



Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan were removed via 'soft coup': Mushahid

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed has asserted that former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was removed in the same way Nawaz Sharif was ousted – via soft coup. (Report on Page 8)



Imran's every political trick fails miserably: Khawaja Asif

Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday said that during the last year, all political tricks of Imran Khan have failed miserably. Talking to Pakistan Television News, the defense minister said that Imran Khan's "Jail Bharo Tehreek" was a hollow slogan that failed shamelessly. (Report on Page 8)

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Pak-US relations

LAHORE: Pakistan Ambassador to the US Sardar Masood Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan values its mutually beneficial ties with US: PM

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that Pakistan valued its mutually beneficial ties with the United States and was determined to further enhance its trade and investment in multi-dimensional fields of IT, agriculture and industry. The prime minister was talking to Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Sardar Masood Khan who called on him, PM Office Press Wing said in a press release. The prime minister directed the envoy to identify further avenues of collaboration to

promote Pak-US trade and investment. He further directed Pakistan's Mission in Washington and the authorities in Pakistan to extend full cooperation to the American investors. The prime minister underscored that the government was working on priority basis to further ease trade and investment-related rules and regulations. The ambassador briefed the prime minister about the performance of Pakistan's mission in the US. Later on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will

travel to Doha on 5-6 March to participate in the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries an invitation of the Amir of Qatar. The conference, being held from 5-9 March, will consider steps for accelerating sustainable development in the LDCs, helping them make progress on the road to prosperity. In Doha, the prime minister will hold bilateral meetings and interactions with participating leaders and heads of delegation on the sidelines of the conference, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Saturday. At the conference, the leaders

will mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of LDCs and agree on a renewed partnership between LDCs and their development partners. Pakistan has been playing a leading role at UN platforms to amplify the collective voice of the Global South to promote sustainable development worldwide. During 2022, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Pakistan actively supported the efforts of the LDC Chair and Qatar in securing the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries by consensus and its

endorsement by the UN General Assembly. "The Prime Minister's participation in the Conference will signify Pakistan's support and solidarity with the Least Developed Countries, in their quest for social progress and economic prosperity," it was added. The spokesperson further said that Pakistan supported reinvigorated global partnerships based on effective means of implementation, including within the framework of South-South Cooperation, to pursue the UN 2030 Development Agenda and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

President offers condolence on Amjad Islam Amjad's death



Bureau Report

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi and First Lady Begum Samina Alvi on Saturday visited the residence of late Amjad Islam Amjad to express condolences with the bereaved family. They offered fatcha for the departed soul and prayed for

the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The president said that late Amjad was a great Urdu poet and author and the country felt pride over such personalities, adding that his death was a loss to the nation.

Govt committed to extend maximum support to facilitate Hajjis, says Dar



Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday expressed a firm commitment to extend maximum support and cooperation for facilitating the Hajjis to make the religious event successful. The minister chaired a meeting on Hajj Policy-2023 as Mufti Abdul Shakoor, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Special Secretary of Finance and senior officers from Finance and Religious Affairs ministries were

among the attendees. The meeting was appraised of the Hajj-2023 policy. It was informed that more than 179,000 Pakistanis were expected to perform Hajj this year. Minister for Religious Affairs informed the finance minister about certain issues related to foreign exchange and sought his support. Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar stated that "Hajj is a sacred religious obligation to be performed by every Muslim and we have to contribute our part for the blessings of Almighty Allah". The minister committed to extending maximum support and cooperation in facilitating the Hajjis to make the religious event successful. Minister for Religious Affairs thanked the finance minister for cooperation and support.

Langu welcomes appointment of Wali Kakar as Governor Balochistan



News Desk

QUETTA: Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langu on Saturday has welcomed the appointment of Malik Abdul Wali Kakar as Governor of Balochistan. He expressed the hope that he would support the provincial government for the development of Balochistan. Mir Ziaullah further said that Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and his family had played a key role in the politics of Balochistan. Besides, he also played an important role in the promotion of brotherhood in the province, he added. He expressed that after his appointment Malik Wali Kakar would utilize all his abilities for the people of Balochistan while fulfilling his constitutional responsibilities for the interest of the country and province. Mir Ziaullah Langu also expressed his good wishes for him on this occasion and prayed that he would be able to fulfill the right of this position.

Imran puts country's interest first, says he's ready to forgive everyone

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Saturday expressed willingness to forgive everyone for the sake of the country including the assailants who involved and orchestrated the Wazirabad attack in November last year. Addressing his party supporters on the campaign for the upcoming Punjab elections via video link from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore, the deposed premier at the outset of his address lauded PTI's stalwarts for contributing to the court arrest drive and said the party's leaders were treated like terrorists in jail, and the incumbent rulers lodged fake cases against workers to harass them. He added that 74 cases have been

registered against him by the ruling PDM, adding PTI will never kowtow to the government. The PTI chief alleged that Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have hatched another plot to kill him, months after he survived an assassination attempt in Wazirabad during his party's long march. "Both had damaged the investigation process in the case of attempt on my life as they were afraid of my return to power," added Mr Imran. "We sacrificed our governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa keeping in view the Constitution as lawyers had told that elections could not be delayed beyond 90 days," he said while assuring the judiciary of full support. He reiterated that a snap election

is the only way to pull the country out of the quagmire as the upcoming government through the masses' faith could halt the economic meltdown. Recalling his government's achievements, he said during the pandemic, Pakistan's growth rate clocked in at 6pc despite the global inflation cycle, but today due to failed policies of Shehbaz-led government industries are shutting down, and skyrocketing inflation crushing masses more than ever. Imran also warned the people that petroleum prices will further see a historical rise. "NAB had recovered Rs480 billion during PTI's tenure, NAB had to recover 1100 billion more but the PDM amended NAB rules to benefit themselves," said Imran.

Fawad terms NAB chairman appointment 'controversial'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf senior leader Fawad Chaudhry raised questions over the process of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman's appointment calling it "contentious". Taking to Twitter, he said the court suspended the notification of PTI members resignation and the party appointed, Shah Mahmood Qureshi as the opposition leader. He added consultation was required between the government and opposition for the NAB chief appointment and the due process was not followed in this regard.

Imran wants 'NRO' to save his skin: Marrayum



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marrayum Aurangzeb on Saturday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan wanted an NRO like a concession to "save his skin in corruption cases". "The [alleged] foreign agent and a thief who has stolen a wristwatch from Toshakhana [referring to Imran] does not want to compromise [as the PTI chief claims] but rather is seeking an NRO," the minister said in a news statement. She said that nobody would sit with Imran Khan for the talks whether he "screams, whines or bemoans". "The PTI chief wants to evade accountability in corruption cases of Al-Qadir Trust and others," she accused.

Holding G20 summit in India or in HoJK amounts to whitewash Modi govt's crimes: Wani

Abdul Majeed Tahir
MIRPUR (AJK): Veteran Kashmiri rights activist and Chairman KIIR Altaf Hussain Wani has said that holding of G-20 summit in India or anywhere in Indian Illegally Held occupied Jammu Kashmir would be tantamount to whitewashing the Indian government's crimes it has been contributing against humanity within and outside the held territory. In a statement issued here on Saturday, the KIIR chief while referring to rising tides of communalism, intolerance and xenophobia within the Indian society said that the G-20 countries should not turn a blind eye towards the woeful plight of Kashmiris who were facing the heavy brunt of Modi government's double-edged onslaught since the past several years. Urging G-20 countries not to sacrifice human rights on economic interests, Mr. Wani said that under the given circumstances holding of G-20 summit in India or any meeting in Indian Illegally Held Occupied Kashmir was tantamount to whitewashing the crimes, the BJP government had committed against the Kashmiris and minorities in India.

Lt Gen (retd) Nazir Ahmed appointed NAB chairman

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The government on Saturday appointed Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed as the new chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). A notification issued by the Prime Minister House stated that "In terms of Section 6 of the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 (XVIII of 1999), as amended from time to time,

consultation between the Leader of the House is the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly has been made and there is a consensus on the name of Lt.Gen(Retd.) Nazir Ahmad, for his appointment by the Federal Government as Chairman, National Accountability Bureau (NAB). **Profile** Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed was commissioned in the 40 Frontier Force Regiment, Pakistan



Army in 1983. He graduated from the Command and Staff College, and the National Defence University, Pakistan. Prior to his appointment as commander of the XI Corps (Peshawar Corps) in December 2016, he served as commander of the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in addition to commanding an infantry division in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Hajj Policy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on Hajj Policy-2023 at Finance division on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Finance minister hints at arranging foreign exchange for Hajj: Religious ministry

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor on Saturday held a comprehensive meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and discussed Hajj Policy 2023, Hajj Sponsorship Scheme, payment of funds to Saudi Arabia and Federally Administered Tribal Areas

reforms. According to the official sources in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, the finance minister had hinted at arranging a foreign exchange for Hajj despite the difficult economic situation in the country. They said the finance minister had assured all possible support to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith

Harmony for Hajj arrangements, adding that the government would take all possible measures for the ease and convenience of Allah Almighty's guests. The sources said Hajj Sponsorship Scheme was only for overseas Pakistanis or their relatives. Pakistanis remitting foreign exchange from abroad to the designated accounts would be able to benefit from

this scheme, they maintained. They said it was decided in principle to fix the quota of Hajj Sponsorship Scheme at 50 per cent while the other 50 per cent quota for public and private Hajj scheme. The religious affairs ministry's sources said under the regular Hajj Scheme, Hajj applications would be collected in designated Pakistani banks as per ex-post.

They also hinted that the estimated Hajj expenses at current dollar rates were between Rs 1.1 or 1.2 million. They said the religious affairs minister would formally announce receipt of Hajj applications after approval from the federal cabinet next week. Receipt of the Government Hajj Scheme applications would likely to start from March 13, the sources concluded.

Imran Khan says 'ready to talk with COAS for betterment of country'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has said that he is ready to talk with COAS General Syed Asim Munir for the betterment of the country.

While talking to the senior journalists at the Zaman Park residence, Imran Khan said that he will not surrender before anyone and he is not fighting with the establishment but he can do nothing if someone is not ready to talk. He challenged his political



rivals to prove a single corruption charge against him and his wife. He asked the army chief to find any corruption case

against him. He alleged that Qamar Javed Bajwa had stabbed him in the back and he should face a court martial. Khan said that Mohammed

bin Salman is still in contact with him. The former premier said that he has recorded a video message regarding the threats to his life which is present in a foreign country. To a question, Khan said that he had decided to not travel to Islamabad via aircraft at 12:00 midnight as they want to arrest from the airport and transfer to Balochistan. He added that the PTI's vote bank would further increase if the government sent him behind the bars. Regarding the Punjab chief minister's slot, the PTI chief said that women lawmakers

also want to become the CM. He said that the rivals are using all tactics to pressurise Pervaiz Elahi to part ways with the PTI. He said that they would have to exhibit loyalty to Pervaiz Elahi and he cannot be disloyal to anyone. Imran Khan said that general elections would save resources if they are held at once. He added that PTI will win the elections despite the presence of Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) umpires. The former premier said that overseas Pakistanis are standing alongside PTI.

GB govt warns Centre of protest against 'non-issuance of funds'

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government has warned Centre of staging massive protest in front of the parliament if the latter failed to release its development funds.

In an exclusive interview with ARY News, GB's Information Minister Fathullah Khan has announced to hold a meeting of administrative territory's cabinet at Islamabad's D-Chowk.

"The federal government has seized more than half of the development budget of Gilgit-Baltistan", Fathullah Khan said, warning Centre of staging massive protest in front of the parliament if the latter failed to release its development funds. He feared that inevitable situations will arise in the administrative territory if the federal government continued to drag feet on releasing their dues.

"The government has also imposed a cut on the wheat subsidy", he said, adding that the GB government has run out of money to purchase wheat.

"During Imran Khan's tenure, the territory received a record development budget", he said, urging the federal government to take necessary measures to fulfill the needs of the territory.

Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan were removed via 'soft coup': Mushahid

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed has asserted that former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was removed - via soft coup.

In a statement, Mushahid Hussain termed Imran Khan 'the strongest candidate' for prime minister's slot, saying that currently the opposition is very popular and cannot be suppressed with force.

The PML-N senator further said that 'powerful quarters' will decide to hold elections across Pakistan at one time, adding that the government should have made the decision to hold elections in the province - not the Supreme Court (SC). Earlier in January, Mushahid Hussain Syed claimed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and former president Pervaiz Musharraf were removed through a 'soft coup'.

There are two ways used in Pakistan to remove governments. "One is 'military coup' which took place in the country four times, while 'soft coup' is another thing which does not have tanks," Chairman Senate Defence Committee Mushahid Hussain Syed said while exclusively



talking to ARY News.

Commenting on the former prime minister and PTI chairman Imran Khan, the PML-N senator said he should understand no 'individual' but the 'institution' is important.

SC verdict The Supreme Court, in a 3-2 verdict, ruled on Wednesday that elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab should be held within 90 days.

CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar supported the verdict, while Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah opposed the admissibility of the suo moto notice and dissent-

ed from the majority verdict. Justice Shah and Justice Mandokhail in their dissenting notes agreed with the position of Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Athar Minallah. "The matter was already being heard in the high courts, Supreme Court cannot take suo moto notice on the undertrial cases in the high courts." The short verdict stated that the Election Commission of Pakistan failed in discharging its role in the election. The announcement of the election date in KP is the responsibility of the provincial governor, while the president has the authority as per law and constitution to fix the election date in Punjab.

Imran's every political trick fails miserably: Khawaja Asif

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday said that during the last year, all political tricks of Imran Khan have failed miserably.

Talking to Pakistan Television News, the defense minister said that Imran Khan's 'Jail Bhro Tehreek' was a hollow slogan that failed shamelessly.

Khawaja Asif further said that PTI chief was so scared that he gathered the workers outside the house for his protection in order to avoid being arrested.

"Personally, I don't consider Imran Khan a political worker because, in



my opinion, political leaders never compromise his dignity", he added. Khawaja Asif criticized Imran Khan's politics and said that Imran's political narrative, from the accusation of cipher conspiracy to "Jail Bhro Tehreek", was based on lies, and he was exposed to the nation.

Int'l media briefed on destruction during Nagorno-Karabakh war; de-mining operation



Spokesman Report

BAKU (AZERBAIJAN): Having reclaimed a huge area of Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia during 2020 war, Azerbaijan is still faced with the major challenges of reconstruction and de-mining the whole area.

During a visit of international media men to the war-ravaged city of Aghdam, the Azeri authorities informed that with the help of de-mining experts and drone technology, the area was being cleared of mines, though it could take years more to accomplish the task.

The newsmen, who were in Baku to attend the summit level meeting of the Contact Group of Non-Aligned Movement in response to COVID-19, were

briefed on the massive destruction of properties during the war which also claimed hundreds of lives.

During a tour to the site, it was told that foreign forces also hit the residential area of Ganja, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, which killed 26 people and injured many others. A monument would be built there in the memory of the victims.

It was told that the foreign forces, not only hit the residential areas but also destroyed municipal buildings, desecrated religious places and also hit the sports and entertainment facilities.

However, the Azeri government was making dedicated efforts to reconstruct the area to ensure that the relocated population was resettled in their towns and restart living their lives.

Punjab cabinet approves wheat purchase policy

News Desk

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over 8th Cabinet meeting at Chief Minister Office on Saturday which made decisions to promote merit in the province and elimination of recommendation culture by relaxing rules in the departments and declaring null and void the decision to make inductions through departmental committees.

The Punjab Cabinet granted approval for wheat purchase policy for 2023-2024. The wheat purchase campaign will start from 10th of March across Punjab and the Punjab government will purchase 35 lac metric tonnes of wheat. 395 centres will be set up to purchase wheat across the province.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi directed the Cabinet Standing Committee for Wheat to review

wheat purchase campaign on daily basis.

It was decided to give a mega relief to the male and female students travelling on Metro Bus service and Orange Line Metro Train during the meeting. The male and female students will be provided free travel facilities on the Metro Bus service and Orange Line Metro Train. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi directed Transport department to submit a summary at the earliest to provide free travel facility to the male and female students.

The Cabinet sought a plan to run Metro Bus service at 6:00 am in the morning instead of 6:30 am in the morning. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi remarked that thousands of labourers travel on the Metro Bus service and are supposed to reach at their place of work at 7:00 am. Thousands of labourers will be able to reach their destination points on time.

Announcement of KP poll date likely on March 6, says governor

News Desk

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali on Saturday said that the election date for the KP Assembly is expected to be announced on March 6.

Talking to journalists in Peshawar, the governor said the Election Commission of Pakistan's letter to his principal secretary was received at 8 pm on Friday, and the secretary will open the letter himself when he returns from leave on Monday.

It is pertinent to mention that Punjab and KP assemblies were dissolved on January 14 and 18, respectively. According to the constitution, the elections should be held within 90 days after the dissolution

of an assembly.

On March 3, President Dr Arif Alvi gave assent to April 30 date to conduct the all-important elections in Punjab.

The president's announcement comes minutes after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) proposed dates for holding general elections in Punjab following a landmark verdict of the Supreme Court. April 30 falls on Sunday.

In a letter to President Arif Alvi earlier, the electoral body recommended a day between April 30 and May 7 for elections in the province where assembly was dissolved in January last. The letter was dispatched after Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired a meeting of the ECP officials.

Budget for Benazir Kafalat program exceeds Rs.252 billion: Minister

ABC

KHANGARH: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri Saturday said that the government has allocated an amount of more than 78 billion for the next installment of the Benazir Kafalat program while the annual budget for the program is 252 billion rupees.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Benazir Dynamic Registry Center under the Benazir Income Support Program in Khangarh, she informed that so far 8 lakh 72 thousand surveys have been completed in Benazir Dynamic Registry Centers.

"Six Dynamic Registry Centers have been set up in Muzaffargarh district while currently, more than 3 lakh 21 thousand families in Muzaffargarh district are being given scholarships under the Benazir Income Support



Program," she stated. The political opponents criticized BISP program; however, United Nations and other reputed international organizations

have appreciated it, she added. The Federal Minister also talked to the beneficiaries who urged the minister to increase the number of count-

ers. Upon receiving the request, she immediately directed the D.G Punjab and Zonal Director BISP to increase the number of centers for beneficiaries' relief.

Ms. Marri, later on, also attended the Workers Convention in Khangarh. While talking to media she lamented the previous government for the current economical fiasco. She said that the previous government had inked the deal with IMF therefore, the incumbent government had no other choice but to take drastic measure in order to save the country from default.

Later on, she also chaired the workers convention of Pakistan People's Party at Khangarh. She reminisced that PPP last government had provided economic assistance to thousands of families by providing income support.

'Peace Valley Ball' Tournament inaugurated in Azam Warsak area



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: "Peace Valley Ball Tournament" was inaugurated in Azam Warsak area of Wana tribal district of South Waziristan Lower.

Peace valley Ball Tournament was inaugurated by Major Abid Saleem and SM Taslim 133 Wing and total of 06 teams are participating in this valley ball tournament organized in the name of peace.

The first opening match of the tournament was played between Sirki Khel Club and Azam warsak Club, the tournament was attended by a large number of regional spectators, who enjoyed the match.

It should be noted that this tournament has been started in the name of peace at the behest of Lt. Col. Saqib Iqbal of 133 Wing, with which the people of Azam Warsak have expressed great joy.

Local People says that this tournament will bring peace to the region, regional players and people thanked Colonel Saqib Iqbal of 133 Wing. However, people said that such games will promote peace and a healthy society in the area, which will create an atmosphere of happiness and peace.

Legal action will be taken against those producing and supplying drugs: CPO



Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: No compromise or pressure will be accepted regarding the health of the nation.

Law enforcement agencies have to be vigilant at all times to eliminate social evils rising up day by day.

A major operation was carried out by the police against drug dealers in order to promote a healthy society. Undoubtedly, the drugs are the scourge of society that every organization should play its vital & active role in eradicating narcotics spreading anywhere. So far as we don't take required action, we might be deprived of healthful manpower mandatory for nation building. In this context, night and day by the police all necessary actions are ongoing on but such people must pay special attention to their relations indulging in these illicit drug abuse. Drug trafficking and its use is a crime that destroys generations and insists on securing their future at all costs.

According to the details, the statement of the Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, the Faisalabad Police is conducting a grand crackdown against drugs and its sellers across the district. City Police Officer Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi has not only formed special teams to take action against drug dealers, but also the CIA has been tasked in this regard.

According to further details, a press conference was held today in Police Lines Complex regarding the recovery of drugs, in which SSP Operations Muhammad Arslan Shahzab appreciated the action of Thana Sandal Bar Police and said that the Sandal Bar Police closed the blockade. More than 100 kg of opium was recovered from a car during which a woman has been arrested and a case has been registered. Further investigation is underway. City police are active against drug peddlers. Blockades and patrolling have been increased so that criminal elements do not get a chance to thrive. But the SP Iqbal Division Irtza Kamil was also present to contribute their views.

Life in danger

RAWALPINDI: People walk on a railway track which may cause any incident any time and needs the attention of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online

We are not producing intellectuals: Ahmad Shah

ABC

KARACHI: Three-day Sindh Literature Festival at Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi is going on in full swing While speaking in the second day program of the ongoing three-day Sindh Literature Festival in Arts Council of Pakistan, "Tradition of Public Knowledge", the country's leading intellectuals said that with the increase in universities in the country, ignorance is also increasing. Our educational system is such that intellectuals have stopped coming out of the universities. Today, the tradition of public knowledge has ended due to which the society has fallen. In the session, the president of Arts Council

Muhammad Ahmad Shah, well-known poet Iftikhar Arif, writer Noor ul Huda Shah, Ghazi Salahuddin and Dr. Jafar Ahmed spoke while Hasnain Jamal performed the duties of Moderator. Iftikhar Arif said that in the past intellectuals guided the people due to which the society moved forward. It is not necessary for a man to be a good historian, he is also a public intellectual. Everyone has his own priorities.

Dr. Jafar Ahmed said that public knowledge demands sacrifice, courage and bravery are needed to speak the truth and call the wrong. It is difficult to get our point across because sometimes the ruling time does not like the process, we have to decide how to get our point

across. He said that knowledge is that which awakens the consciousness in the society by its spread, unfortunately, there are not those people who can face resistance in our educational institutions and the people who graduate from educational institutions do not have enough knowledge that they can contribute to the society. Noor ul Huda Shah said that after the establishment of Pakistan, our intellectuals did not encourage people to connect with the land, due to which even after 75 years we do not know which areas are in Balochistan.

If the youth of Sindh is active on public issues and prevents fundamentalism with arguments, people like

Rasool Baksh Plaju, Sheikh Ayaz, Gian Chand have given him mental training. Because of the seed that he sowed, young people stand up to save the temple even today in Sindh, She said that first intellectuals make generations, then generations make intellectuals. Ghazi Salahuddin said that the intellectual is the one whose writing and speech bring change in people, in the past, the tradition of public knowledge was very strong in our society. Our real war is against hatred. Only intellectuals destroy hatred on the basis of knowledge. The conversation with the people should be such that your positive words reach the people, we need to learn a lot.

Obeying the traffic rules is a duty on all of us: CTO Rana Khalid

M.A Rashid

FAISALABAD: Obeying the traffic rules is a duty on all of us so that we can be saved and secured from the loss of precious lives said CTO Rana Khalid Rasheed Khan.

Informing the details further he said that according to the statistics of violations of traffic rules in the month of February, a total of more than 80 thousand traffic challans were fined valuing more than 3 crores. In these challans there comprised motorcyclists were the first, 41409 motorcyclists violated traffic rules, 3241 car/jeep drivers also violated traffic rules, more than 1786 Chung Chi rickshaw drivers also did not respect traffic rules, 14371 public Service, issued challan tickets to 21176 commercial vehicles.

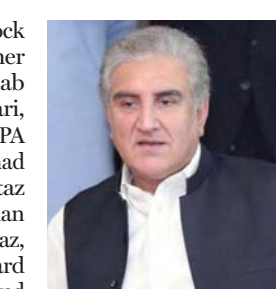
Qureshi released from Attock Jail

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Vice Chairman Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf ex-Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Saturday after his release from Attock Jail while addressing the party workers has said that the entire nation is stood by the PTI leadership Imran Khan to get liberation from slavery besides making dignified and a self-respectable foreign policy of Pakistan. The Vice Chairman Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf ex-Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi was speaking to PTI workers here at Al-Murtaza House Attock. He was also extended warm welcome by a large number of PTI workers and office bearers, include his son Zain Qureshi,

PTI district president Attock Qazi Ahmed Akbar, former provincial minister Punjab Syed Yawar Abbas Bokhari, Bgr. (R) Asim Nawaz, ex-MPA Fatehjang Sardar Mohammad Ali Khan, Sardar Mumtaz Khan Majia, Mr. Akbar Khan Tanoli, Malik Ahmed Nawaz, Member Cantonment Board Attock Syed Mehdi Shah, Syed Sakhi Shah who expressed their complete solidarity with Shah Mehmood Qureshi at the premises of Attock Jail.

On this occasion, Shah Mehmood Qureshi also passed thanksgiving remarks to all the participants saying that his political will power was further strengthened during his solitary confinement of 10 days 10 nights with the moral support his leader Imran Khan. He challenged PML(N) supremo



Mian Nawaz Sharif to come back and face the wrath of the public which was plunged into a worst inflation storm arisen due to their ineffective and misdeeds. He reiterated the stance of PTI leadership Imran Khan with the commitment to visit Sind province and announce health cards program for the health care facilities of the people of Sindh after coming into power. Shah Mehmood Qureshi vowed that

the Imran Khan has political wisdom to steer the country from the prevailing imbroglio of political economic with overwhelming majority in the forthcoming elections.

They also expressed their hope that Supreme Court of Pakistan would definitely prevail to initiate the election process if the government failed to fulfil its constitutional commitments. Meanwhile, Attock Jail sources told that Vice Chairman Pakistan Tehrik Insaaf Shah Mehmood Qureshi son of Makhdoom Muhammad Sajjad Hussain Qureshi was detained in Attock Jail for a period of 30 days under section 3(1) of the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance 1960 issued by the Deputy Commissioner Lahore vide No.RDM/28,

dated 22.02.2023. The Superintendent District Jail Attock also reported to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Government of the Punjab Lahore and Inspector General of Prisons, Punjab Lahore through his official communication No.1651-52 dated 23-02-2023. The jail sources said that the detainee was admitted in Attock Jail to day on 23.2.23 on transfer from Central Jail Lahore by the orders of the Inspector General of Prisons, Punjab, Lahore by order No.17360-17437 dated 23.02.23. The compliance of his detention and release was also communicated to DIG Prisons, Rawalpindi, Deputy Commissioners, Lahore, Attock and District Police Officer Attock, accordingly, sources added.

Land dispute between the two tribes of Spirikai and Khooni Khel resolved



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: According to details, with the efforts of District Police Officer Shabbir Hussain Marwat and tribal elders of Jirga in South Waziristan Shakai serious enmity has been successfully turned into friendship and peace and order has been maintained in the district.

In this regard, due to the efforts of DPO South Waziristan and Jirga tribal elders, there was a land dispute between the two tribes of Spirikai and Khoniy Khel in Wana for years in which the danger of fierce conflict and bloodshed was ever present, amicably resolved into friendship.

The parties embraced each other in the presence of DPO South Waziristan, political leaders and tribal elders of Jirga and pledged to end all grudges and enmities.

On this occasion, DPO South Waziristan said that organizing Jirgas according to Pashtun traditions will continue to eliminate hatred and promote peace and brotherhood,

Police will always play their role in ending tribal conflicts to maintain law and order.

It is the duty of the police as well as the tribal elders and political leaders to ensure that we do not push our future generations towards hostilities and do not sow the seeds of hatred in their hearts, but let knowledge, consciousness, and enlightenment lead the way in a peaceful society and peaceful atmosphere.

Inshallah, very soon the remaining tribal disputes will also be resolved in a friendly, brotherly and peaceful manner, making Wana a cradle of brotherhood and peace.

At the end of the prayers were offered for the peace, prosperity and brotherhood of the country.

Later, the dignitaries of the two nations came to the office of DPO Shabbir Hussain Marwat to express their gratitude and pledge so that they will cooperate with the police to solve the tribal disputes, the police and the tribal elders will work together to end all the disputes.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:11 am
Zohr	12:20 pm
Asr	4:26 pm
Maghrib	6:06 pm
Isha	7:29 pm

EMERGENCY

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

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Chairman PEMRA assures for Radio and TV license to ICCI on priority basis

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation met with Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig in his office and discussed with him the plan of starting an ICCI radio and TV channel. Wakil Khan, Director General Licensing, PEMRA was also present on the occasion.

Addressing the delegation, Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig appreciated the plan of ICCI to start its own radio and TV channel and assured that he would issue their license on priority basis after fulfilling the documentary requirements. He further assured that he will fully cooperate with ICCI for the completion of this important project as it will benefit the business community and the economy. He said that ICCI should coordinate with foreign universities for providing quality business education to students to meet the needs of businesses and industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) briefed the Chairman PEMRA about the aims and objectives of starting radio and TV channels. He said that these channels would educate the young generation about the importance of exports promotion, which the country desper-



ately needs at this time. He said these channels would promote business role models for youth to motivate them to launch business start ups and create jobs for others. He said that Pakistan's business and economic potential will be highlighted to attract local and foreign investment to Pakistan. He said that prominent business leaders and economists will be invited on radio and TV channels to discuss the key issues of economy and find their optimum solutions. He said that these channels will create better awareness in the business community about various business & economic issues to facilitate them in business development. He said that the channels will focus on expanding the tax base and identifying new exports markets for Pakistan. He

hoped that with the support of PEMRA, ICCI would soon be able to start its own radio and TV channel. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that many TV channels normally highlight negative aspects of Pakistan while the ICCI radio and TV channels would highlight the positive aspects of Pakistan to promote a soft image of the country. He said self-made business persons would be promoted by highlighting their achievements.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI, said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country, but is not given the due respect in the society, so the ICCI channels will promote the respect and dignity of the business community.

NAB broadens probe against Shahzad Akbar

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has broadened the scope of investigation against former accountability czar and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mirza Shahzad Akbar over alleged irregularities.

According to details, the NAB Lahore has sought details of Mirza Shahzad Akbar's properties and assets from development authorities across the province.

The bureau has also sought records of properties owned by Akbar's family members. The accountability bureau has asked the authorities concerned to provide details by March 6.

The former special assistant is accused of committing irregularities in the amount recovered from Britain and brought to Pakistan.

Earlier in 2022, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) initiated an inquiry against former prime minister Imran Khan's aide Barrister Mirza Shahzad Akbar for allegedly owning assets beyond his means.

Later, Islamabad police registered a case against former aide to prime minister Shahzad Akbar, model Sophia Mirza and former director-general (DG) Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Sanaullah Abbasi over conspiracy, forgery and misuse of public office.

The Secretariat police station registered a case against Shahzad Akbar, Sophia Mirza and former DG-FIA Sanaullah Abbasi on the complaint of Umar Farooq Zahoor — Mirza's ex-husband — for record tampering, forgery and misuse of public office.

Umar Farooq Zahoor engaged lawyer Mian Ali Ashfaq to represent him at all forums in relation to this matter. The complainant, in his application, alleged that Sophia and Akbar conspired to create a fabricated story against him and with the support of Sanaullah Abbasi filed false and bogus cases.

Authorities disallow Women's Day March in Lahore



ABC

LAHORE: Authorities in eastern city of Lahore have refused permission for a rally to mark International Women's Day, which regularly meets a fierce backlash in the country.

Marches have been held in major cities all over Pakistan since 2018 to bring attention to women's rights.

Lahore city authorities cited the "controversial cards and banners" commonly displayed by participants in the march and security concerns as reasons behind the decision, which were laid out in a notification to march organisers late Friday.

Counter-protests dubbed "Haya (modesty)" marches are commonly staged by religious groups to call for the preservation of Islamic values.

"It's a violation of our rights. This raises questions about the state's ability to manage the right to freedom of assembly for both groups," Hiba Akbar, an organiser for Aurat (women's) March Lahore, told AFP. Lahore authorities have allowed this year's Haya March to be held despite the ban on the Aurat March.

Organisers of the Aurat March in Pakistan have frequently had to resort to legal action to counter attempts to ban it.

The Aurat March rallies have courted controversy because of banners and placards waved by participants that raise subjects such as divorce and sexual harassment.

Organisers and participants have been accused of promoting Western, liberal values and disrespecting religious and cultural sensitivities. Hundreds of women are killed by men in Pakistan each year over "honour".

Rights group Amnesty International said the Lahore decision "amounts to an unlawful and unnecessary restriction of the right to assembly".

Authorities in the capital Islamabad, citing security concerns, have relegated the Aurat March to a city park where a woman was gang raped in February.

"We are a feminist movement, we will not be in parks but rather on the streets," a statement by march organisers there said.

In 2020, groups of hardline men turned up in vans and hurled stones at women participating in the Aurat March.

Women have long fought for basic rights in Pakistan, where activists say men commit "pervasive and intractable" violence against them.

PIA flight cancelled after several hours of delay



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airline (PIA) flight from Pakistan to Turkey was cancelled after several hours of delay.

According to details, passengers of PIA flight PK-705 staged a protest in front of the PIA counter at Islamabad International Airport after the flight was cancelled following 10 hours delay.

One of the passengers told the media that the PIA officials boarded the passengers and made them wait in the plane for several hours and then announced that the flight has been cancelled.

The six-hour-35-minute flight was supposed to fly from Islamabad Airport at 6:10am today for Istanbul Airport, Türkiye. In a statement, PIA officials said that the flight has been cancelled due to prolonged technical reasons.

The PIA spokesperson said that the proper arrangements were being made and the passengers will be transported to Istanbul on the next flight.

On January 2023, the PIA spokesperson said the national flag carrier added two more aircraft to its operations fleet during the last 24 hours.

The PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan said in a press statement, "Despite the difficult economic conditions of the country, the government is acting for PIA's progress, which is evident from the fact that the number of aircraft in its operational fleet continues to increase."

He said a new Airbus-320 aircraft, which arrived in the last few days, had also been added to the schedule after completing all the details. "Yesterday, the new Airbus 320 took its first commercial flight as PK-309 from Islamabad to Karachi."

Similarly, he said, a seven-month grounded Boeing-777 aircraft had also been added to the operational fleet after necessary overhauling. "The aircraft operated its first flight after several months this morning and departed for Jeddah as PK-300."

Hunar exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Women are busy in buying handmade items from a stall during Exhibition to recognize and honour Women entrepreneurs, title "Hunar" at Pak-China Center in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Utility Stores to give discounts on these products in Ramazan

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Ramazan relief package on utility stores will launch on March 20, wherein all utility store consumers across Pakistan will get discounts over 19 daily essential items.

According to details, the Rs5 billion Ramazan relief package will launch on March 20. The citizens eligible for Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) will get relief of Rs1.15 billion while general consumers will get relief of Rs3.84

billion. The poverty-ridden citizens will get Rs100 subsidy on ghee, Rs52 on flour, Rs30 on sugar while a 10 kg bag of flour will be available for Rs400, ghee and sugar Rs70 and Rs300 per kg, respectively.

Ordinary consumers will get a subsidy of Rs27 on flour, Rs11 on sugar and Rs25 per kg on ghee, while a 10 kg bag of flour will be available for Rs648, ghee and sugar for Rs490 and Rs89 per kg.

Moreover, all consumers will get Rs20 per kg subsidy

on pulses, Rs25 on cooking oil, gram flour and dates and 15 to 30 percent relief on beverages.

Last week, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved the Ramazan Relief Package and a uniform procurement price of wheat crop 2022-23 at Rs3900/40 kilogram.

According to a press statement, the summary regarding wheat procurement price was tabled by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research before the ECC meeting, which was presided over

by Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar.

The ECC also approved a hybrid model of the Ramazan Relief Package (Targeted and Un-targeted) consisting of 19 items for Utility Stores Corporation, budgeted of Rs5 billion. The summary was moved by the Ministry of Industries and Production.

The Ministry of Industries and Production presented a report on the logistic plan of PASSCO for in-land transportation of imported wheat in 2022-23.

Hunar exhibition inaugurated

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is organizing Her Hunar exhibition today at Pak-China Friendship Center. The event was inaugurated by Chief Guest Mr. Malik Ghulam M. Raza Rabani Khar (Minister of State for Commerce). While addressing the audience, he said that women empowerment is an essential component for growth in developing nations like Pakistan for lifting millions of families out of the poverty cycle. He appreciated TDAP for the initiative of Her Hunar exhibition. In his welcome address, Dr. Muhammad Fareed Qureshi (Secretary, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan) apprised the audience with the basic objective of Her Hunar exhibition and expressed that TDAP will continue to support women entrepreneurs and prepare them for global market. He said TDAP will also organize similar exhibitions in other parts of the country. More than 40 representatives of diplomatic community also attended the inaugural session and enjoyed cultural performance of Gilgit Baltistan, Kelash, Chitral and Kashmir. In exhibition, 130 women entrepreneurs are exhibiting their products. Public showed great interest and a large number of people are visiting the event. The exhibition would carry on till 9 pm of 5th March, 2023 with free entry.

University of Essex graduates and award winners join special graduation in Pakistan

ABC

ISLAMABAD: Delighted graduates, their friends and families came together for the University of Essex's first graduation ceremony in Pakistan, held at a local hotel in Islamabad.

More than 50 University of Essex graduates joined the celebrations at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad with hundreds of supporters watching and applauding their achievements what is believed to be the first Graduation ceremony organised by a leading UK university in Pakistan and attended by its Vice-Chancellor. Vice-Chancellor Professor



Anthony Forster said: "We have received such a warm welcome from everyone in Pakistan and this was a fitting climax to an inspirational week. Our alumni communi-

ty is incredibly important to us, and I felt absolutely privileged to meet so many of our amazing Pakistani graduates." Vice-Chancellor Awards were presented to two

outstanding graduates. Education and environment campaigner Nasira Habib and heritage and human rights champion Nasiruddin Mirza, both received awards during this historic event.

In her acceptance speech Nasira said: "I feel honoured, humbled and excited at the same time. No award is more prestigious than getting recognized by your alma mater."

"The University set high standards of learning, which encouraged analysis and independence of thinking. Thank you, Essex, for helping me become an independent thinker."

In his acceptance speech Nasiruddin paid tribute

to the support of his family and friends and added: "This recognition means a great deal to me. I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Essex for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my academic and personal goals."

The University of Essex has been a supportive and inclusive community that has allowed me to grow and develop as an individual."

The University of Essex is one of the most international universities in the world and now has more than 700 students from Pakistan studying in the UK at its campuses in Colchester, Southend and Loughton.

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Russia near first major victory in Ukraine war

Spokesman Report

Russian artillery pounded the last routes out of Bakhmut on Friday, aiming to complete the encirclement of the besieged Ukrainian city and bring Moscow closer to its first major victory in half a year after the bloodiest battle of the war.

The head of Russia's Wagner private army said the city, which has been blasted to ruins in Russia's more than seven month onslaught, was almost completely surrounded with only one road still open for Ukraine's troops.

Reuters observed intense Russian shelling of routes leading west out of Bakhmut, an apparent attempt to block Ukrainian forces' access in and out of the city. A bridge in the adjacent town of Khromove was damaged by Russian tank shelling.

Ukrainian soldiers were working to repair damaged roads and more troops were heading toward the frontline in a sign that Ukraine was not yet ready to give up the city. To the west, Ukrainians were digging new trenches for defensive positions.

Russia's RIA state news agency released a video showing what it said were Wagner fighters walking by a damaged industrial facility. One fighter is heard saying Ukraine's army is destroying infrastructure in settlements near Bakhmut to prevent the Russian encirclement.

The commander of Ukraine's ground forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, visited Bakhmut on Friday for briefings with local commanders on how to boost the

defence capacity of frontline forces. Denys Yaroslavskyi, commander of a Ukrainian army unit at Bakhmut, told Espresso TV that parts of some units had been ordered to rotate to more secured positions, describing the situation since the morning as "a slaughterhouse on both sides."

A Russian victory in Bakhmut, with a pre-war population of about 70,000, would give it the first major prize in a costly winter offensive, after it called up hundreds of thousands of reservists last year. Russia says it would be a stepping stone to completing the capture of the Donbas industrial region, one of Moscow's most important objectives.

Before the war Bakhmut was known for salt and gypsum mines. Ukraine says the city has little strategic value and the huge casualties Russia has suffered trying to take Bakhmut could shape the course of the conflict.

'PINCERS ARE CLOSING'
 "Units of the private military company Wagner have practically surrounded Bakhmut," Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a video that Reuters determined was filmed on a rooftop in a village some 7 km (4 miles) north of the city centre.

"Only one route (out) is left," he said. "The pincers are closing."

He called on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to order a retreat from Bakhmut to save his soldiers' lives. The camera panned to show three captured Ukrainians – a grey-bearded older man and two boys – asking to be allowed to go home.

Robert Brovdi, the commander of a Ukrainian drone unit active in Bakhmut who goes by the name "Madyar," said

in a video posted on social media that his unit had been ordered to withdraw immediately. He said he had been fighting there for 110 days.

Volodymyr Nazarenko, a deputy commander in the National Guard of Ukraine, told Ukrainian NV Radio the situation was "critical", with fighting "round the clock".

"They take no account of their losses in trying to take the city by assault. The task of our forces in Bakhmut is to inflict as many losses on the enemy as possible. Every metre of Ukrainian land costs hundreds of lives to the enemy," he said.

"There are many more Russians here than we have ammunition to destroy them."

MORE U.S. ARMS

The past few days have seen alarm in Russia at its own potential vulnerabilities after Moscow reported a number of drone attacks on targets deep within Russia, followed by what it said was an armed cross-border raid on Thursday.

President Vladimir Putin told his Security Council on Friday to step up "anti-terrorism measures".

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy visited wounded soldiers at a military hospital in Lviv. One, shaking the president's hand from bed, apologised that he could not stand up. "That's OK," Zelenskyy said. "The time will come and you will rise."

Zelenskyy gave no details of the fighting in Bakhmut during an evening video address in which he thanked troops for "firmly and bravely" defending the city.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced another round of military aid for Ukraine, a package of ammunition and other support valued at \$400 million.

The United States has provided nearly \$32 billion in aid to Ukraine since Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

At the White House, U.S. President Joe Biden thanked visiting German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for "profound" support on Ukraine. Scholz said it was important to send the message that backing Ukraine will continue "as long as it takes and as long as is necessary."

After their meeting, the White House said the pair reiterated their commitment to impose costs on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

Germany makes Leopard tanks promised in January and expected to be the core of a new Ukrainian armoured force.

Scholz has been criticised by some Western allies for taking a cautious public stance toward arming Ukraine, although he has overseen a big shift in policy from a country that was Russia's biggest energy customer before the war.

Kyiv's ambassador in Berlin, Oleksii Makeiev, said Germany was now taking more of a leadership role in arming Ukraine.

Moscow, which says it has annexed nearly a fifth of Ukraine, accuses pro-Western Kyiv of posing a security threat. Ukraine and its allies say the invasion was an unprovoked war of conquest.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, pointing to U.S. military interventions around the globe, accused the United States of hypocrisy on Friday after Blinken said Moscow cannot be allowed to wage war in Ukraine with impunity. The two men met briefly on the sidelines of a G20 foreign ministers meeting in India.

HR violations in IIOJK

Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Saturday said that the fascist Narendra Modi regime is snatching ancestral lands of Kashmiri Muslims to make a way for Hindu settlements under the nefarious plan to change the demography of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In a strong reaction to the Indian notorious government's ongoing drive to evict the local residents of their lands and render them homeless, Mushaal said that Modi's Hindutva regime started attaching properties of the Kashmiris in the occupied valley to put pressure on them to give up their legitimate struggle for internationally recognized right to self-determination, said a press release.

She revealed that the occupation authorities attached two more Kashmiris' houses under draconian law Unlawful activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in Srinagar and Sopore, besides 168 properties of Kashmiris in Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri and Poonch district in last few days.

Mushaal, wife of incarcerated Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, said that supremacist Hindutva regime got inspiration from Zionist government in Israel, which encroached upon Palestinian properties through various brutal tactics and Modi government was replicating the same model in the occupied Kashmir, which would be resisted at all fronts.

She went on to say that occupation authorities hell-bent on rendering Kashmiris homeless in their own homeland on one pretext or another, demolishing their houses and snatching their ancestral lands to make way for non-residential settlers in the occupied territory and snatch the Muslim identity of the territory.

The chairperson noted that attaching properties of Kashmiris was a sheer political vendetta on part of the Indian regime and was meant to bully them to shun the legitimate struggle to break the shackles of Indian slavery.

She expressed her surprise that notorious Modi regime gave a free hand to over nine hundred thousand brutal Indian troops to commit atrocities on the people of the occupied territory to terrify them through different tactics to silence the dissenting voices in IIOJK.

Mushaal stated that in the wake of repealing the special status of IIOJK, Indian fascist government issued domicile certificates to thousands of Indian Hindus and was now evicting them of their lands so as to render them homeless.

The Chairperson said that Indian authorities were confiscating properties of Kashmiris to punish them for their affiliation with freedom movement, adding that occupation troops were regularly destroying Kashmiris' houses during violent military operations.

She said that Killing of Kashmiris in fake encounters and destroying their properties was a norm in the occupied valley, as Modi regime was planning not only to render Kashmiris homeless but to deprive them of their identity as well.

Mushaal stated that Indian government was using every brutal and highhanded tactic to stifle the freedom voice of Kashmiris. However, the Hurriyat leader vowed that Indian machinations would not deter the Kashmiris from taking to legitimate struggle to its logical ends.

She lamented that the world power and human rights organizations observed a criminal silence in this human rights violations and fundamental rights of Kashmiris.

Mushaal urged the world powers and UN bodies to wake up from their sweet slumber and take notice of the Modi regime's brutal actions in the occupied valley.



Chinese peasants cultivation can help reduce import bill of edible oil in Pakistan

Dr Babar Ijaz,

In a farm in Weifang City, Shandong Province, China, rows of verdant peanut seedlings are bathing in the sparkling sunshine with pride, waiting to contribute their fruit clusters in the coming autumn.

Look! Our seeds are rich in nutrient elements, Dr Babar Ijaz, the person in charge of overseas projects, Shandong Rainbow Agricultural Technology Co., Ltd, showed a plump peanut seed during a recent interview with China Economic Net.

Rainbow high-oleic-acid peanut cultivation base project was formally included in the framework of China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation by the Ministry of Agriculture of China.

As you can see, our seed registration in Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) has started. A total of five high-oleic peanut varieties for oil extraction, Runhua series have been trial-planted in Pakistan, expected to achieve fruitful results. Next, our aim is to increase the area gradually to 1,500 hectares in coming years, Fan Changcheng, Deputy General Manager of Rainbow, noted bluntly.

My country has a long tradition of peanut planting. Peanuts like a warm environment with sufficient sunlight, with loose and breathable sandy loam as the most suitable soil condition. Potohar region, Punjab is the best area for peanut production here, Babar Ijaz added, Peanut seeds contain 40-50 percent oil, and high oleic peanut oil is rich in unsaturated fatty acids, which is not only more storable but also lowers blood lipids.

During our trial, we always focused on how the local environment can act on the quality of seeds on the whole. The varieties we selected have the highest oleic acid content, up to 75-80 percent, which means very high nutritional value.

Self-sufficient in peanut production means that we can reduce our import bill of edible oil, said Muhammad Jahanzaib, scientific officer of the Oil Seed Research Program in NARC, Pakistan. Statistics suggest that Pakistan peanut planting area in 2022/23 is about 150,000 hectares, with a total output of 140,000 metric tons, and an average yield of about 0.93 metric tons per hectare.

According to Babar Ijaz, such a relatively lower yield needs a lot of room to be improved, especially since we need to produce more edible oil and get rid

of the situation that edible oil is highly dependent on imports. If our project area can be gradually expanded, it can even improve the peanut farming ecosystem in Pakistan as a whole.

In January, Rainbow and Beli Technologies, a well-known Pakistani agricultural enterprise, signed a large-scale planting MoU. First lot of peanut seeds with independent intellectual property rights has been exported to Pakistan. Overall, the seed germination rate of Rainbow peanuts is over 98 percent.

As for the future, Fan mentioned two major obstacles that affect the peanut industry in Pakistan: insufficient planting area and low yield. After gradually increasing yield, subsequent by-product processing also has a good prospect. We are working with the Chinese Government to establish the China-Pakistan oilseed crops focusing on the quality testing of peanut oil, and will also assist in the formulation of unified standards for peanut oil in Pakistan.

In addition to edible oil, other food processing is under consideration. Except for the improvement of local edible oil structure, at the same time gradually upgrade the entire peanut industry, which is a win-win situation for us and Pakistan enterprises.

UN rights chief slams Israeli minister's call to 'wipe out' Palestinian village

Spokesman Research

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has voiced alarm at an Israeli regime minister's "unfathomable" call for the obliteration of an entire Palestinian village.

Turk made the remarks in Geneva on Friday, days after the Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said the Palestinian village of Huwara "needs to be wiped out," adding that he thought "Israel should do it."

Speaking before the Geneva-based United Nations Human Rights Council, the UN rights chief denounced the remarks as "an unfathomable statement of incitement to violence and hostility".

"The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is a tragedy, a tragedy above all for the Palestinian people," Turk told the 47-member Council as he formally presented a report on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Smotrich's remarks came after hundreds of armed Israeli settlers attacked Huwara and nearby villages

and torched dozens of houses and cars, according to media reports. They had been angered at the killing of two Israeli brothers by a Palestinian gunman in Huwara.

One Palestinian was killed during the settler rampage and at least 390 others were injured, with Palestinian media reporting stabbings and attacks with metal rods and rocks.

The Israeli regime's forces and settlers have escalated their attacks against the Palestinians since late December 2022, when Benjamin Netanyahu staged a comeback as prime minister at the head of a cabinet of hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Since the start of the year, at least 68 Palestinians have been killed as a result of the violence, including five, who were killed by Israeli settlers' gunfire, 13 children, four elderly people, and one prisoner.

Turk warned the Council that the "increasing violence is condemning innocent people," calling on "decision-makers to step back from the precipice to which increasing extremism and violence have led".

Elsewhere in his remarks, the UN rights chief made a direct call for the Israeli regime to end its occupation of and settlement activities across the Palestinian territories.

"My report finds that over the reporting period, lethal force has been frequently employed by the Israeli security forces (ISF) regardless of the level of threat and at times even as an initial measure rather than as last resort," Turk said.

"My office has also documented several cases of apparent extrajudicial targeted killings by members of" Israeli forces, he said. "The report finds that 131 Palestinians were killed by ISF personnel over the past year in a context of law enforcement that is outside any context of hostilities. This includes 65 people who we understand were not armed nor engaged in any attacks or clashes."

"The occupation is eating away at the health of both societies on every level, from childhood to old age and in every part of life. For this violence to end, the occupation must end," he added.

"In the near future, there must be an end to settlements in the occupied land. And within a foreseeable horizon...," Turk insisted.

The UN rights chief said decades of the Israeli occupation of Palestine have led to "widening dispossession ... and recurring and severe violations of their [Palestinians'] rights, including the right to life".

"Nobody could wish to live this way or imagine that forcing people into conditions of such desperation can lead to an enduring solution," he said.

Pakistani universities contribute more than 500 million PKR for earthquake relief in Türkiye

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Under auspices Private Sector Universities Pakistan (APSUP), a 34 members high level Pakistani delegation from 18 universities participated in the Eurasian Higher Education Summit in Istanbul and pledged more than 500 million PKR for the earthquake-affected areas of Türkiye. The amount will be spent on relief, rehabilitation, and scholarships for students from the affected areas.

During the summit, the Pakistani Pavilion was set up, and Chairman of APSUP, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rehman, along with Rector Superior University, Prof. Dr. Sumaira Rehman, handed over a cheque of 400,000 Turkish lira to Elif Aydin, Vice Chairman of the Board Anatolian Education and Cultural Foundation Türkiye. The President of Eurasian Universities Union, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Aydın, expressed his gratitude to APSUP and the Pakistani nation for their continued support to the Turkish people, especially during hard times.

Several universities in Pakistan extended their support to the earthquake-affected people of Turkey. The



University of Lahore donated one million US dollars in the form of 150 tons of edibles, fireproof and weatherproof tents, blankets, and medicines. The University of Faisalabad donated 110 hundred dollars for community services, and a

20-member team from the University of Faisalabad participated in rehabilitation activities in the affected areas.

The University of Sialkot and International Institute of Science, Arts, and Technology Gujranwala joint-

ly announced scholarships worth 10 million Pakistani rupees for Turkish students affected by the earthquake. Under the University of Management and Technology Lahore Scholarship Program for Turkey, scholarships worth



one million dollars will be awarded, with special preference given to students from the affected areas.

Additionally, Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary who was also part of Pakistani delegation, offered fully funded scholarships and research fellowships to Turkish

nationals severely affected by the earthquake in collaboration with APSUP and member universities of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence.

The APSUP member universities remain committed to extend all possible assistance to the earthquake-affected people of Türkiye.

Ambassadors show keen interest in RCCI Education Summit & Expo

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Foreign ambassadors have shown keen interest in the two-day international education summit and expo organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Saturday.

Syrian Ambassador Dr. Rameez Al-Rai, Indonesian Ambassador Adam Togyu and Moroccan Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune visited the stalls set up by various universities at the Education Expo and took information.

Indonesian envoy Adam Tugio informed that Pakistani students are being offered under Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) programme, and added that it will provide an opportunity for local students to pursue post-graduate degrees in Indonesian universities.

The RCCI International Summit and Expo brings an excellent opportunity



for all interested students to gain first-hand information on various Indonesian scholarships and International programs, he added. Students will be acquainted with all the relevant information on the scholarship programs of their preference.

Earlier, Chamber President Saqib Rafiq said that we have to bring such an education system that

attracts young people towards business and they can get jobs, the government has to increase the education budget, make policies according to the demand of the industry.

A panel discussion was also held on the occasion of the conference in which the speakers emphasized on increasing the communication between the industry

and academia.

The purpose of the conference is to increase communication between industry and academia in view of contemporary challenges, to discuss and find solutions to problems related to emerging technology and employment opportunities, e-commerce, scholarships, expensive education and industry demand.

China opposes "long-arm jurisdiction" practices: spokesperson



Xinhua

BELJING: China stands firmly against "long-arm jurisdiction" practices, a Chinese spokesperson said Saturday.

Some countries have kept abusing the extraterritorial application of their domestic laws in violation of the international law with the aim of suppressing foreign entities and individuals and serving their own interests, said Wang Chao, spokesperson for the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, at a press conference.

"Such bullying acts are widely criticized in the international community as long-arm jurisdiction. China stands firmly against such practices," Wang said.

Turkey, UAE sign free trade deal as ties improve

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The oil-rich United Arab Emirates and Turkey signed a free trade agreement on Friday, the Gulf country's president said, the latest step in improving ties long strained by regional disputes.

For Turkey, the pact comes ahead of elections on May 14 as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sticks with contested economic policies that have deterred many foreign investors.

"The signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with my friend @RTErdogan strengthens the partnership between the UAE & Türkiye," Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said on Twitter.

The pact "builds on our longstanding ties to deliver further growth, opportunity & stability for our countries & our people," he said.

Turkish Trade Minister Mehmet Mus attended the signing in Abu Dhabi during a video summit between Sheikh Mohammed and Erdogan.

The pact aims to eliminate or reduce customs duties on 82 percent of goods and products, accounting for more than 93 percent of non-oil trade, the official WAM news agency reported.

Non-oil exchanges between the two countries reached \$19 billion last year, up 40 percent on the previous year and 112 percent from 2020, WAM said.

"It is expected that the agreement will contribute to increasing non-oil bilateral trade to \$40 billion annually within five years, while also creating 25,000 new job opportunities by 2031," the news agency added.

Turkey and the UAE have backed opposing sides in regional conflicts and have sparred over issues including gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.

Hong Kong national security law a milestone in 'one country, two systems': spokesperson

Xinhua

BELJING: The formulation and enactment of the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is an important milestone in the practice of "one country, two systems," a Chinese spokesperson said Saturday.

Wang Chao, spokesperson for the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), made the remarks at a press conference ahead of the opening of the session.

Since the Hong Kong national security law took effect, the institutions and mechanisms for safeguarding national security have been further improved, national security has been effectively safeguarded, and social order has been resumed rapidly, Wang said.

The rule of law has been ensured, business environment has kept improving, development has been brought back to normal, and the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents have been better protected, the spokesperson noted, adding that Hong Kong has had a major turn from chaos to stability.

About 75.7 percent of Hong Kong citizens are satisfied with the implementation of the Hong Kong national security law, Wang said, citing opinion polls.

At the end of 2022, the NPC Standing Committee interpreted relevant provisions in the Hong Kong national security law, clarifying the legal definition of relevant clauses and making clear the means and pathways of resolving relevant issues.

"This helped to address the practical problems in the enforcement of the Hong Kong national security law in a proper and timely manner," Wang said.

Iran visit could produce important agreements: IAEA

News Desk

TEHRAN: The UN nuclear watchdog chief said Saturday he had "constructive" meetings with Iranian officials in Tehran after the discovery of uranium particles enriched to near weapons-grade level.

The two-day visit by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comes as the Vienna-based organisation seeks greater cooperation with Iran over its nuclear activities.

"By having a constructive discussion... and having good agreements, like I am sure we are going to have, we are going to be paving the way for important agreements," Rafael Grossi told a news conference alongside Iran's top nuclear official Mohammad Eslami.

Grossi arrived in Iran on Friday amid deadlock in negotiations on reviving a landmark 2015 accord on Iran's nuclear activity, known formally as the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

A diplomatic source told AFP the IAEA chief would meet President Ebrahim Raisi during his trip to "relaunch the dialogue" on Iran's atomic work and to "reset the relationship at the highest level".

Grossi had made clear "that he was only prepared to go to Tehran if he had an invitation to speak with the president," the source added.

Uranium particles enriched up to 83.7 percent — just under the 90 percent needed to produce an atomic bomb — had been detected at Iran's underground Fordow plant about 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of the capital, according to a confidential IAEA report seen by AFP this week.

Tehran denies wanting to acquire atomic weapons, and said it had not made any attempt to enrich uranium

beyond 60-percent purity.

Iran's government noted that "unintended fluctuations... may have occurred" during the enrichment process.

The discovery came after Iran had substantially modified an interconnection between two centrifuge clusters enriching uranium, without declaring it to the IAEA.

Grossi was greeted Friday at Mehrabad International Airport by Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and later met with the agency's chief Eslami.

At the joint press conference on Saturday, Eslami called for other signatories of the 2015 deal to fulfil their "obligations".

"Three European and some other countries are just focusing on Iran's JCPOA obligations," he told the news conference. "They too have obligations

that they need to adhere to."

"We came to an arrangement (with Grossi) to define our cooperation within the framework of the safeguards" on nuclear activity.

Grossi met later on Saturday with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, official news agency IRNA reported.

Iran's top diplomat earlier told CNN that "the window for an agreement on negotiations to lift sanctions is still open, but this window will not be open forever".

During the visit, the IAEA director general aimed to secure "more access to the (Fordow) site, more inspections," the diplomatic source said.

The United States unilaterally withdrew from the pact in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump and reimposed sanctions, prompting Iran to suspend the implementation of its own commitments.

Women now represented in all parliaments of world: IPU

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: For the first time ever, there are women MPs in every single country on Earth, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a global organization of national parliaments.

In its latest annual report, IPU, which is dedicated to promoting peace through parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue, also said that women's participation has never been as diverse as it is in many countries today.

The findings are based on data from the 47 countries that held elections last year.

These polls saw women take an average of 25.8 per cent of the seats available, representing a 2.3 percentage point increase, since elections were last held.

Despite this positive data, IPU

noted that it is nonetheless the smallest increase in women's participation in six years. The 0.4 per cent rise means that the global share of women in parliamentary office, stood at 26.5 per cent, as the New Year dawned.

The other bad news is that at this rate, it will take another 80 years to reach gender parity in parliament, Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General, said in a statement.

"Currently, one of the foremost obstacles, is the climate of sexism, harassment, and violence against women that we are witnessing across the world," he said.

"It is a phenomenon that is pervasive across the world and it is not endemic to any particular region. And we can estimate that this is having a toll on the participation of women in political life."

The IPU chief referred to the

resignations of New Zealand and Scotland premiers Jacinda Ardern and Nicola Sturgeon, saying that it was widely held that they had stepped down after being harassed.

Chungong also pointed to other IPU data showing pervasive and increasing trend of harassment, sexism and violence against women, that deters them from participating in the political processes in their countries.

Lesia Vasylenko, President of the IPU Bureau of Women MPs, said that every woman elected, "brings parliaments one step closer to becoming more inclusive and representative and it's great to see much more diversity".

But overall, she added, "progress is far too slow with half the world's population still vastly under-represented. There is an urgent need to change this,

to strengthen democracy everywhere."

The President of the IPU, Duarte Pacheco, called on male colleagues in every parliament worldwide, "to work with their female counterparts to move forward and accelerate the pace of change."

There were encouraging signs that progress is at least happening, the report said, citing Brazil, which saw a record 4,829 women who identify as Black, running for election, out of nearly 27,000 standing overall.

In the USA, a record 263 women of colour stood in the Congressional Midterms. And LGBTQI+ representation in Colombia, tripled, from two to six members of the Congress.

In France, 32 candidates from a minority background were elected to the new National



Assembly, an all-time high of 5.8 per cent of the total, it was pointed out.

PIA announces Hajj 2023 fares

TLTP

ISLAMABAD: The national flag carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Saturday announced fares for Hajj 2023 for southern and northern regions of the country.

The PIA spokesperson expressed the fare for pilgrims going for private Hajj has been fixed from \$870 to \$1,180. This fare will be applicable for pilgrims from the southern region of Pakistan which includes Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur, Hyderabad.

The fare rate for pilgrims from the northern region of the country, which includes Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Multan and other cities, will be from \$910 to \$1,220.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs is expected to announce fares for pilgrims going under the official Hajj quota.

The national airline will continue Hajj flight operations from May 21 to August 2, during which more than 38,000 pilgrims are expected to travel. About 44,000 pilgrims will go to Hijaz through Saudi Airlines and two private airlines operating from the rest of Pakistan. PIA will use Boeing 777 and Airbus 320 for its Hajj flight operations to Jeddah and Madina.

Last week, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony decided to allocate a 25% special quota in the government's Hajj Scheme for the pilgrims depositing their dues in US dollars, adding that they would be exempted from the balloting under the new Hajj policy.

The ministry said about 22,400 pilgrims would benefit from the 'Sponsorship Scheme' being introduced in the wake of the prevailing foreign exchange crisis in the country.

It has also increased the Hajj quota for private operators from 40-50%, which might be raised further.

The ministry is expected to charge Rs1.1 million from each pilgrim under the government scheme, but expenses might rise to Rs1.3 million in case of further depreciation of the rupee.

The Ministry of Finance indicated that it would not be able to arrange some \$2 billion for the Hajj amid the foreign currency shortage. According to sources, the Saudi government is also increasing the tax rate on Hajj by 18-20%. TLTP

Silvergate suspends Crypto Payments Network

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Silvergate Capital said on Friday it made a "risk-based decision" to discontinue the Silvergate Exchange Network, its crypto payments network, two days after the digital asset-focused bank raised doubts about its viability.

"Effective immediately Silvergate Bank has made a risk-based decision to discontinue the Silvergate Exchange Network (SEN). All other deposit-related services remain operational," Silvergate said in a statement posted on its website.

The Silvergate Exchange Network, one of the bank's most popular offerings, enabled round-the-clock transfers between investors and crypto exchanges, unlike traditional bank wires, which can often take days to settle.

Silvergate shares on Friday slumped more than 2% in after-hours trading, after closing up 0.9% at \$5.77 in regular trade. The shares on Thursday had fallen to a record low, ending the day down more than 97% from their all-time high in November 2021.

Silvergate on Wednesday warned in a filing that it was evaluating its ability to operate as a going concern, disclosing that it had sold additional debt securities this year at a loss and that further losses mean the bank could be "less than well capitalized."

Flour mills announce to call off strike

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: After the successful dialogues with the food department, the flour mills association announced to end the strike.

The association's chairman said that the Sindh government announced to reopen the six sealed flour mills, whereas, another round of talks will be held on the flour prices.

The government took a stand to fix the price of wheat at Rs85 and flour at Rs105 per kilogram. The flour mill owners agreed on reducing the flour prices from Saturday.

It is important to mention here that flour at the government rates is not available in the metropolis, whereas, the chakki flour is being sold at Rs160 per kg, whereas, another category at Rs130 per kg.

Earlier, the flour mills association announced to observe strike for an indefinite period and declared the government responsible for an expected flour shortage in the metropolis.

The association's spokesperson said in a statement that six flour mills were 'illegally' sealed by the authorities in Karachi and Nawabshah yesterday. The association demanded the government to reopen the flour mills and the provision of cheap and standard wheat.

The owners announced to close flour mills across Sindh until their demands are met.

Ambassador of Turkiye calls on Finance Minister

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci Saturday called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed future potential areas for strengthening relations especially on business and investment between both the countries.

SAPM for Finance Tariq Bajwa, Special Secretary Finance, Nurettin Demir, Turkish Commercial Councillor, Ali Battal Country Manager Turkish Airline, Farhan Akram CFO Dawlance and senior officers from Finance Division and FBR attended the meeting.

The finance Minister expressed sympathies on human and material losses in the deadly earthquake in Turkiye.

He said that government and people of Pakistan are saddened at the loss of precious lives and properties in the devastating earthquake and stand with the people of Turkiye



in its difficult time. He further said that Government of Pakistan is ready to further extend relief support

to Turkiye. The minister highlighted the future potential areas for strengthening relations espe-

cially on business and investment front and extended maximum facilitation to the Turkish investors.

Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye expressed gratitude for providing immediate relief support and necessary to Turkish brethren in its difficult time.

The Turkish Ambassador shared that the Republic of Turkiye has strong bilateral ties with Pakistan and apprised the finance minister of certain issues related to Turkish companies operating in Pakistan.

The two sides further exchanged views on the long-standing religious, cultural, political, economic and social ties between Pakistan and Turkiye.

The economic, trade and investment cooperation between the two countries was also discussed in the meeting.

Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye thanked the Finance Minister for support and cooperation.

Out of reach

ISLAMABAD: Vendors are selling vegetables at Vegetable Market at Sector I-11, in Federal Capital, Pakistan's consumer price inflation jumped to 31.5% in February of 2023, the highest rate since June of 1974, following a sharp depreciation in the rupee and as the government announced a rise in energy prices and taxes to meet the International Monetary Fund's loan conditions. At the same time, the consequences of last year's devastating floods have accumulated economic difficulties.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Dewa awarded 'supreme achievement award 2022'

News Desk

DUBAI: Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) has been awarded the Supreme Achievement Award 2022 from the British Safety Council, which is considered the most prestigious award worldwide in health, safety, and the environment.

This was in recognition of DEWA winning the Globe of Honour for Environment and the Sword of Honour for Health and Safety, for 11 consecutive years. In 2022 DEWA won the Globe of Honour for the 11th time and the Sword of Honour for the 15th time.

HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of DEWA, received the award at DEWA's headquarters. Dr. Yousef Al Akraf, Executive Vice President of Business Support and Human Resources at DEWA; Zaal Bin Zaal, Vice President, Supply Chain Management, Quality, Health, Safety and Environment; Nada Butti Alsuwaidi, Deputy Senior Manager, Environment Department; and Dr. Marcell Greff, Deputy Senior Manager, Occupational Health and Safety, were present.



"DEWA's winning of this prestigious award for consecutive years confirms its full and continuous commitment to the highest international standards and best practices in the field of quality, health, safety and the environment, and its keenness to provide a healthy and safe environment for all stakeholders.

We are guided by the words of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai: "The quality of your life is related to the quality of your health". We have staff trained and qualified in the highest international standards in occupational safety, health, and the environment. We are committed to organ-

izing awareness and training campaigns to ensure that employees and partners are keeping pace with the latest systems and best practices in health and safety. DEWA adopts smart programmes and systems that promote sustainability, productivity, health and safety using the latest disruptive technologies and Fourth Industrial Revolution applications.

DEWA actively ensures the health and safety of its employees in the workplace and provides them with quality solutions and the latest technologies and tools to help them perform field tasks easily and seamlessly, according to the highest international standards," said Al Tayer.

Dr. Yousef Al-Akraf noted that DEWA adopts the Integrated Management Systems Policy, and is committed to effectively implementing quality, health, safety and environmental management systems. This helps DEWA provide electricity and water services according to the highest standards of availability, sustainability, efficiency, and quality, while implementing the best health and safety standards as well as the sustainability of resources.

NTDC regularizes the service of 11 sportspersons, promotes 19 to the next grade

Bureau Report

LAHORE: National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has regularized the services of 11 sportspersons, whereas 19 have been promoted to the next grades (varying from BPS 9 to BPS 18). The sportspersons have represented NTDC and Pakistan at national and international sports competitions of hockey, football, volleyball, badminton, weight lifting, body building, karate, table tennis, cycling, basketball, netball and judo.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan gave away the regularization and promotion letters to the players in a ceremony held at WAPDA House, today.

While appreciating the excellent performance of the sportspersons, MD NTDC emphasized that the players should go under extensive trainings in camps and must bring laurels for the nation as well as for the company. He

vowed that the players will be awarded for their excellent performance in different high level competitions.

The sportspersons, whose services have been regularized, include Muhammad Imran, Muzamil Mehmood, Muhammad Zahid Arif, Muhammad Ahsan Abbas, Hamra Latif, Rashid Noor, Muhammad Hamza Malik, Muhammad Umar, Muhammad Zubair Idrees, Salman Butt and Waqas. While the promoted players include Syed Ali Mehdi, Haider Ali, Abdul Basit Ghafoor, Nadeem Abdul Rehman, Muhammad Kashif, Muhammad Khalid, Javed Khan, Muhammad Rameez, Muhammad Basheer, Haroon Javed, Owais Zahid, Nisar Ahmed, Shahid Ali, Haris Kamal, Muhammad Idris, Sonam Barkat and Muhammad Ashiq Hussain. Two Assistant coaches, Muhammad Irfan Hussain and Sohail Ashraf, were also promoted to the next grade.

Gold prices dip by Rs1,600 to Rs200,000 per tola

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,600 and was sold at Rs200,000 on Saturday against its sale at Rs201,600 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1,372 to Rs.171,468

from Rs172,840 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs157,179 from Rs158,436 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,140 and Rs1,834.70 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by US\$8 to \$1,856, the association reported.

Withdrawal of power sector subsidy will dwindle exports

ABC

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has forewarned that the abrupt withdrawal of power sector subsidy to appease IMF is set to decrease exports even further; which have already in decline for the last 6 months consecutively, i.e. August 2022 - February 2023 as per the numbers released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh had that, as per the latest statistics, Pakistani exports have declined by a hefty 18.67 percent in February 2023

on a YoY matrix from \$2.83 billion in February 2022 to \$2.31 billion in February 2023; whereas, the government is not willing to accept the ground realities and trying to make us believe that the decline is merely in the vicinity of 10 percent.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh mentioned that the aforementioned power subsidy had to end by June 2023 with a tangible possibility of renewal or renegotiation. However, the government has withdrawn it in the most harmful manner to the export-oriented industries.

Pakistan receives \$500mn financing from Chinese Bank

Business Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received \$500 million from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd (ICBC), Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar confirmed late Friday.

The friendly country has extended the tranche after Islamabad fulfilled almost all the tough conditions for the revival of the IMF loan programme.

Taking to Twitter, the finance minister announced that the Chinese Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd (ICBC) has completed all formalities and approved the

rollover of \$1.3 billion facility that Pakistan repaid in recent months.

"The facility will be disbursed in three instalments. The first one of \$500 million has been received by Pakistan's central bank," Dar said in a tweet.

"It will increase forex reserves," he said.

Earlier, Dar had in a press conference, said Pakistan was expecting financing from ICBC.

Addressing the presser, the finance minister refuted resignation and financial emergency rumours. He went on to say that the former prime minister Imran Khan's government has ruined the economy.

Ishaq Dar said that despite PTI claims that the country is on the verge of default, the PDM government have neither let the country go default nor it will default in future.

It is pertinent to mention here that a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the ninth review for a \$6 billion loan facility that paves the way for the release of the much-awaited \$1.17bn is facing delay despite Islamabad accepting the majority of IMF's conditions.

Sources privy to the development said the staff-level agreement with the IMF is now likely to be signed in the month of March.

UK to extend energy bill help for 3 months

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: UK's finance minister Jeremy Hunt is expected to extend support for household energy bills by an extra three months beyond April, a government source said on Friday, in a move that would help ease the country's cost-of-living squeeze.

Government subsidies are scheduled to be scaled back from next month, meaning average annual bills would rise to 3,000 pounds (\$3,600) from 2,500 pounds now.

But the government source said the lower bills are now expected to be kept in place until the end of June, confirming a story reported by the Times earlier on Friday.

Hunt is due to deliver a budget statement on March 15, when any extension to the level of support could be announced.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Industries and Production, Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi, receiving the honorary shield from President of Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sargodha.

Not taking wickets cost us the game: Adam Rossington

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Karachi Kings' wicketkeeper-batter Adam Rossington believes the inability to get wickets in the middle overs was the reason behind their close six-wicket defeat against Islamabad United in the 19th match of the Pakistan Super League.

Rossington, who played a crucial 20-run knock up the order, spoke to the media here and expressed his disappointment over the Kings' six-wicket defeat against United before asserting that the game got away from his side in the wicketless middle period.

"It is disappointing obviously to lose another game on the bounce. I think we probably got to a par score and our captain played really well," said Rossington after the end of the match on late Friday.

"And then, a few early wickets got us into the game, I think it was just



that middle period in which we couldn't take wickets, that's where the game got away from us and those two lads [Azam Khan and Faheem Ashraf] played really well and didn't really give us a chance," he said.

Rossington then went on to term Kings' total a roundabout par after a slow start before asserting that the ordinary bowling cost them a crucial match.

"I think it was probably roundabout

par from where we were especially, we lost early wickets and still took it to 202. Obviously, our captain played brilliantly again today to get us to what was probably a par score or maybe we could have added 10 more," said Rossington.

"I think we've been pretty good on the hold with the bat so far, it's just with the ball, other day we were a bit expensive at the death and today it was the middle period, not taking wickets. I think it's one of the things that if you can take wickets and get new batters coming at the crease, it's always easier to slow down the score," he said.

It may be mentioned that the Kings remained at the fifth position with four points in eight matches in the PSL 8 standings with a narrow six-wicket defeat against Islamabad United.

Kings' skipper Imad's brilliant knock of 92 runs off just 54 balls went in vain as Azam Khan's quickfire 72 sealed the deal for the United.

Islamabad United victorious in PSL match

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad United downed Karachi Kings and set the record for their highest run chase in the HBL Pakistan Super League game at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Azam Khan's sparkling 72 not out off 41 (eight fours and four sixes) helped them roll over Karachi Kings' 201 with six wickets and four balls spare.

Islamabad United set the record for their highest chase in the HBL Pakistan Super League as Azam Khan's sparkling 72 not out off 41 (eight fours and four sixes) helped them roll over Karachi Kings' 201 with six wickets and four balls spare at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday. Never before had Islamabad United – the two-time champions – chased a target of 200 or more.

Azam entered the fray at the dismissal of Rassie van der Dussen in the eighth

over with 69 on the scorecard and Islamabad United needed him to showcase his extraordinary repertoire of strokes. He did exactly that after settling in and stitched a match-defining 125-run partnership with Faheem Ashraf, who made 41 off 32 (two sixes and one four) and mostly played a supporting act.

Islamabad United had a solid start to the run chase despite Mohammad Amir removing Colin Munro (11 off five) in the first over. Alex Hales smashed 34 off 16 and added 50 runs for the second wicket with van der Dussen before the former was bowled on the last ball of Powerplay by Aamer Yamin.

When Tabraiz Shamsi bowled van der Dussen two balls later, it rang alarm bells for Islamabad United, but Azam and Faheem negated the Shamsi and Shoaib Malik threat cautiously before launching a brilliant counterattack.

Karachi Kings were rescued and then dragged over 200 by yet another outstanding Imad Wasim innings. The Karachi Kings captain smoked 92 off 54, hitting 11 fours and two sixes, and added 99 runs with Muhammad Irfan Khan, who played a decent supporting hand with 20-ball 30. Over the course of this innings, Imad became only the second batter in the HBL PSL 8 to cross the 300-run mark.

Imad had to walk to the middle with five Powerplay balls remaining as Karachi Kings lost three wickets for 53. Firing cameo by Tayyab Tahir (19 off eight) and Adam Rossington's 20 off 16 made sure Karachi Kings scored at a respectable run rate despite the fall of wickets in the first six overs.

Shoaib Malik was the only batter to fall in the middle overs when he was bowled by a beautiful Faheem delivery that nipped back into the

right-hander and Islamabad United had to wait till the penultimate over for the next wicket and it came off a brilliant acrobatic effort by Hasan Ali at the boundary straight down the ground.

Irfan launched Tom Curran high into the night sky and the fast bowler caught the ball diving backwards, but such was his presence of mind that he relayed the catch to van der Dussen before coming into contact with the rope or crossing it.

Islamabad United now have four wins from six matches, while Karachi Kings have lost six of the eight.

Scores in brief: Karachi Kings 201-5, 20 overs (Imad Wasim 92 not out, Muhammad Irfan Khan 30, Adam Rossington 20; Tom Curran 2-43).

Islamabad United 204-4, 19.2 overs (Azam Khan 72 not out, Faheem Ashraf 41, Alex Hales 34, Rassie van der Dussen 22).

Wapda, Army reach Men's finals of Combaxx-Roshan Khan National Team Squash Championship



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Displaying their continued dominance, the Wapda and Army player have reached the finals of the ongoing COMBAXX – Roshan Khan National Team Squash Championship being organized by Pakistan Navy in collaboration with Combaxx Sports at the Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex, Karachi.

Besides, semis, in Women's event the round robin league matches completed.

The following are the results of the semis and other matches played on the 4th day:

Men's 1st Semi Final

WAPDA Beat KP 2 – 0
Nasir Iqbal Beat Mutahfir Ali 11-3, 11-2, 11-5 (14 mins) while Noor Zaman Beat Shahzad Khan 11-8, 11-8, 12-10 (21 mins).

Men's 2nd Semi Final

Army trounce Punjab 2-0.
Sadam Ul Haq Beat Khaqan Malik 11-5, 11-9, 11-7 (17 mins), and Ashab Irfan Beat Ahmed Amin 11-2 Retired

In Women's event the round robin league matches completed.

The following are the results:

Position 5-7

Sindh Beat Navy 2-1
Huraira Zafar Lost Anas Khan 6-11, 8-11, 8-11 (14 mins)

And Abdul Basit Beat Awais Younas 8-11, 11-2, 11-4, 11-8 (21 mins) while Aayeman Zahid Beat Noor Zaman 13-11, 11-9, 11-9 (12 mins)

Position 5-7

Balochistan thumped Sindh. Jahanzaib Yousaf Beat Muhammad Ali 11-0, 11-0, 11-0 while Muzhar Ali Lost Huraira Zafar 3-11, 4-11, 6-11 (15 mins), and Abdul Waqar Beat Abdul Basit 6-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3 (28 mins)

In Women's category, WAPDA thrashed Sindh, Noor Ul Ain Beat Anum Mustafa 11-5, 15-13, 9-11, 11-7 (30 mins) while Mehwish Ali Beat Mahnoor Ali 11-8, 11-5, 12-14, 11-7 (26 mins), and Saima Shukat Lost Fehmina Asim 0-11, 0-11, 0-11.

Sunday Fixture:

Women's Final at 1200 hours
WAPDA VS Army
Men's Final at 1400 hours
WAPDA VS Army

Bodybuilding championship

LAHORE: Bodybuilders demonstrating during 71,MR and JR Lahore National bodybuilding championship 2023, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Ahmed Baig in full command at 1st Rumanza Open Golf Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: After the completion of the third round on Saturday of this four rounds 1st Rumanza Open Golf Championship carrying a prize money of twelve million rupees being contested at the fascinating Nick Faldo designed Rumanza Golf Course the most dynamic player of the championship is Ahmed Baig of PAF. In this wonderfully managed Open Golf Event participated by national golf stars and golfers who have travelled from Canada and USA, the DHA Multan has done exceedingly well in promoting golf at national and international level. All contenders for prize money and honors expressed pleasure with the golf course playing conditions and in particular Ijaz Malik, an international architect from US, Nazir

Chaudry from Florida and Dr Tariq Malik from Canada hope to continue visiting with playing mates from those countries.

As for the flow of the Championship in the third round on Saturday, Ahmed Baig, a brand ambassador for Rumanza was a contender beyond compare. His performance again was stylish and high toned and enabled him to maintain his hold on the competitive drift of the golf event. Adversaries like Shabbir Iqbal, Matloob Ahmed, M.Saqib, M.Naeem and M.Ashfaq who have many accomplishments to their credit did put in a great effort to neutralize Ahmed Baig but somehow Ahmed Baig's excellence was unparalleled. In the course of the third round on Saturday, his golfing prowess fetched him birdies on holes 2 and 3, then on 5th hole and on the

back nine on holes 11,15 and the closing 18th. The birdies added up to six in all complemented by eight regulation pars. Stroke losses hit him too on four holes but the birdies advantage prevented any set back to his leadership standing. His round of 70 added to his first round similar 70 and the second rounds merited 67 gives him an aggregate of 207, nine under par and an advantage of seven strokes over his nearest rival Muhammad Minhaj Maqsood of Rawalpindi Golf Club.

Minhaj Maqsood a South Africa trained golf professional is looking notably seasoned and his performance in the third round was upscale and smart. Five birdies on holes 3,7,9 and then consecutive ones on holes 16 and 17 highlights the remarkable element in his game. He did

encounter three bogies too but overall he was a competitor in control of the fierce competitive situation. His scores for three rounds are 68, a modest 76 and again an applaudable 70. Total for three rounds is 214, four under par and he will play the last round on Sunday in the leaders flite with Ahmed Baig and third placed Muhammad Shahzad of Lahore Garrison. M.Shahzad is beginning to look more and more proficient and his name appears prominently in prestigious open golf championships. Here also at Rumanza Golf Course he is well placed two strokes behind Minhaj and with three rounds aggregate score of 216, gets noticed for an impressive show of golfing skills.

Other notable ones looking fairly good are Ashiq Hussain (Multan) at 218 along with



M.Naeem of Peshawar who is also at 218. M.Munir who played the best round of the third day with a score of gross 68 helped by eight birdies, six pars and four bogies is at an aggregate score of 219.

M.Saqib is at 221 along with three others, Muhammad Alam, Abdul Zahoor and Kashif Masih.

Pakistan veteran cricket team has reached in South Africa



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Pakistan veteran cricket team will have reached in South Africa for participation in the Over 50s World Cup to be held in Cape Town, South Africa from March 5 to 20.

Former Test Cricketer Zahoor Elahi will lead the team while Jaffer Qureshi vice-captain and Dr Asjad Ali will be the manager of the team.

Team: Zahoor Elahi (Captain), Jaffer Qureshi (V.C), Muhammad Jawed, Azhar Khan (wk), Ahmed Hayat, Mazhar Hussain, Shakir Bhagat, Jam Nafees, Naeem Tayyab, Fawad Atiq, Muhammad Hafeez, Imtiaz Ahmad, Jamshaid Ali, Mohammad Rauf, Hafiz Khalid, Asif Humayun, Khalid Hussain, Nafis Ali Khan, Amir Sabazwari and Rehan Rauf. The team includes 8 players from Lahore.

Players above 50 years of age will be playing in this World Cup. Each team will play six group matches and the top two teams in each group will go into the semifinals of the tournament. The opening and closing ceremonies will be held on March 5 and 20 respectively.

The group matches will start from March 6. The final match will be played at the iconic Test venue, The Wanderers Stadium on March 19, 2023.

Pakistan had lost in the final to Australia in the inaugural Over 50s World Cup held in Sydney in 2018 and the Second Over 50s World Cup held in Cape Town in 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Pakistani squad consists of 7 Batsmen, 7 Bowlers, 3 All-rounders, and a Wicket keeper.

Fourteen Countries are divided into two groups. Group A includes Pakistan, South Africa, England, Wales, India, Namibia, and the USA. Australia, New Zealand, West Indies, Zimbabwe, Canada, Sri Lanka, and UAE are included in group B.

PCB Chairman Najam Sethi expressed his best wishes for the veteran's team.

PCB unveils squads for women's exhibition matches

By A Sports -

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board on Saturday unveiled the two women's squads for the three Women's League exhibition matches, which will be played ahead of the HBL PSL 8 matches in Rawalpindi on 8, 10 and 11 March.

Bismah Maroof will captain Amazons, which include Ireland's Laura Delany, England's trio of Lauren Winfield-Hill, Maia Bouchier and Tammy Beaumont, and Australia's Tess Flintoff. Nida Dar will lead the Super Women, which will also comprise Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu, Danni Wyatt of England, Jahanara Alam of Bangladesh, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt and Lea Tahuhu of New Zealand.

This means world's 10 leading foreign players from seven countries will be represented in the three matches, which are billed as soft launch of the Pakistan Women's League, which is tentatively planned for September.

These 10 foreign stars will be accompanied by Pakistan's 20 elite players, four U19 players who featured in the recently held ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup (Areesha Noor, Eymen Fatima, Shawaal Zulfqar and Syeda Aroob Shah) and two emerging cricketers (Fatima Khan and Syeda Masooma Zahra).

The 36 cricketers have been equally divided into two sides with the playing line-ups to include a maximum of four and minimum of three foreign players and a minimum of one emerging or U19 player.

Of the 10 foreign players, eight cricketers recently featured in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2023 in South Africa with Delany and Athapaththu captaining Ireland and Sri Lanka, respectively.

South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt is one of the biggest stars in women's cricket. She was selected in the Team of ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2023 and is the sixth-ranked batter in the world. Similarly, Danni Wyatt is one of the recognisable names in women's cricket following her 1,776 ODI and 2,369 T20I runs. Along with Suzie Bates of New Zealand, Wyatt is the second most capped T20I player with 143 matches, eight matches behind India's Harmanpreet Kaur.

Squads:

Amazons: Bismah Maroof (c), Aliya Riaz, Anam Amin, Areesha Noor, Eymen Fatima, Fatima Khan, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Gull Feroza, Kainat Imtiaz, Laura Delany (Ireland), Lauren Winfield-Hill (England), Maia Bouchier (England), Nashra Sundhu, Sadaf Shamas, Tammy Beaumont (England), Tess Flintoff (Australia) and Umm-e-Hani.

Super Women: Nida Dar (c) Aimen Anwar, Chamari Athapaththu (Sri Lanka), Danni Wyatt (England), Iram Javed, Jahanara Alam (Bangladesh), Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa), Lea Tahuhu (New Zealand), Muneeba Ali, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaima Sohail, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfqar, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz, Syeda Aroob Shah, Syeda Masooma Zahra and Tuba Hassan.

Matches Itinerary:

March 8: 1st Match, 2 PM, Pindi Cricket Stadium
March 10: 1st Match, 2 PM, Pindi Cricket Stadium
March 11: 1st Match, 2 PM, Pindi Cricket Stadium

Other positions went to M.Tariq (Islamabad) and Muhammad Akram (Gymkhana).

Senior amateurs first position was secured by Muhammad Sarfraz of Rumanza Golf Club. Runner up was Umair Butt of Defence Raya.

In the amateurs event Salman Jehangir of Lahore Gymkhana leads the gross section with a score of 222 for three days. Following him are Qasim Ali Khan of the same club at 227, Saad Habib of Rumanza at 230 and Damil Ataulah of Garrison at 233 along with Umair Saleem at the same score.

Sunday is the final day of the 1st Rumanza Open Golf Championship and at the conclusion of the championship, the prize distribution will be held in the evening at 4.P.M. at Rumanza Golf Club, DHA, Multan.