



**Women play key role in community resilience initiatives: Sherry**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman said the women of the climate catastrophe-impacted regions of the country played a key spearheading role in successful management of initiatives intended to enhance climate resilience and disaster preparedness. "These are difficult times for the human race particularly those of us who are on the frontline of the ground zero of climate change," she cautioned.



**Xi stresses enhancing integrated national strategies, strategic capabilities**

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday stressed opening new ground for enhancing integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities. President Xi urged efforts to advance collaborative innovation in science and technology, with a focus on independent and original innovation, thus building high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology at a faster pace.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Economy Top Agenda**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presided over the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

**Security forces kill 6 terrorists in NW**

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Six terrorists were killed during intense exchange of fire in an intelligence-based operation by the security forces in Datta Khel area of North Waziristan District on Wednesday.

actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and civilians.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from them.

Locals of the area appreciated the security forces response and expressed their full support to eliminate menace of terrorism from the area.

According to ISPR, the killed terrorists remained

**Election schedule for Punjab announced**

Candidates can file nominations papers from March 12 to 14

ISLAMABAD: Marking an end to months-long political drama over general elections in Punjab, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday announced the schedule for polls in the province — which are to be held on April 30.

President Alvi had already fixed April 30 (Sunday) as the date for elections in Punjab after the Supreme Court ruled that the elections to the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies should be held within the stipulated period of 90 days.

by Punjab on 14th January 2023 and Order dated 1st March 2023 passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Pakistan in Suo Motu Case No. 1 of 2023, Constitution Petition No.1 of 2023 and Constitution Petition No.2 of 2023 and announcement of date by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as 30th April 2023, the Election Commission of Pakistan in terms of Article 224(2) and 254 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan read with Section 57(2) of the Elections Act, 2017 (Act No. XXXIII of 2017) and all other powers enabling it in the behalf, hereby call upon the electors of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab constituencies to elect their representative from each of these constituencies to the general seats," the ECP notification read. Agencies

The apex court had allowed the ECP to propose a poll date that deviates from the 90-day deadline by the "barest minimum", in case of any practical difficulty, following which consultations were held and April 30 was finalised.

"In pursuance of the dissolution of the Provincial Assem-

**Maryam sees women's role vital in politics**

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz said on Wednesday that the role of women in politics was vital.

the biggest fan of my mother, who is not with me today. But she lives in my every breath. I have learned a lot in a life from my mother. My mother, Kulsoom Nawaz, was farsighted woman."

Addressing a speech on the occasion of International Women's Day, Ms Nawaz said it was necessary that the women pick up the right party that will pave the way for them to raise their voice at the national level.

She recounted the role of the women in different aspects of life, saying, the women had proved their mettle in every field. She heaped praise on many celebrities, including cricketer Bismah Maroof and the youngest Microsoft professional, Arfa Karim.

Ms Nawaz greeted the Women's Day, saying, "In overly routine life, everyday belongs to women, as no day would be complete without the presence of our women."

Commenting the efforts of noted singer Hadiqa Kiani, Ms Nawaz said, "I want to salute Hadiqa Kiani for rendering her social services without the support of the government." Agencies

Speaking about Fatima Jinnah, Ms Nawaz said, "I am biggest admirer of Fatima Jinnah. After that, I am

**'Women in Islam' moot**

**FM calls for women's empowerment, gender parity**

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says Islam forbids injustice against people, nations and women

NEW YORK: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Wednesday opened a Pakistan-sponsored conference on 'Women in Islam', with a spirited call to Islamic countries to lead the way in building a common future for humanity where the empowerment of women and gender parity underwrite a new peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive world order.



a special responsibility to counter this propaganda and perception.

discrimination, a first step towards tyranny".

"We have convened this conference to dispel the deep misperceptions that exist about the rights, roles and identity of women in Islam," he told ministers and senior officials from around the world participating in the conference being held on the sidelines of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) at the UN headquarters in New York.

"It offends me as a Muslim and a Pakistani to the core of my heart that the face of Islam unfortunately in much of western public perception are the likes of Osama Bin Laden and not of the likes of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto," he added.

He said Islam forbids injustice against people, nations, women. It shuns race, colour and gender as a basis of distinction among persons.

The foreign minister said the caricature that dominates the perception of women in Islam and the Muslim society was one painted on the ignorance of the Islamic history and roles that women had played. "This caricature is a result that the perception of our religion has largely been hijacked after 9/11 by extremists who do not represent our faith and I feel

For a fuller understanding, FM Bilawal said, it was essential to distinguish between Islamic principles and law, and social practices espoused by some patriarchal societies. It was a distinction that xenophobes, Islamophobes and obscurantists would not like to make because "they believe in

Islam treats women as human beings in their own right, not as chattel," FM Bilawal said as the world celebrated International Women's Day. Under Islamic law and tradition — the Sharia, he said a woman had an independent social and legal identity and enjoys civil, political, economic, and cultural rights as well as inherit, divorce, receive alimony and child custody.

During the opening session, the President of the UN General Assembly, Csaba Korosi, made his opening remarks followed by the Executive Director of the UN-Women, Sima Bahous, the Chairperson of the CSW, Ambassador Mathu Joyini and Ambassador Hameed Ajilbaiye Opeloye, OIC Observer Mission to the UN, who delivered a message on behalf of Secretary-General of OIC, Ambassador Houssein Brahim Taha. A recorded message of UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed was also played. She conveyed her greetings to the conference on behalf of herself and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

ously operating educational institution in 859 AD.

In his keynote address, FM Bilawal said, "Islamic history attests to the outstanding role played by Muslim women in all walks of life — education, enterprise, economics, politics and governance."

"Muslim women have been agents of change in their societies. Islamic history is replete with examples of illustrious women: Hazrat Khadija (R.A.), a women business entrepreneur; Hazrat Ayesha (R.A.), a scholar and preacher; Hazrat Zainab Bint Ali (R.A.), a brave fighter, participant and survivor of the battle of Karbala; Hazrat Rabia Basri, a Sufi mystic; Shuhdah al-Baghdadiyyah, a scholar and calligrapher; Fatima al-Samarqandi, a scholar and jurist."

Even today, he said, millions of Muslim women continued to dominate multiple fields — politics, education, health, science, commerce — in Muslim societies, citing Megawati Sukarnoputri, the first Muslim female President (of Indonesia), Najla Bouden, Prime Minister of Tunisia; Tansu Çiller, Prime Minister of Turkey, Elsafty, a computer scientist at the University of Cambridge; Anousheh Ansari, first Muslim space explorer and astronaut, and Malala Yousufzai, the youngest Muslim girl to have won the Nobel Prize. APP

**Imran's 'save judiciary' campaign slap on face of justice system: Marriyum**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's "save the judiciary" movement was a slap on the face of the justice system of the country.

**PTI claims activist killed in clashes with police**

IK calls off rally as caretaker government imposes Section 144 in Lahore, arrests party workers

LAHORE: A worker of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been killed in clashes with police in Lahore, the party claimed on Wednesday, as the government imposed Section 144 to ban public gatherings ahead of PTI rally in the provincial capital.



In a message on Twitter, PTI Chairman Imran Khan accused the provincial police of brutality and murdering party worker Ali Bilal in clashes near his residence in Zaman Park. "Ali Bilal unarmed & our dedicated & passionate PTI worker murdered by Punjab police," the former

prime minister said in a tweet.

"Shameful, this brutality on unarmed PTI workers who were coming to attend election rally. Pakistan is in the grip of murderous criminals. We will file cases against IG, CCPO & others for murder," he added.

of brutality. An old worker of PTI Ali Bilal was martyred due to police brutality and violence. The imported government has started shedding the blood of [political] workers," Farrukh Habib said in a tweet.

**Elahi accuses PM Shehbaz of leaving masses at IMF's mercy**

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi lambasted on Wednesday Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, claiming the latter left the masses to rely on the mercy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mr Elahi held a meeting with former lawmakers and other leaders, during which he took a dig at PM Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, saying, "The performance of PM Shehbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar has been exposed."

"The inept rulers have been failed to take the country out of the quagmire. Imran Khan will revive the country's economy once he will come to power," added Mr Elahi. Agencies

**ECC okays wheat procurement target of 1.80MMT**

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Wednesday approved wheat procurement target of 1.80 million metric tons (MMT) at the rate of Rs.3,900 per 40 kilogram by Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation (PASSCO).

wheat from PASSCO's stocks and carry forward stocks at the start of new food year on 01-04-2023.

According to press statement issued by the finance ministry, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presided over the ECC.

Considering the situation, additional demand of wheat from PASSCO's stocks by Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, minimum level of carry forward stocks and prevailing pricing trend in the local wheat market, the ECC approved the recommendation of the ministry to assign wheat procurement target of 1.80 MMT @ procurement price of Rs. 3,900/40kg. Further the ECC directed the ministry to form a committee to review the proper wheat usage, wheat storage mechanism/Silos in the country and present its findings to the ECC in 15 days. Agencies

## Int'l Women's Day

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and Begum Samina Alvi in a group photo with the winners of the Women Leaders Awards of an entertainment channel on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

## President for greater role of women in socio-economic dev

*Dr Alvi says practical steps were needed to bridge the gap between men and women in terms of social and economic inclusion*

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi called for a greater role of women in economic, political and social spheres to utilize their potential for ensuring further progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

Speaking at a Women Leaders Awards ceremony organized by a television channel here in connection with International Women's Day, he said women should work outside of their homes and society should provide them with appropriate opportunities to excel in their respective fields.

Men should take it upon themselves to address the concerns of women regarding harassment at workplaces, he remarked.

Dr Alvi said Pakistan lagged behind other countries in terms of gender parity and practical steps were needed to bridge the gap between men and women in terms of social and economic

inclusion.

He shared the example of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah whose sister Fatima Jinnah stood shoulder to shoulder with him during the movement for the creation of Pakistan.

"We cannot afford to keep women confined to the homes if we want to make economic progress," he emphasized adding countries like China made phenomenal progress by making women part of the economic endeavours.

The President said Islam gave rights to women including her right to inheritance many centuries back, at a time when there was no concept of these rights in other societies. In the western world, women were given these basic rights just in the last century, he pointed out.

He cited the example of Hazrat Khadija ((RA), the wife of Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH), who was a business-woman in her own right.

The male-dominated business class should encourage their female family members to become part of economic ventures, he advised.

The President said banks had made available loans for women who should be guided and mentored so that they could avail these loans from financial institutions and start their own businesses.

He said it was unfortunate that the majority of women in our country were deprived of the right of inheritance despite the teachings of Islam, he noted.

Talking about girls' education, he said more than 20 million children in Pakistan were out of school whereas countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had achieved almost hundred percent enrollment at the

primary level. In Pakistan, the enrollment of children in primary schools was at 68 percent, he apprised.

The President said the initiatives of social protections like Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) contributed to the social and economic empowerment of women.

The programme was a success because women were made direct beneficiaries as money was put in their hands and they were given responsibility to take decisions for the financial betterment of their families, he added.

He said the process of digitization was helping women to work from the security of their homes.

He said Pakistan took a significant step when it gave representation to women in Parliament, adding more such proactive steps were needed to increase participation of

women.

Talking about the issue of increasing population, he said there were nine million unwanted pregnancies in the country every year and the issue could be tackled by making women aware about the availability of long-term contraceptives.

He said the awards were recognition of women who contributed to the betterment of society in diverse social and economic spheres.

Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Alvi also spoke on the occasion and highlighted different initiatives taken for the empowerment and welfare of vulnerable sections of society especially women and children.

President Hum Network Sultana Siddiqui in her remarks told about the annual event of awarding women leaders for their contributions and achievements. APP

## Pak-UK agree to enhance bilateral trade



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Member of British Parliament and British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Mark Eastwood called on Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar for the enchantment of bilateral trade.

The federal minister welcomed the visit of Mark Eastwood to the Commerce Ministry and appreciated his efforts for the enhancement of bilateral trade between the two countries, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

Syed Naveed Said Pakistan honored trustworthy relations between the two countries adding that there was great potential for

the investors in the field of education, health, energy, textile and other sectors. There is only need to push them to right direction, he continued.

He said that economic stabilization and economic growth were the key priorities of the present government and hoped for the stability in the country in near future.

The UK Trade envoy said that Pakistan and UK were enjoying durable, historical and cooperative relations which need to be resilient through the enhancement of bilateral trade.

He also acknowledged that a large number of Pakistanis residing in the UK were playing their full role in the development of the country.

## Court fixes hearing of IK's pleas today

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Wednesday fixed two cases of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for hearing today (Thursday) as the ex-prime minister remains embroiled in legal battles.

The high court will hear two separate pleas — one filed against the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) ban on Khan's speeches and the other where the PTI chief is seeking to attend court hearings online due to security "threats".

In the plea seeking online hearings, the PTI chief has also requested the high court to provide a "foolproof security arrangement" and assure his safety and well-being as guaranteed under Pakistan's Constitution.

The petition further stated that Khan should be saved from "orchestrated 'politically motivated' false

cases registered against him with the sole agenda to expose him, so that he may be 'targeted' yet again after his survival from the last assassination attempt at Wazirabad."

In his plea, the PTI chairman has sought permission to mark attendance and attend court proceedings via video link on grounds of "serious threat and risk" to all those present in the court's premises. The petition added that strict action should be taken against state machinery if it fails to maintain law and order in court during the hearing of said cases.

The former prime minister, in his plea, has requested the court to ensure that no "adverse action (including arrest)" should be taken against him "till he is properly facilitated and provided proper security arrangement for court attendance and appearances." Agencies

## Legislation made in parliament to ensure women's rights: Law Minister

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has asked PTI Chairman Imran Khan to review his approach and shun his duplicity in connection with upholding rule of law.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said 'Save Judiciary Movement' of PTI Chief is aimed at hoodwinking the masses' attention from his corruption cases. He said Imran Khan should first pay a glance on his past before launching any such movement.

Azam Nazeer Tarar said

Imran Khan ridiculed, and hurled allegations on judiciary through his statements and actions when he was removed under a constitutional and legal procedure in the parliament.

He said the PTI Chairman defied the judicial proceedings and even he is still escaping from facing the cases against him in the courts. He said such kind of attitude towards judiciary is not appreciable.

Talking about International Women's Day, the Minister said the government's policies are women friendly and all the institutions working for the rights of women in the country are functional.



He said essential legislation has also been made in the parliament to ensure rights of women. However, we have to raise voice at every forum for the rights of women folk.

## 6 firecracker dealers held during crackdown in Pindi

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested six fire cracker dealers and recovered large quantity of fireworks from their possession during crackdown here on Wednesday, informed police spokesman.

Ganjmundi Police conducted raid and held fire cracker dealers who were identified as Sheh-yar, Rizwan, Bilal, Babar and Usman were arrested. Similarly, Gujjar Khan police arrested Kamran who was selling firecrackers.

Police have registered separate cases against the

## Pak-China to jointly promote agri technology under CPEC

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: In a move to promote China-Pakistan industry-university-research strategic cooperation on modern agriculture, a Documents of Understanding (DoU) was signed between National University of Sciences and Technology, Pakistan (NUST), Weifang Engineering Vocational College, Qingzhou Municipal Government and Weifang National Comprehensive Pilot Agriculture Zone at Weifang, China.

The four sides agreed to work together in promoting bilateral agricultural technology cooperation under the framework of CPEC, with the focus on construction of the entire agri-

cultural industry chain system, deep processing of agricultural products and related industrialization development, CEN reported.

"Agriculture in the South Asian Region is struggling with low productivity, supply shortfalls, low returns to farmers, lack of advanced technology, and lack of trained professionals and thus threatening our food security," Pro Rector Academics of NUST Dr. Osman Hassan noted in his speech.

"These problems are related to people's livelihood and well-being closely, particularly in Pakistan, as it is an agro-economic country with immense potential for crop production and research in agricultural

sciences" he said.

Dr. Osman Hassan said that currently, the NUST is actively conducting research including precision agriculture, multispectral sensing of crop fields, agricultural 3D printing and scanning applications, early detection of pathogens, and plant disease management. "Nevertheless, research on sustainable agricultural resource management systems remains a major challenge for us, and I sincerely believe that today's agreements will certainly play an indispensable role in filling these gaps."

Another conferee, Dr Hussain Ahmad Janjua, Principal, Attatur-Rahman School of Applied Biosciences (ASAB), NUST, also highlighted his viewpoint

with practical measures, "Food processing and preservation, a key area for both countries to deal with food security. To increase the shelf life of perishables such as fruits and vegetables, there is a need to introduce modern food storage technologies and facilities in Pakistan. The input of Chinese modern technologies in this regard would be helpful in strengthening research and development in this key area."

Dr Hussain Ahmad Janjua pointed out that they have plans to build research collaborations with Chinese Agriculture Universities such as Nanjing Agriculture University and Research Organization such as Chinese Academy of Sciences.

## JUI KP Chief criticizes PTI for financial mismanagement

PESHAWAR: Ameer, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Senator Atta-ur-Rehman, Wednesday, said that those who deceived people on the name of Riyasat Madina have inflicted huge losses to the economy and pushing the country towards an abyss of financial crises.

Addressing a ceremony to welcome new entrants to the party, he said that rulers who misled people have also targeted the economy and religion for their personal interests. He said that corruption and malpractices of past rulers are main reasons behind current financial crises.

He said that the masses would reject previous rulers for their corruption and ill-planned policies. He said that Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman who was well aware of the nefarious intentions of Imran Khan had already launched a daring struggle against his policies right from the



beginning.

Senator Atta said that Imran Khan has lost public trust and become isolated due to his policies. He said that PDM is not an electoral alliance but it is a political alliance adding that decision to forge an alliance for election or take a solo flight would be decided by leadership of JUI according to future situation.

He said that effective policies are needed to control inflation and put the country on right track after the mismanagement of by PTI. He said that JUI would fully participate in elections and directives have been issued for candidates. APP

## 9 held for possessing illegal weapons in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested nine illegal arms holders and recovered arms, ammunition, and bullets from their possession during an operation here on Wednesday, informed a police spokesman.

Similarly, Airport Police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Jamshed and recovered 20 rounds of pistol 30 bore from Ali Raza.

While, Taxila police held Ahsan Shahzad and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession.

Dharmyal police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Sikandar,

and 01 pistol 30 bore from Qasim while 01 pistol 30 bore from Eid Gul.

Following the operation, Rawat police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Sher Ali and 01 pistol 30 bore from Ghulam Murtaza. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress.

SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police teams adding that strict action will be continued against those possessing illegal weapons. APP

# BISP non-political program to facilitate poor people: Kundi

*The Minister says about 8.9 million women were availing the financial assistance through this program*

**Our Correspondent**

MULTAN: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi, termed the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) a non-political program, saying that reforms were being made to facilitate maximum deserving people.

He expressed these views while talking to media persons after inaugurating Dynamic Registry Center under the BISP at Shujaabad here.

He said that about 8.9 million women were availing the financial assistance through this program and added that the beneficiaries would get 25 percent extra amount in quarterly installments.

He said that the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had imposed restrictions on the BISP, and now the government was removing it



to facilitate beneficiaries.

He recalled that BISP was initiated by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government in 2008, for the poor

and deserving people. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had expanded this program through a dynamic survey as a large number of women

were getting the facility. He said that around 2,40,000 beneficiaries were getting the BISP financial aid across the Multan district.

He further said that four dynamic registry centres and 13 counters had been established in Multan district to facilitate masses. Pregnant women were being supported under the World Food Program, while subsidy on utility stores was also being extended to beneficiaries, he added.

To a question about PTI Chairman Imran Khan, the state minister said that no one was above the law and the government would ensure the implementation of court orders.

He recalled that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had tasked the PPP for Karachi and Multan seats and they "clean bowled" the PTI chairman and vice chairman in these two constituencies in the by-elections.

## Prioritizing health

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel handing over the ceremonial keys of the technical immunization vehicles to the provincial team leads from all provinces and federating units on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

## PHC restores LG representatives in KP

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) here Wednesday suspended notification of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and restored Local Government (LG) representatives in the province.

After hearing the arguments and examining the facts of the case, the two-member PHC bench comprising Justice Rohul Amin and Justice Arshad Ali announced the verdict.

During the course of proceedings, the Deputy Attorney General informed the court that the ECP had the powers to suspend local government representatives in the province, in order to ensure transparent and free election of the provincial assembly.

He argued that this was not the first time that ECP had suspended local government representatives as the same had happened during the 2018 elections.

On February 3, the ECP had suspended all local government functionaries in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till the announcement of the election results of both provincial assemblies.

The ECP had stated that it wanted to ensure that the general election of the provincial assemblies were held in an "honest, just and fair" manner, and to prevent any action on the part of the local government institutions that amounts to influence the results of upcoming general election by depriving candidates from having a level playing field.

On February 10, a PTI tehsil council chairman moved the Peshawar High Court challenging the ECP's order.

In the petition, Mohammad Ishaq Khan Khattak, who heads the Nowsheera tehsil council and is the son of former federal minister Pervez Khattak, requested the court to set aside the February 3 ECP notification. APP

## AJK president urges LG reps to serve masses



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD/KOTLI: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that elected local government representatives should gear up for the future and devote all their energies to serving the masses.

He expressed these views in a meeting with newly elected Chairman District Councils of Kotli Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor Javed Advocate, Mayor of Kotli Muhammad Taj Chaudhry and Deputy Mayor Kotli Raja Rashid Mahmood who called on him here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said, "Now that key stages of local body elections have been completed, it is high time that the elected representatives should come forward in a big way and play their due role in helping people to get their problems solved at their doorsteps".

He said that those who assumed their charge as Chairman of District Council, Vice Chairman, Mayors and Deputy Mayors should make public service their motto and serve their people selflessly.

## Patel hails services of lady health workers

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel has hailed Lady Health Workers for their precious and praiseworthy services for the country.

Addressing a ceremony in connection with International Women's Day in Islamabad on Wednesday, he also thanked all the international partners for their valuable support and assistance to eradicate polio from the country.

The Minister said anti-polio drive is being run effectively and the government is making all out efforts to facilitate Lady Health Workers.

Abdul Qadir Patel also paid glowing tribute to the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto saying that she was the first-ever female Prime Minister of the Islamic world, who made unmatched efforts for the women rights.

## Agri Minister for resolving issues of Agriculture University on priority

D.I.KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Abdul Haleem Khan Qasuria on Wednesday vowed that the issues of the Agriculture University Dera Ismail Khan would be resolved on priority.

The caretaker minister stated this during his visit to the Agriculture University, Dera Ismail Khan. Vice-Chancellor Dr Masroor Elahi warmly welcomed the visiting minister and presented him a gift of 'Saraiki Ajrak' in connection with the Saraiki Culture Day.

The minister also visited the various departments of the University and got briefed about the varsity by the vice chancellor.

The VC informed the minister about the problems and other activities of the agricultural university.

The minister said that the agricultural university was a valuable asset of Dera Ismail Khan and steps were being taken for its betterment.

"The problems of the agricultural university are our problems, which will be resolved on a priority basis," the minister added. APP

## Giving election date in KP is difficult, says KP governor

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said on Wednesday that giving the election date in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was tremendously difficult.

Talking to the media, he said there was progress in the session with the Election Commission of Pakistan and the nation would hear the good news regarding the polls, while claiming consensus would be reached with the ECP.

KP governor added the situation of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was change with a significant difference in the security situation of the both regions. Agencies

## Govt resorts to cowardly tactics of torturing women: Zaidi

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Ali Zaidi said on Wednesday that the government was resorting to cowardly tactics of torturing women and elders.

Speaking to media, Mr Zaidi said, "The dictatorial attitude of the government led the country to disastrous situation. The rulers have already entered a panic situation ahead of the launch of the electoral campaign."

He launched a broadside at Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, saying, "The country whose interior minister sold drugs could not hope for the best." Agencies

# No one will be allowed to play with AJK's interests: PM Tanveer

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan on Wednesday said that his government would not allow anyone, whosoever, to play with the interests of the state.

Some people had virtually held the entire state and its system hostage, but they would not escape from law, he said while addressing a function in connection with the International Women's Day.

"A few state employees have established offshore companies, all evidence have been collected, and they will be held accountable," he added.

Sardar Tanveer said the state was liberated by the forefathers after rendering match-



less sacrifices. "We are not technocrats, our roots are in the people," he added.

He said it was quite shocking that officials paid hefty amounts to get lucrative positions in government departments.

"Rs 35 to 40 is paid for

the post of Commissioner of Inland Revenue."

Highlighting women's significant contribution to society, he said the Kashmiri women on both sides of the Line of Control had rendered tremendous sacrifices.

"Our mothers, sisters and

daughters in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have been scripting a new history while fighting shoulder to shoulder alongside their men against the Indian occupation, and I salute them for their resilience against tyranny."

Referring to the place of women in Islamic society, he said Islam had given a special place to women in society. He said his government was committed to empowering women and addressing their problems. It had fulfilled its promise by giving representation to women in the recent local elections in Azad Kashmir.

The government, he said, was taking steps to improve the life of women by making them

skilled. "Our government has launched a successful women's programme within Azad Kashmir, which provides educated women with the opportunity to enhance their skills and get respectable employment opportunities."

Pink bus service, he said, was launched to facilitate the travel of working women in the capital city. Some 1,650 women would benefit from the introduction of modern technical training institutes, he added.

The AJK PM on the occasion issued directives for regularising the services 196 women employees working in the Social Welfare Department. He also announced a grant of Rs 2.5 million for the welfare of women. APP

# Political drawbacks pushed back the Country into unseen anarchy

**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah wanted with the great expectations and desires a multicultural, multi-ethnic Pakistan. Recent attacks by fundamentalist religious organizations on Hindu students celebrating Holi in universities are against Quaid-e-Azam's vision.

The only solution to the stability and economic stability of Pakistan is a fair & free election. The Pakistan Army is the backbone of the security institutions along with the judiciary of Pakistan. The Deputy General Secretary

Pakistan Ulema Council and Member Provincial Union The Muslim Committee of the Government of Punjab told the visiting delegation of Pakistan Ulama Council while talking to Maulana Ubaidullah Gormani, Maulana Habibur Rahman Abid, Maulana Izharul Haq Khalid, Maulana Aminul Haq Ashrafi, Sahibzada Hamza Tahirul Hasan and other scholars in the delegation.

Time is needed for the stability of Pakistan and the people for the sake of prosperity, democracy should be strengthened in the country. The only solution is peaceful

and transparent elections. It is the responsibility of the government and other institutions to give their full support to promote democracy and the Chief Election Commission should fulfill its responsibilities to the people. His choice for the betterment of an elected and democratic system should provide an opportunity to do so that a good message of Pakistan will be sent to the whole world. They want to gain power by making them controversial for personal interest. This is not giving a good impression to the politicians in the whole world. Instead of misleading the

people, the politicians should fix their situation and put an end to their personal fights.

The politicians should take measures for the welfare of the people. And freeing the people from inflation by ending the political conflict. Let the governments and the opposition come together to strengthen the stability and democratic process of Pakistan by holding an all-party conference and determine the formula for the development of the country for the future so that the problems of the people can be solved and the country of Pakistan can develop.

## Govt. taking steps to provide relief to people in Ramadan

PESHAWAR: Standing Committee of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker cabinet was Wednesday informed that the government is taking steps to provide relief to people during the fasting month of Ramadan and ensure availability of edibles on reasonable rates.

The meeting was chaired by Caretaker Minister for Food, Fazal Elahi and attended by caretaker minister, Sawal Nazir, CM's aide, Himayatullah, secretary food, Abid Wazir and concerned officials of finance department. Chairing the meeting, Fazal Elahi told that government is utilizing resources to provide relief to people and facilitate them during Ramadan. APP



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:06 am  
Zohr ..... 12:19 pm  
Asr ..... 4:28 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:10 pm  
Isha ..... 7:32 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH ..... 561111  
MH ..... 561116  
MH ..... 561116  
Cantt Hospital ..... 9270907-11  
DHQ ..... 5556311-4  
RGH ..... 9290301-7  
Holy Family ..... 9290322-7  
PIMS ..... 9261170-79  
Polyclinic ..... 9218300-09  
Shifa International ..... 4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**Commercial market to be cleared from encroachers, says Commissioner**

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatha has said that the Commercial Market, Satellite Town is the hub of business activities, and no one would be allowed to set up illegal encroachments there. He said this while talking to the members of the Commercial Market Traders Association during his visit to the market. Commissioner said strict action would be taken against shopkeepers, who would allow encroachments in front of their shops and directed the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi to clear the porches of the market from the encroachers. He said that a comprehensive plan to eliminate encroachments was being implemented. Liaquat said removing encroachments was the government's top priority; however, the traders' role was essential to end violations as only administrative measures could not prove result oriented. He added that Pir Wadhai General Bus Stand had been upgraded to facilitate the citizens while the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company carried out a special campaign to free the city from waste. APP

**Int'l Women's Day**

**Samina Alvi stresses inclusion of women in all fields**

*The First Lady says Pakistan is taking concrete steps to provide women equal opportunities to excel*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Samina Alvi has emphasized that inclusion of women in all fields of life, particularly in trade, business digitalization and finance is imperative for progress of the country.

Addressing a ceremony held in connection with "International Women's Day" here on Wednesday, she said currently, the ratio of women in Pakistan is almost fifty percent but we still have a long way to go in terms of empowerment.

The First Lady said this day serves as an important opportunity for taking stock of the progress made so far and to reflect the challenges that stand in the way of women's rights and equal participation in decision-making in all walks of public life. She said despite challenges, women in Pakistan have always shown the strength of character and resilience.

She emphasized that the Quran, in Surah Nisa, recognizes the rights given to women by our religion. It is our duty



to ensure and advocate the rights and empowerment of women, which is essential for future generations.

Samina Alvi said Pakistan is taking concrete steps to provide women equal opportunities to excel.

She said a number of steps have been

taken in Pakistan to protect and guarantee the rights of women in Pakistan including formation of National Policy for the Development and Empowerment of Women, a National Action Plan on Human Rights, Gender Equality Policy Frameworks, and Women's Empowerment Packages.

**NA Speaker highlights importance of women empowerment**

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has emphasized the importance of women's empowerment for the development of Pakistan as the progress of the country was intertwined with the progress of women, and their empowerment is vital for national growth.

Speaking at the "International Women's Day Celebration Event" organized by the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), the Speaker paid tribute to the resilient women of Pakistan who played a significant role in the country's movement.

He also acknowledged the pivotal role played by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in empowering women and creating history in all fields. He added that he was proud of the



fact that his political upbringing was done by the first female prime minister, Mohatma Benazir Bhutto.

He praised trailblazing women and stated that "the society in which the rights of women are protected is the society that develops." Speaker NA added, "It was the PPP which has played the most important role in empowering women." He also said that Pakistani women have made their mark with their commendable

contributions in every field, as the struggle of Fatima Jinnah and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was a torch for women around the world. "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto bravely fought two dictators to restore democracy in the country."

"He said the first woman prime minister, first woman speaker, and minister of information and broadcasting of the Islamic world belonged to the PPP, "as women in our Parliament are playing a

pivotal important role." "The honour and respect of women is the honor and respect of all of us," NA Speaker remarked. He applauded Secretary WPC Shahida Rehmani and her team for organising the event.

The event highlighted the importance of women's empowerment and their vital role in the progress and development of Pakistan. It also paid tribute to the resilient women of the country who have contributed significantly to its growth and development.

Secretary WPC Dr Shahida Rehmani welcomed the attendees and highlighted the role of Benazir Bhutto, Fatima Jinnah, and Kulsoom Nawaz as role models for women's struggle for democracy. She added that Pakistan's constitution provides equal rights to all and praised the United Nations' theme for 2023, "DigitAll," as pertinent for the country's progress.

**CDA to auction commercial plots to boost revenue, attract investors**

ISLAMABAD: The capital Development Authority (CDA) has announced its plans to auction commercial plots in various developed sectors of the federal capital, beginning on May 3, aiming to generate more revenue for the city and attracting investors to participate in the auction.

Official sources while talking to APP urged interested investors to participate in the auction, which will take place at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad. The development is expected to have a significant impact on the commercial estate market in the capital city.

He said the auction in various sectors of the Islamabad capital territory would continue till May 5, adding that the authority has already publicized the auction schedule of various plots in different newspapers.

The official said that the real estate experts have announced it as a must-avail investment opportunity for investors nationwide and overseas. The participants investing in the public sale can possess commercial plots with 'legal protection'. The details about the commercial plots located in the developed sectors of the federal capital included vari-

ous centres, agro farms, petrol pumps, E-11 northern strip, Class-III shopping centre, Park Enclave commercial and Blue Area E-11/F-11, Canopy side, he added.

The participant, the official said that whoever submits full payment within 30 days of the bid acceptance letter would be offered a 10 percent rebate on the remaining amount.

He said the list of protocols announced by the authority in the auction voucher for prospective investors included a facilitation team presence is mandatory for the assistance of investors, 25 percent amount of the bid amount would be

considered the first instalment, 1st instalment should be submitted within thirty days of bid acceptance, CDA to collect the advance tax on a pro-rata basis, site and marketing offices charges would not be included, building plan will be approved after the submission of 1st instalment centres.

The official said the CDA auction voucher allowed accommodated investors with a one-window directorate to make their payments. The investors can also pay through selected Askari, UBL, HBL, MCB, and Bank of Punjab branches from March 25 onwards. APP

**Kashmiris women worst sufferers of Indian savagery: Mushaal**



**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick came down hard on the fascist Narendra Modi fascist government for using the rape of Kashmiri women as a weapon of war to humiliate Kashmiris and suppress the ongoing struggle to shackles of Indian brutal subjugation.

Speaking as Chief Guest at a seminar 'Status of Women's Rights in Indian IIOJK at National University of Modern Languages on the occasion of the International Women's Day marked on Wednesday, she said although every Kashmiri was victim of Indian state terrorism, the women were the worst sufferers of the Indian savagery.

Mushaal, wife of senior hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, said that the miseries and victimization of the Kashmiri women at the hands of occupation forces, police, paramilitary and agencies continue unabated in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), making a life a hell for the residents of the valley.

Paying glowing tributes to the valiant Kashmiri women for their supreme sacrifices in the ongoing freedom movement, the Chairperson said that thousands of women are among 96,181 people of Jammu and Kashmir, who were martyred by Indian troops since January 1989 till date.

She said that at least, 682 women have been martyred by the troops since January 2001 but the fascist authorities could not dampen the courage of the brave women.

Mjushaal stated that the gravity of the situation could be judged from the fact that over 22,958 women were rendered widowed while 11,256 women were molested/ disgraced by Indian troops.

Moreover, she went on to say that thousands of women lost their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers in the occupied territory who were subjected to custodial disappearance by Indian troops, adding that over 8,000 Kashmiris went missing in custody during the past 34 years.

"Many mothers died after waiting for their disappeared sons while widows and half-widows are in pain since decades in occupied territory," she added.

The hurriyat leader condemned the criminal silence maintained by the world community on the Indian brutalities on the women in the occupied territory. She urged that the world community must wake up to contain sexual violence being perpetrated by Indian forces in IIOJK.

Mushaal noted that over two dozen women including Hurriyat leaders and activists like Aasiya Andrabi, Fehmeeda Sofi, Naheeda Nasreen, Insha Tariq Shah, Saima Akther, Aisha Mustaq, Hina Bashir Beig and Aasiya Bano were languishing in illegal detention in IIOJK and New Delhi's notorious Tihar Jail.

She said that the Kashmiri people were being victimized only for representing the righteous demand of right to self-determination and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Women are backbone of country's development: Maryam Idris**



**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: Social and human rights activist Maryam Idris said that women are like the backbone in every sphere of life including our family system, society, country and economy.

She said according to the constitution and law they are given health, education and other basic facilities and an environment of equality should be provided so that they can lead a dignified life socially and economically. I will raise my voice for the solution of women's rights and problems at every forum.

She expressed her views in a message on the occasion of International Women's Day. Human rights leader Maryam Idris said that the purpose of celebrating this day is Where women's political, social and economic struggles are to be saluted, women's problems are to be highlighted and women's rights are to be highlighted are deprived of basic rights and humanity is facing atrocities in IIOJK This is a matter of concern for international human rights organizations

The world should stop the atrocities on women in Occupied Kashmir and play their role to give them basic rights.

**Advocates for gender equality**

**Hashoo Group celebrates women's achievements**

*On Int'l Women's Day, the group raises awareness about women's rights*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo Group joined the world in celebrating International Women's Day (IWD), a global day that honours women's achievements, raises awareness about women's rights, and advocates for gender equality.

This year's theme for IWD is embracing equity and moving beyond equal opportunities, which aims to build a truly equal and just future for all. Hashoo Group is committed to promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their full poten-

tial. To celebrate IWD, Hashoo Hotels hosted a beautiful celebration surrounded by purple decorations. The half-day event included launching two extraordinary campaigns in honour of the IWD. The Pearl-Lady programme was launched across all Pearl-Continental Hotels nationwide. The aim of 'Pearl-Lady' programme is to provide a safe and secure environment for the solo female traveller while providing them with the utmost comfort and luxury. The second campaign, Women@Hashoo, was aimed at the female workforce of Hashoo Group. The goal is to help women have more

accessibility in their careers and lives while encouraging more women to join in and become part of the Hashoo Team.

Murtaza Hashwani, while speaking on occasion, highlighted the importance of women in general. He said, "When you educate a son, you educate an individual, but when educating a daughter, you educate the whole generation; the whole community prospers". He also admired the positive contribution of women towards Hashoo Group. "This diversity has made us who we are. We take pride at the fact that Hashoo Group is one of the organizations in Pakistan that has key positions filled by



women and are taking important deci-

sions, a prime example of true leader-

ship. Going forward, our intention is to recruit an equal proportion of male and female staff for our upcoming hotels", he added.

Hashoo Hotels believes in breaking stereotypes, promoting gender balance, and increasing women's workforce. They remain committed to advancing gender equality and empowering women to thrive in all aspects of their lives. The Group employs more than 4,000 staff across Pakistan and is committed to including more women in their workforce by reshaping policies and offering more facilities within the workspace to facilitate women joining and staying in the workforce.

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# Chinese modernization inspires developing countries

**Waseem Ishaque**

**M**odernization is a systematic and continuous process that has a visible impact not only on economic and infrastructure development but also on the overall well-being of the population.

China, with its 5,000 years of uninterrupted civilization, has made profound contributions to humanity for over a millennium. For centuries before the Renaissance, China held a leading position in global economic, technological, and cultural developments. Since the onset of modern times, the Chinese have been committed to modernization to catch up with the times.

The implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978 presented China as a lucrative market for investment. It ushered in a new era of social, economic, industrial, and political developments aimed at poverty alleviation and moving quickly toward prosperity. China unveiled a strategic three-step vision for modernization as part of this policy. Guided by this vision, China reformed its old institutions, built new ones, integrated itself into the global economy, and made new achievements in modernization. Chinese citizens began to enjoy a moderately prosperous life, and China crossed the threshold for low-middle-income countries in 1999 and upper-middle-income countries in 2010.

The biggest achievement of Chinese

modernization is the lifting of over 800 million people out of poverty over the past 40 years. The per capita income of those who were raised out of poverty reached 14,000 Chinese yuan (\$2,100) by the end of 2022. Today, China is the world's second-largest economy, with its GDP estimated to be 120 trillion yuan. China has maintained steady growth while overall global estimates have been on a downward slide. For many years China has contributed more than 30% to the world's economic growth and assumes the pivot and engine of the global economy.

The success of the Chinese path to modernization has been widely recognized as a miracle in the history of human development and a pioneering undertaking in human society, offering an alternative approach to achieving modernization that is different from that of Western countries.

In its stride towards modernization, China will continue to bring development opportunities to the world, make global governance fairer and more equitable, and work with other nations to create a better future for humanity. Chinese modernization contains elements common to the modernization processes of all countries, but is characterized by features unique to the Chinese context. The Chinese path to modernization aligns with its national conditions and aspirations. And China's achievements have inspired many developing countries to seek their own paths to development and prosperity.

Chinese modernization aims to

achieve shared prosperity for all and promote social equality and justice. It follows a development path featuring increased productivity, a prosperous life, and a sound ecological environment.

Today, China is a major stakeholder in preserving the environment and promoting green development, which inspires the world. In this regard, Chinese

equity and justice. Building a community with a shared future and creating a new form of human advancement are essential features of Chinese modernization. This demonstrates that China's path to modernization will always work to make global governance fairer and more equitable and is always ready to jointly create



modernization can be seen as a beacon of hope for the world's development, making enormous contributions to humanity around the world.

Chinese modernization will inject more positive energy into improving global governance as China adheres to an independent foreign policy of peace and upholds the basic norms governing international relations and international

an even brighter future for humanity. China has pledged to share its development opportunities with other developing countries and help other countries develop and improve people's livelihoods, reflecting the importance of people-centered policies. Courtesy: China.org.cn

*Dr. Waseem Ishaque is a senior fellow of Taihe Institute, a think tank based in Beijing.*

## China advances modernization drive with confidence

**W**ith a spring in his step after an uptick in tourists to his region, Wu Guoping, a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) from Jiangsu Province, attended the opening meeting of the annual session of China's top legislature in Beijing.

According to Wu, the number of visitors at Wuxi City's Nianhua Bay in Jiangsu exceeded 210,000 in the first two months of this year, the highest for the same period since 2019, according to the CGTN.

Similar rebounds are happening everywhere in China as the country begins the first year of its march toward modernization, echoing Xi Jinping's remarks that "the start is crucial to the overall situation and decisive to the future."

Xi attended the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th NPC on Sunday morning in Beijing. A government work report submitted to the session for deliberation reviewed the country's progress in 2022 and revealed China's main targets for development in 2023.

The work report noted that the people have expressed views and suggestions which deserve full attention and urged efforts to live up to the people's trust.

In the past decade, Xi has participated in deliberation with lawmakers or political advisors 53 times at the annual Two Sessions, having listened to opinions and suggestions of over 400 NPC deputies and CPPCC members.

The government work report stressed that "the past five years for China have been truly momentous and remarkable," saying the country has met numerous tests, including accelerated changes on the international landscape, the COVID-19 pandemic and a domestic economic slowdown, and made major achievements in economic and social development, including winning the critical battle against poverty and finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Calling for the stage to be set for building a modern socialist country in all respects, the report listed the main targets for development in 2023, including a GDP growth of around five percent, an increase of the consumer price index of around three percent and a deficit-to-GDP ratio of three percent.

The Two Sessions forges a synergy among the Chinese people and firms up their confidence in overcoming difficulties in achieving development goals in 2023 and advancing Chinese modernization, according to experts. "China is striving to secure stable economic growth this year, so the Two Sessions are of special significance in boosting confidence and gathering strength," said Yang Hui, a national political advisor.

As the Chinese modernization blueprint is fleshed out with specific targets to strive for at this year's Two Sessions, how China will create new opportunities for the world through its own development has captured global attention.

The government work report told the world that "China's economy is staging a steady recovery and demonstrating vast potential and momentum for further growth," as the country's consumer demand, market distribution, industrial production, and business expectations have all markedly improved.

It announced that China will intensify efforts to attract and utilize foreign investment. "With a vast and open market, China is sure to provide even greater business opportunities for foreign companies in China."



## Ambush of western agenda in shelter of Aurat March

**Kiran Asim**

**O**n 8th March men and women around the world celebrate international women day to recognize the achievement of women politically, socially and economically. The United Nations first celebrated International women's day in 1975. By 1977 the UN and its members declared 8th march as an official day for women rights.

If we talk about Pakistan and aurat march. Pakistan being an Islamic democratic country empowered women from the day of its birth. We took Pakistan on the name of Islam so that we could exercise our religion freely and independently. Islam gave rights to Women. The prophet SAW preached the importance of women. Motivated their contribution to family and society and always condemned the ill-treatment on women

Sheikh ibn Baaz said "There is no doubt that Islam came to honor to the woman. Guard her, protect her from the wolves of mankind, secure her rights and raise her status."

In Pakistan and other Islamic countries, under Islamic laws women have the right of sell and buy properties, run their businesses, can vote and take an active part in politics and society. Even Pakistan and Turkey had female Prime ministers.

While according to a report of WHO in 2021. Women are subjected to physical, mental and sexual torture. Nearly 1 in 3 or 30% women aged 15-49 have been subjected to physical and sexual torture. One of the biggest problem women are facing in west today, is the discrim-

ination with women. Which results in the lack of women in positions of power. According to a study, 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. 82% of all sexual assault victims are females.

Rape cases and sexual assaults cases have reported more in Europe and US. Pakistan is 100th in the list.

In Pakistan, a woman is respected and



protected. While there is so much oppression and persecution of women in the West. Why isn't there a women's march in west? Do these women who are marching see the oppressed women only in Pakistan? Why didn't these women ever raise their voices for the women of the West? Is the West very safe and like paradise for women? So why is there so much noise about the women's march here?

Why don't the women marchers speak against the oppression of women in Kashmir

Palestine, India, Myanmar and Syria? what kind of hypocrisy is this? Why don't they raise their voice for Dr Aafia Siddiqui?

What is the purpose of Aurat March here? When the women have full freedom and rights. These woman marchers demand equality, equality to whom? When Quran teaches us that Adam and Eve were created from same soul, both equally guilty, equally responsible and equally valued.

This woman marchers demand freedom, freedom from whom, your father, your son, your husband, How and from whom do they talk about freedom? Do they want to target our family system?

Every year they chant slogans of "Mera Jism Meri Marzi". In Europe, this slogan was used to protect the right of abortion. Do they want to promote obscenity behind this slogan in Pakistan? Do they want to promote LGBTQ in Pakistan? I have witnessed other slogans

"Maa ka, Nani ka, Dadi ka sabka badla lein gy" "Daalo magar Pyar se" "Mein Lollipop nahi aurat houn"

In the shelter of Aurat March, this march is promoting obscenity and nudity in Pakistan. Aurat march is not voicing women issues but supporting vulgarity. The LGBTQ narrative has been attracting a lot of ignorants who needs a pass for justifying their wrongdoings.

The women in the west are being treated badly. They got their rights after suffering and hardship in the west. And we being blessed without any suffering or struggle. There is no restriction for women in Pakistan. They are working in every field. They are totally free. What kind of freedom these women marchers want?

## A day of celebration and recognition of female caregivers' contributions

**Dr. Maliha Hashmi**

**F**rom the very beginning of civilization, women have occupied an important place in society. Statistics show that most caregivers are female — 65 percent alone in the US — and more than 80 percent care for a relative or friend who is 50 or older.

It is impossible to imagine a functioning society without women caring for the vulnerable and infirm, often in the most challenging circumstances, whether from leadership positions or the front line. We wouldn't be where we are today without them.

On International Women's Day, I encourage you all to consider the many contributions throughout history from the people we know about: Examples from the Prophet Muhammad's courageous and educated female family members such as Khadija, a caregiver, and successful businesswoman, to his daughter, Fatimah, also a caregiver and health care provider, Aisha bint Abu Bakr, another caregiver and judge, to those such as Florence Nightingale, Mother Teresa — and the millions of other unsung heroes.

Today, the health care profession is changing with the introduction of new technologies. Artificial Intelligence and robotics will shape health care for many years to come and will support medical professionals rather than eliminate their jobs.

But to truly empower caregivers through new

technological solutions, we must logically ensure they are fully involved at every stage of their development.

In the interests of inclusivity, women should be at the forefront of the process. Their involvement will also ensure that patients are better accounted for, as solutions will be designed to work for everyone, not only a few, and create health "caring" systems.

This year's International Women's Day theme is "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for gender equality." As the UN has highlighted, bringing women into technology results in more

creative solutions and has more significant potential for innovations that meet women's needs and promote gender equality.

The events of the beginning of the decade have revealed significant weaknesses in health care worldwide as caregivers came under immense pressure.

We also stand on the cusp of a new industrial revolution. Let's not waste the opportunity to get it right. Let's do it together, side by side. Courtesy: Arab News

Dr. Maliha Hashmi is a prominent global health leader, a winner of the prestigious Forbes Health Leadership Award of 2022, and a recipient of the World Leaders Award. Hashmi is one of the Top Seven Most Talented Female Health Leaders of the MENA region and a C-level health care executive, public speaker and WEF Global Future Council Expert. She is also a V2O Delegate of the G20 and an author.

# Ukraine vows revenge for apparent POW killing in viral clip

Footage appears to show a detained Ukrainian combatant standing in a shallow trench, smoking

KYIV: Ukraine vowed to take revenge against Russia, blaming the Kremlin for a captured soldier apparently being riddled with bullets in a viral video after using a pro-Ukrainian slogan.

The footage appears to show a detained Ukrainian combatant standing in a shallow trench, smoking, and being shot to death with multiple automatic weapons after saying "Glory to Ukraine."

Officials in Kyiv have blamed Russian forces and called for the International Criminal Court to probe the incident.

The apparent victim's last words were trending online in Ukraine this week and the footage has spawned a new war-time meme in Ukraine celebrating the armed forces.

Many Ukrainians and social media users, who support Kyiv against Russia's invasion, posted a picture of the killed man online.

"The deceased is a serviceman of the 30th separate mechanized brigade — Tymofiy Mykolayovych Shadura," the Ukrainian military said on Tuesday,



citing initial findings.

Shadura has been missing since February 3 amid fighting near the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut and his identity would be confirmed when his remains were returned, the military added.

"Revenge for our hero's killing is inevitable," it added.

Brigade spokesman Anatoliy Yavorsky said Shadura was born in 1982 and was from the region of Zhytomyr west

of Kyiv. He was mobilized in December. Kyiv has said his remains were still in territory held by Russian forces.

Ukrainian journalist Yuriy Butusov, however, identified the deceased man as 42-year-old Oleksandr Matsiyevsky from the northern city of Nizhyn.

Butusov posted a picture on Facebook of Matsiyevsky, who resembled the Ukrainian soldier from the viral video.

The prominent reporter said Matsiyevsky, who had a 19-year-old son, went to the front voluntarily. He was buried in Nizhyn last month, he added.

AFP could not independently determine the origins of the footage or whether it showed a Ukrainian serviceman.

The head of the Wagner mercenary group, which has spearheaded Russia's assault on Bakhmut, said there was no evidence to link his fighters to the killing.

But Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said that if details emerged linking his group to the incident, then "we will certainly look into it in detail."

In an address to the nation on Monday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the video showed Russian forces "brutally killing" a Ukrainian serviceman.

"We will find the murderers," he vowed.

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has called for the International Criminal Court to probe the footage.

The Hague-based Court did not immediately respond.

## International Women Day

MOSCOW: Passengers carry flowers while taking an escalator on International Women's Day at a metro station on Wednesday.



Photo: Xinhua

## Trafficker suspect caught in Austria after Italy shipwreck disaster

ROME: A fourth suspected human trafficker has been arrested in connection with a shipwreck off southern Italy last month in which at least 72 people died, an Italian police official said on Wednesday.

The suspect, a 27-year-old Turkish national, was caught in Austria on Tuesday evening after managing to escape the scene of the disaster in the early hours of Feb. 26, the official said, giving no further information.

Three alleged traffickers, one Turk and two Pakistanis, were detained in the immediate aftermath of the sinking after survivors identified them to police.

The wooden boat, crammed with an estimated 180 migrants, set sail from Turkey on Feb. 22 and broke apart on rocks five days later within sight of the village of Steccato di Cutro.

So far, 72 bodies have been retrieved, including those of 28 minors and 30 women. Seventy-nine people survived and around 30 are still missing.

Survivors have indicated that there was at least one other trafficker, possibly a Syrian national, who managed to escape the boat and has not yet been identified. Investigators have named only four suspects, all of whom are now in custody.

Prosecutors have launched two investigations into the disaster—one into the traffickers and another into whether enough was done by Italian authorities to avoid the tragedy.

The Italian government has denied accusations it delayed a rescue operation after receiving a report from a plane operated by the European Union Frontex border force that the boat was approaching southern Italy in rough seas.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Tuesday that Frontex did not say the boat had any problem navigating, adding that Italy's coastal services had "operated in a correct fashion."

Meloni is due to hold a cabinet meeting in Cutro on Thursday and is expected to approve a bill that will increase penalties on human traffickers. Reuters

## UK home secretary dodges question on Mo Farah deportation

LONDON: The UK home secretary has declined to comment on whether champion runner Mo Farah, who was trafficked into Britain aged 9, would have been deported under fresh plans to clamp down on asylum-seekers, The Guardian reported on Wednesday.

Suella Braverman said the government is abiding by the law with the proposed strategy to detain and deport asylum-seekers crossing the English Channel.

The strategy, outlined by her and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, aims to clamp down on migrant crossings and deter would-be asylum-seekers from attempting dangerous journeys from France to Britain.

But Braverman, while unveiling the strategy, said the plan is "more than 50 percent" likely to violate human rights laws.

After the strategy was publicized, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said it is "profoundly concerned" as the strategy would be a "clear breach of the refugee convention."

The plans were announced as the UK faces a surging backlog of asylum claims, with 166,000 people awaiting decisions on their applications.

Braverman, in a TV interview, was asked whether Farah would have been deported under the strategy.

She struggled to answer, saying: "Well, as I said, we are very proud of our world-leading modern slavery regime. We've got world-leading protections on human trafficking, proud of protections the Conservative government have put in place to protect genuine victims of modern slavery."

The new strategy, which will be put forward in Parliament, relies on a two-tiered plan: The government first aims to stop boats crossing the English Channel, and will then introduce an annual limit on the number of people who will be offered asylum through legal routes.

Sunak told a press conference that illegal arrivals would be deported from Britain "within weeks" under the new strategy, which would also apply retroactively.

Opposition figures criticized the plan, with Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper telling the BBC: "I think that they are being irresponsible in the way they're doing this. Time and again they go for the gimmicks, they go for the rhetoric, they ramp up the debate on this, but they don't actually solve the problem." Arab News

## Syrian woman rescued quake victims



IDLIB: Syrian civil defence volunteer Salam Mahmoud had only one thought when she saw the collapsed buildings after the devastating earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey.

"All I could think about was how can I get the children out? If there is someone alive, how can I reach them?," the 24-year-old said.

Mahmoud is one of around 300 women in the Syria Civil Defence, also called the White Helmets, a rescue service of more than 3,000 people which operates in insurgent-held northwestern Syria.

She said some people in the village of Millis, where she deployed the day of the disaster, objected at first to the sight of women taking part in rescue efforts.

Also read: India's oil deals with Russia dent decades-old dollar dominance

"When we first got to the site... we were criticized a lot, and were told that we shouldn't have come down," she said, describing socially conservative views in the area about the role of women.

"But all of that shortly switched from negative to positive [comments]. We saved as many people as we could, met people's expectations and responded to women and children, who were under the rubble," she said.

Getting home that evening, Mahmoud said she couldn't sleep. "All night I was thinking: could there still be children calling for us, could there still be women screaming out?"

The earthquake has killed more than 4,500 people in northwest Syria, according to local reports cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance. It killed more than 45,000 in neighbouring Turkey.

The Civil Defence rose to prominence by pulling people from under the rubble of buildings destroyed by air strikes and bombardment during the conflict that erupted in Syria in 2011.

Mahmoud has volunteered with the Civil Defence for five years. Her role includes providing primary health care for women in the western Idlib region. Reuters

## Dust storm hits southern Mongolia

KHANBOGD: A heavy dust storm hit the southern Mongolian province of Umnugovi on Wednesday, causing low visibility on roads.

The storm is expected to continue in the province in the coming days, with wind speed expected to reach 18-24 meters per second, according to the country's meteorology and environmental monitoring agency.

Located in the Gobi Desert region of southern Mongolia, Umnugovi is one of the provinces most affected by desertification.

More than 70 percent of the province's total territory had been somewhat affected by desertification and land degradation, according to the provincial governor's office. Xinhua

## US forum calls for countries to speed up energy transition

HOUSTON: Voices from the Global South are an integral part of the ongoing global energy forum CERAWEEK as speakers from the developing economies gather together with other world industry leaders.

Their opinions have added timely importance as the world is facing harsher twin challenges of energy security and transition amid turbulence, observers say.

The five-day event kicked off on Monday under the theme, "Navigating a Turbulent World: Energy, Climate and Security."

More than 7,000 participants, including policymakers, industry leaders, company executives, investors and researchers from over 80 countries and regions, joined the forum, according to the organizer.

"It is necessary to ascertain how dependent finance



can be made more reachable to the countries that need them," said Malaysia's Tengku Muhammad Taufik, president and group chief executive officer at Malaysia's state-owned energy firm Petronas.

Taufik said that small and medium-sized enterprises have to deal with harsh realities resulting from climate change, such as frequent flooding and record-high temperatures recently experienced in parts of Asia.

"We are not climate deniers. I want to put this on record. Eight out of 10 coun-

tries in ASEAN have got very ambitious nationally determined contributions targets," Taufik said, adding that the big challenge is to "put these aims in order and match them with real pragmatic actions."

The Russia-Ukraine conflict and the 2022 energy market volatility have added a "big catalyst to invest in renewable energy from the energy security point of view," rather than just "investing in renewables because of the sustainability," Liza Mustapha, executive

vice president and group chief financial officer of Petronas, said in a separate panel.

She said the company attaches great importance to addressing the energy trilemma of energy security, affordability and sustainability.

There is a need for a "balanced view" on the energy transition in the developing economies since they "have people to feed," said Bharat Jagdeo, vice president of Guyana, during the CERAWEEK.

Even with 10 FPSOs (floating production storage and off-loading) operating offshore in Guyana, "we will be carbon negative," he told the audience.

"The world is hoping to get to carbon negative in 2050, but we are already there. Our forest area is bigger than England and Scotland combined," as a huge carbon sink, he said.

## Afghan prosecutor, women's rights activist challenges UK refugee scheme

LONDON: An Afghan prosecutor and women's rights activist whose life is at risk has been "wholly excluded" from a UK Government resettlement scheme, the High Court in London heard.

The unnamed woman specializes in cases involving violence against women, forced marriage and honor crimes, according to media reports. She has publicly denounced the Taliban, received "direct threats" for years as result of her work, and has been in hiding since August 2021, the court was told.

Now she is challenging the legality of the UK government's operation of its Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

There are three pathways to eligibility for the scheme. One

is open only to those who were notified by the government that they could relocate to the UK but were unable to board an evacuation flight, another is for people referred by the UN Refugee Agency.

The third pathway covers at-risk individuals who supported the work of the UK and the wider international community in Afghanistan, as well as those who are considered particularly vulnerable, including women, girls and members of minority groups. In the first phase of the scheme, however, only three groups of people are eligible: Those who worked with the British Council or security firm GardaWorld, and alumni of the Chevening Scholarship scheme funded by the British Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Office.

Lawyers for the "exceptionally vulnerable" woman argued that the scheme's narrow operation is unlawful because at-risk people with a "legitimate expectation" of being considered instead find themselves excluded, according to media reports

Irena Sabic, a member of the legal team, said in written submissions: "Despite these clear and unambiguous statements, vulnerable people who 'stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech or rule of law' and currently remain in hiding and at risk in Afghanistan, and who are entitled to prioritization, are currently excluded from accessing ACRS."

She later said that although the woman does not expect to be granted the right to resettle, she should nevertheless have access to the scheme and be considered for eligibility.

"Those who are in Afghanistan, like the claimant, are in the most acute need of assistance," Sabic said. "The claimant's life is at risk. She is in hiding, she cannot go out, she is constantly subjected to threats."

In her written submissions, Sabic argued: "It was clearly intended that pathway three of ACRS would offer a potential route to safety and protection."

Edward Brown KC, a lawyer for the Home Office, Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, denied that the resettlement scheme was being run unlawfully.



"There is an active consideration to expanding pathway three; the issue is whether there is a legal obligation to do what the Government is doing by considering it," he told the court.

Brown noted in his written submissions that the scheme "can provide for a structured approach which prioritizes certain cohorts, and it is taken as acting in the public interest in making such

choices."

After the third pathway has been in operation for a year, he added, the government "will work with international partners and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk."

Brown said the policy announcement of the scheme, in September 2021, clarified that it would "prioritize those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for specific values, and vulnerable people."

He added: "However, that statement, without more, cannot reasonably be read as providing an access route to anyone capable of falling within that description."

Judge Charles Bourne will issue a ruling on the case in writing at a later date. Arab News

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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
41,358.93	41,334.69
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,618.66	41,334.69
Index Value	Change
5,716,808,416	+24.24
Percentage	Time
+0.06%	8 Mar, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,929.92	+10.44
Percentage	Time
+0.13%	8 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
32,775.85	-80.61
Percentage	Time
-0.25%	8 Mar, 11:42 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
28,444.19	+135.03
Percentage	Time
+0.48%	8 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.5	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	734.02	742.02
Canadian Dollar	202	204.2
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	39.6	40
Euro	290.00	292.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.16	35.51
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	898.24	907.24
Malaysian Ringgit	60.58	61.18
New Zealand \$	170.67	172.67
Norwegians Krone	25.19	25.49
Omani Riyal	716.82	724.82
Qatari Riyal	71.84	72.54
Saudi Riyal	73.50	74.20
Singapore Dollar	194.93	196.93
Swedish Korona	25.09	25.39
Swiss Franc	293.21	295.71
Thai Bhat	7.87	8.02
U.A.E Dirham	75.50	76.20
UK Pound Sterling	329	332
US Dollar	278.20	281.00

# ICCI demands empowerment of women for sustainable growth

*Govt urged to take strong measures to bring women into the mainstream of economy*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry celebrated the International Women's Day to highlight the role of women in the economic development of the country. The theme of the event was "Empowered Women - Progressive Nation". Parveen Khan Durrani, Honorary President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry chaired the event. She was made Honorary President of ICCI for one day in commensurate with the importance of International Women's Day. Speaking at the occasion, Parveen Khan Durrani said that women account for half of our total population but only 20 percent of them are participating in the formal economy, which shows that Pakistan is not utilizing the talent of 80 percent women to promote its



formal economy. She stressed that the government should take strong measures to bring them into the mainstream of economy for their empowerment that would ensure the sustain-

able economic growth of the country.

She said that empowered women would pave the way for progressive nation and stressed that the government should take steps for their economic empowerment. She said that the women have good potential to start businesses and emphasized that the government should announce special incentives for them in the upcoming budget to increase their financial inclusion for inclusive growth of the country.

Fatma Azim, former Senior Vice President ICCI, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed for creating a better ecosystem for women.

They stressed the need of providing women equal opportunities in all fields of life so that they could play a more effective role in the economic development of the country.

## Circular debt, state-run companies hinder growth: Mian Zahid Hussain

*Says IMF's emphasis on energy reform is welcome but insufficient*

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said it is impossible to achieve a satisfactory growth rate in the presence of circular debt and failed state-run companies.

Circulating debt has increased over Rs2.6 trillion while the losses of failed state-owned companies have reached Rs1879 billion rupees which have made it necessary to get rid of them, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that these companies are siphoning off foreign debt and taxpayers' money for decades.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the IMF's emphasis on reforms in the energy sector is welcome but insufficient. Instead of continuously increasing the price of electricity, the price of electricity can be reduced by 3 rupees per unit by controlling theft, eliminating line losses, and improving bill collection.

He said that the K-Electric team has



reduced losses by 50%. Now this institution is investing 484 billion rupees till 2030 to get 30% of electricity from renewable sources. If K-Electric can reduce its losses and improve quality, why can't other power companies reduce their losses, he questioned. The business leader noted that the current framework of almost all power sector companies discourages efficiency and load shedding continues despite excess generation.

The performance of state-owned distribution companies is weak, they have failed

to meet targets related to power transmission and distribution losses, recovery of bills, investment, and public safety. According to a report, on their poor performance from 2016 to 2020, the national treasury suffered a total loss of 13 trillion 55 billion rupees, while every day five to six thousand megawatts of electricity is stolen or wasted.

The main reason for the failures is the delay in privatization and continuous bailouts by the government which hinder the system improvement. In order to eliminate the circular debt, there is a need to generate more electricity from Thar coal, which will reduce the import bill by billions of dollars while also providing employment to the people. Admirable work is being done in this regard and it needs to be accelerated while encouraging local and foreign investors is the need of the hour.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that many efforts have been made in the past decades to revive the failed government companies, which have not yielded any results, so further efforts will prove to be a waste of time and capital, the only solution to this problem is the privatization of these companies.

## SECP to promote gender diversity in corporate sector



**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) celebrated International Women's Day with a pledge to continue efforts to improve female representation in the corporate sector of Pakistan.

Former SECP Commissioner Sadia Khan graced the occasion as the chief guest. In her address, she highlighted three things that working women need to adapt to succeed in the professional landscape. "Use your strengths to your benefit. Be courageous, be kind, and make sure that you build a network of supportive colleagues and friends". She insisted upon the need for driving change through collective action.

SECP Chairman Akif

Saeed, in his concluding address, said, "I firmly believe that women are ready for change; it's the society that needs to prepare itself, and I am proud to say that SECP, as an employer, is spearheading that change with women accounting for 38% of senior management and 51% of new recruitments."

As a result of SECP's measures directly aimed at promoting diversity and inclusivity, 6,295 companies registered since January 2015 are headed by Pakistani women as chief executive officers; 87% of listed companies now have women directors on board; 2,364 women-owned businesses have availed of financial facilities through the Secured Transaction Registry and 72% of non-banking microfinance companies are women.

## Coca-Cola, NIC Pakistan team up for gender equity

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The National Incubation Center and Coca-Cola celebrated International Women's Day 2023 with an event focused on the day's global theme: Embracing Equity.

The event focused on the issue of water equity with a specific emphasis on how it disproportionately affects women and children in Pakistan. It was noted that around 40% of Pakistan's population lacks access to clean drinking water. The previous year's floods worsened the situation, contaminating and making safe drinking water scarce. Rural women were particularly affected, having to travel long distances to collect water for their families.

To address this issue, Coca-Cola partnered with Indus Earth Trust and Bondh E Shams to install a solar-powered water filtration system in Ali Muhammad Johkio village, Thatta, which produces 10,000 liters of clean water every day. Additionally, innovative water



wheels were provided to women to help ease the burden of carrying water. Safia and Asia, women of the Ali Muhammad Johkio village were in attendance at the event and interacted with the audience sharing their perspectives and first-hand experience of the critical connection between women and access to safe drinking water.

The event featured a relevant and timely keynote by Senator and Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik, serving as a critical bridge in the relationship between women, water, power and development.

In line with Coca-Cola's global sustainability priorities, Aisha Sarwari, Director of Public Affairs, Communication, and Sustainability at The Coca-Cola

Company, led a panel discussion on gender and climate action. The panel featured the perspectives of journalist Munizae Jahangir, Dr. Imran Khalid, Director of Policy and Governance at the WWF-Pakistan, and Rajaa Bokhari, Program Manager of Pakistan Business Council. The discussion highlighted the importance of gender equity and clean water and sanitation in achieving sustainable development goals of which gender equality (SDG 5) and clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) are among key priorities for Coca-Cola.

"Women in Pakistan have faced systemic disadvantages and we believe in fixing the fundamentals first. Access to clean drinking water is a game

changer, especially in times of natural disasters and climate change catastrophes," said Aisha Sarwari, Director of Public Relations, Communications, and Sustainability.

Coca-Cola is committed to creating equal opportunities for women in our business and the communities they serve. Women bear a disproportionate impact of climate change, as evident from the floods in Pakistan, and they responded to International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Pakistan Business Council's (PBC) Climate2Equal Call to Action, pledging to increase women's involvement in consultations on water conservation and make them the main stakeholders in climate-focused interventions.

At the event, the National Incubation Center and Coca-Cola were also joined by startup WeCamp, a platform dedicated to supporting, and celebrating home-based female entrepreneurs. WeCamp held a panel discussion on "Female Inclusion in the Workforce".

## DE-CIX, PTCL partner to establish Internet Exchange in Pakistan

**Spokesman Report**

FRANKFURT AM MAIN/ ISLAMABAD: DE-CIX, the world's leading Internet Exchange (IX) operator, and Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the largest integrated Information Communication Technology (ICT) company of Pakistan, today signed a strategic partnership to establish an Internet Exchange (IX) in Pakistan. The IX will be housed as a redundant setup in the data centers of PTCL.

As a world-class interconnection platform in the populous South Asian country, it will be operated by DE-CIX as a Service (DaaS) model,



and built on DE-CIX's award-winning interconnection infrastructure, including the full set of peering, cloud connectivity, and other interconnection services. Technical implementation is planned in 2023. The interconnection platform is set to serve as a hub for regional connectivity, enabling local networks low-latency interconnection and localization of global content, while increasing network stability, scalability, and security.

## PEC E-Gateway to export engineering services internationally

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: PEC E-Gateway launching ceremony held here on Wednesday. One of the remarkable e-procurement platform launched first time in Pakistan by PEC to export engineering services internationally. The event was graced by renowned Engineers, diplomats and appraised by Senator, Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi as Chief Guest and Guest of Honor Eric Hahn form European Union.

PEC E-Gateway is one of the important initiatives by the Council committee PPDC - Pakistan Development Committee, working towards creating opportunities and providing resources for engineers across the borders. E-Gateway provides a one-window solution for international companies to engage qualified

and registered Pakistani engineers and firms for their business needs. It also offers a new avenue for business development and export the talent of Pakistani engineers. The Washington Accord paved the way for Pakistani engineers to be recognized as professionally accredited and provide their services in member countries and PEC E-gateway is a step in the direction of this growth. PEC E-Gateway is being launched with a focused objective of promoting local engineering talent in international market through coordinated efforts of overseas engineers for minimizing brain drain at national level.

Engr Mir Masood Rashid advisor to chairman PEC and convenor PPDC welcomed all valuable guests from academia, industries, and diplomats. He highlighted on the business



need of such platform launch considering economical challenges of Pakistan. "PEC E-Gateway" e-procurement platform is offering services of professional and competent Engineers, who are eligible for giving

consultancy and economical business solutions that will be commercially viable and practical.

Engr Lt General Moazzam (Retd) rector NUTECH university, appreciated the efforts of PEC and PPDC

committee on such a great launch of door which is taking Engineering community into next future Era. Biggest current challenge is Jobs for the engineers and such initiatives will bridge the gap that has been created in market. He appreciated other initiatives of PPDC especially the CAPSTONE EXPO bringing motivation to engineering community to work on commercially viable projects.

Senator Engr Rukhsana Zuberi chief guest of the ceremony highlighted this change step in the engineering and industry market, by creating a linking hub, utilizing IT industry evolving opportunity in the best way. Currently, Pakistan is with such challenges due to lack in Engineering role in the industry and economy which they can play if such more platforms provided.

*Further hike in interest rates being planned: Chairman PEW*  
*Millions will lose jobs if interest rates increased*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Wednesday said the government is considering a further hike in the interest rates which will close many businesses and leave millions unemployed.

There are reports of an interest rate hike of two to three percent which if carried out will be a doomsday scenario for the businesses, it said. Every condition of the IMF should not be blindly followed and the plight of the masses should also be considered, said Brig. (retd) Aslam Khan, Chairman PEW.

He said that the government is skinning masses under the guise of IMF conditions but elites are completely insulated from the impact of these strict conditions. Among all the measures taken so far, the surcharge of 3.82 paise per unit of electricity is the cruellest which will affect the people badly, he said. The purpose of this surcharge is to reduce the circular debt which reached Rs2.6 trillion in the month of December last year, he informed.

The main reason for the accumulation of the circular debt is the corruption of the elite, politicians, and the bureaucracy but the people are being punished for it, he observed. Aslam Khan said that no government has any interest in the welfare of the people and all aim is to reap the undue benefits which have bankrupted the country despite taking record loans.

The central government took loans worth Rs44 trillion in the month of January, which has brought the total debt to 55 billion and it is increasing rapidly. Politicians and other powerful circles do not care about anything except their own interests and because of their irresponsibility, the country is not avoiding default but moving towards default.

But there seems to be no realization of the impending calamity among all circles ruling Pakistan. The warring political forces are refusing to pull back from the point which is set to bring down the entire system.



## PSL Season 8

## Gladiators surprise by chasing record high target of 241-run

Jason Roy has made the PSL highest score of 145 off 63 balls and materialized amazing victory for Gladiators

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Jason Roy's blistering unconquered 63-ball 145 and Mohammad Hafeez's unbeaten quickfire 18-ball 41 powered Quetta Gladiators to record eight-wicket victory against Peshawar Zalmi in the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Chasing a mammoth total of 241, Jason Roy immediately went after the Zalmi batters and left the spectators in awe with incredible innings. Roy's innings was laced with 20 fours and five towering sixes.

Though losing Martin Guptill (21 off 8) early, Roy never stopped and was ably supported by Will Smeed, who scored 22-ball 26, clubbing one boundary and two sixes.

Mohammad Hafeez showed his class and experience by clobbering six boundaries and two maximum in 18 balls to smash an unbeaten 41.

The Zalmi bowlers even surpassed the Gladiators' bowling attack in terms of conceding runs. Mujeeb (1-38) picked up a wicket. Wahab Riaz also took a scalp but was too expensive, conced-



ing 56.

Other bowlers including Arshad Iqbal (0-55), Azmatullah Omarzai (0-35) and Aamer Jamal (0-56) remained wicketless.

Skipper Babar Azam's staggering 65-ball 115 and Saim Ayub's fiery 34-ball 71 powered Peshawar Zalmi to mammoth 240-2 against Quetta Gladiators in the 25th match of the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

After opted to bat first, Babar Azam and Saim Ayub had flown along to second highest partnership of in history of the marquee tournament. Across 81 balls, 162 runs were scored by the pair.

Babar Azam clubbed 15 fours and three sixes in 65 balls to smash a brilliant century before he was runout by Aimal Khan. Saim Ayub whacked six boundaries and two maximums, before he was removed by Dwaine Pretorius. Rovman Powell scored unconquered quickfire 18-ball 35, studding with three

boundaries and two sixes.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore remained unbeaten on 3-ball 7, hitting a gigantic six to help the Zalmi posted the fourth highest total in the history of PSL. The Gladiators bowlers were sent for runs and it was only Pretorius who scooped up a wicket. All other bowlers remained wicketless and went for runs.

Peshawar Zalmi opted to bat first against Quetta Gladiators in domestic premium tournament. Sarfaraz Ahmed, who was injured during his last outing was not playing today. The Gladiators handed the gloves to Umar Akmal and Mohammad Nawaz was leading the visitors.

Squads

Peshawar Zalmi: Babar Azam (c), Saim Ayub, Mohammad Haris, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Haseebullah Khan (wk), Rovman Powell, Aamer Jamal, Wahab Riaz, Azmatullah Omarzai, Arshad Iqbal, Mujeeb-ur-Rahman

Quetta Gladiators: Martin Guptill, Jason Roy, Will Smeed, Iftikhar Alam, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Nawaz (c), Umar Akmal (wk), Dwaine Pretorius, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Aimal Khan

## Super Women beat Amazons by eight wickets

Wolvaardt, Nida star in Super Women's eight-wicket victory

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: A sparkling half-century by South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt and an all-round performance by Nida Dar helped Super Women defeat Amazons by eight wickets in the Women's League exhibition match to go one-up at the Pindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Wolvaardt scored 53 not out and Nida Dar followed her three for 25 with the ball with 23 not out with the bat as the two batters put on 68 runs for the unbroken third wicket to help Super Women achieve the 132-run target with more than four overs to spare.

Wolvaardt belted a six to reach her half-century and also take her side home. Her 36-ball knock also included



six fours, while Nida scored almost run-a-ball 23 with a four.

In pursuit of a 133-run target, opener Muneeba Ali and Chamari Athapaththu put on 39 runs for the first wicket before the latter departed after scoring a rapid 23 from 13 balls with four fours and a six. Muneeba

then added 31 runs for the second wicket with Wolvaardt before joining Athapaththu in the dressing room after scoring a 27-ball 33 with six fours.

Nashra Sundhu and Anam Amin took a wicket each, conceding 18 and 23 runs, respectively.

Earlier, Amazons, electing to bat first, were off to a flying

start of 46 in 5.3 overs before they lost their way and ended up at 132 for nine – thanks to a 35-ball 38 by top-scorer Aliya Riaz. The Pakistan all-rounder hit three fours and a six before she was smartly run-out by Chamari Athapaththu from extra-cover when the Sri Lanka captain had one stump to aim.

England duo of Tammy Beaumont and Danni Wyatt equally struck eight fours between them as they matched each other stroke by stroke. The partnership ended when Beaumont's 18-ball 24 innings was ended by Syeda Masooma Zahra. Three balls later, Wyatt fell to a good reflex action catch by Sadiya Iqbal off Nida Dar as Amazons slipped from 46-0 to 49-2.

## Chelsea see off Dortmund to reach quarter-finals

LONDON: Chelsea kept their season alive by beating Borussia Dortmund 2-0 at Stamford Bridge to progress to the quarter-finals of the Champions League 2-1 on aggregate on Tuesday.

Raheem Sterling and Kai Havertz, with a twice-taken penalty, got the goals as the Blues relieved the pressure on manager Graham Potter.

The Englishman's job was on the line after a season that has so far failed to deliver any return on a world-record injection of over £500 million (\$600 million) in one season on new signings.

Chelsea had won just three of their previous 16 matches to fall to 10th in the Premier League and bow out early of both domestic cups.

But some of their expensive collection of stars showed up in time to remain in the hunt for a third European Cup.



Kick-off was delayed by 10 minutes after Dortmund got stuck in the heavy London traffic on arrival to the stadium.

Once the action got underway, Chelsea sped out of the blocks.

Alexander Meyer failed to fly off his line to block from Joao Felix with a narrow angle before Havertz fired a big chance into the side netting.

Dortmund arrived in England on the back of a 10-game winning run in all competitions.

But the visitors posed barely any attacking threat in the first half bar a Marco Reus free-kick that Kepa Arrizabalaga did brilliantly to palm to safety.

Chances continued to come and go at the other end. Havertz smashed a volley off the inside of the post and then finally found the net via the underside of the bar only for the goal to be ruled out for an offside against Sterling earlier in the move.

The worst miss was to come as Kalidou Koulibaly miscued with an open goal from Ben Chilwell's free-kick and Felix's follow-up effort was blocked on the line.

Potter was uncharacteristically animated on the touchline as he constantly whipped the crowd up to keep pushing his side forward.

And the home fans finally had some-

thing to celebrate three minutes before half-time.

Sterling's first attempt was another one to forget as he swiped and missed Chilwell's low cross, but the England international composed himself to dribble past Reus and fire high into the net.

That was just Chelsea's third goal in the last eight games.

Havertz's penalty early in the second half meant Potter's men scored more than once for the first time since December 27, but the German international needed two spot-kicks to make his mark.

Marius Wolf was penalised for handling Chilwell's cross after a VAR review.

Havertz's first penalty came back off the post, but VAR came to Chelsea's rescue once more as Dortmund were further punished for encroaching.

## Sports Gala of inmates begins in Karak Jail

KARAK: The three days sports gala was started at Karak Jail, District Karak under the aegis of District Sports Officer Karak here Wednesday.

Talking to APP, Regional Sports Officer Karak Amir Zahid Shah said that the sports festival was organized for inmates of Karak Jail. Deputy Commissioner Karak was chief guest on the occasion and distributed prizes among the position holders.

In his address, the DC appreciated the efforts of Regional Sports Officer Karak and said that it was very essential for the prisoners to take active part. He said that the law and order situation was improving in the province with each passing day and added that similar sports events would be arranged in other prisons of the province as well.

He assured the sports and cultural facilities to the jail inmates in the province with the main focus on giving them an opportunity to become a good citizen after their jail term was over.

Regional Sports Officer on this occasion, assured that such activities would give them due opportunities to exhibit their skills.

Additional Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Jail were also present on occasion. APP

## Women's Tug-of-war competition held in Peace College Charsadda

PESHAWAR: A thrilling women's tug-of-war competition in connection with 'International Women's Day' was held at Peace school and College Charsadda on Wednesday.

A total of eight different teams participated in the competition. In the first semi-final, Red Star defeated North Star by 2-0 while in the second semi-final, Galaxy Star defeated the Blue Star team by 2-1 and qualified for the final.

In the final, Red Star defeated the Galaxy Star team by 2-1 and won the trophy.

Finally, the special guest gave trophies, cash prizes, and certificates to the position holders' team. He also thanked Taj Muhammad Khan, President Tug of War Association for organizing the best event and hoped for the continuation of such events in the future as well.

Prof. Shamsul Munir, Shireen, Coordinator, sports Incharge Nausheen, Provincial Tug of War Association representative Taj Muhammad, officials Ejaz Muhammad, Atiqur Rehman, Uzair Muhammad, Muhammad Ali, Ikramullah, and other personalities were present at the event. APP

## Malik thrilled to see inclusion of women's matches in PSL

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistani skipper and Karachi Kings' cricketer Shoaib Malik was thrilled to see the inclusion of Women's League exhibition matches in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 8.

Malik in a statement said it would provide a much-needed platform to showcase the immense talent and potential of women cricketers.

"This is an excellent opportunity to create a level playing field and encourage gender equality in sports. By promoting women's cricket in Pakistan, we can inspire the next generation of athletes and help them realise their dreams. I fully support this initiative and hope to see the women's league grow from strength to strength in the years to come," he said.

## National Tenpin Bowling Championship kicks off

ISLAMABAD: The National Tenpin Bowling Championship kicked off at the Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

The championship was inaugurated by Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaqat Ali Chatha while President Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation Ijaz ur Rahman, Secretary General Mohammad Hussain Chatha and Divisional sports Officer Rawalpindi Haji Waheed Babar were also present on the occasion.

On the opening day of the championship, women's competitions were held to mark International Women's Day. About 150 male and female players were participating in the championship. Competitions including men's singles, men's doubles, team event, amateur, deaf (men's and women's) and media categories would be held in the championship.

The semifinals of the event would be held on March 11 while the final on March 12. A prize of Rs 10,00,000 would be distributed among the winners. Agencies

## Klinsmann eyes Asian Cup as new South Korea coach



SEOUL: Jurgen Klinsmann wants to win the Asian Cup after landing in South Korea on Wednesday to take over the men's national side.

The former Germany, Bayern Munich and United States coach succeeds Paulo Bento, who took the Koreans to the last 16 of the World Cup in Qatar, where they were beaten 4-1 by Brazil.

"I think the goal has to be winning the Asian Cup. Winning. That is the goal," the 58-year-old former striker told reporters at Incheon airport, where a sprinkling of fans greeted him.

"You proved in Qatar that you can beat big nations, you beat Portugal in Qatar and four years ago you beat Germany, so you can do very well and this is our goal."

Klinsmann had a successful playing career at clubs such as Inter Milan, Tottenham and Bayern, but some South Korean fans have questioned his record as a coach.

He took charge of his native Germany in 2004 and led them to third place in the 2006 World Cup on home soil, losing to eventual winners Italy in the semi-finals.

He went on to manage Bayern and the United States. His previous coaching job was a 10-week stint in charge of Hertha Berlin in the Bundesliga more than three years ago. AFP

## Women footballers adapt their goals

New FIFA policy is allowing players to start their families mid-career, while also having financial security

PARIS: Women footballers once felt they had to put off motherhood until their playing days were over. Now a few are starting families mid-career, with lingering resentment at their clubs replaced by a FIFA-enforced policy.

Pregnant players faced slashed or unpaid wages, threats, partial maternity cover and even sacking. It was only in 2021 that FIFA published new rules and the situation is now changing.

"Before being footballers, we are first and foremost women," said Cameroon international defender Claudine Falone Meffometou, who plays for French first division club Fleury and gave birth to a daughter in May 2021.

"Being a mother changes my life and the way I see things and

the way I behave," she told AFP in an interview to mark International Women's Day on Wednesday.

"For a long time, many girls who would have liked to start a family said to themselves that their contract was going to be terminated. Most were waiting until the end of their career to have a child," the 32-year-old said.

"Today, things are different, and it feels good."

Meffometou said she had constant support from her club during her pregnancy. And even though she was away for 10 months, Fleury offered her a contract extension in 2021.

Icelandic player Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir had a far less positive experience, at one of the

world's leading women's clubs – and her case led to a landmark ruling this January.

When she became pregnant in 2021, Gunnarsdottir's wages were slashed by Lyon, the eight-time European women's champions, and she said her bosses showed little understanding when she returned to training after having her baby.

In an article for the Players' Tribune, Gunnarsdottir recounted how one of Lyon's directors failed to reply to her representatives until she lodged a formal complaint after she was not paid for two months.

When Gunnarsdottir turned to the players' union FIFPRO for help, she claimed she was told by Lyon that her career at the club would be over if she took the case

further.

Gunnarsdottir, who is now with Italian giants Juventus, eventually won her case at a FIFA tribunal and Lyon were ordered to pay her more than \$2,000 euros (\$87,000) plus interest.

"The victory felt bigger than me," she wrote. "It felt like a guarantee of financial security for all players who want to have a child during their career."

Her case attracted support from former Ballon d'Or winner Megan Rapinoe. The American called Lyon's approach "utterly disgraceful".

In the United States, maternity rights have been written into the contracts of players in an agreement between the national team players and the US federation.

But at the highest level,



combining a playing career and children remains relatively rare.

Of 3,500 players involved in the main championships questioned by FIFPRO in 2017, just two percent had a child – and of those players, just eight percent received a maternity allowance

from their club or their federation.

Things took a turn for the better in 2021 when FIFA published new rules which mean international federations guarantee a minimum of 14 weeks maternity leave, of which at least

eight weeks must be taken after the birth. In addition, players must receive at least two thirds of their salary.

Importantly, in light of Gunnarsdottir's experience, clubs have an obligation to reintegrate the player into the squad and they have to be given the opportunity to breastfeed – and clubs must provide suitable facilities to do so.

Leading clubs are gradually adapting to the needs of their female players – and after the unhappy experience for Gunnarsdottir, Lyon are trying to do better with midfielder Amel Majri, who gave birth to a daughter, Maryam, last July.

"The club allowed me to travel to matches with Maryam and her nanny," Majri said when she returned to the team in January.