



**Maryam Nawaz stops Capt Safdar from giving 'policy statements'**

The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz has stopped Capt Retired Safdar Awan from delivering 'policy statements' after he criticised the party's leadership, ARY News reported on Friday. (Report on Page 8)



**Fawad stresses on need to 'reduce bitterness' in politics**

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry on Friday stressed the need to "reduce bitterness" in the country's politics amid the crumbling economy and security situation. Talking to media persons in Lahore, he commented on renowned anchorperson Javed Chaudhry's column on meeting with former army chief Gen (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa said that ex-COAS confessed in the column that he played a key role in "regime-change operation".

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Relief goods for the earthquake victims**

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with Turkish Consul General Emir Ozbay & others on the occasion of seeing off a cargo plane carrying relief goods for the earthquake victims of Turkiye in Lahore.

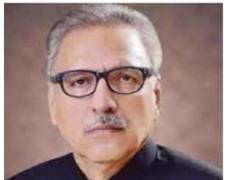


Photo: PID

**President calls Senate's golden jubilee session on March 15**

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called the special commemorative session of the Senate in connection with the golden jubilee of the House on March 15.



The commemorative session will be held at 11 am and will continue till March 17, the President House said in a statement.

He said the search and rescue teams from Pakistan were already in Turkiye and lending their help in trying to rescue people trapped in the rubble. He said that he has also spoken to the chief ministers and requested them to take ownership of national relief campaign for earthquake-hit people in Turkiye. He said he has also asked the Minister

for education for a campaign in the schools to collect donations from the students.

He also lauded caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi for his quick response in the collection and dispatch of the relief goods.

The Turkish Consul General Emir Ozbay appreciated the expression of solidarity of the people and the government of Pakistan and said the two countries were tied together with strong bonds.

**Death toll exceeds 21,000 after Turkiye-Syria earthquake**



News Desk

ISLAMABAD, FEB 10 (NEWS AGENCIES /APP WEB DESK): The combined death toll in Turkiye and Syria from Monday's earthquakes has surpassed 21,000, and the disaster has left thousands of people homeless and in need of urgent shelter and aid, according to country's officials.

At least 18,342 people have been killed in Turkiye, according to the country's officials — surpassing the toll from the devastating 1999 earthquake in that country.

At least 3,377 people are known to have died in Syria. The World Bank has promised \$1.78bn to Turkiye in relief

and recovery assistance. UN chief Antonio Guterres is calling on the international community to provide more money for earthquake relief and has announced a donor conference for next week.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has said that 14 trucks carrying humanitarian aid had crossed into northwestern Syria from Turkiye.

"These convoys are carrying electric heaters, tents, blankets and other items to assist these people who have been displaced as a result of this catastrophic earthquake," said spokesperson Paul Dillon, adding that the aid was bound for Idlib.

**Pakistan to extend every possible support to quake-hit Turkiye: PM**

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said Pakistan would extend every possible support to Turkiye in the wake of catastrophic earthquake that killed and injured thousands and urged the people to donate to the Prime Minister's relief fund.

Talking to media here at the Lahore airport, the prime minister handed over 100 tonnes relief goods including food, medicines and winterized tents for the people of Turkiye.

He recalled that how Turkiye had established an air bridge with Pakistan after the horrific 2005 earthquake that killed around 80,000 people in Azad Kashmir.



The prime minister was earlier briefed about the collection and dispatch of the relief goods from Pakistan to Turkiye and Syria. He was informed that the NDMA

turned to help the Turkish brethren ... we have never seen such catastrophe in a century and can feel the pain and loss of the people of Turkiye," the prime minister said and likened the people of Turkiye and Pakistan as "two hearts and one soul."

He recalled that the wife of President Erdogan even had donated her precious necklace to help the people of Pakistan who lost their homes and livelihood after the 2005 earthquake.

He said his government had decided to turn the ongoing rescue and relief efforts for Turkiye into a nationwide support campaign.

In this regard, he said, the support of the business community, religious scholars and educational institutions would also be sought.

The prime minister said an air bridge has already been set up to transport relief good to Turkiye

and the trucks of National Logistic Cell will carry 100 tonnes relief goods to Turkiye via Iran.

A PIA 777 aircraft earlier in the day carried relief goods to Turkiye from Lahore, while 30 tonnes would be airlifted from Islamabad today. Another batch of 40 tonnes relief goods will be sent from Lahore on Saturday.

The prime minister made an impassioned appeal to the people, the business community and the philanthropic organisations to gear up their efforts and send winterized tents, blankets, food and clothing for those who lost everything in the 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

He asked the people to send their donations to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the earthquake in Turkiye. He said it was bitter cold in the earthquake affected areas and urgent help was required to save precious lives.

**IMF staff-level talks conclude positively, discussion on MEFP from Monday: Dar**

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Ishaq Dar said on Friday that after positive conclusion of staff-level talks on the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would start virtual discussion on the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) from Monday.

"Good news is [that] as per their commitment, the team has gone according to their plan. As per their commitment, we have received MEFP. The draft is with us, we will study it and from Monday we will engage in virtual discussion with the fund," Dar said while addressing a press conference on the completion of IMF staff-level visit to Pakistan.

Once completed and approved by the IMF Executive Board, Pakistan would receive the next tranche of SDR 894 million (\$1.2 billion), the finance minister said.

The minister said, the ten-day dialogue with IMF concluded positively and there was no ambiguity on anything. The final round was held on Thursday during which "we mutually agreed and finalized all the things".



He said there was mutual understanding to complete the programme, for the second time in the country's history, adding the government was committed to fulfill its sovereign commitments.

The minister said the team had also a courtesy zoom meeting with Prime Minister, wherein the PM said that the things agreed by the finance team would be implemented.

Talking about the outcomes of the negotiations, the minister said the policy package with IMF included Rs 170 billion fiscal measures. He said it was agreed to generate additional Rs 170 billion new taxes, however, added the government would not impose any such taxes that would directly impact the

common man. He said, for imposing new taxes, a new finance bill may be presented in the parliament.

He said that it was agreed to increase the financial volume of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) by Rs40 billion and take it from the existing Rs360 billion to Rs 400 billion to provide relief to the commoners.

Dar said that the government was committed to reform the energy sector to reduce the losses. He said the cost of electricity generation was Rs30,000 billion whereas recovery was just Rs18,000 billion, which results in huge losses. He said the government prioritized implementing energy reform and do away with untargeted subsidies. The finance minister said the

government was also committed to zero debt in the gas sector to rationalize the sector. He that the government also pursued the agenda for Privatization to stop the bleeding of resources.

To a question, he expressed the hope that the government would receive payment from friendly countries as per their commitments on the international forum.

Dar said that because of the bad policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, a credibility gap developed between Pakistan and IMF. He said that the PTI government was responsible for the current economic situation.

Earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a statement said, considerable progress was made on policy measures to address domestic and external imbalances.

It said virtual discussions would continue in the coming days to finalize the implementation details of these policies.

The statement said, the IMF mission led by Nathan Porter visited Islamabad during January 31 – February 9 to hold discussions under the ninth review of the authorities' program supported by IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement.

**Two soldiers martyred in IED blast in Balochistan's Kohlu**



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Two soldiers were martyred after an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded near them during a "sanitisation operation" in Balochistan's Kohlu area, the military's media wing confirmed on Friday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), based on credible intelligence, a sanitisation operation was initiated on February 10 in the Kohlu area of Balochistan to deny terrorists any liberty of action. During the operation, an IED exploded close to the leading party.

Resultantly, two officers — Major Jawad and Captain Sagheer — embraced martyrdom and laid their lives in defence of the motherland against an externally perpetrated threat.

**PTI's leaves behind a trail of plunder & destruction, says Marriyum**

News Desk

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) during its four years of rule at the Centre and 10 years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa did nothing for the welfare of the common man rather than leaving behind a trail of plunder and destruction.

The incumbent government would eventually revive the economy by focusing on national development and prosperity with the ultimate objective of self-reliance, she said addressing a press conference.

Flanked by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi, the minister said the Imran Khan-led regime had signed the agreement with the International Monetary Fund on tough conditions and then itself violated its provisions, and the present government had no option but

to renegotiate for the revival of the economy.

She said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif as prime minister had successfully negotiated the IMF programme in 2014, and during its implementation, not a single rupee increase in the prices of daily-use commodities and utilities was witnessed. Resultantly, no burden was passed on to the common people.

The minister said PML-N's Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz had launched a campaign to reorganize the party by holding conventions and meeting with workers across the country.

For organizing the party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maryam Nawaz was now in Hazara Division. She had addressed a workers' convention on Thursday and today met members of the party's women and social media wings in Abbottabad, she added.

## Maritime Expo

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, being presented with a memento at Pakistan Maritime Expo's Session on "Ocean Governance and Development of Blue Economy", at Conference Marquee, Expo Centre on Friday.



Photo: PID

## LHC orders ECP to hold Punjab by-polls in 90 days

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to organise by-polls in Punjab within three months.

The LHC's Justice Jawad Hassan announced the reserved verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition seeking the court orders for Punjab by-polls.

In a 16-page short verdict, the high court ordered the election commission for organising by-polls in Punjab within 90 days.

The LHC directed the electoral watchdog to issue the election schedule in accordance with the Constitution.

It further stated that the elections should be conducted



ed within 90 days after the dissolution of the assembly in accordance with the Constitution.

However, it is not clear in the law who will announce the date of elections in case of dissolution of assemblies, it added.

In light of the court's decisions, the ECP is possessing the mandate to conduct elections as an independent and impartial institution.

Earlier in the day, Justice Jawad Hassan heard a plea filed by PTI Secretary General Asad Umar seeking direction to the Punjab governor to immediately announce the date of elections in the province.

The Inspector General of Punjab Police, Dr Usman Anwar and the chief secretary appeared before the court.

During the course of

proceedings, Punjab IGP assured the court they will follow whatever decision was made by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The Punjab governor's lawyer maintained that Balighur Rehman was not bound to give a date for elections as an interim cabinet had already been formed. He pleaded with the court to return the pleas as inadmissible with a fine on the petitioner.

PTI's counsel Barrister Ali Zafar, while responding to the governor's lawyer, said President Arif Alvi could give an election date as the IGP and chief secretary had assured of performing their duties. He said the president could announce the date through a notification.

## Pakistan, France sign roadmap for bilateral cooperation

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Secretary General of Foreign Ministry of France Anne-Marie Descôtes signed Pakistan-France Roadmap for Bilateral Cooperation, agreeing to strengthen partnership in political, economic, development, defence, security, education, culture, multilateral and other domains.

Pakistan, France sign roadmap for bilateral cooperation

The agreement was reached during the 14th round of Pakistan-France Bilateral Political Consultations held in Paris on Friday.

Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan led the Pakistan side while Secre-



tary-General of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Anne-Marie Descôtes led the French side. Ambassador of Pakistan to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmad and other senior officials assisted the Foreign Secretary.

With shared desire and commitment to reinforce ties, the 'Roadmap for Bilateral Cooperation' envisages deepening rela-

tions in all fields of mutual interest including high level exchanges and cooperation in political, economic, development, science and technology, education, culture, tourism, defence, security and counter-terrorism, migration, climate change and multilateral domains.

The two sides had a comprehensive exchange of views on bilateral coopera-

tion, and regional and multilateral issues. The Foreign Secretary conveyed Pakistan's profound appreciation for President Macron's participation in the Geneva Conference on 9 January 2023 and strong support pledged by France for resilient reconstruction of flood-affected areas of Pakistan.

Noting that the meeting between President Macron and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2022 had imparted fresh momentum, the Foreign Secretary stressed the importance of regular high-level political contacts to provide guidance and impetus for enhancing broad-based mutually bene-

## Renowned poet Amjad Islam Amjad passes away

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Literary icon and renowned Urdu poet and columnist Amjad Islam Amjad passed away in Lahore on Friday.

According to a private news channel, he died due to cardiac arrest at the age of 78. Amjad Islam Amjad was born on 4 August 1944 in Lahore. He had also been writing drama series, columns, and lyrics (nazm).

Amjad Islam authored more than 40 books in his career that span over 50 years. He received many awards for his literary work and screenplay for TV, including Pride of Performance and Sitara-e-Intiaz. Some of the most-acclaimed TV series he wrote for



PTC include Waris, Dehleez, Samandar, Waqt, Fishaar, Raat, Din, Eendhen, and Inkaar. He had also written some plays for children including Jadu Ki Sheeshi, Bahadur Shehzada, and Daal Mei Kala. Of the 40 books he authored, most were in the poetry niche including Itne Khwab Kahan Rakhun Gaa, Baarish Ki Awaz, Phir Yun Huwa, Zindagi Ke Meley Mein, Nazdeek, Yahin Kahin, and Sapne Baat Nahi Karte (lyrics).

## Uninterrupted supply of medicines to be ensured: Qadir

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel has said that effective measures were being taken to ensure an uninterrupted supply of medicines in the country.

In a statement, the minister said in this regard all necessary arrangements had been made and strategy had been chalked out for the availability of medicines.

He said there would be no compromise on the pricing of medicines keeping in view its burden on patients.

He said a meeting was held in Karachi between the officials of the Ministry of National Health Services



and the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacture Association (PPMA). The objective of the meeting was to make sure that all medicines are available in the market, he added.

He said the government was well aware of the problems of the citizens and taking sincere steps to give maximum relief to them

## Armed man arrested outside Imran's residence

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The law enforcing agencies on Friday arrested an armed man outside Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan's residence in Lahore.

As per details, the man identified as Zazarullah was taken into custody after he reached near the barrier fixed outside Khan's residence. The police during the search of Zazarullah recovered a pistol from his custody. Further investigation was underway.

Earlier this week, former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan claimed that two assassins from South Waziristan had been hired to assassinate him.

## Maryam Nawaz stops Capt Safdar from giving 'policy statements'

## News Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz has stopped Capt Retired Safdar Awan from delivering 'policy statements' after he criticised the party's leadership, ARY News reported on Friday.

The PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz took notice of Capt Retd Safdar Awan's statements, criticising the party leadership. Sources said that Capt Safdar was stopped from giving 'policy statements'. Maryam Nawaz ordered PML-N leaders to refrain from giving statements creating differences in the political party.

The development came after Capt Safdar criticised PML-N leadership during an interview with ARY News.

Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz leader Captain (retired) Safdar said he is not seeing Maryam Nawaz as prime minister in near future.

"Not seeing Maryam Nawaz as PM in near future," Captain (retired) Safdar Awan said in his exclusive interview with ARY News.

The PML-N leader said the 'vote ko izzat do' narrative of the party was buried on the day when PML-N decided to vote to ensure an extension to the former COAS Qamar Javed Bajwa. Safdar said he thinks whoever vote for Qamar Javed Bajwa's extension except for Pervaiz Rasheed, are 'convicts.'

He said Nawaz Sharif was the man who 'challenged' the status quo and later he was 'deceived' by some of

the party leaders. He vowed to expose the team which 'deceived' the former prime minister.

In reply to a question, Maryam Nawaz's husband said the parliamentarians should not change their loyalties. It is not right to win elections on PTI's tickets and later change your loyalties for power, he maintained.

Safdar was of the view that elections in Punjab and KP should be delayed and went on to say to hold general elections in 2025 after the recovery of the economy.

The PML-N leader regretted his personal attacks on Imran Khan and political rivalry should remain political, not personal.

We all have shortcomings in our life, that should not be exploited in a political rivalry, he added.

## Turkish envoy commends PM Sharif's role in helping quake victims

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador Dr Yousaf Junaid on Friday commended the active role of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in helping quake victims of Turkey.

Pakistan had given prompt response to Turkey soon after a high-intensity earthquake that ravaged parts of the Turkish and Syrian region, he said while talking to the state news channel programme.

## 'Not seeing Maryam Nawaz as PM in near future', says Safdar

## Bureau Report

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پاکستانی حکومت اور عوام اس مشکل گھڑی میں اپنے ترک بہن بھائیوں کے ساتھ ہے

وزیر اعظم ریلیف فنڈ برائے متاثرین زلزلہ ترکیہ

**G-12166**

Account Title:  
Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Türkiye Earthquake Victims

IBAN: PK18NBPA0001004182864740  
Bank: National Bank of Pakistan

وزیر اعظم پاکستان کے قائم کردہ ریلیف فنڈ برائے متاثرین زلزلہ ترکیہ میں دل کھول کر امداد کریں

بشکریہ کونسل آف پاکستان نیوز پیپر ایڈیٹرز

CPNE COUNCIL OF PAKISTAN NEWSPAPER EDITORS

#PMReliefFundForTürkiye #PakStandsWithTürkiye

# 14th Karachi Literature Festival explores Possibilities and Solutions in these unprecedented times

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI : Oxford University Press (OUP), organizer and producer of Karachi Literature Festival (KLF) held a press conference at The Arts Council Karachi to announce the salient features of the 14th edition of the KLF. Lovers of literature, culture and the arts will finally get the chance to interact with their favorite literary luminaries, celebrities, academics and scholars.

The theme of this year's KLF is People, Planet and Possibilities focusing on the current economic and geo-political challenges facing Pakistan, the impact of climate change resulting in catastrophic floods in Pakistan and recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria and exploring possibilities through thought-provoking panel discussions and book launches.

Keynote speeches will be delivered by Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Noor ul Huda Shah, an eminent author and poet at the inauguration; Shehan Karunatilaka, Booker Prize winner for 2022 and veteran journalist and author Ahmed

Rashid at the closing ceremony. There will be over 200 speakers including 10 international speakers from eight countries (Pakistan, UK, US, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Germany and France). As always, the KLF 2023, like the ones before aims to encourage thought-provoking discussions providing an environment of openness, pluralism, and intellectual discourse.

There will be over 60 sessions, including 24 book launches with a mix of both Urdu and English. All sessions will be broadcast live around the world on OUP's social media channels. Visitors and the online audience will also have the chance to enjoy Urdu and English poetry readings, feature film and a series of short independent film screenings. A first this year will be the presence of two Booker Prize winning authors, Damon Galgut in 2021 and Shehan Karunatilaka for 2022.

A total of 7 literary awards for Pakistani authors will be announced at the opening ceremony. The prizes will recognise pioneering work in Urdu prose and poetry, and English fiction, which are sponsored by Getz Phar-

ma. KLF also celebrates the diversity of languages and cultures across the country by recognising the best books in Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi and Pashto languages. These awards are supported by the Little Book Company.

Speaking at the press conference, Arshad Saeed Hussain, Managing Director, OUP said, "This year our theme is People, Planet and Possibilities reflecting the major issues that we face viz-a-viz the economy, natural disasters, climate change and our response to these crises. We are excited to once again bring together a diverse group of writers, thinkers, and literary enthusiasts from Pakistan and around the world to share their stories, ideas, and perspectives. This festival is a testament to the power of the written word and the vital role it plays in shaping our communities."

The 14th KLF will feature live sessions with prominent literary figures, including Muneeza Shamsie, Tariq Rehman, Yasmeen Hamid, Anwar Maqsood, Moni Mohsin, Hameed Shahid, Zulfiqar Kalhoro, Iftikhar Arif, Kishwar Naheed among



others. Visitors will also have the opportunity to join discussions on current affairs, education and ed tech, climate justice and importance of Leadership and D&I with experts such as Rashheedah Watts, Ishrat Husain, Michael Kugelmann, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Jehan Ara, Miftah Ismael, Ikram Sehgal, Nadeem Hussain, Syed Salim Raza, Hamid Khan, Makhdoom Ali Khan, and Raza Rabbani. The festival will

also include panel discussions featuring celebrities such as Khaled Anam, Bee Gul, Sanam Saeed, Sarwat Gillani and Bilal Maqsood among others.

The festival organizers are grateful for this year's title sponsor, Habib Bank Ltd (HBL) for their generous support and appreciate the contribution extended by Getz Pharma, EBM, NEO Paints, the British Deputy High Commission, the British Council, US Consulate and

Lincoln's Corner, the French Embassy, Goethe Institut, NBP Funds, UBL Funds, Engro, Soya Supreme, Tapal, Gerry's, Divvy and Herbion. A Special thanks to SMS Security for continuing to partner with us.

The organizers of the 14th KLF are excited to welcome visitors and look forward to the exciting days of enlightening experience and memorable moments.

## Repairing

KARACHI: A worker busy is repairing of a traffic signal at Albela Chowk, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## First look of 'HUEY TUM AJNABI' now launched



**News Desk**

LAHORE : The trailer of 'HUEY TUM AJNABI' starring Mikhaal Zulfiqar and Sadia Khan has been launched in nationwide cinemas. Written and directed by Kamran Shahid, the movie is set to be released on Eid ul Fitr featuring all-time favorite and veteran artists like Sohail Ahmed, Mehmood Aslam, Shafiqat Cheema, Samina Pirzada, Ayesha Umer, Shamoona Abbasi, Aly Khan and filmstar Shahid in pivotal roles.

The first look trailer provided the viewers with a chance to snap back into an untold love story happening

in the background of 1971 war, when Nizam and Zeenat met in the corridors of history at a strange time. The intense and epic love story is a phenomenal flashback into one of the most captivating romantic stories under the banner of Shahid Films. The film is being distributed by Mandviwalla Entertainment in Pakistan.

The press conference recorded the attendance of movie cast as well as showbiz reporters who were eager to know more about the movie and its background context. The movie has geared the audience for its exciting launch with an exceptional star cast, mega-scale production and cinematic

grandeur around Eid-ul-Fitr.

While talking about the trailer screening of the movie, the renowned anchor Kamran Shahid who recently appeared to be the writer and director of the movie said, "The production of 'Huey Tum Ajanabi' depicts the most enthralling love story of past that went unheard and untold in the chaos of war. The movie starring Mikhaal Zulfiqar and Sadia Khan as lead characters' dwells into the history of souls that were connected beyond borders. Huey Tum Ajanabi hopefully will exceed viewer's expectations by building fresh and uncommon romantic narrative in war histories."

## People's urgent need for clean drinking water: Mian Ejaz

**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: Political interventions had a profound impact on the performance of the institutions. Problems in the society cannot be solved without giving autonomy to the institutions. These views were expressed by Jamaat-e-Islami's nominated candidate MPA, PP-115 Mian Ejaz Hussain while reviewing the work of improving the sewerage system and gas supply in the area. Mian Altaf Hussain Mian Atiqur Rehman, Rana Taha Khan was also with him. He said adding that the purpose of appointing MPAs as chairman in the institutions is to run the institutions according to their wishes. This move should end now. From the police to all the local institutions, whole the local institutions are under political influence. Their freedom is very important to get transparency.

Mian Ejaz Hussain further elaborated and focused that, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and MD WASA Faisalabad should review the demands of the people & there is an urgent need for clean drinking water in the area and water connections should be installed immediately.

## Responsive Drip Irrigation in Pakistan



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) teamed up with Eva-Anna farms and Responsive Drip Irrigation (RDI) from the United States to host a program called "Responsive Drip Irrigation in Pakistan: A Transformative Water Management Solution to Improve Livelihoods and Climate Resilience. The event took place at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad on Friday. The event was attended by the Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali as Chief guest of the event along with water resources experts, senior scientists & members from NARC, RDI, Eva-Anna farms, INGOs, NDMA, and ICARDA.

According to Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, the Chairman of PARC, combining Regenerative Agriculture with Responsive Drip Irrigation can reduce the waste of water and fertilizer while also preserving the soil's nutritional health. He expressed that Responsive Drip Irrigation has the potential to transform agriculture in water-scarce regions of Pakistan like Thar, Cholistan and Thal deserts. The Chairman emphasized the significance of youth involvement in the agriculture sector and guaranteed that PARC is always ready to offer technical support for agricultural advancements. He added that Responsive Drip Irrigation has been successfully tested at NARC and at farmers' fields. Dr. Bashir Ahmad, the Director of CEWRI at NARC, demonstrated how the system works and spoke about the advantages of water-smart agriculture.

The CEO of Responsive Drip Irrigation (USA/UAE), Ms. Jan Gould, stated that Responsive Drip Irrigation is an incredibly efficient system that can double crop yields using half the water, increase crop biodiversity, and decrease the risk of chemical contamination in food. She highlighted that RDI is straightforward to operate and maintain as it doesn't require complex machinery. Ms. Jan emphasized the importance of locally producing Responsive Drips to make the system more cost-effective. At the conclusion of the session, the attendees had a chance to engage with the Chairman of PARC and representatives from PARC and RDI. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali expressed his appreciation to the RDI team for introducing innovative technology to Pakistan.

## Justice Raja Saeed Akram calls on President Barrister Sultan Mahmood

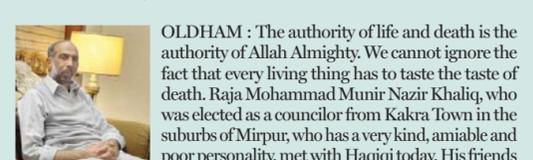


**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Azad Jammu and Kashmir Supreme Court Justice Raja Saeed Akram called on President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry here on Friday. During the meeting the duo discussed in detail the issues of mutual interest. They also discussed the issue of filling the vacant posts of High Court judges and members of the service tribunal, the performance and progress of the Accountability Bureau. Meanwhile, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry felicitated the newly elected president of RIUJ Mr Abid Abbasi, General Secretary Tariq Ali Virk and other office bearers of the forum. Barrister Chaudhry hailed the forum for its significant contribution in the development and prosperity of Pakistan and highlighting Kashmir cause nationally and internationally.

## Raja Mohammad Munir Nazir Khaliq passes away

**Arif Chaudhry**



OLDHAM : The authority of life and death is the authority of Allah Almighty. We cannot ignore the fact that every living thing has to taste the taste of death. Raja Mohammad Munir Nazir Khaliq, who was elected as a councillor from Kakra Town in the suburbs of Mirpur, who has a very kind, amiable and poor personality, met with Haqiqi today. His friends and family are deeply saddened by his sudden death. Political and social business personalities Raja Maqsood Hussain Kakarvi, prominent journalist Arif Chaudhry, Raja Sagheer Kakarvi, Muhammad Fayyaz Bashir, Chaudhry Muhammad Ishaq, Nadeem Zulfiqar Chaudhry, Chaudhry Iqbal, Javed Iqbal Advisor to the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Raja Marwat Hussain, Councillor Shahid Mushtaq, former Mayor Atiqur Rehman, Ghazala Rana, Deputy Mayor Dr. Zahid Chauhan, Raja Amjad Hussain, Naseem Khan, Maulana Abdul Shkur Qadri.

## ACCA Talent Trends survey reveals accountancy talent crunch in Pakistan

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: The world of work has gone through the biggest transformation in a generation and a new era has begun. In Pakistan 55% of finance professionals expect to move to roles in the next 12 months, and a further 26% over the next two years.

In one of the largest ever studies across the accountancy profession, ACCAs (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) new annu-

al Global Talent Trends Survey 2023 provides a unique and vital view of how people feel about working in the profession right now.

Over 8,000 professional accountants from 148 countries, including Pakistan, were asked about the concerns they held around work in the future as well as aspirations for their careers. The survey also assessed key workplace issues such as employee engagement, wellbeing, and attitudes to technology adoption.

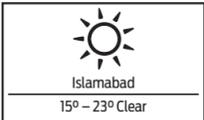
The research highlights a talent crunch for employers as they struggle to retain staff with big career mobility ambitions and an eye on their next role. Meanwhile the biggest worries for employees in Pakistan are inflation, wellbeing, career opportunities and the risk of a global economic downturn.

At a time of significant workforce change, and a challenging global economic climate, the survey indicates that a career in accountancy remains

a smart choice for those seeking long-term career prospects and possibilities to continually acquire new skills. The opportunity to acquire a professional qualification which affords cross-sectoral and international mobility further adds to the perception that choosing accountancy leads to a career with choices and flexibility.

Assad Hameed Khan, head of ACCA Pakistan said: 'Attracting the next generation of talent to Pakistan's accountancy profession is vital to a healthy economy.





**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**  
 Fajr ..... 5:33 am  
 Zohr ..... 12:22 pm  
 Asr ..... 4:09 pm  
 Maghrib ..... 5:47 pm  
 Isha ..... 7:11 pm

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

**Women Police Stations**  
 Islamabad ..... 9222596  
 Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

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

**HOSPITALS**  
 CMH ..... 561111  
 MH ..... 561116  
 Cantt Hospital ..... 9270907-11  
 DHQ ..... 5556311-4  
 RGH ..... 9290301-7  
 Holy Family ..... 9290322-7  
 PIMS ..... 9261170-79

# Raja Pervez offers support and solidarity to Syrian people

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf, today, held a meeting with the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Ramez Alraee, at the Parliament House in Islamabad to offer condolences and support in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that has impacted Syria. Speaker Ashraf expressed his heartfelt sympathies to the Syrian people and conveyed the solidarity of the Pakistani people in the face of this tragedy. He stated, "The people of Pakistan stand with our Syrian brothers and sisters in this difficult time and we will do everything in our power to support them. The loss of life and destruction caused by the earthquake is truly heart-breaking and our thoughts and prayers are with the affected families."



He also extended prayers for the Syrian PM and his family who were hurt badly by the recent quake. Ambassador Alraee expressed his gratitude for the outpouring of support and condolences from the government and people of Pakistan, thanking Speaker Ashraf for his sincere sentiments and for the heartfelt condolences offered on behalf of the National Assembly and the Pakistani people. He also took the opportunity to thank Pakistan for its support during the 1973 war. While commenting on the overall situation of the country, he acknowledged the improvement

in the security situation in recent years but expressed his discomfort over the international sanctions impacting the progress and development of Syria. This meeting between Speaker Ashraf and Ambassador Alraee is a testament to the strong relationship between Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the commitment of the Pakistani people to stand in solidarity with their Muslim brethren in their time of need.

## Government should support the private education sector: Malik Abrar

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: Malik Abrar Hussain, Central President of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, said that the government should support the private education sector engaged in the educational development of Pakistan. The private education sector is playing an active role in increasing the literacy rate and providing modern education in the country. A program held in Punjab Group of Colleges Dharnai campus. Where honorable principals, education experts and teachers of private and public sector participated.

All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association Central President Malik Abrar Hussain said that the private sector is playing an active role in educational development. The government should support the private educational institutions involved in the development of the education sector. Vice President and former advisor to Chief Minister Punjab Rana Sohail Ahmed, Rawalpindi Division President Irfan Muzaffar Kayani, Rawalpindi District President Malik Hafeezur Rahman, Potohar Town President Sardar Anees Iqbal and Imran Ali Durran were also present on this occasion. Principal Professor Muhammad Waseem also said on this occasion that scholarships should be given to intelligent and weak students, while private educational institutions which do not have laboratories, will be provided with free practical facilities.

## AIOU inks MoU with AlAzhar University



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Al Azhar University, Egypt, the oldest and most prestigious educational institution of Islam. According to the MoU, both universities will initiate joint projects to collaborate academically to offer new educational programs and opportunities for faculty and students exchange programs. Furthermore, both universities will start a joint degree program in the future and faculty members from each other's universities will be able to do Ph.D. and post-doc from respective universities. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood and Prof. Dr. Salama Daoud, President, Al Azhar University, Egypt signed the MoU. Dr. Nasir said that the training of faculty members is necessary to increase the quality of education, for which there is a special focus on collaborations with international universities. Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director, International Collaboration and Exchange Program gave a detailed briefing on the profile of the university.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day: Honoring the Courage of the Brave

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: To show unity with the people of Indian-Occupied Kashmir, their ongoing freedom struggle, and to pay homage to the martyrs of the freedom movement of Kashmir, a week-long activities was organized in all Federal Government Educational Institutions (Cantts / Garrisons) across the country. Debates, Tableau, solidarity walks, human chain are some of the activities. These activities were performed to show solidarity with the 10 million residents of the Indian illegally occupied territory of Kashmir who have been facing torture under a lockdown. The day was observed to show that the entire Pakistani nation stand with its Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their valiant struggle to achieve the legitimate right to self-determination. It is our firm belief that the Kashmiri will succeed in their struggle.

## K-Electric files generation tariff petition for its power plants

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: K-Electric has filed tariff petition for its power generation plants with the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for the period commencing from July 01, 2023, till their remaining licensed useful lives. The petition has been admitted by the Regulatory Authority for KE's generation segment comprises of six thermal based power plants. Through this petition, KE has proposed a tariff for remaining life of generation plants with structure in line with IPPs where expenditures are allowed through Fixed and variable O&M. This will help to have visibility and align the tariff structure with CTBCM requirement and industry practice.

# PPAF-NI ink MoU for the health and wellbeing of marginalised communities

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), and Nutrition International (NI) have entered into an agreement to work together to enhance Nutritional and Social development of the vulnerable, especially mothers and children in all geographic areas of Pakistan. Mr Nadir Gul Barech, COO, PPAF, and Dr Shabina Raza, Country Director, NI, formally signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard on behalf of respective organizations. PPAF and NI would engage different level of stakeholders including communities to contribute to achieve the goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and various socio-economic development plans laid down by



the Government of Pakistan. Mr Nadir Gul Barech, while commenting on the collaboration, said, "Inadequate nutrition among mothers, especially during the pregnancy, and a high ratio of stunting in children should be taken as a serious concern and addressed as a collective national resolve. Responding to this critical challenge is also important to bring a positive impact in the lives of communities that are lagging behind in socio-economic development of the underprivi-

leged communities which is one of the key priorities of PPAF. We look forward to work with NI therefore to play a vital role in ensuring the wellbeing of vulnerable communities, especially pertaining to their dietary needs and address the issue of malnutrition, especially among women and children across Pakistan." Dr Shabina Raza on the occasion said, "I appreciate PPAF and its management for joining hands for the cause of malnutrition." She added further that "I am sure that this collaboration will pave way to leverage each other's strengths and expertise for improving the health and well-being of women, adolescent girls, and children particularly at the grass root level and we are looking forward to a long and successful partnership to achieve the objectives agreed under the MoU." While implementing the initiative, Nutrition International will provide technical assistance in module development related to nutrition, fortified food, iodized salt, IFA, KMC, vitamin A, Zinc etc., besides building the capacity of the project staff on relevant subjects. PPAF would provide various kinds of facilitation during the implementation of the initiative including identifying the target districts and local partners in consultation with the Provincial Adviso-

## Metro donates safety masks to CDA for health and sanitary workers



Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: METRO Pakistan, market leader in retail and wholesale sector, donated 10,000 safety masks for health and sanitary workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Islamabad. The safety masks were handed over by Mr. Pervaiz Akhtar, Director Corporate Affairs METRO to Mr. Noor ul Amin Mengal, Chairman CDA at a meeting held at the CDA office.

Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Pervaiz Akhtar, Director Corporate Affairs METRO said: "METRO has donated the safety masks, as part of its METRO Care & Share initiative, which has in the past also provided relief through essential food and safety supplies to the effectees of national calamities, like recent floods and earthquakes, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This very initiative aims at providing necessary protection to the CDA staff susceptible to health and safety hazards in the line of their duty." At the meeting, it was further agreed that METRO and CDA will partner on environment friendly initiatives including the tree plantation drive in the city. The Chairman CDA thanked the management of METRO Pakistan for the gesture and reaffirmed his vision of providing necessary support to the private sector for enhancing business activity in Islamabad.

# English Works Alumni Meet & Greet ceremony held at NUML

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The English Works alumni meet & greet was held at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on Friday. English Works is a U.S. funded program being implemented by the NUML at its main campus and Rawalpindi branch, with strength of 100 students each. Alumni of the first cohort also attended to share their experience, learnings and success stories with the participants of the second cohort. Director General NUML Brig Syed



Nadir Ali was the chief guest of the ceremony while Pro Rectors, Deans, Directors, faculty members and participants of the EW were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion DG NUML Brig Syed Nadir Ali said that it is a great opportunity for the participants to learn vari-

ous skills so as to excel in life and respective fields. He applauded the success stories of the Alumni and urged the Regional English Language Office (RELO) US Embassy to broaden the canvas of this program to the other parts of the country as NUML has campuses in all major cities of Pakistan. He thanked RELO for its continuous trust in NUML for undertaking the project. It is pertinent to mentioned that training these 200 students, the program focuses on use of English in professional world, Employability skills and common international values of cross-cultural competence, tolerance, harmony and UN SDG's, enabling Pakistani youth to secure better opportunities for education and jobs at home and abroad and initiate startups through training in entrepreneurial skills.

# Turkiye Earthquake: Funeral prayers in absentia offered in Faisal Masjid

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayers in absentia for the people of Turkiye and Syria who lost their lives in the recent huge earthquake were offered in Faisal Masjid on Friday. Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci, Diplomats of Islamic countries, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, President of International Islamic University (IIU) Dr. Hathal Hamoud Al-Otaibi, Vice Presidents of IIU, well-known social figures and a large number of citizens attended the funeral prayers in absentia.



On this occasion, faithful prayed for the eternal peace of Turkish and Syrian Muslims who died in the earthquake, while prayers were also offered for the unity of the Ummah. Mehmet Pacaci, the Ambassador of Turkey, while

talking to the media after the funeral prayers said that the we are thankful to President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister, other government officials and the entire Pakistani nation for the solidarity they have shown. He said that Pakistan's aid operations in Turkey are exemplary. He said aid supplies were also sent to Turkiye from Pakistan today. He said that the sympathy and cooperation of Islamic countries with Turkey after this natural disaster is commendable. The Turkish ambassador said that Pakistan had started providing aid from the first day of the earthquake.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** PHATA

"Royal Ghar" Mouza Parial, Main Chakri Road Tehsil & District Rawalpindi comprising an area 223-Kanal& 06-Marla. Public is hereby informed that **Chaudhary Zeeshan Aslam** s/o Muhammad Aslam CNIC#37405-0356917-7 Resident of Main Nazim-ud-Din Road, House No.327, Sector F-11/1 Islamabad. Office #2nd Floor, Waheed Plaza, Main Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area Islamabad has applied to Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency for the sanctioning of a Private Housing Scheme located at Mouza Parial, Main Chakri Road Tehsil & District Rawalpindi under Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency (PHATA) Affordable Private Housing Scheme Rules 2020. The detail of area is as under:-

Khasra No.	Area		
	Kanal	Marla	Sft
5554, 5557, 5525, 5530, 5526, 5525, 5531, 5532, 5533, 5534, 5535, 5536, 5537, 5538, 5539, 5523, 5522, 5521, 5520, 5519, 5518, 5517, 5516, 5515, 5514, 5513, 5512, 5574, 5573, 5572, 5576, 5578, 5579, 5580, 5581, 5594, 5595, 5596, 5597, 5598, 5556, 5555, 5623, 5553, 5848, 5701, 5700, 5586, 5585, 5850, 6622, 6623, 5528, 5508, 5479, 5834, 5835, 5773, 5840, 6869, 5368, 5371, 5369, 5343, 5373, 5360, 5301, 6281, 6280, 766, 5997, 5964, 5300, 6001, 5718, 5719, 5717, 5690, 5689, 5691, 5692, 5834, 5704, 5841, 5842, 5707, 5731, 5701, 5839, 6732, 640, 5368, 767, 5714, 5759, 5834, 6083, 6529	223	06	
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>06</b>	

"Royal Ghar" Mouza Parial, Main Chakri Road Tehsil & District Rawalpindi comprising an area 223-Kanal& 06-Marla or ownership/title documents of land mentioned above may, within **FIFTEEN DAYS** of publication of this notice, submit the same in writing to undersigned. Any objection filed after due date shall not be entertained.

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 PUNJAB HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING AGENCY,  
 AIRPORT LINE ROAD NEAR WATER TANK,  
 GULZAR-E-QUAID RAWALPINDI, PHONE NO.051-5191753

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# Nutrition crisis

**Tooba Khan**

As millions worldwide continue to go hungry, leaders of five international humanitarian, banking and trade organizations Wednesday appealed for further urgent action to prevent the global food and nutrition crisis from worsening.

The heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) called for rescuing "hunger hotspots" and facilitating trade, among other measures.

In a joint statement, they advised countries to balance short-term urgent interventions with longer-term resilience efforts.

"Food inflation remains high in the wake of shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate emergency, Russia's war in Ukraine, supply chain disruptions and rising interest rates," they said in a statement - their third since July.

Nearly 350 million people across 79 countries are acutely food insecure, and undernourishment is on the rise. The situation is expected to worsen, with global food supplies projected to drop to a three-year low.

The need is especially dire in 24 countries identified as hunger hotspots, 16 of which are in Africa.

"We call on governments and donors to support country-level efforts to address the needs in hotspots, share information and strengthen crisis preparedness," the leaders said.

They stressed that WFP and FAO required funds urgently to serve the most vulnerable immediately.

WFP and partners reached a record number of people last year, the UN said in a press release. The agency delivered food and nutrition assistance to more than 140 million thanks to a record-breaking \$14 billion in contributions.

FAO also invested \$1 billion to support more than 40 million people in rural areas with agricultural interventions, while the World Bank provided a \$30 billion food and security package covering a 15-month period ending this July.

Funding must also be mobilized so that the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) can provide concessional financing to poorer countries, while its new Food Shock Window has so far supported Ukraine, Malawi, Guinea and Haiti.

Donors and governments should also support the Global Alliance for Food Security, which promotes greater crisis preparedness.

The organization heads called for facilitating trade, improving the functioning of markets and enhancing the role of the private sector.

"Countries should minimize trade distortions, strengthen

some export bans on wheat and rice, they warned that new restrictions and bans, particularly on vegetables, are hampering availability worldwide.

"Global food security can be strengthened if governments support both food producers and consumers in a smart and targeted manner, such as by strengthening the provision of public goods in ways that improve farm productivity sustainably," they said.

The World Bank has a \$6 billion platform that supports farmers to access fertilizers and other critical supplies, while at the same time helping private companies make longer-term investments, according to the statement.

Countries should also reform and repurpose harmful subsidies for more targeted and efficient programmes towards global food security and sustainable food systems, they said.

"Most of the global social protection response to inflation is in the form of subsidies, half of which are untargeted, inefficient, and costly to already constrained governments," the leaders said.

"Support should be scaled up for countries to strengthen and deploy comprehensive, actionable and shock responsive social protection strategies."

They also highlighted the need to re-examine and reform support to agriculture. While

this amounted to roughly \$639 billion per year between 2016 and 2018, and has been rising since then, farmers received only 35 cents for every dollar spent.

"Much of this support incentivizes inefficient use of resources, distorts global markets, or undermines environmental sustainability, public health, and agricultural productivity," they stated.

Instead, funding should be used to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the agri-food system, including through the adoption of good agricultural practices, research and innovation, and improved infrastructure.

"Action is already underway to address underlying structural challenges in social protection and in the food and fertilizer markets, but more concerted action across these three key areas is needed to prevent a prolonged crisis," they noted.

The leaders began their statement by offering their deepest sympathies to the people of Türkiye and Syria in the wake of the deadly and devastating earthquakes this week.

"Our organizations are closely monitoring the situation, assessing the magnitude of the disaster, and working to mobilize necessary support in accordance with each organization's mandates and procedures," the leaders added.

## Weekly inflation records 34.83pc jump from last year

The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.17 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on February 09, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 228.17 points as compared to 227.79 points during the past week, according to PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 34.83 percent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed a 0.06 percent decrease and went up to 233.61 points from last week's 233.76 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption group from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175; and above Rs 44,175 witnessed an increase of 0.02 percent, 0.10 percent, 0.14 percent and 0.22 percent respectively.

On the other hand decrease is observed in the prices of Onions (9.83%), Tomatoes (5.40%), Eggs (3.40%), Wheat Flour (2.71%) and Sugar (0.31%) The items which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) basis included onions (9.83%), tomatoes (5.40%), eggs (3.40%), wheat flour (2.71%) and sugar (0.31%), according to the data.

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included potatoes (7.15%), chicken (6.94%), bananas (6.53%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (5.67%), rice basmati broken (3.80%), rice irri-6/9 (3.64%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (2.71%), cooking oil 5 kg (2.60%), pulse mash (2.42%) and garlic (2.20%), pulse moong (2.20%) LPG (3.06%) and cigarettes (2.25%).

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the commodities that witnessed a decrease in prices included tomatoes (57.76%), chillies powdered (12.43%) and electricity for q1 (12.31%).

The commodities that witnessed an increase in prices on a YoY basis included, , onions (507.98%), chicken (93.21%), diesel (81.41%), eggs (79.19%), rice basmati broken (68.92%), petrol (68.77%), rice irri-6/9 (68.26%), pulse moong (66.30%), tea packet (63.92%), bananas (61.88%), pulse gram (56.80%), bread (50.66%), lpg (50.41%), pulse mash (50.25%) and salt powdered (46.46%).



Amjad Rasmi

## Youth Programme – an opportunity for unemployed to excel

**Mirza Abdul Rehman**

Young generation, especially the students, economists, researchers and emerging businessmen always prove to be the backbone of any country as they put in maximum efforts for creating strong economies and invincible nations.

Nations across the globe regardless of caste, creed and colour fully employ such squads to lay down sound economic, cultural and educational foundations not only for self-sufficiency but to compete internationally.

Therefore, the governments in respective countries off and on introduce programmes and policies to get optimum benefit from abilities of their youth by involving them in a variety of nation-building activities, and Pakistan is less to none.

The recent remarkable initiative of reviving the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan scheme speaks volumes of the present government's commitment to cultivate and advance business to empower youth that comprises a big chunk of the country's total population.

"Such initiatives are a blessing for people like us in an era when there is economic recession and it is hard to get desired jobs," said Salman Ali, a youngster who is in search of a job after completing Mechanical Engineering degree.

Terms and conditions will be simple and mark up lesser as 15 commercial, Islamic and SME banks will be providing loans to set up new as well as extension of the existing business, performing as catalyst for economic empowerment of the youth.

"Empowering youth is one of the top priorities of the government," said Prime Minister's

Special Assistant on Youth Affairs, Shaza Fatima Khawaja. "It is our history that whenever the PML-N comes into power, it launches multiple schemes for students, unemployed youth and the small businessmen."

She said, "Through its youth and agriculture loan programme, the government aims to providing financial assistance to talented youth for reducing unemployment and promoting a culture of self-employment to reduce extra burden on national kitty."

"Pakistani youth are talented, hardworking and passionate to compete in international market and fully benefit from opportunities provided them to grow and prosper," she stated.

As unemployment and inflation were touching new heights due to global recession and unwise decisions of the previous PTI government, empowerment scheme would provide breathing space for the poverty stricken people.

Arifa Fatima who is already running a stitching business at small scale also pinned hopes in this endeavor as she thinks, "it will pave way for exploiting entrepreneurial potential of youth."

"Provision of business loans on simple terms and conditions and with lesser markup will encourage people like us to fully utilize our energies for better earning as well as contribute to economic development of the country," she stated.

"It was my long cherished desire to expand business but paucity of resources always hampered me," she said. "But, this opportunity will definitely help me expand my business and create jobs for other people as well."

"Special persons were often considered as a burden for their families as well as society. But, this initiative has also raised their hopes to become productive hands by making them

earn a respectable livelihood.

"This is encouraging to include people like me in this scheme," said Haris Kamal. "Special focus on persons with disabilities will ensure their constructive role in economic development, making them equally productive citizens of society."

"Focusing this segment of society is appreciable," remarked Abid Akram, a Disability Rights Activist. "We acknowledge the government's initiative to provide easy loans to youth especially for special persons who form a sizable chunk of society with half among them the female."

He said about 80 percent of the women with disabilities lived in rural areas and lacked access to basic health, education and employment. "Since these women cannot contribute in financial matters of their family, they are considered to be a burden."

"But, Youth Business and empowerment programme will help enable them to be financially independent," Abid Akram said.

"We hope the government will exploit all means to spread information about the programme especially in far-flung areas for creating awareness among people."

Pakistan's agriculture sector has a vast potential and agriculture loans under this scheme are expected to increase investment in this sector and bring revolutionary changes.

Khalid Anwer, an agriculturist also sees better future for farmers especially youth who can promote corporate farming in the country to achieve the goals of self-sufficiency and food security.

"This scheme will help mould the interest of youth to benefit from the potential of agriculture sector making it technology driven for their and the benefit of the country as a whole," he said.

## Familiar with tragedy, Turkey miners rush to help after quake

**Spokesman Report**

When miner Ismail Hakki Kalkan saw people buried under the rubble of Turkey's earthquake, he rushed to help despite living on the opposite side of the tragedy-stricken country.

Kalkan, who has been a miner for eight years, said he felt he had more expertise than most digging through rough terrain since Turkish miners are no strangers to disasters.

"When we watched what was happening here on the TV, we knew that we had to be here and we came," the miner from the Black Sea province of Zonguldak said. Monday's 7.8-magnitude earthquake has killed nearly 22,000 people along a swathe of southeastern Turkey and parts of Syria.

It was too much for Kalkan. "Our hearts couldn't take this," he told AFP, wearing black boots and a high visibility jacket.

He is one of around 30 miners in dust-stained white and yellow helmets in the ancient city of Antakya trying to find survivors trapped under rubble.

Antakya is in Hatay province, one of the worst affected in Turkey.

Turkey, a coal producer, suffered its deadliest coal mining disaster in 2014, which left more than 300 people dead in the western town of Soma.

Late last year dozens died in a similar incident in Amasra, close to Zonguldak.

Kalkan's colleagues stand straight with pickaxes, shovels, sledgehammers, saws and crowbars — their daily tools prepped to save lives. Another miner has large iron wire cutters on his shoulder.

"Words can't describe this" Turgay Acikgoz understands the harsh conditions and emotional turmoil that such catastrophes wreak on rescue workers.

"Mine disasters have been frequent," he said. "We know what this pain feels like, since we have

tasted this pain before... Words can't describe this," the miner said.

The older members of the group remember a 2010 tragedy in Zonguldak, when 30 miners were killed in an explosion.

The most recent incident last year left four miners injured, including two seriously, only three weeks after the Amasra incident killed 42 in a similar type of blast, just 50 kilometres (30 miles) away.

In Antakya, the miners spend much of their time on a large boulevard, where cars wind their way through the ruins of collapsed buildings.

They head towards a building reduced to a pile of rubble. Several people are likely to be under the large, cracked pieces of cement and scrap metal, the anguished survivors tell the miners. A mechanical digger is helping to clear the debris. The head of the group from the Zonguldak mine tells the machine driver to stop smashing through the concrete.

Wearing a white helmet covered with dust, the head demands a blanket.

They have just discovered the body of a child lying in their bed.

**Losing hope** The grief-stricken father in a black hat and scarf carries the body away, holding his child tightly.

A few metres away, a woman with her face drawn stands close to her daughter.

Nesibe Kulubecioglu guides the miners. Her mother-in-law, 80, lives in the same building as her son's family, with only one floor between them.

Kulubecioglu and her daughter fled to safety after the quake hit around 4:00 am (0100 GMT) Monday but they have lost six loved ones. She no longer has any hope of finding people alive and blames the government and the slow arrival of rescuers.

But the mother is still relieved to see the Black Sea miners. With their help, she hopes she will have a body to lay to rest. Only then will she mourn and think about the future.

"We must first find a place to bury them and then start from scratch."

# Pakistan's economic reforms needed to boost productivity, World Bank says

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy can grow sustainably only if the country introduces productivity enhancing reforms that facilitate a better allocation of resources into more dynamic activities, and of talent to more productive uses, according to a new World Bank report.

The report, From Swimming in Sand to High and Sustainable Growth, finds that the country's inability to allocate all its talent and resources to the most productive uses has stunted economic growth. It presents evidence of systematic productivity stagnation across firms and farms. In manufacturing and services, most of the productivity stagnation is related to firms losing efficiency over

time. The report also shows a systematic decline in agricultural productivity, as well as a strong link between elevated temperatures and rainfall variations and productivity.

The report presents a roadmap to reduce distortions in the economy that are currently acting as a deterrent to productivity growth. Critical reforms include: harmonizing direct taxes across sectors, so that more resources flow into dynamic tradable sectors like manufacturing and tradable services, instead of real estate and non-tradables; reduce the anti-export bias of trade policy by lowering import duties and reversing the anti-diversification bias of export incentives.

Productivity is further affected by the fact that Pakistan does not tap into all

of its talent. "Women in Pakistan have made progress in educational attainment, but this accumulated human capital is underused because of constraints they face to participate in the labor force," said Najy Benhassine World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "With only 22 percent of women employed in Pakistan, women's labor force participation is among the lowest in the world. By closing the female employment gap relative to its peers, Pakistan can accrue GDP gains of up to 23 percent. Successful implementation of policies to address

the demand- and supply-side barriers to female labor force participation, can create about 7.3 million new jobs for women."

"Pakistan's economy is at a critical stage. It could be a turning point where long-term structural imbalances that have prevented sustainable growth for too long ought to be addressed urgently. The report puts forward a series of policy recommendations to achieve this in a sequenced way," said Gonzalo J. Varela, Senior Economist and co-author of the Report. "First, reduce

distortions that misallocate resources and talent. Second, support growth of firms through smart interventions, rather than through blanket subsidies. Third, create a positive, dynamic loop between evidence and policymaking, strengthening feasibility analysis of publicly funded projects or programs."

The report urges Pakistan to maximize positive impact on businesses and productivity across the board by: reducing regulatory complexity; harmonizing the general sales tax (GST) across provinces; reforming investment laws to attract more foreign direct investment; and upgrading insolvency laws to reduce the costs of liquidating non-viable firms.

In the meantime, providing safe and affordable mobility especially for women; boosting digital connecti-

ty and digitally enabled jobs; demonstrating the benefits of increased female labor force participation to positively shift entrenched norms; developing skills; and reducing sectoral gender bias are among the top and medium-term recommendations of the report.

"Firms in Pakistan struggle to grow large as they grow old. A young formal firm in Pakistan that has been in operation for 10 to 15 years is about the same size as a firm that has been in operation for more than 40 years. Similarly, an average Pakistani exporter is less than half the size of one in Bangladesh. This shows a lack of dynamism amongst Pakistani firms, compared to better functioning markets, where firms either grow or exit," said Zehra Aslam, Economist and co-author of the report.



## In-house session held with heads of mission of African countries

**City Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an In-House session with Heads of Mission of African countries in Islamabad. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood led the ISSI side.

The distinguished participants included: H.E. Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco; H.E. Mthuthuzeli Madikiza, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa; H.E. Salih Mohammed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig, Ambassador of Sudan; H.E. Ms. M. Nyambura Kamau, High Commissioner of Kenya; H.E. Mr. Rashid Ally Soobadar, High Commissioner of Mauritius; H.E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye, High Commissioner of Nigeria; and Mr. Shirwa Abdullahi Ibrahim, Charge d' Affaires of Somalia.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on the myriad dimensions of Pakistan-Africa relations. The African Envoys shared their thoughts on the level of mutual cooperation and



underscored the desire for deeper collaboration in diverse fields including political, economic and people-to-people exchanges.

Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared a historical perspective on Pakistan-Africa relations and highlighted the main contours of Pakistan's 'Engage Africa' policy. In this context, he noted the

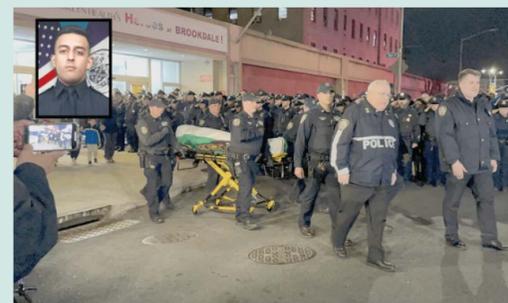
practical steps taken to expand Pakistan's diplomatic footprint in Africa and deepen its economic engagement with the Continent. He added that Pakistan's policy was further driven by the pivot to geo-economics.

Areas of mutual cooperation were identified including prospects for increased trade and investment as well as opportunities in the wake of

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It was agreed to maintain regular mutual dialogue, facilitate interface with the private sector, and strengthen linkages with academic institutions and think-tanks.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, and Amina Khan Director, also spoke on the occasion.

## Slain Pakistani-American police officer Adeed Fayaz laid to rest with full honour



**News Desk**

NEW YORK: The slain Pakistani-American officer of the New York Police Department (NYPD), Adeed Fayaz, was laid to rest Thursday afternoon after an elaborate memorial ceremony and funeral attended by hundreds, including top city officials, friends, family and fellow officers.

The 26-year-old Fayaz, a father of two young children, was off-duty when he was shot and killed last week during an attempted robbery.

His Namaz-i-Janaza held at Makki Masjid in Brooklyn — a borough of New York City — drew a large number of mourners, many in tears.

Pakistan was represented by Consul General Ayesha Ali, who paid tributes to the fallen officer for his dedication to duty.

Pakistani community members were present in full force, including representatives of the prominent political group — the American-Pakistan Public Affairs Committee (APPAC) — Dr Ijaz Ahmad, Asad Chaudhry, Tanveer Chaudhry, Asif Riaz, Naheed Bhatti, Badar Bhatti, Iftikhar Ahmad, and Rizwan Yazzdan.

Although officer Fayaz was off-duty, he was granted the solemn ritual of a line-of-duty funeral.

A motorcycle escort cleared the way for the police ambulance. Highways were closed as the procession made its way to the Makki Masjid, where the service took place.

As his casket was brought out of the ambulance, hundreds of police officers stood at attention and saluted on Brooklyn's Coney Island Avenue which passes through an area called "Little Pakistan."

The officer's wife cradled an American flag as his mother cried uncontrollable tears. NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell spoke at the funeral service for his heartbroken colleagues.

"We cannot allow anger or grief to eternally paralyze us, darken our hearts, test our resolve or break our will to hold those to account for malice in this city," Sewell said.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams also spoke at the funeral service. "I know this community, I know how much you believe in public safety, how much you believe in family, how much you believe in faith," Mayor Eric Adams told those at the funeral.

"This is the moment when we must lean on that faith and ensure that our brother did not lose his life in vain."

## Italian and Pakistani Governments Collaborate to Promote Olive Culture



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan 10th February- 2023-The Olive Culture initiative is a joint effort between the Pakistani government and Italian Cooperation aimed at promoting olive farming and cultivation in Pakistan. As part of the Project, experts from Italy are invited to Pakistan to share their knowledge with local farmers. These experts conducted training sessions in three provinces (KP, Punjab, and Balochistan) for over 800 stakeholders. A recent training session took place at the Sala-huddin Farm in Manki Sharif, Nowshera district, as part of a three-week program on Olive Good Agronomic Practices. The well-kept olive orchard serves as a model for the rest of Pakistan.

Farmers and prominent technicians from the Department of Agriculture Research and Extension from ARI Tarnab, Peshawar University of Agriculture Peshawar, Hazara University Manshera, and NTHRI Shinkiarri were present at the session and appreciated it, emphasizing the importance and benefits of olive cultivation in Pakistan. The session covered the shaping of young olive plants no older than four years, along with hands-on training in olive tree pruning techniques for balancing vegetation, production, nutrition, and irrigation practices.

A delegation from Italy, led by Luca Mastripieri, the Director General of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation AICS, visited the farm and was welcomed by delegates of the Pakistan Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R), the Economic Affairs Division, and the KP provincial government. The delegation addressed farmers, technicians, and students from different parts of KP.

The Director of AICS Pakistan, Ms. Emanuela Benini, expressed her hopes for the olive industry in Pakistan, stating that "Pakistan, especially KP, is fortunate with good soil, and the olive industry in Pakistan can flourish if farmers follow the training and put in an effort to cultivate this plant"

## Relief consignment

ISLAMABAD: Relief consignment of 16.5 tons dispatched by President NDMA to Turkiye through PIA Boeing-777 from Islamabad International Airport.



Photo: APP

## Indian SC rejects plea to ban BBC in India over Modi documentary

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court (SC) of India has rejected a request seeking a ban on BBC in the country over its documentary about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reported local Indian media.

The court, while rejecting the petition filed by Hindu Sena chief Vishnu Gupta who sought a ban on BBC's operations in India, said the request was "misconceived".

"How can a documentary affect the country," Indian media quoted the Supreme Court as saying.

The documentary "India: The Modi Question" looks at the tensions between Modi and the country's Muslim minority, "investigating claims about his role in the 2002 riots that left over a thousand dead."

## Japan provides 12.7 million USD for upgrading Primary Girls' Schools

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has agreed to provide new grant assistance worth 1,686 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to around 12.7 million USD/ around 3,510 million PKR) for upgrading primary girls schools into elementary schools in rural Sindh.

On February 10, 2023, a signing ceremony for the assistance was held at the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Islamabad. H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and other officials from both countries attended this ceremony.

The project has been conceived keeping in view the facts that the number of middle/elementary schools is much lower (2,162) than the primary schools (35,377) in rural Sindh. This particular issue is also adversely affecting the primary school student's retention &



the biggest cause of student's dropout from school. The net enrollment rate for lower-secondary education (grades 6-8) is 49% (boys 53%, girls 45%). Girls in government schools drop out drastically from primary education as the middle or high schools are not available in close vicinity, particularly in rural Sindh. According to Alif Alan, the access-

ibility distance hinders girls' education more (13% dropout due to access) than boys (5% dropout due to access).

This project aims to improve access of girls' middle education by providing school facilities for female students in rural areas of Sindh Province. This is the third grant aid through which Japan will be upgrading 20 new primary girls'

schools into elementary schools, which brings the total number of schools provided with Japan's assistance to 74. The assistance contributes to improve the school enrollment rate and gender equality in the target areas, contributing to the SDGs Goal 4 (Quality education) and 5 (Gender equality).

In the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro stated, "This project will also be implemented in the areas affected by the devastating flood last year. I sincerely hope that this project will contribute to the reconstruction efforts of Pakistani people. And, it is my hope that girls educated in these schools will play an active role in various fields in Pakistan."

Mr. KINOSHITA, while speaking at the event said "As some of the target districts of the project were affected by the flood last year, we hope that the new grant aid project will bring the hope back to the brave & resilient girls' students and keep them motivated so that they remain on track for "learning continuity", during the post floods recovery phase".



# Sports 'top priority' of government: Shaza Fatima

Sports Reporter

ISLAMABAD : Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday said sports were top priority of the federal government and all-out efforts were being made for the promotion and encouragement of games at all levels.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of Women National Volleyball Championship here at the Pakistan Sports Complex, she lauded the women players who featured in the championship. "Women



have been working hard in every field and proving their mettle," she stressed.

"They (women) are no less than men in any field. The government will support volleyball including all sports at all levels," Shaza said.

Efforts were underway to encourage and promote women not only in sports but in every walk of life, she said, adding that support programs for sports persons would be launched so that young girls can come forward from the grassroots level.

Chairman Pakistan Volleyball Feder-

ation Ch. Muhammad Yaqoob said that all-out efforts were afoot to promote women's volleyball. "Pakistan women's team would bag the top position in the South Asian Games," he said.

"Pakistan will also try to qualify for the Olympics. We will emerge victorious in Asia in the next two years," he said.

Yaqoob also asked for the cooperate sector to come forward and support the games. "There is a need for the cooperate sector to help in promoting sports, as it is difficult for the government to do it single-handedly," he urged.

## Mushtaq eyeing a thrill-packed Lahore-Multan opening PSL-8 contest on Feb 13

Sports Desk

MULTAN : Multan Sultans and defending champions Lahore Qalandars are set to open the 8th edition of Pakistan Super League (PSL) on Monday and coach Mushtaq Ahmad believed Multan Sultans, backed by home crowd, would try to keep the momentum in their favour in the action-packed contest on Feb 13.

Arrangements for the PSL-8 are in full swing and Multan Sultans were gearing up in preparations on Friday, two days ahead of the opening match against defending champions Lahore Qalandars.

Mushtaq eyeing a thrill-



packed Lahore-Multan opening PSL-8 contest on Feb 13

Labourers preparing the stage for the event of PSL-8 opening ceremony at Multan Cricket Stadium.

Multan Sultans coach Mushtaq Ahmad told a

news conference that he expected the opening match to be a thrill-packed contest between Multan Sultans and Lahore Qalandars. He said, Multan Sultans, the champions of PSL 2021, would not disappoint the home fanbase.

They would come up with their spirited demonstration of cricketing skills, Mushtaq said adding that all the players were fit and would follow the strategy of demonstrating their natural performance.

Multan Sultans fans support their team in all circumstances and the team would take advantage of the home ground and would try not to let the momentum shift in favour of rivals, the Lahore Qalandars.

He said, PSL has proved its worth as an important international cricket platform and new players would learn a lot while sharing the dressing room and ground with the international cricketers.

## Wales better than Six Nations humbling suggests, says Owens



Sports Desk

EDINBURGH : Wales captain Ken Owens is confident his side can quickly "right the wrongs" of a Six Nations hammering at the hands of Ireland when they face Scotland on Saturday.

Warren Gatland's second spell as Wales boss started in the worst way possible last week with a 34-10 defeat — the nation's heaviest loss at home in the competition for 22 years.

Gregor Townsend's Scotland are buoyant after they beat England 29-23 in a thrilling match at Twickenham to retain the Calcutta Cup.

"I don't think we were as bad last Saturday as a lot of people made out," said Owens.

"Ireland were very good, and there were some lessons in being clinical and accurate. It is something we have emphasised this week and worked on."

Gatland has made five personnel changes, dropping veteran forwards Alun Wyn Jones, Justin Tipuric and Taulupe Faletau from the starting XV that faced Ireland.

"We are on a bit of a journey and growing," said Owens. "It's still early days under new coaches with a new squad."

"We are confident we can bounce back and right the wrongs of last week and be a lot more clinical and a lot more physical."

During his previous stint as Wales boss, between late 2007 and 2019, Gatland had a perfect record against Scotland but the New Zealander believes Townsend's side will be a tough proposition.

"It is all about momentum, and they have created some great momentum from last week," said Gatland.

"They defend well and work hard for each other, they are pretty slick in attack, have continuity with players who have been there for a while and a bench that can make an impact."

"They are probably the strongest I've seen a Scottish team for a long, long time."

## Shadab Khan's royal look from his baraat wins hearts

Sports Reporter

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan all-rounder Shadab Khan got hitched with Saqlain Mushtaq's daughter in a wedding ceremony on Thursday. Dressed in an ivory sherwani with matching turban, the 24-year-old cricketer chose a classy look for his big day.

In several videos circulating online, the Islamabad United captain can be seen happily greeting his guests at the intimate event. His fans and friends also showered best wishes on his new journey. While several said the cricketer was looking dapper



in the royal look.

He also shared his pictures on his official social media accounts. "Alhamdulillah. Today is a blessed day for me and my family. My baraat. I hope I can be a good husband to my wonderful

wife. A huge thank you to everyone for respecting my family's privacy," he wrote. Shadab's outfit was designed by famous designer Humayun Alamgir and his styling was done by Tony & Guy.

The cricketer's wedding festivities kicked off with a close-knit mehndi ceremony. A glimpse of the intimate event was shared on social media by fellow cricketer and friend Hassan Ali's wife Samiya Khan.

In the video circulating on Instagram, Shadab can be seen sitting on the stage, wearing a heavily embroidered, deep green sherwani. As the video progresses, Samiya makes the groom wear a garland and put mehndi on his hand.

Shadab announced his nikkah last month by revealing that he had joined mentor "Saqi Bhai's" family.

## Potter aware that pressure is mounting on big-spending Chelsea

LONDON: Graham Potter says he understands the mounting pressure he is under to get Chelsea back on track after the club's huge spending spree.

The Stamford Bridge club splashed out more than £300 million (\$362 million) on new signings during the January transfer window and Potter is expected to produce an upturn in results.

Chelsea have won just one of their past seven games in all competitions and are 10 points adrift of the Premier League's top four, leading to intense speculation over Potter's future.

"There'll be lots of talk around pres-



sure and time," he said on Friday. "If I'd had a month for every time I've been asked the question, I'd be here for about 10 years. That's just the nature of it."

"I'm not stupid. If the results aren't what this club should get, and I'm the

reason for it, then that's the job. In the meantime, I go through the process of working with the players, helping them improve, helping them come together."

"It's a complicated situation at the moment. But I'm really excited for it, really looking forward to the challenge that awaits us. I don't worry too much about the absolute timescale of it all."

The former Brighton boss, whose side travel to West Ham on Saturday, reportedly held talks with chairman Todd Boehly this week and stressed he has a good relationship with the American, whose consortium bought Chelsea last year.

Chelsea resume their Champions League campaign next week with a last-16 first-leg tie at Borussia Dortmund.

Misfiring Gabon forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will be absent from the trip after Potter left him off Chelsea's list of eligible players for the knockout stages.

Despite reports the 33-year-old could be allowed to join Los Angeles FC on loan, Potter said he is happy with Aubameyang, who flew to Milan after being left out of the Chelsea squad to face Fulham last Friday. AFP

## Murray ready to face French challenge in Six Nations: coach

Sports Desk

DUBLIN : Ireland scrum-half Conor Murray is "in good form" and ready to face France in their Six Nations blockbuster on Saturday despite his father suffering serious injuries in a road accident, scrum coach John Fogarty said on Friday.

Murray's father Gerry was taken to hospital on Tuesday after being hit by a truck near Limerick when riding his bike.

As a result Murray had been a doubt for the game but after consultations with the 101-capped Munster star head coach Andy Farrell selected him in the starting line-up on Thurs-

day. "He's (Murray) back in with the group and he's in good form and he's looking forward to tomorrow," said Fogarty at a press conference.

"We wish his dad the very best from the squad and a quick recovery."

Fogarty added he felt Murray was in the right frame of mind to take on the titleholders at Lansdowne Road and there were no plans to let him sit it out.

"Not that I'm aware of," he said. "Conor's good, he's great, all considered."

Murray will line-up alongside talismanic Irish fly-half and captain Johnny Sexton — once

arguably the most feared half-back partnership in Test rugby before Murray lost his place to Jamison Gibson-Park.

For France team manager Raphael Ibanez 2018 World Player of the Year Sexton surmounts just being the playmaker on the pitch.

The 37-year-old was pivotal to the Irish rising to number one in the world rankings — France are ranked second — including the historic series win over New Zealand last year.

"He's one of the key players, so much control of the game," said Ibanez.

"He could be like a player-coach actually."

'Not far off Hell'

Although Ireland have yet to beat France since Farrell took over as Irish head coach after the 2019 Rugby World Cup Ibanez says his side arrive as underdogs.

"We feel very privileged and honoured to play against the world number one team, currently," he said.

"It's a big challenge so we come here with the attitude of challenger."

"We know they're pretty proud of their fitness, their athleticism, their physicality as well and their good tactics, this is why they deserve their current position in the world ranking."

"They will be ready but we will



be ready too."

France captain Antoine Dupont admitted he could feel the pressure mounting — a scrappy 29-24 win over Italy last

## SYS Blues, Orange win Kho Kho, Sepaktakraw events

Sports Desk



KARACHI: SYS Blues beat SYS Orange in the Kho Kho event of the ongoing SSB Sports Festival's third round.

According to details, Kho Kho and Sepaktakraw matches were held in the ongoing sports festival which is organized by Sindh Youth Sports.

SYS Blues clinched the trophy of Kho Kho event while SYS Orange named champions of Sepaktakraw event.

Later, Chief Guest CEO Virtual Axis, Khuwaja Mustaqeem distributed prizes amongst winners along with Director Sports KMC Aftab Ahmed.

KMC Sports Complex admin officer Faisal Zafar, Dr Arif Hafeez, Shabbir Ahmed, Muhammad Salim, Shahroz Alvi and others are also present at the occasion.

## Shaheen asks fans if they like Lahore Qalandars' new kit



Web Desk

LAHORE : The eighth edition of Pakistan Super League (PSL) is around the corner and Lahore Qalandars have launched their new kit.

Sharing the pictures of his team's new kit on Twitter, Shaheen Shah Afridi asked his fans if they like the new kit. "Kesi lagi meri Kit? Remember us in your prayers," he wrote.

Earlier on Friday, Qalandars shared their new kit with Lahore's map on it. In the launching ceremony — team captain Shaheen, Haris Rauf, Daniyal Latif and other players could be seen posing in their new kit for the upcoming event.

PSL 2023 will start from Feb 13 with Lahore's match with Multan Sultans in Multan. The opening ceremony of the league will also be held in the city of Saints.

## Why Ben Cutting and Erin Holland love coming to Pakistan?



Australian all-rounder Ben Cutting gets interviewed by his wife Erin Holland during PSL season 7 on January 30, 2023, in this still taken from a video. — Twitter/@thePSL20

Australian all-rounder Ben Cutting Friday said he and his wife Erin Holland return to Pakistan for its people and culture.

Speaking with journalists on the sidelines of the training camp with Karachi Kings as the much-awaited eighth season of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) approaches, Cutting said they "love" coming to the country.

"We look forward to it every year [...] coming back to PSL and the country Pakistan, the hospitality and the cricket... it is awesome," the Australian player said.

The cricketer has remained part of PSL for the last five seasons. After representing Peshawar Zalmi and Quetta Gladiators in previous seasons, Cutting will represent the Kings in this year's PSL.

On the other hand, Holland will return to the PSL as a presenter. She will accompany renowned Pakistani presenter Zainab Abbas as a presenter in the commentary panel of PSL 8.

New franchise Cutting is looking forward to a new challenge in PSL 8. "Yes, it's a new franchise and obviously another challenge. I am really looking forward to it," he said.

"PSL has always been tough in terms of standard. Local bowlers dominate here and it really makes this league apart from others around the world," he highlighted.

The Australian cricketer said his franchise will definitely miss the presence of the world's best batter Babar Azam.

the past few years as a team and we have already experienced difficult moments under pressure.

"Sometimes we were favourites sometimes they thought we were the underdogs."

"It is imperative that all those experiences strengthen us, that we are ready and we do not lose sight of our ultimate goal, winning the match."

For Ibanez Lansdowne Road and a passionate home crowd will be intimidating enough even before the whistle goes for the start of the match.

"I do not believe Lansdowne Road is Hell," he said.

"It is not far off Hell, but also it is not far off paradise either."

Sunday only adding to it.

"The pressure is rising as we know what is at stake in this match," he said.

"We have evolved together over