raja Kamran Hussain said that members from local bodies, People Students Federation, People Youth Organization, Women Wing, People Lawyers Forums and People's Unity of PIA would participate in the event.





# Kashmiris remember Quaid-e-Azam on his 146th birth anniversary

**Bureau Report**

MIRPUR (AJK): People across Azad Jammu Kashmir observed the 146th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Sunday with great enthusiasm and devotion coupled with the renewal of the pledge to continue the individual and collective role for making Pakistan a progressive and prosperous state as envisioned by the Father of the Nation.

The day dawned with special prayers in the mosques throughout AJK for the integrity, solidarity, progress and prosperity of Pakistan and for the early success of the Kashmir freedom movement.

Special ceremonies were held in all the districts and its tehsil headquarters

of the State including Muzaffarabad and divisional headquarters of Mirpur and Rawalakot. Various social, political and intellectual organizations held special programs to celebrate the Day with great fervor and enthusiasm. Special cake cutting ceremonies were by the jubilant participants to express their heartiest love and affection with the great leader of the Sub-continent.

Speakers paid glorious tributes to the founder of Pakistan besides highlighting his life, ideas and achievements.

In Mirpur, a special ceremony in this connection was hosted by a Kashmir based NGO Jinnah Foundation which was addressed by Deputy Chief of the organization Dr. Khalid Yousaf, Secretary General Altaf Hamid Rao and others who paid rich tributes to

Quaid-e-Azam for his unprecedented services for the Muslims of the Sub-continent.

The speakers said that the best way to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam was to continue his mission with national spirit and devotion as envisioned by the late Father of the Nation. They reiterated Kashmiris' resolve coupled with the renewal of the pledge to continue to follow the policy of founder of Pakistan on Kashmir, who had described Kashmir as the jugular vein of Pakistan.

They said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir would continue their freedom struggle for the liberation of occupied Jammu Kashmir from the Indian illegal and forced rule and for the achievement of their legitimate right to self determination and to reach

their ultimate destination, Pakistan. They emphasized for performing their individual and collective role for turning Pakistan a true Islamic welfare, prosperous state to enter the ranks of the developed nations by strictly acting upon the vision of the Quaid.

Similar special ceremonies were also held in other towns of AJK and Pakistan by the Kashmiri refugees under the auspices of various social and political organizations.

All the three radio stations of Azad Jammu Kashmir including Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Tararkheil and AJK TV aired special programs highlighting the marvelous role of the great leader, his meritorious and remarkable services for the emergence of the separate homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-continent.

## Abdul Rasheed awarded with Honored for Literary Services



Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: International Writers Forum Pakistan honored local journalist Abdul Rasheed Astrana with an award for literary services. The second annual training workshop and awards distribution ceremony organized by the International Writers Forum Pakistan was held yesterday at the conference hall of the Academy of Literature Pakistan Islamabad, where literary and social personalities from all provinces of the country including Azad Kashmir tribal areas participated. Writers from India, UAE, England and other countries also participated. Representing Dera Ismail Khan in the ceremony, local journalist Abdul Rasheed Istrana received the award from the special guest speaker, National Assembly, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Raja Parvez Ashraf for his literary and social services. It should be noted that Abdul Rasheed Istrana made the name of Dera Ismail Khan famous at the domestic and international level for his literary services in a short period of time.

## PM stresses on plantation of trees to reduce effects of climate change

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**



MUZAFFARABAD: In a bid to reduce the effects of climate change in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan issued special directives to agricultural department regarding the plantation of fruit and flower plants in the state.

During tree plantation campaign this year 200,000 pomegranate saplings 100,000 saplings of apple, walnut, olive and mango, 50,000 cherry and 30,000 pear, potato and apricot trees would be planted in different areas of the state.

The AJK premier has directed the secretary agriculture to cultivate saffron on twenty five thousand kanals of land Azad Kashmir. The PM also stressed the need for planting roses and other flowering plants on 300 acres of land so that the flowering plants can also be used for commercial purposes. Terming trees as one of the precious gifts of nature, he said appealed the masses to plant more trees to protect the future generations from intensifying pollution and climate change.

## Physical Education & Sports Science Scholars in RASCON 2022



**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: International & national scholars of Physical Education & Sports Science delivered their insights in RASCON 2022 1st International Conference of Rehabilitation and Allied Health Sciences 2022 organized by Allied Health Sciences, Superior University by the invitation of Dean, Dr. M. Naveed Babur, AHS, Superior University & Faisal Fayyaz.

International scholars consist of Prof. Dr. Gareth Irwin, FIFA medical advisor, president of world biomechanics society, Chairman, Cardiff University, UK, Prof. Dr. Zornitza Mladenova, world future leader, world sports community expert, Bulgaria, Prof. Dr. Hilla Davidov, Olympics Specialist, University of Cologne, Germany, Associate Prof. Dr. Lim Boon Hoi, world rehabilitation, sports injury & physical therapy specialist, University of Malaya, Malaysia, & national Speakers are Dr. M. Tahir Nazir, President IAPES, Assistant Professor, Punjab University, Dr. Noor Muhammad, Head of Department, Physical Education & Sports Science, Gomal University, KPK, Dr. M. Sajjad Ali Gill, Vice President SPSI, Assistant Professor, Punjab University & Dr. M. Zia-ul-Haq Chairman, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

Dr. Zia-ul-Haq & Faisal Fayyaz also organized a workshop entitled "2-D and 3-D video analysis of sports and anthropometric Assessments" during rascon 22 in Superior University, Allied Health Sciences.

## Construction Machinery Show

KARACHI: A view of placed heavy machinery in Expo Center during 61th Build Asia International Building Materials & Construction Machinery Show, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# APHC-AJK chapter, paying rich tributes to the founder of Pakistan

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: APHC-AJK chapter Convener Mehmood Ahmad Saghar, General Secretary Sheikh Abdul Mateen and Information Secretary Imtiaz Wani in a joint statement issued in Islamabad said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had declared Kashmir as Pakistan's jugular vein and said that Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir.

They said that the Quaid-e-Azam was a history-making personality who fought for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent and succeeded in his mission.

The APHC-AJK leaders said that Pakistan came into existence on the basis of the Two-Nation Theory and this theory also provides the basis



for the freedom movement of Kashmiris. They added that time had proved that Quaid-e-Azam was right and due to his tireless struggle the Muslims of the subcontinent

achieved a separate homeland in the form of Pakistan. They deplored that the minorities in India, especially the Muslims, are insecure and India has been discrim-

inating against the Muslims and other minorities not only in occupied Kashmir but also in other Indian states from day one.

They said Kashmir's freedom movement is a continuation of Pakistan's movement and Jammu and Kashmir is an incomplete agenda of partition. He said that the hearts of the Kashmiris and Pakistanis beat in unison and "Kashmir will become a part of Pakistan" is the voice of every Kashmiri and Pakistan has always supported the struggle of Kashmiris.

The APHC-AJK leaders urged the international community to play its role in resolving the Kashmir dispute according to the will of the Kashmiri people and the resolutions of the United Nations so that lasting peace could be established in South Asia.

## Role of Minorities in the History of Pakistan

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: District Youth Office in collaboration with Civil Administration Lower Waziristan organized a program for the Christian community at Wana Church in FC Camp, the program was on "Role of Minorities in the History of Pakistan".

Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Ashfaq Khan participated as a special guest in the program and spoke in detail about these people of the Christian community.

District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir was also present on this occasion.

"Who played their role in the history of Pakistan". DC Ashfaq Khan also listened to the concerns of the Christian community and their problems that they will solve these problems very soon, on this occasion, DC also cut the cake.

Pastor Zeeshan Alam and PTI Wing Vice President Akash Masih were accompanied by both men and women from the Christian commu-

# Sindh Governor, CM call upon pursuing Quaid's principles for country's development

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah have laid emphasis on following the principles of Father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for the development of the country.

They said we have come here at the mausoleum to pay tributes to Quaid on his 146th birthday.

They stated this while talking to media at Mazar-e-Quaid here on Sunday.

Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah said that on the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary we should reaffirm our commitment to steer the country out of different crises by forging unity and discipline



so that the country he founded could flourish.

He said that the nation needed unity to face all the challenges, including the financial and reemerging wave of

terrorism so this beloved country that Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah founded with his untiring efforts, visions, and sagacity could attain new vistas of development and prosperity.

He said that a new wave of terrorism has started emerging. "The incident of Bannu and Islamabad are condemnable, and this nation brought into being by Quaid-e-Azam would nip in the bud all the nefarious designs of the enemies of this country," he said.

Murad Ali Shah said that on this day we must remember the sacrifices and struggles of the people of Kashmir for their just cause. He said that the people of Pakistan were with the oppressed people of Kashmir.

The CM also recalled the problems of the people affected by the devastating floods. "The winter has multiplied their problems and we all must help them at this time of need," he said and added that his government was trying its best to rehabilitate the flood-affected people.

# Kashmiri Leaders paying glorious tributes to Father of Nation

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman JKSM and Senior Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Altaf Ahmed Bhat on behalf of people of Pakistan on the birth anniversary of founder of Pakistan-Quaid e Azam M Ali Jinnah.

Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM) and Senior Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Altaf Ahmed Bhat while paying glorious tributes to Father of Nation M Ali Jinnah said that, It was the tireless efforts of M Ali Jinnah that Pakistan is a free nation today. The great Quaid envisioned the completion of Pakistan with the inclusion of IIOJK with it, and rightly said that, "Kashmir is Jugular Vein of Pakistan."

Chairman JKSM referring to the sacrifices of Kashmiri people for being a part of Pakistan said that people of Kashmir were part and parcel of the Pakistan movement and they fought shoulder to shoulder for the emergence of Pakistan. Kashmiris always had great love and affection for Pakistan and Quaid e Azam M Ali Jinnah.

Chairman JKSM further added that Pakistan never left Kashmiris alone. Pakistan supported, advocated, strived and fought for the libera-



tion of Kashmir form illegal Indian Occupation.

Pakistan is raising Kashmir issue at every forum, and we are hopeful Pakistan will once again expedite Kashmir issue internationally on diplomatic and all other forums.

Chairman JKSM Altaf Ahmed Bhat reiterated that, Accession to Pakistan is the destiny of the Kashmiris and the Kashmiri people have lost hundreds of thousands of lives to be part of Pakistan.

Altaf Ahmed Bhat further said that, today we pledge to uphold the great Quaid's guiding principles of unity, faith, and discipline for a better future, freedom of Kashmir and prosperity of Pakistan.





Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:41 am
Zohr	12:07 pm
Asr	3:27 pm
Maghrib	5:05 pm
Isha	6:35 pm

## EMERGENCY

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

## PTI-PML-Q seat adjustment

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q) held its third round of talks for seat adjustment on Saturday ahead of the general elections, ARY News reported.

The third round of talks between PTI and PML-Q leaders was held at Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi's residence in Lahore.

The session was attended by Pervaiz Elahi, Moonis Elahi, Hussain Elahi, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pervez Khattak, Fawad Chaudhry, Farhat Abbasi and others.

The leaders reviewed the list of constituencies in the latest round of talks for finalizing seat adjustment for the next elections. PTI and PML-Q party leaders agreed to hold another round of session regarding seat adjustment soon.

In a statement, PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry claimed that Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Pervaiz Elahi would seek a vote of confidence from the Punjab Assembly, noting that they have support of almost 187 members.

Earlier today, PML-Q leader Moonis Elahi while speaking to a private news channel - said that discussions were held with the PTI chief Imran Khan on seat adjustment following which a committee has been formed in this regard.

# Nation marks 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam with patriotic zeal

City Reporter / News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The nation celebrated the 146th birthday anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on December 25 (Sunday) across the country showing great zeal and enthusiasm.

The day dawned with special prayers for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan while the national flag was hoisted on the major government buildings in the federal capital, like across the country.

Public and private departments arranged a variety of events, including seminars, conferences, competitions, and discussion programmes, mostly during the last week to pay rich tributes to the father of the nation for his untiring struggle, sagacity, and leadership that led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of sub-continent.

Special events were arranged to highlight and promote the vision and messages of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, particularly with regard to rule of law, the supremacy of the constitution, and the upholding of democracy.

A special ceremony was arranged by the Pakistan Academy of Letters on December 22 (Thursday) to mark the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The ceremony was presided over by noted literary person Dr Ehsan Akbar while Haroon-ur-Rasheed

Tabassum, Yusuf Aziz, Jabbar Mirza, and Dr Fakhar-ur-Islam were the special guests at the occasion.

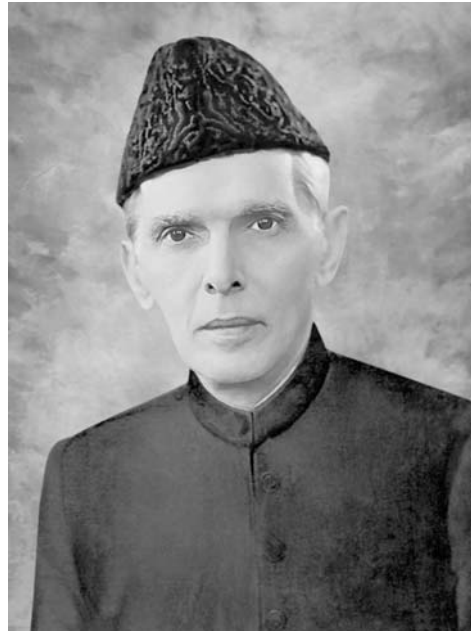
A series of programmes were arranged by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on December 25 (Sunday) at the Pakistan National Heritage Museum which included a prestigious opening ceremony featuring vibrant performances at the Heritage Museum Hall, Lok Virsa, and screening of video documentaries on Quaid-e-Azam at the Pakistan National Monument Museum.

The essay writing competition was arranged by the Nazariya Pakistan Council in connection with the Youm-i-Quaid celebrations in which students of different educational institutions participated and exhibited their extraordinary oratorical skills.

A cycle race was arranged by the Islamabad Cycling Association on December 24 (Saturday) around F-9 Park (Bolan Gate) on the main roads.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Shaoor also arranged hiking at Trail 5 followed by a discussion on Quaid's life on Sunday with the purpose to highlight the vision of the founder of Pakistan in a unique way. While Bazeecha Trust marked the day by arranging special functions on Sunday.

Paying tribute to the father of the nation, President Dr Arif Alvi urged the nation to reiterate its commitment to cherish and uphold the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for Pakistan and mobilize resources to tackle the grave issues to



move on the path of political stability and economic prosperity.

"On this day, we express our gratitude for carving out a separate homeland for the Muslims of

the sub-continent where we are free to realize our dreams as envisioned by the Quaid. Due to his untiring efforts, we were blessed with a country where we can live and breathe as free men and can develop it according to our own wishes and culture and uphold the principles of Islamic social justice", he said.

In his message, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on the nation to take guidance from the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and follow his principles to ensure the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

He emphasized that the Pakistani nation today needed to follow Quaid's thoughts and principles, adding that in Quaid's Pakistan, nobody would have superiority on the basis of language, class, religion, or numerical strength.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a lawyer and politician who served as leader of the All-India Muslim League from 1913 until Pakistan's independence on August 14, 1947, and then as Pakistan's first governor-general until his death on September 11, 1948.

He was a true and upright leader whose devotion and committed efforts resulted in the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-continent.

He, with his leadership qualities and his vision, changed the map of the world. The new generation should make Quaid-e-Azam their role model and follow his principles.

## Martyred place of Benazir Bhutto

RAWALPINDI: Sanitary worker busy in cleaning place of martyred former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto ahead of death anniversary ceremony to be held on 27th December at Liaquat Bagh, in the city.



Photo: Online

## PIDE unveils crucial charter of economy

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), being the nation's premier think-tank, amid continuous calls for the Charter of Economy by different segments of the society as well as political leadership, has presented its "Charter of Economy."

The country's economic indicators over the course of its entire history have fluctuated widely without a clear and sustainable growth trajectory. Despite experiencing extreme economic and political experimentation, the country fails to get on the road to development. All thanks to the myopic approach.

This was stated by the former Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Renowned Economist, and Vice Chancellor of

PIDE, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque while talking to a group of Senior Journalists here in Islamabad.

He said that the focus, thus, has to be long-term, as short-term quick fixes have not worked, and it must start from somewhere. The only way out of the economic turmoil that Pakistan has been stuck in has to be sustained and accelerated growth. How to achieve it? Not without a complete reset of the fundamentals of governance systems and markets.

"In this context, a political consensus in Pakistan is critical because implementing any new rules of the game in letter and spirit seems highly unlikely without a broad-based political consensus. First and foremost, the pre-requisite must be policy consistency for at least the next 15 years. Once there is a political

consensus, there should be no off-tracking from the set direction, whatever the case may be" VC PIDE added.

According to the Press Release issued from the PIDE office, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque further said that through this document, PIDE brings to the spotlight the real issues that matter, hitting right at the core, in an attempt to set the fundamentals right. The Charter has been divided into six broad themes that include: Governance for the 21st Century, Sludge and Deregulation, Economic Policy Focus, Developing Markets, 3Ts (Trade, Tariff, and Taxation) and Modernization.

He said that next theme is about developing markets. The Charter focuses on three key markets: energy, agriculture and real state. The basic argu-

ment is to reduce the government footprint, modernize the processes and let the markets evolve and function on their own.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque added that then comes 3Ts. Taxation, Tariffs and Trade. Firstly, make taxation simple and progressive, while universal income tax treatment should be followed. Secondly, tariff lines must be rationalized and reduced. A clear perspective is required regarding the extent of openness, and broader guidelines for policy directives must be present.

Thirdly, a 15-year Export Policy-owned and monitored by an "Export Cell" at the Independent Planning Commission should be initiated. Having said that, the policy should be targeted to enhance competitiveness rather than spoon-feeding.



ISLAMABAD: Regional Directorate (RD) Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) North Commander, Brig Ammar Ali, Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz and others cutting the cake during Christmas celebration ceremony after the Christmas prayer at Fatima Church, in Federal Capital. Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Reduction in business hours will hit Gov in collecting revenues: RCCI

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has asked the Government to review its decision of reducing business hours. The government will lose billions of rupees in terms of sales tax, due to reduced business hours. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq in a statement said that stakeholders should be consulted before making the announcement and added that the early closure of businesses, especially hotel restaurants or food service will add more suffering to the masses.

He said that it is appreciable that the Government is concerned about saving energy, which is a good initiative, but the government's revenue of electricity bills may decrease due to reduction in power consumption during peak hours.

He demanded that the government should focus on finding an amicable solution to this problem by holding talks with all the stakeholders and avoid imposing unilateral decisions.

Reduced business hours will further stagnate the economy and reduce revenues, he added. The business community is aware of the current economic situation, however, it is necessary to formulate policies in consultation with stakeholders, he remarked.

The decision to close the shops early to save electricity was also taken in the previous periods, however, it has not yielded any significant benefit or results, rather the officials of the district administration come down on harassment, he cautioned.

RCCI president Saqib Rafiq suggested that working hours should be fixed by consensus, applicable to all types of markets and shopping malls in the federal capital and all provinces.

## Authorities devising strategy to enhance storage capacity of Rawal Dam

City Reporter



RAWALPINDI: The authorities concerned of the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and Small Dam Organization (SDO) are devising a strategy to enhance the storage capacity of Rawal Dam.

According to a WASA spokesman, Chairman, Rawalpindi Development Authority and WASA Rawalpindi Tariq Mehmood Murtaza chairing a meeting had formed a committee to give recommendations to increase the storage capacity of Rawal Dam.

He informed that Managing Director, WASA Muhammad Tanveer, Chief Engineer Potohar Irrigation Department Naem Ashraf, Project Director Small Dams Maher Manzoor, Deputy Managing Director, WASA Muhammad Saleem Ashraf and others attended the meeting.

It was agreed that solid steps should be taken to increase the capacity of Rawal Dam to meet the increasing water demand of the city.

The participants discussed various proposals to increase the existing capacity of the dam including desalination which would help enhancing the water storage capacity of the dam.

The project would help provide an additional 50 to 60 million gallons of water per day.

The spokesman informed that a technical committee consisting of officers from the Irrigation Department and WASA was formed to prepare the TORs of the project.

The Committee would submit its report to the Chairman within one week and a plan would be submitted to the government for final approval, he added.

## PAC organized photo exhibition to mark Quaid-e-Azam Birthday

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: On the occasion of the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a photo exhibition titled 'Quaid-e-Azam Kay Shab o Rooz' was organized in Punjab Arts Council. Member of the National Assembly Amir Mahmood Kayani was the chief guest of the exhibition. Addressing the participants of the exhibition, Chief Guest Amir Mahmood Kayani said that Quaid-e-Azam fought for the Muslims on the basis of two-nation theory.

Under the leadership of the father of the nation, Pakistan emerged as an independent state in 20th century. By following the teachings of Quaid-e-Azam, the nation can overcome the problems and difficulties of the present day. The reason for our downfall is that we forgot the edicts of Quaid-



e-Azam. Currently, Pakistan is facing uncertainty. To solve it, we need to

follow the words of Quaid-e-Azam, he added. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that we are on the path of development in the field of literature and culture as per the vision of Quaid-e-Azam. We have to unite and reiterate our determination to stick to the teachings of Quaid-e-Azam.

He said that in order to achieve progress, the principles of unity, faith and discipline of the leader must be followed. Portraits of Quaid-e-Azam and rare photographs of his life long journey were put on display in the exhibition, a large number of people liked these photographs. The new generation was enlightened about the life of the father of the nation, the struggle done in the journey of freedom through the exhibition. At the end of the ceremony, the birthday cake of Quaid-e-Azam was also cut. A large number of citizens participated in the photo exhibition.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
 (mszk786@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
**Islamabad Office:** Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.  
**Karachi office:** Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.  
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.  
**Lahore Office:** 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.  
**Email:** spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
**Whatsapp:** 0346-5008408

# Saudi Arabia in new era of tolerance and openness

**Rawan Radwan**

Just a few short years ago, Christmas was a low-key affair in Saudi Arabia, celebrated by expatriates behind closed doors. Nowadays, thanks to an environment and culture of religious tolerance, the festive period is marked openly and enjoyed by expatriates and citizens alike.

In one of Jeddah's busiest neighborhoods, Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" wafts from a local bakery, where patrons snack on snowflake-shaped sugar cookies and gingerbread men, and sip hot chocolate topped with whipped cream.

People walk past Christmas decorations displayed for sale at a gift shop in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh on Dec. 7, 2020. (AFP)

Less than a decade ago, scenes like these were unlikely to be found anywhere in Saudi Arabia, a country where public celebration of Christmas was unthinkable. Now its symbols, songs and traditions have been absorbed into the commercial and social life of Saudi cities.

To be sure, non-Islamic reli-

gious occasions such as Christmas were observed in Saudi Arabia but largely in secret or behind the high walls of compounds occupied only by expats and operated by private firms.

Expats living in Saudi Arabia choose Christmas decorations at a gift shop in the capital Riyadh on Dec. 7, 2020. (AFP)

A 1971 article, titled "Christmas in Dhahran," published in the Texas-based Saudi Aramco magazine, told the story of how the holiday was celebrated in the "heart of the Muslim Middle East," with one big difference — they used real camels for their Christmas pageants.

The article notes how the oil worker compounds of Dhahran were once referred to in the US press as "a typical southern California suburb, transplanted 8,500 miles east of New York."

It went on to describe how, in 1970, a Christmas pageant was held at the local softball field and "drew an audience of 2,000 persons, most wrapped in blankets against the desert chill."

In 2016, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled Saudi Vision 2030. With it came a raft of reforms that would unlock the Kingdom's potential and create an

ambitious, robust, and vibrant society with a diversified economy, prioritizing quality of life.

Retired Aramco staff recall Christmas festivities in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. (Supplied)

Over the past six years, Vision 2030 has created a culture of tolerance and openness. The Kingdom's religious institutions are being restructured and its system of government, based on the teachings of the Qur'an, is being carefully re-examined.

The crown prince is charting a new and more modern course for the country, vowing to return to a "moderate Islam." Saudi Arabia is "a tolerant country with Islam as its constitution and moderation as its method," he said in an interview last year.

"We are simply reverting to what we followed — a moderate Islam open to the world and all religions."

At no other time is this unprecedented transformation in Saudi Arabia more obvious, perhaps, than at Christmas.

Today, cafes, restaurants, party supply stores and malls across the Kingdom are decked out with twinkling lights and decorations. Shoppers can

find trees, reindeer headbands, Santa hats, colorful baubles of various shapes and sizes, Christmas-themed treats and gift wrap.

Retired Aramco staff recall Christmas festivities in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. (Supplied)

Christmas is not the only holiday being openly embraced. The symbols and paraphernalia of Valentine's Day and New Year's Eve are also now widely available, again in a significant break with the past.

The growing acceptance of Christmas in the Kingdom has been a welcome development for the hospitality industry. Several five-star hotels and private catering companies now offer special Christmas dinners. Sometimes even Santa Claus makes an appearance.

Many embassies and consulates arrange Christmas parties for their staff and hold feasts of their respective nations' favorite foods.

Speaking openly about Christmas remains uncomfortable for many in the Kingdom, wary of past restrictions. Some expats and visitors, aware of religious sensitivities, still believe it is best to be discreet.

Santa used to come by heli-

copter from Dhahran, and then ride a camel down Surf Avenue with the entire camp lining the street. Dhahran was a melting pot of different cultures and religions. (Supplied)

Nevertheless, although Christmas is not an Islamic tradition, many Muslims believe it is a time to share the joy of those who love to gather with friends, family, and neighbors.

"As Muslims, we understand that the holidays are not part of our religion, but because we are a nation with many nationalities, we celebrate our holidays with everyone and we celebrate theirs," one Saudi woman told Arab News.

Another Saudi said: "It's all about the gift of giving. It's a common message, and doesn't the Bible say 'love thy neighbor?' It's the same in Islam. It's a point of connection between faiths as Islam stresses to respect our neighbors and love them like family."

"It's a common religious value shared by people of all religions. And Christmas is colorful. It's fun, and celebrating it here (in Saudi Arabia) with Muslims and Christians alike is a sign of both piety and religious tolerance."

## China-Pakistan youth community distributes relief supplies among people of GB

The China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community paid a three-day visit to the Gilgit-Baltistan region and distributed 1,700 packages of food, tarpaulins, quilts, blankets and other supplies among the local people.

Following the recent floods, a significant number of GB people are living in tents and makeshift wooden houses as their homes have been devastated by the deluge.

Standing by the people of GB, the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community distributed the second batch of relief supplies to Gilgit, supported by the Tencent Charitable Foundation and the China Foundation for Rural Development, CEN reported.

Relief supplies were distributed in the areas of Gilgit, Ghizer, Khunjerab, Hunza, Nagar and other areas.

Accompanied by officials from the local governments and chambers of commerce, the community drove for nearly four hours to the Ghizer district, to distribute anti-disaster and cold-weather supplies to 800 families.

Qurban Ali, Chairman of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital Office, lauded the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community for its long-term assistance to Pakistan.

The community was warmly welcomed and received at the office of the GB Disaster Management Authority (GB-DMA). Zaheer Uddin Babar, Deputy Director of the Authority, briefed the community on the situation in Gilgit and the difficulties faced by the affected people. He also revealed the measures taken by the Gilgit government to rehabilitate the flood victims.

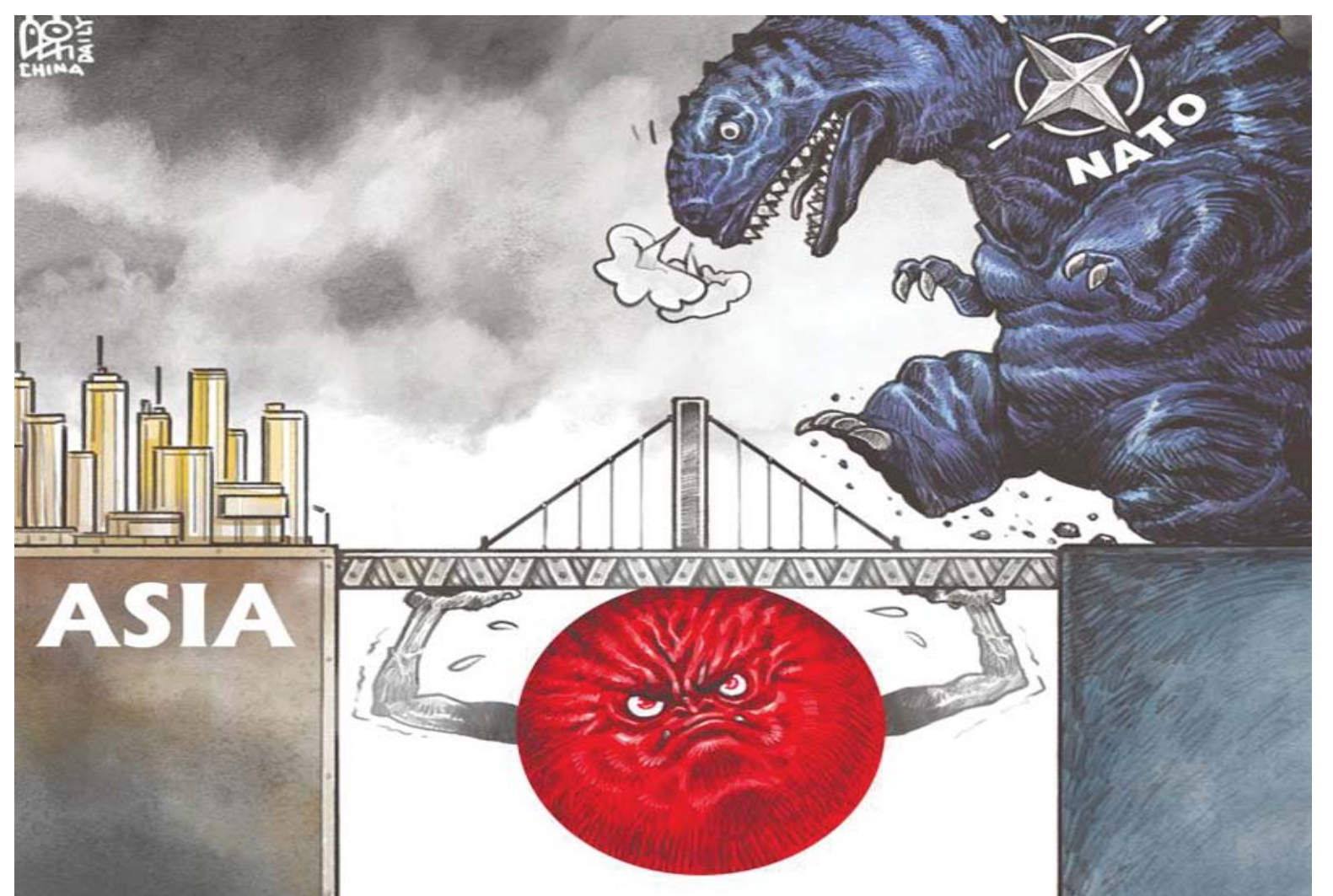
He hoped that the community could cooperate with more public welfare organizations to help the affected Pakistanis in their long-term recovery.

In Nagar district, where a large number of houses and buildings were destroyed by the floods, the community distributed materials to 400 affected families. Relief supplies were also provided to 500 affected families in Hunza, Khunjerab.

Irshad Sadan, Vice President of the Nagar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expressed his gratitude to the community for the timely help extended by China to the people of Gilgit.

"This event exhibits a strong brotherly friendship between China and Pakistan. I hope the baton of love from China will help them rebuild their homeland as soon as possible.

I also hope that this love can cascade into the sea of charity and strengthen the deep friendship between China and Pakistan," concluded Ma Bin, the focal person of the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community.



## Women in science can change world

**Beate Trankmann and Smriti Aryal**

From climate change to the energy crisis to COVID-19, the answers to our most universal challenges lie in science. Yet in seeking them, we still exclude the brainpower of half the world: women and girls.

Just 28 percent of engineering graduates, one-third of scientific researchers worldwide and three percent of Nobel laureates are women. At the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, only seven percent of academics are women. Such imbalances not only risk replicating gender biases and inequalities in new technologies, but also lead to expertise and talent shortages across science, technology, engineering and mathematics globally that society can ill afford. For a future that truly includes everyone, women and girls must be able to participate in science fully and equally.

When they do, the rewards are high. Take Tu Youyou, who became the first Chinese Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine in 2015, decades after discovering the malaria treatment, artemisinin. "Every scientist dreams of doing something that can help the world," she said. When more women become scientists, more people are able to do so.

This is clear in China, where over half of all patent applicants are now women. Women are also building more than half the country's internet companies, like Zhou Qunfei, a migrant worker who later founded touchscreen manufacturer, Lens Technology, becoming one of the wealthiest women in tech.

While structural changes take time, special measures for women offer more immediate solutions. For example, given that raising children requires extended leave—a responsibility falling disproportionately on women—allow-

ing female researchers longer to secure funding can help. In 2011, the National Natural Science Foundation of China lifted its grant age limit for women from 35 to 40, boosting the percentage of women winning grants from a major fund for young scientists from 33 to 43 percent in one year. Along with the Ministry of Science and Technology, NSFC also raised the number of female scientists on review panels and recommended female applicants be prioritized, when all else was equal. Building on past efforts, in 2021, MoST, along with the All-China Women's Federation and 11 other departments, also launched Measures on Supporting Female Talents in Playing a more Prominent Role in Science and Technology, facilitating nationwide action.

Third, unpaid care and domestic work has forced women to quit or slow their careers. Among married women scientists surveyed by Nature, 30 percent reported doing most household, versus only six percent of men. The pandemic has deepened this divide. Comparative data for 2019 and 2020 suggests women scientists as primary caregivers for children experienced a 17 percent research time decline. Female academics are posting fewer preprints and starting fewer projects than male peers. Instead of free riding on women's unpaid work, society should collectively assume the costs, by recasting public spending on care as a social investment. Care and domestic work deserves recognition. It must also be redistributed between men and women.

Increased paternity leave is one way to encourage this. For example, the proportion of men taking paternity leave increased from 4 percent to 39 percent when Norway introduced 4-weeks of full payment paternity leave in 1993 and further increased to 89 percent as Norway gradually extended paternity leave entitlements to now 15 weeks. In China, there are no regulations or legislation at the central level regarding paternity leave, and while in some provinces, men are entitled to as many

as 30 days of paternity leave, more will need to be done to rebalance the burden of care.

Last, outstanding women scientists must be promoted as role models and mentor younger women. Research reveals that women without mentors report the lowest career optimism. Women and girls should be supported early on to take interest in science and be guided in their careers. This can also build networks and connections—social capital crucial to their career advancement.

Equality in STEM would enable faster scientific advances and a more inclusive world. It also makes business sense: organizations with gender-diverse executive boards outperform financially by 25 percent, according to McKinsey. Achieving equality not only benefits everyone, but also depends on everyone—parents, spouses, institutions, employers and universities. That is why UNDP, UN Women and the entire UN system partner with all involved to elevate women in STEM. History shows the incredible leaps humanity makes when women step forward in science—from Marie Curie, to Tu Youyou. Such potential likely exists in countless women and girls today, if they find the encouragement, resources and enabling environment to go forward. Unlocking this is about more than realizing gender equality; it is also about what equality can realize for us all.

With our future hanging by a thread, we need every science heroine we can get. The time to champion them is now.

*Beate Trankmann is UNDP resident representative in China, and Smriti Aryal is UN Women country representative in China. The opinions expressed here are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of China Daily and China Daily website. If you have a specific expertise, or would like to share your thought about our stories, then send us your writings at [opinion@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:opinion@chinadaily.com.cn), and comment at [chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:chinadaily.com.cn).*

## Afghan women denounce Taliban's ban on women from working for NGOs

Afghan women spoke out against the latest severe blow to their rights under the Taliban administration on Sunday, after authorities ordered all non-governmental organizations to stop female employees from working.

The order was issued by Economy Minister Qari Din Mohammed Hanif on Saturday evening. Any local or foreign organization found not complying would have their operating license revoked in Afghanistan, according to the edict.

The move comes less than a week since the Taliban banned women from attending universities in Afghanistan, following a series of restrictions authorities have imposed on women since the group took control of the country last year.

The latest restriction drew widespread condemnation from international organizations and foreign governments. This includes the EU — a major funder of aid organizations working in Afghanistan — which said they are assessing the impact it will have on aid from the bloc and described the ban as "a clear breach of humanitarian principles."

Afghan women affected by the ban have denounced the move they say will affect the livelihoods of many families across the nation, as they urged action from the international community.

"I'm personally so depressed as I'm the only breadwinner for my family," Ramzia Sayedi, who works at a foreign NGO in Kabul, told Arab News.

Sayedi said she was turned away by her office on Sunday morning.

"We were told to leave the office, and we were told that we can't work here anymore until the next order, because if anyone violated the order,

she would be beaten and taken to prison."

Sakina Hussaini, a women's rights activist and employee of a foreign organization in the capital, said the Taliban order was "inhumane."

"I'm the sole breadwinner of my family and many other women like me make a living for their families," Hussaini told Arab News.

"This decision of the Taliban is inhumane and against the religion," she added. "This will have consequences, so I urge the international community to address this problem."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the ban "will disrupt vital and life-saving assistance to millions," highlighting that women are central to humanitarian operations globally.

Some women warned that Afghanistan would further deteriorate if the Taliban stopped women from going to work and getting an education.

"Instead of creating opportunities for work, the Taliban are removing current employment opportunities. It's a big crisis. Women must be allowed to go to work," Shabana Niaza, who works at a financial consultancy NGO, told Arab News.

She called on the Taliban administration to "give women their rights, not to take away their rights."

Arzo Yoya, who works with projects under the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said women must be allowed to contribute to society.

"If we do not work, we will be more economically disadvantaged. Our economic problems will increase even more," Yoya told Arab News. "It will be a big disaster if women stay at home, don't study, don't work, don't go to university."

"We want our rights and to raise our voices. No country has progressed without the presence of women."



# Pakistan Trade House in Kyrgyzstan to help promote bilateral trade: envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuaev on Sunday underlined the importance of the opening of the Pakistan Trade House in Kyrgyzstan for promoting Pakistani products besides attracting investors and buyers in the market and further moving to the Eurasian economic union.

Speaking at a reception hosted in Lahore in his honour by Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis who is also Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Vice President Gold Ring Economic Forum, a thank-thank, Ulanbek said more Kyrgyzstan Trade Houses will be established in other major cities of Pakistan for direct interaction of business community of either country to promote bilateral trade and tap huge potentials through regional



connectivity which he added is need of the hour in the prevailing global scenario.

He called upon the chambers of commerce and industry to come

forward and encash the existing market of Kyrgyzstan and adjacent states of the region.

He said frequent exchange of visits of businesses community will pave way for the strengthening of bilateral trade in diversified sectors, according to a press release issued here.

He said one of the major obstacles to the development of trade-economic coordination between both countries and regions is difficult logistics routes which he added will be overcome after the successful establishment of a railway link through Afghanistan.

He said he feels pleasure to announce that his government has started working on for the execution of this multinational gigantic project of regional importance.

Ulanbek Totuaev said newly established Kyrgyzstan Trade House and his embassy is all the time available to assist the Pak traders for business visit to his

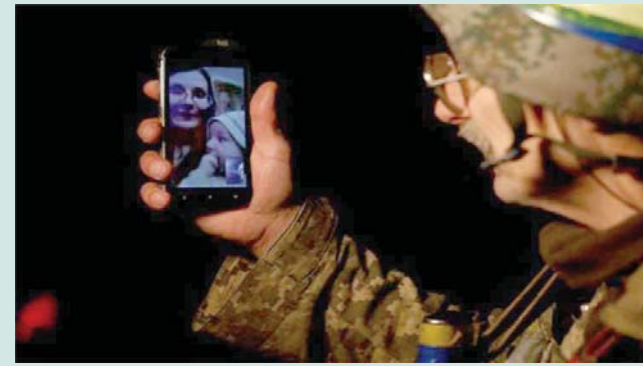
country, a land with ample opportunities for investment.

He said Meher Kashif Younis is a dynamic trader of Pakistan and will exercise his sphere of influence for promoting bilateral trade between the two Muslim brotherly countries in the day to come.

President Kyrgyzstan Trade House Dr Shahid Hassan was also prominent among others.

Briefly speaking on the occasion the host Meher Kashif Younis said the in prevailing scenario, the philosophy of globalization is getting phased out and sharply shrinking to regional connectivity. Hence we should now focus on trade and economic cooperation with the regional blocs especially rich central Asian states. He said both countries from the same region are deeply interconnected from historical, cultural and religious perspectives.

## Ukrainian soldier reunites with family over Christmas call from east



Spokesman Report

KHARKIV: Leonid Onyshchenko, a gruff-voiced 63-year-old Ukrainian soldier with a thick moustache, has spent many a Christmas away from his family, but hearing his little grandson Petro's voice over the phone from far away is as hard as ever.

Onyshchenko joined the territorial defence force after Moscow's February invasion, and has volunteered supporting Ukraine's army in the fight against Russian-backed separatists in the country's east since 2014.

While he is stationed in the Donetsk region which has seen some of the heaviest battles, his daughter Maryna and her husband Vitalii were celebrating Christmas at home in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second biggest city, frequently under Russian attack.

In the past, Ukrainian Christians mostly celebrated Christmas in early January. This year the holiday is celebrated by many on December 25, as Ukraine's main Orthodox Church has broken with Moscow and turned its face towards the West.

War has scattered the family. Maryna's two older daughters and her mother fled to the western city of Lviv. As the family gathers around the table, Maryna calls her father to wish him merry Christmas. Little Petro takes the phone.

"I just want to tell you that Christmas is coming and Santa Claus is coming. I was a good boy," the boy says.

Speaking is a comfort, says Onyshchenko, known among fellow soldiers under the nom-de-guerre 'Deer'.

"On one hand, we will see and hear each other. But on the other hand, we are hundreds kilometers apart. I cannot compare it with anything. But nevertheless, we are one big family."

## UK PM slammed for asking homeless man if he 'works in business'

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faced criticism on Saturday for seeming out of touch with ordinary people when he asked a homeless man at a charity whether he "worked in business" and wanted to get into the finance industry.

Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs banker and one of Britain's wealthiest people, was serving breakfast at a homeless shelter in London on Friday when he began chatting with a man who identified himself as Dean.

"Do you work in a business?" the prime minister asks the man at one point during the conversation as he hands him a plate of sausages, toast and eggs.

"No, I'm homeless. I'm a homeless person," the man replies.

Angela Rayner, deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, posted a clip of the exchange on Twitter, calling it "excruciating." In contrast, another Labour lawmaker, Bill Esterson, called Sunak "out of touch".

His ascent to the British premiership in October made Sunak the richest occupant of Number 10 Downing Street when the country struggled with a cost-of-living crisis.

The prime minister this week made surprise phone calls to British diplomats and military personnel around the world to give them Christmas wishes, his office said on Friday.

His awkward exchange with the homeless man begins when the man asks Sunak if he's "sorting the economy out".

When the homeless man says he is interested in business and finance, Sunak replies that he used to work in finance, too, before asking: "Is that something you would like to get into?"

"Yeah, I wouldn't mind," says Dean. "But, I don't know, I'd like to get through Christmas first."

## Russia ready to negotiate over Ukraine, says Putin

MOSCOW: Russia is ready to negotiate with all parties involved in the war in Ukraine but Kyiv and its Western backers have refused to engage in talks, President Vladimir Putin said in an interview aired on Sunday.

Russia's Feb 24 invasion of Ukraine has triggered the most deadly conflict in Europe since World War Two and the biggest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

There is, thus far, little end in sight to the war.

The Kremlin says it will fight until all its aims are achieved while Kyiv says it will not rest until every Russian soldier is ejected from all of its territory, including Crimea which Russia annexed in 2014.

"We are ready to negotiate with everyone involved about acceptable solutions, but that is up to them — we are not the ones refusing to negotiate, they are," Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in the interview.

CIA Director William Burns said in an interview published this month that while most conflicts end in negotiation, the CIA's assessment was that Russia was not yet serious about a real negotiation to end the war.

An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Putin needed to return to reality and acknowledge that it was Russia which did not want any negotiations.

# Nepal's 'fierce' ex-guerrilla chief becomes new prime minister

News Desk

KATHMANDU: A former Maoist guerrilla who led a decade-long insurgency against Nepal's Hindu monarchy was on Sunday appointed prime minister for a third time, in alliance with the main opposition after last month's election returned a hung parliament.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who still goes by his nom de guerre Prachanda—meaning "terrible" or "fierce"—will head the new government for the first half of the five-year term with the support of the opposition Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) party and some other smaller groups, party officials said.

"He has been appointed and commands the support of a big majority of parliament," Tika Dhakal, an aide to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari told Reuters.

Prachanda, who replaces Sher Bahadur Deuba of



the Nepali Congress party, will step down in 2023, making way for the UML to take over the office, local media reported.

"This is the understanding. Remaining work of distribution of key other posts and ministries is still to be worked out," Dev Gurung, the general secretary of Prachanda's Maoist Centre party told Reuters after a meeting of the new coalition.

The new coalition comes to power hours after

Prachanda, 68, surprisingly walked out of the ruling alliance led by Deuba of the Nepali Congress party. Deuba refused to back Prachanda for the prime minister's job.

Deuba and Prachanda had both campaigned in the November election pledging to keep the old alliance intact for several years.

Prachanda's Maoist Centre party won 32 seats in the 275-member House of Representatives. The UML has 78 seats, and the rest,

required for the 138-majority, will be controlled by smaller groups.

The Nepali Congress party will be the main opposition controlling 89 seats.

Analysts said Prachanda was unlikely to provide the country with stability due to many coalition partners. He also faces serious economic challenges.

Inflation is more than 8%, the highest in six years. Nepal, tucked between China and India, also faces dwindling foreign exchange reserves, with an increasing dependence on imports of basic goods.

"It is unlikely for the economy to grow as political instability will spook investment and businesses," former central bank governor Deependra Bahadur Kshetri told Reuters.

Nepal has seen 10 government changes since 2008 when the 239-year-old monarchy was abolished.

# China to increase investment in Pak power sector: Chinese Envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese Government would further increase investment in the power sector of Pakistan, said

Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong while addressing the Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) ceremony held here. The National Electric Power Regulation Authority (NEPRA) has celebrated the outstanding achievements of NEPRA's licensees in Occupational HSE.

Chairman NEPRA, Tauseef H. Farooqi chaired the ceremony while the Chinese ambassador graced the event as Chief Guest. The Ambassador appreciated NEPRA's efforts of organizing an amazing ceremony and shedding light on various CPEC energy projects initiated by the Chinese Government in Pakistan visa-vis HSE and reiterated his government's resolve to help Pakistan's Power



Sector. "The Chinese Government would further increase investment in the power sector, especially in renewable energy," Mr. Rong added. Chairman NEPRA,

remarked that HSE issues are at the forefront of his priorities and therefore each licensee shall strive hard to improve its performance in this area. He also elaborated that NEPRA through its PwS

drive is making tremendous headways by developing safety protocols and conducting awareness sessions which have resulted in a decrease in accidents and electrocutions.

Ambassador Nong Rong and Chairman NEPRA Tauseef H. Farooqi presented awards to the top performing organizations. UCH & UCH-II Power (Pvt.) Limited was recognized as the top performer and presented Gold Award, followed by Foundation Power Company (Daharki) Limited with the Silver whereas the Bronze award was shared by Karachi Nuclear Power Generating Stations, M/s Chashma

Nuclear Power Generating Stations, and Nishat Power Limited. Similarly, NEPRA also recognized eighteen individuals from power companies for their outstanding safety performance in the field.

# Big aid agencies suspend Afghanistan efforts after Taliban bar on women staff

News Desk

KABUL: Three big international aid agencies including Save the Children said on Sunday they were suspending their humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan in response to the Taliban-run administration's order to stop women employees from working.

The administration on Saturday ordered all local and foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to send female staff home until further notice because some had not adhered to the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic dresscode for women—a move condemned globally.



Three NGOs—Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE International—said in a joint statement that they were suspending their programmes as they awaited clarity on the administration's order.

"We cannot effectively

reach children, women and men in desperate need in Afghanistan without our female staff," the statement said, adding that, without women driving the effort, they would not have reached millions of Afghans in need since August last year.

The suspension of some aid programmes that millions of Afghans access comes at a time when more than half the population relies on humanitarian aid, according to aid agencies, and during the mountainous nation's coldest season.

The joint statement also highlighted the effect of the ban on female staff on thousands of jobs in the midst of an enormous economic crisis.

Earlier, international aid agency AfghanAid said it was immediately suspending operations while it consulted with other organisations, and that other NGOs were taking similar actions.

# Iran's Guards arrest seven people linked to UK over protests

News Desk

DUBAI: Iran's Revolutionary Guards arrested seven people on Sunday, including dual nationals linked to the United Kingdom, over anti-government protests that have rocked the country, according to a statement published by state media.

"Seven main leaders of the recent protests related to the UK were detained by intelligence services of the IRGC (Revolutionary Guards) including dual nationals who were trying to leave the country," the statement read.

The unrest was triggered by the Sept. 16 death in detention of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian who was arrested for wearing "inappropriate attire" under Iran's strict Islamic dress code for women.



The protests, in which demonstrators from all walks of life have called for the fall of Iran's ruling theocracy, has posed one of the biggest challenges to the Shi'ite Muslim-ruled Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution.

The government has blamed the unrest on demonstrators bent on destruction of public property and says they are trained and armed by enemies including the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia.



**OGDCL opens Mashl-e-Elm School for out-of-school children in Attock**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: As a responsible corporate continuing with its mission to promote education in Pakistan, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has opened Mashl-e-Elm School for the out-of-school children of Chappri village in the Attock district of Punjab.

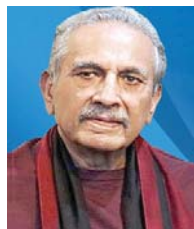
Pakistan's largest oil and gas exploration and production company, OGDCL, has launched the program for out-of-school children under its CSR Program in collaboration with Vision-21.

The Mashl-e-Elm School has been formally made functional, and a large number of students have been enrolled in the school in the first week of the enrollment drive.

Under the Mashl-e-Elm School program, quality education will be provided to children through a speed literacy program for primary, middle, and matric levels. The duration of the program will be four years, and there is a strong skill development angle as well. The initiative also include six months Skill Development Program for the students of the community.

**Black marketing and smuggling of dollars increasing**

**News Desk**



ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rashid Butt on Sunday said the concern expressed by opposition leaders over the deteriorating economy is nothing but crocodile tears.

The opposition would have started negotiations with the government to find a solution to the economic mess if they had any inclination for this, he added.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that improving the economy and giving relief to the people is not on the agenda of opposition leaders.

He said that the opposition is misleading the people and disturbing the government by showing a new drama every day, which is further affecting the economy.

The drama of dissolving the assemblies has failed and now a new issue is being sought to create problems.

He said that Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves are decreasing, and businesses are being affected by unnecessary trade restrictions.

Black marketing and smuggling of dollars is increasing as the smugglers are using land and air routes and actions against them are unsatisfactory.

As long as the difference between the official rate and the market rate of the dollar remains it will continue to be smuggled, the most profitable market of which is Afghanistan.

In the Afghan market a dollar can fetch as much as Rs20 profit which is enough to attract smugglers, he observed.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that due to the government's policy on the dollar, there has been a drastic reduction in remittances because Pakistanis living abroad are also using illegal means to send money.

Currently, goods worth five billion dollars are stuck at the port while LCs worth the same amount are awaiting a positive response from authorities.

**Weekly inflation slides down by 0.11 percent**

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.11 percent for combined consumption group during the week ended on December 22, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 217.39 points as compared to 217.64 points during the past week, according to PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 28.76 percent.

The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed 0.04 percent decrease and went down to 225.59 points from last week's 225.69 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption group from Rs 17,732-22,888 witnessed decrease of 0.01 percent whereas it slightly increased by 0.02 percent for consumption group from Rs 22,889-29,517 and witnessed no change for consumption group from Rs 29,518-44,175 and declined by 0.21 percent for consumption group above Rs 44,175.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 20 (39.22%) items increased, 14 (27.45%) items decreased and 17 (33.33%) items remained stable. APP

**Economic revival is no obligation of friendly countries**



**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh said saving the sinking economy of Pakistan is not an obligation for international institutions and friendly countries but the responsibility of our leaders.

Vague economic policies are resulting in nervousness among the investors which is damaging to the economy therefore Government should take a clear stance on important economic matters which should support the national interests, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said that country cannot borrow more unless the demands of lenders

are met and the government will have to take unpopular decisions to tackle the economic crisis.

He said that popular decisions and lavish expenditure for decades have made the country a slave and we have no other option but to follow the dictation of lenders and now the situation has worsened to an extent that the country has to borrow for its defense needs.

He noted that external debt stood at \$3.5 billion in 1970, which jumped to \$33 billion in 2004, and now it is over 130 billion dollars because of irresponsible spending.

Now Pakistan cannot pay debt and liabilities without taking new loans but there is a limit to it as many governments borrowed heavily for personal welfare and popularity

which has weakened the country economically and politically.

Now, our economy has lost the strength to withstand internal and external shocks while health, education, and development are being compromised, he observed.

He said that many countries borrowed to ensure development but Pakistan mostly borrowed to bridge the current account deficit but it never tried to reduce imports.

The US has lost interest in the war against terror in the region which has reduced the importance of Pakistan but our Government and masses have not learned to spend wisely.

Proper handling and reviving the economy is not the responsibility of the US or friendly countries but that of our leaders, he said.

**Zonergy Participated in 11th Edition of SOLAR PAKISTAN**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: - Zonergy Solar development Pakistan, Pakistan's Leading Solar solution provider, has participated in 11th Edition of SOLAR PAKISTAN along with the 4th edition of ELECTRICITY PAKISTAN-International Electricity Pakistan Exhibition organized by FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd in Karachi Expo Center. It is Pakistan's biggest and only dedicated solar energy exhibition - inaugurated by Chief Guest Mr. M. Kamran Khan Tessori - Governor Sindh in the presence of Mr. Abu Bakar Ahmed - Secretary Energy Government of Sindh, Mr. Saleem Khan Tanoli-CEO of FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. and other renowned industry names took an active part in this Exhibition.

The three-day mega exhibition received an overwhelming response, more than 100 companies participated and displayed a wide and exquisite range of technologies and solutions for the renewable energy, storage and power industry. SOLAR PAKISTAN and ELECTRICITY PAKISTAN exhibition will last till 26th December 2022 and is expected to attract more than 500,000 trade visitors, providing them an ideal opportunity to get acquainted with innovative and state-of-the-art technologies.

On this occasion, Mr. M. Kamran Khan Tessori stated that "FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. has taken a wonderful initiative by organizing the SOLAR PAKISTAN Exhibition, which will provide an opportunity for the renewable energy industry to showcase their state-of-the-art technology, equipment and services. He further added that exhibitions like SOLAR PAKISTAN have



played a pivotal role in strengthening our industries, providing business, and employment opportunities, and uplifting the economy of Pakistan. He concluded by saying that this is the right time for our country to go solar and reduce its reliance on the expensive source of electricity generation".

General Manager Pakistan Mr. Victor appreciated the E-Commerce for organizing Industry oriented Exhibition he further said "The exhibition played a vital role in bridging the gap between the end user and the industry. It's a good omen in the looming Import crisis the country is going through and provides an opportunity to give first-hand experience to end product users to experience the products. Zonergy is determined to offer viable solutions to end the Energy crisis in the country and always believes in providing exper-

ience-based products to its customers and welcomes client feedback to offer the best competitive solar solutions. We are willing to cooperate with the Government in working towards sustainable energy solutions by building Clean Energy complete ecosystem. We want to help the Pakistan Government in the extension of the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Power plant to its full 900MW capacity to bring down the Cost of Electricity and put an end to the looming energy crisis".

The exhibition is followed by a high-level conference to highlight the happenings, innovations and potential of the renewable energy industry. The conference had the presence of Mr. Tauseef H. Farooqi - Chairman NEPRA and was attended by both industry experts and academia, serving as a platform to bridge the gap between academia and industry.

**Jazz rejuvenates denizens of twin cities with SoulFest'22**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator and a part of the VEON Group, rejuvenates the denizens of twin cities by bringing back the SoulFest'22 to Islamabad this weekend.

After a two-year hiatus from all outdoor festivals due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jazz decided to make it back with a bang by relaunching the iconic SoulFest'22. The three-day music and food filled festival was held at Park View City in Islamabad, brought for the people through Jazz in collaboration with Active media.

Jazz Cash is the official digital payment partner for SoulFest'22, with all food stalls and ticket counters offering mobile payment solutions. As a special treat and to promote digital payments, Jazz Cash offers 40% cash back on all food items and tickets purchased via the JazzCash app. This encourages people to go all out and enjoy the vast variety of delectable food and music at the event.

ety of delectable food and music at the event.

In addition to the live music, special experience zones are set up for the Tamasha app, Bajao app, and GameNow to give people more avenues of enjoyment at the festival.

Speaking about this initiative, Head of Marketing at Jazz, Ali Fahd said, "Sharing magical moments with our customers is what drives us to be the leading digital operator of Pakistan. SoulFest'22 is the perfect setting for our youth to enjoy good music and food with friends and family."

"Active media is a staunch proponent of creating quality entertainment avenues in Pakistan, and SoulFest'22 is the perfect commemoration of our lives returning to normalcy post-COVID-19. Islamabad and Rawalpindi always bustle with lifestyle activities so it was fitting to play our part in bringing festivities back. I want to thank the people of twin cities for making this event a huge success," said Saad M Khan from Active media.

**Karim Aziz Malik congratulates Tariq Bilal Malik**



Gujrat: Prominent businessman, former president of Gujrat Chamber Tariq Bilal Malik was elected secretary of Gymkhana with an overwhelming majority on the occasion Former VP FPCCI and well-known Businessman Karim Aziz Malik , CEO,Barkat Rice Congratulate to Tariq Bilal Malik and present the flowers.

**Solar energy Exhibition inaugurated at Karachi Expo Centre**

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Pakistan's biggest and only dedicated solar energy exhibition - 11th Edition of SOLAR PAKISTAN along with 4th edition of ELECTRICITY PAKISTAN-International Electricity Pakistan Exhibition organized by FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. opened its doors on 24th December 2022 at Karachi Expo Centre.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Chief Guest Mr. M. Kamran Khan Tessori - Governor Sindh in the presence of Mr. Abu Bakar Ahmed - Secretary Energy Government of Sindh, Mr. Saleem Khan Tanoli-CEO of FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. and other renowned industry names.

On this occasion, Mr. M. Kamran Khan Tessori stated that "FAKT Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. has taken a wonderful initiative by organizing SOLAR PAKISTAN Exhi-



bitution, which will provide an opportunity for the renewable energy industry to showcase their state-of-the-art technology, equipment and services. He further added that exhibitions like SOLAR PAKISTAN have played a pivotal role in strengthening our industries, providing business, employment opportunities and uplifting the economy of Pakistan. He concluded by saying that this is the right time for our country to go solar and reduce its reliance on expensive source of electricity generation".

A high level conference also took place at the event, highlighting the happenings, innovations and potential of renewable energy industry. The conference had the presence of Mr. Tauseef H. Farooqi - Chairman NEPRA and was attended by both industry experts and academia, serving as a platform to bridge the gap between academia and industry.

The three day mega exhibition received an overwhelming response, more than 100 companies participated and displayed a wide and exquisite range of technologies and solutions for the renewable energy, storage and power industry.

**ICCI celebrates Christmas with Christian Community**

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a Cake Cutting ceremony to celebrate the Merry Christmas with the Christian community. Pastor Babar Waris, Pastor Petros Joseph, Ch. Ashraf Farzand Convenor ICCI Interfaith Committee, Jamil Khokhar, Maqbool Khokhar, Sharon Masih, Waqas Bhatti, Tariq Piyara, Victam Jan, Ch. Ishaq, Ch. Shaikat, Ch. Liaquat, Pervez Jazbi and a large number of people from the Christian community attended the event.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islam-

abad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the Christian community is playing an important role in the economic development of Pakistan, which is laudable. He said that Christians around the world are celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ who was a symbol of peace, brotherhood and respect for the entire humanity. He said that Jesus Christ not only healed the ailing humanity, he also preached the divine values of tolerance, love and compassion, which are kept in high esteem in Islam as well. He said that Pakistan needs adoption of these values to emerge as a strong country. He assured that ICCI would continue to play a role for promoting

the business interests of traders and industrialists of minority communities so that they could play a more effective role in the economic development of the country.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that all minorities including Christians enjoy equal rights in Pakistan and all should work hard for the better development of Pakistan. He wished Christian community a Merry Christmas.

Pastor Babar Waris read the message of Jesus Christ, which was the message of conciliation, love and forgiveness. He lauded ICCI for organizing the Christmas cere-



mony and added that such events promoted inter-faith harmony & unity in the country.

Ch. Ashraf Farzand Convenor ICCI Interfaith Harmony Committee and Pastor Petros Joseph thanked ICCI for organiz-

ing the Merry Christmas ceremony for Christian community. They said that Christmas was an occasion to promote love and peace. They assured of their cooperation to ICCI in initiatives focused on promoting the interests of minorities.



# 4th Afeef Beach View Sindh Ranking Tennis Championships commences

## Sports Report

KARACHI: The 4th Afeef Beach View Sindh Ranking Tennis Championships commenced at DA Beach View Club Karachi.

Week long Championship is being sponsored by Afeef Group and organizers have received 100 plus entries in various events, Shehzer Ali, promising boy from Karachi Club impressed the audience with his fine base line game when he eliminated Kashif Zahir in two straight sets, in the first Round of Under 17 Singles and Faiz Ilyas beat Rohan Das in three sets with 0-4, 4-0, 4-1 score in the first round of Under 13 Singles.

In Wheelchair Tennis Singles, six male and XT two female players took part, Muhammad Ayub of PTCL emerged victorious in Final beating Imran Siddiqui with 6-4 score.

## Results Day One:

### Men's Singles:

Farhan Altaf beat Sheeraz Khan 6-1, 6-0  
Under 17 Singles 1st Round:  
Kashan Tariq beat Jagdesh Manjo by 6-1, 6-0.  
Bilal Ikram beat Saqlain Moosa by 6-0, 6-0.  
Shehzer Ali beat Kashif Zahir by 6-4, 6-3  
Under 13 Singles 1st Round:  
Ruhab Faisal beat Aahil Imran by 4-0, 4-1,



Faiz Ilyas beat Rohan Das by 0-4, 4-0, 4-1.  
Under 11 Singles 1st Round:  
Aidh Imran beat Sufyan Shafi by 4-0, 4-1,

Meer Abbas Bhagat beat Huzaifa Zahid by 4-0, 4-0.  
Wheelchair Tennis Final  
Muhammad Ayub beat Imran Siddiqui by 6-4.

## Our job is to perform on ground' Babar hopes comeback in NZ Tests

## Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has dispelled the impression that he is under any sort of pressure after the recent changes in the Pakistan Cricket Board's top hierarchy, saying his sole focus is on the field rather than the developments happening outside.

"A lot has been changed in the last three to four days, but as a professional, you've to face these things," he said in a scheduled pre-match press talk on Sunday.

"Our job is to put our efforts in the field" he added. "These are off-field developments while our sole focus is on the ground"

With Pakistan set to engage in a two-match Test series against New Zealand commencing tomorrow, Babar said the final XI for the opening Test has not been finalized.

"The decision on the final XI will be made after consultation with the selectors," he told.

Pakistan captain informed that he was taken on board on the last-minute changes made in the Test squad, saying he had a discussion with the newly-appointed interim chief selector Shahid Afridi about the selection of the new players.



On Saturday, the interim selection committee Shahid Afridi added Mir Hamza, Sajid Khan and Shahnawaz Dahani to the Pakistan Test squad for the Test series against New Zealand.

While conceding that his team did not perform up to the mark in the recently-concluded Test series against England

that ended in a disappointing 3-0 home series whitewash, Babar hoped that his team would make a comeback in the upcoming home assignment.

"I accept that we didn't play good cricket against England, but we are sure to make a comeback in this series."

"We played our best eleven against England but obviously when the results do not come in your favour, you face such type of criticism," he added.

## 'French didn't mention this'—referee hits back in criticism over Argentina goal

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The World Cup final ended nearly a week ago but the drama around it continued as the match referee showed a photo on his phone during a news conference to respond to claims that Lionel Messi's extra-time goal should not have stood.

Argentina won the final in Lusail, Qatar 4-2 on penalties after the match ended 3-3 following 120 minutes of action, with Messi scoring twice and Kylian Mbappe bagging a hat-trick for France.

Szymon Marciniak, the first referee from Poland to officiate a World Cup final, faced criticism from French media that he should have chalked off Messi's extra-time goal because two Argentina substitutes appeared to enter the pitch before the ball went into the net.

French newspaper L'Equipe mentioned the International Football Association Board's Law 3, paragraph 9, which includes that the referee must disallow the goal if a substituted player was on the field of play when the goal was scored.

## Vieira slams Martinez's 'stupid' World Cup celebrations

## News Desk

LONDON: Crystal Palace manager Patrick Vieira believes Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez's "stupid" celebrations have tarnished Argentina's World Cup final win.

Martinez was a key figure in Argentina's victory over France.

He made a fine save to deny Randal Kolo Muani in extra-time and then denied Kingsley Coman in the shoot-out in Qatar as Argentina won a thrilling final.

But the keeper was then seen making a crude gesture after winning the golden glove trophy for the best goalkeeper



at the tournament.

Then, during Argentina's victory parade in Buenos Aires, he was seen holding a baby doll with his face covered by a photograph of France star striker

Kylian Mbappe, who scored a hat-trick in the final but still finished on the losing side.

Vieira, a World Cup winner with France in 1998, was unimpressed by Martinez's antics.

"Some of the pictures I saw from the Argentinian goalkeeper, I think, take away a little bit what Argentina achieved at the World Cup," said Vieira at a pre-match press conference ahead of Palace's Premier League match against London rivals Fulham.

"I don't think they really needed that."

"You can't control sometimes people's emotional decisions. But that was a stupid decision, I think, from Martinez to do that," he added.

Martinez will return to Birmingham next week, with Villa manager Unai Emery intending to talk to the 30-year-

old about his controversial behaviour.

"When you have big emotion, sometimes it is difficult to control it," Emery said.

"I will speak to him next week about some celebrations but I respect that he is now under the national team and when he will be with us, he is our responsibility then we can speak about it."

French sports minister Amelie Oudea-Casteran was scathing about Martinez's conduct, saying: "I find it pitiful."

"It's just vulgar, inappropriate, really not up to the occasion. This Emiliano Martinez is not distinguishing himself. It is rather pathetic."

## India beat Bangladesh in second Test thriller

## News Desk

DHAKA: Shreyas Iyer and Ravichandran Ashwin held firm as India beat Bangladesh in a thrilling second Test on Sunday, dashing hopes in Dhaka of a first-ever win over their giant neighbours.

India needed just 145 to win the match and the series 2-0 but the visitors in the end won by only three wickets in a nail-biting morning's play on day four in Dhaka.

Bangladesh overcame India in the preceding 50-over series but have never beaten them in a Test. India had won 10 of the teams' previous 12 Tests, including five victories by an innings.

India won the first Test comfortably by 188 runs in Chittagong and were widely expected to romp home in the second game, cementing their position in second place in the ICC World Test Championship.

India bowled Bangladesh out on

Saturday for a sub-par 231 but the home side's spinners Mehidy Hasan and Shakib Al Hasan then reduced the visitors to 45-4 at stumps with 100 still to chase.

Shakib started the slide with the wicket of captain KL Rahul for two and then Mehidy claimed Cheteshwar Pujara, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli — all for single-digit scores.

Bangladesh then reduced India to 74-7 when play resumed on Sunday but Shreyas (29 not out) and Ashwin (42 not out) put on 71 runs in an unbroken eighth-wicket stand to steer India home.

Mehidy was the stand-out bowler for Bangladesh in the second innings, finishing with 5-63, which included two wickets in the morning.

Bangladesh dominated play in the opening hour as Shakib dismissed nightwatchman Jaydev Unadkat, who hit a six in the opening over but fell in the next after making 13.

Mehidy then trapped danger man Rishabh Pant leg before for nine before he bowled unbeaten overnight batsman Axar Patel for 34 runs.

Ashwin was dropped by Mominul Haque on one at forward short leg before he grew in confidence, with Iyer looking solid against spin at the other end.

After his three fours in two overs, Bangladesh were forced to finally bring pacers into the attack but to no avail.

Ashwin — named player of the match — took India close with a six after Mehidy changed his bowling end and wrapped up the contest with two more boundaries.

"(I'm) not going to lie, there was a lot of tension in the dressing room. It was a tough wicket to bat on, they put us under pressure in both innings," said Rahul, who captained in place of injured Rohit Sharma.

"Everyone contributed. We always knew that we had a chance... Very good



Test cricket, that's what the crowds love to see," said Shakib.

"Both teams were really good. Credit goes to Shreyas and Ashwin, they

absorbed the pressure well and built a partnership," Shakib said.

## Trophy unveiled as Pakistan to face New Zealand in Test opener tomorrow



## Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The trophy for the two-match Test series between Pakistan and New Zealand has been unveiled on Sunday here at National Bank Cricket Arena, ending 32 years of wait for the venue to host Kiwis in a Test match.

The glittering trophy was revealed by Pakistan's skipper Babar Azam and his New Zealand counterpart Tim Southee as both the captains posed with the trophy.

Earlier, both teams held final practice sessions ahead of the first Test; commencing on December 26 (tomorrow). Players from both teams participated in rigorous batting, bowling, and fielding drills, meanwhile the management and captains of the two sides assessed the pitch keenly in order to make their best move in the series.

Earlier in a press talk, Pakistan's captain hoped that his team would make a comeback in the upcoming home Tests after disappointing results in the recently concluded Test series when England handed Pakistan its first-ever 3-0 home series whitewash.

It is pertinent to mention that New Zealand are on a historic tour to Pakistan to play two Tests and a three-match ODI series from December 26 2022 to January 13 2023.

The National Bank Cricket Arena will host all five matches of New Zealand's historic series after the second Test has been shifted from Multan due to deteriorating weather conditions.



Pakistan International Long range Shooter Mohsin Nawaz is giving the certificate to the position holder who participated in 22nd Shooting Competition at Lahore Garrison Shooting Gallery

## Charlo suffers broken hand, showdown with Tszyu postponed

## News Desk

LOS ANGELES: Undisputed world super-welterweight boxing champion Jermell Charlo suffered a broken left hand in training and his January showdown with unbeaten Australian Tim Tszyu has been postponed, promoters announced Saturday.

The matchup, which had been set for January 28 at Las Vegas, would have been the first time Charlo defended all four major sanctioning body world crowns after unifying them in May by knocking out Argentina's Brian Castano.

Charlo broke his left hand in two places, between the pinkie and ring fingers and at the base of the thumb, on Tuesday after landing a punch in sparring at his gym in Houston.

The 32-year-old American visited two doctors and a hand specialist in Houston and his hand was placed in a cast, where it will stay for the next two months. Only then will Charlo begin rehabilitation of the injury, which he must complete before he can resume training for a fight.

"I was sparring and I threw this nice punch and as soon as it landed, I knew something was wrong," Charlo said. "I felt my hand throbbing right away."

"I had two X-rays and an MRI to see what was wrong. It showed it was broken in two places. I hate this feeling. My hand will be in a cast for two months. I'm as disappointed as the fans, maybe more, because this was my first chance to defend the undisputed title."