



Samina Alvi emphasizes on need of making differently-abled children self-sustaining

The First Lady Samina Alvi has emphasized on the need of making differently-abled children self-sustaining in addition to empowering women through employment and entrepreneurship. (Report on Page 8)



National harmony needed to uproot terrorism: Khawaja Asif

Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday said national harmony was needed to uproot the monster of terrorism but Imran Khan's lust for power was creating hurdles in achieving that. Talking to a private media channel, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) avoided building a national consensus against terrorism by refusing to participate in the APC called in the wake of Police Lines Peshawar tragedy. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

COAS visits hospital

KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir visits Jinnah Hospital and meeting with the injured police and Sindh rangers personnel. CM Sindh is also present on the occasion.



China firmly supports Pakistan in maintaining security: Wang Yi



News Desk

BEIJING: China firmly supports Pakistan in maintaining security and stability, as well as achieving development and revitalization, and stands ready to provide assistance to the best of its ability to help Pakistan overcome temporary difficulties.

Wang Yi, Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made these remarks during a meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the sidelines of the 59th Munich Security Conference, which opened here on Friday, Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua reported.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said China

and Pakistan were "all-weather strategic cooperative partners" and "China-Pakistan friendship is rock solid."

"China is ready to work with Pakistan to implement the strategic consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries and build an even closer community of shared future in the new era", he said.

Bilawal expressed satisfaction over the development of Pakistan-China relations. He stressed that China was Pakistan's all-weather friend and "an important pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy is to strengthen relations with China and promote the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor."

Pakistan would resolutely fight terrorism and spare no effort to ensure the safety of Chinese enterprises and citizens in Pakistan, he said.

Terrorists have no religious or ideological moorings, says COAS

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Saturday said the security forces remained singularly focused on counter-terrorism and intelligence-based operations (IBOs) being conducted all over the country with pronounced success on the contrary to political and other distractions being faced by the public.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations' (ISPR), during his visit to the metropolis, the army chief along with Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah were briefed about the Karachi Police Office (KPO) incident at Corps Headquarters.

Thereafter, the COAS and CM visited Karachi Police Office (KPO), where last night successful coordinated counter-terrorism (CT) operation involving Pak

Army's Special Service Group (SSG), Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Sindh Police cleared the site.

The CM and COAS also visited Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre (JPMC) and met the injured Police and Sindh Rangers personnel.

They praised the bravery, morale and sacrifices of Army, Police and Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) in the line of duty.

The CM stated that State

acknowledged and saluted innumerable sacrifices rendered by law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and nation's unbreakable resolve against terrorism.

The COAS emphasised, "Terrorists have no religious or ideological moorings, rather only misguided conception forced through coercion or inducement."

He continued, "No nation can overcome such challenges with 'kinetic actions' only. It needs

mutual trust, will of the people and synergy between all stakeholders."

"Pakistanis have always rejected and defeated terrorism and extremism in all its manifestations. Together we shall prevail upon this menace for a shared prosperous future," the COAS concluded.

Earlier on arrival, the COAS was received by Commander Karachi Corps Lieutenant General Babar Iftikhar.

PM pledges to continue assisting quake-victims of Turkiye

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday reiterated that Pakistan would stand by its Turkish brothers and sisters in the wake of a devastating earthquake with all possible relief assistance.

In an interview with Anadolu news wire, the prime minister said they were deeply grieved at this very difficult situation and expressed the hope that the Turkish people with their resilience under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would overcome the post-quake challenges.

He said President Erdogan was leading from the front along with his team.

Undaunted by the extreme weather conditions, they were marching forward with a sense of purpose.

"Things are extremely difficult, but the resolve of the Turkish nation is strong," he said adding, the Turkish nation, in the past, had fought for their freedom by offering sacrifices.

"Out of this challenge, there is an opportunity, and no doubt, they will convert this destruction into a wonderful construction," the prime minister opined.

The prime minister said Pakistan and Turkiye were like two souls and one heart.

He said that after the earthquake, he spoke to President Erdogan on the telephone and offered condolences and

everything they had in Pakistan for their Turkish brothers and sisters.

He said Pakistan had already sent 500 tons of relief goods through different commercial flights and via Pakistan air force planes.

So they hoped by the end of this month, they would be able to send something like 1300 tons of relief goods and in the month of March about 1700 tons of relief goods, he added.

The prime minister said the bulk of it would comprise winterized tents.

He informed that he had already directed for speedily manufacturing of the winterized tents which would be sent to



Turkiye.

"Our rescue teams are able to rescue 14 people from the rubble. But this devastation is beyond imagination," he added.

The prime minister said the federal cabinet and parliament of Pakistan had donated one month's salary in the relief fund established for the earthquake-affected Turkish people.

He said that he had also requested people of Pakistan to express complete solidarity with the people of Turkiye.

President urges stakeholders to sit together for steering country out of crisis

Correspondent

HYDERABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said the implementation of the constitution was the solution to all problems and all stakeholders must sit together to steer the country out of the prevailing crisis.

He expressed these views while addressing the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (HCCI)'s programme and a conference themed, "Yeh Watan Tumhara Hai, Tum Ho Pasban Iske" here on Saturday.

Dr Alvi said the economic condition of the country was not so good, but the solution of all these problems lies in the continuity of democracy.

"The IMF is a lending institution and before giving money, it wants to see how we will repay that amount, therefore, it enforces discipline so that other lenders and friendly countries also



lend us," the President maintained.

He said solar was the cheapest source of energy in the country. "We can meet our energy needs by generating abundant electricity through solar technology."

He said oil lobby kept us away from Thar coal, making us to waste 10 to 15 years before benefiting from it.

While giving credit to the former prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Dr Alvi said due to

his efforts, Pakistan was able to launch nuclear programme which enabled us to generate electricity from nuclear sources and got a 40 to 50 years umbrella. The same programme prevents our enemy from attacking us, he added.

Referring to the food abundance, President said we need to work in that regard through Agriculture University Tandojam and other research institutes.

He said the Netherlands is a country 16 times smaller than Pakistan, but it is the second largest food exporter in the world.

He also urged agriculturalists to go to Faisalabad and the Arid University and conduct research on low-water consuming crops to achieve the goal of food security.

Earlier, HCCI president Adeel Siddiqui presented a welcome address to the honourable chief guest. HCCI's patron in chief Ikram Rajput also spoke on the occasion.

MQM-P raises concerns after arrest of COC member

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has expressed its concern over the arrest of Asif Ali Khan, a member of party's central organising committee (COC) from Karachi.

According to details, Asif Ali was arrested from an election office of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Friday night.

The party's Rabta Committee expressed concern over the arrest, saying that Asif Ali was arrested a day earlier and transferred to an unknown location.

Govt taking steps to resolve prevailing issues: Maryam

Bureau report

LAHORE: Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz on Saturday said that the incumbent government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was taking every possible step to steer the country out of prevailing issues.

Talking to journalists at Model Town, she said the PML-N believed in serving the masses, and its performance in the past was an evidence.

The present government was trying its best to rectify



wrong policies and mismanagement of the previous PTI government. The previous government did nothing for the welfare of the masses and it was responsible for current inflation in the country.

She said PTI Chief Imran Khan was hiding himself in Zaman Park and avoiding to appear in the courts to face cases against him.

Imran lauds President Alvi for not approving mini-budget ordinance

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Saturday lauded President Arif Alvi for turning down the federal government's request to approve an ordinance, seeking to impose new taxes to raise additional revenue in line with the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

to revive the stalled \$6.5 billion bailout package.

Speaking to a group of columnists at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore, the deposed premier fired a salvo at the PDM-led government over the audio leaks saga saying that the judiciary is being pressurised and blackmailed through audio tapes, adding that nation will not accept these "fascist acts."

President visits hospital

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi enquiring after the health of police and rangers officials, who got injured in police office terrorist attack at Jinnah Hospital on Saturday.



Photo: PID

PM appreciates security forces on successful operation against terrorists

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday appreciated the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists at the office of Karachi Police Chief.

The prime minister expressed his condolences to the bereaved families of police, Rangers personnel and a civilian who embraced shahadat during the incident, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister also announced



Shuhada package for the martyred personnel.

He paid tribute to the sacrifices of martyred security personnel.

The prime minister also lauded the

professionalism and response of the security forces which they displayed during one-hour operation.

He also stressed upon immediate professional preparedness and enhancement of capacity building of the police force.

The prime minister observed that the strength of state and collective mechanism would be completely utilized to root out the scourge of terrorism.

He also directed for the provision of best medical treatment to the injured and prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls.

Meanwhile, the prime minister also contacted Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah and appreciated his presence and prompt response on the occasion.

The chief minister apprised the prime minister of the details and facts of the incident.

The prime minister said that major loss was averted due to the valour of the security forces who had eliminated terrorists.

He also assured assistance of the federal government in the capacity building of the provincial governments to eradicate terrorism.

FM urges for capacity building of Afghan authorities to counter threats of terrorism

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday urged the international community to help in capacity building of the Afghan interim authorities to take on threats of terrorism.

The foreign minister was taking part in a panel discussion in Munich Security Conference.

He said the international community wanted the Afghan interim government

to live up to its obligations and commitments in areas like women education, all-inclusive government and tackling of potential threats from terrorism, emanating from terrorist groups of Daesh, TTP and Al Qaeda.

The foreign minister said that if this issue was not taken seriously, the terrorist groups could conduct terrorist activities from Afghanistan as had been witnessed recently from incidents in Pakistan.

The interim government



neither had a standing army, a counter-terrorism force and even a border force, nor have the capacity, he opined.

Bilawal said the global community should convince

the Afghan interim government to take on the threat of terrorism and demonstrate its will.

Terrorism not only posed threat to immediate neighbours of Afghanistan but also to the West, he cautioned.

Pakistan had helped Afghanistan in the past and would continue to do so as it had hosted the largest number of Afghan refugees on its soil, he said, adding that the international community could not wash their hands and turn away from Afghanistan.

He stressed that the world should continue its humanitarian support, unfreeze Afghan's assets, open up banking channels and engage with the Taliban, society and the women.

The foreign minister reiterated that a peaceful Afghanistan was vital for the stability of the region and the international community must play its role in this regard.

The Afghan interim government had assured to eradicate terrorism from its soil, he added.

CTD police foils terror bid, arrests female suicide bomber in Quetta

Correspondent

QUETTA: Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Police along with sensitive agencies arrested an alleged female suicide bomber and recovered suicide jacket at Satellite town area of Quetta.

According to the spokesman of Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Balochistan, acting on a tip off on late Friday night, the CTD team along with sensitive agencies conducted successful operation at the area near Ladies Park and apprehended an alleged female suicide bomber of the banned organization Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and recovered from her handbag suicide jacket with attached 4 to 5 kg explosive material.

The spokesman said that she was planning to attack any important installations or security forces in Quetta which was foiled by the security forces.

China, Pakistan launch int'l industry-education cooperation alliance

News Desk

BEIJING: Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque said that it was learned that almost ten percent of the youth in Pakistan were unemployed and had no vocational, technical and commercial skills.

Meanwhile, with the progress of CPEC, he said the demand for skilled labor force is becoming more and more urgent, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. It is under such backdrop that the seminar was hosted, the Ambassador said.

He was addressing at a seminar on launching ceremony of China-Pakistan International Industry-Education Cooperation Alliance Initiative held at the China-Pakistan Seminar on "Internet+ International Education and Industry-Education Integration in Beijing on Saturday.

The seminar was hosted by China Education Association for International Exchange and Organized by TANG International Education Group and Pakistan's Embassy in Beijing as part of the 23rd



China Annual Conference and Expo for International Education.

He said that a large number of Chinese enterprises were working in Pakistan on such projects. They need skilled labor force," the Ambassador said, adding, "Recently, I had the opportunity to visit some big names in Shenzhen, China and was impressed by their innovation, hard work and focus on people training. China has emerged as one of the world leaders in AI, computing, IoT, and big data. "We would like to emulate the achievements of China in Pakistan."

Li Jinsong, President of TANG International Education Group said, Chinese colleges' investment on modern international education platforms and digital curriculum resources has helped train local Pakistani teachers and provided a large number of scholarships and living allowances for the poorest students in Pakistan to access to learning and life-changing opportunities.

In the same spirit, the China-Pakistan International Industry-Education Cooperation Alliance will facilitate the introduction of 210 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) disciplines of

China to Pakistan, the establishment of 36 TVET excellence centers, the provision of international courses, and the opportunities of pursuing further studies and jobs in China in its following work.

"The alliance has been under preparation since Aug, 2022. It has garnered the support of over 500 of bilateral TVET colleges, universities, and enterprises," Ammar Muhammad, Secretary General of China-Pakistan International Industry-Education Cooperation Alliance introduced.

"We aim to build a bilateral platform for China and Pakistan to exchange information on industrial and education information, share success stories, and work together in various programs so as to empower Pakistan's young people, promote employment, support the construction of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and enhance Pakistan's export," he added.

On this occasion, over 20 agreements were signed on bilateral education and industrial cooperation projects.

'Shab-e-Meraj' being observed across country

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Muslims of Pakistan and across the world are observing 'Shab-e-Meraj' night of ascension with great respect, and reverence on Saturday.

'Shab-e-Meraj', also known as 'Shab-e-Meraj-un-Nabi' and 'Laylatul Meraj' is celebrated on the 27th night of the Holy Month of Rajab to recall the journey of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Mecca to Jerusalem.

At the mosque of Al-Aqsa, which used to be the Muslims' Qibla before the Holy Kaaba, Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) led the former Prophets of Allah (AS) in prayer and then ascended to heaven to meet Allah Almighty.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went on a special journey to meet the Creator of this Universe

Allah Almighty, crossing seven skies on the heavenly animal named 'Al-Buraq'.

The Isra night is also mentioned in Holy Quran in these words: "Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs".

This incredible journey took place during a time when the Prophet (PBUH) was facing intense hardship because his tribe stood against him and his companions.

After leading the prayer in Baitul-Muqaddas, the Angel Jibrail (AS) took Him (PBUH) towards the heavens.

Muslims observe this event by praying, congregating, reciting Holy Quran, and supplicating to Allah All Mighty. They also fast during the day from dawn to dusk.

Samina Alvi emphasizes on need of making differently-abled children self-sustaining

Correspondent

HYDERABAD: The First Lady Samina Alvi has emphasized on the need of making differently-abled children self-sustaining in addition to empowering women through employment and entrepreneurship.

She expressed these views on Saturday while talking to the APP at the educational institution Rashidabad in Tando Allahyar district.

The first lady visited Darul Sukoon and the Deaf Reach Center. Mrs Alvi also visited the stalls where products

made by female students were placed as she appreciated their work.

"The differently-abled children should be supported but efforts should also be made to make them self-sustaining," she reiterated.

She also emphasized the need of educating girls. She said the government would focus on both the issues concerning differently-abled persons and women's education.

The wife of Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Sohail Aman, Shagufta Jabeen, also accompanied the first lady.

National harmony needed to uproot terrorism: Khawaja Asif

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday said national harmony was needed to uproot the monster of terrorism but Imran Khan's lust for power was creating hurdles in achieving that.

Talking to a private media channel, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) avoided building a national consensus against terrorism by refusing to participate in the All Parties Conference (APC) called in the wake of Police Lines Peshawar tragedy.

While condemning the Karachi terror attack, the minister said the time has come to move beyond condemnation against terrorism.

The government's top priority was to control terrorism and deal with the economic crisis and it had kept all political differences and instability aside to achieve those endeavours.



Answering a query, the minister said Jil Bhoro Tehreek should not be for workers only.

Imran Khan advised all party workers to surrender themselves for the Jail Bhoro Tehreek, but he himself was hiding in his home and calling his workers to reach Zaman Park and save him (from arrest), Khawaja added.

He said, "Instead of getting pre-arrest bail and whining to the media, Imran should put his words into practice for the honor of politics."

Balochistan govt pledges to support Sindh in fight against terrorism

Agencies

QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem, on the directions of Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langu, on Saturday, contacted his counterpart from Sindh to express solidarity with the law enforcement personnel who lost their lives in Karachi Police Office terrorist attack, the other day.

The additional chief secretary (home) assured to extend all possible cooperation against the elimination of anti-peace elements to the Sindh government on behalf of Balochistan government.

Zahid Saleem said that terrorists were the enemies of peace, development and prosperity which did not deserve any remorse or leniency.

He said the bravery and gallantry of the security personnel foiled the attack as officers martyred in the line of duty were the heroes of the entire nation whose sacrifices would be remembered forever.

Asad Umar Predicts Announcement of Punjab Election Date Soon



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Asad Umar expressed full confidence that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will announce the Punjab election date by Tuesday.

While addressing to media, Asad Umar said that the motive of PTI's Jil Bhoro Tehreek' motive is protecting the Constitution.

Slamming the ruling party, Umar said Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is determined to sacrifice democracy but it cannot digest the presence of Imran Khan in national politics.

Regarding Khan's appearance in the hearings, Umar clarified that the PTI chief is not egoistic but he is facing security threats. He said that Khan was advised by the doctors to take rest as his wounds are not recovered.

Asad Umar claimed that a smear campaign was launched to pressurise the judiciary besides the ongoing attempts to delay elections.

Federal Minister Shazia Marri addressed the conference

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme—Madam Shazia Marri, addressed the conference held by the Sindh Mental Health Authority, at the Regent Plaza in Karachi. Titled “How Benazir Income Support Programme (B.I.S.P) can help with Mental Health Issues”, the conference focused on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rain and flood havoc and environmental issues, in worsening mental health issues around the country.

Lauding the work of the Sindh Mental Health Authority, in highlighting the importance of targeting mental health issues in society, the Minister also thanked the doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and members of civil society who were attending the conference.

Acknowledging the work of Dr Karim Khawaja, the Minister lauded the wonderful work being done in Sindh and highlighted the recent report published by the Sindh Mental Health Authority. The Minister stressed on the importance of mental health issues



stating that there was no health without mental health, as the brain was a vital organ that needed care too

The Minister then stated that mental health issues were rather common, as they could also be seen in political figures around the country. She however, reiterated that it was necessary to talk about mental health, so that people could feel comfortable in attaining help with regards to their

issues. Citing the Covid-19 pandemic and the havoc wreaked by the recent floods, the Minister acknowledged the impact of these disasters on the mental health of the victims.

Expressing dismay over yesterday's terrorist attack at the Police Station in Karachi, the Minister addressed the prevalent issue of terrorism and its terrible impact on the mental health of the victims of terrorist attacks. Shazia

Marri further shed light upon the issues of child marriage, sexual harassment and incest, and stressed how crucial it was that the mental health issues caused by these horrors, were also addressed.

The Minister then emphasised the need for stability in the country and lambasted the people trying to destabilise the country. She particularly condemned the people responsible for facilitating the rise of terrorism in the country, and acknowledged the sacrifices made by the nation and its armed forces, in the fight against terrorism.

Appreciating everyone's presence at the conference, the Minister then suggested the extension of mental health support services to all the women enrolled in BISP, in collaboration with the Sindh Mental Health Authority.

This conference was attended by prominent members of the World Health Organization, the medical community and civil society, particularly doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists from some of the most renowned hospitals and universities in Karachi.

Earthlink brings award-winning luxury projects



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Earthlink, the leading real estate brand in Pakistan with a top-tier portfolio of award-winning luxury apartments hosted the biggest sales event in Peshawar, Pakistan. Earthlink has been long recognized for being a trendsetter in the market due to its novel initiatives and strategies in comparison to the fierce competition. The 2-day event achieved its end goal by Earthlink's brand name not only gaining massive recognition amongst the people of Peshawar but, also by bolstering the economy of Pakistan through its state-of-the-art commercial and residential projects.

Prior to the event, Earthlink branded Peshawar with creative billboards, streamers and digital campaigns at every prominent location within the city. As a result of the extensive marketing efforts, a massive crowd of dealers, clients, and the general public, arrived at the sales event to invest in Earthlink's projects.

“The market of Peshawar has a huge potential to help us achieve our overarching aim. Being abreast of the current socio-economic state of Pakistan and the unpredictable situation of the real estate industry, I deemed it crucial to target this very market. I encourage everyone in the real estate market to spare no effort in these pressing times”, said Mubusher Hayat, the founder and CEO of Earthlink.

High-ranking officials, dignitaries, influencers, dealers, realtors, and renowned politicians graced the event on both days. Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurated the sales event as the chief guest, as well as Opposition Leader Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Akram Khan Durrani, and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan were present at the event.

After wrapping up all the investment-related activities on the first day, Earthlink arranged an invite-only concert of “Khumariyaan, The Band”, for families. On the 2nd day, an award ceremony was held for real estate agencies in Peshawar with the best digital presence under Earthlink's #BoomingPakistan CSR initiative.

Driving License facility is never out of reach now: CTO

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Shams ul Haq Durrani Acting CTO Faisalabad made a surprise visit to the 24/7 Driving License Facilitation Centers to ensure the real understanding of the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, orders of IGP Punjab and DIG. In providing driving license facility round the clock as per the instructions of Traffic Punjab, there should not be any kind of deadlocks.

The CTO said that citizens can take the driving test at any time within 24 hours by taking an appointment from Rasta App/Driving Test Center People's Colony Faisalabad. Along with this, citizens can visit Driving License Block CTO Office 24/7 for the process of Driving Learner Permit, Renewal, Duplicate, Out District Renewal and International Licenses also.

The staff of the driving license block is working round the clock for the entire satisfaction of the public services. CTO, DSP traffic headquarters and in-charge vigilance are continuing surprise checking of various centers for checking the provision of driving license facility to the citizens, he further expressed.

He also said that the planning of providing better facilities to the people is also going on, which will restore the confidence of the people and will not let their valuable time be wasted.

Weekly Inflation up by 2.89pc amid hike in fuel prices

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation in Pakistan, measured by the Sensitive Price Index (SPI), increased by 2.89% during the week ending February 16, 2023, as per data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

During the week, out of the 51 monitored items, the average price of 34 items increased, 5 items decreased whereas 12 items registered no change during the week.

The items which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included tomatoes (14.27%), onions (13.48%), eggs (4.24%), garlic (2.10%) and wheat flour (0.10%).

The items which recorded an increase in their average prices on week-on-week (WoW) basis included cooking oil 5 litre (8.65%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (8.02%), bananas (8.01%), chicken (7.49%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (6.76%), non-food items, petrol (8.82%), diesel (6.49%) and cigarettes (6.18%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities which recorded a decrease in their average prices included tomatoes (65.30%), electricity for Quarter 1 (7.50%) and chillies powdered (7.42%).

The commodities that witnessed an increase in prices on a YoY basis included, onions (433.44%), chicken (101.86%), diesel (81.36%), eggs (81.22%), rice irri-6/9 (74.12%), rice basmati broken (73.05%), petrol (69.87%), pulse moong (67.98%), bananas (67.68%), tea packet (63.89%), pulse gram (56.93%), bread (55.36%), pulse mash (53.42%), LPG (52.68%) and cigarettes (50.02%).

Funeral prayer

KARACHI: Corps Commander Karachi Lt. General Babar Iftikhar is carrying coffin of police personal martyred in Provincial Capital, as a day after an attack by Pakistan's Taliban on Karachi Police Office compound.



Photo: Online

Functional vital role is the key to eliminate social problems: Mirza Anjum Kamal

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Patrolling Police believes in solving & settling its tasks in a functional role on priority basis so as to eradicate the evil elements from the society.

The public should be on the lookout for suspicious persons and fully cooperate with the law enforcement agencies, said by SSP Patrolling.

On the direction of SSP Patrolling Faisalabad Region Mirza Anjum Kamal, the performance report of Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region for the current month has been released where 206



cases were registered in which 17 most wanted by the police and 15 court fugitives were arrested while 01 repeater, 04 pistol, 01 pump action, stolen rickshaws and motorcycles and drugs were also recovered from the 206 arrested

accused and it was considered the best done performance by the police. The suspects, 17 most wanted and 15 judicial fugitives wanted by the police in various cases also included who were involved in serious incidents.

The patrolling police team took timely action by means of it the stolen rickshaws and more motorcycles were also recovered. While in 20 drug abuse cases, more than 02 kg of hashish and 109 liters of alcohol, 90 grams of heroin, 02 kg of 500 grams of beech were recovered.

Actions were also taken against 48 people who were

driving at high speed on the public roads. Patrolling police responded immediately and provided first aid to 120 people.

In the same way, around 70 temporary and permanent encroachments have also been removed while conducting operations against encroachments. SSP Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region Mirza Anjum Kamal while reviewing the performance report has also intensified the mega operations against criminals this month. It has been directed to do while drug prevention on the highways.

Students should focus on their studies: VC Gomal University

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Federal Government with the support of Higher Education Commission (HEC) distributed Benazir Scholarship checks worth about one and a half crore rupees to 71 students of Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan.

These checks were handed over to the students by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shakibullah in a special ceremony. Deans, directors, administrative officers and teachers of all departments including Gomal University Registrar Prof. Dr. Jabbar Khan were also present.

On this occasion, Deputy Director Scholarships Dr. Hamid Khan briefed all the dignitaries including the Vice Chancellor about the unique scholarship program offered by the Higher Education Commission.

UAJK arranges farewell party in honour of retiring faculty, officers

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The Vice-Chancellor University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK), Prof Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, has said that the faculty members and administrative staff who devotedly served the institution and nurtured a generation of highly educated youth in the region will never be forgotten for their valuable services and lighting the candle of knowledge in the society.

He expressed these views while addressing a farewell party held in connection with the retirement of Prof Emeritus Dr. Muhammad Abdul Qayyum, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sadeeq

Awan, Prof. Aamir Farooq, Prof. Arif Bakhari, and Additional Treasurer Abdul Wahid.

Paying rich tribute to their services, the Vice-Chancellor said that the retiring faculty members and administrative officers have dedicated their lives to serving the institution for over three decades and have prepared young people by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and spirit of national development. “Their devotion is an admirable example and a source of inspiration for other officers,” he added.

Dr. Kaleem Abbasi said that UAJK has a great tradition of honoring its retirees after serving in any capacity at the university, and today's ceremony was

organized to uphold this glorious tradition and acknowledge their services and bid them farewell with dignity and respect.

Acknowledging Prof. Dr. Abdul Qayyum Khan's contributions to the university as a faculty member, Registrar, Dean of Engineering, and Director of Finance, he termed it a golden chapter in the history of the institution. “Similarly, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sadeeq Awan, Prof. Arif Bukhari, Prof. Aamir Farooq, and Abdul Wahid have also rendered remarkable services in their respective fields, which is a source of pride for the university,” the VC remarked.

The ceremony, besides retiring professors and administrative officers was also addressed

by, Meritorious Prof. Dr. Ghulam Murtaza, Prof. Emeritus Dr. Muhammad Rustom Khan, Registrar Prof. Dr. Ayesha Sohail, Meritorious Prof. Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari, Dean of Sciences Dr. Sadiq ur Rahman Khattak, Dean of Engineering Saadat Haneef Dar, President Officers Welfare Association Sardar Majeed Zafar, Additional Registrar Sardar Zafar Iqbal, representative of Academic Staff Association Dr. Manzoor, and President Administrative Staff Association Israr Saeed Qadri. The speakers paid tributes to their fellows for their professional services to the university and presented shields and souvenirs to them as a memento.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5: 26 am
Zohr12: 22 pm
Asr4: 15 pm
Maghrib5: 54 pm
Isha7: 18 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654

Planing Minister surrenders expensive official vehicle

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday returned expensive official vehicle provided to him for use as federal minister.

He returned the vehicle in order to implement austerity measures announced by the Prime Minister to overcome the current economic challenges faced by the country, said a press release.

The minister, in a letter to Secretary Cabinet Division, said he was provided



an expensive vehicle with engine capacity of 4,500cc for use as Member National

Assembly, and asked for providing a vehicle having 1,800cc or lesser engine capacity to save the fuel and maintenance costs.

He said during current economic crisis faced by the county, it would be an appropriate step towards right direction and called upon the masses to cooperate with the government during these difficult times to pull out the country from prevailing economic crisis.

It is worth mentioning here that Prime Minister had also issued the direction to Cabinet for reducing all non-developmental expenses to minimize burden from the national exchequer.

Security High Alert

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel searching a vehicle outside Police Headquarters in Federal Capital, during security high alert on Saturday after the Karachi police office compound a day earlier after an attack by Pakistan's Taliban in Karachi on Friday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Sherry condemns terrorist attack on Karachi Police Chief's Office

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Saturday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Karachi Police Chief's Office.

In a statement issued here, the federal minister expressed solidarity with the families of the martyred in the attack. She also prayed for the speedy recovery of the personnel injured in the attack.

"I salute to the Police and Rangers who participated in the operation. Sindh Police and Rangers foiled the attack with quick and effective action and saved the country from major damage," Sherry Rehman said.

She added that such cowardly attacks of terrorism could not dampen the nation's spirits. The whole nation stood united against terrorism, Sherry Rehman

Sheikh Rashid suggests Maryam fix issues with husband before politicking

City Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Saturday took an aim at PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz when he advised her to fix issues with her husband, retired Capt Safdar, before engaging in political activities.

The former interior minister apparently referred to a reported tension between Mr Safdar and his wife, which came

on the scene when the former slammed the PML-N leadership for voting for the extension of ex-Chief of Army Staff (COAS) retired Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and regretted his comments against PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

Speaking to a private news channel, he also shared his two cents on turncoats, stating that the lawmakers should not change their loyalties for personal benefits. Mr Safdar also commented that he was

not seeing Maryam Nawaz as prime minister in near future.

Following his statements, reports claimed that Maryam Nawaz had barred her husband from issuing policy statements.

Sheikh Rashid, in a series of tweets, said: "Maryam should take her husband onboard before addressing workers". He said the PML-N did not need enemies as it was being damaged by insiders.

The AML chief said the friendship with China could

not be put at stake at the behest of imperialist powers, adding: "Pakistan-China friendship is higher than Himalayas".

Lashing out at the government for increasing power tariff, he said burden of line losses worth Rs380 billion had been put on poor consumers. "The 88-member cabinet is answerable to whom," he asked. Mr Ahmad said only President Arif Alvi and the Supreme Court could save Pakistan from the ongoing crises.

CEC asks president to use mild words for constitutional body

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja on Saturday replied to President Dr Arif Alvi's letter inviting him to deliberate on the date for election.

The president had stated that he waited anxiously that

the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would realise its constitutional duties to proceed and act accordingly but was extremely dismayed by the commission's poignant approach to this important matter.

The CEC wrote that the president's office was the top

constitutional body, adding that the ECP expected it to be unbiased. "We expect the president will guide other institutions," he added. The ECP, he said, would look forward to the president to use better words for the constitutional institution in the future.

The CEC penned that the

president was supposed to give the date for the election only if the National Assembly was dissolved, but the governor was authorised to give an election date if a provincial assembly were dissolved. "The constitution does not allow the ECP to announce the date for elections," he added.

Elahi throws weight behind 'Jail Bhara Movement'

News Desk

LAHORE: Former chief minister Chaudhry Pervaz Elahi on Saturday announced his support for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's "Jail Bhara Movement" which would commence from Lahore on February 22 (Wednesday).

Mr Elahi called on PTI chief Imran Khan at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore. During the meeting, both top guns discussed the country's prevailing political situation while party's "Jail Bhara" movement took centre stage in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the ex-Punjab executive castigating the PDM-led government over the date of the election said that the incumbent rulers are afraid of Imran Khan's popularity and not following the Lahore High Court (LHC) orders, adding that they are damaging the sanctity of the constitution.

Yasmin Rashid to move court against 'audio leak'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Yasmin Rashid has announced to move court against the audio leak, purportedly featuring former Punjab health minister and Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Ghulam Mahmood Dogar.

Talking to journalists, the former Punjab health minister criticised 'some quarters' for recording and leaking audios, saying that they have audios the country a 'banana republic'.

Yasmin Rashid announced that she was filing a petition in Lahore High Court (LHC) against the 'invasion of privacy', saying that they cannot tap

anyone's calls. "They are weaking the country with such measures", she added, without naming anyone.

She further criticised the government over an assassination attempt on chairman of 'world's six largest political party' - Imran Khan. "[Prime Minister] Shehbaz Sharif and [Interior Minister] Rana.Sanaullah are involved in the attack on Imran Khan," she alleged.

The PTI leader also lambasted the government for delaying in announcing election date, saying that as per the Constitution, the authorities were responsible to hold polls within 90 days of dissolution of assemblies.

Earlier in the day, another audio recording, purportedly

that of former Punjab health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and former Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Ghulam Mahmood Dogar, who was recently reinstated by Supreme Court (SC) was emerged.

In the audio clip, available with ARY News, the former Punjab minister can allegedly be heard talking about reinstatement orders with CCPO Lahore Dogar.

The audio leak comes a day after the Supreme Court reinstated Ghulam Mahmood Dogar as the CCPO after suspending his transfer order made by Mohsin Naqvi led interim Punjab govt.

"Imran Khan is concerned about your reinstatement," a

woman, believed to be Yasmin Rashid, can be heard speaking to another person believed to be CCPO Lahore. "I had told Khan sahab that orders were yet not received," she said in a telephonic conversation.

In the alleged clip, the person believed to be Ghulam Dogar, flagged signatures of judges on post carrying orders as the reason behind the delay. The man assures the woman that he had his man [sitting] at the apex court.

It is pertinent to mention here that Dogar, as the Lahore CCPO was at the centre of a tussle between the federal government and the then-Punjab government under Chaudhry Parvez Elahi last year.

Qatar's Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani makes bid

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani, a son of Qatar's former prime minister, on Friday launched a bid to buy Premier League soccer club Manchester United, whose American owners launched a formal sale process late last year.

A deal for United is expected to shatter records for the sale of a sports business. The club's current majority owners, the Glazer family, are seeking a valuation as high as 7 billion pounds (\$8.42 billion), Reuters has previously reported.

The record 20-time English champions, have over 650 million fans worldwide, according to market research firm Kantar.

Sheikh Jassim is the son of Sheikh Hamad bin Jaber Al Thani, who is one of the richest men in the Gulf state.

"The bid will be completely debt free via Sheikh Jassim's Nine Two Foundation, which will look to invest in the football teams, the training centre, the stadium and wider infrastructure," said a statement from a spokesperson representing Sheikh Jassim, who is the chairman of QIB, one of the top banks in Qatar.

However, Qatari state investors, who own a stake in French champions Paris Saint-Germain, could face challenges structuring a takeover of Manchester United, as rules forbid two clubs with the same owner taking part in the lucrative Champions League.

Sheikh Hamad is the owner of PSG and it is unclear how the Qatari bid will be structured.

Suitors have been asked to submit a bid amount and proof of funds after which Raine Group, the investment bank running the sale process, will draw up a shortlist.

Security of two ex-CJs and SC judge withdrawn



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Interior has withdrawn security of two former Supreme Court chief justices and a judge on Saturday.

Rangers security has been withdrawn from former Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, former Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, and Justice (r) Azmat Saeed Sheikh.

The judges had been provided Rangers security after giving verdicts in Panama Leak and other important cases.

It should be remembered that Saqib Nisar served as Supreme Court chief justice from December 31, 2016 until January 17, 2019, after which Justice Asif Saeed Khosa served as chief justice from January 18 to December 20, 2019, and Justice (r) Azmat Saeed Sheikh had been a judge of the Supreme Court.

NAB country's most corrupt institution, blasts Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Saturday the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was the most corrupt institution in the country.

Speaking to media persons, former prime minister Abbasi said the NAB was still operational despite the fact that there had been three democratic governments in the country. "Pakistan cannot function as long as the NAB remains operational," he added.

The PML-N leader said government officials were reluctant to use their powers due to fear of the anti-graft watchdog. The NAB was created for political victimisation and former chairman Javed Iqbal needed to answer questions about his tenure, he stressed.

The former prime minister, while speaking about reports of differences with the PML-N leaders, said he worked in the party for over three decades without holding any office. "I have no issues with PML-N and Nawaz Sharif is my leader," he added.

Preparations in full swing for Lahore Literary Festival



News Desk

LAHORE: The preparations to celebrate the 10th annual Lahore Literary Festival (LLF) are in full swing as the district administration is all set to give the final touches to this event, says Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider.

LLF CEO Razi Ahmed met Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider and discussed the issues regarding the event, here on Saturday. All issues including the schedule of Lahore Literary Festival, hosting of domestic and foreign guests and permits were reviewed in the meeting.

DC Lahore Rafia Haider said that a three-day Lahore Literary Festival would be held at Alhamra Mall Road, Lahore. She said that LLF 2023 would have different sessions from 9am to 9pm, while LLF had always played an important role in maintaining the status of Lahore as the city of literature.

Economy would have been better if PTI govt was not toppled, claims Hammad

News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Hammad Azhar claimed on Saturday the country's economy would be in a better shape today had the PTI government not been toppled.

Talking to the media, he said today Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had claimed that the country had defaulted. "A few days ago, federal minister for planning and development Ahsan Iqbal had said that those talking about a default were the country's enemies", he added. We would have tackled the challenges, he said, had the PTI been still in power.

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

What's next for Pakistan?

Pakistan is going through one of its toughest times in terms of fiscal and governance challenges. The country is seeking a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Although negotiations have been going on since last August, the fear of commitment and political fallout of the deal has been haunting not only current Prime Minister (PM) Shahbaz Sharif's government but also the previous government of former PM Imran Khan.

The government of Pakistan's finance ministry is seeking \$1 billion of an agreed \$6 billion bailout programme. The agreement was signed in 2019 by the Khan government. An additional \$500 million was added to the package after the devastating floods of 2022 in Pakistan. The recent staff-level meetings have been concluded and a positive response is expected from the IMF board next week.

Pakistan's Minister of State for Finance, Aisha Ghous Pasha, recently announced in the Pakistani senate that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government was actively engaged with the IMF regarding the agreement struck by the erstwhile Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) regime, to convince the world that there was continuity of policy in Pakistan.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, who had cooked a snook earlier at the IMF with statements like "I won't take dictation (from the IMF)," and "I don't care," backtracked on his grandstanding and acquiesced to the IMF terms. But his delay in agreeing to the IMF's conditions has only deepened the economic crisis.

The government has presented the Finance (Supplementary) Bill, 2023, in both the senate and the national assembly. Speaking in the senate on Friday Pasha stated that since the country's economy

was on the verge of default the leadership had to perforce take tough measures and increase taxes amounting to Pakistani Rupees (PKR) 170 billion, a target set for the next four months.

Although Pakistan will be bailed out this year and defer the default crisis courtesy the \$1 billion from the IMF, along with sundry monies from friendly nations like China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, etc., it'll be back to square one next year. Which will compel Pakistan to go back to the IMF for another bailout. This may prompt international institutions to discipline Pakistan to improve its governance and financial systems.

Pakistan needs to expedite its much-anticipated energy and refinery policy, which might induce Saudi Arabia to invest \$6-8 billion in refinery projects in the country.

A gas pipeline from central Asia to Pakistan, which has been a pipe dream for over 20 years, should be turned into reality in another couple of years. This will help the country attract the right kind of global attention and a few billion Dollars to develop the necessary infrastructure, through possible joint ventures with Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Russia.

To ensure accountability and transparency in the system, a more aggressive National Accountability Bureau could be reactivated, creating global trust in the Pakistani establishment to ensure that money is spent according to an agreed plan in a transparent manner.

Pakistan has to show that there is accountability for every Dollar spent, and the system should ensure the responsibility of the political leadership beyond the electoral process. This might require

measures to enforce speedy justice, which would be an uncomfortable prospect for leaders across the political spectrum.

While many are still supportive of Khan's demand for justice, however, the PTI government's incompetence and political impotence ensured that it failed to deliver on its promises. There are no signs of any change in the PTI leadership.

Eying the elections in October-November this year, the PDM government is continuously playing to the gallery and has committed an amount of PKR 400 billion (up from 40 billion last year) to ostensibly protect the poor from inflation.

The demand for structural reform has not come from the IMF only. Even China and Saudi Arabia have indicated that Pakistan needs to fix its house first, and make its economy more stable and trustworthy.

Although the government claims that the recent increase in electricity and gas tariffs would not affect small consumers, the sentiment on the street is quite different. People have openly expressed their distrust in the government and its ability to deliver any relief by way of a workable, durable economic solution.

The big question is: will Pakistan revisit its defence budget under international pressure? An increase in the defence budget will be a challenge for the PDM pressure and scarcity of resources might require some strategic realignment on part of the military.

To reap the benefits of investment in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it is important to ensure that 95 percent of Pakistan's exports are shipped by sea. To that end, in order to create a robust

port infrastructure, Pakistan is taking help from China to build the Gwadar port in the south of Balochistan.

Gwadar became important post the Kargil war, when Pakistan felt the need for a military port, and the Karachi-Gwadar coastal highway was built for the purpose. Gwadar has been termed as the key trade hub for the CPEC, as it is the point where the road networks connect to the belt systems of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) map.

As of today, only three China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects are under development. These are the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan (\$4 million), the Physical Infrastructure of Gwadar Port, and the Free Zone Phase-1 (both totalling \$300 million).

A Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (\$10 million) is also planned. This project is intended to upskill locals so that they may be employed at Gwadar Port and other CPEC projects. This is an effort to get a buy-in from the local population and mitigate the risk of local alienation and resistance.

Nonetheless, a trust deficit still exists in the local population, and they feel they're being excluded or exploited by both the Pakistani authorities and the Chinese investors.

Despite all economic effort and international assistance, Pakistan is yet to kickstart the economy. Currently, 64 percent of the nation is younger than 30 years. Pakistan now has more young people than it has ever had, and their numbers will continue to increase until at least 2050.

This is a herculean challenge for future governments as a humungous number of jobs need to be created.

The author is a global competitiveness, risk, and development expert. He is a leading strategic communication specialist. Courtesy Moneycontrol

IT Ministry another gift for Karachiites

Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication Syed Amin-Ul-Haque has said that the establishment of the Center of Excellence in Gaming and Animation (CEGA) at NED University is a gift from the Ministry of IT to the youth of this city. The gaming and animation industry in the world has a volume of more than 500 billion dollars, of which Pakistan's share is limited to only 50 million dollars. We hope that through the CEGA, Pakistan will be able to turn its short segment into a big one in the gaming and animation industry. This was he stated on Saturday in the MoU signing ceremony held in NED University Karachi. The MoU was signed by Asim Shahryar Husain, CEO Ignite National Technology Fund; a public sector company affiliated with Ministry of IT & Telecom (MoITT) and Syed Ghazanfar Hussain, Registrar NED University Karachi. The event was attended by officials from Ministry of IT & Telecom, Ignite, NED University Karachi and professionals from industry & academia.

Syed Amin-Ul-Haque welcomed the establishment of CEGA, stating that; the government is committed to supporting the growth of the technology and creative industries in Pakistan, and the establishment of the Center of Excellence for Gaming and Animation is a step in the right direction. Ministry of IT and Ignite National Technology Fund believe that Pakistan has great potential to meet both demand and supply side of the gaming and animation industry. We believe that this initiative will provide the necessary skills and platform to the youth of Pakistan to contribute to the gaming and animation industry while also aiding the country's economy.

The most expensive animation and gaming courses will be provided to 2,000 students annually through this center through physical and virtual attendance. The center will also host 20 start-ups every year, which will not only provide an ideal environment for the talented with imaginative abilities but also provide an easy observation for new learners. This center will also provide space to 50 companies working in gaming and animation, which will enable them to do their work with better adaptation and technology and allow students to share their ideas and work methods with them. Practical opportunity to know will also be available.

Amin-Ul-Haque further said, along with this center, Pakistan's first modern Virtual Production Studio is also being established at a cost of Rupees One Billion. This studio will enable our talented professionals to produce world-class gaming and animation project with the help of state-of-the-art cameras and equipment.

Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodi, Vice Chancellor NED University, Syed Junaid Imam, Member IT MoITT and Asim Shahryar Husain, CEO Ignite stated that, "The aim of this program is to make Pakistan one of the key regional players in the gaming, animation, and multimedia industry by providing proper equipment, co-working facilities, and trainings over a period of five (5) years. CEGA has the potential to contribute significantly to the growth of the industry and to the country's economy and exports."



Analysis
Amir Jahangir



Amjad Rasmi

Life in 21st century

Jannat Javed

The 21st century has been a century of change and advancements. Everything has completely changed.

The big biggest role in this change is the hard work intelligence and effort of man. In Man has made the 21st century, the best century in every way by his hard work and effort. A man's passion for discovery taken him to the moon. Access to other planets along with change on Earth is only a result of best technology. 21st century is the century of widespread modern facilities and Technology. Man has crossed all Stages of knowledge, skills, experiences, competence and abilities.

The advancement of technology has made human life comfortable. The man of 21st century is living a mechanical life. Everyone knows that 21st century is also the century of social media. So, everyone has social media awareness. Through social media everyone is connected with each other. Social media has provided a lot of benefits like in the field of promoting educational awareness along with educational resources. Internet is the major factor of enabling information and updates. It highlights the social issues all over the world. Social media has a great impact on the world of employment. Social media is a platform that is like a therapy for mental health issues as it creates a feeling of elation and bestow a brighter attitude.

Along, with all advancements and developments in 21st century, man has also faced many disasters in 21st century. The world's biggest natural disaster of 21st century including: 2003 European heatwave, 2004 Indian ocean

tsunami, 2005 Kashmir earthquake, 2008 Afghanistan blizzard, 2010 Haiti earthquake and tsunami, and the horrible virus of this century was 2019 coronavirus. These all disasters of 21st century are like the stars shooting off the sky, human life vanished to its half due to these disasters. History of 21st century has suffered and gas been shaken really badly to the core of human resources. It caused human to beg on their knees to get their life going again as it was the time when human felt helpless to reach out their hands to each other.

The 21st century was different and faster than previous centuries. Technically, this century has been made the best, but along with it, problems have also increased. If we compare 21st century to the other previous centuries, we come to know that this century is the fastest and busiest century. This is the century of social media. Social media has locked the world in a small box, so everyone is every time connected with each other, but no one want to meet or interact with each other. Time has also increased it's speed along with the progress. Everyone has kept himself busy and limited. No one really knows the purpose of life especially our young generation really doesn't know about the purpose of life. Everybody is busy in improving their standards. The rule of trend of fashion has become common. Man has moved away from social values, civilization and their cultural values.

Technology has definitely connected people to each other through social media but man has been far in real sense. Connection become weak between people. No one goes to meet anyone. Use if social media for longer time, also connected people with itself and distanced from themselves and their

loved ones.

Another important issue if 21st century, is hunger and pollution. Even this time, many regions of the world are going through these kind of issues. Despite being at the highest level of consciousness and intellect, many countries are still living as slave countries. Old traditions are still established in many places. Women and second class citizens are not given any importance at some regions. Migration is also a main challenge and issue in 21st century. People have started migration for many of reasons. It included good education, better facilities, inequality, employment gaps, poverty etc.

It is a fact that 21st century is a unique in every way, compared to the previous centuries. The changes in human life and the devices that provide comfort have made life easier. These devices have made the difficult task easier. In this century, machines do their work in blink of eyes.

The pace of life is very fast. This century seems to be the century of intelligent and intellectual people. Everyone is trying to win from each other. Along with all these advancements, the 21st century has alienated people from each other. People have lost their moral values. Why life is moving so fast? We are so busy in work that we do not even worry about ourselves.

Where is humanity lost? What kind of world and century are we in, where nothing is our own. No one is waiting for anyone, no one is thinking about anyone, no one is worried about anyone. Life has been consumed by worries. This is only the century of social media and technology, century of rules and laws, far from happiness and full of busyness, running far away, seeking for peace and life. The 21st century has been the best and worst century ever.

Regenerating Squatter Settlements

Sehrish Habib

Urbanization process today has entered an unprecedented era. Nowadays in urban areas squatter settlements continue to rise dramatically. A huge increase in migration of people from rural to urban areas, people resort their living in slum areas as the housing in the city is beyond their affordability. The settlements of dislodgments and reconstruction is ostracized and bungling. This has the result that in cities often face multiple social problems like poor living conditions and economic instability. For example, Mehrabadi in Islamabad is an illegal land occupation, and houses are constructed with mud and a wide trash land. They have refused to give up their land to the Capital development authority (CDA), and they demolished the tenant houses and shops many times. Therefore they fail to improve their livelihood and are also unable to prevent the advent of squatter settlements. The residents in this area are primarily Afghan refugees and Christian communities. There are several issues in this shantytown area related to housing, but the most alarming problems are; inadequate water supply management and development resources are risk factors for different diseases.

The illegal nature of squatter settlement dwellers is excluded from the standard delivery services as they don't have a proper resident address and other valid documents. Likewise, there is no facility for gas supply, and people usually use gas cylinders which is costly for the poor fragment of society. They also use wood for cooking food, and in cold weather for heat purposes, they are more concentrated on economic benefits rather than health benefits. Similarly, the region lacks suitable housing designs. Most of the population lives in mud houses, and high residential rent is difficult for daily wagers. Open drains, intolerable pungent smells, poor waste disposal systems, and no proper sanitation system generate most of the diseases. They face multiple health issues like allergies, cholera, dysentery, Hepatitis A, typhoid, malaria, and other diseases from dirty air and smoke of burning wood lead to asthma and coughing. Mismanagement of healthcare staff to work in slum areas create more problems, most of the health facilities are privately owned, and costly medicine is not within reach of poor people in this area.

Besides this, in squatter settlements, dwellers' education is

the most serious problem because a significant portion of the population is poor. Young people and child labor to do odd jobs to financially contribute to their family needs. There is also the problem of education institutions, the existing schools having no proper infrastructures and well-trained/educated teachers. Even due to gender biases, and the unavailability of schools, most girls are out of school. Parents are also uneducated and have no awareness of the education system, which further creates difficulties for children's education. The other reason is parents cannot afford the expense of school for their children because most of them are daily wagers, and women are working as a maid in different houses to fulfill their basic necessities. Therefore, children in this area start begging, most of whom are child laborers. All these issues are considered the cancerous part of cities that not only bring higher crimes but also traps its residents in eternal deprivation.

For sustainable integration of squatter settlements into cities, a systematic approach must be adopted. Policies to strengthen the squatter settlements and planning, financing and regulations must be formed to overcome these problems. Firstly, the government should take action on the illegal occupation of land. Destroying squatter settlements is not the solution while resulting it hurt the economy and displacement many poor dwellers. Government should introduce a proper housing scheme with a reasonable rent system for these communities and focus on the poor living conditions and economic instability. Secondly, squatter settlement up-gradation projects in different cities could help informal settlement and achieve urban transformation, which is crucial for formal urban settlement. This could be achieved through Local government, NGOs, and Civil society. Thirdly for sustainable integration and management of squatter settlements, NGOs and academic institutions should be focused on social security and essential services along with the supply of water, health, sanitation, waste management, energy services, and arrangement of education facilities must be provided.

In sum, the problem of squatter settlements settlement could be solved if they are integrated and accepted. The squatter settlements must be transformed in the urban regeneration process to achieve economic bounciness and social cohesion to make it convenient for the lower income class. If no innovative measures are taken, the situation will be problematic.

Sehrish Habib is a Research Assistant at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)

Ethiopian Airlines arrival in Pakistan to boost relations with African countries: Envoy

Asif Siddiqi / Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula on Saturday said the arrival of Ethiopian Airlines in Pakistan would give a major boost to the relations between Pakistan and Africa by bolstering contacts among their people.

"Ethiopian Airlines which is starting its operation from Karachi by next month will be a game-changer for the relations of Pakistan and Africa as the contacts among its people is not as strong as it should be," the ambassador said during a meeting with the members of Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and

Industry here.

He said two major issues which hampered the growth of bilateral relations especially trade between Pakistan and African countries were the absence of institutional linkages and weak people-to-people contacts.

However, Ethiopia which was a gateway to Africa had the potential to bring the people of Pakistan and African countries closer, he added.

The Embassy of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia had worked out a comprehensive strategy to resolve those issues, he said, while highlighting the steps so far taken to promote people-to-people contacts and establish institutional linkages between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

"Our embassy is inching closer to achieving its first target of

bringing Ethiopian Airlines in Pakistan," said the ambassador, who added that a trade agreement had already been signed between Pakistan and Ethiopia to formalize the trade between the two countries.

More agreements would soon be signed to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries in diverse sectors, he added.

He said the embassy had also finalized preparations for a trade delegation to Ethiopia which would not only connect the Pakistani business community with the right people in his country but also increase its presence in Africa.

The delegation which was bound to Ethiopia on March 5 would include subsidized airfares and accommodation, business-to-business and

government-to-business meetings as well as grand receptions and cultural nights hosted by the country's leadership.

"Do not mislocate yourself as this is right time to enter in Ethiopia which will connect you with the entire Africa," he remarked.

He said Ethiopia was the fastest growing economy in the world offering lucrative business, trade and investment opportunities with the cheap cost of production including clean energy and skilled labour.

"We have almost completed the largest Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam with 6,500 MW capacity," he said, adding his country had already been exporting energy to Kenya, Sudan, Djibouti and others.

Jemal Beker said the government of Ethiopia was support-



academia in promoting the people-to-people ties between the two countries.

On the occasion, the University of Sialkot Chairman Board of Governors Faisal Manzoor said Pakistanis had a religious association with Ethiopia which was a land of Hazrat Bilal Habeshi (RA). Nothing could stop these two nations from coming closer as their long-standing relations were anchored in shared values, culture and beliefs.

He said the University of Sialkot and IISAT would offer fully-funded scholarships to Ethiopian students.

Meanwhile, the ambassador also inaugurated the Sustainable Development Goals center at the International Institute of Science, Arts and Technology (IISAT).

ive of foreign investors as it has opened up its economy and encouraged private sector to take lead for development of the country.

Multiple incentives and one-window services were among the other initiatives to attract Foreign Direct Investment, he added.

Ethiopia and Pakistan had a vast potential for bilateral trade in the diverse sectors of econ-

omy including manufacturing, agriculture, agro processing, textile, cement, steel, chemicals and others, the ambassador remarked.

Jemal Beker Abdula also visited the International Institute of Science, Art and Technology and addressed the students on the history of Pakistan and Ethiopia relations and its future prospects.

He highlighted the role of

SAPM, Swiss envoy discuss possibilities of enhancing mutual cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Georg Steiner here on Saturday called on Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Jawad Sohrab Malik and discussed with him matters pertaining to enhancement of mutual relations and bilateral cooperation in different areas.

The SAPM underscored the commitments of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals in fostering sustainable economic growth, rule of law, management of natural resources and peace for the people.

He appreciated Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, formulated by the Federal Council highlighting sustainable econom-



ic growth, market development, creation of jobs, addressing climate change by managing natural resources, human development in education and healthcare, promoting peace, rule of law and gender equality.

Talking to the Ambassador, Jawad Sohrab Malik said that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) had been performing an efficient role

through its projects in mitigating water woes in vulnerable areas of Pakistan.

The Swiss Ambassador said that Swiss international cooperation was driven by the vision of a world without poverty and in peace, for sustainable development. Switzerland has earmarked CHF 11.25 billion for international cooperation in the 2021-24 period, he told and added, Swiss international cooperation alleviates need

and poverty, reduces global risks and promotes peace.

The Ambassador said that in Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24, the Federal Council had set out four objectives of equal importance; economic development for contribution to sustainable economic growth, market development and the creation of decent jobs; climate change and the environment to addressing climate change and its adverse effects and managing natural resources sustainably; human development for saving lives, ensuring quality basic services (especially in relation to education and healthcare), and reducing the causes of forced and irregular migration; and peace and governance to promoting peace, the rule of law and gender equality.

Top Israeli Diplomat ejected from African Union Summit



Mentoring Desk

A senior Israel diplomat was on Saturday removed from the African Union's annual summit in Ethiopia, as a dispute over Israel's accreditation to the bloc escalated.

Images posted online showed AU security personnel confronting the diplomat during the opening ceremony of the summit, before she left the auditorium.

"Israel looks harshly upon the incident in which the deputy director for Africa, Ambassador Sharon Bar-Li, was removed from the African Union hall despite her status as an accredited observer with entrance badges," the foreign ministry said.

Ebba Kalondo, the spokesperson for the African Union's commission chairman, said the diplomat had been removed because she was not the duly accredited Israeli ambassador to Ethiopia, the official who was expected.

But Israel blamed the incident on South Africa and Algeria, two key nations in the 55-nation bloc, saying they were holding the AU hostage, and were driven by "hate".

"We call on the countries of Africa to stand up against these actions that harm the organization of the African Union itself and the entire continent," the Israeli foreign ministry said.

South Africa rejected the claim, saying Israel's application for observer status at the AU has not been decided upon by the bloc.

"Until the AU takes a decision on whether to grant Israel observer status, you cannot have the country sitting and observing," Clayson Monyela, head of public diplomacy in South Africa's department of international relations, told Reuters.

"So, it's not about South Africa or Algeria, it's an issue of principle." South Africa's ruling party has historically been a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause.

The Algerian delegation at the summit was not immediately available for a comment.

Samjhauta Express victims waiting for justice



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Indian government continues to deny justice to the families of victims of the Samjhauta Express terrorist attack despite availability of evidence even after the passage of 16 years to the horrific incident.

A report, released by the Kashmir Media Service on the completion of 16 years to the deadly attack, said that on this day in 2007, 68 persons, mostly Pakistanis, were killed in bomb blasts in Samjhauta Express – a cross border train service between Pakistan and India. It maintained that the bombs were planted by Hindutva terrorists with connivance of Indian secret agencies.

The report deplored that the Indian court acquitted four Hindu terrorists despite the evidence of their involvement in the heinous act. It said that these culprits were acquitted owing to their Hindutva connections.

It pointed out that the court decision came even after a Hindu extremist leader and affiliated with RSS, Swami Aseemanand – the mastermind of the attack – confessed during the investigations that Hindu terror outfits were behind the blasts.

The report said the acquittal of those involved in blasts showed Hindu extremists enjoy impunity under Modi-led fascist Indian government and that the court decision in this regard was a reflection of Indian state policy to protect the Hindu terrorists.

It lamented that Indian agencies had blamed a Pakistan-based group despite seeing a clear Hindutva link to the Samjhauta blast.

The report said that Samjhauta Express bombing was a false flag operation aimed at maligning Pakistan. It pointed out that the Indian secret agencies had staged several Samjhauta Express blasts like false flag operations to defame Pakistan. It added that the world must realize that the RSS-backed fascist BJP regime is a threat to global peace.

Pakistan stands in solidarity with quake-affected people of Turkiye, Syria: Pak HC



Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Zaheer A. Janjua on Saturday said that the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with their Turkish and Syrian brethren in the wake of the devastating earthquake.

He said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was actively engaged in mobilizing all available resources, including winterized tents, blankets and other critical life-saving supplies to support relief efforts in Turkiye and Syria.

The Urban Search and Rescue teams, trained to operate in disaster-hit areas, had been dispatched from Pakistan to the affected areas, the high commissioner was speaking as a chief guest in a fundraising event for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Turkiye and Syria.

The event was organized by the International Development Relief Foundation (IDRF), in collaboration with the Turkish and Syrian diaspora in Ottawa, a press release said. IDRF is a Canadian non-profit charity organization working with partners around the world to facilitate relief and development programs.

Addressing the audience, the high commissioner expressed deep condolences over the loss of precious lives and extensive damage to property caused by the massive earthquake that hit parts of southern Turkiye and northern Syria on 6th February.

"Pakistan stands ready to extend all possible support in the relief efforts in the earthquake-affected areas in Turkiye and Syria. We are confident that the brave people of Turkiye and Syria will overcome this natural calamity with characteristic resilience and determination," the press release quoted the high commissioner as saying.

He also urged the audience and the Pakistani diaspora living in Canada for making generous donations for their brothers and sisters in Turkiye and Syria.

Bilateral Manner

BAKU: It would be good if Armenia and Azerbaijan established checkpoints on the Armenian-Azerbaijan border in a bilateral manner: President Ilham Aliyev said during an interview by TV channels in Munich.



China blasts US over 'hysterical' balloon claim

Mentoring Desk

MUNICH: China's top diplomat Wang Yi on Saturday blasted the United States's reaction to what Washington has called a Chinese spy balloon as "hysterical and absurd", in uncharacteristically strong remarks against the top Western power.

Addressing a gathering of world leaders at the Munich Security Conference, Wang said US President Joe Biden's administration has a "misguided" perception of Beijing.

He accused Washington of trying to "smear" the Asian giant while it itself was implementing policies that ran counter to its paradigms such as free trade.

"There are many balloons from many countries in the sky. Do you



want to down each and every one of them?" Wang charged.

"We urge the United States not to do such preposterous things simply to divert attention from its own domestic problems."

The United States has been in a

state of alarm since a huge white balloon from China spotted over top-secret nuclear weapons sites, before being shot down just off the east coast on February 4.

Beijing denies it uses spy balloons and says the craft was for weather research. Subsequently it accused Washington of sending its own espionage balloons over its territory – something that the US has denied.

The spat had led US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a rare visit to China.

With Blinken also in Munich for the conference, all eyes are on whether both sides succeed in setting up a meeting.

But asked if he was planning a huddle with the US delegation, Wang reacted combatively.

Washington, he said, had the wrong view of China as a serious geopolitical challenge and a threat to the United States.

"This is a misguided perception of China and with this perception, the United States is using all of its means to smear and clamp down China, and is co-opting other countries to do the same," he said.

Wang accused the US instead of "100 percent protectionism, 100 percent self-servingness, 100 percent unilateral action" in its own economic policies like the Chips Act.

"We hope the US side would take a pragmatic and proactive attitude towards China and work together with China to return our bilateral ties to accept a track of sound development," he added.

NIC Peshawar joins hands with code for Pakistan for the Net Zero Tech Camp Challenge



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: This week NIC Peshawar, with support from The Asia Foundation, hosted the second round of the Net Zero Tech Camp Challenge. The event, curated by Code for Pakistan featured mentoring and project development workshops facilitated by NIC Peshawar. Spanning over 3-days, it was designed to empower tech students from five of KP's universities to pursue projects that have the potential to achieve zero environmental footprint. A total of 40 undergraduate students from University of Swabi, UET Peshawar, Institute of Management Sciences, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University and Pak-Austria Fachhochschule were selected for both rounds of the challenge. 20 students, in groups of 5, participated in the second round that ended yesterday.

The event comprised of multiple speaker sessions delivered by professionals within the Sustainability and Climate Change field. After presenting their initial pitches for sustainable solutions like up cycling and "green bricks" (among others), the participants received a "speed mentoring" session from the expert speakers. Towards the end of the event, participating students got the opportunity to demo their projects and are expected to receive a grant of 2000 USD from The Asia Foundation and US Consulate Peshawar to pursue their projects.

"We hope to address all broad and deep challenges impacting our nation and communities. Of course, we will not achieve absolute success immediately, but our roadmap forward is based upon a clear vision, thoughtful strategy and flawless execution."

MD SNGPL Aj Hamdani Removed Over 'Financial Irregularities'



News Desk

LAHORE: The Managing Director (MD) of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) AJ Hamdani has been removed by the company's board of directors over alleged financial irregularities worth millions.

MD SNGPL Ali Javaid Hamdani was removed over alleged financial irregularities and a senior officer Amir Tufail was given charge of the acting managing director.

An investigation was launched into Hamdani's salary. Sources told ARY News that the former MD was receiving the highest salary which was Rs6.8 million per month. The SNGPL's board of directors ordered the inquiry into ex-MD's salary.

Sources revealed that the company detected financial irregularity worth millions in the 260-km pipeline in Bannu which led to the launching of an inquiry against Hamdani.

Pakistan exported textile products worth \$10 billion in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: Textile exports reached to \$10,039.743 million during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday. The textile exports during the period showed a decline of 8.17 per cent as compared to the exports of \$10,933.059 million during the same period of last year (July-January 2021-22).

The textile products that witnessed positive growth during July-January (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 134.77 percent, from \$5.233 million to \$12.286 million.

The exports of tents, canvas and tarpaulin also went up by 13.44 percent, from \$65.339 million to \$74.122 million.

Like-wise, the exports of cotton cloth decreased by 9.34 percent, from \$1,351.532 million to \$1,225.348 million; cotton (carded or combed) by 41.18 per cent, from \$1.610 million to \$0.947 million, yarn (other than cotton yarn) by 23.15 per cent, from \$34.031 million to \$26.154 million, knitwear by 2.93 per cent from \$2,887.880 million to \$2,803.298 million, bed wear by 14.81 percent, from \$1,924.030 million to \$1,639.103 million and towels by 5.29 per cent, from \$615.355- million to \$582.833 million.

Miftah Ismail criticises govt for massive drop of foreign reserves

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail on Friday stated that the foreign reserves of Pakistan would never drop this level at \$2.5 billion if his financial policy is followed.

While talking to the ARY News programme "Bakhabar Savera", Miftah Ismail stated that the current finance minister Ishaq Dar took delayed decisions which dented Pakistan's economy.

He said that the ruling government took tough decisions to fulfil the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to revive the loan agreement.

Miftah Ismail said that the ruling government is now realizing that the situation would have been different if the finance ministry followed his policy.

The PML-N leader said that the friendly



countries also assured IMF that they would invest in Pakistan, but later they all stepped

back. He said that former finance minister Shaukat Tarin had made a mistake in the past and current finance minister Ishaq Dar also made some mistakes which will surely create a big impact at the time of the election.

PML-N has suffered enormous losses, if they continue with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's policy, how can they be held responsible PTI chief?

Miftah Ismail expressed concern over imposing additional taxes as well as the inflation in petroleum products in the past two weeks and said that the prices will automatically drop after the public will release the stashed dollars in the market.

The former finance minister said that the next IMF program will be started as soon as this program ends.

ICCI calls for privatizing loss-making SOEs to get rid of debt

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that the government is spending billions of rupees every year to bail out the loss-making State Owned Entities (SOEs) including PLA, Pakistan Steel, Pakistan Railways and DISCOs, which show that these entities are a big burden on the national exchequer and stressed that the government should privatize these entities to big businessmen of the country that would reduce government expenditure, improve the performance of these organizations and enable the country to decrease its debt. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest a dinner reception hosted by Zahid Rafiq, Secretary General, Islamabad Estate Agents Association.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there are many reputed businessmen in the country who have the financial capacity and capability to turn the loss-making SOEs into profit generating organizations and emphasized that the government should hand over these SOEs to them on the condition that they would pay off all the debts of the country within 10 years and after that these SOEs should be transferred to their name.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President



ICCI speaking at the occasion, said that rising debt servicing obligations are consuming a major share of our total revenue due to which the country is unable to spend more on development and public welfare projects. He said that Pakistan cannot achieve sustainable economic development without controlling the rising debt burden. He stressed that the government should make policies to control debt and reduce non-development expenditures. He called upon the business community to work hard to promote trade and exports in order to improve the economy.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former Presi-

dent ICCI said that running business entities is the job of the government. Therefore, he stressed that the government should focus on improving the regulatory framework for commercial organization and reduce its footprint in the business field by handing over the loss-making organizations to the private sector.

Sardar Tahir President, Zahid Rafiq Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association and others also spoke at the occasion and emphasized that the government should adopt austerity measures and reduce all unnecessary expenditure to overcome fiscal and current account deficits.

P&G Pakistan wins Champion of 2022 Award



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: P&G Pakistan, in recognition of its women empowerment initiatives and diverse and equitable workplace ethics, was honored with the title of Champion of 2022, at the annual OICCI Women Empowerment Awards held by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI). The award ceremony was held at OICCI HQ.

OICCI, the oldest and largest investment chamber, plays a major role in the growth of commerce and industry in the country with 200 plus members representing 35 different countries and 14 different sectors of trade and industry. OICCI Women Empowerment Awards are the continuation of the OICCI Women initiative which was launched to encourage member companies to become role models to empower women in the workforce and create gender equality within their respective organizations.

Promoting gender equality and diversity has been a long-standing mission of P&G Pakistan. The company has been actively working to raise their voice to tackle gender bias, remove barriers to education for girls, create economic opportunities for women through corporate and brand programs, and policy advocacy, achieve an inclusive, gender-equal environment within P&G, while also advocating for gender and intersectional equality in workplaces everywhere so that everyone can contribute to their full potential.

Commenting on the receipt of this prestigious award the SVP and CEO of P&G Pakistan, Adil Farhat said "It is a matter of great pride for P&G Pakistan to be recognized as the Champion of 2022 by the OICCI at the Women Empowerment Awards. The collective effort of all the organizations that were nominated for the awards, has and will continue to leave an everlasting impact in empowering the women of Pakistan. P&G has been advocating for women empowerment and gender parity through various impact programs and has been constantly working to empower and shape societal perception of women and promoting gender equality across all platforms. We are grateful to OICCI for the recognition of our efforts and giving us further motivation to continue our mission to achieve an equitable and inclusive world for everyone."

P&G Pakistan has various initiatives in place to fulfil its equality and inclusion mission. The company ensures fair and just working opportunities for everyone with a special focus on recruiting and advancing a diverse workforce. As a result, today women constitute almost 46% of the employees at the P&G head office in Karachi with 7 top function leaders being women. For this purpose, P&G is also a member of the US-Pakistan Women's Council (USPWC). Through its education initiatives, in partnership with Health Oriented Preventive Education (HOPE) and READ Foundation, P&G has provided quality education to ~15,000 girls from under-privileged communities in Pakistan. P&G is also a partner with STEMconnector, to encourage girls and women around the world to pursue, persist and succeed in STEM careers.

Symposium

ISLAMABAD: Carlo De Rosa from the European Union, Dr. Khawaja Masood from the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Sahib Jaan Badar from AAP Health Sindh, Dr. Mohsin Sheikh from Health Secretariat Sindh, posing for group photograph with participants during the Reflections and Takeaways Symposium organized under the Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh (PINS) organized by Action against Hunger (ACF) at a hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Malaysian Consul General visits FPCCI

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his longstanding concerns that bilateral trade deficit with Malaysia has been in excess of \$1 billion historically; and, it needs to be addressed in the new FTA bring discussed between the two governments. He highlighted that there are many Pakistani products which are exported to Malaysia through third countries after only packaging and branding; e.g. Pakistan's world-class surgical & sports goods. This way Pakistani producers lose a lot of value addition and revenues, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh apprised that FPCCI team has discussed the rationale & must-have sectorial concessions, which should be included in the FTA, during the visit

of H. E. Mr. Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad, Consul General of Malaysia, to the Federation House, Karachi. He added that the FTA is more than 15 years old; and, need to be reviewed & expanded as it has lost its relevance in today's time.

Mr. Shabbir Mansha, VP FPCCI, emphasized that after Pakistan's inclusion into TIR Convention, Pakistan has started to trade with CIS countries through land-based routes - which is not only time-saving but also more than halves the cost of transportation. He added that Pakistan & Malaysia should explore and study the possibilities of using TIR Convention & transit trade routes to enhance their bilateral trade.

Mr. Shabbir Mansha also requested the Malaysian diplomat to use their influence to get Pakistan a Full Dialogue Partner status in the

important alliance of ASEAN from the current status of a Sectorial Dialogue Partner. He apprised the Consul General that the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) has solicited the feedback, proposals and recommendations of the apex body of FPCCI in the review process of FTA with Malaysia; which is being revised after it was signed back in November 2007.

Mr. Bashir Jan mohammed, Chairman of FPCCI's Pakistan - Malaysia Business Council (PMBC), apprised the session that palm oil imports from Malaysia to Pakistan have declined considerably due to various restrictions; and, top of the list is the imposition of 3 - 8 percent export duty on Crude Palm Oil (CPO). He also emphasized that direct flights between the major cities of Pakistan & Malaysia can enable the exports of perishables like fruits & vegetables.



H. E. Mr. Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad, Consul General of Malaysia, agreed that there are logistical impediments, lack of direct flights & insufficient B2B activities; and, he is reaching out to business community of Pakistan to address them. He also assured FPCCI that Malaysia

is assessing the possibilities to offer concessions or waivers in duties to the ten products requested by Pakistan under the FTA review process. He stated that Malaysia needs to import rice, pink salt, surgical goods, chicken & eggs, other halal foods, etc. to meet its domestic demand.

HBL PSL 8 to continue: PCB

Sports Reporter

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has said the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 will continue as planned, with both Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators fielding their full-strength sides later on Saturday at the National Bank Cricket Arena.

Toss will take place at 6: 30pm, with the first ball to be bowled at 7pm.

PCB Chairman Najam Sethi said on Saturday, "The HBL PSL 8 will continue



as planned after it has been established and confirmed that Friday's incident was an isolated one, which was unrelated to cricket. We have been working very closely with all stakeholders, including the

local and foreign security experts, who have provided assurances and comfort that the event can proceed as there was no threat to cricket.

"The PCB takes the safety and security of all those involved in the HBL PSL 8 very seriously.

To ensure no stone is left unturned, Presidential-level security has been provided to the teams and officials. These unprecedented arrangements are similar to what were in place for international matches that have been highly praised

and appreciated by the visiting teams and officials.

"The PCB remains committed to providing complete safety and security to all the participants and, as always, will continue to work very closely with the security experts and law enforcing agencies to ensure the players and officials are comfortable and being well looked after so that they can enjoy their stay in Pakistan and continue to entertain the fans and followers with their cricketing skills and talent."

Quetta Gladiators open victory box with 6-run win over Karachi Kings

Sports Desk

KARACHI: In another nerve-racking match, Quetta Gladiators (QG) staged a 6-run victory over Karachi Kings (KK) despite Shoaib Malik's determined 71 runs off 49 balls in the sixth contest of the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at National Stadium on Saturday night.

QG opened its victory box with this win while leaving a third consecutive defeat for KK. Guptill's scintillating 67-ball 117 runs earned him the "Player of the Match" award and a cash prize of Rs500,000.

In the three death overs, QG lowered the momentum posed by the seventh-wicket partnership between Shoaib Malik and Irfan Khan Niazi. KK needed 36 runs in the last three overs but Naseem Shah blocked Malik's way to hit a boundary in the eighteenth over and Mohammad Hasnain bowled the nineteenth over for only 7 runs leaving insurmountable 24 runs for KK in



the final over.

Earlier, QG opener Martin Guptill's thumping 117 runs on 67 balls had helped QG post a total of 168 against Karachi Kings (KK) after the batting side suffered four early blows. Guptill remained top scorer while Iftikhar Ahmad added 32 runs to the scorecard on 27 deliveries. Meanwhile other players failed to register a noticeable knock.

The KK's bowling side performed exceptionally well until the 17th over when Guptill started accelerating the score with his blistering boundaries. Imad

Wasim took three wickets against 16 runs in four overs, Aamir Yamen bundled out two against 37 runs while Andrew Tye remained the most expensive bowler with 55 runs in four overs without a wicket.

Kings had won the toss and elected to bowl first against Gladiators. Both teams are yet to open the tournament with a victory.

QG skipper Sarfraz Ahmad said that he would have opted for field first had he won the toss. "We will try to post a target of 170-180 for KK", he added.

Kings flew to the field

with the inclusion of spinner Imran Tahir (replacing Muhammad Musa) and medium pacer Aamir Yamen after losing two close contests against Peshawar Zalmi and Multan Sultans. In the former game, Zalmi secured a two-run win over KK as the Kings could not chase the target of 200 posted by Zalmi. In the latter, Sultans managed to dupe the hopes of Kings by chasing the target of 174 against a loss of six wickets with ten balls left.

On the other hand, Gladiators could not incept the contest with a win as against Multan Sultans, QG posted a total of 110 which the Sultans chased comfortably in the 14th over with 9 wickets in hand. However, the team would land the field with Qais Ahmad and Odean Smith replacing Nuwan Thushara today. Meanwhile, QG dropped former Pakistani skipper Mohammad Hafeez for the match. He had been included in the team after Ahsan Ali was ruled out of the team on account of injury.

Karachi Kings win toss, opt to bowl first against Quetta Gladiators



A Sports -

KARACHI: Karachi Kings have won the toss and elected to bowl first against Quetta Gladiators in the sixth match of the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight.

PLAYING XI'S

Karachi Kings: James Vince, Sharjeel Khan, Haider Ali, Shoaib Malik, Imad Wasim (c), Matthew Wade, Irfanullah Niazi, Aamer Yamin, Andrew Tye, Mohammad Amir, Imran Tahir.

Quetta Gladiators: Sarfraz Ahmad (c), Jason Roy, Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, Martin Guptill, Iftikhar Ahmed, Qais Ahmed, Umar Akmal, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Hasnain, Odean Smith.

PCB wants to revive women's cricket in Pakistan: Najam Sethi



KARACHI: The chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) management committee, Najam Sethi, on Saturday said that India's announcement of their women's league came right after Pakistan announced the same.

In an interaction with the media on Saturday, Sethi said PCB wanted to revive women's cricket in the country and the Women's League is part of that plan.

Amid the ongoing eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), the PCB will hold three women's exhibition matches as a build-up to the Women's League.

"As soon as we announced the women's league, India and the IPL announced their own women's league. This year we are going to launch a women's league. There are some women's matches in this PSL as well," he said.

He also heaped massive praise on Pakistan women's wicketkeeper-batter Muneeba Ali for "scoring a magnificent century" against Ireland in the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup 2023 in South Africa.

Najam Sethi visits Shahnawaz Dahani, inquire about his health



Bureau Reporter

KARACHI: The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) management committee Najam Sethi met injured pacer Shahnawaz Dahani on Saturday and inquired about his health.

Right-arm pacer Dahani, who was poised to represent Multan Sultans in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight had an early exit from the extravaganza after sustaining an injury to his right-hand finger.

Following the injury, the young right-arm pacer was ruled out of the PSL 8 and his counterpart Mohammad Ilyas was called up to the Sultans' squad for the remainder of the marquee league.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the PCB management committee met the injured pacer in the team hotel on Saturday to inquire about his health and also wished him a speedy recovery.

Taking to Twitter, the PCB shared the footage of the meeting. "Chairman of the PCB Management Committee, Mr Najam Sethi met [Shahnawaz Dahani] in Karachi and inquired about his health following his finger injury," wrote PCB.

Kohli's Gaffe in front of Usman Khawaja goes viral

Sports Desk

DELHI: Indian cricketer, Virat Kohli shared a lighter moment with the Australian left-handed batsman Usman Khawaja during the second India-Australia Test match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in India's Delhi city on Friday (February 17).

Australia while batting first, lost three key wickets including David Warner, Marnus Labuschagne, and Steve Smith in the first session. Nonetheless, Khawaja kept them on course for a significant score as he expertly dealt with the Indian spinners.

During his batting, a hilarious moment was recorded, which sparked a laughter riot on the field.

The former captain of India, Virat Kohli was overheard on the stump microphone instructing the spin bowler Ravichandran Ashwin in Hindi on how to get Khawaja wicket. Although it wasn't the intention for the batsman to comprehend it, but Khawaja did, which Kohli realised right away.

The legendary Indian batsman broke into laughter, and his expression quickly gained popularity on social media platforms.

Ultimately, it was Ravindra Jadeja who picked Khawaja's wicket after he made 81 runs. Khawaja was dismissed after a stunning one-handed catch by KL Rahul.

Excited for PSL's 'El Clasico': Lahore Qalandars' youngsters

Every year, Pakistan Super League (PSL) fans wait most eagerly for the riveting clash between Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings.

The much-awaited contest — also dubbed as El Clasico of PSL — is all set to take place on February 19 (Sunday) at Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena, and fans are already charged.

Excited for PSL's El Clasico: Lahore Qalandars youngsters However, fans of the two teams are not the only ones excited about this contest. Youngsters of Qalandars are just as hyped for this high-intensity game.

Zaman Khan — who defended 15 runs in the last over of Qalandars' first match to hand them a winning start in PSL 8 — talked about the importance of the Lahore vs Karachi match.

"The Karachi vs Lahore game is next level because the whole world watches it," he shared.

"There is always a tough competition between the two teams and everyone enjoys it. We are really looking forward to this contest," added the young bowler who rose to fame after representing Qalandars in PSL last year.

The right-arm pacer bagged 18 wickets in 13 matches in PSL 2022. He was the third-best bowler in last year's tournament.

Tahir Baig, who found his feet in Qalandars' squad through their class of 2022, will continue supporting his team.

"I have been watching Karachi vs Lahore with full excitement even when I wasn't part of Qalandars. This time, I am a part of their squad so I am more excited," he said.

Pakistan Super League 8

KARACHI: Quetta Gladiators' Martin Guptill received Player of the Match as he scored century (100 runs) during the Pakistan Super League (PSL 8) T20 cricket match between Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators at the National Stadium.



Malik's fifty goes in vain as Gladiators edge Kings in nail-biter

A Sports -

KARACHI: Shoaib Malik played a gritty 71-run knock in the tense run chase but failed short of trumping Martin Guptill's century as Quetta Gladiators managed to edge Karachi Kings by six runs in a Pakistan Super League (PSL) eight thriller.

Set to chase 169, the Kings fell just six short of glory as they finished at 162/5 despite a valiant 71-run knock by experienced Malik.

The Kings got off to a frustrating start to the run chase as the home side lost three quick wickets inside the powerplay that dented their march to glory early on with James Vince, who appeared solid with also perishing for a 14-ball 22.

Following the early slump, wicketkeeper Matthew Wade and Shoaib Malik anchored the run chase as the duo added 35 runs to the total before Mohammad Hasnain castled the former to break the crucial partnership. Wade could score 15 off 19.

The Kings then dealt with another major blow as



Hasnain struck again in the same over and removed Imad Wasim on five.

Meanwhile, Malik carried on his retaliation and was superbly supported by young Irfan Khan Niazi but some tight bowling by Naseem and Hasnain in the 18th and 19th barred the pair from steering their side to glory despite an expensive last over by Odean Smith, who went for 17 runs. Malik remained the top-scorer for the Kings with 71 off just 49 deliveries and smashed nine boundaries including a six.

Hasnain led the bowling attack for the Gladiators with 2/29 while Naseem, Smith and Qais Ahmed made one scalp each.

Put into bat first, the

Gladiators managed to post a decent 168/7 in the allotted 20 overs at the back of a scintillating century by their opener Guptill.

Batting first, the visitors got off to a poor start as Kings captain Imad ran through their top order by picking up three quick wickets including two in the first over.

Gladiators' captain Sarfraz Ahmad attempted to script recovery amid his brief partnership with Guptill but failed as he fell victim to Aamer Yamin on the first delivery after the power-play and could score a mere five off 11.

With the side in heaps of trouble at 23/4, Guptill joined hands with in-form Iftikhar Ahmed and

anchored the innings with a gritty 69-run partnership for the fifth wicket.

Kings' experienced pacer Mohammad Amir then ceased the budding partnership in the 15th over as he deceived Iftikhar Ahmed with a short-pitch delivery. The right-handed batter scored 32 off 27 deliveries, hitting three boundaries.

Following Iftikhar's dismissal, Guptill launched a counter-attack on the Kings' bowlers and powered his side to a competitive total with little to no help from the other end before perishing on the final delivery off Yamin.

Guptill top-scored with 117 off just 67 balls, laced with 12 boundaries and five sixes while Iftikhar (32) remained the only other notable run-getter for the Gladiators.

The rest of the Gladiators' batters seemed hapless against the Kings' bowlers as they could not amass the double figures. Skipper Imad led the bowling attack for the Kings with 3/16, followed by Yamin's 3/37 while Amir made one scalp.

Sciver's fifty fires England to sink India despite Renuka's five-for

By A Sports -

QEBERHA: England's veteran all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunton scored a magnificent half-century and cruised her side to edge India by 11 runs in the ongoing ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

Put into bat first, England raised a decent 151/7 in their allotted 20 overs at the back of a sensational fifty by Nat Sciver.

Earlier, England got off to a dismal start as the side lost three wickets inside the batting power-play for a mere 29 runs before Sciver scripted an astounding recovery for her side with a gritty partnership with skipper Heather Knight.

The pair charged on the Indian bowlers as they piled brisk 51 runs in 38 deliveries Shikha Pandey broke the shackles by dismissing Knight, who could score 28 off 23.

Following the dismissal, Sciver then put on yet another important partnership for her side as she added a vital 40 runs with Amy Jones before falling victim to Deepti Sharma.

Sciver top-scored for England with 50 off 42 deliveries and smashed five boundaries.

Jones then partnered briefly with



Sophie Ecclestone (11) before finally perishing in the final over. She scored a brisk 40 off 27 balls, laced with three boundaries and two sixes.

Renuka led the bowling attack for India with 5/15 while Deepti and Shikha made one scalp each.

Set to chase 152, India fell 11 runs short of the victory despite a brilliant half-century by opener Smriti Mandhana and Richa Ghosh's 47.

The rest of the Indian batters, however, failed to make an impact with the bat as India could pile 140/5

in their set of overs. Mandhana top-scored for her side with a 41-ball 52 that featured seven boundaries and a six before falling off Sarah Glenn in the 16th over.

Ghosh, on the other hand, scored an unbeaten 47 off just 34 deliveries but her efforts eventually turned out to be insufficient as England ran away with a thrilling 11-run victory.

Glenn led the bowling attack for England with 2/27 while Ecclestone and Lauren Bell struck out a batter each.