



Sanjrani urges unity, collective efforts for prosperous Pakistan

On Pakistan Day, Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani congratulated the nation and emphasised the historical significance of the occasion, reminding the people of the struggles and sacrifices made to achieve independence and urging them to reflect on the values that underpin their nation. He said the day serves as a reminder of the determination and resilience of the Pakistani people and their unwavering commitment to their principles.



Kashmir an integral part of Pakistan; says Mushaal Mullick

Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) and Pakistan are an integral part and can never be separated from each other. Mushaal, the wife of incarcerated Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, said that 'Kashmir is the Jugular Vein of Pakistan' and people of Pakistan stand with the Kashmiris in their struggle for the right of self-determination.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Flag hoisting ceremony

DHAKA: Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui hoisting national flag to mark Pakistan Day during a ceremony at Pakistan's High Commission on Thursday.

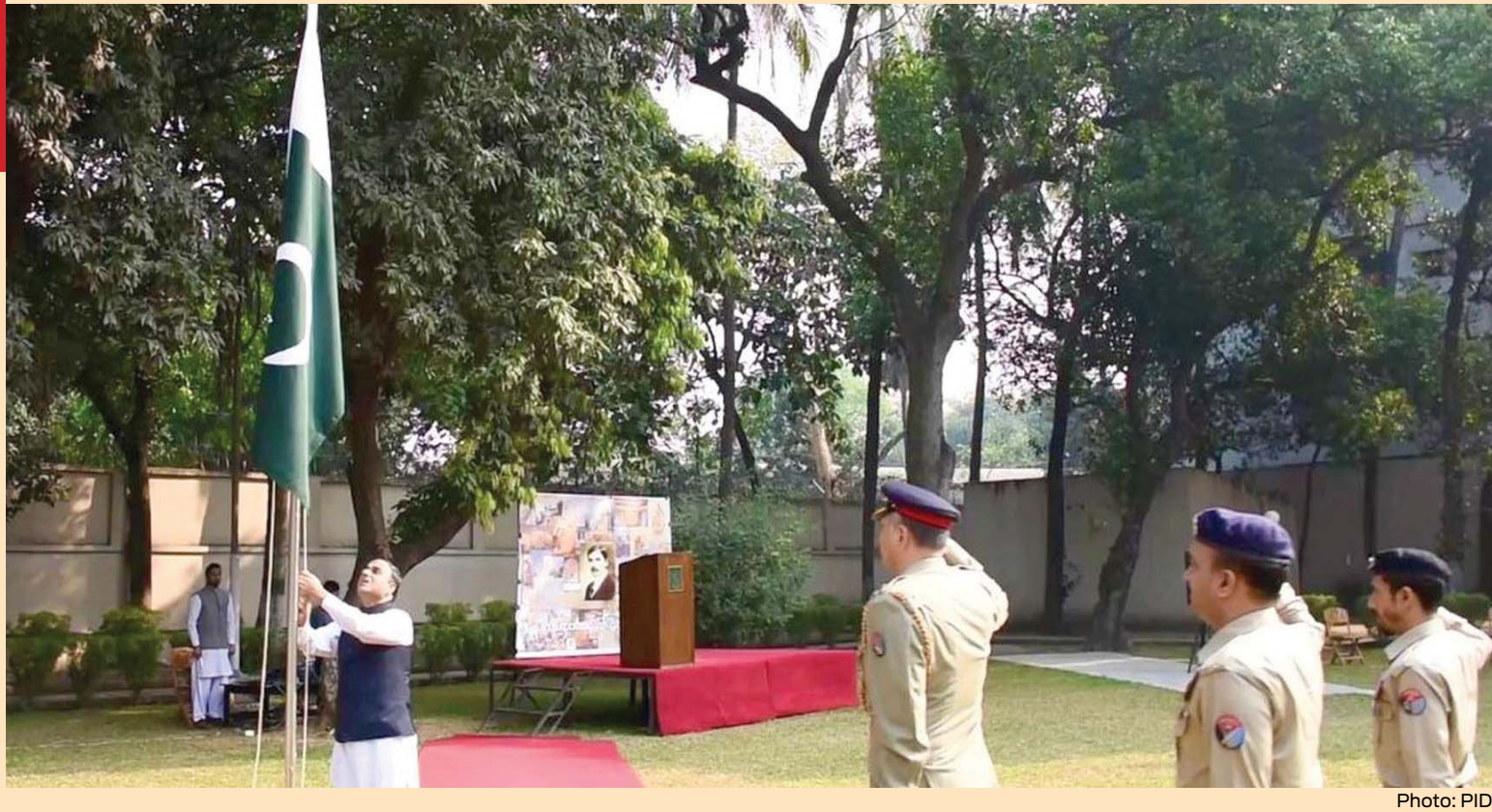


Photo: PID

'Political chaos main reason for economic instability,' says PM



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: On the 83rd Pakistan Day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that "political chaos" was the main reason for the country's economic instability.

In his message, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged the nation to pay tribute to the sacrifices of the country's founding fathers but not lose sight of the challenges staring the country in the face.

"The challenges are topped by a combination of economic instability and the inability to settle the rules of the game. An environment of political chaos explains why we have failed to develop our economy on a sustainable basis," said the PM.

The premier said that for Pakistan to "achieve great heights", the countrymen will "have to forge unity in our ranks, equip ourselves with national purpose and vow to wage a struggle in line with the legacy of our forefathers".

"Let us use this day to introspect and hold ourselves to account. Only those nations that are capable of analysing their past, learning from their mistakes and making amends

can achieve true glory," said PM Shehbaz.

In his message on the occasion of Pakistan Day, President Arif Alvi said that the persecution of minorities, violation of human rights and brutalities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) prove that the Muslim leadership of that time made a prudent decision.

"This day also serves as a reminder to take stock of our successes and failures as a nation," said President Alvi.

He added that Pakistan's post-independence "established state institutions", made the country's "defence impregnable, achieved nuclear deterrence, curbed terrorism, overcame the COVID-19 pandemic, and displayed the spirit of sacrifice and cooperation in the face of natural calamities".

"We still have a long way to go to ensure the rule of law, strengthen democracy, reduce inequalities in our society, empower women, provide the rights of persons with disabilities, eradicate terrorism and extremism, ensure the political and economic stability of the country, and protect the human rights of our citizens," said President Alvi.

If IK wants, govt ready for 'grand political dialogue': Tarar

We should not forget country is facing security challenges, says Law Minister

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazher Tarar has said the coalition government is ready to hold a grand political dialogue if Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan shows a willingness to bring down political heat.

"Imran Khan should send two people from his side while two people from the coalition government will sit together to discuss things," he said addressing a press conference on Thursday.

The law minister lamented that during the four-year tenure of the PTI, they did not try to mend relations with the opposition.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader also said that Pakistan is facing serious economic and security challenges as well as political upheavals, which require unanimous views among all the stakeholders, especially the political parties.

Pakistan is facing serious economic and security challenges as well as political upheavals

The democratic process, he added, is successfully continuing in the country and "we should refrain from paving way for any undemocratic third option".

Commenting on the elections dilemma, the federal minister said that the simultaneous election for the national and four provincial assemblies is the only viable option to bring political and economic stability to the country.

Tarar, while endorsing the Election Commission of Paki-



stan's (ECP) decision to postpone the date for general elections in Punjab from April 30 to October 8 — said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) made the "right move" by withdrawing the election schedule.

A day, the electoral body, in a surprise development,

announced the postponement of the upcoming elections in Punjab till October 8, initially scheduled to be held on April 30, citing security reasons as the major cause for the change in plan.

Supporting the ECP's decision, the law minister mentioned that Article 254 of the Consti-

tution provides that when any act or thing is required by the Constitution to be done within a particular period and it is not done within that period, the doing of the act or thing shall not be invalid or otherwise ineffective by reason only that it was not done within that period.

The minister further added that a digital census is underway in the country and its findings will also be compiled in the next few weeks.

He said this will address the concerns of the smaller provinces and provide a basis for delimitations of constituencies across Pakistan.

"We should not forget that the country is also facing security challenges on multiple fronts and holding elections requires the massive deployment of law enforcement agencies, which is not possible at this point in time," he said. Agencies

'Attacks on courts' Govt forms JIT to probe cases against IK

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has announced that a high-level joint investigation team (JIT) is set up to probe four cases filed against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan and his supporters for allegedly attacking courts and law enforcers, vandalism and stopping the court from functioning.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, the security czar said that the JIT is headed by Additional Inspector General of Police Special Branch Punjab Zulfiqar Hameed, comprising representatives of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Military Intelligence (MI) and DIG Headquarters Islamabad Awais Ahmad.

The interior minister accused Khan of attacking the Federal Judicial Complex with the support of "armed gangs" on February 28 to

hinder the courts' proceedings in connection with Toshakhana, foreign funding and Tyrian White cases.

The PTI's supporters broke the main gate, entered the judicial complex forcefully and vandalised the courts. A case was filed in this regard under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and other charges at Islamabad's Ramna police station.

The same scenes were witnessed when the PTI chief arrived at the IHC and a separate FIR was registered at the police station under terrorism charges.

On March 18, Khan, along with armed gangs arrived at the judicial complex and attacked the law enforcers. The PTI leader, however, failed to enter the judicial complex at that time. Several police officials and civilians sustained injuries when the PTI's supporters attacked them. Agencies

PTI to move SC against ECP decision on Punjab elections

Article 6 should be applied on five members of ECP, says Fawad

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry has said his party will challenge the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to postpone the date for general elections in Punjab from April 30 to October 8 in the Supreme Court (SC).

A day earlier, the election organising authority announced the postponement of the upcoming elections in the largest province of the country — citing security reasons as the major cause behind the change of plan. In light of the Supreme Court's split ruling last month, President Arif Alvi announced the date for the Punjab polls after consulting the ECP.

Addressing a joint press conference on Thursday, Fawad, flanked by PTI Secretary General Asad Umar, announced that they are moving the top court against the ECP for "breaching the Constitution".

"There is no other option but to hold elections on April 30," insisted

the PTI stalwart. He added that the former ruling party's petition would seek the court's order for holding elections in the province as per the previous schedule.

Turning his guns towards Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government, Fawad said that the joint sitting of parliament convened on Wednesday was aimed at an "attack on the Supreme Court".

It is pertinent to mention here that the joint session was held yesterday instead of 10th of next month to "take important decisions" to enforce the state's authority. The session was convened in the midst of prolonged anti-government defiance by PTI Chairman Imran Khan. National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, while exercising his powers under Joint Sitting Rules 1973, had made a change in the schedule of the joint session of parliament.

"Judges are being blackmailed and pressurised," Fawad claimed. Expressing his solidarity with the

apex court and its judges, the PTI senior leader said that millions of people stand with the CJP and other judges of the apex court.

"It is your duty to save the Constitution," Fawad appealed to the judges of the top court.

Expressing his surprise, the former information minister said they were not part of the agenda of yesterday's sitting, adding that the "main target" of the parliament's session was the Supreme Court.

Fawad further said that they are ready for talks on the elections.

For the first time in the county's history, a civilian government tried to subvert the Constitution, he said, adding that the nation demands that Article 6 should be applied on five members of the electoral watchdog.

On his part, Asad Umar termed the ECP's decision to postpone elections in Punjab against the orders of the apex court. The PTI secretary general demanded that elections in the province should be held on April 30. Agencies

Mariyum lauds ECP's decision on Punjab elections



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan to postpone the Punjab Assembly elections was in the interest of Pakistan.

"The Election Commission took the decision keeping in mind the economic, political and security situation", she said in a statement.

The minister said that the ECP had saved the country from a big constitutional crisis and this decision would bring political stability in the country.

Mariyum Aurangzeb maintained that under Article 218 of the Constitution, the ECP has to ensure transparent, impartial and fair elections.

Article 224 required that at the time of elections, caretaker governments should be established at the federal and provincial level, she maintained.

The minister stated that the Election Commission took this decision after consulting all of

the stakeholders. There were reservations that because of one man's ego, elections were being forced on two provinces, she said.

If elections in two provinces were held on April 30, it would have created a controversy for forever as the terms of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies would have ended six months before National Assembly and other two provincial assemblies.

The process of the census is going on in the country and it was not possible to hold elections in two provinces before the census and in other provinces after the census.

Castigating Imran Khan, she said the Constitution cannot act on the whims of one person who could violate it anytime, dissolve the assembly whenever he wants.

She said Imran Khan instigated his followers to injure the law enforcement agencies personnel, attack the ECP and storm the court premises.

She said one person could not dictate when the election should be held, and when the decisions should be made.

Civil Award ceremony

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi conferring the Pakistan Civil Award of Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon Mr. Muhammad Ramzan Chhipa in recognition of his services in the field of Public Service at the Investiture Ceremony on Pakistan Day, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: Online

For public service, gallantry

President confers Pakistan civil awards on 135 individuals

In recognition of their excellence and gallantry in their respective fields

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday conferred Pakistan's civil awards on 135 citizens as well as foreign nationals on Pakistan Day, in recognition of their excellence and gallantry in their respective fields.

The awards were conferred at an investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr here, also attended by the cabinet members, diplomats and family members of the recipients of the awards.

The president distributed the civil awards in 10 categories including Nishan-i-Imtiaz, Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, Hilal-i-Imtiaz, Hilal-i-Quaid-Azam, Sitara-i-Shujaat, Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Presidential Award for Pride of Performance, Tamgha-i-Shujaata and Tamgha-i-Khidmat.

The president conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz on Sartaj Aziz, Mir Hasil Bazinjo and late Justice (Retd) Rana Bhagwandas for their public service; Ahmed Ali Chagla (art), late Sufi Ghulam Tabassum (poetry), Muhammad Qavi Khan (drama, film) and Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan (sports).

President Dr Arif Alvi conferring the Pakistan Civil Award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz upon Mr Ahmed Ghulam Ali Chagla (late) in recognition of his services in the field of Art (Musician/Composer) at the

Investiture Ceremony on Pakistan Day, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 23-03-2023. His award is being received by the Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ms Shahera Shahid.

The Hilal-i-Pakistan award was given to Ambassador (ret'd) Robin Lynn Raphael for her services to Pakistan.

The president conferred the Hilal-i-Imtiaz award on Khawaja Abdul Hayee (education), Engineer Professor Ahmed Farooq Bazai (academic), Dr Talat Naseer Pasha (science), Hakeem Rizwan Hafeez (health), Dr Raja Ali Raza (engineering), Raees Ahmed (arts), late Amjad Islam Amjad (arts), late Arif Nizami, Mujibur Rehman Shami and Altaf Hassan Qureshi (journalism); Bilquees Bano Edhi (social services), Muhammad Ramzan Chhipa, Sardar Ahmed Nawaz Sukhera, late Maroof Afzal, Senator Talha Mahmood, Capt (ret'd) Sher Alam Mehsud, Justice (ret'd) Fazal Karim, Sultan Ali Alana and Hilalur Rehman (public service); Dr Gohar Ejaz (philanthropy) and Khawaja Masood Akhtar (sports exports).

The president conferred the Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam award on Dr James M. Shera for his services to Pakistan.

The Sitara-i-Shujaat award was given to Malik Muham-

mad Hassan, late Malik Gangrai, Malik Shumali Khan, late Fiza Tariq Malik, Raja Mustafa Ali, Muhammad Afzal Sheikh and Sajid Kiani (Gallantry) and Mansoor Ahmed Khan (services to Pakistan).

The president awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz to Muhammad Afzal Javed and Zafarullah Khan (services to Pakistan), Dr Saeed Akhtar (medicine), late Humayun Khan (agriculture), Dr Sharif Malik (medicine), Mahfoozur Rehman (education), Fakhar-e-Alam (hosting), late Saghar Siddiqui (poetry), late Shama Khalid (art); late Ziauddin, Javed Chaudhry and Nadeem Malik (journalism); Dr Anees Ahmed and Maulana Hanif Jalandhari (religious scholar), and Waqar Ahmed Malik (public service).

Among others who were also conferred the Sitara-i-Imtiaz award included Syed Murataz Mahmood (public service), Imdadullah Bosal (public service) and Mirza Ishtiaq Baig (social service); Lt Gen Noman Zakaria, Major General Muhammad Idris Dastgir, Brigadier Salman Rashid Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Asim Ali Khan, Samina Chagali, Dr Amir Malik, Tahir Rai and Riazuddin Sheikh (public service); Behroz Sabzwari and Tariq Mahmood (art).

The president awarded Presidential Award for Pride of Performance to Dr Ayesha Siddiq (medicine), Anjum Shaheen (acting); Taskeen Zafar, Syed Shamoon Hashmi and late Prof. Jahazeb Niaz Khan (art); Shahida and Irfan Mehsud (sports); and Tika Khan and Hafiz Tahir Khalil (journalism).

In recognition of their gallantry, the Tamgha-i-Shujaat award was conferred on Amir Nawaz Shaheed, Muhammad Kamran Shaheed, Sher Ahmed, Tanveer Hussain Tonio, Amjad Ahmed Sheikh, Mazhar Nawaz Sheikh, Bashir Ahmed Barohi, Zeeshan Ahmed, Naved Ahmed, Ziaur Rehman, Javedullah Shaheed, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Sohail Zafar Chattha, Sadiq Shah, Raja Muhammad Majid, Bilal Raja, Mubashir Saleem, Minhas Ahmed Khan, Ijaz Hafeez, Aqeel Ahmed Siddiqui and Waseem Ahmed Khan.

President Dr Arif Alvi conferring the Pakistan Civil Award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz upon Mr Muhammad Qavi Khan (late) in recognition of his services in the field of Performing Arts (Drama, film & stage) at the Investiture Ceremony on Pakistan Day, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 23-03-2023. His award is being received by Mr Sohail Ahmad.

President Alvi conferred Tamgha-i-Imtiaz on Sindh Governor Kamran Tesori, Achad Bhuglah (services to Pakistan), Jehan Ara (IT), Uzma Batool (medicine), Dr Rizwan Uppal (health), Dr Tanvir Khaliq (medicine), Dr Syed Abbas Raza (medicine), Prof. Dr Khalid Mehmood (medicine), Der Zahoorul Haq (higher education) Dr Samreen Hussain (education), Rustam Ali Lone (art), Arif Khan (art), Nigar Nazar (art), Dr Ikramullah (Qiraat) and Bisma Maroof (sports).

The recognition of their public service, the president conferred Tamgha-i-Imtiaz on Cristina VON Sperling Afridi, Saima Saleem, SP Sumera Azam, Shehzad Afzal Khan, Major Muhammad Ali Tehseen, Major Atif Naveed, Saleh Azeem, Insaf Shah, Amin, Khawaja Adnan Zaher, Ahmed Farooq, Imran Rasool, Nadeem Akhtar Sherazi, Tahir Akbar Awan, Syed Ali Hasnain Hussain and Dr Asif Bashir. Whereas Dr Shahid Masood got the said award for his services in (medicine), Khansha Maria (literature) and Amin Haswani (philanthropy) and Amir Ilyas Rana (journalism).

The president awarded Tamgha-i-Khidmat to Chaudhry Pervez Iqbal Lusar for his services to Pakistan. APP

'Double Standards' Sherry picks apart PTI's deal with another US lobbying firm

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday slammed the purported 'U-turn' made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) by signing a six-month agreement with a private US consulting firm, Praia Consultant, for using their services to promote party's image and restoring its lost credibility.

In a flurry of tweets, the minister held the signing of the agreement exposing the PTI's "double standards and hypocrisy".

The federal minister said that many countries appoint lobbyists, and so do political parties, but this case was particularly bizarre because it came from a party that attempted to pose itself as a [political] martyr of the "US meddling".

"If that was the case, why are they now locked in a desperate attempt to buy the influence of the US decision-makers after the failure of the 'Cipher Conspiracy' narrative and earlier lobbying efforts? PTI's double standards and U-turns have been exposed many times," she said.

"Now, they are constantly taking the services of lobbying companies for their publicity in the US. His [Imran



Khan] concocted narrative has been exposed numerous times that show he was planning to 'play' with Pakistan's interests for his own personal politics," she alleged.

The minister continued, "Despite previously blaming the US for their ouster from politics, the PTI hired an American lobbying firm Fentone Arlook LLC in October of last year, only to quickly backtrack on their criticism of the US within a month. It's now apparent that hiring of lobbyists is not with Pakistan's interests and integrity in mind, but rather as a means to influence the country's domestic politics for their own gain. This brazen use of self-interest above national interest is a clear indication of PTI's willingness to compromise Pakistan's interests for the sake of their own political agenda." According to the agreement, it

NADRA initiates 'Pak ID Mobile App' services

ISLAMABAD: National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) has initiated the 'Pak ID Mobile App', bringing Identity services to the mobile screens of the citizens.

Citizens can now process applications for their identity cards and documents by using the app. After completing the process through the app, the applicant could get their ID documents delivered at their doorstep, said a press release on Thursday.

With the 'Pak ID mobile app', citizens can now apply for CNIC, and Family Registration Certificates without visiting NADRA offices, avoiding long queues and waiting times.

Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik said the latest version of the App has a built-in document recogni-

tion system and contactless biometric verification which allow users to enjoy a wholesome experience through a complete range of ID issuance services including uploading and submitting documents, capturing photographs and fingerprints, and adding digital signatures using the smartphones.

"This innovative approach is a significant step towards achieving the goal of Digital Pakistan by improving service delivery," said Tariq Malik.

He said the Mobile App promises to bring maximum convenience to all citizens living within the country and beyond geographical boundaries.

Tariq Malik said that the App is built using 'Contactless Technology' which truly digitalizes the experience of getting desired documents. APP

IK need to face court trials instead of misleading nation: SAPM

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Malik Ahmad Khan on Thursday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief Imran Khan should face court trials instead of misleading the nation through lies and baseless propaganda against state institutions.

"If Khan obeys the law and constitution so much, he should appear before the court as per orders," he said while talking to a private news channel.

Imran Khan was trying to create political instability through lawlessness in the country, the SAPM claimed, adding, he was not only criticizing the politicians but also defaming the national security institutions.

Niaz and his supporters should express patience and wait for the next general elections which would be held on time, he mentioned.

Replying to a question, he said that strict action would be taken against all those involved in activities contrary to the law and the Constitution.

To another question, he replied that Imran Khan was responsible for price hike, increased debt and economic crisis in the country, adding, PTI did record corruption to destabilise the country.

Masses were facing problems and inflation due to tough conditions placed by the IMF in an agreement with the former PTI government, he alleged. APP

Train service suspended after explosion near Kotri

HYDERABAD: An explosion on the railway track near Kotri has suspended railway traffic here on Thursday, however, no loss of life was reported, official sources said.

According to officials, an attempt was made by unknown saboteurs to blow up the railway line with explosives, which damaged the railway track.

The sound of the bomb blast was heard far away. Railway officials including police and rangers personnel reached the spot soon after the incident.

The trains have been stopped at Kotri and other stations due to damage of the railway track near Bolhari railway station.

According to a railway official, technical staff has

Pak-China's friendship shines at space exhibition in Beijing

BEIJING: The commemorative flag of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, which was carried into space, was displayed at an exhibition in China.

The 'Dreaming of the Universe and Asking the Sky: 30 Years of China's Manned Spaceflight Achievement Exhibition' was recently held in the West Hall of the National Museum of China, featuring an impressive collection of items that highlight China's success in space exploration.

Of particular interest is the commemorative flag on display, which celebrates the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

This flag was carried into space by the Shenzhou-12

spacecraft on June 17, 2021, and spent three months orbiting the earth before returning to the earth. It serves as a reminder of China's diplomatic ties with Pakistan.

"For Pakistani visitors, seeing the flag being presented here was really meaningful, representing not only the special relationship between Pakistan and China but also reminding people of the long-term cooperation between the two nations in the aerospace industry. It is a fitting tribute to the significant contributions that China has made to Pakistan's space program over the years," a Pakistani vlogger, Mahzaib Abbasi, who was shooting a vlog at the exhibition, told China Economic Net.

Since the 1990s, China and Pakistan have had a strong relationship in terms of space

collaboration, which began with Chinese assistance in the launch of Pakistan's first satellite, Badr-1. In 2019, Pakistan and China signed several space exploration agreements at the second BRI Forum, including one paving the way for Pakistan's first astronaut to go to space. These agreements also established a framework for joint ventures in space and the development of Sino-Pakistani space committees.

In June of last year, Pakistan sent seven sets of medicinal plant species seeds aboard China's Shenzhou 14 spacecraft to the Tiangong space station, for exposing the seeds to cosmic radiation and microgravity in the hopes of inducing beneficial mutations in their genes.

"Many of my viewers in China's

scientific developments, especially since the ceremony celebrating the return of plant seeds from Tiangong last month," Mahzaib said.

"I have the opportunity to bring my followers to witness the development of China's aerospace industry and get up close to various advanced equipment. It is an honour for me. I also hope that my young followers can be inspired and study hard to contribute to Pakistan's aerospace industry," he added.

Other notable features showcased at the exhibition included a 1:1 model of the Tianhe core module, a 1:4 model of the space station combination, and scale models of the Long March 2F, Long March 7, and Long March 5B carrier rockets, among others. APP

Entire nation committed to defeat terrorists: CM Sindh

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said that the terrorists were enemies of Pakistan and its people, but the nation was committed to defeating them.

He said while talking to the media along with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori during his visit to Mazar-e-Quaid for paying tribute to the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah on the eve of Pakistan Day.

He said that the police and other law enforcement agencies under the guideline of the government were working day and night to eliminate terrorists and their facilitators.

Replying to a question, Syed Murad Ali Shah said that his cabinet had approved a Rs. 15.6 billion Ramzan package for 7,810,482 low-income families under which Rs. 2,000 cash will be transferred to each family through Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) as a subsidy to buy 30kg atta at Rs65/kg.

"The leftover low-income people can verify their eligibility by entering their National Identity Card numbers on BISP number '8171'

or they can visit the nearest BISP centre to register themselves," he added.

The CM disclosed that an ordinance was being promulgated to control hoarding and profiteering. "Under the ordinance, the powers to control the prices, artificial price hike, and hoarding have been given to food department officers apart from the officers of Revenue department," he said.

Talking about Pakistan Day, Murad Ali Shah said that the Sindh Assembly had the honour to have passed a resolution in support of Pakistan in March 1943. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah through his political wisdom and struggle created the country, he underlined.

"Now, it becomes our utmost responsibility to make this country strong enough so that our future generation can live a secure, safe, and sound life," Shah said.

The CM condemned Indian atrocities in Indian Illegal Occupied Kashmir and paid tribute to the people of Kashmir for their struggle against Indian occupation.

Govt committed to provide facilities to masses: AJK Prime Minister

Gilgit-Muzaffarabad bus service inaugurated

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Beginning of restoration historical ties between the people of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan on the historic day of Pakistan Day, the Prime Minister of the Azad State of Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan and the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Barrister Khalid Khurshid inaugurated the Gilgit-Muzaffarabad Bus Service.

Gilgit-Muzaffarabad bus service has been started by the joint efforts of the governments of the two units of the Kashmir region in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan and Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Barrister Khalid Khurshid, which restores historical relations and harmony between the people of the two regions cultural, social, regional linkages, industry and tourism will be boosted. The inauguration ceremony was held at New Prime Minister House, Muzaffarabad.

Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Barrister Khalid Khurshid was the chief guest of the event. Gilgit-Baltistan Interior Minister Shamsul Haque, Azad Kashmir Government Ministers

Ali Shan Soni, Chaudhry Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Chaudhry Maqbool Gujjar, Akmal Hussain Sargala, Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Javed Butt, Azad Kashmir Government Spokesperson Professor Taqdees Gilani, Parliamentary Secretary Asim Sharif Butt and Chairman Prime Minister Inspection and Implementation Commission Peer Mazhar Saeed including government secretaries, other high ranking officials, lawyers and a large number of civil society participated.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan said that today is a very important day for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent when the Pakistan Resolution was passed in 1940 and this day is also for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. It is historic when today the ties between the two regions are going to be restored, the journey of restoration of ties that we have started today will continue further, the path that we have opened has a lot of potential. Pakistan after Eid. They are starting tourism bus service in Azad Kashmir from all major cities, which will promote tourism here. Pakistan is the center of hopes of the oppressed

classes of the world and the will of God. On the other side of the Line of Control, the Kashmiri people are making sacrifices for the completion of Pakistan. No one can defeat the determination of this nation, who raise their children to become Khalid Bin Waleed. India is not aware of our history. India can conquer the world in movies, but they should remember that when Muslims go to Spain, they burn the boats, if India does not stop, we will do the same, which is the history of Muslims.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said that the journey between Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir that we started today, we hope that future generations will continue it, in the future both regions will benefit from each other's experiences and potential. Gilgit-Baltistan will help Gilgit-Baltistan in the fields of communication, agriculture, designing and housing, while the government of Azad Kashmir will benefit from the sectors in which Gilgit-Baltistan is ahead. The scope of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bank will be extended to Gilgit-Baltistan while the cooperative bank of Gilgit-Baltistan will be brought to Azad Kashmir. Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan said that the quota of Gilgit-Baltistan will be increased in



MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Prime Minister Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan and Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Khalid Khurshid inaugurating bus service between Muzaffarabad and Gilgit-Baltistan at Muzaffarabad.

universities and other educational institutions of Azad Kashmir. I suggest that in future the officers of both the regions should go on posting from one region to the other.

Azad Kashmir Prime Minister said that yak is found only in Gilgit-Baltistan and will farm it in the upper areas of Azad Kashmir. The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said that the governments of both the regions can create a special economic zone together.

mir to prepare an annual calendar and provide free travel facility to those traveling from Gilgit to Muzaffarabad and Muzaffarabad to Gilgit on Long Weekend.

Addressing the ceremony, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Barrister Khalid Khurshid said that today is Pakistan Day and a historic day when a bus service is being started to connect the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will benefit, these measures will reduce the distance between hearts and promote harmony between the two regions, the people of Azad Kashmir will come to Gilgit-Baltistan and the government will provide them all the facilities. He said that I belong to the nearby area of Shuntar, PCI is ready with reference to Ruto Shunter tunnel, whenever Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government comes to the federal government, work on this tunnel will start. The Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan said that the passengers who are going to Gilgit from Muzaffarabad today will be received by the Chief Secretary and my Principal Secretary in Gilgit. Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan made sacrifices for the establishment of Pakistan and stood for Pakistan.

Iftar food

LAHORE: Volunteers give Iftar food to women before breaking their fast at P.I.C ground on the first day of the holy month of Ramadan, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

IUB VC meets Indonesian ambassador



Staff Reporter

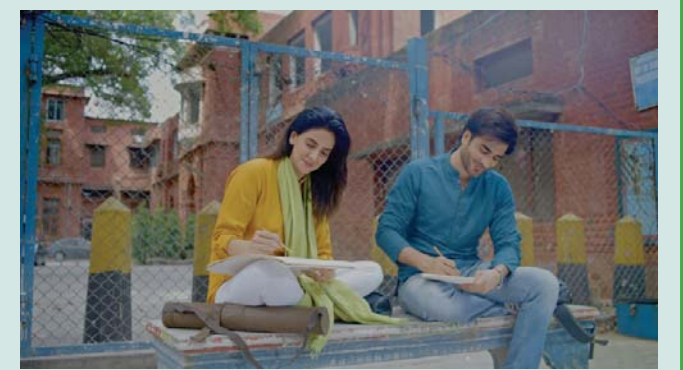
BAHAWALPUR: Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur meets with His Excellency Adam Mulawarman Tugio, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia for Pakistan in Islamabad.

On this occasion, matters relevant to academic collaboration between the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and the Indonesian higher education institutions were discussed.

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, through its recently established Directorate of International Linkages, is engaging with the international universities, including Indonesia, through MoUs of joint academic and research endeavours, faculty, and students exchange programmes.

Both sides agreed that education ties will be strengthened and new avenues of cooperation will be explored.

Saba Qamar, Imran Abbas unveil official poster of Tumharay Husn Kay Naam



Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Saba Qamar and Imran Abbas will be seen sharing the screen together for the first time in history of television in Tumharay Husn Kay Naam, coming on Green Entertainment.

Produced by Eyeconic Media in association with Multiverse Entertainment, the upcoming series is directed by Saqib Khan, who has Ghabrana Nahi Hai under his belt, and written by Umera Ahmed and Sarah Qayyum. The show stars Saba Qamar and Imran Abbas in leading position along with Salman Shahid, Asad Siddiqui and Sidra Niazi amongst others.

PC Hotel Lahore chefs win the fifth season of PICC 2023

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pearl-Continental Hotel Lahore chefs won four gold medals, two silver medals and two trophies in the fifth season of Pakistan International Culinary Championship (PICC) held at Royal Palm Golf and Country Club, Lahore.

The Chefs Association of Pakistan (CAP) along with its strategic partner, the College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM) Pakistan and Dubai, and co-organizers The World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) launched the fifth season of PICC 2023 to challenge the potential of Pakistan professional chefs

from hotels, restaurants, catering companies, bakeries, fast-food restaurants etc.

The objective of the Championship was to showcase Pakistani cuisine, unveil the potential of the hospitality industry, and recognize the creativity, innovation, and style of professional chefs in Pakistan. Participants from various regions of the country competed in the event.

Pearl-Continental Hotel Lahore emerged as the leading establishment, earning four gold medals, two silver medals, and two trophies. The PC Lahore team's exceptional talent resulted in a clean sweep of the awards, earning



them high praise from both international chefs and the judging panel. The Executive Chef of PC Lahore, Nauman Ifikhar Khan said that "It has been a very challenging period

for us as a culinary competition of this level is both emotionally and physically intense. The team has sacrificed their time and sleep." Mr. James Wilson, the

General Manager of Pearl-Continental Hotel Lahore, hosted a celebratory dinner for the victorious chefs. The executive team, including Mr. Vangelis Boulis, EAM F&B, as well as other heads of departments, also participated in honoring the accomplishment. On occasion, Mr. James expressed that "Having such an exceptional team of chefs together at Pearl-Continental Lahore was a remarkable accomplishment and a source of pride for the establishment. As a leader in the hospitality industry in Pakistan, Pearl-Continental Lahore has once again demonstrated its excellence through the success of its team".

President praises Saylani for transforming lives of thousands of youth

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Ali has said it is high time that obsolete curriculum should be done away with for promoting concepts of modern education and vocational training for providing youth with employment and other advancement opportunities.

The President stated this while addressing as the chief guest at a ceremony held at the Governor House for awarding certificates to the graduates of the Information Technology training programme of the Saylani International Welfare Trust (SIWT).

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, founder of the SIWT Maulana Muhammad Basheer Farooqui, chief of the Presidential Initiative for Artificial Intel-

ligence and Computing (PIAIC), Zia Khan, also addressed the ceremony. The ceremony was attended by the Consul Generals of various countries, noted businessmen, industrialists, and civil society representatives.

The President praised the services of Maulana Basheer Farooqui and PIAIC chief Zia Khan for practically taking my part in the struggle to brighten the future of Pakistani youth.

He praised the services of SIWT for the promotion of educational, skill development, and employment opportunities in the country.

Sindh Governor told the audience at the ceremony that it was the first and foremost priority of the government to lessen the suffering in the lives of common

citizens in the country. He said the massive youth population was like an asset to the country.

Tessori assured the audience that he would provide the utmost assistance in furthering efforts of Saylani for IT training and skill development.

Maulana Basheer Farooqui said that his non-profit not just stood for providing free meals to deprived families but also to impart IT training to hundreds of thousands of youth in the country.

He said the SIWT had the aim to produce one million software developers in the country.

He told the audience that up to 50,000 youth had been getting training annually at the mass IT training initiative of the SIWT and PIAIC. He said the facility of online classes in this regard was

available all over Pakistan.

He said the graduates of the mass IT training initiative of the SIWT in the next few years had the ability to earn up to US \$ 100 billion for the depleting foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan.

He said the mass IT training initiative of Saylani had revolutionized the lives of thousands of youth in the country since the last decade.

Maulana Farooqui informed the audience that the SIWT had been working all over Pakistan for creating employment opportunities, distribute free food rations, construct low-cost housing facilities, and supply clean potable water.

PIAIC chief Zia Khan said that his initiative had been working for the provision of the latest IT train-



ing related to Metaverse, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology. On the occasion, certificates were given to 300 graduates of SIWT.



Islamabad

15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:45 am
Zohr	12:15 pm
Asr	4:37 pm
Maghrib	6:21 pm
Isha	7:45 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	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

KC-EU's Chair Ali Raza Syed for immediate release of Irfan Meraj

Sohail Anjum Malik

BRUSSELS: Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed has called for early release of Irfan Meraj and other Kashmiri journalists and human rights activists imprisoned by Indian authorities.

Irfan Meraj, the freelance Kashmiri journalist was arrested by the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) on fake charges of in a terror funding case (of 2020) in Srinagar on Monday. A Delhi's court on Wednesday remanded him to NIAs custody for 10 days under the Indian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

Reacting to the arrest of Irfan Meraj, Chairman KC-EU Ali Raza Syed said, charges on Irfan Meraj are false and we strongly condemned this unlawful Indian act. Indian authorities should release him and other Kashmiri journalists and human rights activists immediately. "We strongly condemn the imposing of UAPA on Irfan Meraj as a media person. Implementation of this act is a misuse of the authority by the Indian officials and a violation of freedom of speech and expression," Chair of KC-EU added.

Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Aakar Patal, the chair of Amnesty International board in India and office bearers of Indian Press Club, Journalist Federation of Kashmir also expressed deep concerns on arrest of Irfan Meraj.

Pakistan Day

NA Speaker emphasizes importance of unity, dialogue for resolving conflicts

Speaker Ashraf highlighted the importance of political stability for economic stability

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Thursday highlighted the importance of the Pakistan Resolution and emphasised the need for unity, collective thinking, and dialogue to address the crises faced by Pakistan right now.

In his Pakistan Day message, he stressed the need to forget bilateral differences and work towards the development of the country. He emphasised the importance of adopting the guiding principles of Faith, Unity, and Discipline of Quaid-e-Azam to overcome the



crises currently faced by Pakistan, and to repeat the spirit of March 23, 1940.

Speaker Ashraf highlighted

conflicts.

Condemning the Indian government's atrocities against minorities, he also expressed solidarity with the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and recognised the sacrifices made by Pakistan's armed forces and law enforcement agencies.

Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani, in his separate message, also emphasised the significance of the Pakistan Resolution and the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan's armed forces and law enforcement agencies for the country's survival.

Heavy rain

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of Faisal Masque reflection in rain water after the heavy rain in twin cities in morning hours, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Covid infection before vaccination lowers immunity: Study

ISLAMABAD: If you had Covid infection before you took vaccination, chances are that you might have less immunity, claimed a study.

Researchers at the Stanford University in the US found that the magnitude and quality of a key immune cell's response to vaccination with two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine were considerably lower in people with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection compared to people without prior infection.

In addition, the level of this key immune cell that targets the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein was substantially lower in unvaccinated people with Covid-19 than in vaccinated people who had never been infected.

Importantly, people who recover from SARS-CoV-2 infection and then get vaccinated

are more protected than people who are unvaccinated, Medical Xpress reported.

These findings, which suggest that the virus damages an important immune-cell response, were published in the journal Immunity.

Led by Mark M. Davis, Professor of microbiology and immunology at Stanford's School of Medicine, the researchers designed a very sensitive tool to analyse how immune cells called CD4+ T cells and CD8+ T cells respond to SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccination.

These cells coordinate the immune system's response to the virus and kill other cells that have been infected, helping prevent Covid.

The tool was designed to identify T cells that target any

of dozens of specific regions on the virus's spike protein as well as some other viral regions. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine uses parts of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein to elicit an immune response without causing infection.

The investigators studied CD4+ and CD8+ T-cell responses in blood samples from three groups of volunteers. One group had never been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and received two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine. The second group had previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and received two doses of the vaccine. The third group had Covid-19 and was unvaccinated.

The researchers found that vaccination of people who had never been infected with SARS-

CoV-2 induced robust CD4+ and CD8+ T-cell responses to the virus's spike protein. In addition, these T cells produced multiple types of cell-signaling molecules called cytokines, which recruit other immune cells — including antibody-producing B cells — to fight pathogens. A

However, people who had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 prior to vaccination produced spike-specific CD8+ T cells at considerably lower levels — and with less functionality — than vaccinated people who had never been infected.

Moreover, the researchers observed substantially lower levels of spike-specific CD8+ T cells in unvaccinated people with Covid than in vaccinated people who had never been infected. APP

Pakistan Day parade rescheduled due to bad weather

Parade will now be held on March 25

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Day parade, scheduled to be held on Thursday, has been rescheduled due to inclement weather, the President's House stated.

The joint services parade, which was due to be held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, will now be held on March 25.

Pakistan Day commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, when the All-India Muslim League demanded a separate nation for the Muslims of the British Indian empire.

The nation is celebrating Pakistan Day on Thursday with a renewed pledge to transform the country into a "true Islamic welfare state" in line with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and to ensure its progress, prosperity and strong defense.

The day dawned with a 31-gun salute in the federal capital and a 21-gun salute in the nation's provincial capitals. Special prayers were offered in the mosques after Fajr prayers for the progress and prosperity of the country. APP

Parvaiz Ashraf extends felicitations to Shamoon Hashmi

For receiving prestigious award

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Parvaiz Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Thursday extended their congratulatory messages to Syed Shamoon Hashmi on receiving the prestigious pride of performance award from the President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi.

Syed Shamoon Hashmi, who is also the additional secretary of the National Assembly, is a well-known host and writer at the national level.

The award was conferred on Shamoon Hashmi in recognition of his outstanding services in the preservation of Urdu language, national culture, and heritage through various mediums such as television, print, and electronic media.

This was not the first time that Shamoon Hashmi has been recognized for his talent and hard work. He had earlier won the Best Comper Award in 2004 for his unique style of narration and promotion of Urdu.

Apart from his contributions to the field of media and language, Syed Shamoon Hashmi has also rendered his services to the people affected by various natural calamities, including the devastating earthquake of 2005 and floods that hit the country between 2001 and 2010.

His dedication to his work and commitment to the betterment of society is truly commendable and serves as a role model for others.

Hashmi was also honored with the Tamgha-e-Essar, Civil Award for his services during the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

He has been a source of inspiration for many as a social leader for the troubled nation. The federal government has also recognized the contributions of Syed Shamoon Hashmi and honored him with the Presidential Award in recognition of his national services. APP

NUST, ICESCO join hands to make strides in higher education

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) entered into a partnership with the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST-Islamabad) on Wednesday. The aim is to make collective efforts towards advancing higher education and research, particularly in Islamic countries.

Lt Gen (Retd) Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, and Dr. Salim M AlMalik, Director General ICESCO signed the partnership agreement at NUST School of Interdisciplinary Engineering and Science (SINES).

Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, also graced the occasion with his presence.

Based in Rabat (Morocco), ICESCO is a leading Islamic world organization promoting educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation.

As part of the understanding, an ICESCO Chair will be established at NUST to strengthen ties between the two institutions, and promote academic and scientific cooperation, especially in the field of Data Analytics. The agreement will help foster joint research, exchange of expertise, faculty and student exchange programs, and joint academic and scientific activities.

The Chair will also promote educational and scientific cooperation among Islamic countries toward reinforcing the global knowledge economy. The two institutions aim to work together to achieve sustainable development, promote social harmony, and advance the well-being of people in the Islamic world and beyond.

Prior to the signing ceremony, the esteemed guests also visited the National Science and Technology Park-NUST and various high-tech labs at SINES.

ICT food safety awareness campaign

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Food Authority has conducted awareness campaign regarding food safety for the restaurant and food handlers to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene standards of the eatables in the Federal capital.

Deputy director Food Authority along with teams on Thursday visited sector G-6 Abpara market and I-10 markaz for the introductory campaign to train food handlers regarding hygiene standard, maintaining the edible's quality and keep the surrounding clean and pleasant, said a press release.

The Chambers, restaurants associations and food factories are also taken on board regarding the initiative to provide clean food and a healthier environment for the citizens. APP

ICCI delegation donates Rs4m for earthquake victims of Turkiye

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the Embassy of Turkiye and presented a cheque of Rs.4 million to H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Turkiye as a token of support for the help and rehabilitation of earthquake victims of Turkiye.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Turkiye have deep rooted relations and the Pakistani nation stands in complete solidarity with the brotherly people of Turkiye in the wake of the unprecedented earthquake that struck it in February 2023. He said the entire Pakistani nation is saddened over the huge damage and loss of lives caused by the

earthquake. He said that the business community of Pakistan will continue to provide all possible support to the people of Turkiye in the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction process. He said that Turkiye is one of the best friends of Pakistan and Pakistan would never forget the support of Turkiye during the earthquake of October 2005 and devastating floods of 2010 and 2022 in Pakistan. He assured that ICCI would continue to provide more financial support to the people of Turkiye in these difficult times. He also discussed the matters for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Turkiye.

H.E. Dr Mehmet Pacaci Ambassador of Turkiye thanked ICCI delegation for visiting his Embassy to express solidarity with the people of Turkiye and

to provide financial support. He also expressed gratitude to the leadership and the people of Pakistan for extending humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of the massive earthquake in his country. He said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was the first foreign leader who visited Turkiye after the devastating earthquake to express solidarity with the people of Turkiye, which showed Pakistan's love and affection for his country. He said that Pakistan has already sent hundreds of tons of relief goods, including winter tents, clothes, blankets, and food items, to quake-hit areas of Turkiye and is still sending relief goods on a daily basis for which the entire nation of Turkiye is thankful to Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that this

natural calamity has brought both brotherly countries closer and added that bilateral relations between Turkiye and Pakistan would continue to strengthen day by day.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the people of Pakistan consider Turkiye their second home and would always stand with them in every thin and thick hour.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Rizwan Chheena, Raja Imtiaz Abbasi, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Muhammad Yahya, Rohail Anwar Butt, Zial ul Haq Abbasi, Shahid Abbasi, Amin ur Rehman, Khalid Mehmood and others also spoke at the occasion and expressed resolved that Pakistani business community would continue to provide support to the people of Turkiye in their rehabilitation process.



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

An overview of Post-Disaster Housing Reconstruction

What we need to learn from World and Our Experiences-I

Every disaster in Pakistan and Sindh has unfolded new dimensions of our physical, social, economic and political vulnerabilities. Right from fight against terrorism to coping with repetitive floods, our capacities to face, withstand and respond to these disasters have been reducing both in temporal and spatial terms. We need to rethink; and unlearn the methods and strategies that we have been applying for managing disasters and crises.

We have come long way in terms of legislative, policy and institutional framework since 2005 Devastating earthquake. We have National Disaster Management Commission headed by Prime Minister of Pakistan, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at federal level, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) at province level. We have very weak District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) just in papers and in relevant legal instruments. The legal framework and policies have not translated into robust and strong institutions. The local government and local bodies structure that is one of the key institutional instrument worldwide, has been kept under consistent experimenting and lost its importance, competence and role in the disaster management.

The subsequent floods of 2010, 2011 and 2012 unpacked both the structural and non-structural problems. In disaster management, with the identification of problems, finding lasting solutions are

relatively easy. But 2022 floods told different story- not learning from any of the previous floods and hanging on with old solution or doing entirely different from what was required.

With this background, it is important that we reflect on the projects that are being or about to be implemented for post disaster reconstruction in Sindh especially housing. The studies reveal that reconstruction of housing always require major part of targeted funding; almost half of the total requirements. Housing is big, complex, dynamic and multidimensional work. In 2005 Earthquake reconstruction, out of 5.2 Billion USD that were required for reconstruction, 44% were for housing.

World Bank alone has approved the projects of 1.7 billion Dollars for different sectors in Sindh. The housing project has maximum allocation of 500 million US dollars. Government of Sindh has succeeded arranging 727 Million USD; which come out to be Rupees 190 Billion on today's conversion rate. The total houses that have been fully or partially damaged have been assessed over 2 Million out of which more than 1.44 Millions are fully damaged and more than 650,000 are partially damaged. The extent of poverty has been also demonstrated from the fact that almost 80 percent of the houses that have been fully or partial-

ly damaged are Kacha houses and rest are Pakka construction. In first phase, Government of Sindh is focussing on construction/repair of 461,000 houses. Government of Sindh is also looking for additional resources around 1350 Million USD to achieve total target of 2 Million houses. Even the scale of 461,000 houses is such a big activity! This scale of reconstruction has never been done before in Sindh and perhaps in Pakistan (as it surpasses the targets that were set and achieved for 2005 earthquake reconstruction).

There are generally three types of housing needs during and after a disaster: immediate shelters, temporary housing and permanent housing. Sindh has already passed the temporal phase for the temporary shelters. The stage of reconstruction and rehabilitation of houses is about to start. Government of Sindh has established "Sindh Peoples Housing for Flood Affected" (SPHF) company under section 42, deployed efficient and reputable project management team and also in process of hiring of professionals for different positions. The strategic design of the project is quite inclusive. It is community driven with participation of affecteds, involving social mobilisation and process assistance and monitoring by reputable NGOs; and also third party monitoring and engineering support by consultants. GIS based geo

reference locations are to be put into practice. Five reputable Non Governmental Organisations will be partnering with SPHF for making project inclusive and successful. NED University has provided assistance on developing few typical designs of houses that will be followed. It is important that the designs are made flexible so that local indigenous knowledge, culture and material can be incorporated into it.

One of the key responsibility of the political leadership during and immediate after disaster is provide hope, determination and courage. Leaders uplift the marooned communities for better and secure tomorrow. In 2003 Balm Iran earthquake, 2004 Tsunami in Indian ocean, 2005 Katrina cyclone, 2011 Japan tsunami, the relevant political leaders promised and pledged to 'build big, strong, better and safer!'. At Geneva, on 9 January 2023 in the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, that was collectively arranged by Pakistan and the United Nations, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari showed firm resolution to build "Resilient Pakistan". This is important for all the actions, program and projects that they result in establishing resilience, providing additional safety and strength to the communities and the built environment.

To be Concluded
 The writer is Development and Programme Management professional. He can be reached at ehsanleghari@gmail.com.



Ehsan Leghari

Drug-Free Society: ANF vigilance squads to combat drug addiction

Across the globe, societies are being faced with the growing challenge of drugs addiction having the wide range of varieties and novel techniques, especially amongst the youngsters, and Pakistan is no exception to it.

Youth is considered the future of any country, but what if they are targeted by enemies or anti-social elements indulging them in the deadly habit of drug addiction under their inimical designs.

Cognizant of the situation, Pakistan has recently rolled out ANF Vigilance Squads (AVS) aims at countering drug prevalence around educational institutions and community centers.

"The AVS is swift, smart and service-oriented modern proactive mobile patrolling units for operations to purge the society from drug abuse," said an official of the Ministry of Narcotics Control. The AVS, he said, in the first phase would operate in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi.

A senior official of the ANF said the youth was Pakistan's greatest asset, which constituted 66 percent of the population.

"They are our future and we have to protect them from the harms of drug addiction. Protecting the country's youth and the future generation from the menace is inevitable for the prosperous future of Pakistan," he said, adding that to protect our youth, the ANF was working tirelessly in coordination with other law enforcement agencies of Pakistan.

A Spokesperson for ANF said the department was playing a leading role in mass awareness and community participation programs to educate the people against drug abuse.

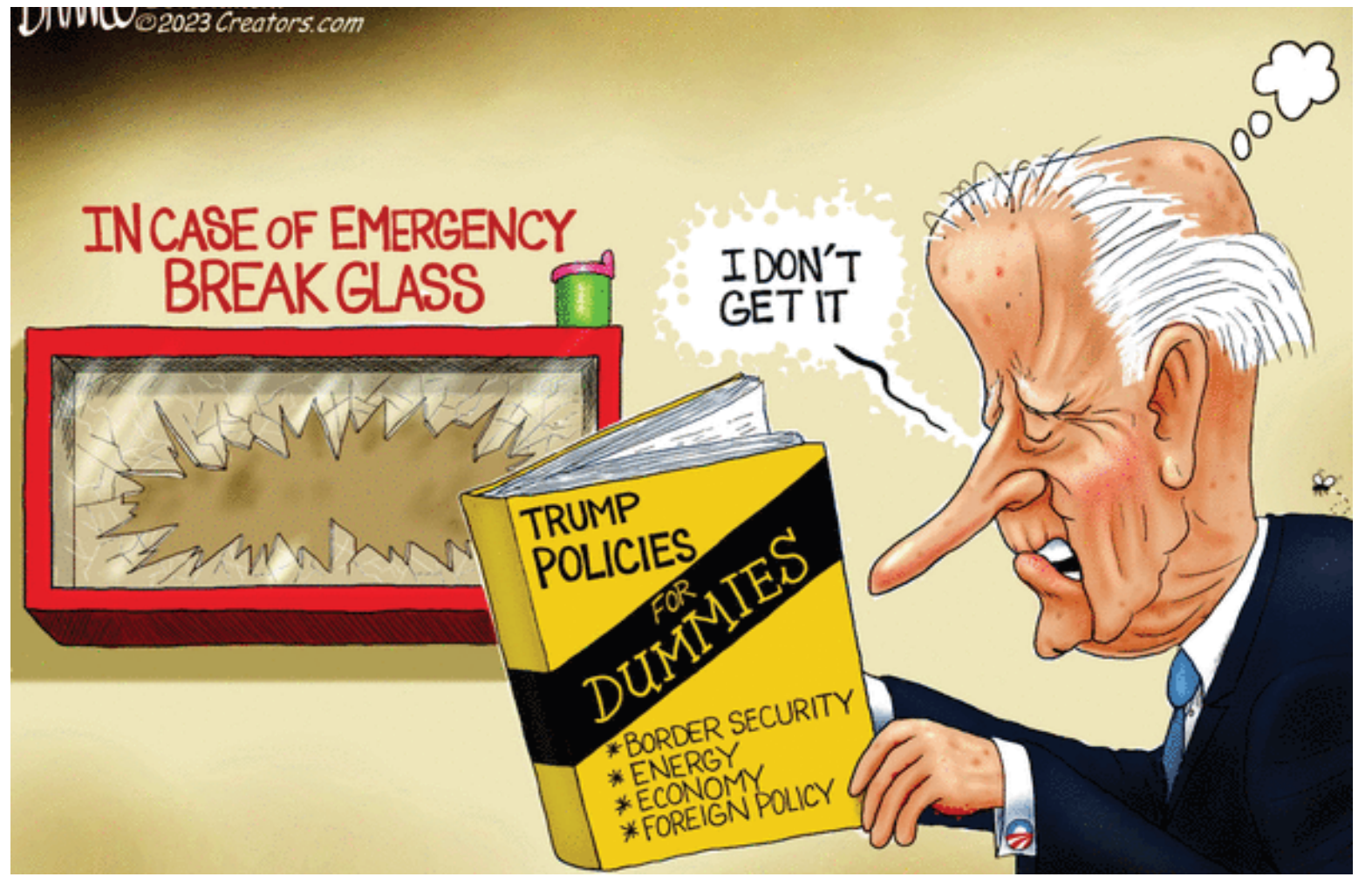
We are constantly putting our efforts at the national and international level." He stressed the concerted efforts by all the quarters concerned to fight the menace of drug addiction, particularly among youth.

The force is sparing no effort in carrying out its duties and protecting the young generation from the dangers of drugs, he said, adding "We pledge to carry forward our manifesto with utmost determination, sincerity, and devotion."

While sharing the details of a drive against drug smugglers, the ANF spokesperson said that total drug seizures by Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) in 2022 summed up to 227.2 metric tons, out of which ANF seizures were 116.2 metric tons, with ANF share amounting to 51.1% of complete IATF seizures.

By accounts of the drug make and type, ANF seizures of plant-based drugs were 79.986 metric tons (68.95% of seized drugs), synthetic drugs were 3.582 metric tons (3.08%), Chemical Precursors were 25.695 metric tons (22.11%) and other substances 6.9 metric tons (5.8%). Drug Traffickers used different modes; against which ANF seizures through land-based operations were 111.328 metric tons, seizures at seaports added up to 3.312 metric tons and airports were 428 kgs. Seizures against drug trafficking attempts through parcels at mailing offices were 1.147 metric tons.

He said 30 internationally coordinated intelligence operations were also conducted with assistance from international partners. 324 individuals were arrested in ANF's operations at airports to foil drug trafficking attempts to other countries, out of total arrests 1508 were made during the year. As many as 595 drug traffickers were convicted in various trials bringing the conviction rate to a remarkable 87%. He said that 1810 individuals received treatment at model addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers (MATRCs) in Karachi, Islamabad, Sukkur and Hyderabad.



Obstacles in Census, 2023

A census is a complete count or survey of a population of the country. Usually conducted by a government or a designated authority. The purpose of a census is to gather demographic and social data about a population, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, and housing. Censuses are typically conducted at regular intervals, usually every 10 years, and are important for policy-making, planning, and research purposes. In our country previously it was from 15 March 2017 and ended on 25 May 2017. The data collected from a census can be used to inform decisions related to funding, resource allocation, and the provision of services in areas such as education, healthcare, transportation, and housing.

Censuses can also be used to track changes in population size, composition, and distribution over time, and to identify patterns and trends that can inform social and economic policies. However, conducting a census can be a complex and challenging task, requiring significant resources and planning to ensure accuracy and completeness of data collection. Conducting a census in Pakistan poses several challenges and difficulties. Some of the major challenges include:

Pakistan has faced security challenges due to terrorism and political instability in various regions. This can make it difficult for enumerators to access certain areas, which can lead to undercounting and inaccurate data. Is a large country with diverse geographical terrain, including mountainous regions, deserts, and dense forests. This can make it difficult to access remote areas and also pose logistical challenges for the transportation of census materials. Our country has a low literacy rate, which can make it difficult for enumerators to

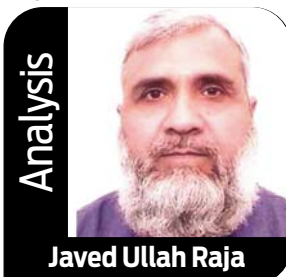
explain the purpose of the census and to collect accurate data. Some communities in the country may be reluctant to provide personal information, particularly about women and children, due to cultural sensitivities and privacy concerns. We have not sufficient resources to conduct a comprehensive census, which can result in incomplete data and undercounting of certain populations.

In one day, we can collect only eight to ten families by applying our struggle, enumerators said. Apart from this, the difficulties faced by the staff include the fact that the current census is being carried out according to the maps of many years ago. While in the blocks grown considerably with the time. We are being paid Rs 25000 for data collection of one block. In addition to the strictness, the disrespect is separating. While we are also bound by the institution to complete our work before April 10. Because for each person has many entries to update the work. While the peoples do not give us much time to complete. They provide some information, while they do not provide some, saying that write down what you have, and give the rest later. When asked about water supply in the houses, the answer is if there is none, then what will you provide us? And when asked about radio and television, the answer that there is no television, but the cost of the television fee has been deducted on monthly basis with electricity bills since many years. Some people say that polio campaigners have damaged the image of more than harassing people at home. It seems like there isn't a single day that they visit. So now, whenever someone knocks on the door, it is taken very seriously, and this has

become a daily routine. This has caused a lot of frustration among the people. Some educated individuals have also questioned why the government needs to collect new data about individuals when every citizen's information is already available with the Nadra. However, it is being heard from the enumerators' side that while they do have information about individuals, they do not have information about their residences and locations, which are essential for everyone. Therefore, the government needs to collect the data. There are many reasons why people in Pakistan are reluctant to give their exact information in the census. Some of the main reasons are: Many people in our nation have a general lack of trust in the government due to historical instances of corruption and abuse of power. This lack of trust can make people hesitant to share personal information with government institutions. By taking responsibility and cooperating with others, we can successfully complete the census campaign. As responsible citizens, we should not hesitate to lend our support in any matter. If each individual does what they can in their own capacity, they can demonstrate their responsibility as good citizens and help our country emerge from various crises. We should realize that our collective sense of responsibility can be the key to getting our country out of crisis. The deadline for the census campaign from the enumerators is said April 10th of next month, and those responsible for conducting the census are our own government agencies, including teachers from our children's schools. We should cooperate with them, as they are our brothers and those responsible for

our country's welfare. Furthermore, those who are coming to our homes to help us with the census campaign are also working for the good of our country. Therefore, we should cooperate with them fully. To facilitate the process for the public, we can fill out the census form before hand and leave it at home, which will only take us a difficult half hour to complete. Whether we are at home or not, when the census staff arrives, we can provide them with the completed form. This will not only make it easier for us, but also for the census workers. It is our responsibility to participate in the census to ensure that accurate and comprehensive data is collected. This involves providing truthful and complete information about themselves and our family members. By doing so, individuals can help to ensure that government policies and programs are based on accurate data, which can help to improve their own lives and the lives of others in their communities.

In addition to participating in the census, we should also help to raise awareness about the importance of the census and encourage others to participate. This can involve educating others about the purpose of the census and how the data collected can be used to inform decision-making and improve the provision of public services. Individuals can also support efforts to ensure that the census is conducted in a fair and transparent manner, and that political interference is minimized. This can involve monitoring the census process and reporting any instances of misconduct or bias. Overall, individuals in Pakistan is to actively participate in the census process, promote the importance of the census 2023, and support efforts to ensure that the census is conducted in an accurate and transparent manner in our country this time.



Javed Ullah Raja

Mitti Ki Dua



Prof Fazal Tanha Gharshin

A region, suffering from acute starvation and persistent insecurity, cannot become creative and literary easily. In multilingual Balochistan, literature is stunted, wasting and moves at snail's pace. Not to speak of English or Urdu literature, even local literature is in deplorable state in Balochistan. At the time that literature is on the deathbed in the province, the publication of Mitti Ki Dua by Salim Hasni in our national language (Urdu) is not less than a blessing.

Salim Hasni is lecturer in English by profession and belongs to district Barkhan. Mitti Ki Dua is his first Urdu poetry collection. The collection contains forty poems and ten ghazals. His poetry is all about love, peace and tranquility, but sometimes he protests against modern slavery and women's persecution in symbolic tune.

Successful love creates population; while broken love creates unique and beautiful thoughts. When love becomes a scattering dream, then its aroma spreads everywhere. Hasni's unfulfilled dreams have morphed into balanced thinking, colorful imaginations and

sweet verses. To him, beauty exists in distance — the farther the distance between the lover and the beloved, the greater the beauty will develop. He is not obsessed with power, fame and wealth; rather he is in the search of music, dance, painting and smiling. He expects his darling to be fond of literature and entertainment. The unfaithfulness of his darling brings more power to his poetic imagination.

Hasni believes that the concept of love has come after the invention of the wheel. To him, before the invention of the wheel, there was neither cloth nor veil — everything was unveiled. He is in the favor of women empowerment and women freedom. He hates toxic masculinity and male superiority.

Like Atta Shad, Hasni loves his native place (Balochistan) the most. In Mitti Ki Dua, he praises Bolan, Chiltan, Koh-i-Sulaiman, Quetta, Ghavarikh, etc. to an exaggerating level. He pays rich tribute to the natural resources of Balochistan, and does not want these resources be exploited by foreigners. He uses different symbols, colors and sounds to express his ideas. His Urdu poetry collection (Mitti Ki Dua) is worth reading.

Mitti Ki Dua will prove to be an important chapter in Balochistan's Urdu literature. It is hoped that Mitti Ki Dua will be appreciated by Balochistani Urdu intellectuals and Salim Hasni will also continue writing Urdu poetry and publishing literary books. More power to him!

Prof. Fazal Tanha Gharshin is Lecturer at Degree College Pishin.

Blinken promises review of Afghan withdrawal to Congress

Members of Congress have been demanding information about August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told lawmakers on Wednesday that the State Department has been putting together a review of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and will share findings with Congress by mid-April.

"We've now been spending time putting all of this together to make sure that we look at some of the common lessons learned," Blinken said in testimony to a Senate Appropriations Committee subcommittee hearing.

"I am committed and determined to make that information available to Congress, and we will do that. We will do that by mid-April. So I can tell you today, you'll have the after-action review. We will share the findings and find the appropriate mechanism to do that within the next three weeks."

Members of Congress have been



demanding information about the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years in what was the US's longest war. The Republican chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee

threatened this week to issue a subpoena if the State Department does not produce documents it has requested.

John Kirby, the top spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, told reporters the main takeaways from the review would be released to the public and shared with the House committee.

Republicans, who took control of the House in January, say there has never been a full accounting of the chaotic operation, in which 13 US service members were killed at Kabul's airport.

Hundreds of US citizens and many thousands of Afghans who had worked with American forces were left behind as they were seeking to flee from the Taliban, the militant group that resumed control of Afghanistan. Reuters

Altaf Bhat pays glowing tributes to martyred Abdul Majeed Dar

Spokesman Report

SRINAGAR: The APHC AJK leader, Altaf Ahmed Bhat remembering the frontline freedom fighter Shaheed Abdul Majeed Dar on his 20th martyrdom anniversary paid glowing tributes to Abdul Majeed Dar.



Abdul Majeed Dar was martyred on this day in 2003 outside his house in Sopore town.

Altaf Ahmed Bhat in a statement said that martyr Abdul Majeed Dar was a visionary man and played an important role in ongoing freedom movement. He also paid homage to Kashmir martyrs including top martyr leader Syed Ali Gilani, Muhammad Ashraf Sehria, Shaikh Abdul Aziz, Masood Tantray, Muhammad Maqbool Allie, Abdullah Bangroo, Ajaz Dar, Ghulam Rasool Dar, Shamsul Haq, Haji Abdul Ghani Butt, Ali Muhammad Dar, Ghazi Naseeb u din, Ishfaq Majeed Wani, Hameed Sheikh, Burhan Wani, Mirza Aslam Khan, Imtiyaz Ahmad, Farooq Mircha, Raouf Rasool, Asghar Rehman, Muhammad Ayoub Bandy, Haji Bilal, Mushtaq Ahmad Babu and Ghulam Rasool. He said that the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs would not be allowed to go waste and their mission would be accomplished at all costs.

He also congratulated the government and people of Pakistan on the Pakistan Day. Thanking Pakistan for its unconditional support, Altaf Ahmed Bhat said that for the last 76 years Pakistan openly supported the right to self-determination of Kashmiris and helps us on political, diplomatic and moral levels and we believe Pakistan will take practical steps and continue to do so until Kashmir is free from Indian occupation."

He said that the Kashmiris' right to self determination is the continuation of the Pakistan Movement.

Wishing a happy Ramazan to muslims all around the world Altaf Ahmed Bhat said that, Ramazan is the month of blessings and prayers. Let's remember the oppressed and besieged muslims of Kashmir and Palestine in our prayers.

Biden Admin must insist on transparency in Kashmir: Dr. Fai

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: Once again, the United States Department of State has issued its latest report on human rights practices around the world. The report was issued on March 20, 2023. The section on India (around 39 pages) contains graphic documentation of human rights violations being committed by the Indian military and paramilitary forces in Jammu & Kashmir. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, 'World Forum for Peace & Justice' underscored that the scale of gripping wrongdoing in Kashmir dwarfs what was witnessed in Bosnia and East Timor prior to international intervention, yet the world powers have watched the people of Kashmir suffer like spectators at the Roman Coliseum. That complacency gives at least the impression that Kashmiri lives and hopes are worth less than those of others.

This report Fai added at least takes the veil of secrecy off of India's crimes against humanity. Perhaps now the United Nations can share the outrage felt by the people of Kashmir.

Here are the excerpts of the report given below.

While as "Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP)" has reported that there are 8 to 10 thousand persons who have disappeared in Kashmir, Amnesty international echoed, "India: 'If they are dead, tell us' - 'Disappearances' in Jammu and Kashmir." The State Department report mentions the following regarding disappearances. "In March 2021, UN special rapporteurs asked the central government to provide details regarding allegations of arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances in Jammu and Kashmir, including the status of Naseer Ahmad Wani, who disappeared in 2019 after being questioned by army soldiers. The location of Wani was still unknown at year's end."

The report adds: "On July 29, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance and UN special rapporteurs expressed concern over continued allegations of lack of identification, protection, and preservation of large numbers of unmarked single and mass burial sites in Kashmir, including the failure to conduct proper forensic investigations, efforts to search for the forcibly disappeared, and the lack of progress in identifying the remains of individuals buried therein in accordance with international standards. The rapporteurs stated they were concerned by reports of intimidation and harassment against individuals and civil society organizations, including human rights defenders and journalists, who called for investigation and accountability."

The report details many instances where the use of draconian laws has given sense of total impunity to the Indian army in Kashmir. It states, "The Public Safety Act (PSA), which applies only in Jammu and Kashmir, permits authorities to detain persons without charge or judicial review for up to two years without visitation from family members. In April, the press reported that more than 500 persons remained in detention under the PSA in Jammu and Kashmir." It is pertinent to mention here that Amnesty International calls PSA as, 'Lawless law'.

Turkmenistan, Qatar agree to strengthen bilateral ties

The state visit of the president of Turkmenistan to Qatar was held

Spokesman Report

DOHA: On March 19-20, 2023, the state visit of the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov to the State of Qatar took place.

On March 20, in the first half of the day, the meeting of the President of Turkmenistan with the heads of leading companies and investment organizations of Qatar was held at the "Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel". The business event was attended by representatives of the Qatar Chamber, the Qatari Businessmen Association, as well as major holdings as Delta Group, Turnkey Trading and Contracting, Shaheen Al Mohannadi Group, Bin Twar Group. On the sidelines of the event, an exhibition of products manufactured in our country was launched.

The representative of the Qatar Chamber noted that the first state visit of President Serdar Berdimuhamedov is designed to give effective incentives to bilateral contacts, primarily in economic partnership.

President Serdar Berdimuhamedov, stressing that today there are all conditions for bringing the Turkmen-Qatari contacts to a qualitatively new level, noted that Turkmenistan considers Qatar and its business circles as reliable partners.

Along with this, it was proposed to discuss in detail the possibilities for developing investment activities in such areas as energy, the agricultural complex, the textile



industry, scientific and innovative industries, urban planning, and the use of renewable energy sources.

Noting that in the trade and economic sphere the potential for building up cooperation is not fully tapped, the commitment of Turkmenistan to the creation of a council of businessmen together with Qatar was confirmed.

The readiness of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan to establish direct contacts with the Association of Businessmen of Qatar in order to strengthen the business platform was also indicated.

The importance of the joint Intergovernmental Turkmen-Qatari Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation as an important tool in deepening bilateral relations was emphasized. At the same time, the head of state expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the next meeting of the IGC in Ashgabat.

The need was also noted for increasing the volume of bilateral trade, increas-

ing oil and gas production in the Caspian Sea, creating modern high-tech industries in the petrochemical and gas chemical industries of Turkmenistan, and joint participation in international energy projects.

Qatari business associations were invited to participate in the implementation of projects on international pipelines. At the same time, readiness was expressed to involve Qatari partners in the implementation of projects in the transport infrastructure sector.

Among the promising vectors of bilateral relations was stressed the textile complex. In addition, a desire was expressed to study the successful experience of the formation and functioning of the financial system, financial and credit organizations, insurance companies, stock exchanges in Qatar.

Attention was paid to expanding contacts between business circles, the expediency of holding joint business forums, cross-exhibitions of commodity producers and companies in the service sector was noted.

During the meeting, a video was shown about the huge potential and rich natural resources of Turkmenistan, dynamically developing sectors of the national economy, large-scale projects of national and international importance being implemented.

Representatives of Qatari business noted that the bilateral dialogue is marked by stability and based on the principles of mutual understanding and trust, which is reflected in visits at the highest and high levels, and the strengthening of the legal framework.

During the presentations on the opportunities of companies of Qatar, Qatari business structures, having confirmed their readiness to invest in the economy of Turkmenistan, made a number of specific proposals aimed at expanding partnerships in the fuel and energy complex, through the export of oil and gas equipment, in the trade and economic sphere, in the field of industry, agriculture, food industry, construction, tourism.

Having indicated their readiness to expand their presence in the Turkmen market, to take part in the implementation of state programs and projects of international importance, the intention of leading Qatari companies to visit Turkmenistan to get acquainted on the spot with the favorable investment climate and conditions for doing business was expressed.

Xi's Russia visit deepens coop, contributes to human progress

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Russia from March 20 to 22 at the invitation of his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. The two leaders had sincere, friendly and fruitful talks on bilateral ties and major regional and international issues of mutual interest, and reached new and important common understanding in many fields.

The international community has spoken highly of Xi's visit, describing the journey of friendship, cooperation and peace as a historic milestone. Under the strategic guidance of Xi and Putin, China and Russia have enriched the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, and deepened practical cooperation in various fields, bringing more benefits to the people of the two countries, global observers have said.

They also expressed the belief that the visit will help improve global governance, promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and advance the cause of human progress.

On the fruitful results of Xi's visit, Vasily Kashin, director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at Russia's National Research University-Higher School of Economics, said head-of-state diplomacy is the key to the steady progress of Russia-China relations.

Noting the visit's major accomplishments in deepening the partnership and strengthening economic cooperation, Kashin believed that Russia-China relations will continue to develop healthily and rapidly.

For former Bolivian Foreign Minister Fernando Huanacuni, in the face of rising hegemonism and unilateralism, Xi's visit has injected more elements of stability and certainty into today's world. Xinhua

23rd March PAKISTAN DAY

"Organise the people economically, socially, educationally, and politically, and I am sure that you will be a power that will be accepted by everybody."

Quaid e Azam, 23rd March, 1940

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

[Twitter](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Facebook](#)
[YouTube](#)
[GovtofPakistan](#)
[GovtofPakistan](#)
[www.moib.gov.pk](#)
[#UNITEDPAKISTAN](#)

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
40,376.10	40,877.98
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,996.72	40,352.71
Index Value	Change
3,075,436,111	-501.88
Percentage	Time
-1.23%	22 Mar, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,568.39	+32.17
Percentage	Time
+0.43%	22 Mar, 4:00 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
32,526.50	-34.10
Percentage	Time
-0.10%	22 Mar, 12:01 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
27,466.61	+520.94
Percentage	Time
+1.93%	22 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187	189.4
Bahrain Dinar	749.55	757.55
Canadian Dollar	205	207.2
China Yuan	40.91	41.31
Danish Krone	40.77	41.17
Euro	302.5	305.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.92	36.27
Indian Rupee	3.41	3.52
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	919.22	928.22
Malaysian Ringgit	62.85	63.45
New Zealand \$	176.66	178.66
Norwegians Krone	26.33	26.63
Omani Riyal	731.97	739.97
Qatari Riyal	77.43	78.13
Saudi Riyal	75.4	76.2
Singapore Dollar	208	210
Swedish Korona	26.5	26.8
Swiss Franc	305.12	307.62
Thai Bhat	8.19	8.34
U.A.E Dirham	77.2	78
UK Pound Sterling	343.5	347
US Dollar	283.20	286.00

USAID, Coca-Cola sign MOU to support flood-affected communities

US Ambassador to Pakistan says the diaspora and the private sector are uniquely positioned to help with flood recovery

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) hosted the "Building Back Better Conference" at the Serena Hotel Islamabad to bring together representatives from different private and public organizations to discuss ways in which the US-Pakistani diaspora and the private sector can be engaged for post-flood recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

During the event an MOU was signed between The Coca-Cola Company and USAID to create a humanitarian and social development impact in Pakistan by addressing the immediate, short, and long-term needs of the flood-affected population and social development causes in Pakistan.

Under the MOU, USAID will collaborate with The Company on flood response activities and use its convening power to create an enabling environment to address operational challenges. Additionally, USAID will facilitate contacts through its network of relationships with the local business and diaspora of Paki-



stani nationals abroad for identifying possible partnership opportunities.

The Company, in turn, will collaborate

with USAID in flood-affected areas following a hybrid approach of creating a social and commercial impact. Additionally, The Compa-

ny will initiate community-based rural development initiatives in and around flood-affected areas and drive clean drinking water initiatives.

Speaking at the event, US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, said, "The diaspora and the private sector are uniquely positioned to help with flood recovery."

Fahad Ashraf, Vice-President of Coca-Cola Pakistan and Afghanistan, added that, "The most agile and sustainable way the private sector can kick-start economic recovery is by investing in economic supply chains that target communities from disaster-hit regions. Through this partnership, we aim to improve human impact and economic development, whilst expanding our commercial and humanitarian footprint.

Last year, The Coca-Cola Foundation, the global philanthropic arm of The Company, provided a grant of USD 250,000 to CARE International which supported immediate relief efforts with essential supplies. Through the National Disaster Authority (NDMA), Coca-Cola İçecek Pakistan also provided 120,000 liters of clean drinking water.

EV Charging Infrastructure Regulations 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: As the petrol and diesel prices continue to hit new highs and the climate crisis escalates, consumers and businesses are gradually adopting electric vehicles (EVs) to cut their costs and carbon emissions.

To ensure that the charging infrastructure is present and developed according to certain standards of accessibility, openness, and connectivity, National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) has developed the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Regulations 2023 to ensure that consumers are protected, and power grids are not overloaded due to substandard charging facilities. The proposed EV charging regulations are duly approved by the Technical Committee of NEECA's Board in its 11th meeting held on 21 March 2023.

The EV charging regulations set a series of standards that will help ensure a

more efficient and consistent EV charging network. Specifically, these regulations are directed at making EV charging infrastructure user-friendly, accessible, and reliable. It is also intended to manage future EV sales growth, ensuring they don't overload the power grid and cause disruptive blackouts. To support the transition to electric vehicles, a national charging network is required that makes finding a charging point as easy as filling up at a fuel station. The charging stations to contain a minimum number and type of chargers capable of supporting drivers' charging needs. Additionally, the proposed regulations would enforce consistency regarding the installation, operation and maintenance of the EV supply equipment (EVSE) to provide the EV users with reliable expectations for their charging experience.

The new regulations would further specify the required minimum density of provided chargers, payment methods and requirements for customer support

services. These charging regulations would help create a seamless national network of EV charging infrastructure that would communicate and operate on the same software platforms across Pakistan. It would also help create a public EV charging database; and network connectivity allowing for secure remote monitoring, diagnostics, control, and updates. These regulations will open door to new, emerging and evolving technologies like Vehicle-to-grid (V2G) that allows two-way power delivery between an EV's battery and the power grid. Compared to regular charging, which flows in one direction only from the grid to the car's battery, V2G allows EVs to momentarily push back power into the grid to balance variations in energy supply and demand. V2G's two-way power flow makes it a valuable source of backup power in case of loadshedding, bypassing the need for diesel generators. V2G can truly become a game-changer when applied at the scale of an entire power grid.

Pakistan Cables signs MoU with Steam Pakistan

Staff Reporter



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cables signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pak Alliance for Math & Science Welfare Trust (PAMS) to partner for employee volunteering through STEAM Pakistan. STEAM Pakistan is a collaboration between the Malala Fund and the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training.

Pakistan Cables will partner with STEAM Pakistan by putting forward volunteers that will promote subjects of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) among students of secondary classes of Govern-

ment schools through experiential learning.

Pakistan Cables Ltd. is an active advocate of the UN's sustainable development goals - SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Female Empowerment). Previously having rolled out ASCEND, its flagship initiative, to promote science and engineering related fields by offering scholarships and internships among female students among leading public sector engineering universities of Pakistan.

The collaboration for STEAM Pakistan is the second major initiative by the Company illustrating its commitment to youth empowerment.

L'Oréal Professionnel Institute of Pakistan welcomes its first batch

Bureau Report

KARACHI: L'Oréal Pakistan has taken a significant step towards empowering women in Pakistan with the launch of L'Oréal Professionnel Institute of Pakistan [LPIP]. The institute, which was officially launched in Karachi, aims to unlock the potential of aspiring hair-stylists in Pakistan and provide them with affordable, certified training opportunities to achieve financial independence. Consul General of France for Karachi, Monsieur Alexis Chahtahtinsky, was the guest of honor at the event.

L'Oréal Pakistan has partnered with CIRCLE, a women-led not-for-profit tech startup, to identify underprivileged women who have the passion but lack resources and direction to pursue their career in hairdressing. The first batch of 12 aspiring hair-stylists has been shortlisted, with six students receiving 100% scholarships, fully funded by L'Oréal Pakistan in partnership with CIRCLE.

The launch event, held in Movenpick Hotel Karachi, highlighted the need for such initiatives in Pakistan's economic and social ecosystem. It celebrated the L'Oréal Professionnel Institute of Pakistan [LPIP] vision and mission and recognized the team's commitment to the cause, which led to L'Oréal Pakistan being awarded the Global GEEIS-SDGs Trophy for Gender



Equality by the Arborus Endowment Fund for the platform, "LPRO Empowering The Salon Community" at the Europa Experience in Paris.

The event featured an introduction to the L'Oréal Professionnel Institute of Pakistan where The Country Managing Director of L'Oréal Pakistan, Qawi Naseer, also addressed the audience, along with General Manager Professional Products Division at L'Oréal Pakistan, Hassan Murad Khan, CIRCLE Founder Sadaf Abid, stylist, and long-term L'Oréal Partner Nabila Maqsood, followed by a keynote address by Consul General of France for Karachi, Monsieur Alexis Chahtahtinsky. The event also featured a presentation on State Bank

of Pakistan's various initiatives for women by Ms. Faiqa Naseem, Deputy Director at Agricultural Credit and Financial Inclusion Department, State Bank of Pakistan. Various partner salons, along with the 12 students from the first batch, were also in attendance.

Consul General of France for Karachi, Monsieur Alexis Chahtahtinsky said, "It is heartening to see a global beauty leader, such as L'Oréal, make efforts to empower women in Pakistan through initiatives such as L'Oréal Professionnel Institute of Pakistan. This is a great example of how businesses can contribute to society while creating opportunities for people to achieve their potential."

Uzbekistan envoy calls for increasing trade with Pakistan to \$1b

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov has said that to increase the bilateral trade with Pakistan to 1 billion dollars, direct contacts between the businessmen of the two countries will be promoted and in this regard, Pakistani investors will be encouraged. All kinds of facilities will be provided.

He was talking to Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq. He welcomed the recent agreement between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and said that necessary steps are being taken to achieve its goals. He invited the delegation of Faisalabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry to visit Uzbekistan so that they can see the import and export potential of Uzbekistan.

The envoy expressed regret over the damage caused to the cotton crop by the recent floods and said that Uzbekistan can provide cotton to Pakistan as per its requirements. He also informed about the efforts being made for peace and order in Afghanistan for access to Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states.

Dr. Khurram Tariq said that despite the fraternal relations between the two countries, the trade volume is very low, and an agreement has been signed recently to increase it. Under this agreement, apart from the trade of goods, services can also be exchanged.

ESG, tech and affordability top travel trends at ITB Berlin, says TIME Hotels CEO

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: According to the CEO of UAE-based TIME Hotels, Mohamed Awadalla, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), technology and affordability were the key travel trends at this year's ITB trade exhibition, which took place earlier this month, in Berlin, Germany.

Speaking with hundreds of travel professionals during the three-day show, the team from TIME Hotels found that climate change, social responsibility, ethical management, technology and affordability were particularly prominent with Gen Z and Millennial travellers.

"Climate change was clearly the most important issue. Being media savvy generations, we found that they wanted to see tangible evidence that hotels were making a concerted effort to reduce their carbon emissions, whether that is eradicating single use plastics and toiletries, installing LED lighting, water diffusers, recycling efforts, air conditioning modulators or solar panels," said Mohamed Awadalla, CEO, TIME Hotels.

"Some even went as far as checking if hotels were participating in carbon offset programmes and employing net zero strategies. If hotels want to compete for market share from this demographic,



addressing their impact on the environment is essential," he added.

According to TIME's executives at ITB, another issue that was very important to Gen Z and Millennial travellers was diversity and inclusion

of employees was also of great interest to them, as well as support for local community programmes and charitable donations," said Awadalla. Affordability was also a key issue. Although traditionally, the German outbound travel market predominantly has one winter and one summer holiday, younger travellers would rather have mores shorter breaks, which are better suited to their work-life balance.

"The younger travellers spoke to were also more inclined to choose value options, such a four-star hotel, rather than five-star luxury beach resorts, to stretch their annual holiday budget further," added Awadalla.

Soneri Bank posts PBT of Rs4,554mln

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Board of Directors of Soneri Bank Limited, in their 196th meeting held in Lahore, announced the Bank's financial results for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The Bank posted profit before tax (PBT) of Rs. 4,554 million and profit after tax (PAT) of Rs. 1,883 million for the year ended December 2022, as compared to Rs. 5,149 million and Rs. 2,854 million respectively for the prior year. The Bank's EPS was recorded at Rs. 1.7082 per share for the current reporting period, as compared to Rs. 2.5889 per share for the year 2021.

The Bank's Net Interest income for the year ended at Rs. 11,267 million, increasing by 3.01 percent against Rs. 10,938 million for the prior year, while non-interest income increased by 20.21 percent to end at Rs. 5,157 million as against Rs. 4,290 million for the last year. Despite inflationary pressures, growth in expenses was restricted at 20.16 percent as compared to the prior year with Non-markup expenses reported at Rs. 12,245 million for the year ended December 2022.

The Board of Directors has recommended cash dividend for the year ended 31 December 2022 @ 10.00 percent i.e. Rs. 1.00 per share (2021: @ 15.00 percent i.e. Rs. 1.50 per share), subject to shareholders' approval in the forthcoming AGM.

The Bank's net advances portfolio increased to Rs. 208,434 million as at 31 December 2022, 25.95 percent higher than the year end 2021 level, while the Bank's Non-performing loans to total Advances ratio improved to 4.71 percent (December 2021: 5.95 percent). Specific coverage was at 71.61 percent (December 2021: 76.51 percent).

Bank's Deposits registered an increase of 1.64 percent when compared to 31 December 2021, ending at Rs. 409,643 million at 31 December 2022. The Bank's CA mix improved to 32.73 percent in December 2022 as against 27.17 percent at December 2021, with year end Current Accounts at Rs. 134,080 million as against Rs. 109,494 million at the year end 2021.

As a result of the changes introduced by the Finance Act 2022, the overall effective tax rate for the Bank for the year ended 31 December 2022 stood at 58.65 percent (2021: 44.57 percent).

