



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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## COAS Asim Munir paying visit to UK not USA, clarifies DG ISPR

The Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG-ISPR) Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has clarified that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir is paying an official visit to the United Kingdom (UK) but not the United States of America (US). In a clarification message on Twitter, the DG ISPR wrote, "There have been baseless speculations on social media that COAS is visiting the USA. It is categorically stated that COAS is on an official visit to the UK from 5th to 10th February in connection with the 5th Pakistan-UK Stabilisation Conference."



## Inter-parliamentary union president visits Pakistan

Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) president Duarte Pacheco on Thursday visited Pakistan. Mr Pacheco visited Police Lines, Peshawar and condemned the heinous attack at the mosque which left 84 people dead and observed one-minute silence at the place of the incident to pay homage to the martyred. He said Pakistan's security forces and people paid huge sacrifices in the war against terrorism adding Pakistan would get rid of terrorism soon.

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## Meeting for Relief Activities

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review Pakistan's contributions in rescue and relief activities in the post-earthquake situation in Türkiye and Syria on Thursday.



Photo: PID

# PM forms committee to streamline relief activities for quake-hit Türkiye, Syria

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday formed a high-level committee to streamline the relief support for quake-hit people of Türkiye, Syria and ensure the supply of relief goods.

The premier while chairing a meeting to review the relief activities for quake-hit Türkiye and Syria ordered to hold fundraising at schools, colleges, and universities. He also appealed to philanthropists, industrialists, and the business community to take part in fundraising for the distressed people of Türkiye and Syria.

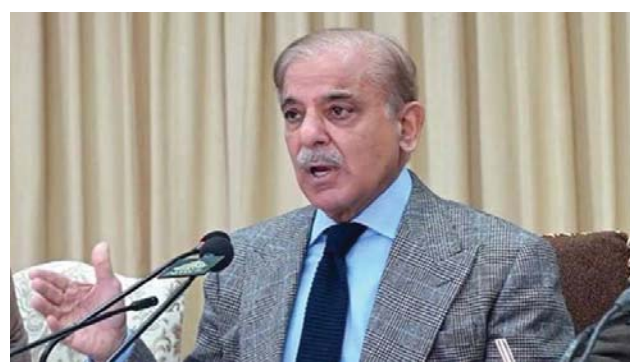
The committee will be headed by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal comprising Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Education Minister

Rana Tanveer Hussain, Religious Affairs Minister Mufti Abdul Shakoor, NDMA chairman, Pakistan's ambassadors in Türkiye and Syria and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi.

He urged the people of Pakistan to donate relief goods at the collection centers of the National Disaster Management Authority. He also instructed the NDMA to enhance its coordination with the provincial governments to speed up the relief activities.

The prime minister said Pakistan stood by its close friend Türkiye in this hour of distress. He said Türkiye extended support to the people of Pakistan after floods in 2010 and 2022.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also instructed the authorities concerned to arrange blankets, warm clothes, baby food, and tents while ensuring the quality of the relief goods being sent to



Türkiye and Syria.

The prime minister said that despite limited resources, Pakistan would leave no stone unturned in supporting their Turkish brethren.

He said that Pakistan established an air corridor to supply relief goods and a convoy of trucks would soon leave for Türkiye and Syria.

The meeting was told that a

team along with the equipment for a 30-bed mobile hospital was already serving in Türkiye while another mobile hospital was being dispatched along with staff and equipment.

The prime minister appreciated the services of Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, her team as well as the Pakistani media to highlight the sufferings of the Turkish people among the

people of Pakistan.

Besides, he also lauded the role of the Pakistan Air Force, PIA, and NDMA in the relief operation.

Moreover, rescue and Pakistan Army teams were engaged in relief operations in Türkiye.

Pakistan's ambassador in Türkiye apprised the meeting of the statistics of destruction caused by the earthquake in Türkiye.

The prime minister appreciated the ambassador's performance and directed him to play his role to strengthen contacts between the institutions of Pakistan and Türkiye.

Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, NDMA Chairman, Pakistan's ambassadors to Türkiye and Syria, and senior officers attended the meeting.

## \$1.1 billion tranche will be released upon approval by IMF board

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: As the talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over \$6.5 billion bailout program concluded on Thursday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the deal with the international money lender saying all matters were settled, sources told.

Sources privy to the development said the IMF delegation had a meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif via video link which was also attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The IMF would approve the release of \$1.1 billion loan tranche after the IMF board conducted the country's economic assessment, sources added.

In order to unlock the next

tranche, the lender required Pakistan to increase levies on petrol, diesel, and gas; decrease circular debt and reform the power sector; collect up to \$5 billion in funds from friendly countries; introduce mini budget to increase taxes; make public departments profitable; and ensure compliance on privatisation.

Earlier today, Finance and Revenue Minister Ishaq Dar was confident that the matters would be settled with the IMF and people would hear the "good news" shortly. He said the government was working expeditiously to enhance length and quality of road infrastructure in the country to facilitate economic growth and prosperity. The minister was addressing the concluding

## UN chief pushes for more aid access to Syria from Türkiye

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday pushed for more humanitarian aid access to northwestern Syria from Türkiye, saying he would be "very happy" if the United Nations could use more than one border crossing to deliver help after a deadly earthquake struck the region this week.

The Syrian government views the delivery of aid to the rebel-held northwest from Türkiye as a violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since 2014 the United Nations has had a UN Security Council mandate allowing it to reach millions of people in need in the area via one crossing.

Speaking to reporters in New York, Guterres said now was the time to explore all possible avenues to aid and personnel into the area affected by the earthquake, which struck early on Monday morning and has killed at least 19,000 people in Türkiye and Syria.

"Many non-UN relief agencies are already delivering through other crossings," Guterres told reporters. "I will



be very happy if, in relation to the UN, there will be the possibility to do it also in as many crossings as possible."

Guterres did not say whether he has specifically asked the Syrian government to allow aid deliveries through more border crossings, but he did reference the 15-member UN Security Council's ability to approve such a measure.

"It is obvious that we need massive support," Guterres said. "I will be, of course, very happy if the Security Council could reach a consensus to allow for more crossings to be used."

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths will visit Gaziantep in Türkiye and Aleppo and Damascus in Syria this week-end to assess needs and see how the United Nations can step up support, Guterres said. UN aid delivery into northwestern Syria from Türkiye resumed on Thursday after it was briefly halted by the earthquake.

## KP masses look up to Nawaz Sharif in difficult times



Correspondent

ABBOTABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz said on Thursday the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa looked up to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in difficult times.

Addressing a convention, Ms Nawaz said, "PML-N supremo had handed over me the responsibility of chief organiser".

Pointing out the PTI-led government's contributions, Ms Nawaz berated PTI chief Imran Khan "on not building a single university or college in the province."

Assailing the PTI's Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme, Ms Nawaz said, "The PTI government had devastated the forests."

## 'The court did not take suo-moto notice of the NAB amendments

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday remarked that all public issues could only be resolved in the parliament but the incumbent parliament was kept incomplete at will.

The five-member bench headed by the CJP heard Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's plea against amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law.

Makhdoom Ali Khan represented the federal government in court. He argued that the PTI moved the courts after National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf accepted the resignations of the PTI MNAs and now the matter was being debated in the court instead of parliament. "If the court annuls legislation on any plea seeking the annulment, it will lower the court's dignity", he added.

The CJP remarked that particulars were different in the present scenario as the plea was filed by no one else but the chairman of the country's largest political party. "Might Mr Khan be inquired why he was contesting elections if he was not willing to sit in the parliament", he remarked.

Know more: GHQ excuses itself from providing security for Punjab, KP and NA polls

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan inquired whether the court could revoke someone's right to a plea if they boycotted the assembly. "NAB amendments were instituted for the benefit of a few people only", he remarked.

Mr Makhdoom argued that the statements rendered by Mr Khan and PTI MNAs on NAB were on record as the PTI-led government amended



the NAB law after bringing an ordinance. The CJP remarked that the ordinance was temporary legislation but the recent amendments seemed permanent. "Having no majority in the assembly is also a cause for bringing an ordinance and the court is seeking a response to PTI's absence from the house while the amendments were being debated", he remarked.

Also read: SC orders ERRR to submit details of earthquake relief funds

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah inquired how the ordinance was different from the new amendments. Mr Makhdoom argued that the ordinance brought by the PTI was amended in recent times, and the lower house could not debate the law due to the PTI's absence. "However, the law was debated in the Senate in the presence of the PTI members", he added.

The CJP remarked that the court was not intended to halt the legislation. "The court did not take suo-moto notice of the amendments but the NAB brought the case to the court", he remarked.

Later, the court adjourned the hearing till Friday.

## Aamir Dogar, all others walk free a day after arrest

Bureau Report

MULTAN: Judicial Magistrate Marzia Ali on Thursday ordered the release of senior PTI leader Aamir Dogar and all other political workers involved in rioting outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) office in Multan.

During the hearing of the case related to the riot outside the ECP office, the judicial magistrate dismissed the case and ordered the release of PTI leader Aamir Dogar and other activists. The PML-N leaders Tariq Rashid, Malik Anwar and others also were acquitted.

It should be noted that there was a fight between the PML-N and PTI workers on Wednesday outside the ECP office in Multan, during which they attacked each other. In the altercation, the glasses of the doors of the Election Commission of Pakistan office were broken.

The FIR registered against the suspects contained eight provisions, including terrorism. Aamir Dogar, Nadeem Qureshi, Javed Akhtar and PML-N's Sheikh Tariq Rashid were nominated in the case.

## Imran fires a broadside at Imran, labels Maryam 'Miss Mandela'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said on Thursday he felt the role of judiciary important in bid to hold snap elections.

Mr Khan acknowledged the legal community while speaking to a delegation of journalists, saying, "Only the judiciary knew the way of constitutional supremacy."

Talking about his party's participation in the All Parties Conference (APC), Mr Khan said, "I will first wait on the government's call on holding the APC on the matter of terrorism. Then I will decide whether to attend the meeting or not."

Speaking about the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr Khan stated, "Agreement with the IMF will invite a new wave of inflation in the coun-



try." He underscored the importance of the role of the overseas Pakistanis (OVPS), saying, "They could save the country from economic hardships."

Mr Khan bashed the rulers on "keeping the greenback abroad". Mr Khan slammed PML-N senior vice president Maryam Nawaz, saying, "Efforts were foiled to launch Maryam in Pakistan by perceiving her Miss Mandela."

He also challenged PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif to land in the homeland to witness his popularity.



## Pak-Sri Lanka Relations

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with senior Civil Servants from Sri Lanka who are attending a two-week training programme at National Defence University, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday.



Photo: PID

# President for greater cooperation with Sri Lanka in trade, economy & education

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for promoting greater cooperation between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the fields of trade, economy and education.

He said that both brotherly countries enjoyed cordial relations that needed to be further expanded for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He underscored the need for increased cooperation in

the areas of higher education, academia, and research to promote mutual understanding between the people of both countries.

The president expressed these views while talking to a delegation of senior civil servants of Sri Lanka here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Currently, twenty Senior Civil Servants of Sri Lanka are attending a two-week training programme related to International Relations,

Peace and Strategic Studies, Public Policy, Leadership and Management, at the National Defence University, Islamabad.

The president urged bureaucracy to be responsive to people's needs, improve the system's efficiency, and their capacity and intellect for ensuring fast-paced development.

He said that developing countries should focus on the development of education

and health sectors, besides making fast decisions to help address the challenges being faced by them.

The president said that bureaucrats and politicians must adapt emerging technologies and make timely decisions to build intellectual pathways for the development of the IT sector.

He said that the intellectual edge made nations great, and countries should focus on developing knowledge econ-

omies and investing in the intellectual development of their people.

He stated that developing countries could achieve accelerated economic growth by focusing on the development of the IT sector and adopting conducive business policies.

The president also highlighted the need to become more financially disciplined to overcome perennial financial issues of developing countries.

# Envoy shows Indonesia's investment interest in Pakistan, highlights CPEC's importance

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan Adam Tugio said his country was keen to invest in Pakistan, acknowledging the importance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in enhancing trade connectivity with Central Asian states.

"We take note of the importance to have more balanced trade for mutually beneficial relationships and the Embassy will do its best to help find potential business partners in Indonesia for Pakistani businessmen," the envoy expressed these views during a meeting with Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council (PIBC) Abid Nizar and the body's executive members.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways and means to deepen bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries.

The envoy appreciated the PIBC's contribution to strengthening bilateral trade and urged the council to help identify the areas where Paki-



stani manufacturers had the expertise and a strong comparative advantage in the market.

Envoy shows Indonesia's investment interest in Pakistan, highlights CPEC's importance

Ambassador Tugio said the two countries manufactured good qual-

ity products and Indonesia supplied types of vinyl and polyester while Pakistan was well-known for qualitative production in textiles and garments.

He was of the view that Indonesian and Pakistani were fond of spices and that export of spices from Pakistan to

Europe and the US was improving due to the increased demand from overseas Pakistanis.

"Since Indonesia is the world's biggest exporter of spices, we can team up to produce the best quality of garam masala for Pakistani overseas in those continents", added the envoy.

Ambassador Tugio also mentioned the interest of some investors from Indonesia to invest in Pakistan and referred to the geo-economics and geo-strategic location of Pakistan as a trade hub for the Central Asian markets.

He encouraged Pakistani businessmen to participate in the "Pakistan-ASEAN Trade Exhibition" to be held in Jakarta in May by TDEP and explore more business opportunities with ASEAN trading partners.

Abid Nizar received the highest distinction award "The Primaduta Award" from the Indonesian government for his outstanding performance in trade between Pakistan and Indonesia.

# PM Shehbaz greenlights IMF agreement

### Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: The government's dealings with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) settled on Thursday as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the dealings with the international money lender.

Sources privy to the development said the IMF delegation had a meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif via video link. PM Shehbaz discussed the programme with the IMF delegation through a video link.

Earlier today, Finance and Revenue Minister Ishaq Dar is confident that the matters will be settled with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and people will soon hear the "good news".

He said the government was working expeditiously to enhance length and quality of road infrastructure in the country to facilitate economic growth and prosperity. The minister was addressing the concluding ceremony of the Road Safety Conference for Parliamentarians in Islamabad on Thursday.

The minister said the government was also pursuing effective implementation of road safety laws to ensure accident-free traffic flow in the coun-

try.

Urging parliamentarians to find necessary solutions to improve road safety, he underscored the need to focus on traffic laws and ensure their strict implementation. Mr Dar said the government had included 50 projects worth Rs118.4 billion in the current fiscal year to provide safe and modern transportation system in the country.

The finance minister pointed out that the PML-N government in the early 90s executed the motorway project from Islamabad to Lahore and now the network of motorways had almost been expanded throughout the country.

On Wednesday, a delegation of the IMF met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz assured the international financial body of fulfilling the targets given to the country. The PM was flanked by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, while officials of the finance and energy ministry were also present in the meeting.

The officials of the energy ministry presented the gas management plan, while the premier briefed the IMF on the current situation of the country's economy.

# Imran helping terrorists with baseless statements against national institutions: Marriyum



### City Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that Imran Khan was helping terrorists with his baseless statements against national institutions.

In a tweet, sharing a video clip of Imran, she said that with every new plaster on his leg, PTI Chairman has been telling the nation a new lie, a new accusation against the opponents.

Marriyum said Imran Khan was not ready to sit with the national leadership to evolve a joint strategy on terrorism, the Kashmir issue, and

national security.

The minister said how could Imran unite the nation when he during his government had run a dirty campaign against the martyrs and stated he would not be blackmailed by the funerals of the martyrs of the Hazara community.

The person who introduced hate-mongering, misbehavior, and division in the nation was spewing poison against the institutions, she maintained.

Taking a jibe at Imran she said he should come out of Zaman Park where he had taken the shield of women and children.

# 23 Pakistanis evacuated from quake-hit Türkiye: FO

### Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said the Pakistanis were evacuated from Gaziantep University and accommodated in Adana city. The devastated city of Gaziantep, located about 33km from the epicentre, suffered heavy loss of life and infrastructure during the earthquake.

"Sixteen of these evacuated persons will be brought back to Pakistan, while the rest will be shifted to Istanbul city of Türkiye," she at a weekly press briefing.

She said the country's missions in Türkiye and Syria remained in constant touch with the relevant authorities to provide relief to Pakistanis affected by the earthquake.

In response to a question regarding the outcome of Pakistan's series of meetings with Afghanistan and Iran, she said the multifaceted dialogue with the neighbouring states would lead to positive development.

Asked why Pakistan stayed away from the Multilateral Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in Russia's capital Moscow, she said, "We decided not to participate in the Moscow meeting of regional stakeholders."

"We will continue to participate in all constructive meetings on Afghanistan," she said.



The spokesperson said Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi will visit Pakistan from February 15-16.

"The visit will provide an opportunity for Pakistan and the IAEA to explore avenues to advance cooperation in peaceful applications of nuclear technology for socio-economic development," she said.

Baloch said Foreign Secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan would visit France to meet his counterpart on February 10 for the 14th Round of Bilateral Political Consultations.

A roadmap for bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and France will also be signed, she said.

About the eviction of Kashmiri Muslims from the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), she said in some states of India, bulldozers were used to demolish the properties of Muslims to terrorize them.

# Iran's remarkable rise after the revolution



Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini

Forty-four years ago on February 1979, the most popular revolutions of the 20th century won amidst a cold winter. The revolution succeeded through the all-out support on the side of the people participating in the rallies led by the founding father of the movement, Imam Khomeini (R.A). Throughout the past years, despite the treacheries, conspiracies and obstacles fabricated by the hostile enemies of Iran such as

imposed war, sanctions, terrorism, the maximum pressure campaign, Iran has not stopped its progress train, moving non-stop in the direction of scientific, economic and technological achievements in order to gain self-sufficiency in different fields including industry, agriculture and technology. The statistics and figures presented by the reputable international institutions indicate that Iran has enjoyed all-round progress and development year by year, especially in the field of science and technology.

Before the revolution, the Iran society struggles a lot to overthrow the royal regime and removed foreign-affiliated elements from the Iranian political scene. Finally, the endeavors and resistance resulted in the establishment of a system based upon the religious democracy and the increase in the role of the people in the determination of their destiny. Since then, the Iranian nationals have a predominant role in the determination of their political and social destiny through the different democratic elections of the head of the different powers and institutions directly or indirectly.

The government and people of Iran are proud to have proven in these 44 years that; when it's time for the nego-

tiations based on mutual respect and respectable agreement, they always respect the agreements and are fully committed to all the commitments agreed upon by them. Where they face with the maximum oppressive pressure, they will inflict an unprecedented defeat on the founders of the economic terrorism with maximum and heroic resistance, and when there it comes the for the violation of their rights and aggression by the hostile sides, they have defended the security of their country with courage and determination.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has played an incomparable role in ensuring the stability and security of the region and the world with heroic sacrifices at the forefront of the fight against the ominous phenomenon of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. Iran has paid a heavy cost in this way and sacrificed valuable lives in the fight against the afore-mentioned plights.

We commemorate the memory of Iran's national heroes, as well as the hero of the fight against terrorism and extremism, Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani and all the martyrs who sacrificed their valuable lives to ensure peace and security in the region and the world.

Iran, enjoying its geographical strategic location, enormous natural resources, human resources and a large potential market, has a great and pristine capacity to develop and expand economic and trade cooperation in all fields with all the countries.

During the last few years, the relations between the two friendly, brotherly and neighboring countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, have been growing in various fields. This level of connection and solidarity between the two countries is based upon the commonalities and links that have been formed between these two countries during the ages.

Past and present are the harbingers of a bright tomorrow for our dear homelands of Iran and Pakistan.

I wish a bright, promising and prosperous future with all-round improvement of the relations and between the two brotherly, friendly and neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan.

Long live comities

(The Writer is Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan and write the article On the Occasion of the 44th Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution)



# JICA/API/NARC Project for capacity building will facilitate growers: Chairman PARC

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: JICA/API/NARC conducted two days seminar on Capacity Development of Agriculture extension services in Balochistan. The 4-years project is jointly executed by JICA/API/NARC and Department of Agriculture Extension Balochistan. Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali was the chief guest. DG, National Agricultural Research Center, Dr. Shehzad Asad, Chief Advisor API/JICA, Mr. Kosuke Sawada, DG, (ARI) Balochistan, Dr. Muhammad Qasim Kakar, Representative DG, Agriculture Extension Balochistan Mr. Abdul Karim Jafar, besides a large number of Provincial Agriculture Officers and Field Assistants also participated in the program at the National Agricultural Research Center Islamabad.

Muhammad Ali said that we are producing high quality crops in Balochistan province so training and research are very important to support the development of agriculture in the province. Dr. Ali said that capacity building of agriculturists and farmers is crucial in elevating agriculture development in the province. Chairman PARC has expressed special thanks to Japanese Government for launching capacity building program in Pakistan. Dr. Ali said that the program to facilitate growers will ultimately contribute in improving the country's economy. He added that through improving the production of fruits & vegetables in Balochistan province, we can also boost the country's exports. Furthermore The Chairman said that PARC scientists can conduct such trainings in all provinces of the country.

DG, Agriculture Research Initiative, Dr. Muhammad Qasim kakar



said that the people of Balochistan are thankful to JICA and the government of Japan and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council for arranging these trainings. Mr. Abdul Karim, DG Agriculture Extension Balochistan also expressed greetings to the government of Japan and JICA. It is not just a story of the Last 4 years but for over

70 years the people of JAPAN have been helping Pakistan. He said that if we want to sustain the success of this project then Agriculture Officers and field Assistants must impart acquired knowledge and the activities monitored by administrator. He stressed on strengthening the research infrastructure in Balochistan. The train-

ees expressed that it was a great experience and we learnt a lot from the program. It was very informative and brushed up on our skills. Mr. Chingez, Field Assistant highlighted the challenges faced in agricultural sector of Balochistan. He mentioned that the training was very useful as it will help in bridging the knowledge gap in agriculture sector in province. Furthest Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali distributed certificates to the Agriculture Officers and field assistants from Balochistan. At the end of the ceremony, DG NARC Dr. Shehzad Asad vote of thanks to the participants.

## Traffic jam

LAHORE: A view of massive traffic jam at Bhatti Chowk road area in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Sardar Attique pays tribute to Sardar Tanveer for steps taken on Kashmir issue

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan while paying tribute to the steps taken by the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan on the issue of Kashmir, said that the OIC delegation The efforts of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir on other initiatives including the arrival of Azad Kashmir and the first visit of the American ambassador to Azad Kashmir are worthy of praise. Sardar Attique Ahmed called on AJK Premier at Kashmir House Islamabad. During the meeting both leaders discussed the current situation of Indian occupied Kashmir and other issues.

He said that the unanimous approval of the resolution on the Kashmir prob-

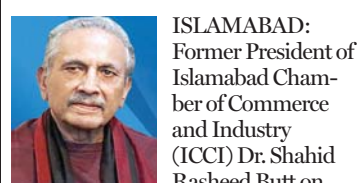


lem in the joint session of the Parliament is a great success and a big step forward in the solution of the Kashmir problem. Above all, on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, the entire team including the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, who expressed solidarity with the Kashmiris across the country and participated in the joint session of the Parliament, deserves congratulations. Talking to the media after the meet-

ing, he paid great tribute to Shaheed Maqbool Ahmed Butt and Muhammad Afzal Gaur and said that the martyrdom of the two leaders has breathed a new spirit into the Kashmir Liberation Movement. He said that the Kashmiri people will not let the sacrifices of their martyrs go in vain and will fulfill their mission at any cost. Force them to resolve the Kashmir dispute by giving them their right to self-determination

## Politicians should not fill up the jails but hungry stomachs

Commerce Reporter



ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on

Thursday said politicians should not focus on 'Jail Bhara' but try to fill the stomachs of the poor.

In the current alarming situation, the agitation is being planned by the politicians who are responsible for the destruction of the economy, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the poster boy of the previous government delayed the deal with the IMF until he was removed from office in April 2019.

The country was grappling with the crisis due to the wrong policies but the Finance Minister Hafeez Sheikh was dismissed and Hammad Azhar was given the charge, after which a former banker was given the portfolio of the Finance Ministry for the sake of artificial development.

The banker cum finance minister started a new crisis by avoiding improving the economy and doling out packages to the billionaires, which did not give the people anything, but the growth rate became six percent.

Foreign exchange reserves decreased by fifty percent, while the value of the rupee decreased by seven percent due to the policies of the former government, he informed. Mr. Butt said that those who came after him did more damage to the economy instead of taking corrective measures.

He said that it has become a tradition that every outgoing government leaves such serious problems that do not allow the new government to function.

Every new government has to knock on the door of the IMF to survive, he said, adding that the PTI government has shown the worst economic performance while PML-N also damaged the economy.

## "NeelaAsmaan" Artist Residency Program Offers Unique Creative Opportunities

News Desk

KARACHI: The ever-pioneering Academy Award and Emmy Award winning filmmaker, SharmeenObaid-Chinoy proudly announces the launch of her latest platform, NeelaAsmaan—an international artist residency program for emerging and established artists from Pakistan and around the world.

NeelaAsmaan, a project of SOC Films, will offer artists the opportunity to take inspiration from their surroundings in the picturesque Shigar valley in Gilgit-Baltistan. The residency program, open to writers, photographers, philosophers, architects, climate change warriors, visual artists, and design practitioners, provides private bedrooms and shared spaces that double as studio spaces, as well as a stipend of up to PKR 100,000 to cover travel expenses.

"NeelaAsmaan is a unique opportunity for artists to refocus and create original works in a supportive and nurturing environment," said Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, founder of SOC Films. "We're excited to bring this program to life and support the next generation of talented artists."

Applications for the first cycle of the NeelaAsmaan residency program will be accepted starting February 15th, 2023, with a deadline of March 15th, 2023.

## Exhibition of drawings made by students of Iqra University North Campus

News Desk

KARACHI: The creativity of the students is a testament to the exhibition of this drawing and I am proud that the students have developed their skills and brought their imaginations to life with the art of drawing. These views were expressed by Prof. Dr. Syed Ali Raza, Director Academics, Iqra University, North Campus, during his visit to the drawing exhibition organized by the media sciences students at Iqra University.

Dr. Ali Raza was impressed by the artworks of the students who had used graphite, charcoal, colored pencils, and markers to create beautiful art pieces. The techniques and styles used by the students were also unique and exclusively detailed which were evident in different artworks like still life, expressive portraits, etc. The students experimented with different mediums and methods, which helped them capture the actual emotions of their subjects or focus on particular aspects of someone's appearance.

The artworks of the students showed their creativity and indicated that they have the ability and the talent to become great artists of the future. Dr. Syed Ali Raza congratulated the faculty members and the participants of the exhibition for organizing a successful exhibition.

## Collision between Chung Chi and flying coach in Tank

Adam Khan Wazir

TANK: A 14 years student was died and 15 people, including 5 women, were seriously injured in the collision between Chung Chi and a flying coach in Tank.

Rescue 1122 faced difficulties in shifting the injured to hospital due to traffic problems caused by the unplanned construction of sewerage in the market.

Later, after all the injured were transferred to DHQ Hospital Tank, most of the injured were referred to Dera Ismail Khan due to inadequate medical facilities.

Extreme anger among the relatives appealed to the health department to take notice.

However, the accident occurred due to negligence at the cross SMA police registered a case against flying coach driver Zaka.

According to the details, a terrible collision has taken place between a coach going from Tank to Dera Ismail Khan and a Ching Chi coming to the city from Barakhel, near the Civil Secretariat, one kilometer away from the city on the Tank Dera Ismail Khan road.

In which 14-year student Alam Rehan, son of Ba Gul died, while 15 people including 5 women have been seriously injured.

Initially, all the injured were shifted to DHQ Hospital Tank by local people and rescue personnel.

However, due to insufficient medical facilities there, most of the injured have been shifted to Dera Ismail Khan Teaching Hospital.

Relatives of the injured also protested in front of the emergency block due to the lack of medical facilities in the hospital.

On the other hand, the rescue teams are facing serious difficulties in transferring the injured to the hospital due to the traffic problem caused by the construction of the sewerage channel in the city.



## CED urges strict adherence to constitution regarding provincial assembly elections

Adam Khan Wazir

ISLAMABAD: Coalition for Elections and Democracy (CED), a coalition of leading civil society organizations, has urged the Federal and provincial governments and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to strictly adhere to the constitutional requirements regarding the conduct of provincial assembly elections in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. Any delay due to political expediency will undermine the constitutional order and will have adverse consequences for the fledgling democracy in the country. The CED consists of civil society organizations including Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), Centre for Govern-

ance and Public Accountability (CGPA), Individual and Development (IRADA), Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) and Peace and Justice Network (PJN).

CED has also urged the political parties to take steps to reduce polarization, sort out the controversy around implications of the decision of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) regarding census, jointly set date or dates for the polls within the constitutional framework, agree on a code of conduct for electoral campaign, and ensure that will of the people will be respected in all circumstances.

The proposed dialogue among political stakeholders must pave the way for

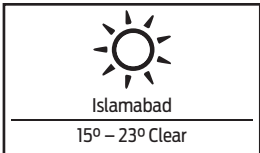
multi-party consensus on measures aimed at improving the law and orders conditions, enacting electoral reforms, building trust of the voters in the electoral process, and upholding of constitution. The CED believes that the multiple crises affecting the country require mature politics and stakeholders' dialogue, as the existing polarization and unchecked politics of zero-sum type runs the risk of bringing down the whole constitutional order.

The CED has further called upon the political leadership of the country to assess risks of holding provincial assembly elections in the presence of a partisan government at the Federal level, and together find a solution for the short term

as well as on the long term basis through an agreed code of conduct or legal measures. The issues of such sensitive nature can't be resolved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, unless all the relevant players sit together and develop consensus in the light of regional or international best practices and in the interest of promoting democratic values.

Any unwarranted delay, CED has warned, in the conduct of provincial assembly elections will set a bad precedent, which will not be in the interest of political stability and democratic consolidation. It is imperative that, despite challenges, our governments and institutions stick to the Constitution and fulfil their responsibility in accordance with the law.





**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:34 am  
Zohr ..... 12:22 pm  
Asr ..... 4:08 pm  
Maghrib ..... 5:46 pm  
Isha ..... 7:10 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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PIA Flight Info ..... 114  
PIA Cargo ..... 9280979  
Railway Inquiry ..... 117  
Railway Exchange ..... 9270831-5  
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CAA ..... 9281092

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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

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

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service  
E-7, F-10 & F-11 ..... 9204654  
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 ..... 9203883  
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 ..... 9266316  
Wapda Islamabad ..... 9217579-80  
Sui Gas Complaint ..... 119, 9272249  
Wasa Water Tank  
Rawalpindi ..... 0331-5022125

**Police recover abducted person and arrest kidnapper**

ISLAMABAD: capital police Kirpa police station team has recovered an abducted man and arrested the kidnapper, a Police Public Relation Officer said.

He said that, a woman submitted an application at Kirpa police station and stated that his husband namely Akhtar Zaib was kidnapped by accused namely Muhammad Asif. Upon receiving the application the police team started investigation and used technical and human resources and succeeded in safely recovery of the abducted person and arrested the kidnaper Muhammad Asif. Further investigation is underway.

IGP Islamabad directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis. No laxity will be tolerated in official duties, he maintained.

**Federal Educational Institutions Raising Funds for Earthquake Affected Turkiye and Syria**

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of recent earthquake in Turkiye and Syria, Federal Directorate of Education under Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training has instructed educational institutions to raise funds to help earthquake victims. The amount will go to the 'Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Earthquake Victims', to generate funds for Turkiye and Syria, which was rocked by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on Monday.

The decision was made in the meeting held on Thursday, chaired by Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

To kick start the campaign, fundraising activity has immediately started in 5 schools including Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2, Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3, Islamabad Model College for Girls F-7/4, Islamabad Model College for Girls F 10/2 and Islamabad Model College for Boys F - 8/4. The students and administration set up a donation box to collect

donations and teachers and students had awareness and motivational sessions for students to encourage them in taking part in this activity. Schools administration has asked students to contribute to the funds, with as little as Rs. 10. Together they can make the difference in the lives of affected people.

In the next step, this campaign will expand to a greater number of schools, ultimately involving all educational institutions under FDE in this fundraising campaign.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain reassured that they will leave no stone unturned in helping earthquake victims, and this is one of the many initiatives that the ministry is undertaking to contribute toward relief fund. Pakistan's government has already started dispatching of assistance packages to the victims. He also said that the aid should not stop till the complete recovery of the earth-

quake-affected people.

Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, Secretary IBCC while taking the efforts to the higher level said "we are making efforts for a nonstop relief flow of emergency aid to our brothers and sisters in the earthquake-affected areas of Turkiye and Syria. We have started fund raising campaign in few schools and we will continue expanding the magnitude of this campaign".

Dr. Ikram Malik, Director General FDE while visiting these schools appreciated the students and motivated them to take part in these activities. He said together we will make a big difference.

Students have expressed their commitment and determination to lend a helping hand to the Government of Pakistan in helping earthquake affected people in Turkey and Syria, who lost their families, home and livelihoods in the earthquake. This is the high time that we all rise up to help our brethren in need, in every possible way.



**Training Programme**

ISLAMABAD: Boys Scouts Chief Commissioner Tariq Gill and Shahid Saleem Gorsi distributing certificates amongst participant of Training Programme at IMCG I-84 Islamabad



Spokesman Photo by Ghulam Farid

**Death threats are being given: Sheikh Rasheed**

RAWALPINDI: After the arrest of Awami Muslim League head Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, the workers of the Awami Muslim League have also been given life threats. Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed spoke to media at Murree court that all these cases against him are due to his loyalty towards Imran Khan and some unknown people are pressurizing him to change his loyalty towards Imran Khan and come to their side otherwise he will bear outcomes. It is known that after the registration of cases against the head of Awami Muslim League Sheikh Rashid Ahmed in different districts of Pakistan, Murree, Sindh, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, as well as his arrest, the local leaders of Awami Muslim League Sheikh Rashid Shafiq, Muhammad Imran, Muhammad Arshad Afzal and others have been implicated in baseless cases and the task of their arrest have



been given. Muhammad Arshad Afzal has been forced to leave the country for the past several time due to the revengeful actions of the PDM government, while recently the police also raided Arshad Afzal's in-laws' residency on behalf of the

PDM government and scared them. They are continuously harassing their in-laws and especially the women & children in the house are being harassed just to make Arshad Afzal appear in a false case on the basis of political differences

**55 billion rupees can be obtained from the health levy to meet the revenue shortfall**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is currently going through a critical period. In the negotiations with the IMF, there is talk of increasing taxes on many necessities of life. Tax increase is the compulsion of the government, but this tax should be increased on things that affect the common man the least. Tobacco and sugary drinks are the things that are leading to serious diseases. The annual expenditure on tobacco-related diseases is estimated at more than 615 billion rupees annually. Similarly, if we talk about the diseases caused by sugary drinks, the treatment of diseases caused by diabetes alone is estimated to be more than 2640 million US dollars. By raising taxes on sugary drinks and tobacco, the government can get an additional revenue of Rs 80 billion annually and this can significantly reduce the expenditure on diseases. That means a win-win situation for the government.

A health levy bill was passed which is not being implemented due to industry interference. If implemented, it can generate revenue of Rs 55 billion.

We request the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister that instead of increasing the tax on the necessities of life, tax should be collected from the non-essential items, which will have a double benefit. Revenue will also be received and diseases will also be reduced and the expenditure on health will also be reduced.



ISLAMABAD: PPP leader Taj Haider presenting the 1st Media Award 2022-23 to Senior photographer Online Sultan Bashir during a ceremony on Pindi Arts Council on Thursday.

**Gold price in Pakistan registers losses for fifth straight session**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani gold's price continued to deflate for the fifth consecutive day on Thursday as the rupee's clawback against the dollar tied safe-haven investors' hands amid market buzz that a deal to revive International Monetary Fund's (IMF) stalled loan programme was almost struck.

According to All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), the price of gold (24 carats) decreased Rs3,300 per tola and Rs2,829 per 10 grams to settle at Rs194,700 per tola and Rs166,924 per 10 grams, respectively.

**In Upper Waziristan, Chairman alliance has declared Asif Khan Mehsud as a suitable person for giving ticket**

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: South Waziristan Upper Constituency PK 110 PTI ticket for the village chairmen tightened their belts, and together made the most important decisions organized regular grand meeting for constituency ticket, thirty two elected village chairmen of PTI participated.

The agenda was kept in the meeting that who is the suitable ticket candidate for the constituency?

On which voting was done regularly among themselves and the names of those who presented themselves as candidates for the ticket were kept, on which voting was done,

Asif Khan Mehsud got 31 votes while Sajil Burki got only one vote.

After voting, all the chairmen wrote a formal sworn statement that we will all support Asif Khan Mehsud

and if the ticket goes to any wrong person or place, the elected public chairmen will fight the decision of the alliance and the wrong decision will not be supported.

The central and provincial leadership will also be informed of their decision and in this regard they also informed Ali Amin Gandapur about their decision in the form of a regular delegation.

and also informed Ali Amin about his decision to be strictly restrained.

The PTI chairmen's alliance said that if the seat is to be won, then Asif Khan Mehsud must issue a ticket, otherwise we will

lose the seat as per tradition.

They also said that all of us elected chairmen stand by this decision and the leadership should also respect our mandate and the twenty thousand voters behind us whose votes we have taken to respect the opinion that tickets should be issued to Asif Khan Mehsud.

Otherwise, if another wrong decision is made, then our destiny will be to lose the seat and we will not allow the Chairman's Alliance to be a partner in the wrong decision.

Chairman's Alliance says that the decision of the ticket should be left to the elected representatives of Waziristan. If our mandate is not respected, we will ask Asif Khan to come to the field as an independent

If he does not come, we will

think of fielding a chairman from our alliance because we cannot afford to lose this seat and it is very important for us to win the MPA seat.

The Chairman's Union said that we are Khan Sahib's soldiers and Khan Sahib has taught us to call wrong wrong and right right.

Unfortunately, some of our own people do not want PTI's candidate to win from concerned constituency in Waziristan.

Because these people have a special interest in Waziristan and for them Waziristan is a vacuum or hole of corruption through which they can promote their corruption.

The effort of these people is to have the weakest candidates in the field so that they don't close the vacuum after losing and the



constituency is at their mercy as before.

It should be remembered that there are five candidates

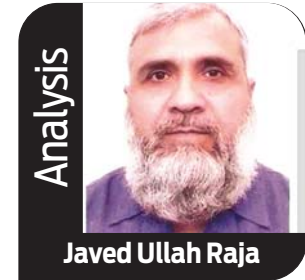
for the ticket in this constituency, among which the leading son is Senator Dost Muhammad Mehsud Asif Khan

While District President Afzar Khan, Sajil Burki, Riaz Mehsud and Abdul Wasey Mehsud are also in the race of candidates.



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# Women and Girls role in the Sustainable Development of the World



**Javed Ullah Raja**

**A**nalysis  
 February 11, International Women's and Girls Day in Science, reminds us that women and girls have also seen the essence of their abilities in the development of the world. Women represent half of the world's population. Whereas women and children make up seventy percent of the population compared to men. Women are the architects of future generations. If women participate in world research projects, future generations will also be successful. It is seen that women are playing an important role in research projects alongside men in various fields. Apart from higher education, still, there is a dire need to provide opportunities and encourage women in every field. According to a research grant report, women are generally awarded smaller research grants than men. They represent 33 percent of all researchers. Women make

up 12 percent of national science academies, while only one in five women make up cutting-edge fields like artificial intelligence. Despite skills shortages in most of the technical fields driving the industrial revolution, women still make up 28 percent of graduates in engineering and 40 percent in computer science and informatics. Female researchers tend to have shorter and less well-paid careers. Their work is underrepresented in high-profile journals and is often passed over for promotion.

Women from Pakistan and other countries who participated in various fields include: Hertha Marcus Ayrton of Great Britain (Mathematician, Engineer), Margaret Higgins (Astronomer), Beatrix Potter (Geologist), Dorothy Klumpke Roberts of France (American born) (Astronomer), Germany's Amalie Dietrich (Naturalist), Agnes Pockels (Physicist), and in Russia and Sweden: Sofia Kovalevskaya (Mathematician) While Pakistani women who have earned a name in the world of science include: Sania Nishatar (Cardiology), Nargis Malwala (Pakistani-American Physicist), Tasneem Zahra Hussain (Theoretical Physicist), Asma Zaheer (Computer Scientist), Azra Qureshi (Botanist), Arfa Karim little girl (Computer Programmer), Maryam Sultana

(Astrophysicist), Talat Shahmaz Rehman (Condensed Matter Physics), Asifa Akhtar (Biologist) and Farzana Aslam (Physicist and Astronomer).

All over the world, however, women are more inclined towards higher education. Yet they are under-represented in some sectors. Gender equality has always been a core issue for the United Nations. Empowering women and girls will not only contribute to the economic development of the world but will also contribute to achieving all the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An international journal text states that on March 14, 2011, the Commission on the Status of Women at its 55th session adopted a report on the access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology. Consensus findings emerged for the promotion of access. For full employment and decent work on 20 December 2013, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on science, technology, and innovation for development. It was also agreed that women and girls of all ages should have full participation and equality in science, technology, and innovation to achieve gender equality. Over the last few decades, science technology, and the dedication of some of the world's leading climate scientists

thanks to this, the world's understanding of climate change has improved rapidly. In 2018, women accounted for one in three 33 percent of researchers. They have gained parity in the life sciences in many countries and even dominated the field in some cases. However, there are many fields where women are underrepresented in digital information technology, computing, physics and mathematics.

The United Nations climate change news highlighted the important role of women and girls in science and technology on the occasion of the 7th International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11, 2022. An emergency is being faced. We must work together to find solutions and implement them. This means ensuring universal access to and implementation of gender-responsive climate education so that more women and girls can contribute to a sustainable and just future. According to a UNESCO report, only 28 percent of engineering graduates and 40 percent of computer science and informatics graduates were women. In sectors that are driving the industrial revolution and essential for the transition to a low-carbon economy. In addition, there is a gender gap in the care giving sector, bodies

that will increase as the climate crisis progresses. For example, while 70% of health and social care work is done by women, they are paid 11% less than men. One of the major areas of work under the UN Climate Change Action Plan is the education and empowerment of women and girls, and the work on gender and its Gender Action Plan. Recognizing the importance of gender equality, the Gender Action Plan aims to accelerate women-led capacity-building initiatives, promote gender-responsive climate action, and the full participation and leadership of women and girls in science and technology, research, and development.

In the coming time, the world will face numerous challenges. Both women leaders and beneficiaries are tackling climate change in their communities around the world. The United Nations Global Climate Action Awards have highlighted dozens of diverse projects led by women, such as in the country of Syria a massive women's biking initiative and harvesting of rainy forests in Indonesia. These projects show women's significant leadership and participation in tackling climate change. Also reminds the importance of full and equal access and participation of women and girls in science.

## CPEC provides connectivity

**B**elt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an initiative of connectivity of not only infrastructure but of economy, trade, and people to people. When connectivity is improved, so does the accessibility to different economies. Trade and movement of technologies will be enhanced. That is BRI to the world, a catalyst for economic growth and cultural exchanges," said Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to Prime Minister of Pakistan on Commerce and Industry.

Citing an example of a road project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Rana told China Economic Net (CEN), it used to take almost 24 hours to travel from Islamabad to Gilgit Baltistan. As soon as the CPEC came in and the road network was improved with traveling time shortened by half, we saw that all of a sudden there was a boom of tourism and economic growth in Gilgit.

According to the official website of the CPEC Authority, five transport projects under the CPEC have been completed, and among them, three are motorway projects, including KKH Phase II, Multan-Sukkur Motorway (M5), and Hakla - D.I Khan Motorway, adding 809 km to the road network of Pakistan and driving economic activities in the cities along the road.

As mega project with a cumulative investment of \$ 65 billion in 2022, the CPEC has created 192,000 jobs, 6,000MW of power supply, 809km of highway, and 886km of transmission line, which laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's socio-economic development.

However, rumors and smears on CPEC from certain western and Indian media never cease.

Dismissive of these noises, Rana said, "No one is forcing any country to be part of BRI. It is by choice. Pakistan and China, for example, are close neighbors. When neighbors are friendly with each other and do business, it is only to benefit the people."

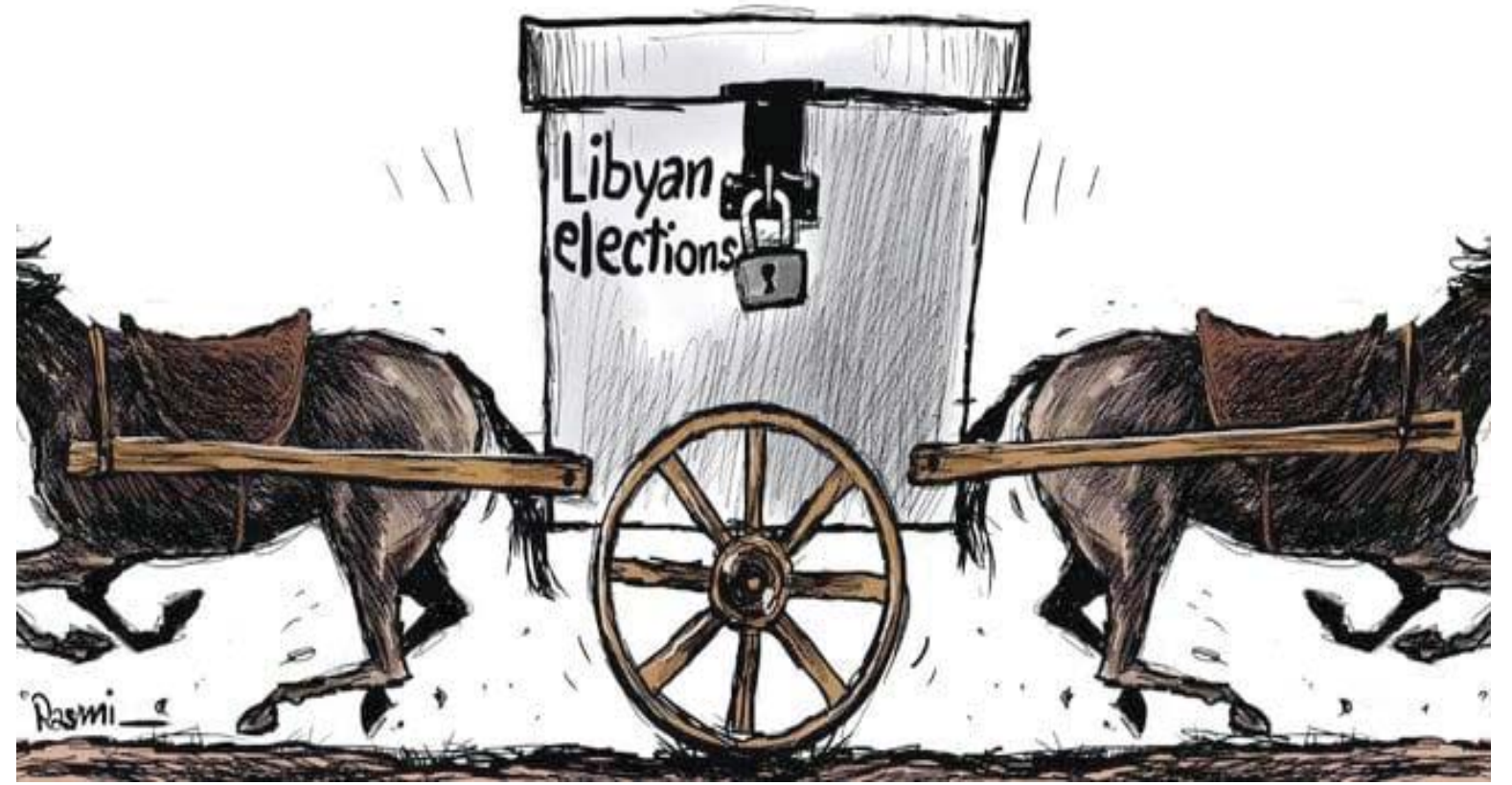
As for challenges occurring in the construction of the CPEC project, Rana said, "definitely if the planning is not properly done as expected, it cannot be blamed on others, we have to look at ourselves." "Currently the biggest problem Pakistan is facing is our foreign reserves have fallen to a very low level. The reason behind it is basically that Pakistan has faced a huge trade deficit," Rana said, adding that last year Pakistan had imports of almost \$82 billion and exports of \$32 billion, leaving a trade gap of around \$50 billion.

"To reduce the trade deficit and the current account deficit, we have to increase our exports and do import substitution, and we are looking up to the Chinese market, which can import \$2.5 to \$3 trillion worth of goods each year," Rana hinted.

He disclosed that the government has already assigned the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Industries and Production to look into where Pakistan has a comparative advantage in terms of exports to China. And in a general impression, food, fruit and textile products will be the main areas of export.

According to data from the World Bank, Pakistan's export to China rose by over 35% from US\$ 2,652 million in 2013, the year BRI was proposed, to US\$ 3,589 million in 2021.

"Thanks to the CPEC project, a lot of private Chinese investors have come to Pakistan. For example, A Chinese tyre company has established a manufacturing factory in one of our industrial zones, and they are quite pleased with their production here," Rana said.



## APHC leaders say gallows; imprisonments can't suppress Kashmiris' freedom sentiment

**Zafar Bakhatawari**

**I**n Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders have said that gallows, illegal detentions and other brutal tactics by India cannot suppress the Kashmiris' resolve for achieving freedom from Indian illegal occupation of their homeland.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC leaders paying glowing tributes to prominent Kashmiri leaders, Muhammad Maqbool Butt and Muhammad Afzal Guru, on their martyrdom anniversaries, reaffirmed the Kashmiris' resolve to accomplish the mission of their martyrs at all costs. They maintained that the martyrs are the real heroes of Kashmiris and a great asset of the ongoing freedom movement.

India had hanged Muhammad Afzal Guru in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on this day in 2013 and sent Muhammad Maqbool Butt to the gallows in the same jail on 11th February in 1984 for their role in Kashmir freedom movement. Their bodies remain buried in the premises of the jail.

Illegally detained senior APHC leader, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, in a message from New Delhi's Tihar jail said that the hanging of Afzal Guru was miscarriage of justice. The verdict against Guru, he said, was slap on India's judiciary and its entire legal system that brazenly violated the fundamentals of justice by denying him the right to fair trial.

Shabbir Shah expressed the hope that the day was not far when subjugated but determined people of Kashmir will see the dawn of freedom. He also took strong exception to Narendra Modi regime's eviction and demolition drive in IIOJK terming it as a part of conspiracy to cripple Kashmiris economically and render them homeless and weaken their stand on Kashmir.

Senior APHC leader, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who is under continued house arrest, in a statement issued in Srinagar urged the world community and international human rights bodies to impress upon New Delhi to transfer the mortal remains of Maqbool Butt and Afzal Guru from Delhi's Tihar Jail to occupied Kashmir for proper burial.

He said that the sacrifices offered by the Kashmiri martyrs were a constant reminder to the world that they remain steadfast and work with dedication and focus towards the fair and just resolution of the lingering Kashmir dispute. The Mirwaiz urged the people to fully stand with their just demand of right to self-determination to send a strong message to New Delhi that they will continue their struggle till it reached its logical conclusion.

Another illegally detained senior APHC leader, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, in a message from Tihar Jail said the Kashmiris have been engaged in a valiant struggle for a just political cause and they have rendered unparalleled sacrifices for it in the last over seven decades. The best way of paying tributes to the Kashmiri martyrs is that people

remain steadfast and committed towards the cause they laid down for, he maintained.

Other APHC leaders and organizations including Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Syed Bashir Andrabi, Khawaja Firdous, Muhammad Yasin Attai, Firdous Ahmed Shah, Zamruda Habib, Yasmeen Raja, Farida Bahenji, Khadim Hussain, Syed Sibte Shabbir Qummi, Javiad Ahmed Mir, Dr Musaab, Muhammad Aaqib, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, and Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League in their separate statements also paid rich tributes to the Kashmiri martyrs especially Maqbool Butt and Afzal Guru.

They said that the due to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri martyrs, the Kashmir dispute was echoing in every forum of the world. They said that these sacrifices would not be allowed go waste and the mission of Kashmiri martyrs would be accomplished at all costs.

The leaders and organizations said fascist Modi cannot kill the Kashmiris' freedom sentiment by resorting to wanton killings. They said the Kashmiris being custodians of the martyrs' blood are determined to take the freedom struggle to its logical end. They urged India to read the writing on the wall and accept the reality about Kashmiris' struggle for freedom. They also called upon the justice-loving people and organizations of the world to compel India to hand over the mortal remains of Maqbool Butt and Afzal Guru to their families so that they can accord the martyrs a proper burial.

## K-FIS 2022 shows that financial inclusion in Pakistan - II

**Spokesman Report**

**T**his major gap needs to be addressed through gender-sensitive elements in service design. The Banking on Equality Policy has laid out several initiatives in this regard, such as credit services for female digital accounts and establishing targets for women's account ownership. The KFIS survey is valuable and instrumental in addressing these challenges. The information on the various aspects of financial inclusion can inform service design and provision, and also facilitate market development in a manner that considers the key barriers to inclusion."

Mr. Mahesh Mishra, Counsellor and Group Head (Economy & Trade) at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) said, "Access to suitable and affordable financial services is a powerful tool to help poor people work their way out of poverty. I congratulate Karandaaz on successful completion of the 2022 Financial Inclusion Survey in Pakistan. I hope K-FIS will provide data and insights the policy makers, regulators, and private sector need in supporting expansion of financial access in Pakistan."

The webinar also included two panel discussions led by experts from the financial sector. The first panel discussion focused on bridging gaps in the financial inclusion of women and rural populations; participants in the discussion included Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, CEO HBL; Dr. Rashid Bajwa, CEO National Rural Support Programme (NRSP); Ms. Halima Iqbal, Founder and CEO Oraan Tech; and Ms. Inez Murray, CEO of Financial Alliance for Women (FAW). The second panel discussion focused on interoperability and participants included Mr. Sohail-Javaad, ED Digital Financial Services Group SBP;

Mr. Mudassar Aqil, CEO of Telenor Microfinance Bank; Mr. Yahya Khan, Chief Digital officer of Bank Alfalah; Ms. Naureen Hyat CEO of ZoodPay Pakistan; and Dr. Russell Toth, Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Nafisa Shah Member National Assembly and member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, Law, Justice and Information reiterated the importance of this subject. Dr. Shah displayed detailed and nuanced understanding of financial inclusion, stating that financial inclusion is a powerful lever and can open up opportunities for vulnerable and excluded segments of the country's citizenry. She urged Karandaaz to include qualitative aspects in subsequent editions of the survey in addition to the extensive quantitative metrics already covered in the K-FIS. Dr. Shah also stated that the significance of financial inclusion is not fully comprehended among policy circles and this survey should be presented to policy makers to enable adequate understanding and suitable actions by political leaders and representatives.

CEO Karandaaz, Mr. Waqas ul Hasan thanked Dr. Nafisa Shah for her comments and welcomed an opportunity to share and present the K-FIS 2022 findings to policy makers. Mr. Hasan concluded his remarks by stating that "In conducting this rich survey, Karandaaz will periodically but regularly be collecting data on a rich set of indicators to promote a data-centric culture within the financial ecosystem."

Karandaaz is a Section 42 Company, supported by the UK's FCDO and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to improve access to finance for unserved and underserved individuals and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), by providing financing and by leveraging technology platforms. The survey findings are available on the Karandaaz website.

*Concluded*



# ISSI hosted ACD Secretary General for Roundtable on Connectivity

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Roundtable on "Development through Connectivity: Asian Perspective.". The Keynote Speaker for the event was H.E. Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, Secretary General, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). The event was attended by diplomats, dignitaries, scholars, students, journalists, and people from different walks of life.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, introduced the Asia Cooperation Dialogue to the participants. He said that Asia Cooperation Dialogue is an intergovernmental organization established in June 2002 in Thailand. He added that ACD is important as it provides a forum to Asian countries to exchange

views on areas of mutual interest including peace and development. The organization covers West Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and North-East Asia, he added.

In his remarks DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood extended a warm welcome to the Secretary General on his first visit to Pakistan and to ISSI for this interactive session. He highlighted the key aspects of ACD's vision as an inclusive, continent-wide cooperative framework and its emphasis on mutual peace and economic growth. He further highlighted ACD's evolution and working mechanisms (dialogue & projects) as well as Pakistan's role in promoting the ACD process as a founding member. He noted that Pakistan had become a 'Prime Mover' on Connectivity and 'Co-Prime Mover' on Culture and Tourism.

In his remarks, Mr. Amer Ahmad Atozai, Director General (East Asia



and Pacific), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appreciated ISSI's initiative to invite Secretary General Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana and thanked for

hosting the event. Mr. Atozai said that the Asian countries continue to suffer from poverty, climate change, food insecurity, and various other challeng-

es. He said that the solution to such unprecedented problems lay, inter alia, in regional connectivity. Mr. Atozai argued that Pakistan could serve as a major hub to achieving such connectivity. Pakistan has a consumer economy of more than 220 million people and to facilitate connectivity, it has liberalised its visa policy, he added.

In his Keynote Address on the subject, Secretary General Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, thanked the ISSI for hosting him. Dr. Pornchai said that the entire concept of development is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and declared the latter as the blueprint for peace and prosperity. He added that the need of the hour was to act upon the UN SDGs to achieve sustainable development and to save the environment. He further said that countries needed to strike a balance between development and protecting the envi-

ronment. He noted that ACD has a total of 35 members and it is promoting effective management of resources including human resources. Dr. Pornchai argued that connectivity was the key to trade and development, and depending on the region, it involved both physical and non-physical components.

He also underscored the importance of addressing the 'development gap' and the 'digital divide.' He stressed that connectivity alleviates economic and social disparities.

In his concluding remarks Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, appreciated the efforts being made by ACD and its Secretary General and underlined that the future of Asia lies in development through connectivity.

The event was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir and was followed by an engaging Q&A session.

**Visits**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visits tents erected for earthquake victims in Gaziantep, Türkiye on Thursday.



AA Photo

## 3rd CIS Islamic Banking and Finance Forum to be held in Uzbekistan

**Spokesman Report**

DUBAI: 3rd CIS Islamic Banking and Finance Forum will be held in Tashkent -Uzbekistan on March 14, 2023, with the theme to explore the untapped potential of Islamic Finance market of CIS countries and to adopt the latest trends, address the challenges and discover the new opportunities in Islamic financial industry of Central Asia and CIS region.

The CIS region has significant potential for Islamic banking and finance industry which needs to be untapped. The main objectives of the forum include recognizing significant developments in Islamic Financial Infrastructure of Central Asia and linkages of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Islamic Finance industry with the international financial market. The event is open to the public with a very nominal entrance fee. For a decade, AlHuda CIBE has been organizing international events in different parts of the world to provide a platform to global think-tanks for exchange of ideas, networking and promotion of institutional services for social impact.

Muhammad Zubair Mughal, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AlHuda CIBE-UAE said that Islamic finance is the fastest growing sector in CIS countries, Islamic finance is not only developing its roots in Muslim countries but many non-Muslim countries are getting benefit from it. Among the CIS countries, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are well developed in this concept whereas Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are developing in the same way slowly but steadily. AlHuda CIBE is committed to provide state of the art specialized services for consultancy and advisory, capacity building, research and product development, events and workshops globally with commitment, dedication, and aspiration all over the world.

The Forum will be followed by a Two days post event workshop on "Innovate Approach of Islamic Banking & Finance" on March 15-16, 2023.

## Xinjiang resumes regular flights to South Asia after three-year break

**Xinhua**

URUMQI: Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has resumed direct regular passenger flights to South Asia for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic started. China Southern Airlines resumed its regular passenger flights between Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, and Islamabad in Pakistan on Wednesday after three years of suspension due to COVID-19.

More than 160 passengers, mostly overseas students and business people, took the flights to and from Islamabad on Wednesday, according to the Xinjiang subsidiary of China Southern Airlines.

One passenger surnamed Xiang, who engages in trade and regularly travels between China and Pakistan, said that the resumption of the direct service could greatly shorten travel time and help him grasp market opportunities more quickly.

The airline is scheduled to operate one-round trip per week.



## Delegation from China's Ningbo University visits IIUI

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Ningbo University, China visited International Islamic University, Islamabad on Thursday where it called on the university President H.E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi and also held meeting with the Dean and scientists of the Faculty of Sciences.

During the meeting with the delegation, The President of IIUI, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, said the collaborations and partnership is a precious opportunity for both Universities. He added that IIUI is a leading international university and especially, hosting hundreds of Chinese students which is also another opportunity for expansion. He offered his full support to joint initiative and appreciated the ongoing progress between both universities.

On the occasion, Xinmin Liu and Professor Liu Yu from Ningbo University stressed for further expanding the joint academic teaching, research, projects, researcher and faculty exchanges between the two renowned universities. Professor Liu said he found immense pleasure for this opportunity for shared teaching, research supervision, project and exchanges. Professor Dr. Ahmed Shuja Ahmed Syed, Vice President (R&E), IIU encouraged this initiative with his full support.

The Chinese delegation was headed by Professor Dr. Xinmin Liu (Professor at Institute of Drug Discovery and Technology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and WHO Expert on Herbal Medicines). It was also accompanied by Associate Professor Dr. Xiang Ning, Associate Professor Dr. Yan Wang and Professor Dr. Atia-ul-Wahab.



China's Spring Festival & Lantern Festival 2023 Celebrations at Rashkhai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. Cake Cutting on the occasion was graced by (L-R) Pakistan China Friendship Association's Secretary General Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Project Manager RSEZ Mr. He Bing, China Road & Bridge Corporation's Ms. Zheng Fang Sophia, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC)'s Chief Operating Officer Mr. Adil Salauddin, Pro Vice Chancellor (UOP) & Director-General China Study Centre Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar and KPFZDMC's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Javed Khattak.

# What does return of Pakistani Seeds from Chinese space station means to Pakistan's food security?

**Misbah Saba Malik**

ISLAMABAD: The new phase of seed cooperation between Pakistan and China is critically important for Pakistan to meet the food security challenge in the future, a Pakistani minister said.

China helped Pakistan take seven herbal seeds to the Chinese space station for space breeding by exposing them to cosmic radiation and microgravity to mutate their genes, and in this regard an event was held here to mark the successful return of the seeds.

On the sidelines of "Celebration of the Return of Pakistani Seeds from Chinese Space Station," Pakistani Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said that the South Asian country is in dire need of seed cooperation to meet climate change challenges.

"Pakistan is very vulnerable to climate change, due to which we need smart agriculture, and for that we need new varieties of seeds, which are resistant to the



new weather challenges, and which are more suitable to the climate change risks," Iqbal told Xinhua.

Liu Xinming, a chief scientist from China's Ningbo University, said the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs transferred the seeds to China Manned Space Agency on April 12 last year.

The seeds were launched into outer space carried by Shenzhou-14 spaceship on June 5, 2022, and after six months of flying, returned to the earth with the Shenzhou-14 astronaut crew on Dec. 4 last year, Liu added.

Atia-tul-Wahab, a professor at the International Center for Chemi-

cal and Biological Sciences, University of Karachi, said her institute proposed the government to send the herbs' seeds to space.

"We sent some grains to the space and kept the same quantity in our laboratory. Now upon their return, we will closely examine them and do their tests at our laboratory. Then both seed varieties will be sowed separately to see the end results through comparison," she told Xinhua.

Wahab said it is the first time that Pakistan sent seeds to space and it is a landmark achievement for the country, adding that her lab is eyeing sending

food staples including rice, wheat and pulses to space for further research.

The professor told Xinhua that the herbs sent to space are used in traditional Pakistani medicine, and that it's hoped that the space breeding will enable scientists at her institute to produce medicine for incurable diseases.

Pang Chunxue, charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, said the experiment will surely be recorded in the history of China-Pakistan friendship as a landmark of the science and technology cooperation of both countries.

China's international science and technology cooperation is an open, shared and inclusive cooperation that insists on conducting cooperation in space exploration on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, peaceful use and inclusive development, she said.

"All countries are welcome to actively participate in space exploration with China," the Chinese diplomat added. Xinhua

# Government fully acknowledges importance, role of opposition: PM AJK

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that the government would take opposition on board develop consensus on issues of vital national interest. The AJK premier said this while talking to former President and Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan and former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan who called on him here today at Kashmir House Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion the PM said that he held the opposition in high esteem. He said that the government and the opposition have a very important role in the democratic system. "The government

fully acknowledges the importance and role of the opposition and wants the full support of the opposition in legislation and other parliamentary matters", the PM said. "We will move forward together and work together for the development of the state", he said adding that developing consensus on issues of national interest was key to success. During the meeting the trio expressed satisfaction over the unanimous resolution adopted by the joint session of the Parliament on Kashmir and said that the resolution was of great importance. They observed that lasting peace in South Asia was inescapably linked to a just and equitable solution of the lingering Kashmir dispute. Appreciating the existing unanimity on the

issue of Kashmir, they agreed that there was a dire need that Kashmiri leadership should also speak in one voice on national issues, especially the Kashmir issue. They also stressed the need for launching an effective diplomatic campaign at international level to highlight the Kashmir issue in its true context in influential world capitals. They also expressed their deep sorrow and grief over the widespread deaths and destruction caused by the deadly earthquake in Turkey and Syria and discussed sending a delegation from Azad Jammu and Kashmir to Turkey.

Former Prime Ministers Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan and Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan also informed the Prime Minister about the



problems of the opposition, especially regarding development funds. The duo sought equal distribution of funds

amongst the lawmakers. Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan agreed to their demands and said that the opposi-

tion members will also be provided with development funds so that they can solve the problems of the people he added



**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
42,466.59	41,723.32
Day's High	Day's Low:
42,567.75	41,723.32
Index Value	Change
11,950,445,250	+743.27
Percentage	Time
+1.78%	9 Feb, 2023 5: 00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,911.15	+25.98
Percentage	Time
+0.33%	9 Feb, 4: 35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,024.74	+75.73
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	9 Feb, 11: 38 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
27,584.35	-22.11
Percentage	Time
-0.080%	9 Feb, 3: 15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.3	186.7
Bahrain Dinar	734.58	742.58
Canadian Dollar	205	207.2
China Yuan	40.68	41.08
Danish Krone	39.85	40.25
Euro	290.11	290.71
Hong Kong Dollar	35.19	35.54
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.36	912.36
Malaysian Ringgit	64.25	64.85
NewZealand \$	174.33	176.33
Norwegians Krone	26.81	27.11
Omani Riyal	718.24	726.24
Qatari Riyal	75.88	76.58
Saudi Riyal	71.93	72.23
Singapore Dollar	208.4	210.4
Swedish Korona	26.1	26.4
Swiss Franc	300.25	302.75
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.4
U.A.E Dirham	73.49	73.79
UK Pound Sterling	326.85	327.55
US Dollar	270.25	270.75

# RCCI assures full participation in trade delegation to Ethiopia

**Spokesman Report**

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on Thursday vowed to participate fully in the business delegation flying to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on March 5-10 for exploring trade and investment opportunities.

The leadership of RCCI gave assurance of their full participation during a meeting with H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDRE to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan here at the RCCI office.

During the meeting, RCCI President Mr. Saqib Rafiq said the business community of Rawalpindi would take part in the business delegation in a big number in order to boost the bilateral trade between the two countries to the next level.

"There is a huge potential of bilateral trade between the two countries which can be increased by connecting the business community of both countries," he said while pointing out the low volume of trade between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

Ambassador H.E. Jemal Beker said absence of institutional linkages between the two countries was a major reason behind the low volume



of bilateral trade. However, concerted efforts were being made in this regard.

He briefed the Rawalpindi businessmen about the trade delegation to Ethiopia which was crucial to bolster the connectivity between the business communities of both the countries. "Our government attaches great importance to Pakistan which has enormous trade, business

and investment potential."

The envoy said it was a right time for Pakistani businessmen to enter the market of Ethiopia which was a gateway to entire Africa that had total population of around 1.4 billion people. "Visit of the Pakistani business community to Ethiopia will open a new window of trade and investment opportunities

for them in diverse sectors of economy including textile, pharmaceutical, rice, chemicals, steel and cement."

Likewise, he said Pakistan could import coffee, tea, pulses, oilseeds and other agricultural products from Ethiopia.

The ambassador also assured the business community of his full cooperation in facilitating their participation in the trade delegation to Ethiopia which entailed government-to-business meetings, business-to-business meetings, visits to the industrial and tourist sites.

He said the government of Ethiopia had been offering a lot of concessions for the trade delegations which included subsidized airfare and accommodation, free transportation during their stay at Addis Ababa and others.

Meetings with the top leadership of the Government of Ethiopia with the representatives of trade delegations had also been scheduled to further boost the bilateral relations between the two countries, he added.

The ambassador said the Ethiopian Airlines would soon start direct flight operations from Karachi to Addis to increase people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, Executive Members and Chamber Members were also present during the meeting.

## KE sets up a Computer Lab

Karachi: KE sets up a Computer Lab at DIL School located in Bin Qasim. The school is the winner of KE's KHI Awards and provides education to 360 children at this remote campus. KE Chief IT Atif Aslam inaugurated the facility. Regional Head Adnan Sami, Head of ESG Aliya Idris and Cluster Head Muzammil Ilahi and DIL Director Program Zeba Shafi were also present.



## FrieslandCampina Engro announces financial results

**News Desk**

KARACHI: Friesland Campina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL) announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2022. Building upon the growth trajectory, FCEPL delivered another record year with highest ever topline and operating profit of PKR 73.5 Billion and PKR 5.3 Billion respectively. The topline grew by 41% over last year driven by volume growth, mix improvement and expansion of the retail footprint despite aggressive competition and distribution challenges.

The Company witnessed gross profit growth of 37% while the gross margin declined by 50bps due to higher commodity prices, global geo-political environment, foreign exchange constraints, Rupee devaluation and floods. While the gross margin has declined, the operating margin improved by 60bps over last year due to initiatives such as cost rationalization and driving efficiencies across the value chain.

Profit After Tax grew by 37% despite higher interest rates and imposition of super tax.

**School Milk Program**

Keeping in view the Company's purpose of nourishing Pakistan, the Company collaborated with University of Education and University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences to gauge the health benefits of daily milk consumption on children. For this purpose, School Milk Program (SMP) was conducted by providing milk to 8000+ children in 89 primary schools in Attock and Sheikhpura. The program encouraging research-based evidence that highlights the need to develop a policy for providing milk in schools at a national level to improve the status of nutrition in Pakistan.

**Dairy and Beverages Segment**

The segment reported a revenue of PKR 66.3 billion, reflecting a growth of 41% versus last year. Olper's led the growth in the segment by strengthening its market leadership position through



brand and trade investments. Olper's UHT Milk, Olper's Cream, Dobala, Flavoured Milk and Tarang all posted a double-digit growth.

The segment deployed various physical availability initiatives along with capitalizing on category captaincy in the Modern Trade channel. Through targeted consumer promotions, investment in trade activations and consumer engagement, FCEPL's retail footprint expanded by 4500+ outlets. The Company accelerated its profitable growth by driving its Value-Added Brands in the market.

Ice cream and Frozen Desserts Segment

The segment reported a revenue of Rs. 7.18 billion, reflecting a growth of 37% versus last year. The business invested in season-opening activities and capitalized on all festivities through best-in-class service and expansion of the trade universe by inducting more assets in the market.

**Future Outlook**

The business environment remains challenging amongst rising inflation, foreign exchange constraints, currency devaluation, higher finance cost and imposition of Super Tax. Moreover, rising natural disasters due to climate change and dynamic consumer needs may affect business's ability to serve the consumers effectively. However, the Company will continue to remain agile and drive efficiencies across the value chain to deliver growth. The business will continue to invest in brand equity and expand its profit accretive portfolio to leverage margins.

Committed to Nourishing Pakistan, the Company will expand upon its partnership with the Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA) and the Government to educate the consumers on the potentially hazardous effects of loose milk, and positive features of safe, packaged milk.

## MOL Pakistan holds Community Sports Gala for girls in district Kohat

KOHAT: MOL Pakistan Oil and Gas Company B.V. in partnership with the Joint Venture consortium of Tal Block and in collaboration with the District Administration of Kohat held a Community Sports Gala for girls in District Kohat.

More than 200 girl students from various schools and colleges of the adjoining areas attended the day-long event held at the Kohat District Sports Complex. The girls actively participated in various team games and sports such as badminton, volleyball and table tennis etc.

Ms Reena Shaheed Sohorwerdi, Additional Deputy Commissioner (F&P) District Kohat was the chief guest of the gala that attended on behalf of Mr. Furqan Ashraf, Deputy Commissioner (DC), District Kohat. Ms. Khola Tariq, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Lachi, District Kohat, Sajid Khan Afridi, District Sport Officer (DSO), District Kohat and all members of District and School Administrations also witnessed the sports activities.

While talking to the audience the chief guest said, "I am extremely thankful to MOL Pakistan for its support towards promoting healthy activities for the youth, especially girls of this area." She also said that the district administration was committed to supporting and encourag-



ing youth, girls in particular, to play team and individual sports.

In his message Ali Murtaza Abbas, MOL Group Regional Vice President for Middle East, Africa, and Pakistan said, "MOL Pakistan operates in some of the most rural and remotest parts of the country, where we appreciate sports and games as a means of cultural conservation and to promote the spirit of sports, inclusivity, and a healthy lifestyle in our local communities. However, due to very limited sport facilities and equipment, recreational activities and sports are not always available and acces-

sible. Therefore, at the request of our local communities, especially our youth, MOL Pakistan regularly sponsors and organizes community sports galas through our corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives."

In the end the chief guest distributed trophies and prizes among the winners and the runner ups. The girls thanked the company for its support to women and girls, and promoting their inclusion and empowerment in the area. It is pertinent to mention here that MOL Pakistan is a fully owned subsidiary of MOL Group, operating in Pakistan since 1999.

## ICCI and PIDE to work jointly to prepare charter of economy and policy papers

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Nadeem ul Haq, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) along with Durr-e-Nayab, Pro-Vice Chancellor and his team of researchers visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed areas of collaboration with ICCI to take joint research initiatives and develop various policy papers on economy. He briefed the participants about research works of PIDE and shared some research-based publica-

tions with ICCI. He agreed that PIDE would collaborate with ICCI in various projects including development of budget proposals for the upcoming budget and policy paper on tax reforms, charter of economy and state of the commerce report. He stressed that the business community should work for transforming SMEs into multinational companies as Pakistan needs MNCs to improve its economy. He emphasized that open discussions should be held on economy between stakeholders that would help in making better business and economic policies.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry highlighted the barriers being faced by the entrepreneurs in starting and expanding businesses. He said that businesses have to face around 122 regulatory agencies and added that the burdensome trade and commerce regulations are distorting the markets and raising the cost of doing business. He stressed that the government should minimize the regulatory burden and speed up the completion of the Pakistan Single Window project



to provide all regulatory services at one place that would help the businesses to flourish and play a more effective role in the economic development of the country. He lauded the willingness of

PIDE to work with ICCI on various projects of mutual interest and hoped that joint efforts of ICCI and PIDE would produce beneficial outcomes for the businesses and the economy.

## Askari Bank Joins Hands with SCO -S-Paisa Digital Financial Services



**Commerce Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Askari Bank Limited (AKBL) and Special Communications Organization (SCO) has signed an agreement for collaborative effort towards attainment of State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) vision to promote financial inclusion and broadening access to financial services. The prime purpose of this strategic alliance with SCO, leading Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services provider, is to complement SBP's vision for Financial Inclusion and expanding the outreach of financial services in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

SCO will utilize its "S-Paisa Pension Account" facility through its Digital Financial Services platform "S-Paisa" under the national service initiative with the approval of the SBP. The partnership between AKBL and SCO aims to readily disburse pension to customers by providing Over-the-Counter (OTC) facility by utilizing AKBL Digital Wallet along with the strong retail network of SCO in AJ&K and GB. The Agreement was signed by Mr. Khurshid Zafar—Chief Operating Officer AKBL and Colonel Farhan Shahid Khan—Director Commercial Affairs SCO.

Mr. Atif R. Bokhari—President & CEO AKBL, Sher Afgan Khanzada—Group Head Branch Banking AKBL, Mr. Zahid Afzal—Group Head Operations AKBL, Mr. Rashid Zaman Khan—Chief Information Officer AKBL, Mr. Omer Afzal—Acting Chief Digital Officer AKBL, Mr. Imran Sher—Project Director Digital Financial Services SCO and other senior officials from both organizations were also present at the ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Atif R. Bokhari said, "In line with SBP's National Financial Inclusion Strategy, this convergence of communication technology with AKBL's digital banking wallet will aim to provide widespread accessibility to our financial services.



# Inter-Provincial Netball C'ship from Saturday

**Sports Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Provincial Men and Women Netball Championship would kick off at the Hamidi Hall of the Pakistan Sports Complex from Saturday.

According to President, Pakistan Netball Federation (PNF), Mudassar Arain all arrangements for the Championship have been finalised in the Organising Committee meeting held under the chairmanship of Sameen Malik.

"A total of seven teams from all over the country, are participating in the Championship, including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad," he added.

He said trophies, medals and certificates would be distributed among the winning teams at the end of the tournament while the manager's meeting would be held on Friday.

The Championship is being played under the auspices of the Pakistan Netball Federation in collaboration with Pakistan Sports Board.



## 4th HiTech Ladies and Couples Golf Tournament commences

**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The 4th Hi-Tech Ladies and Couples Golf tournament will be held over two days, 10th and 11th February at the par 72, Royal Palm Golf Course. As announced by Minaa Zainab the Lady Golf Captain of Royal Palm and Tournament Director, the format is stroke play for ladies amateur category and will be contested over 18 holes on Friday, 10th February.

Eligibility Categories are two, one for ladies who

play to a handicap ranging between 0-24 and second category is for ladies who play to a handicap falling between 25-36. Prominent ladies competing in this 18 holes event are Parkha Ijaz who has the honor of playing to a zero handicap and Rimsha Ijaz who carries a handicap of one. This is a reflection of their playing expertise and capabilities.

To challenge them will be proficient ones like Suniya Osama, handicap 3, Ghazala Yasmin, handicap 5, Zahida Durrani, handicap 6, Little

Bushra Fatima, handicap 7, teenager Amina Tiwana, handicap 8 and seasoned ones like Ami Qin, handicap 8, Zenunnisa, handicap 9 and Ana James Gill, handicap 9. A few other ladies who seek to become single handicappers through participative and competitive golf are Tehmina Ahmed, Shahbana Waheed, Uzma Khurshid, Rubab Haider and Momina Tarrar.

Couples golf will take place on Saturday and also invited are men amateurs with participation based on

invitation.

An added attraction is a hole in one Honda City Car on hole number thirteen. For nearest to the pin the hole assigned is hole number 2 and longest drive is on hole number 7.

At the conclusion of the 4th Hi Tech Golf Tournament on Saturday, the prizes will be awarded to the performers by Dr Muhammad Arshed of Hi Tech and Lt Gen (r) Muhammad Hilal Hussain, former President of Pakistan Golf Federation.

## Miss Nayab Hayat called on DG Sports Punjab

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: ITK University of Leipzig Germany Ambassador Miss Nayab Hayat called on Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi at National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Director Admin Syed Umair Hassan, Director Sports Chand Perveen, Assistant Director Shaista Qaiser, Tehsil Sports Officer Nasir Malik and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi and ITK University of Leipzig Ambassador Miss Nayab Hayat discussed the promotion of sports, training and coaching under exchange programme during their meeting.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on this occasion said that the contributions of ITK University of Leipzig for the sports development are quite impressive.

"The experience of ITK University of Leipzig could prove to be beneficial for Sports Board Punjab and our players and coaches can improve their performance through international training courses," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi further said that the sports culture will further grow in the Punjab province through the launching of exchange programme. "Sports Board Punjab will also coordinate for conducting international table tennis awareness lecture at our academy," he stated.

ITK University of Leipzig Ambassador Miss Nayab Hayat on this occasion said that ITK University of Leipzig will extend full cooperation for conducting international training courses. "The international training courses under exchange programme could prove to be very helpful in the growth of sports," she added.

ITK University of Leipzig Ambassador Miss Nayab Hayat expressed her intent to cooperate with Sports Board Punjab for development of sports among younger generation.

## HBL Pakistan Super League 8 trophy



**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: National team's motto, artistry, recognition and prestige were conveyed in the brand new HBL Pakistan Super League 8 trophy, which was unveiled in an eye-catching and memorable ceremony at the historic Shalimar Gardens by the Chair of the PCB Management Committee, Mr Najam Sethi, in the presence of franchise owners, HBL representatives Ali Habib, Chief Marketing and elite cricketers.

The 24-karat Supernova Trophy, as it will be called, has been made in Pakistan and showcases the country's skilled craftsmanship and the Pakistan Cricket Board's dedication towards supporting local businesses.

The three pillars of the trophy, which are studded with 9,907 sparkling zircon stones, represent the national cricket team's motto: Unity, Passion, and Strength, while the main pillar at the back is further embellished with crystals, representing the dedication and hard work that has gone into ensuring the team's success.

## Zain Mahmood covered the distance of 3 kilometers in (1 minute 22secs)



**Sports Desk**

BAHAWALPUR: Noted offroad racer Zain Mahmood on Thursday claimed victory in the qualifying round of the Cholistan Jeep Rally. Zain Mahmood had covered the distance of 3 kilometers in (1 minute 22secs) While Nadir Magasi got the second place while Faisal Shadikhel and Sahibzada Sultan secured the third and fourth places, respectively. During the race, two vehicles turned turtle.

## FIFA use Club World Cup to trial referee microphones

**News Desk**

RABAT: The ongoing Club World Cup is being used as a trial run for another potential refereeing revolution in football, with fans in the stadium able to hear officials explain decisions taken following VAR reviews.

Referees being hooked up with microphones is nothing new in other sports such as the NFL, but it is only now being tested in football, just as the sport is still getting used to Video Assistant Referees and semi-automated offside technology.

## Hockey Has-Beens

**Sarib Ijaz, Rawalpindi**

RAWALPINDI: Germany won the Hockey World Cup 2023. The tournament was hosted by India and concluded on January 29, with Germany beating Belgium in the final to become world champions. Missing from the entire affair were four time champions Pakistan. Our tally of world cup wins is the most out of any country, which speaks volumes about the level of our decline. It is like Brazil failing to qualify for the FIFA World Cup.

Many international experts have pointed to the lack of infrastructure as one of the major reasons for the decline. In the past, various governments and private enterprises supported hockey, but in recent times this support has declined at a rapid rate. Hockey stadiums nowadays aren't used for training but rather for other miscellaneous purposes. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) needs to investigate the reasons behind our failure to qualify for the biggest competition in what is supposed to be our national sport. The same cannot happen in 2026. (Email: saribijaz@gmail.com)

## Punjab Cup 2023

LAHORE: Polo players in action during a match between Master Paints vs DS Polo in Century 99 Punjab Cup 2023.



Photo: APP

## The sponsorship signals Paymob's commitment to the Pakistan market

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Paymob, the leading financial services enabler in the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan (MENA-P) announces its official sponsorship of the HBL PSL franchise, Quetta Gladiators for the 2023 season which debuts on February 13, 2023. The official signing ceremony was held in Karachi with star pacer Muhammad Hsain and legendary fast bowler and bowling coach Umar Gul in attendance.

This partnership further signals Paymob's commitment to serving the Pakistan market, where it officially launched operations in 2022. The payment giant promises to fuel the digital transformation of small and medium-sized businesses by delivering the most innovative payment solutions to merchants across the country.

Fawad Abdul Kader, Paymob's Country Manager in Pakistan commented, "We are excited to partner with Quetta Gladiators, which is



one of the most passionate franchises in the HBL PSL 2023. As a multinational brand that is deeply connected to the local market, we aim to bring the entire nation together with a sport that is an integral part of our culture. Paymob is enthusiastic about putting its muscle behind cricket and other sports in the coming future."

Cementing Paymob's position as a fintech leader in Pakistan, the sponsorship aligns the financial services enabler with the sporting fervor of the nation, ensuring customers can buy tickets seamlessly through Bookme.

The company recently announced its exclusive partnership with the official ticketing partner for the HBL PSL series. Cricket enthusiasts and fans can purchase tickets online through cards and digital wallets through Paymob's secure encrypted gateway.

Nadeem Omar, CEO & Chairman of Quetta Gladiators, stated, "Our partnership with Paymob for the HBL PSL this season emboldens our mission, primarily because their approach to excellence mirrors our own at Quetta Gladiators. We are humbled that they chose to

support us during the course of the tournament and laud the innovative payment solutions that they have integrated in Pakistan."

Quetta Gladiators, led by captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, won the HBL PSL championship in 2019 and has made it to the finals in previous tournaments. The team is owned by Nadeem Omar and coached by former Pakistani wicket-keeper Moin Khan with Umar Gul as their bowling coach. The leading run-scorer of the team is Sarfaraz Ahmed while the leading wicket-taker is Muhammad Nawaz.

Paymob's extensive product portfolio offers swift fund settlement, easy integration, capability to accept payments across multiple platforms which are fully secured through the gateway. Merchants running online and brick-and-mortar businesses can conveniently collect payments digitally and offline on Paymob's omnichannel suite whilst using the dashboard to analyze business growth and revenue.

## England coach McCullum plots to topple his native New Zealand

**A Sports -**

WELLINGTON: Former Black Caps captain Brendon McCullum thinks patriotic cricket fans will forgive him for coaching England against New Zealand, as long as the two sides deliver an entertaining clash. "I guess so," he told reporters in Hamilton Thursday when asked if it felt odd to wear England's cricket kit in his native New Zealand, "but it's nice to be here."

"We're looking forward to the challenge in front of us with New Zealand."

The 41-year-old retired from Test cricket in 2016 having scored nearly 6,500 runs for New Zealand in 101 Tests, including 12 centuries.

Born in Dunedin at the bottom of New Zealand's South Island, McCullum has enjoyed a dream start since taking over as England coach last May.

He helped engineer a



home series win against South Africa plus a clean sweep of three Tests in Pakistan. There was also a famous Test win against India at Edgbaston last July, when England chased down a record 378 while losing just three wickets — as well as a 3-0 series win over New Zealand on English soil last June.

"It's been a good start, definitely. Results have been great," McCullum said.

Next up is his first tour in New Zealand as England coach with two Tests against

the Black Caps, starting at Mount Maunganui next Thursday before a second in Wellington the following week.

McCullum, once one of the game's most entertaining players, does not expect a hostile reception from the Kiwi crowds.

"It should be alright, I would think. Obviously people are patriotic.

"Even if sometimes your own team doesn't win, you still walk away knowing you have had a hell of a day out.

"Hopefully that will be the case during this series."

New Zealand host England with new captain Tim Southee taking charge in his first home series since Kane Williamson stood down as skipper.

Williamson will go head to head with England captain Ben Stokes in a highly anticipated clash between two of the world's best batters.

McCullum described Stokes as "the sort of guy who writes his own scripts and achieves some pretty special things".

The Black Caps drew two Tests against Pakistan in January, but managed only one victory from six limited-overs games against India earlier this year.

McCullum was full of praise for Southee, who he played alongside for the Black Caps.

"We know New Zealand will be very good in these conditions, Tim will be creative, as he always is, and I look forward to seeing how we respond to that."