

**Combating islamophobia demands collective efforts: NA Speaker**

Speaker NA Raja Pervez Ashraf on Wednesday said that rising Islamophobia is a real danger to global harmony and to peace of the world. He said, "the day serves as a reminder of the urgent need to address the rise of Islamophobia, a scourge that has affected millions of Muslims around the world. (Details on Page 8)



**Ahsan for strict monitoring of edibles, action against hoarders during Ramadan**

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal underlined the need for ensuring strict monitoring of edible items and taking action against the elements involved in their hoarding during the holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak. Chairing a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC), the minister directed the provincial authorities to ensure a smooth supply of essential commodities (Details on Page 8)

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**US delegation**

ISLAMABAD: The Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Energy Resources at the US Department of State, Mr. Geoffery Pyatt along with a delegation calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

**Govt nothing to do with Imran's arrest warrants: Marriyum**



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that the government had nothing to do with the arrest warrants of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan as police was implementing the court's orders. "Imran has been giving the impression that the government was arresting him, but media should inform the people about the actual position regarding Imran Khan's arrest warrants," she said while talking to media persons here.

"A cowardly person, a foreign agent, a Toshakhana thief, Tyrian's father, a criminal of contempt of court is on the run from the police", the minister said.

Without naming Imran Khan, she said this person was trying to give the impression that he was disabled and elderly, his leg was plastered and his life was in danger, Marriyum Aurangzeb said. Castigating Imran, the minister said Imran had the habit of telling lies and had been claiming that he was ready for agitation but at the same time he was sick for appearance in the courts.

Terming Imran a hypocrite and cowardly person, she said the liar wanted anarchy and civil

war in Pakistan.

She said Imran was desirous of creating chaos in Pakistan, and was misleading the people by blaming the government for his arrest order.

"If the government had to arrest (Imran), it had the power of the state, the authority was there, which Imran Khan used for the last four years by jailing his political opponents", she said.

This person was hiding behind of children and women using them as a shield, she said, adding this person was using a human bunker and trying to give the impression that the government was arresting him and the government wanted to kill him.

The people of Pakistan should know that Imran Khan was wanted in the cases of foreign funding, Tyrian case, Toshakhana, Zeba judge contempt of court, she maintained.

The minister said the court issued the arrest warrant for Imran Khan and directed the police to produce him in the court after arrest.

Imran Khan should know that his political obituary had been written as no leader ever tried to take shelter behind women and children.

She said so far 65 police personnel had been injured while executing the court's orders.

**Govt to act per ECP's decision on holding polls: PM**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the federal government was committed to fulfill its constitutional obligation of holding election and would act as per the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"No one should have a doubt on us regarding evading the elections. We will whole-heartedly participate in election and will follow whatever decided by ECP," he told a delegation of Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) here at the PM House.

Shehbaz Sharif said it was up to the ECP to decide over the matter, however, as president of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), he had directed his party to finalize names of ticket-holders.

He said the government was cognizant of the fact that timely election led to a stronger State and its progress.

In the same context, he mentioned that the government had initiated work on census and the funds had been released despite financial constraints.

The prime minister said the



country was passing through political and economic challenges, however said that all political parties of the Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM) coalition contributed positively towards improvement in situation.

During 11 months of the tenure, he said, the government successfully overcame the shadows of default.

He regretted that the previous government stepped back from the agreement inked with the International Monetary Fund

(IMF). He said it was not a private but a State deal, and the non-implementation of which resulted in big loss of the country.

He expressed confidence that a staff-level agreement with the IMF would be struck soon. He dismissed the impression that IMF talked about political instability in the country.

Shehbaz Sharif recalled that friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and China extended support to Pakistan in trying

times. To control inflation, he said the government was committed to ensuring austerity and providing relief to poor especially during Ramadan.

The prime minister pointed out the "naked defiance" of former prime minister Imran Khan and making fun of the State institutions by his no-show in courts.

"First time in Pakistan, a so-called political person is considering himself above law ... Non-appearance in courts is tantamount to violation of law," he said. He recalled that Imran Khan used to hit at politicians with unlawful tactics and was now trying to defy the rule of law.

He mentioned that PML-N leaders including himself, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Rana Sanaullah were dragged in fake cases by the previous government, but still appeared before the courts. Also, senior journalists including Ahsan Alam and Matiullah Jan were manhandled during Imran Khan's tenure.

"The government is not taking action on its own, but on the court order," he said in reference to yesterday's movement of police

with regard to Imran Khan's arrest warrants.

On Toshakhana case, he said Imran Khan who called himself an 'honest person' was in fact a liar, who even sold a wrist watch with model of Holy Ka'aba.

He mentioned the change of Toshakhana policy by his cabinet wherein only the gifts up to \$300 could be retained on payment of requisite amount.

The prime minister termed CPNE an important link between the government and the masses. He apprised the news editors of the effective steps taken by the government in areas of economy.

Asked if the government was ready to hold talks with Imran Khan, he said though the politicians always resorted to dialogue, however, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had a history of not responding positively in this regard. He said the PTI even did not join the apex committee meeting chaired by him in Peshawar on the recent mosque blast.

The meeting held in-depth discussion on the overall situation in the country in areas of politics, economy, foreign affairs and security.

**Army, LEAS not available for election duty, ECP told**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab chief secretary and inspector general (IG) have expressed their inability to provide foolproof security to polls for the Punjab Assembly without the assistance of law enforcement agencies and the Pakistan Army and due to the country's overall economic and law and order situation.

Briefing the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) session chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja about general elections, the law and order situation in Punjab and the economic conditions of the province, the chief secretary emphasised clean and transparent elections, stating that it was not currently feasible to hold elections under current conditions.

The Punjab IGP highlighted that the deployment of police personnel was not limited to just the day of elections but extends to ensuring

the safety and security of officials during census and the prevention of crimes, the state news agency reported.

The IG also emphasized that the police will be deployed to protect mosques and worshippers during the upcoming month of Ramadan.

The IG Punjab further added that the police force was committed to ensuring the safety and security of all citizens, and their duty is not just limited to maintaining law and order during elections. The police personnel will continue to provide security to the citizens, especially during events such as Ramadan, which are of religious significance.

He said that 3,330 political meetings and campaign events were held during the 2018 elections. There will be more of them during these elections, so it is very difficult to provide security, keeping in mind the current law and order situation.

He further informed that police action has been started against

criminals in "Katcha" area. For which 4 to 5 months will be required, after the operation there was a strong hope that the situation will improve for the holding of elections.

Around 40,000 teachers were on duty for the census and matriculation exams, and will also assist with wheat procurement while upcoming elections were also being held in April. The Election Commission's second meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor discussed the state of law and order and challenges faced in the merged districts.

The Election Commission has requested the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to inform them of his decision following a final consultation held on Tuesday.

Defense Secretary Lt. Gen. (R) Hamud-ul-Zaman Khan and Additional Defense Secretary Maj. Gen. Khurram Sarfaraz Khan briefed the Election Commission on the country's current situation, borders, and army deployment in the interior

during their third meeting held in the commission.

They informed the commission about the overall law and order situation of the country and said that Pakistan army attaches great importance to its basic duties, in which the security of the borders and the country was its first priority.

They said that due to the current situation in the country, Pakistan Army was not available for election duty at this time. Apart from this, the current economic situation of the country has an effect on the army as well. And the government may restrict the army to performing primary duties or assign it to secondary duties, such as election duty, due to current conditions.

Army will be available on Quick Reaction Force (QRF) mode for election duty to ensure efficient response to security concerns during the upcoming elections. However, it won't be possible for Army to perform election duty in static mode.

**Maryam Nawaz terms PTI a 'terrorist group'**

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president and chief organiser Maryam Nawaz has termed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) a 'terrorist group', lambasting the political party for 'pelting stones' at law enforcers.

Talking to PML-N's social media workers, Maryam Nawaz said that PTI was a terrorist party, which takes lives of its own workers.

She also termed party chairman Imran Khan a 'terrorist' for 'inciting workers and supporters' against law enforcers. She regretted that PTI workers pelted stones at the police. "We will fight to save the country not to win the elections", she added.

**Imran Khan's plea seeking cancellation of arrest warrant disposed off**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Wednesday disposed off a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) seeking cancellation of arrest warrants issued for party chairman Imran Khan in Toshakhana case.

According to details, the IHC announced the verdict after reserving it earlier in the day and directed Imran Khan to submit the undertaking, wherein he assured that he would appear in court on March 18, to the trial court.

In the judgement, the IHC said that the trial court should decide on the former premier's undertaking in accordance with the law and upheld the trial court's order in the case.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq took up the petition filed by the PTI legal team. The party had filed the petition after police reached Zaman Park to arrest the PTI Chairman in Toshakhana case.

At the outset of hearing, the IHC judge asked Imran's counsel, Khawaja Haris Ahmed, if he had addressed all the objections previously raised on the petition.

Haris said that the court had directed the PTI chief to appear before the court on March 13 however he was unable to do so.

During the proceeding, the former premier's counsel presented an affidavit signed by Imran Khan and urged the judge to suspend the arrest warrants issued for his client. "Whether it was a civil court or a trial court, one must show

respect to the court," the IHC chief justice remarked.

Justice Farooq then remarked that a political party's workers were attacking the police, adding that it was an attack on the state. The court then reserved the verdict.

A local court in the federal capital issued Imran's arrest warrants and ordered the police to arrest Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in the Toshakhana case once again over his non-appearance.

LHC stops police operation at Zaman Park

Earlier in the day, the Lahore High Court (LHC) stopped police operation at former premier Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence till 10am tomorrow (Thursday), putting a halt to day-long clashes that had erupted after police tried to arrest the PTI chairman in the Toshakhana case.

LHC's Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh issued the order on a petition filed by PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry seeking to stop the "atrocities" outside Zaman Park.

The court had earlier instructed the Punjab inspector general, chief secretary and Islamabad police (operations) head to appear in court by 3:15 pm. The court reprimanded the additional attorney general for baselessly defending the operation.

After the LHC order, Police and other law enforcers pulled back from former premier Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence.

## Credentials

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner-designate of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mr Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, presenting his credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

# Combating islamophobia demands collective efforts: NA Speaker

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Wednesday said that rising Islamophobia is a real danger to global harmony and to peace of the world.

He said, "the day serves as a reminder of the urgent need to address the rise of Islamophobia, a scourge that has affected millions of Muslims around the world."

"It is our collective responsibility to stand in solidarity with those subjected to discrimination and take

concrete actions to combat this phenomenon". He expressed these views on international day to combat Islamophobia across the world.

In their separate messages, Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani said, "we firmly believe in the principles of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect. Our country has a rich history of diversity and pluralism, and we are proud of our traditions of interfaith harmony and understanding."



The Speaker and Deputy Speaker expressed solidarity with Muslim communities across the globe who have been subjected to hate speech, discrimination, and

among different faiths and cultures.

It is pertinent to mention that the United Nations commemorated the first-ever International Day to Combat Islamophobia on March 10, 2023, with a special event in the General Assembly Hall, co-convened by Pakistan.

They said, "In Pakistan, we firmly believe in the principles of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect." They also resolved that this day offers an opportunity to renew commitment to render this world free from hatred and prejudice.

# Ahsan for strict monitoring of edibles, action against hoarders during Ramazan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday underlined the need for ensuring strict monitoring of edible items and taking action against the elements involved in their hoarding during the holy month of Ramazan-ul-Mubarak.

Chairing a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC), the minister directed the provincial authorities to ensure a smooth supply of essential commodities,



especially gram flour and dates in the open market, keeping in view their demand in the fasting month.

He also directed the Ministry of National Food Security

and provincial governments to maintain the prices of essential items and take necessary measures for bringing down the prices of edible oil aimed at extending maximum relief

to the common man during the holy month. The minister expressed concern that despite the decrease in the prices of edible oil in the global market, its positive impact did not reach Pakistan, directing the departments concerned to resolve the matter immediately.

Officials of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics gave a detailed briefing regarding the prices of food items

Prof Ahsan Iqbal voiced concern over an undue increase in the prices of food items in the Federal Capital, asking the chief commissioner to immediately control the prices of edibles.

He also directed assistant commissioners for taking effective measures in their respective areas to ensure the provision of essential items at the prescribed rates. "The government is taking vigorous steps to provide maximum relief to the common man," he remarked.

Among others, the NPMC meeting was attended by senior officials of all provinces, the Federal Board of Revenue, the Bureau of Statistics, and the ministries of National Food Security and Industries & Production.

## FBR field formations asked to recover pending arrears, pursue cases

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Federal Board of Revenue Asim Ahmad on Wednesday directed the field formations to recover all pending arrears and expeditiously pursue cases pending in courts in order to strengthen revenue collection to achieve sustainable economic development in the country.

He visited the Large Taxpayers Office (LTO) Lahore and held a detailed meeting with the chief commissioner and commissioners of LTO, besides, he discussed revenue collection for the period of July-February 2023, said a press release. He also reiterated his resolve to achieve the budgetary target assigned to FBR and the team of LTO Lahore assured that they would make all-out efforts to attain the desired results despite import compression and challenging the market conditions.

# Pak-China joint Gandhara art exhibition opened at Palace Museum

News Desk

BELJING: The Pakistan-China joint exhibition was opened at the Palace Museum here on Wednesday to showcase the cultural heritage of Gandhara to the Chinese audience.

China's Minister of Culture and Tourism Hu Heping inaugurated the exhibition titled 'Gandhara Heritage along the Silk Road'.

Federal Secretary Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division Fareena Mazhar, Pakistan Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque, senior Pakistani and Chinese officials and a large number of Pakistani community attended the event.

The exhibition organized by the Palace Museum and Department of Archaeology

and Museums, National Heritage and Cultural Division, Pakistan, featured a wide array of artefacts, sculptures, and other items that were representative of the Gandharan culture.

The exhibition, to be continued for three months, also included a multimedia presentation, art installations, and interactive activities to help visitors understand the cultural history of the region. Over 170 art pieces brought from various museums of Pakistan would be showcased at the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Addressing the audience, Federal Secretary, the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division Fareena Mazhar said that this event was also an important part of the Year of Tourism Exchanges being celebrated by China

and Pakistan this year.

She hoped that a large number of people from both countries, including government officials, academics, and members of the public would attend this exhibition and learn more about Gandhara Heritage.

Fareena Mazhar said that the Gandhara exhibition was a great opportunity for both countries to learn more about each other's culture and history.

"The exhibition will also help strengthen the ties between the two nations and promote mutual understanding," she added.

Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque welcomed the audience and said that Pakistani and Chinese cultures had several similarities.

He said that the cultur-

## Elections not possible without adequate security: EC Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab election commissioner Saeed Gul has expressed outrage over 'inadequate security arrangements' by the government during the submission of the nomination papers.

The Punjab EC Saeed Gul expressed outrage over inadequate security arrangements and said that elections cannot be held without adequate security arrangements.

Sources told ARY News that the government failed to provide adequate security to the election commissioners and the returning officers (ROs) yet. The provincial EC apprised the Islamabad headquarters regarding the poor security arrangements.

The Punjab EC stated that a tense situation was created in RO offices during the submission of nomination papers as the candidates and their supporters were fighting each other. Saeed Gul suggested deferring the schedule in Lahore.

# Kharif season: ECC directs Petroleum Division for gas supply to fertilizer plants



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet on Wednesday directed the Petroleum Division to supply indigenous gas to fertilizer plants till May 31 aimed at meeting the urea requirement in the country for the upcoming Kharif season, setting aside the option of importing the urea fertilizer.

The ECC meeting, chaired by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, made this direction after considering and deliberating on a summary submitted by the Ministry of Industries and Production on Urea Fertil-

izer requirement for the Kharif-2023 season, a news release said.

The ministry presented details on the demand, production and domestic production gap of urea fertilizer in the country for the Kharif season.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Industries and Production Syed Murtaza Mahmud, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, MNA/Ex-PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, SAPM on Government Effectiveness Dr Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan, federal secretaries and other senior officers.

# MoS Hina meets Ghana FM, Commonwealth Secretary General



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Wednesday met Foreign Minister of Ghana Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, on the sidelines of Commonwealth Day celebrations in London.

Both the leaders explored ways to deepen Pak-Ghana economic engagement and extend mutual support in areas of common interest.

The state minister said that Ghana was Pakistan's key African partner.

MoS Hina also met Common-

wealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland and discussed the ways to strengthen Commonwealth values and take the organisation forward at a time of unprecedented stress in the multilateral system.

On the sidelines of Commonwealth Day celebrations, Hina Rabbani Khar also held a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary Rob Oliphant MP of Canada.

In the meeting, they reviewed Pakistan-Canada cooperation landscape and stressed the need to reduce visa processing time and deepen migration dialogue.

# GB IG removed over force's alleged involvement in attacking Punjab police

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal government on Wednesday dismissed Gilgit Baltistan Inspector General Police (IGP) Muhammad Saeed from his charge for deploying commandos and police at Zaman Park.

Sources said that IG was reluctant in backing off GB police and commandos from Zaman Park. Mr Saeed was ordered to report to the Establishment Division.

Ali Khattak, a grade-20 officer, was appointed as the new IG police. The federal government ordered Mr Khattak to call off the police from Zaman Park.

Maryam Aurangzeb at a news conference earlier today (Wednesday) rebutted the accusation of the government's involvement in the attempts of arresting Mr Khan.

She waved arrest warrants for Imran Khan saying that the latter was wanted in multiple cases including threatening a judge, foreign funding,



and Tyrian White and Toshakhana.

She accused PTI chief of using women and children as human shields against security personnel and claimed that at least 65 policemen were injured by PTI supporters.

She claimed that Gilgit Baltistan force was used to attack Punjab police while Punjab police were unarmed and was just trying to execute court orders.

She also urged the media to fact-check claims made by the former prime minister.

She urged the PTI chief to appear before the court and provide clarification instead of resorting to violent tactics. Imran's political career was over, added Ms Aurangzeb.

# Imran Khan's arrest to deepen prevailing crisis: Zalmay Khalilzad

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: Former US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad has warned that the arrest of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan will deepen the crises being faced by the country.

Taking to Twitter, the former US

special representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation pointed out that Pakistan was facing a triple crisis – political, economic, and security.

"Despite great potential, it is underperforming and falling far behind its archrival, India," Zalmay Khalilzad said, adding that it was time for serious "soul-searching, bold thinking, and strategising".

# Chairman District Council and others met to Sardar Attique

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan was met by the newly elected Chairman District Council Sardar Imtiaz Abbasi, Sardar Jahan-dad Abbasi, Syed Sabarkazmi, Raja Saeed Khan at the State Guest House, Central Chief Organizer Raja Saqib Majeed, Yasir Naqvi and others were present on this occasion. On this occasion, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that he congratulates the newly elected



administration in the municipal elections and hopes that the newly elect-

ed administration will fulfill public expectations.

The election of Imtiaz Abbasi as the chairman of the district council is a good omen and it is hoped that the newly elected administration will perform its duties in a good manner. It is a good move by the government of Azad Kashmir by conducting local body elections. The federal government and the PDM parties put many obstacles in the way of the election, but the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir conducted peaceful elections in adverse conditions, for which the credit goes to

the Prime Minister, the Chief Election Commissioner.

He said that the Muslim Conference has been in favor of local body elections since days and has always supported the good initiative of the government. We all have to play our role to protect the rights of the people. On this occasion, Sardar Amtiazaabasi said that I am grateful to President Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, who supported me and the councilors of Muzaffarabad trusted me. God willing, I will try to live up to their trust.

# IIUI holds workshop on funding research & writing winning proposal

**City Report**

ISLAMABAD: A workshop titled "Funding your research: A workshop on writing winning proposal" was organized by the Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

Worthy President IIUI, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotabi was the chief guest of this workshop who appreciated the efforts of the offices of Vice President Research and Enterprise (R&E) and ORIC, saying that research is the top priority and such activities are necessary. He said we are working to make both research and academic excellence basic recognitions of this university.

Dr. Hammad Omer, a common wealth scholar and Dr. Farida Anjum, Director Research and Innovation Division of Higher Education



Commission delivered lectures on the opportunities available for funding with Higher Education Commission and other national, International organizations. They discussed in detail about the procedures and guidelines to win various projects and funding.

Dr. Hammad Omer talked about Writing Winning Proposals and highlighted the essentials of research propos-

al, common pitfalls to avoid, improvement stages and techniques during a writing and before the submission. Moreover, he presented A Case Study: Self Experience of his research titled: "How Holy Quran Memorization Affects Our Memory" which was appreciated by the audience.

Dr. Farida Anjum, Director (Research & Innovation Division) HEC enlightened about

the Funding Opportunities in this regard, she presented a comprehensive information about HEC Competitive Research Grants and Evaluation Criteria.

Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, Vice President Research and Enterprise Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, VP (R&E) expressed the gratitude to the worthy President for his continuous support for uplift-

ing the Research-based activities at IIUI. He informed that the office of Research & Enterprise has planned such activities to train IIU young researchers. He encouraged the participants to engage themselves and utilize their abilities and expertise in the fields of research, innovation and commercialization. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Amir, Director ORIC briefed about the establishment of ORIC Forum which initiated its activities under the patronage of the Vice President (Research & Enterprise).

The workshop was attended by the 60 nominated faculty members and researchers of all faculties, institutes, academics and centers of IIUI and around 18 representatives of different universities/higher education institutions participated online. At the end souvenirs were presented to the respected resource person by VP (R&E).

# Sardar Tanveer says Kashmiris love Pakistan more than their own lives

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, while referring to Kashmiris' unconditional love for the state of Pakistan, has said that "Pakistan is our faith, we love this country more than our own lives". Addressing a special function held to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the Senate of Pakistan, here today the PM said that he believed that Pakistan's interests were supreme while the rest of things were insignificant and meaningless. Referring to the massive potential in the country, he said that Pakistan as a nation has a great potential to become the best nation in the world. Congratulating the Senate and people of Pakistan on



this historic occasion, the PM said, "Our dear homeland Pakistan is dearer to us than our own lives". The PM said, "We feel proud when we come to our country (Pakistan)". He said that our forefathers fought selflessly for freedom, under the leadership of the father of the nation. Paying eulogizing tribute to the matchless sacrifices rendered by the

Muslims during the Pakistan movement, the PM said that under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam, the Muslims of the subcontinent put up a brilliant struggle that culminated in the shape of Pakistan. About years' long struggle that led to the adoption of a unanimous constitution and bicameral system in the country, the PM said

that the political leadership across the political spectrum deserve appreciation for their significant contribution.

The PM said that there was a dire need that all the stakeholders should come forward in a big way to preserve the nation's security. "When it comes to the country's security and integrity, there should not be any kind of political division", the PM said. "We have to have confidence in our institutions", he said, adding that unity and collective approach was also required to solve our problems. The PM also thanked the Parliamentarians for adopting a unanimous resolution in support and solidarity of Kashmiris recently, which he said has boosted the morale of Kashmiris in the Indian-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

# Cleanliness campaign started



**Correspondent**

KHARIAN: According to the special cleanliness campaign of the Government of Punjab "Cleanliness is Half Iman", under the direction of Assistant Commissioner Kharian Sajid Munir Kalari, under the supervision of Chief Officer Khawar Javed Gujjar, the best performance of Sentry Inspector Muhammad Ikram in terms of cleanliness throughout the city.

According to the campaign, Senri Inspector Muhammad Ikram is conducting excellent cleaning on a daily basis throughout the city, which is being supervised by Assistant Commissioner Sajid Munir Kalari and Chief Officer Khawar Javed Gujjar.



Trustee of Green Crescent Trust Saad Zia with renowned actor Adnan Siddiqui at the event for fundraising for schooling of over 30,000 underprivileged students in Sindh.

# UE holds an international conference on 'Religions and World Peace'



**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: An international conference on "Religions and World Peace" was held at the main Campus Township, University of Education, Lahore on March 15, 2023. The opening ceremony of the conference was presided over by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Talat Naseer Pasha (S.I.), while the Director Seerat Chair Ghazi University, DG Khan Prof. Dr. Arshad Muneer Laghari was the chief guest. Director Division of Islamic & Oriental Learning Prof. Dr. Waheed Ur Rehman welcome the participants of the Conference while Conference Focal Person, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz Manj briefed the participants regarding Conference objectives. The conference aimed to discuss the role of religion in promoting peace and harmony in the world. Scholars, religious leaders, and experts from different countries like USA, Australia, Nigeria, Germany, France, South Korea, Gambia and Egypt participated in the conference and shared their thoughts on the subject. The speakers emphasized the importance of religious tolerance and coexistence among people of different faiths.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Talat Naseer Pasha (S.I.) in his opening remarks said that religion can play a vital role in creating a peaceful world. He stressed the need for promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding to eradicate extremism and promote peaceful coexistence.

Chief Guest Prof. Dr. Arshad Muneer Laghari, in his keynote address, said that the government of Pakistan is committed to promoting interfaith harmony and religious tolerance. He highlighted the steps taken by the government to promote peace and harmony in the country. Prof. Dr. Herman Roborge from University of Melbourne, Australia also expressed his views in the opening session of the Conference.

The conference was a successful endeavor towards promoting peace and harmony among people of different religions. It provided an opportunity for scholars and experts to share their ideas and experiences and come up with practical solutions to promote interfaith harmony and religious tolerance. On this occasion, Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arshad, Lahore based Director/Principals of UE and a large number of students were also present. Moreover Dr. Imran Hayat performed the duties of secretary in the ceremony.

# JS Bank Celebrates Women Leaders at Exciting Session

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: JS Bank, one of Pakistan's fastest growing banks, celebrated women leaders at an event held in Karachi. The event was organized to honor the contribution of women in today's world and to inspire the next generation of female leaders.

The session featured a lineup of women leaders, including Hafsa Shamsie - Managing Director Roche and Ammara Masood - P&CEO NdcTech. The two women shared their experiences and insights into what it takes to be a woman leader in today's world.

Zubina Sadick - Head of HR, JS Bank and Azra Maqsood - Development Sector Specialist and Consultant also shared their knowledge and experience. Adnan Siddiqui was the special guest at the session and shared his thoughts on the importance of empowering women in society.

JS Bank has been on the forefront of empowering the women in banking. Saba Saleem - General Manager; Sehar Shabbir - Relationship Manager; Saria Farooqui - Unit Head-Corporate South; Sharleen Ansari - Head Network Optimization; Bina Bilgrami - Head of Green Banking; Evelyn Julia Gill, Head of Deposits, Wealth



Management & CRM and others took the stage and shared their stories and achievements at the bank.

Commenting on the event, Basir Shamsie, P&CEO of JS Bank, said, "We are committed to promoting gender diversity and empowering women. Women have made remarkable progress in all walks of life, and we are proud to have them as an integral part of our organization."

Imran H Shaikh, COO added, "It was an honor to be part of such an

inspiring event. We need to provide more opportunities for women to succeed, and events like these are a step in the right direction." He credited the women in his life for the success he has attained today and stressed the importance of women's equitable representation.

The event was broadcast live for JS Bank's workforce across Pakistan, while separate celebrations took place across the bank's nationwide branch network.

JS Bank has a strong commitment to gender diversity and has taken several initiatives to promote women's empowerment. The bank is committed to providing equal opportunities for women and men and has a policy of promoting diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. The bank has won various awards for DE&I including Asiamoney's Best Bank for Diversity & Inclusion in 2022 and the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks Award in 2021.

# Encouragement to women gender with societal norms and values make new business opportunities



**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: We need to improve gender equality, women should be provided more and more economic opportunities without channelizing potential of women & we cannot think of a progressive and economic prosperous nation at international arena, said Mrs. Rubina Amjad, President Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FWCCI). She was addressing to a large gathering of women entrepreneurs at an event organized by FWCCI to celebrate International Women's Day here today.

She pointed out that FWCCI has established first ever Women Incubation Centre in its premises with the main purpose that young educated females should opt business as career instead of looking for employment where job market is already saturated. She said that at FWCCI level, we are helping women to be able to provide financial support to their families and better nourishment and education of their children.

Addressing at the occasion, Mrs. Silwat Saeed, Divisional Commissioner, Faisalabad said that women should have equal economic opportunities to grow not only for themselves but also to the national economic growth. She said that women share must be increased in the economic activities. Quoting example of Bangladesh, she said that its economic growth is indebted to the exemplary participation of women in the economic activities of that country. She appreciated the real work being done by Faisalabad Women Chamber on women empowerment in the area and assured every help in this respect. She said that financial autonomy of women is must for which they should be empowered for financial assistance and enabling environment.

Vote of Thanks was offered by Ms. Kanwal Saeed while certificates were awarded to the panelists by Mrs. Silwat Saeed, Commissioner Faisalabad Division while a huge number of women entrepreneurs participated in the International Women's Day celebrations.



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 4: 56 am  
Zohr ..... 12: 17 pm  
Asr ..... 4: 32 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6: 15 pm  
Isha ..... 7: 38 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police) ..... 15  
Bomb Disposal ..... 15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad ..... 1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance ..... 1122 &  
& Rescue Services ..... 4451122  
Motorway Police ..... 92766044  
Motorway Police ..... 9276601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9276601-20

**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**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

*Existing laws will never allow the country to develop*

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Wednesday said the country cannot develop in the presence of existing laws. These laws are made to support the elites that have nothing to do with the protection of the interests of the people, it said. The majority of the victims of fraud have no way to get justice while the looters enjoy all kinds of protection, said Brig. (retd) Aslam Khan, Chairman PEW. In a statement issued here today, he said that government officials treat investors as enemies and they are harassed in every way for bribes. Due to the negative attitude, the number of people coming to do business in Pakistan is very low and the number of people fleeing the country is very high. Muhammad Aslam Khan said that as a result of weak laws and the collusion of concerned departments, most frauds are taking place in the property sector, where a large number of buyers are robbed of their lifetime earnings. The victims try to get justice for decades as the real estate sector has become an organized mafia that is used by the elite to hide illegitimate money. Aslam Khan further said that the real estate sector is a favorite sector of the elite, so it is neither properly taxed nor regulated as it gets amnesty schemes at the cost of the masses. Due to these issues, this sector has become a big problem for the people and the country's economy. It is grabbing the agricultural lands, spoiling the cities, increasing inequality, and robbing the people in the name of the illegal file system. The prices of the plots are manipulated to such an extent that the poor and the middle class cannot dream of owning a house. He said that ninety to ninety-five percent of this government's tax is direct, which means that even if the FBR is closed, the revenue of the government will decrease by barely ten percent.

# Roundtable Discussion to Commemorate the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia'

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) organised a Roundtable Discussion to Commemorate the "International Day to Combat Islamophobia." Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Additional Secretary, MoFA was the Guest of Honour.

The other participants included: DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood; Ambassador Hissein Ibrahim Taha, Secretary General, OIC (via recorded message); Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Geneva (via recorded message); Prof. Dr. Samina Yasmeen, Director and Founder, University of Western Australia's Centre for Muslim States and Societies (on-line address); and Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BoG, ISSI. Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP, made introductory remarks.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, stated that Pakistan's vigorous diplomatic efforts played a pivotal part in the designation of 15 March as the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia' by the United Nations General Assembly through an unanimously adopted resolution last year. He traced the evolu-

tion of Islamophobia as a phenomenon and its myriad manifestations — including denigration of Islam's most sacred personalities, desecration of the Holy Quran, and systematic social, political and economic discrimination against Muslims. In Pakistan's neighbourhood, an ideological agenda was normalizing anti-Muslim sentiments and culminating in discriminatory legislation and policies. He stressed that at a time of extreme tumult in the world, it was imperative to avoid accentuation of religious or cultural fault-lines. "This is a time to build bridges, not to create further divisions." "As we go forward, it is hoped that commemoration of this International Day worldwide would raise awareness about Islamophobia and strengthen the resolve to combat this pernicious phenomenon", including through efforts for mutual understanding, dialogue and inter-faith harmony.

Ambassador Taha, in his message, stated that on this commemorative day, OIC commends the achievement by the United Nations, for the designation of 15 March as International Day to Combat Islamophobia. This Day would serve as a continuous reminder about the danger of violence based on religion or belief, and, at the same time, as an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its commitment to fighting xenophobia, and to promoting the values of tolerance,



understanding, inter-faith harmony, and peaceful coexistence among different religions.

Dr. Samina Yasmeen, in her keynote speech, said that Islamophobia represents a false sense that Muslims are outside the system and their rights do not matter; this can have generational impacts, particularly on children. Peace and cooperation in the society can be achieved if Muslims themselves become agents of change against Islamophobia in the society. Furthermore, tools need to be given to both Muslims and non-Mus-

highlighted the prejudices and attacks the Muslim community faces daily across the world and it is reinforced by biased media representation. Pakistan has played a lead role in raising awareness about this issue and the need to counter it for several years at international platforms. The international commemoration of this Day will hopefully bring about a change in the normative framework with regards to the Muslim community.

Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh, in his address, said that in today's interconnected world where people are empowered to share their views and opinions freely Islamophobia can be very dangerous thing as there are two sides to it, the perpetrators and the victims. There is a "fear" of Islam that has been deliberately created and being propagated. The UN resolution should be a starting point for further discussion and engagement and should act as a trigger point to act against Islamophobia and all others forms of religious discrimination and for that states need to evolve legal deterrents.

Chairman BoG ISSI Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, in his concluding remarks, said there is a need to raise awareness about Islamophobia and present the true image of Islam by the Muslim community. Furthermore, respect for all religions and inter-faith harmony need to be pursued to tackle this menace.

## RTC on Disinformation Campaigns, Narratives And Lawfare

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Center for Law and Security CLAS organized a Roundtable Conference on Disinformation Campaigns, Narratives and Lawfare; Way Forward for Pakistan last day at Serena Hotel, Islamabad says a press release.

Syed Fahd Hussain, Special Assistant to Prime Minister were the Chief Guest at this auspicious occasion. Ambassador Abdul Basit, former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India, Duraid Qureshi, CEO and Co-Founder of Hum TV Network, Haider Waheed, Founding Partner Haider Waheed and Partners, Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Founding Partner ABS and Co and Dr. Faisal Mushtaq Chairman Advisory Board CLAS were among the participants of the Roundtable. The Roundtable was moderated by Mr. Rehman Azhar, Executive Director, Centre for Law and Security CLAS.

Dr. Faisal Mushtaq, Chairman Advisory Board Centre for Law & Security CLAS and Chief Executive TMUC Pakistan, in his opening remarks highlighted the work done by the Center and also thanked speakers and the audience for attending the Roundtable



Conference.

Duraid Qureshi began the discussion by explaining the significance of cinema industry in narrative building and countering disinformation. He emphasized that state should come in support of film making industry.

Ambassador Abdul Basit evaluated Pakistan's narrative building efforts and its seriousness towards countering disinformation campaigns. He further discussed the disinformation campaigns started by India to bring disrepute to Pakistan and emphasized the importance of pre-emptive thinking in countering it.

Haider Waheed, while discussing the legal framework of disinformation at domestic level, called attention to the need to build defamation strategies and adequate legal remedies to counter the problem of fake news as it is becoming easier to launch due to the rising number of social media platforms. Ahmer Bilal Soofi stressed on the importance of ramping up efforts to build legal positions backed by consensus among political parties. He further underscored the importance of the role of Parliament in such narrative building.

Mr. Fahd Husain, the Chief

Guest, underlined local and global challenges related to disinformation faced by Pakistan and stressed that we should know how to tell the story of Pakistan. He emphasized on capacity building of institutions to counter such hostile narratives.

A large number of law students and people from academia attended the event. At the end of Roundtable, souvenirs were presented to the speakers by the Chief Guest Fahd Husain, Rehman Azhar Executive Director CLAS and Dr. Faisal Mushtaq, Chairman Advisory Board CLAS.

## Folk Night held to Mark Punjab Culture Day



**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Folk Night was organized in connection with the culture day by Punjab Arts Council. Tawfiq Khan, Raheela Khan, Sadia Batul, Muhammad Hamza performed beautiful songs and the audience was well received by the audience. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that the Punjab's culture is rooted in history. Punjabis living all over the world have a unique identity everywhere. The province of Punjab is a mirror of the best culture. Highlighting cultural values is actually a practical demonstration of love for one's culture. The Punjab Lok Mela will promote the cultural heritage of Punjab where the audience will see the colors of Punjabi culture. I hope that this Culture Dehar will prove to be an important step of the Punjab government in bringing the cultural heritage to light. On the other hand, a Punjabi mushaira was also organized in connection with the culture day, which was presided over by Anjum Jatiiana. Wafa Chishti, Qamar-ul-Zaman, Tariq Bhatti, Afzal Khan, Ittfaq Butt and other poets received applause after listening to their words. The participants appreciated the decision taken by the Punjab Government on the Cultural Day and urged to take more steps for the promotion of Punjabi language. A large number of people belonging to the literary circles participated in the mushaira.

## AIOU holds Int'l conference on Modern Trends in Chemistry



**Asif Sheikh**

ISLAMABAD: "Strong linkages between academia and the industry will help tackle economic challenges," said Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood while presiding over the opening session of the Fifth International Conference on "Modern Trends in Chemistry" at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). Emphasizing applied research, Dr. Nasir said that there is a need for research based on social challenges for the development of the country. He added that there is a dire need to save the country's resources for a bright Pakistan. Scholars, students, and the youth should think seriously about the preservation of national resources.

Dean Faculty of Sciences, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad, Chairperson, Department of Chemistry, Dr. Uzma Yunus and Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Prof. Dr. Uzaira Rafique were among other speakers. Dr. Uzaira Rafique presented her paper on 'Sustainable Development Goals and Chemistry'. She said that 7 out of 17 goals of SDG are directly related to chemistry. She also explained the challenges faced by the industrial sector. She added that the chemical industry is an emerging sector in the international industry which is the third largest sector of Pakistan after textiles and agriculture and the second largest sector in

Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad said that this conference is part of collaborative efforts with domestic and international educational institutions to keep students informed about modern sciences and the latest information. He said that such conferences provide us with special opportunities to interact with experts and scientists from all over the world. Chairperson, Department of Chemistry, Dr. Uzma Yunus explained the aims and objectives of the conference in detail. International scholars from Russia, the United Kingdom, and Sweden are participating in the conference along with national speakers.

## "Dare To Be" Conference celebrates International Women's Day

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Google Developers Group Islamabad and Women Techmakers Islamabad, jointly hosted a conference to mark International Women's Day (IWD) on the theme "Dare To Be." The conference was a resounding success, featuring valuable insights from talented tech women and the industry's brightest minds.

The event celebrated diversity by inviting not only professionals, but also students from various backgrounds, the transgender community and the differently abled, to motivate them to embrace their aspirations, ambitions, dreams, and share them with others. This year's IWD theme was about encouraging each other to be their authentic selves, and to break stereotypes.

The conference explored what it means to be audaciously bold, to walk through the world with courage and confidence.

The conference kicked off with a keynote by Ali Naqi Rizvi, Co-Manager, Google Developers Group (GDG), who explained the background of GDG Islamabad, introduced the team, and took a trip down memory lane. Sarwat Rizvi, Women Techmakers Ambassador & Data Science Consultant, Conver-



gent Business Technologies, dove into the details on what our theme "Dare To Be" truly means, how the agenda for this year's IWD was intricately designed to provide a platform to the next generation of female leaders and underrepresented communities.

Usman Nazir, Director Business Systems & Analysis, S&P Global, demonstrated his commitment to building a team that values diversity and inclusivity. "At S&P Global, we not only focus on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) internally, but also partner up with like-minded organizations to multiply the power and influence of DEI for a collective win.

A panel discussion "Dare To Be" was designed to inspire

and motivate individuals to break barriers and reach their full potential. The panel featured a stellar line-up of panelists, including Samia Qamar, Director People, S&P Global; Aisha Sarwari, Director Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Company; Hira Zainab, Project Director, Asia Pacific ICT Alliance; Cynia Ejaz, Regional Head North, Daftarkhwan, and the moderator, Ayesha Khawaja, Human Resource Manager, Wolfiz/GDG.

A talk by Rashida Riaz, Business Owner, Resin by Rashida, also known as the Iron Lady, captivated the audience with her journey of hard work that led her to become a successful entre-

preneur. Her story taught everyone, how one can turn their dream into reality just through resilience and hard work.

A lightning talk unveiled the story of Kashaf Alvi, Pakistan's Youngest Deaf Author and the youngest differently abled Pakistani author of "The Language of Paradise," highlighted the importance of inclusivity for minorities. His insights, using a video, incorporating sign language, spoke volumes of his fortitude, inspiring the audience.

Main sponsors and partners for this initiative were S&P Global, Deaftaw, Digital Inclusive Pakistan, Daftarkhwan, TiE Islamabad, Women in TechPK, NetMag, shemote, and Vyro.

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# Islamophobia and the World

Islam is a peaceful religion and respects every other religions. The prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his companions promoted kindness, affection and compassion towards Non-Muslims and that is how Islam spread.

Islam is the religion in which non-Muslims are protected. But unfortunately Anti-Islam lobby like India, Denmark, Sweden and other countries burn cartoons of our Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Muslim Ummah always condemned and warned the leaders of these countries that Islam and our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is our red line. If you cross that line, Muslims will sacrifice their lives to protect their religion and honor of their prophet Muhammad (SAW)

The Babri Mosque was martyred in the Modi government and the car of pilgrims were burnt. Mountains of oppression are inflicted on Muslims in India every day. History should be ashamed of the atrocities committed by the government of India on the innocent oppressed Kashmiris.

On the other hand, in the different cities of Palestine, the rogues of the Jewish army are killing Muslims every day. After all, why is the United Nations and its countries are turning a blind eye on these atrocities committed on Muslims every day? In today's era, news immediately spreads all over the world. So how long will the blood of Muslims be shed in India, Burma, Kashmir and Palestine?

Unfortunately, the 57 Muslim countries in OIC get together but they never



fought against Islamophobia. Instead, used the channel of diplomacy, only protest letters were written to the heads of these countries And never followed up afterwards.

The headquarter of the Muslim Ummah is in Saudi Arabia, but this country has never showed courage to give proper stance and to stand firmly against Islamophobia. On the other hand, in this region of ours, Pakistan and Iran have not only condemned but also resisted it.

Pakistan's Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's brilliant speech against Islamophobia won the hearts of all Muslim Ummah. Due to his hard work and effort,

Islamophobia day is being observed in the whole world today. The world community says that Muslims are terrorists, but if you look at the other side of the

picture Islam spread because of peace, jihad, love, sincerity, compassion, brotherhood and the bright character and morals of our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his companions.

When someone insults the dignity and honor of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the reaction of this insult is strongly felt in the Muslim world. And in response, they don't hesitate to teach the insolent apostle a lesson.

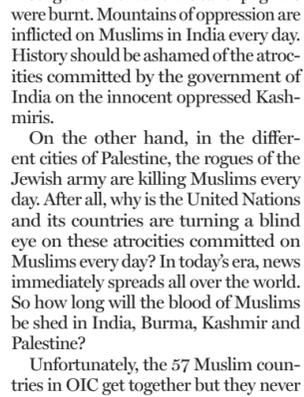
9/11 was just a pretext, Muslims were the real target. As a response to these self-made explosions, the US attacked on Afghanistan in a few days. George Bush said in his speech that "we will not abandon the Muslims like crusades."

In the shelter of Islamophobia, America's intention was to attack in Afghani-

stan and together with NATO forces, US and Israel wanted to control the nuclear assets of Pakistan, China and Iran. But cruelty is only cruelty, which disappear one day.

A few hundred thousand Islamist Afghans defeated the world's superpower, Russia, the United States, and NATO forces. And surprised the whole world. Despite the fact that America has the world's most advanced technology, warships, tanks, missiles, drones and other war weapons, Muslims have won in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, when Russia attacked Afghanistan, the United States called the students of religious schools (Taliban) of Pakistan FREEDOM FIGHTERS And when America's mission to turn Russia into different states was accomplished, America changed its eyes to these Religious students, namely Freedom fighters and called them TERRORISTS.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

## Pakistan, US reaffirm commitment to promote economic growth

Pakistan and the United States on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to promoting economic growth, energy security, partnership in long-term flood rehabilitation efforts, and strengthening their overall relationship.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and visiting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Energy Resources at the US Department of State Geoffrey Pyatt, a PM Office news release said.

Geoffrey Pyatt is leading a delegation to Pakistan for the Pak-US Energy Security Dialogue.

The prime minister appreciated the holding of the Pakistan-US Energy Security Dialogue on promoting energy security that would be beneficial for both countries.

He encouraged further investment in the country's energy infrastructure which would also help transition towards clean energy.

The US assistant secretary appreciated Pakistan for its forward-looking renewable energy policy.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the ongoing dialogues and cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in areas such as trade and investment, health, security, and climate change.

The Pak-US Energy Security Dialogue is a joint initiative aimed at promoting energy security and serves as a platform for high-level discussions between the two countries on bilateral energy priorities, advancing the renewable energy transition, and exploring economic and commercial opportunities in the energy sector.

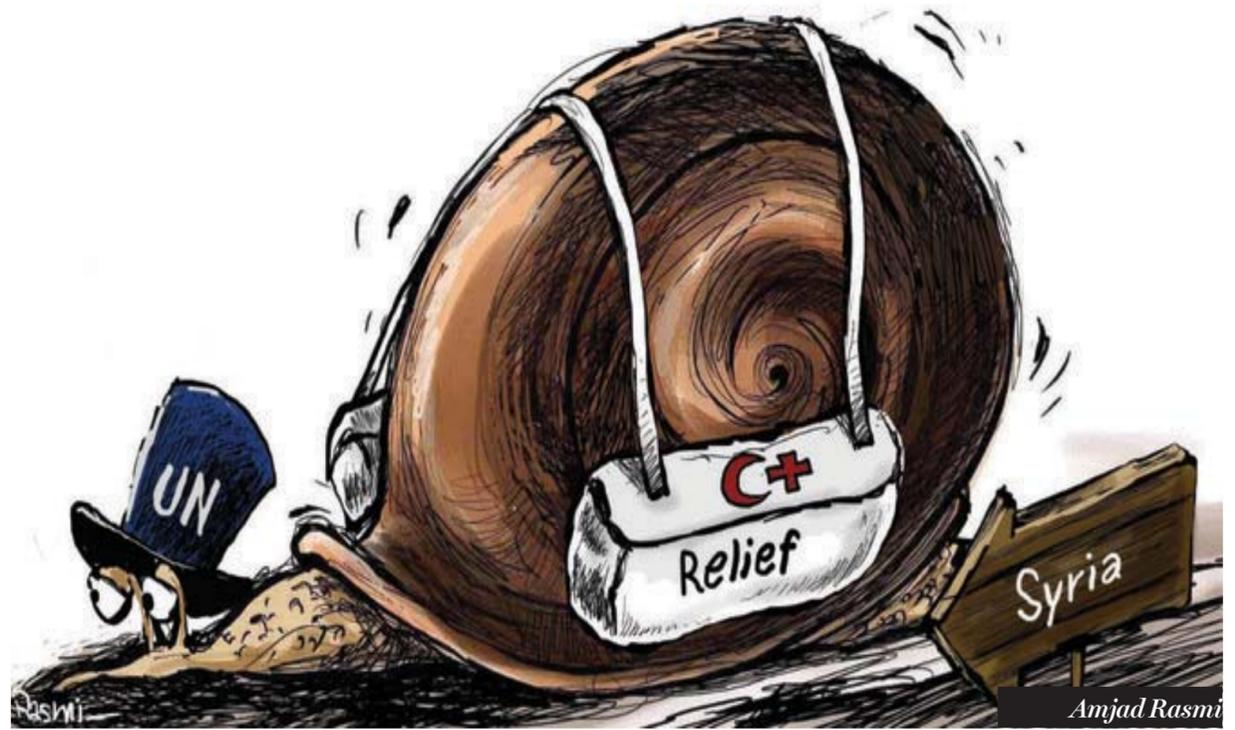
Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment, and Science of the US State Department Monica Medina, who is also in Pakistan on an official visit, informed the prime minister during the meeting that she was leading a delegation for meetings of the Pak-US Climate and Environment Working Group.

She praised the commitment and dedication with which the Government of Pakistan had responded to the consequences of the last year's devastating floods.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Central Asia Elizabeth Horst, and Chief Climate Officer, Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Jake Levine, as well as US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome also attended the meeting.

The senior US diplomats affirmed the Biden Administration's desire to enhance Pakistan-US cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, health, security, and climate change.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar, Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Power Engineer Khuram Dastagir, Adviser to the PM Ahad Cheema, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadiq Malik, and PM's special assistants Tariq Fatemi, Jehanzeb Khan and Syed Fahad Hussain.



Amjad Rasmi

## Karandaaz Launches Report on The State of Business Taxation in Pakistan - Challenges for SMEs

Karandaaz Pakistan arranged a webinar on 15th March, 2023 to launch its latest study on The State of Business Taxation in Pakistan - Challenges for SMEs.

The report provides detailed analysis on the hurdles Pakistani SMEs face when attempting to become tax-compliant, the rules that govern taxation in the country and recommends ways responsible authorities can streamline taxation policy while establishing efficient processes for collection to establish a more optimal tax regime.

SMEs are regularly touted as the backbone of the country's economy, contributing more than 70% of employment and approximately 25% of the country's exports. At the same time, however, Pakistani SMEs tend to remain largely outside the formal economy. Estimates for Pakistan's undocumented or shadow economy range from 35% to 56% of the country's official gross domestic product (GDP).

Another even stronger indicator is provided by data from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Pakistan's supra tax collection and enforcement authority. Though a recent census of business establishments has not been conducted, proxy data suggests that there could be close to 5.2 million SMEs in Pakistan. Yet, according to the FBR's 2018 filing data, only about 64,000 associations of persons (AOPs) filed returns. This indicates that only a handful of SMEs are registered with the national tax collection agency.

The SMEs interviewed for this study cited the burden of tax compliance as a bigger hurdle than the actual tax paid or the high tax rates associated with it. Without the adequate resources and skillset for timely compliance with tax obligations, SMEs end up having to pay penalties. In many developing economies, compliance costs are a major deterrent to tax filing and deciding to become 'formal.'

Evidence collected during the study suggests that, first and foremost, the tax authorities must move beyond revenue-centricity towards the goal of building a cohesive, collaborative, and simplified tax regime that eliminates all the 'noise' in the system. To do so, the report contains numerous recommendations, including

harmonization of policy across jurisdictions; strengthen handholding and facilitation of SMEs via heavy investment in systems that can be integrated across the government machinery so that data can 'talk'; adopt automation and smart regulation that is accessible to SMEs; and institute painless tax administration that reduces tax compliance burdens.

CEO Karandaaz, Waqas ul Hasan addressed Pakistan's shadow economy and said, "One of the key challenges facing the taxation system in Pakistan is its inherent complexity, which leads to high compliance costs and burden for taxpayers. An effective tax system should aim to minimize distortions, facilitate ease of collection, avoid discrimination, and garner acceptability. However, experts suggest that Pakistan's current tax policy does not adhere to these fundamental principles. According to the 2020 Doing Business Report, Pakistan ranks 161st out of 190 economies for the "paying tax" indicator, which underscores the difficulty and complexity of complying with tax regulations in the country."

In his keynote address Federal Minister Mr. Ahsan Iqbal said: "Unlike other nations in the region, Pakistan has yet to adopt an export-led growth strategy, making it crucial to bolster the private sector's export capabilities to improve the country's economic situation. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contribute significantly to value chains, generate job opportunities, and spur innovation and competition. Therefore, policymakers must prioritize developing and supporting the SME sector through effective policymaking. For instance, tax reform efforts must prioritize directing capital inflows towards productive businesses with export potential instead of unproductive sectors functioning as tax havens in the country. This approach can reduce inefficiencies and widen the tax base, leading to increased revenue collection, facilitating socio-economic development in Pakistan."

In his closing remarks Dr Najeeb Memon, Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue Karachi, FBR stated that "We must make choices on how to structure the taxation system. However, these choices cannot solely be based on the revenue authorities' objectives. We must also consider the compliance costs on the tax-paying

entities. Non-compliance is not only a result of the tax regime's complexity, but also the unfair and inefficient system design that actually incentivizes non-compliance. Businesses and individuals are given room to falsely categorize their income, resulting in tax evasion in weakly regulated sectors like real estate and exempt sectors like agriculture. These inequities must be removed from the system. Additionally, larger minimum tax thresholds and lower marginal tax rates for certain sectors have further constricted the tax base, incentivizing tax evasion at the margins. This approach unfairly burdens compliant sectors while failing to enforce tax laws in others. Rather than squeezing the compliant sectors, we need to reform the design of the taxation system in a manner that addresses the core reasons for non-compliance."

The webinar also included two panel discussions. The first panel comprised of SME representatives and relevant stakeholders to talk about the type of challenges faced in compliance with frequently changing taxation policies. Panelists included Ms. Maryam Sarim, CEO and Founder of Instaenergy; Syed Nabeel Hashmi, Chairman SNH Group of Companies; Mr. Asfandyar Farrukh, MD Urban Brands and Founder Chainstore Association of Pakistan; and Mr. Ehsan Malik, CEO Pakistan Business Council (PBC).

The second panel included representatives of several tax authorities as well as experts on taxation, including Mr. Zain-ul-Abidin Sahi, Chairman Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA); Mr. Tariq Naseem, Head of Islamic Finance Department and Registrar Modaraba, SECP; Mr. Muhammad Raza, Partner A. F. Ferguson & Co.; Dr. Hamid Sarwar, REMIT Project, FCDO; Mr. Akbar A. Tejani, CEO and Co-Founder Befiler (Pvt.) Ltd. and Ms. Darakhshan Vohra, Lawyer and CEO of Soan Valley Tech.

Karandaaz is a Section 42 Company, supported by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The Company focuses on improving access to finance for unserved and underserved individuals and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), by providing financing and by leveraging technology platforms.

### Letter to the Editor

*"Judicial system fully supports retired employees"*

Through your newspaper, I would like to convey to the authorities that there is no such example in the whole world and there is no such law that pension and arrears of pension have not been paid to the employees who retired from any institution on account of their last pay. An example of this has been done by a local bank in our country. According to the details, the bank had frozen the salaries of the employees working in the institution on 30th June 2002 as per their own circular issued. As a result of which the employees who retired after this date were not paid the pension and pension arrears based on the last salary. During employment, what could the employee do? The bank decision fell as a mountain, when the employees retired from their own organization. The employees had to suffer a lot due to this injustice. Finally, the retired employees approached the courts to get their rightful rights and the bank's injustice. Indeed retirement benefit and arrears are the reward for the time spent in the organization. And at the same time the capital to deal with the upcoming time and difficulties. It is not an easy task to bear the expenses of lawyers and courts in the current inflation especially, for retired people, their family members, and their widows. Despite these sad difficulties, this oppressed class did not give up the pursuit of justice for many years. Since the retired employees were true and right, therefore the

judicial system also fully supported them. But the bank, instead of accepting the decisions of the higher courts, did not implement any decision to date. Thus, a long time has passed for the elderly people to get justice. The orders are being pushed back instead of obeying. It should be remembered that after many years, on 22nd January 2015, a decision was issued by the Peshawar High Court in favor of the retired employees of Allied Bank. The bank approached the Supreme Court against the decision of high court. God willing, the decision of the Supreme Court on 17th January 2020 came in favor of the retired employees of Allied Bank. In the spirit of the judgments of all these high courts, all retired employees are entitled to pension and arrears of pension according to their last salary drawn. While the Supreme Court in February 2018 taking Smoto the minimum pension of rupees 8000/- unfortunately, no decision has been "implemented" to date. Years are passing and dates are continuing. Now, the statements of both sides have been heard by the Peshawar High court. Leaders of the retired employee's including Mohammad Zafar Sahib, Mohammad Irshad Tanoli, and other senior retired employees of the bank attended the court and they are very optimistic about the decisions of the courts and said that Inshallah, the decision will be made in favor of the retired employees. A large number of retired employees were present in front of the court today.

Javed Ullah Raja

# Turkic Brotherhood-An example of mutual assistance and solidarity

Spokesman Report

On March 15-16, 2023 President Shavkat Mirziyoyev will take part in the extraordinary summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), which will be held in Ankara.

Uzbekistan became a full member of the OTS (formerly the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States-CCTS) in October 2019, and today the development of interaction with the Turkic states is one of the priorities of the country's foreign policy. In 2023, Uzbekistan chairs this organization. The beginning of the chairmanship was marked by the Samarkand OTS summit, held under the slogan "New era of Turkic civilization: on the way to common development and prosperity" in November last year.

In a short period from the moment official Tashkent joined the family of Turkic states, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, put forward more than 40 initiatives and proposals for the further development and strengthening of interaction with the member states of the organization, and by now most of them have been effectively implemented. Thus, at the initiative of Uzbekistan and aimed at strengthening the solidarity of peoples based on a common history, language, culture and traditions, 2023 was

declared the "Year of the heyday of the Turkic civilization."

The OTS summit held in November last year in Samarkand became one of the historical turning points in the transformation of this association and for the first time brought together the heads of states of this association in a qualitatively new format—within the framework of a full-fledged Organization of Turkic States.

The event launched the process of deeper integration of the Turkic countries and also became the beginning of the chairmanship of Uzbekistan in the OTS. As a result, a Joint Declaration was adopted and a number of multilateral documents were signed in the fields of economy, transport and institutionalization of the organization.

Under the chairmanship of Uzbekistan in the OTS in 2023, the effective implementation of the concept "Vision of the Turkic World—2040" and the five-year Strategy of the Organization of Turkic States for 2022–2026 adopted at the summit in Samarkand continues. In particular, priority attention was paid to solving the following tasks:

- strengthening the trade and economic basis of the organization, the transition to concrete actions for the effective use of the huge transport potential of the OTS;
- stimulating the development of the tourism industry, ICT and digital transformation by launching certain projects;
- strengthening cultural and humanitarian rapprochement, in particular, through the use of public diplomacy;
- strengthening cooperation in the field of youth support;
- increasing the efficiency of the organization by improving its institutional framework.

In general, during the period of our country's chairmanship in the OTS, more than 30 events are planned. At the same time, it is important to note that among the member states of the OTS, Uzbekistan for the first time introduced the practice of developing a separate Concept and Action Plan during its presidency.

The spirit of solidarity between the allied member states of the OTS was strengthened by the tragic events that happened in February this year in Turkey. The results of the unprecedented and devastating earthquakes that occurred in the country shocked the entire Turkic world and all the friends of fraternal Turkey.

The OTS member countries were among the first to extend a helping hand to the Turkish people. In this difficult moment, the Turkic countries stood shoulder to shoulder, once again showing how deep and strong their blood ties

are. Rescuers, doctors and volunteers were sent to the affected regions to work with the victims and those who lost loved ones. Through the efforts of teams that arrived from the countries of the Organization of Turkic States, hundreds of people were saved.

Humanitarian supplies with food, essentials and medicines were sent to Turkey from everywhere.

Uzbekistan participated in the aftermath of the natural disaster by sending a search and rescue team, seismologists and medical personnel to the region. More than 160 tons of humanitarian cargo were delivered to Turkey from Uzbekistan by special aircraft and land transport. A military field hospital of the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan was deployed in the city of Khatai. Literally, not a single citizen of our country remained indifferent to the misfortune of the fraternal people. In all major cities of the republic, collection points for humanitarian aid were set up for victims of the earthquake in Turkey.

At the upcoming summit, the heads of the member states will discuss further measures to rebuild the destroyed cities of Turkey, as well as the necessary joint steps to reduce the risk of natural disasters, prevent emergencies, and respond to emergencies in the OTS space.

## 6th Advisory Board Meeting of National Institute of Maritime Affairs

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Meeting of 6th Advisory Board of National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) was held at NIMA Head Office, Islamabad. Admiral Asif Sandila NI(M), former Chief of the Naval Staff, Chairman BoA chaired the meeting while the Board members and special invitees / maritime experts were in attendance, in person and online.

V/Adm (Retd) Ahmed Saeed HI(M), DG NIMA welcomed the participants and presented a look at the major events held since the last BoA meeting. Cdre (Retd) Bilal Abdul Nasir SI(M), Director NIMA presented the progress on the minutes of 4thBoA meeting and sought the input of the house. Moreover, a snapshot of major research activities and future undertakings was also provided.

Board members and participants gave pertinent input on the various agenda items. Detailed discussions on the fishing sector of Pakistan, ports and harbours, shipping, ship recycling industry, maritime tourism, climate change, maritime pollution, biodiversity, and sustainable use of ocean resources were also held.

# Hashoo School of Hospitality Management collaborates with Iqra University, Karachi

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo School of Hospitality Management (HSHM) has recently signed an Agreement with the Iqra University, Karachi (IU) for hospitality educational based projects and skill development programs for the youth, in Karachi, Pakistan.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Haseeb Gardezi, Chief Operating Officer, Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group, and Dr. Mirza Amin Ullah Haq, Registrar, Iqra University, Main Campus, during a special ceremony, attended by Mr. Naveed Lakhani, Chairman, Iqra

University, Dr. Zaki Rashidi, Director of Bahria Campus, along with the senior management of Hashoo Group and Iqra University faculty members.

"Today is a very important day in the history of HSHM as we are partnering with the most iconic institute of Pakistan, Iqra University" said Mr. Haseeb Gardezi. "The shortage of skilled and experienced leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry is a pressing issue in Pakistan. To address this, earlier we introduced the HSHM programme in Islamabad, KPK and now in Karachi, aiming to train and equip hospitality students with the necessary skills to meet industry

demands in all the major cities of Pakistan. Upon graduation, the students will be offered guaranteed job placements at Hashoo Hotels across Pakistan", he further added.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Zaki, Director, Iqra University, Bahria Town campus spoke at length regarding the partnership. He emphasized that academia coming close to industry will accrue positive dividends for both partners. He showed his resolve to ensure that this new program will attract many potential students as it has a lot of scope for future.

During his address to the audience, Mr. Naveed Lakhani emphasized the

significance of the hospitality industry in Pakistan. He further explained the necessity of education in hospitality and tourism in Pakistan, which would provide students with global opportunities. Mr. Lakhani expressed that the faculty at Iqra University is enthusiastic about this partnership and will work towards making it successful. He also expressed his interest in future collaborations with Hashoo Group in various fields.

HSHM, the leading institute in the hospitality and tourism education industry, has been operating in Islamabad for over a year and a half, with the first batch of students to grad-



uate in September 2023. To expand their reach, earlier HSHM partnered with IMSciences in Peshawar and are now teaming up with Iqra University in Karachi, an institution that has been in operation for over two decades. The admissions are open for HSHM courses which will be available at the IU Main Campus, a purpose-built, 13-storey educational infrastructure, offering unparalleled on-campus facil-

ities to its students. HSHM's goal is to connect with Pakistan's youth, offering practicals, internships, and guaranteed job placements at Hashoo Group hotels. With a global curriculum, along with seasoned faculty from around the world, HSHM is looking forward to providing world-class education in hospitality, tourism, and hotel management by expanding to other cities across Pakistan.

# Profile: With popular mandate, Xi Jinping spearheads new drive to modernize China

Xinhua

BELJING: About five months after his election as general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, Xi Jinping won his third term as Chinese president at the annual session of the national legislature, which concluded on Monday.

At the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), Xi was also elected chairman of the country's Central Military Commission. Assuming the top posts in the Party, the state, and the armed forces, Xi is leading the country with 1.4 billion people on a new journey to modernization.

Wrapping up the session, Xi delivered a closely-watched speech to a gathering of nearly 3,000 lawmakers. "The people's trust is my biggest motivation moving forward and is also a weighty responsibility on my shoulders," Xi said.

Xi announced that the central task of the entire Party and all Chinese people, from this day forward to the middle of the century, is to build China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advance national rejuvenation on all fronts.

"The relay baton has been passed on to our generation," he said.

A decade ago, when Xi was first elected Chinese president, he expounded on the "Chinese Dream," saying the dream is about making the country prosperous and strong, rejuvenating the nation and delivering a happy life to its people.

Modernizing China has been a persistent pursuit of the Chinese since the Opium Wars. Over the course of a century, generations of the Chinese, led by the CPC, have charted a distinctively Chinese path toward that goal.

Born in 1953, Xi started his political career as the Party chief in a small village in northwest China. From there, over the past half century, Xi worked his way up through almost every level of the Party's hierarchy. He has amassed extensive experience and made noteworthy accomplishments throughout his career.

Xi was first elected to the Party's top post in late 2012. For the first time, the position was held by a person born after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Since then, he has taken the nation on an ambitious path of revival, according to international media reports. Xi has a clear vision for China, to see it as a powerful country in the world, the reports said.

**The Core**  
In 1969, Xi left Beijing for a small village on the Loess Plateau to live as a farmer, sharing the same fate as millions of youths who came of age during the Cultural Revolution.

For someone like Xi who grew up in Beijing, life in the countryside was extremely difficult at the beginning.

Villagers often went without meat for several months. Despite the hardships, Xi looked back on this experience as the time when he truly understood the struggles of the common people and society.

This unique experience fueled Xi's determination to always do something for the betterment of the people.

While many of his college peers opted to go abroad, Xi decided to work in a poor county called Zhengding in Hebei Province in the early 1980s.

In 2012, soon after taking office as the general secretary, Xi visited poor rural families in Hebei. In Gu Chenghu's home, Xi sat on a heated brick bed and chatted with him.

"I have come here to check your living conditions and see what the Party's leadership can do more for you and people like you," Xi said.

He held up Gu's sleeve and showed it to the officials around him, saying, "Look, his coat is worn out."

At the time, there were around 100 million rural Chinese living under the poverty line of earning an annual income of 2,300 yuan (about 366 U.S. dollars).

In less than a year, Xi put forward the "targeted poverty alleviation" strategy, and over the span of about eight years sent 255,000 work teams and 3 million cadres to villages, providing one-on-one assistance to impoverished farmers.

Xi himself conducted over 50 inspections and research studies on poverty alleviation, which included visits to all 14 regions with high concentrations of extreme poverty.

On Feb. 25, 2021, Xi announced that absolute poverty had been eliminated in China.

China's poverty reduction rate has been notably faster than the global average, making it the country with the largest number of people lifted out of poverty worldwide.

"If not for Xi's personal push, poverty reduction would have been even more difficult and taken longer," said Zeng Shoufu, who once worked as a village poverty alleviation cadre in Fujian Province.

Another challenge was corruption. Upon taking the Party's top office in late 2012, Xi cautioned that "if corruption is allowed to spread, it will eventually lead to the collapse of the Party and the fall of the state."

Less than a month into the job, he fired the first shot in his war against corruption. Over the course of ten years, high-ranking "tigers," including a former member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, were taken down.

Over 500 centrally-administered officials, most of whom were at or above the ministerial level, were investigated. Crooked officials who fled overseas were brought back through anti-corruption



operations initiated by Xi.

In 2018, he announced that an "overwhelming victory" against corruption had been achieved. But the campaign did not end there. After the 20th CPC National Congress, another nearly 20 senior officials were investigated or punished for corruption.

Early this year, at the plenary session of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the top graft-busting agency, Xi urged a crackdown on corruption that involves both political and economic issues. He emphasized the need to prevent leading cadres from becoming spokespersons or agents of interest groups and power cliques.

The success of poverty alleviation and anti-corruption has won Xi popular support, but this is not the only reason he was unanimously elected into the top office of the Party and the state. In the past decade, many long-standing problems in the country were solved under his leadership.

China has steadily developed and become stronger overall, with an average annual economic growth of 6.2 percent over the past decade. It was more than twice the global average. Per capita GDP has doubled to over 12,000 U.S. dollars.

China's share of the world economy has increased from 11.3 percent in 2012 to 18.5 percent at present. The output of grain has consistently been abundant.

In the past, China's manufacturing industry was often referred to as "big but not strong." It took a billion pairs of socks to buy a Boeing plane, some said. Today, China has developed its own large passenger aircraft, and technological advancement contributes over 60 percent to the country's economic growth.

China's digital economy is the second-largest in the world, and its new energy vehicle production and sales have ranked first for eight consecutive years.

Shan Zenghai, a technician at the construction machinery manufacturer XCMG, recalled how in 2017, Xi toured the company's workshop and mounted

an all-terrain crane.

"He gave us great encouragement, saying that the real economy should never be sidelined," Shan said. "He also said the Chinese economy must transition from high-speed growth to high-quality development."

During a deliberation meeting at this year's NPC session, Shan sat down with Xi again and informed him that all the components of the crane that Xi once mounted are now manufactured in China.

"Are the chips in your company's cranes domestically made?" Xi asked.

"Yes. All are made in China," Shan replied.

In the past ten years, while eliminating absolute poverty, China has built the world's largest education, social security, and medical and health care systems. China is adopting measures to provide more accessible and continuous medical and healthcare services to farmers. The life expectancy of the average Chinese increased to 78.2 years in 2021, nearly 2 years higher than that of the average American in that year.

Without Xi, China's ecological environment protection would not have attained historic improvements, observers said. The average concentration of small particles, PM2.5, in the air has decreased for nine consecutive years in major cities, with a cumulative reduction of 57 percent. The once-common occurrence of smog enveloping the skies of northern China has now become rare.

Xi pushed for green development as he tackled pollution across the board. He announced that China aims to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. He also pushed for the ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Also thanks to his efforts, China was among the first to sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership — the world's largest free trade agreement — and has expanded its free trade pilot zones from one to 21. The entire island of Hainan was turned into a free

trade port.

Xi is a strong advocate of the spirit of self-reliance and self-improvement. He emphasized the need to enhance the confidence and pride of being Chinese, and the importance of promoting China's excellent traditional culture, stating that blindly following others is not the way forward.

"Are not Hollywood's films like 'Kung Fu Panda' and 'Mulan' based on our cultural resources?" he said.

Xi's reform measures have achieved "historical changes, systematic reshaping, and overall reconstruction" in many fields, ranging from the economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological protection systems, to national defense and the Party's own institutions.

He made the decision to enshrine the statement of "allowing the market to play a decisive role in resource allocation and letting the government play a better role" into the Party's documents, and led the establishment of the National Commission of Supervision, a powerful anti-corruption agency to oversee every single person in public office.

In late 2012, Xi initiated the eight-point decision on improving conduct. This is regarded as a lasting institutional solution to malaise such as squandering, indulging in pleasure, and extravagance. Through this move, Xi succeeded in curbing practices previously deemed uncontrollable.

In other aspects of institutional development, Xi oversaw the reform of the talent system to enable researchers at the forefront of science to benefit from their intellectual property rights.

A milestone CPC resolution adopted in 2021 states that the Party has affirmed Xi's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and affirmed the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

This, according to the resolution, reflects the common will of the Party, the armed forces, and Chinese people of all ethnic groups, and is of decisive

significance for advancing the cause of the Party and the country in the new era and for driving forward the historical process of national rejuvenation.

Xi considers the affirmation of his core status to be a weighty responsibility. In his words: "To honor the trust of the Party and the people, I will dedicate myself to the utmost and be willing to endure any hardship without hesitation."

Party theorists say Xi's sustained leadership in the Party and state apparatus provides direction, stability, and continuity for China's development. They said this is conducive to strengthening the Party's overall leadership and is an important manifestation of the political and institutional advantages of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Lu Man, who is an NPC deputy and head of an agricultural cooperative in Jiangsu Province, said the unanimous vote electing Xi as the Chinese president is a major outcome of this year's "two sessions." Lu added that the result is what people have been hoping for and is required to advance the Party and the state's causes.

From the 20th CPC National Congress to this year's "two sessions," a new cohort of officials have assumed positions of governance, including members and alternate members of the Party Central Committee, ministers and provincial-level Party chiefs. Xi urged them to strive diligently and avoid letting down the expectations of the people.

According to Party insiders familiar with the matter, these new leading officials "share some common traits," including their strong abilities in terms of political judgment, comprehension, and execution.

In the meantime, the military has also completed its leadership transition, with a new Central Military Commission team and a new defense minister.

In early November, Xi visited the military's joint operations command center and called for "comprehensively strengthening military training and preparedness." He emphasized multiple times "the absolute leadership of the Party over the people's military."

According to Xi, the Party's leadership defines the fundamental nature of Chinese modernization.

Given the immense size of the Party and the country, it is impossible to achieve anything without the authority of the CPC Central Committee and its centralized and unified leadership, as well as the conformity of the nation, Xi said.

"General Secretary Xi has the charisma to unify the whole Party. He is our backbone as the nation charges ahead on the new journey toward modernization," said Cai Hongxing, president of Yanbian University, who is also an NPC deputy.

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

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close
41,874.04	41,816.43
Day's High	Day's Low:
42,010.06	41,607.05
Index Value	Change
7,316,237,212	+57.61
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	15 Mar, 2023 5: 00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
7,344.45	-292.66
Percentage	Time
-3.83%	15 Mar, 4: 35 pm GMT

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
31,521.90	-633.50
Percentage	Time
-1.97%	15 Mar, 12: 47 pm GMT-4

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
27,229.48	+7.44
Percentage	Time
+0.027%	15 Mar, 3: 15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186	188.4
Bahrain Dinar	748.98	756.98
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	40.56	40.96
Euro	301	304
Hong Kong Dollar	35.88	36.23
Indian Rupee	3.42	3.53
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	917.97	926.97
Malaysian Ringgit	62.2	62.8
New Zealand \$	174.2	176.2
Norwegians Krone	26.69	26.99
Omani Riyal	731.5	739.5
Qatari Riyal	77.37	78.07
Saudi Riyal	75	75.8
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	26.88	27.18
Swiss Franc	307.29	309.79
Thai Bhat	8.15	8.3
U.A.E Dirham	77	77.8
UK Pound Sterling	340	343.5
US Dollar	283.5	286.5

# Effective mechanism needed to curb pointless expenditure: Mian Zahid Hussain

**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 some politicians during their government and especially before the election waste resources in the name of development projects.

Some politicians are in habit of wasting resources for the sake of popularity and this practice should be stopped, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that efforts to show artificial growth result in a crisis and the people have to suffer year after year.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the country needs an active mechanism to curb unnecessary expenditure for the sake of popularity. Spending is increasing at a time when



domestic production, exports, and remittances are not increasing, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the previous rulers, despite warnings from economists and international organizations, made huge expenditures and freed imports to give a false impression of the development.

Imports of \$80 billion were made against a total income of \$60 billion, as a result of which Pakistan had to face a current account deficit of \$20 billion, foreign exchange reserves fell and people had to face austerity.

Due to the shortage of foreign exchange, the government has stopped imports which have led to severe shortages of commodities and smugglers started earning handsome money.

The business leader said that there is a need to learn from past mistakes and spend according to the resources.

He said that unless there is an end to the electricity losses, gas theft, and pumping billions on the failed government institutions, a reduction in imports through import substitution, and an

increase in exports, Pakistan will face a payment crisis, and public welfare will be left behind.

He noted that capital, as well as black money, have been directed towards non-productive sectors due to which there is no investment in the industry which is the main reason for the current dismal situation of production, exports, productivity, and unemployment in the country.

In Pakistan, tax collection is short by four thousand billion rupees as compared to the international standard, which is one of the reasons for inflation.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that now the importance of Pakistan has decreased for the western world due to which the possibilities of debt relief have ended while friendly countries are also tired of giving continuous aid.

A large part of the debt is Chinese debt, which does not like to restructure the debt of developing countries, so we have to learn to live within our means, he said.

## TCL Global Education Expo Opens up the World of Opportunities for Students

**ABC**

ISLAMABAD: To encourage and facilitate those aspiring to pursue higher education abroad from well reputed universities and explore options of work visa post study, TCL Global Pakistan held a Global Education Expo for all the willing students to realize their dreams into reality, in connection with its relaunch in Pakistan.

The expo brought together prospective students face to face with representatives from higher education institutions from around the world. Stalls from various well-reputed international universities were set up, providing golden opportunity for Pakistani students to get free guidance and counseling for their future study endeavors. Representatives from British Council, Pearson and education and career counselors were also present to provide a complete guideline and presentation of opportunities to aspirants.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Zafar Mehmood, Senior Vice President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in his keynote speech that it is crucial for students to proactively seek the best education they can regardless of financial worries. A strong higher education ensures innovative, intelligent, and efficient force in the workplace.

TCL Global's Country Director Mr. Faisal Mahmood said that such exhibitions are necessary to spread awareness about the variety of options that students can avail



for their higher education. He reminded of TCL global's vision and mission to support locally and recruit globally. Further, parents, teachers and students alike should take full advantage of such cost-free and highly informative events.

Other esteemed guests included Prof. Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin, Ex Chairman Punjab Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Ijaz Qureshi, Vice Chancellor, Talon Institute of Higher Studies, Dr. Asif Haider, Director UMT, AAQIC, Prof. Dr. M. Afzal, Dean Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Lahore college of women

university, Prof. Zakir ullah Khan, Director Mirror Newspaper and Dr. Humaira, Garrison University.

More than a 1000 students participated in the expo and they considered this an excellent opportunity providing clarity and insights about application procedures, scholarships, entrance requirements etc. The participants appreciated TCL Global's effort in provision of a perfect platform offering free counselling sessions with official representatives of international universities to explore the options of enrolling for a degree of their choice.

## Ali Akhai Selected as a Young Global Leader from Pakistan

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The World Economic Forum has announced the induction of the newest members of its Young Global Leaders class of 2023. This year's cohort of members are from various sectors including political leaders, innovative entrepreneurs and passionate activists.

The chairman of Martin Dow Group Mr. Ali Akhai is also selected as one of the Young Global Leaders for the year 2023. It is interesting to note that Mr. Akhai is the youngest YGL from Pakistan in the year 2023.

Every year, a remarkable group of young exceptional leaders who have the tenacity, foresight, and track record to better the world, are selected to become a part of the YGL community.

Expressing his views on this achievement, Mr. Akhai said "I am elated to become part of the YGL community. I hope to use this platform to serve humanity and promote a softer image of Pakistan among the global fraternity."

The Young Global Leaders Community is an accelerator



for a dynamic community of exceptional people with the vision, courage, and influence to drive positive change in the world.

Their growing membership of more than 1,400 members and alumni of 120 nationalities includes civic and business innovators, entrepreneurs, technology pioneers, educators, activists, artists, journalists, and more.

Aligned with the World Economic Forum's mission, YGL seeks to drive public-private co-operation in the global public interest. We are united by the belief that today's pressing problems present an opportunity to build a better future across sectors and boundaries.

## Pakistan's First Virtual Life Insurance Agent Platform!

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: TPL Life Insurance Limited, Pakistan's 1st InsurTech enterprise in the innovative insurance business, has launched the country's most revolutionary Virtual Life Insurance Agent Learning & Earning Platform - "Muavin."

A means for every Pakistani to create an alternate or regular income stream by selling TPL Life's insurance products. The user can sign-up for free on Muavin, complete the learning phase while referring to available video lectures & course material, become a certified Muavin, start selling from anywhere in Pakistan, and earn a commission for successful sales.

This unique digital platform can be accessed for learning, acquiring a certification, and subsequent sale of insurance products by certified Muavins via Mobile App &/or Web - both life and health insurance products can be sold digitally, omitting the need for paper-based learning and sales practices.

"We are thrilled to introduce a medium for our fellow Pakistanis that offers them the opportunity to pursue their goals, hone their talents, and make a better living for themselves," said Mr. Saad Nisaar, CEO of TPL Life Insurance. He added, "The overwhelming number of sign-ups is a testament to the demand for this platform in Pakistan."

In addition, Mr. Humayoon Asghar, Chief Strategy & Retail Officer, said, "This is a proud moment for us; we are confident that Muavin Platform will be the game-changer for TPL Life and the entire insurance industry of Pakistan."

The platform has enabled distribution of our products directly to every Pakistani via Muavins (Virtual Agents)-without dependency over traditional brick & mortar setups - adding to economic activity in the country, opportunities for fellow Pakistanis & growth for TPL Life."

## Meezan Bank & Field fisher Capital join hands to extend Islamic Finance Advisory

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic Bank, has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fieldfisher Capital LLP (FFC)-a multi-disciplinary advisory service, under which both parties will collaborate to provide Shariah advisory services to international clients including, but not limited to, Europe and the Middle East.

The signing ceremony took place at Meezan House, Karachi and the MoU was signed by Mr. Urooj ul Hasan Khan, General Manager Investment Banking & Shariah Advisory, Meezan Bank and Mr. Haseeb Haque, Managing Partner, Fieldfisher Capital LLP in presence of Mr. Arif Islam-Deputy CEO, Meezan Bank, Mr. Khalid Mansoor, Partner FFC and their respective teams.

On this occasion, Mr. Arif Islam said, "We are optimistic that this collaboration will make a significant contribution towards the growth of the Islamic finance industry."



Our team is delighted to leverage our years of experience and knowledge to provide cutting-edge solutions to complex financial challenges worldwide. We look forward to working together with our partners to create a brighter future for the industry."

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Haseeb

Haque said, "The expertise and strengths of Meezan Bank and FFC offer a unique opportunity to create an incredibly powerful collaborative framework for Shariah advisory services."

We look forward to adding significant value to our international clients through this partnership."

## Alibaba.com Highlights Value of Export E-commerce at Textile Asia International Trade Fair

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) trade, has concluded its participation as Gold Sponsor in the 24th edition of South Asia's leading textile trade show, Textile Asia International Trade Fair. Held at the Karachi Expo Centre from 10-12 March, the event brought together textile industry experts and businesses from around the world in Pakistan to explore the latest trends, challenges and opportunities in the textile sector.

Over three days, the trade fair

attracted the attendance of more than 35,000 visitors and over 450 exhibitors. The Alibaba.com booth at the event attracted more than 500 visitors, who interacted with experts from Alibaba.com on-site to learn about the role of B2B e-commerce in transforming the way traditional businesses conduct global trade, as well as the opportunities and tools provided by Alibaba.com to support their export development. Visitors also took part in interactive activities to win prizes, including coupons for free e-commerce training from Alibaba.com.

Engr. Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari, Consul General, Sultanate of Oman also graced the Alibaba.com booth on the last day of the event. "We appreciate Alibaba.com's effort in facilitating Pakistani textile companies' global export journey through e-commerce. It shall open new business pathways for Pakistan," he said.

"The textile industry has been the backbone of Pakistan's export sector and we are dedicated to helping Pakistani textile companies grow to the next level by exploring online opportunities. To this end, we are greatly honored to be able to meet hundreds

of local industry players at the Textile Asia International Trade Fair to highlight the value of B2B e-commerce to them," said Mr. Rocky Lu, Head of Alibaba.com Pakistan.

"We are delighted with the success of 24th Textile Asia International Trade Fair," said Uzair Nizam, Project Director, Textile Asia Exhibition-Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd, the event organizer. "The textile industry is constantly evolving, and it's great to see global e-commerce players like Alibaba.com joining hands with industry players to promote the industry's digitalization and help expand

the global reach of quality products from Pakistan. We believe that this event has played an important role in shaping the Pakistan's textile industry for the future," says Uzair.

Alibaba.com's participation at the 24th Textile Asia International Trade Fair was a demonstration of its commitment to supporting the growth and development of the local textile industry. In the 12 months ended March 31, 2022, more than 40 million buyers from over 190 countries sourced business opportunities or completed transactions on Alibaba.com.

# 1st Chief of Naval Staff Int'l Sailing Regatta commences

📰 Sports Desk

KARACHI: First Chief of the Naval Staff International Sailing Regatta 2023 commenced at Karachi.

President Pakistan Sailing Federation Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem graced the opening ceremony at Pakistan Navy (PN) Aquatic Club, Karachi as chief guest, said a news release on Wednesday.

The sailing championship is the 1st of its kind in the country with number of inter-



national players participating in the event. The objective of the competition is to foster water sports culture by bringing

together sailors from both national and foreign countries. The event aims at to offer a platform for young Pakistani talents to train alongside some of the world's top sailors and gain sailing tactics from their experiences, thereby enhancing potential of national team for future participation in international events like Asian games, Olympics etc.

The competition is scheduled from March 14th to 20th featuring races in various categories including Laser Stan-

dard, Laser 4.7, and Windsurfing categories. Sailors from various countries including Australia, Bahrain, Egypt, Malaysia, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand alongside Pakistani sailors will participate and demonstrate their skills by competing in various categories of the competition in waters of Karachi.

The opening Ceremony was attended by various serving and retired officers, civil dignitaries, organizers, sponsors, sportsmen and media fraternity.



The presence of Sami Al-Khanjrabai at the Karachi Games Chess and Softball tournaments is an honour for us Dr Saifur Rehman.

## PSL 8 Qualifier to go as scheduled, confirms PCB

📰 By A Sports -

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday announced that the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight Qualifier will go ahead here at Gaddafi Stadium 'as scheduled'.

Following a tense security situation in the city due to clashes between the workers of a mainstream political party and law enforcement agencies on Tuesday, uncertainty surrounded the fate of the remaining PSL matches.

However, PCB has now confirmed that today's PSL qualifier between Lahore Qalandars and Multan Sultan will be played as per its schedule.

"The #HBLPSL8 Qualifier in Lahore today will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium as scheduled," PCB tweeted.

It may be noted here that the winner of today's match will qualify for the PSL final, scheduled on Sunday. Meanwhile, the losing side plays a do-or-die match against the winner of the first eliminator between Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi on Thursday.

## Sultans win toss, elect to bat first against Qalandars in PSL 8 qualifier



📰 By A Sports -

LAHORE: Multan Sultans have won the toss and elected to bat first against home side Lahore Qalandars in the first qualifier of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight.

PLAYING XI  
Lahore Qalandars: Fakhar Zaman, Tahir Baig, Abdullah Shafique, Sam Billings, Hussain Talat, Sikandar Raza, David Wiese, Shaheen Shah Afridi (c), Haris Rauf, Zaman Khan.

Multan Sultans: Mohammad Rizwan (c), Usman Khan, Rilee Rossouw, Kieron Pollard, Tim David, Khushdil Shah, Anwar Ali, Usama Mir, Abbas Afridi, Sheldon Cottrell, Ihsanullah.

## \*PFF names men's squad for friendly match against Maldives\*

📰 Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Administrator Karachi Dr Saifur Rehman has lauded the Consul General of Oman Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari for attending the various prize distribution ceremonies like that of the Chess tournament, Girl's Softball event and other disciplines which were part of the Karachi Games and termed it is an honour for the organizers and the participants as it will encourage our players to enhance their sporting endeavours.

"Our youth are extremely talented. What they need is encouragement and opportunities to explore their talent and shine as world class players. That's why the City Administration is keen on holding events like Karachi Games in future as well so that we can provide ample opportunities and a sports platform to our youth, he observed.

Later, the Consul General of the Sultanate of Oman in Karachi, His Excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari, addressed the participants and lauded the City Administration for holding the Karachi Games, which he termed to be an excellent opportunity for the new talent to come forward.

He said that he was impressed by the mettle shown by the participating team players in various disciplines of the game, especially the softball event where girls marvelled at their abilities.

A large number of sports personalities including the Secretary General of Softball Federation Pakistan Asif Azeem, the Organizing Secretary of the event Saleem Tajik, President of Sindh Softball Association Waseem Hashmi, Secretary of Sindh Softball Muhammad Zeeshan Merchant, the President of Karachi Softball Muhammad Nasir attended the award ceremony held at Kashmir Sports Complex.

# Khawaja, Mitchell rise in ICC Men's Test player rankings

📰 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Australia opener Usman Khawaja and New Zealand batter Daryl Mitchell have made notable gains in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's Test Player Rankings after smashing fine centuries over the past week.

Khawaja's score of 180 in the drawn fourth Test against India in Ahmedabad has lifted him two spots to seventh position and to a career-best 815 rating points while Mitchell's knocks of 102 and 81 in the epic victory over Sri Lanka in Christchurch has helped him reach a career-best eighth position as he touches the 800-point mark for the first time.

The high-scoring match at Ahmedabad also saw former India captain Virat Kohli advance seven places to 13th position after his Player of the Match effort of 186 while Australia all-rounder Cameron Green (up 11 places to 26th) and India's Shubman Gill (up 17 places to 46th) have also progressed after notching centuries.

In the latest weekly update that also considers performances in the second Test between South Afri-



ca and the West Indies in Johannesburg, Temba Bavuma's match-winning 172 for the home side has lifted him 14 slots to a career best 15th position.

Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews is another one to move up the batting rankings, his scores of 47 and 115 taking him from 19th to 17th position.

In the bowlers' rankings, India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has grabbed sole possession of the top spot after his haul of six for 91, 10 rating points ahead of James Anderson. Another bowler to advance is New Zealand seamer Tim Southee, who took five for 64 and two for 57, going from 18th to 12th position.

In the MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings, Bangladesh batter Najmul

Hossain Shanto's scores of 51, 46 not out and 47 not out not only won him the Player of the Series award at home against England but have also lifted him 68 places to 16th position.

In the ODI Rankings, Nepal batters Rohit Paudel (up four places to 55th) and Aasif Sheikh (up 16 places to 62nd) and leg-spin bowler Sandeep Lamichhane (up five places to 21st) are among those to progress owing to their performances in matches of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 in Kirtipur, Nepal. To journalist75

Home Economics University B team defeated Himayat-e-Islam Degree College for Women by a big margin of 24-12 in the final of Jashan-e-Baharan Women Basketball Tour-

nament played under the banner of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) the other day.

The teams of Himayat-e-Islam Degree College for Women, Queen Mary College, Paragon City, Home Economics University A and Home Economics University B participated in the tournament.

The players of Home Economics University B team dominated the match proceedings right from the beginning. Nazia scored 8 points while Shazia and Esha contributed 4 points each in their team's triumph. For Himayat-e-Islam College team, Hira Javed scored 6 points followed by Kainaat Akbar and Anam Akbar with 4 and 2 points respectively.

Member PCB Management Committee Nauman Butt, Asif Lodhi, Mohsin Nawaz, Col Naseem Butt, Col Asif Dar, Sehar Khan, Hakeem Usman, Maj Saleem and Rukhsana Gillani were the guests of honour at the final match.

PBBF officials Imtiaz ul Hasan, Arsalan, Tariq Abdullah, Shahudul Hassan and Organising Secretary M Akram were also present on this occasion.

## A rough night for Cristiano Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr beat Abha 3-1 in the King's Cup on Tuesday but it was a disappointing night for the Portuguese forward, who failed to score, received a yellow card and was substituted for the first time since his move to Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo failed to score for the third consecutive game and is yet to open his account at Al-Nassr stadium.

The former Manchester United striker, who moved to Al-Nassr in January on a two-and-a-half-year contract for a reported fee of about 200 million euros (\$214.71 million), had contributed to 10 consecutive goals, scoring eight with two assists before going empty-handed in the last two league games.

In Tuesday's quarter-final, Al-Nassr were leading 2-0 when Ronaldo had the opportunity to launch a counter-attack but Latvian referee Andris Treimanis ended the first half.

Ronaldo angrily grabbed the ball and then hit it away, which saw the referee bring out a yellow card.

Al-Nassr scored a third in the second half before Ronaldo was replaced in the 87th minute by Anderson Talisca, the league's top scorer returning from injury.

Ronaldo did not enjoy the best of games last Thursday, kicking away water bottles before going into the tunnel after a 1-0 defeat to rivals Al-Itihad.

"Ronaldo's presence gives the opposing teams an incentive to play the game of their lives against him," local media quoted Al-Nassr coach Rudi Garcia as saying after the game.

While Ronaldo's famous celebration was not seen at Al-Nassr Stadium it appeared in another King's Cup game, with Al-Hilal's Michael Delgado performing it in their 3-1 win against Al-Fateh.

## How many teams will feature in FIFA World Cup 2026?

KIGALI: The expanded 2026 men's World Cup in North America will start with 12 groups of four teams in a change from the originally planned format of 16 groups of three, football's world governing body FIFA announced on Tuesday.

The next World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico will be the first to feature 48 teams, a sharp increase from the 32 sides at last year's tournament in Qatar. "The revised format mitigates the risk of collusion and ensures that all the teams play a minimum of three matches while providing balanced rest time between competing teams," FIFA said.

It means that there will be 104 matches, a huge rise compared to the 64 games played in the 2022 tournament, and an increase even on the original plan that the 2026 World Cup would feature 80 matches.

FIFA's initial plan for 2026 was for 16 groups of three teams, from which the top two countries would advance to the last 32.

The new format means the top two in each group will go through to the knockout round along with the eight best third-placed sides.

As a result, the finalists, and the teams finishing third and fourth, will play a total of eight games instead of the current seven.

The decision comes after a dramatic and entertaining group stage at the tournament in Qatar convinced FIFA that a rethink to its original 2026 blueprint was needed.

# Pak Army wins National Women Baseball Championship

📰 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army won the 17th National Women Baseball Championship after outclassing Pakistan Wapda by 19-10 in the final at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Wednesday.

The higher Education Commission finished third and fourth respectively.

Pakistan Army's Humira scored four runs and Ansa and Samia scored three runs each, while Atiya, Madiha, Waheeda scored two runs each. Rashida, Asia and Zahida scored one run apiece.

Wapda's Zainab, Umm-e-Hani and Ayesha scored two runs each, while Madeeha, Sidra, Anila and Maimoona scored one run each. In the match played for the third position, HEC defeated Punjab with a score of 16-6. HEC's Tasmia, Momina scored



three runs each and Aram, Asia, Taslim and Manahil scored two runs each, while Nisa and Alina scored one run apiece. Punjab's Nimra, Asia, Nida, Kulsoom, Amna and Ramsha scored one run each for their team.

Director General Paki-

stan Sports Board Muhammad Abrar, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, distributed the prizes along with Pakistan Federation Baseball's (PFB) President Syed Fakhr Ali Shah.

President PFB said that

a training camp would be organized for the players who had performed well in the championship. The camp will help prepare the national team for the Women's Asia Cup, to be held in Hong Kong, next month.

# Pollard, bowlers storm Sultans into PSL 8 final as Qalandars falter

📰 By A Sports -

LAHORE: Veteran all-rounder Kieron Pollard's blistering half-century recovered Multan Sultans to 160/5 before bowlers powered Multan Sultans into the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight final with a dominant victory over Lahore Qalandars.

Set to chase a modest 161 to seal the final berth, the Qalandars' batting lineup failed completely and was bundled out for a meagre 76 in the 15th over.

The hosts had a dismal start to their run chase as Sultans' pacers Sheldon Cottrell and Anwar Ali ripped through their top order, causing them to slip to 19/3 in the fourth over with in-form batters Abdullah Shafique (0) and Fakhar Zaman (6) also perishing cheaply.

Qalandars' skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi promoted himself in the batting order again but the move did not pay off this time around as he too fell victim to red-hot Cottrell inside the powerplay for a two-ball duck.

Following the slump, Hussain Talat and Sam Billings looked to settle things down with a gritty 13-run partnership for the fifth wicket before a casual effort while running between the wickets brought an end to the former's 10-ball four and added further to the misery of defending champions.

The home side then continued to lose wickets at an alarming rate and soon bundled out for a skimpy total to hand Sultans a resounding 84-run victory and a spot in the final of the extravaganza.

Billings (19) top-scored for

Qalandars amid a dismal show while Haris Rauf (15) and David Wiese (12) remained the other notable run-getters as the rest could not even get into the double-figures.

Cottrell led the bowling attack for the Sultans with 3/20, followed by Usama Mir's 2/12, while Anwar Ali, Abbas Afridi, Ihsanullah and Pollard struck out a batter each.

Opting to bat first, the Sultans managed to post 160/5 in their quota of 20 overs at the back of a brilliant 57-run knock by Pollard.

Earlier, the Sultans were off to a cautious start as their in-form opening pair of skipper Mohammad Rizwan and fastest PSL centurion Usman Khan could accumulate 53 runs before Haris Rauf castled the latter in the eighth over.

Usman could score 29 off 28

deliveries and hit four boundaries.

The strong bowling unit of Qalandars then pushed the visitors to the backfoot with calculated bowling, restricting them to 70/1 halfway through.

Young pacer Zaman Khan then drew a second breakthrough for the Qalandars as he dismissed dangerous Rilee Rossouw (13 off 12) on the first delivery of the 11th over and further dented the Sultans' march for a big total.

Meanwhile, skipper Rizwan, who was hanging around with his gritty knock also fell short after stitching a 20-run partnership for the third wicket with Pollard. He managed to score 33 in 99 balls with the help of three boundaries.

With their struggling at 90/3 in 13 overs, Pollard brought his



experience into play and put on a match-defining 65-run partnership with Tim David and ignited the flow of runs for the visitors.

The vital stand pulled Sultans out of heaps of trouble with Pollard leading the charge

before falling in the final over. He top-scored for his side with a 34-ball 57, featuring a boundary and six sixes.

David, who out of his character, held his ground firm amid Pollard's carnage, remained

unbeaten with a 22-run cameo off 15 balls, smashing one boundary and a six.

Haris led the bowling attack for the Qalandars with 3/34 while Rashid Khan and Zaman made one scalp each.