



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ تم لوگوں نے اس  
شخص کو بلا کر دیکھ لیا اس کی ہیشت توڑ دی۔  
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 2663)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI

## Qatar Sheikh submits new \$6bn bid for Manchester United

Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani has submitted a new bid to buy Manchester United which is believed to be worth around 5 billion pounds (\$6.12 billion), Sky News reported on Saturday. (Details on Page 7)



## Coalition govt to lead country out of crisis: Agha Hassan Baloch

Federal Minister of Science and Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch Saturday said the incumbent coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will lead the country out of the economic crisis and ensure provision of a better quality of life to the people. In a statement, the federal minister, who is also Central Information Secretary of BNP, held Imran Khan responsible for the current political and economic crisis.

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## Pakistan - The Beautiful

Waziristan: Beautiful view of Zamchina area of Normal Tehsil of Lower South Waziristan tribal district.



## Imran should tell nation about 'destruction' caused by PTI's four years misrule: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD, MAR 25 (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, on Saturday taking a dig at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan, said he should tell the participants of the rally at Minar-e-Pakistan tonight about his "forbidden foreign funding, Toshakhana gifts theft and Tyrian White". Using her twitter handle, the minister said Imran should tell the nation about his four years of misrule which plunged the country into unprecedented inflation, unemployment and destruction. The minister said that a person who looted the country and pushed it into the mire

of destruction and division, cannot salvage it as "he is only a fraud and a terrorist." She said the "real freedom" narrative which started from the [taunts] of neutral animals, the indefinite extension offer to the then Army Chief General (Retd) Bajwa came all the way to implicate Shehbaz Sharif and Mohsin Naqvi's role in his [Imran] ouster, and finally concluded at seeking pardons from the United States. She said the narrative of real freedom "has been buried and its funeral will be held tonight". The time has come for the nation to get real freedom from the "instigator terrorist", she maintained.

# PM directs officials to ensure free flour for needy persons

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday said provision of free flour to needy should be ensured with the aim to lessen difficulties of people in the month of Ramazan. He was chairing a review meeting here for provision of free flour to the people of Islamabad capital territory. He said the government was taking all possible measures to reduce the difficulties of poor people in Ramazan. "After my visits to Lahore, Kasur and Sargodha, I will visit other cities to oversee the process for supply of free flour and to ensure quality." The PM instructed that those eligible persons who were not registered with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and could not get free flour, should be immediately

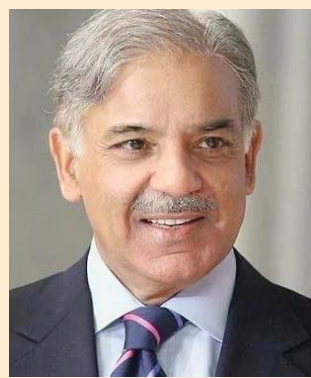
## PM Shehbaz Sharif felicitates PM Sheikh Hasina on the National Day of Bangladesh

ABC

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has extended congratulations on his behalf and behalf of the government and people of Pakistan to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, H.E Sheikh Hasina on the occasion of the National Day of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister in his message of felicitation said that Pakistan accords importance to its relationship with Bangladesh and looks forward to further strengthening the bilateral ties to the mutual benefit of the people

ly registered. He directed that counters of National Database



of the two countries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also conveyed his best wishes for the long life, good health,

and happiness of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and for the continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly Bangladeshi people.

and Registration Authority (NADRA) and BISP should be

immediately opened at the flour distribution points.

He further directed that any needy person who comes to the free flour distribution center, should be given flour and in this regard all relevant departments should take steps. The meeting was told that the provision of free flour was continuing in Punjab, Khyer Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad and a large number of families were benefitting from the scheme.

It was told that the number of free flour distribution centers was being increased in Islamabad to facilitate people coming to obtain flour.

Federal Ministers Rana Sanaullah, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Advisor to PM Ahad Cheema, former members of National Assembly Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Anjum Aqeel and officers concerned attended the meeting.

PM calls for collective efforts to save planet Earth.

## PTI challenges ECP order to delay polls in Punjab, KP

TLTP

ISLAMABAD: Another round of litigation between Election Commission of Pakistan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf may commence in the Supreme Court where as many as 52450 pending cases are waiting for disposal currently.

PTI on Saturday challenged the recent decision of the ECP to change the date of election in Punjab and KP as both the provincial assemblies' speakers Sibtain Khan and Mushtaq Ghani respectively have filed a joint constitutional petition on behalf of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Assad Umar, Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed and Abdul Rehman have been among joint petitioners. The federation, Punjab and KPK have been made parties along with the ministry of parliamentary affairs, ministry of law and the cabinet in the PTI petition.

A contempt of court petition has also been filed in the Supreme Court against postponement of elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakh-

tunkhwa provinces.

The prime minister, chief ministers, Governor KP and Chief Election Commissioner have been made party in the contempt petition filed by G.M. Chaudhry advocate, a resident of Islamabad.

"The Supreme Court had ordered the election commission and federal government for holding elections in Punjab and KP," the petition read. "All state institutions are bound to enforce the supreme court's orders and non-compliance will be contempt of the court under Article 204 of the constitution," according to the petition.

"The government is spending funds on projects that could not be preferred over elections. The government misinterprets the supreme court's March 1st order and intends to escape from the elections," the petition read.

The petitioner pleads to the court to initiate contempt of the court proceedings against the government under the constitution. The court ordered the respondents to hold elections as per the ruling of the court, petitioner said.

## Pakistan Day parade called off

ABC

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Day Parade has been cancelled owing to bad weather in Islamabad, the Awwan-e-Sadar said Saturday.

The event was postponed to March 25 due to inclement weather earlier this week.

The military parade is observed each year on March 23. The event is at the centre of celebrations to commemorate the 1940 Lahore Resolution that called for the establishment of an independent country for the Muslims of British-ruled India.

Earlier, the Pakistan Army decided to hold the annual parade of the armed forces on the Pakistan Day on a limited scale, joining the government's austerity drive that aims at warding off the economic crisis.

Pakistan Army stands firmly united with the masses and will continue to work for the development of the country, the sources said.

## IMF official says Pakistan must explain fuel-pricing scheme before any loan deal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A long-awaited loan agreement between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will be signed once a few remaining points, including a proposed fuel pricing scheme, are settled, an IMF official said on Friday.

Pakistan and the IMF have been negotiating since early February on an agreement that would release \$1.1 billion to the cash-strapped, nuclear-armed country of 220 million people.

The latest issue is a plan, announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last week, to charge affluent consumers more for fuel, with the money raised used to subsidise prices for the poor, who have been hit hard by inflation. In February it was running at its highest in 50 years.

The plan involves a difference of around 100 rupees (35 U.S. cents) a litre between the prices paid by the rich and poor, according to the petroleum ministry.

Petroleum Minister Musadik



Malik told Reuters on Friday that his ministry was working out details. It was not a subsidy but a relief programme, he said.

"People with larger cars will pay more than people with smaller cars. Smaller cars are more fuel efficient, so people will move towards more fuel-efficient cars," Malik said.

IMF NEEDS EXPLANATION But the IMF's resident representative in Pakistan, Esther Perez Ruiz, said the government had not consulted the fund about the scheme.

Ruiz, in a message to Reuters, confirmed a media report that a staff-level agreement would be signed once a few remaining points, including the fuel scheme, were settled.

She has said that the IMF would

ask the government for more details, including how it would be implemented and what protections would be put in place to prevent abuse.

The minister said the scheme wouldn't cost the government anything extra.

"We can explain all this to the IMF when they ask," he said, adding that the lender was in touch with the finance ministry not his.

The finance ministry did not immediately respond to a request for a comment.

With \$4.6 billion in foreign exchange reserves held by Pakistan's central bank in the week ending March 17, enough to cover only about four weeks of necessary imports, Pakistan is desperate for the IMF agreement to disperse a \$1.1 billion tranche from a \$6.5 billion bailout agreed in 2019.

Islamabad has implemented several measures, including devaluing the rupee, lifting subsidies and raising energy prices, as preconditions for the agreement, which the finance minister said this month was "very close".

## Fed govt bans GB CM, Governor from carrying security to other provinces

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The PML-N led federal government on Saturday banned the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) governor and chief minister from carrying the official security personnel along with them during visits to other provinces.

The interior ministry has circulated the copies of notification to all the chief secretaries and Inspector General's of police in this regard. The concerned province would provide the security, the document added.

The ministry also issued the same orders to the federal capital administration.

The federal government had, a couple of days ago, initiated proceedings after a piece of news surfaced that the GB CM Khalid Khurshid Khan had used his police force security to protect Paksitan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan from possible arrest.

## Subsidiary fruit stall

KARACHI: People standing in a queue at a fruit stall established by a non-profit organization near Jail Chowrangi, where people can buy fruits at the price of Rs 10 per kg.



Photo: APP

# PM Shehbaz contacts Nawaz Sharif after Alvi stressed for 'Timely Polls'

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif after President Dr Arif Alvi emphasised 'timely elections' in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The telephonic conversation came a day after President Alvi wrote to PM Shehbaz, asking the premier to direct federal and provincial authorities to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding the Punjab

and KP elections in accordance with the orders of the Supreme Court (SC).

Sources told ARY News that the prime minister has accelerated consultation following the letter by the President. During the conversation, Nawaz Sharif directed the PML-N president to present all the facts before the nation.

Meanwhile, Shehbaz Sharif also held meetings with Azam Nazeer Tarar and other PML-N leaders in this regard. The participants of the meeting proposed to give an 'effective reply' to President Alvi's letter.



A day earlier, President Alvi wrote to PM Shehbaz Sharif, asking the premier to direct the concerned authorities to assist Election Commission of Pakistan

(ECP) in conducting the polls in Punjab and KP.

In the letter, the president asked the premier to take measures in order to not get involved in contempt court

complexities.

He said that the prime minister, as the head of the government, was responsible for safeguarding human rights as well as the fundamental rights of every citizen.

Citing Article 46 of the Constitution, which states the prime minister will keep the president informed on all policy matters and legislative proposals by the federal government, Alvi said: "It is a matter of concern that no meaningful consultation with the president on policy issues has been undertaken by the prime minister in line with the above article."

## Containers placed in Lahore as PTI holds Minar-e-Pakistan jalsa

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: The local administration has placed shipping containers at various locations as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is all set to hold its jalsa at Lahore's monumental Minar-e-Pakistan at around 9pm.

The local administration has placed containers on the ways leading to Minar-e-Pakistan, including GT Road, Cup Store and Du Mauria Bridge. The road heading from Data Darbar towards Minar-e-Pakistan has also been closed off from both sides.

Other routes including Minar-e-Pakistan from Lower Mall, Shahdara from Niazi Chowk, Badami Bagh and



Purani Sabzi market were also closed by placing containers

The administration has taken the step in a bid to stop PTI workers supporters from other towns and cities in Punjab from reaching the rally venue.

'Workers being arrested' Talking to journalists, PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that the party workers were being arrested ahead of Minar-e-Pakistan Rally.

"Despite the Lahore High

Court orders to hold political gathering, the government has placed containers in different parts of the city to create hurdles for PTI workers," he noted.

Shah Mehmood further stated that the police was conducting raids and arresting PTI leaders, adding that almost 1800 PTI workers have been arrested so far. Qureshi maintained that holding the rally was our constitutional right.

'Will break all records' Meanwhile, PTI Chairman Imran Khan - taking to Twitter - said that called on his supporters in Lahore to attend the jalsa after Taraweeh prayers which he believes will "break all records."

The former prime minister announced that he will give his vision of "Haqqeqi Azadi" and how to pull the country out of the mess the "cabal of crooks have put our country in."

"My heart tells me it will break all records. I am inviting everyone in Lahore to attend after Tarawih prayers. I will give my vision of Haqqeqi Azadi and how we will pull Pakistan out of the mess cabal of crooks have put our country in," Imran said.

He also expressed concerns that the government may erect obstacles to prevent party supporters from reaching the venue, saying that it was the fundamental right of the people to participate in a political gathering.

## PTI Chief Imran Khan addresses party workers, supporters



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan is addressing the party's jalsa at Lahore's Minar-e-Pakistan on Saturday night.

PTI president Pervaiz Elahi and other party leaders - including Asad Qaiser Pervez Khattak and Qasim Suri - were present on the stage.

Addressing the power show, Imran Khan praised party workers and supporters for reaching the venue despite 'the hurdles created by the Punjab government'.

The PTI chief alleged that his government was overthrown under a 'conspiracy' and 'gang of criminals' were imposed on the country. "A message should be sent today that no one cannot stop the people of Pakistan by force," he added.

Lambasting the Punjab government for 'creating hurdles', Imran Khan claimed they over 2,000 PTI

workers have been taken and containers were placed to prevent party supporters from reaching the venue.

"The people of Pakistan have borne all kinds of oppression", the former premier said, adding that a nation cannot progress if it does not 'resists the oppression'. He added that a nation gets 'real freedom' when there is 'supremacy of rule of law'.

"It is unfortunate that in the country's history, our democratic leaders never upheld rule of law," he said, adding that Constitution and law were abolished during martial law.

The former prime minister also lambasted the government for 'registering bogus cases' against him, saying that they have registered 143 'fake cases' under several charges - including terrorism and blasphemy.

He also criticised Pakistan People's Party (PPP) over 'atrocities' in interior Sindh, saying that people of interior Sindh were helpless as 'Zardari Mafia' was imposed on them.

## Sanaullah says 'traitor' using Minar-e-Pakistan to perpetuate lies

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD : Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief Imran Khan on Saturday saying the traitor was spreading lies at an important site of Minar-e-Pakistan.

Targeting Imran Khan, he said PTI chief should not be allowed to hold a rally at the Minar-e-Pakistan due to his 'anti-state' activities adding his stance now not focused on anti-America slogan.

He said Imran Khan wanted real freedom from constitution, law, Toshakhana, foreign funding and Teryan cases.

Mr Sanaullah added Imran Khan wanted real freedom to make every institution and its leader his subservient and the nation had seen before his movement at the D chowk.

The minister highlighted that Imran Khan wanted complete freedom to start looting and plundering in the country again.

## Police, Rangers arrest head of street criminals' gang

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: An alleged ringleader of the street criminal gang has been arrested during a joint raid of police and Rangers in Karachi.

According to the Rangers' spokesman, the arrested accused was heading a gang of street criminals in the Godhra and the New Karachi area.

The spokesman added that the accused's accomplice Waseem alias Jailer was killed by a security guard firing on March 18, while he managed to escape from the scene.

Meanwhile, the accused confessed to his involvement in many crimes including robberies.

It is pertinent to mention here that an alleged dacoit was shot dead by a security guard in the New Karachi area of the metropolis.

According to the police officials, the deceased dacoit - identified as Waseem aka jailer - is a 'criminal' and was arrested several times on criminal charges.

The police have shifted the body to a local hospital for medico-legal formalities while an investigation into the incident has been launched.

## Hassan Niazi to be handed over to Lahore police

### News Desk

QUETTA: Lahore police have sought the custody of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan's nephew - Barrister Hassan Khan Niazi.

Balochistan Home Department has penned down a letter to province's Inspector-General (IG), instructing the latter to hand over Hassan Niazi to Lahore police.

The Quetta police had registered a case against Hassan Khan Niazi for inciting violence and interfering in government affairs.

In the letter, the home department noted the PTI leader was wanted by Lahore Police in FIR No. 388/23.

## UNICEF makes urgent appeal for funds amid Yemen humanitarian crisis

### News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Nearly 11 million children in Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance after eight years of conflict and without urgent action, millions could face ever greater risks of hunger and malnourishment, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned.

"The lives of millions of vulnerable children in Yemen remain at risk due to the almost unimaginable, unbearable, consequences of the crushing, unending war," Peter Hawkins, the agency's representative in the country, said in a statement on Friday.

"UNICEF has been here, providing desperately needed support throughout the past eight years, and before, but we can only provide so much

support to children and families affected without a lasting peace."

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen stems from 2015, when Houthi militias clashed with the forces of the internationally-recognized Government, dividing the country, displacing millions and destroying essential services and infrastructure.

Despite a long truce and recent progress along the road to peace, a devastating convergence of compounding factors has unfolded: eight years of fierce conflict, economic collapse, and a crippled social support system, denying the vulnerable essential services, UNICEF pointed out.

Between March 2015 and November 2022, more than 2.3 million children have been displaced, 11,000 have been



killed or seriously injured, over 4,000 have been recruited by the warring parties, and there have been more than 900 attacks on - and the illegal military use of - educational and health facilities. These are verified figures, but the true toll is likely much higher, the agency said.

"After eight years, many children and families feel stuck in a perpetual cycle of hopeless-

ness," Hawkins said. "Visiting a family recently who have been displaced from their homes for over seven years, you realize that for too many families, little of their situation has changed beyond the children's faces."

Children have grown up knowing little but conflict, providing these children with some room for hope of a peaceful future is absolutely critical."

### Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR :The AJK State authorities are ensuring special Ramadan Bazars in various major cities and towns with the provision of an adequate supply of edibles to the general consumers at subsidized rates during the Holy month of Ramadan.

On the special directives of the state government to all district administration of the state, the administration has launched special Ramadan Bazars in various parts of the district including one in front of MUST University's city campus at central Allama Iqbal Road.

Deputy Commissioner Ch. Amjad Iqbal told APP, here on Saturday, that in Mirpur city, the main Ramadan Bazars had been set up at Allama Iqbal Road and central Nangi area where all quality edibles would be available at inexpensive rates as compared to the general market, fixed by the district price control committee.

The vendors at Ramadan bazars will be bound to display the rate lists of the commodities, determined by

the authorities, at a visible place at their sale points from 8.30am in the morning, he said.

When questioned that what preventive steps were being taken by the administration to take punitive action against the profiteers and hoarders, the deputy commissioner stated that an extensive drive has already been kicked off across the district to overcome the artificial price-hike on the part of the shopkeepers involved in overcharging besides creating artificial scarcity and hoarding.

Mobile teams headed by magistrates have yet been constituted to conduct surprise checking of the prices and the shopkeepers - both wholesalers and retailers, involved in charging exorbitant rates would be booked.

Besides, general shopkeepers, wholesalers and owners of the main shopping malls have also been warned to maintain the prices of the items of daily use - fixed by the administration - during and even after the Holy month of Ramadan. "The violators would be taken to task under the law", he warned.

# Sardar Ali Shah announces training of newly recruited JEST teachers in first Phase

Zainab Hyder

KARACHI: Syed Sardar Ali Shah minister for education Sindh has said that Sindh Education department launched, the training of the newly recruited JESTs-Junior Elementary School Teachers in the province in first Phase for the initial professional development.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah has said that 21200 newly recruited PST-primary school teachers out of 40176 PST s teachers are receiving trainings at 55 training institutes in the Sindh province aiming of training is how to teach the student and improve the quality of teachers.

He said that it is professional development of the teachers by providing them training on standard level by trained education experts through STEDA-Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority and it is an act to improve the quality education of teachers and students.

Replying to a question, he said that 21200 PST teachers were

engaged in four batches and each batch has 24 days for the attending training and later of the remaining 18967 PST teachers will be started in the next Phase.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah was briefing to journalists at his office/ while during his visit to teachers training institute at government elementary college Lyari in Karachi as he was on his two days long visit to training institutes in Karachi, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Shahaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and Larkana divisions of Sindh.

He was accompanied by Haroon Leghari ED-Executive Director STEDA and education officials/ officers and education experts/scholars.

He said that on pilot basis, the training of the newly recruited JESTs-Junior Elementary School Teachers was also launched/ started overall in Sukkur, Larkana, Hyderabad, Shahed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas and Karachi divisions in the province in the first Phase. He said that 1117 JEST teachers out of

17685 JST have qualified for the initial professional development (induction training) in pilot base program.

He said that it was aim of PPP leadership and Policy of Sindh government to appoint teachers on merit and start their trainings to build their capacity for improving knowledge and capacity.

"The training of the candidates were successfully completed for such students those failed in IBA test for recruitment of teachers, their capacity of knowledge enhanced and they appeared in tests again from deprived talukas of Sindh" Syed Sardar Ali Shah minister for education briefed about IBA test failed candidates from deprived taluks in Sindh.

"The teachers are trained to develop their awareness of cross-cutting themes such WASH, life skill- based education, inclusive education, national accountability, school management committee (SMS), community mobilization, corporal punishment etc, includ-



ing emerging themes such as sustainable development goals 2030, specially goal for on quality education, education emergencies in pandemic, disaster risk

reduction, earthquake, flood situation" Akbar Leghari secretary education Sindh".

"The newly recruited PSTs and JESTs as course participants are

expected to achieve the learning outcomes in the initial professional development programs" Mr Haroon Leghari executive director STEDA briefed the

media about the objectives of the training of the teachers".

"They are trained about the national curriculum framework and differentiate among the curriculum scheme of studies, syllabus and text books for developing their better understanding for achieving students learning outcomes" a renowned education scholar Syed Rasool Bux Shah told media".

"The main objective of the training is to develop the professional knowledge, skills, and disposition for enhancing their professional capacity through hands-on-activities to teach students effectively" said a renowned educationist expert/ scholar Dr Mohammad Memon".

"This training was started to develop the skills and integration with teaching and learning process" said a JEST teacher Ms Sajidah".

"The training is meant to orient them about student-centered pedagogies and learning styles, multi grade teachings" said a PST Ali Mohammad.

## Iftar at railway station

LAHORE: People are waiting for their turn in a queue to receive Iftar at railway station, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Ramadan package: Bags of flour were distributed in Multan division

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Seven lakh 76 thousand 572 flour bags were distributed in Multan division under Ramadan package. 189518 bags of flour were distributed at trucking points in one day. Flour is being supplied at 82 flour trucking points in the division. These views were expressed by Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak while presiding over the review meeting about the Ramadan package. He said that after the rain, all the Sunders are fully restored and the arrangements are going to complete. Soon all centers will be fully functional again.

Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered to increase the checking counters for the convenience of the citizens and said that the Punjab government has given an ideal Ramadan package for the deserving class. Appealing said that citizens can get benefits from the fruits of government subsidy by showing restraint. He said that the rush has reduced by establishing more dough points in the district. Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, officers of the relevant departments was present in the meeting.

## Police crush operations started against criminals in South Punjab: AIG

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Additional Inspector General of Police South Punjab Maqsood ul Hasan has said that by eliminating the traditional image of the police, the priority is to provide justice on merit, community policing is the best way to gain public trust. Necessary measures are being taken for them, their problems should be solved on a priority basis. Police officers should play their sincere role in improving the image of the police in the public by performing their duties with discipline, diligence and honesty and perform their duty with full hard work and dedication. Protect the dignity of your department and the police uniform

For the sake of the implementation of the constitution and the law, legal action should be taken immediately against the elements hindering the peace. He expressed these views while presiding over a crime meeting with police officers in the committee room of the DPO office during his visit to Khanewal. On this occasion, DPO Rana Umar Farooq, SP Hakim Noel, AS SDPOs and SHOs including PS Kabirvala Shah Rukh Khan were present. DPO Rana Umar Farooq gave a briefing regarding the district and crime. During the meeting, Additional IG South Punjab reviewed the police station wise serious cases

## Heavy snowfall and rain in WANA

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Two people died and 4 people were injured when the roof of a house collapsed due to continuous snowfall and 20 hours of rain since last evening in Zamchina area of Birmal Tehsil of Lower South Waziristan tribal district. Similarly, another incident took place in Tehsil Building Wana, where two children were slightly injured due to the collapse of the roof of a room, their treatment is ongoing.

According to the local people, the injured include Sifat, Ejaz, Hasina and Safarina. However, Syed Mara Bibi, wife of Mamir Jan, Numan, father of Mamir Jan have died, the local people helped the injured people to the district headquarter hospital in wana for medical assistance.

On the other hand, Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundgi gave his stance and said that the government will soon give compensation checks to the dead and injured persons. On the other side, due to landslides, wana Gomal Zam Road has been closed for all kinds of traffic. DC Lower South Waziristan Mohammad Nasir Khan has issued an order to clear the road to Xen Highway on which the work will start soon.

## Constructive thinking will lead Pakistan on the path of development, Qayyum League

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Central Deputy Secretary Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum Faisal Anwar Bhatti has said that the people have been left behind in the battle of two elephants. For the development of Pakistan, it is necessary that we move forward with constructive thinking, he said that it is very important to keep alive the principle of peace and that the practice of revenge politics should be ended by one of the parties. Faisal Anwar said that PDM and PTI will have to develop flexibility in their attitudes in the interest of the country. Other political parties should go ahead and play their role to establish political stability in the country. Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum is ready to play its role in mediating the current political situation. History is a witness that Khan Azam Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan foiled the plans of the enemies of the country by fully supporting Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Even today Qayyum League under the leadership of Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari is ready to deal with the ongoing political and economic crisis in the country.

## Sindh LG Polls: Re-polling in 15 districts to take place tomorrow

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Re-polling in 15 districts for the local government (LG) elections in Sindh will take place tomorrow (Sunday) as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalised the arrangements.

In a statement, the electoral watchdog said that arrangements have been finalised for repolling in 15 districts of Sindh, in response to allegations of irregularities in the previous local government (LG) elections.

Repolling for local government elections will be held on Sunday in the districts include Jacobabad, Kashmore, Shikarpur, Larkana, Qamber Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Khair-



pur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umartkot, Tharparkar, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, and Badin.

The repolling is being held for the seats of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Member District Council, and General Members, to address allegations of irregularities in the previous elections on the directives of the Elec-

tion Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Supreme Court following the allegations of irregularities.

A total of 109,687 voters are registered to cast their votes in the 15 districts, with 59,310 male and 50,377 female voters among them.

A total of 15 district returning officers (DROs), 26 returning officers (ROs), and 52 assistant returning officers have been deployed to conduct the local government polls.

A total of 81 polling stations have been established across 15 districts, including 21 for men, 22 for women, and 38 combined stations for both male and female voters.

As many as 275 polling booths have been set up in 15 districts of Sindh for the upcoming local govern-

ment polls. Of these, 140 booths are designated for male voters, 135 for female voters, and 275 are combined booths for both genders.

Earlier in March, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced a verdict in the alleged rigging case and ordered the recounting of the votes in six Union Councils (UCs) of Karachi.

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) filed a plea against the alleged rigging and irregularities in Local government (LG) polls. Following the plea, the ECP directed the recounting of votes in six Union Councils (UCs).

JI had challenged the result of six UCs which include Mominabad UC-3, Manghopir UC-12, Gulshan-e-Iqbal UC-1, Orangi UC-3, 7 and 8.

## Sector Commander South and DC made emergency visits to various rain affected areas

Adam Khan Wazir

TANK: Sector Commander South, along with Deputy Commissioner Tank, made an emergency visit to the areas affected by the recent heavy rains, determined to take practical steps for the immediate restoration of communication roads and bridges, due to the heavy rain that started last night in Tank, many areas of Tank have been affected and the ground connection of many areas has been cut off from Tank.

Sector Commander South Brigadier Suhail Bajwa along with Deputy Commissioner Tank Shoaib Khan, DPO Waqar Ahmad, Commanding Officer Lt Col Umar and Assistant Commissioner Amin Ullah visited village Bara Khel on Saturday to assess the damage and other relief operations in the affected areas. Village Kot Allah



Dad, Bypass and Village Abi Zar Visited on emergency basis.

During these visits, the senior officials of the Civil and Pakistan Army have re-

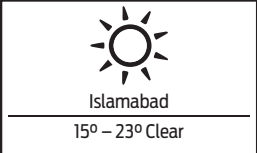
iterated their commitment to speed up the relief work through heavy machinery for the immediate restoration of bridges and roads in the rain-affected

areas, so that the areas that have lost contact with the tank can be restored.

On this occasion, Sector Commander South Brigadier Suhail Bajwa said that Pakistan Army and FC South will stand side by side with the district administration in the relief work.

However, in order to deal with any emergency, FC South will provide full support to the district administration to redress the grievances of the citizens.

On this occasion, the Sector Commander also distributed relief materials to some of the affected people. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Tank Shoaib Khan said that the district administration is using all its available resources to speed up the relief work in the rain-affected areas and soon the communication bridges and roads of the affected areas will be opened for the traffic of citizens.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:42 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	4:38 pm
Maghrib	6:23 pm
Isha	7:46 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**PTI condemn crackdown against party workers in Punjab**

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi has strongly condemned the arrest of innocent and peaceful activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. He has said that our workers were at peace in their homes. They were breaking the fast and preparing for Tarweeh. Their houses were raided. The fault of these people is that they wanted to go to Lahore to participate in Imran Khan's rally. These people were going to Lahore at Imran Khan's call at their own expense. Peace and blessings be upon our workers. Their purpose was to go to Imran Khan's rally only. But the government is showing fascism.

We have never seen such fascism in the past and it has not happened in any democratic country that peaceful workers are taken from their homes. He said, "I strongly condemn the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers as the vice-chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf." Workers should work patiently, stay motivated. We did not panic. The time of trial will pass. You have to be patient and patient enough, the time is not far when the law and constitution will prevail in the country. Imran Khan will be in the government. Looters will be punished. He said, I pay tribute to the workers on behalf of Imran Khan and Tehreek-e-Insaf. This is a testing time. We have to act with courage.

**PCRWR, UNICEF & IUB organized seminar on World Water Day**

Khalid Choudhary

BAHAWALPUR: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Civil Engineering Department (IUB) organized a National Seminar to celebrate World Water Day on March 21, 2023 at the Field Research Station of PCRWR Dingarh, Cholistan Desert. Representatives from various federal, provincial departments and students from academia attended the seminar. Addressing the audience, Engr. Muhibullah, WASH consultant, UNICEF welcomed all participants and gave vote of thanks to spare time from their busy schedule for the wonderful event organized by PCRWR and IUB. He appreciated that such events are very much important because they can provide a platform for the researchers to share their knowledge and experiences with each other and especially with the students.

Dr. Aysha Sumreen Research Officer, Regional Office PCRWR Bahawalpur delivered a detail presentation regarding the current status of drinking water of south Punjab and outcome of technical assessment surveys carried out under National Water Quality Monitoring program and UNICEF funded project "Water Quality Monitoring and Mitigation of South Punjab". She also presented the overall water quality situation of filtration plants in the eleven districts of South Punjab and mainly focus on current water quality status of district Bahawalpur. Dr. Mirza Imran Shahzad, Chairman Department of Biochemistry, IBBS, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur briefed about water borne diseases. Although

water is a lifeline for all forms of life on this planet but if it is not clean cast damaging effects on life.

Availability of clean drinking water is one of the biggest issue of this generation. Without managing it, there is no possibility of living quality life. Engr. Aqeel Ahmed, Civil Engineering Department, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, gave a detailed presentation on, "Innovative technologies for water treatment". He explained different natural processes which facilitated the treatment of wastewater in urban and rural areas. Existing situation of Water Resources in Pakistan was explained by Dr. Haroon Rashid, who is working as Chairman in the Civil Engineering department at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

Causes of the deteriorating water resources were discussed in detail. Furthermore, he also highlighted the potential of wastewater reuse in Pakistan overall and Southern Punjab in particular to overcome the issue of water scarcity in view of southern Punjab climatic conditions and water availability. A policy framework was also provided by Dr. Haroon to cope with this critical situation of water crisis and a way forward was recommended for adaptation. Mr. Muhammad Imran, Regional Director, PCRWR Bahawalpur comprehensively described the available potential of natural resources in Cholistan desert like rainwater harvesting, groundwater availability, water quality of groundwater sources, drinking water requirement of humans and livestock, water deficit, worth of livestock and its products.

The construction of these reservoirs was completed in 2005 and are still providing the drinking water facilities to communities of Cholistan desert. Dr.



Kashif Ali, Assistant Professor, University of Education presented the causes and effects of Arsenic in Aquatic System. He explained in detail the existence of Arsenic in subsurface and also provided information of different levels of Arsenic throughout Pakistan. It was also explained how groundwater quality has deteriorated in different regions of Pakistan due to natural existence of heavy metals, like Arsenic. Mr. Oneeb Talha, Student, Civil Engineering Department, IUB, delivered presentation on "Caring for our water resources is every body's business". He emphasized the smart use of water in daily life in his presentation. Different options were suggested to be adopted, particularly the use of latest tech-

nology, e.g. sensors can facilitate adequate water saving approaches.

Finally, the session was concluded by Dr. Iqbal Hussain Akht (Chief Researcher RARD) and Mr. Muhammad Imran from PCRWR, thanking all the distinguished guests, participants and local community for their keen involvement and interest in the topic of Seminar and for their active participation in discussion as well. The Seminar ended with a satisfactory note on increasing awareness among all the stakeholders for economical and smart usage of available water resources and need to conduct more dedicated and intensive research in Cholistan region to cope with the issues of water scarcity.

**Rain in Capital**

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of cloudy weather during rain at Jinnah Avenue, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**SDPI, WWF-Pakistan sign MoU**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and WWF-Pakistan on Saturday signed an MoU to strengthen research, technical support and policy influencing to take into consideration the ecological, biodiversity protection and environmental concerns in development projects under CPEC.

The cooperation between SDPI and WWF-Pakistan also aimed to bridge the gaps in policies of environmental protection, and ecological and biodiversity conservation during the planning and execution of infrastructure projects and reinforce green transition in infrastructure development in CPEC projects, a news release said.

Dr Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI said that the cooperation between SDPI and WWF is not new and stems from the keen interest of



both organizations in environmental and conservation strategies.

He expressed that the formalization of this cooperation will pave new ways for both organizations to collaborate in different areas of research and extend technical support to public institutions.

He further said that energy, transport and agriculture contribute the major carbon footprint and both organizations can play a critical role in advocating the case of climate finance onwards to COP28 and

beyond to support the green transition in these areas.

Rab Nawaz, Senior Director of Conservation and Biodiversity, WWF-Pakistan said that "Pakistan is at the crossroads of climate change and today's actions will determine if Pakistan is going to emerge as the Climate Champion or Climate Victim".

Neshmiya A. Khan, Manager, Policy and Safeguards, WW-Pakistan stressed evaluating the impacts of infrastructure development on ecology and biodiversity and

taking measures to mitigate these impacts. She said that local communities welcome infrastructure development and investments, but the key is to ensure they are sustainable and do not threaten the historic biodiversity and local ecology.

Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Senior Research Associate, SDPI said that China has emerged as a global leader in environmental conservation and protection by transforming its Belt and Road Initiative into a model of green development.

He further said after infrastructure development, the cooperation under CPEC has extended in the realms of climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy and green transportation.

He sustained that research and technical assistance in facilitating the uptake of these technologies was crucial for the sustainable economic development of the country.

**Divisional administration facilities to general public**

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Khattak ordered to maintain stability in the prices of food items in the division and said that DC counters should be established to provide food items to the citizens at cheap rates. These views were expressed by Commissioner Amir Khattak while presiding over the review meeting on the performance of the districts.

Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered the administration to set up a critical market and said that supply of sugar at cheap rates will be ensured at DC counters. After achieving the targets of Ramadan package muft flour, staff duties should be installed in counters, critical markets. He said that Qalag counters should be established for the elderly.

67 dough points have been made functional after rain in the division Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered the Deputy Commissioners to monitor the performance of the price control magistrates and said that all the price control magistrates should be seen in the markets one hour before Iftar.

Deputy Commissioners, officers of the concerned departments were present in the meeting

**Sarfaraz Mughal congratulate to Hakeem Rizwan**

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sarfaraz Mughal, a prominent businessman, while expressing his best wishes to Rizwan Hafeez on receiving the award from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Arif Alvi, said in a statement that our friend Hakeem Rizwan Hafeez from the supermarket, In recognition of 42 consecutive years of high service in Greek medicine, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Arif Alvi, has been awarded the Hilal Imtiaz, and there is a wave of happiness in the supermarket business community. So we have this tool which is a source of pride for all of us.



**Saudi labour attaché, ILO country director discuss ways to improve cooperation**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Labor Attaché Majid Bakr bin Idris Bakr on Saturday held an inclusive meeting with International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Director Geir T. Tonstol to further improve cooperation and coordination in the labour sector.

ILO Senior Programme Officer Syed Saghir Bukhari was also present on the occasion, said a statement.

Both the dignitaries also exchanged their views on the challenges being faced in this particular sector.

Majid Bakr thanked the Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki for his support, interest and follow-up and also thanked the leaders of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development who supported the labour attachés to a great extent.

It is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia has been a valid member of the ILO Governing Body since 2021.

**'Earth Hour' observed in Pakistan**

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the world, the annual 'Earth Hour' was observed in Pakistan on Saturday night under the theme "Give an Hour for Earth".

Million of people across the globe will observe the day by switching off lights for just one hour. A large number of people around the world can reduce carbon emissions by turning off unnecessary lights and electronic devices for one hour to celebrate Earth Hour to protect the environment.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed that all the lights be turned off for one hour tonight at 8pm. Under Earth Hour, environmental action would be taken on a large scale, he said. "We all have to play our role in climate action. I appeal to all the citizens of the world wherever they are to turn off their lights for one hour at 8 pm local time," he said.

The event launched by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) during 2007, is part of an annual tradition to raise awareness about climate change.

It is pertinent to mention here that Earth Hour is celebrated on the night of the last week of March every year by the United Nations throughout the world, including Pakistan, with the aim of inviting people to think about the negative effects of pollution and other factors on the environment.

**Radio Pakistan starts first ever live video Ramadan transmission titled 'Paigham-e-Ramadam'**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Radio Pakistan has started the first ever live video Ramadan transmission titled "Paigham-e-Ramadam" on "Radio Pakistan Podcast" available at the national broadcaster's social media platforms.

The four-hour video transmission from 5:00pm to 9:00pm daily brings a lot of valuable knowledge and enlightenment for the audience about the holy month of Ramazan and the health-related issues.

Eminent religious scholars, nutritionists and other health experts participate in the transmission and



share their views on the matters pertaining to fasting. Besides, Naat Khawan recite Naat. Tilawat-e-Quran-e-Pak along with translation is

also presented during the transmission.

People may also participate in the transmission through live phone calls at 051-9208940 from 5:30pm to 6:00pm.

The launch of this video Ramadan transmission is part of the initiatives being taken by Director General PBC Muhammad Tahir Hassan to enhance technological advancement and improve content of the state broadcaster in line with the modern-day requirements. In addition to making "Radio Pakistan Podcast" efficient and vibrant, some specialized FM channels have been launched to cater to the specific audience needs.

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# Round Up: Chinese President visit of Russian

The China-Russia relationship is characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation. China-Russia partnership is likely to remain a key factor in shaping the new world order.

President Xi's visit to Russia marks a new milestone in our strategic partnership," said Russian President Vladimir Putin during a joint press conference with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

President Xi, who is on a three-day visit to Russia, responded by stating that "China and Russia are comprehensive strategic partners of coordination, not allies targeting anyone, but partners with sincere mutual assistance and support."

The leaders' comments reflect the deepening ties between the two nations, as they seek to bolster economic and military cooperation amid tensions with the United States and its allies. During his visit, President Xi met with President Putin to discuss a range of issues, including trade, energy, and security. The two leaders signed a series of agreements aimed at boosting economic cooperation, including a \$1.5 billion investment deal between the China Development Bank and Russia's Far East Development Fund. In addition, the two sides agreed to expand cooperation in the energy sector, with China set to import more Russian natural gas and work with Russia to develop a liquefied natural gas plant in the Arctic. The visit also saw the signing of a joint statement on global governance, which called for greater respect for international law and the United Nations Charter, as well as the promotion of multilateralism and the reform of global governance institutions. The growing partnership between China and Russia has been a cause for concern for some Western countries,

who fear that the two nations are seeking to challenge the existing global order.

However, President Putin has dismissed these concerns, stating that "we don't have any plans to create some kind of military alliance." President Xi echoed this sentiment, stating that "we will continue to adhere to the principle of non-alignment, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third party." Despite these assurances, the strengthening of ties between China and Russia is likely to have significant consequences for the world, particularly in terms of shifting geopolitical alliances and economic power.

**China Russia Relations:**  
 In 1949, a patriotic anthem was composed in the Soviet Union to celebrate Chinese leader Mao Zedong's visit to Moscow. The song, titled "Moscow-Beijing," was a rousing military march that extolled the virtues of solidarity between the two socialist nations. The opening lyrics, "Russians and Chinese are brothers forever," encapsulated the fraternal bond between the two countries, with the Soviet Union depicted as the big brother to the newly-formed People's Republic of China, still reeling from the devastation of World War II and a civil war. Although China gratefully accepted Soviet aid, the perception of being treated as a junior partner would ultimately sour the relationship between the two nations.

The world's economic superpower, China is now the senior partner to a Russia that has been weakened by its war with Ukraine and is more dependent than ever on China for economic, technological, and diplomatic support. Trade figures indicate that Chinese exports to

Russia rose by almost 20 percent in the first two months of this year to reach \$15 billion, while imports from Russia surged by over 31 percent to \$18.65 billion. The Chinese yuan has surpassed the US dollar to become the most-traded currency on the Moscow stock exchange. Furthermore, Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia as China's largest oil supplier, with nearly 24 percent year-on-year growth in the first two months of 2023.

In light of these figures, it's clear that China holds the upper hand in the relationship. Its economy is over ten times larger than Russia's, and it boasts a modernizing military, technological superiority, and significant global diplomatic clout. As President Xi Jinping and President Putin meet in Moscow, it remains to be seen how the two nations will navigate their relationship in a world where China is now the big brother.

Over the past few years, China has been expanding its diplomatic outreach, with President Xi visiting more than 50 countries since taking office in 2013. This has helped to establish China as a major player in international affairs, with its growing influence being felt in everything from trade and investment to geopolitics and security.

**China's diplomatic strategy:**  
 One key aspect of China's diplomatic strategy has been to forge closer ties with Russia, which is also seeking to assert its position as a global power in the face of mounting pressure from the West. The strategic partnership between China and Russia has been growing stronger in recent years, with the two countries working

together on a range of issues, from energy and infrastructure to military cooperation and global governance.

The new world order in making:  
 The relationship between China and Russia has always been one of strategic importance. As China continues to rise as a global superpower and Russia looks to maintain its influence in the world, the two countries have developed a close partnership that has only grown stronger in recent years. According to Chinese analyst Yan Xuetong, "the current China-Russia relationship is the best it has been in history." This sentiment is shared by many experts, who see the two countries as increasingly aligned in their geopolitical objectives and shared opposition to Western dominance.

The two countries have engaged in a number of high-profile joint initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and have worked closely on issues such as opposing U.S. sanctions and promoting a multipolar global governance system. Despite these shared interests, the relationship between China and Russia is not without its challenges. For example, there are concerns among some Chinese analysts about Russia's long-term economic viability and the potential for the country to drag China down with it. However, as Yan Xuetong notes, "the China-Russia relationship is characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation." As the two countries continue to work together on key global issues, their partnership is likely to remain a key factor in shaping the new world order.

*The writer is Secretary General of Pakistan China Friendship Association and can be reached through [Syed.Gilani@gmail.com](mailto:Syed.Gilani@gmail.com)*



Analysis  
**Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani**

## UN conference on water crisis, ensure water-secure future

The UN 2023 Water Conference has wrapped after a breakthrough response to the global water crisis, with governments, businesses and civil society making almost 700 commitments to advance the water agenda, a dealmaker for accelerating sustainable development overall.

Pakistan's 4-member delegation, led by Hasan Nasir Jamy, took part in the historic conference's intense deliberations on water-related challenges over the past three days. The conference drew more than 2,000 participants.

Apart from other issues, Jamy, who is Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, especially highlighted the need for transboundary water cooperation, citing the 1960 Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan — a lower riparian state — as an example of such successful cooperation that provides an effective mechanism to deal with issues related to shared water resources.

In this regard, he drew attention to precedents and principles on the rights and obligations of both upper and lower riparians arising from bilateral and multilateral instruments, saying, "These norms must be fully respected by the concerned Parties".

The conference's agenda sets out a series of action-oriented game changing commitments, from making smarter food choices to re-evaluating water as a powerful economic driver, and part of the Earth's cultural heritage.

From protecting the spread of disease to fighting poverty, natural resource also flows through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a time when the world is grappling with climate change, water scarcity, and pollution.

Against this background, conference deliberations ranged from the urgency of the water crisis, including its role in forced migration, climate change and conflicts to stressing its critical link to good health, poverty reduction and food security. Attention was also given to solutions, with deliberations spanning the need for better data collection, enhanced governance systems, capacity development opportunities and funding gaps in the water sector.

With financing needs at between US\$182 to more than US\$600 billion annually, the importance of unlocking financing and innovative funding schemes, calling for new innovations and investments at scale in the water economy was also underscored.

Responding to this, the Water Action Agenda, the key outcome of the Conference, captured over 700 commitments aimed at driving transformation from a global water crisis to a water-secure world.

The agenda represents the global community's bold resolve to address the water challenges through a more coordinated and results-driven approach, it was pointed out. A number of other follow-up steps are also under consideration — including the appointment of a Special Envoy on Water.

The conference outcomes will also receive concrete follow-up in three key upcoming Summits: the SDG Summit during the UN General Assembly in September 2023, the Summit of the Future in 2024, the World Social Summit in 2025, and through the annual High-level political forum on sustainable development, Conference of Parties and other United Nations processes, as well as the Dushanbe Water Process.



Rasmi

Amjad Rasmi

# UN agencies announce 'game-changing' commitments to tackle global water crisis

### Spokesman Research

Two United Nations agencies announced several potentially game-changing commitments that could enable countries to quickly gather data on the state of their water resources, and boost efficiency of water use for more sustainable agriculture practices.

A worldwide network of water analysis laboratories and a tool to foster collective national level action to improve coordination on water management, were among the commitments announced Thursday by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the margins of the UN 2023 Water Conference, which is expected to windup Friday night after three days of intense debates.

The commitments, in line with the Water Action Agenda and the push to see all countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, were announced at the SDG Media Zone, which has been the stage for vital discussion and the announcement of other major commitments, while the main plenary and high-level panels have been underway in other parts of the UN Headquarters campus.

Announcing the IAEA's global

water analysis laboratory network, known as GloWAL, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said that this interconnected network can through the application of nuclear techniques, help countries to identify the nature and characteristics of water (isotope hydrology).

"This technology can help us read many things," he said, citing, among others, a water sources' content, degradation, and renewability. "By establishing this network of labs, we are giving countries the ability to identify from a scientific point of view, the nature of the water issues they are facing" and then developed or adapt policy solutions that address them.

Further, beyond issues related to the global water crisis, GloWAL will also help address another key challenge facing the international community: the technology gap and lagging access to data collection that has long plagued developing countries. "When developing countries do not have the ability to know what the problem is and how to solve it, they are in a much worse situation."

"So GloWAL is about this: it's about giving countries the ability to collect their own data. We are going to train them and give them the necessary equipment to do that," Grossi explained, adding that: as far as commitments go, this was a very concrete initiative that would

help countries be better prepared to face the myriad effects of the water crisis.

Asked to give an example of how the network my work, Grossi said that while he wouldn't like to say one country faced more challenges than another, he could point to Tajikistan, the co-host of the Water Conference (along with the Kingdom of the Netherlands).

Indeed, Tajikistan, which is home to massive glaciers that provide much of the region's freshwater would host a GloWAL laboratory that would monitor the health of those vital water sources.

"Glacier degradation is a very serious problem in this country and by doing this we are giving them the ability to see how fast the glaciers and snowcaps can be regenerated, and how to perhaps better manage the runoff water, because of course, if it is melting, there will be less of it," he said.

For his part, Lifeng Li, Director, Land and Water Division at FAO, said that water accounts for 70 per cent of global freshwater withdrawals, so rather than being a dealbreaker, agriculture could be a dealmaker in dealing with the crisis.

"It is doable," he said, because there are many solutions to improve efficiency and reduce the amount of water used for agriculture. Indeed, in many larger countries, like China and the United

States, the use of more sustainable water and land management practices has seen crop yields increase even as overall water used for agriculture had begun to decline

"Irrigated agriculture is at least three times more productive", he continued, stressing that the aim should be to improve efficiency, particularly as we would need to produce about 50 per cent more agricultural products for our planet's growing population by 2050. "We have seen this efficiency lead increased production of 'thirsty crops' like rice, sugar cane and cotton."

"We strongly believe that agriculture can contribute to a more water and food secure world in the future ... if we first look at efficiency ... and second, the agriculture sector should look at how to re-use and recycle water. For instance, many countries and especially in their urban areas, are making strides to re-use their wastewater, after it has been treated, for agriculture.

With this in mind, he said that FAO had submitted seven commitments to the UN Water Conference, dealing both with policy as well as innovation. Running through all the agency's initiatives, he noted among them, the National Water Roadmaps towards the 2030 Agenda, a tool to foster collective action at national level to improve cross sectorial coordination on water management and

governance in support of the SDGs.

He also announced a "Global Dialogue on Water Tenure" within the framework of water governance, and to engage with Member States, as well as partners from civil society, academia, the private sector, and sister UN agencies, to define principles on the Responsible Governance of Water Tenure.

Nanette Braun, Conference Spokesperson (UN Department of Global Communications), asked how the two agencies might work together towards the goals of the Water Action agenda and Grossi said that FAO and the IAEA had been long-time partners in these areas and indeed, they were the only two international organizations to have a joint working centre, in this case for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture.

"We recognized early on the inextricable nexus between energy and food," said Grossi, and the Joint Centre, where FAO and IAEA experts work side by side, aims to contribute to global food security and sustainable agricultural development worldwide.

For example, as FAO was working on enhancing irrigation and other agricultural techniques, the IAEA worked on drought resistant crops. All this work is carried out to ensure there are no negative environmental impacts. "We are bringing solutions to concrete problems."

## It's not free

The government of Pakistan has started a free Atta scheme for its citizens this Ramadan. The purpose of this is to provide relief to people. The scheme is worth billion of rupees and aims to benefit crore people.

With the current economic situation in Pakistan, including high petrol prices and the dollar at its peak, many people are struggling to meet their daily needs. This scheme comes as a much-needed relief for the people, especially during Ramadan. Due to high prices, a lot of families can't be able to buy basic goods for the household. So, to help those, the Pakistan government decided to start the relief program by providing the 03 bags of free flour to the candidates. However, to avoid inconvenience, people as well as the government is making some mistakes due to which many people are losing their lives. Recently, we have seen many people have lost their although to the inconvenience of others. It is free just by name but inconveniences not free because if you want to get free Atta you have to give your life for it, Although sacrifice your time, family, relation friendship etc. Although people are not following the orders and making inconvenience but if government want, they can do everything. Poor people come early morning where they have to wait until evening. We have seen the poor people struggling to get that package but never ever see a rich man or a minister sons standing in lines. If you haven't seen this, so this is the reward of the choices we have made in past. Recently in our area, an old man has lost precious life. What did this frail old man who came to get a free bag for the children know that he will lose his life. A life is worth a free bag of flour.

Poor people are being humiliated in the name of free flour, there is no proper way or proper security. It's a clear slap on poor people's faces on the name of the free package. Yes, I agree that people are also making mistakes. But that is not the solution. (Email. shahabwali330@gmail.com)



Analysis  
**Muhammad Shahab Wali**

# Traditional Chinese medicine helps to strengthen Sino-Pakistani relationship

Spokesman Report

**BELJING:** The cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has helped strengthen bilateral relations in recent years.

At the beginning of 2023, health authorities of Sindh Province in Pakistan initiated a program, which proposed that China assist the country in training doctors proficient in the field of TCM.

According to the project organizer, the Sino-Pakistan Cooperation Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine (SPCCTCM) in central China's Hunan Province, the Pakistani side will select the first batch of ten young doctors and send them to the center to carry out a two-year TCM theory learning and clinical practice. After the training, they will return to their hometown to carry out TCM diagnosis and treatment, China Economic Net



(CEN) reported.

SPCCTCM was jointly established by the Hunan University of Medicine and the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences of the University of Karachi in Pakistan in late 2020, aiming to build an international cooperation center integrating healthcare, TCM education and training, scientific research, and industrial cooperation.

"This is the preliminary exploration of SPCCTCM in the training of Pakistani TCM talents," said He Qinghu, co-director of SPCCTCM and president of the Hunan University of Medicine.

He said the training project, with support from both the Chinese and

Pakistani governments, will unite TCM colleges and hospitals to train talents with a certain level of TCM theory and clinical practice skills for Pakistan.

Cooperation is "not only an academic exchange but also a cultural exchange, which will help further enhance the friendship between two countries," He Qinghu said.

Recently, an event was held in Islamabad to mark the return of Pakistani plant seeds from the Chinese space station.

A bag containing around seven species of Pakistani herbal seeds was displayed at the event, marking the achievement of cooperation between the two sides in the field of joint breeding.

Chinese and Pakistani researchers at the SPCCTCM will use these seeds to carry out breeding research and study the differences between planting on Earth and in space.

"The results of the research will be

beneficial for our Chinese medicine as well as Pakistani botanicals in terms of breeding, specifically in terms of improving efficacy," said He Qinghu.

The acceptance of TCM in Pakistan has also been increasing these years.

Last year, Raza Shah, a professor who is in charge of the Center for Bioequivalence Studies and Clinical Research at the University of Karachi, announced that the proprietary Chinese medicine, Jinhua Qinggan Granule, had a significant effect on treating COVID-19 patients in Pakistan.

At the same time, the Chinese side is also in communication with the Pakistani side to promote the registration process of another Chinese medicine in Pakistan.

"We will continue to promote the entry of TCM into Pakistan and other countries along the Belt and Road so that Chinese medicine can serve more people in the world," said He Qinghu.

## French police clash with protesters opposed to farm reservoir



**SAINTE-SOLINE :** Police in western France clashed with protesters on Saturday opposed to the creation of a large water reservoir for farm irrigation.

Thousands of protesters converged on the site of the planned reservoir in the rural district of Sainte-Soline, where a similar protest last October resulted in injuries.

Opponents marched on Saturday in defiance of a ban on gatherings in the Sainte-Soline district.

Emmanuelle Dubee, the prefect of the surrounding region, said around a thousand radical individuals were expected among the protesters who were thought to total at least 6,000.

Police fired tear gas to repel some protesters who threw fireworks and other projectiles as they crossed fields to approach the fenced-off construction area. At least two police vehicles caught fire, television footage showed.

The government had deployed over 3,000 police for the demonstration, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said.

The protest over the irrigation project comes after weeks of demonstrations in France against a pension reform that have turned violent since the government pushed through the legislation without a final parliamentary vote.

France's worst drought on record last summer sharpened the debate over water resources in the European Union's biggest agricultural sector.

Supporters say artificial reservoirs are a way to use water efficiently when needed, while critics argue they are oversized and favour large farms. Reuters

# US State Department monitoring reports of kidnapped couple in Haiti

**PORT-AU-PRINCE :** A U.S. State Department spokesperson said Saturday the government is aware of reports of two U.S. citizens missing in Haiti, after media outlets said a Florida couple had been kidnapped. Abigail Toussaint and Jean-Dickens Toussaint, both 33, were taken near capital Port-au-Prince and have been held for days, according to an online petition started by a woman who said she is a relative of the couple.

The couple was on a trip to visit family and attend a festival when they were kidnapped during a bus ride, the relative said, according to CNN.

"We are aware of reports of two U.S. citizens missing in Haiti," the State Department spokesperson said. "When a U.S. citizen is missing, we work closely with local authori-



ties as they carry out their search efforts, and we share information with families however we can."

A spokesperson for Haiti's national police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Haiti's gangs have grown in strength since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, with large

portions of the capital and much of the countryside considered lawless territory.

The security situation has devolved further in recent months with routine gun fights between police officers and the gangs.

Bloody turf battles have left hundreds dead and thousands displaced. Seventeen missionaries

from the United States and Canada were taken hostage and held for ransom in 2021 while on a trip to Haiti organized by the Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries.

The group said ransom money was paid for the release of the captives, but a dozen had escaped on their own. (Reuters)

## Britain to announce plan to house migrants on military bases



News Desk

**ISLAMABAD:** Plans by the British government to move migrants out of hotels and into military bases or even disused ferries are expected to be announced within weeks, Sky News reported on Saturday.

Previous suggestions involving the use of holiday camps and student halls were less likely to be brought into action, the report said.

The government has signalled it wants to end the use of hotels as asylum seeker accommodation.

"We have always been upfront about the unprecedented pressure being placed on our asylum system, brought about by a significant increase in dangerous and illegal journeys into the country," a Home Office (interior ministry) spokesperson said.

"We continue to work across government and with local authorities to identify a range of accommodation options."

Earlier this month, the government set out details of a new law barring the entry of asylum seekers arriving in small boats across the Channel, a proposal some charities say could be impractical and criminalise the efforts of thousands of genuine refugees.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has made stopping boat arrivals a key priority after the number of migrants arriving on the English south coast soared to 45,000 last year, up 500% in the last two years.

# Rahul Gandhi: Why Modi's BJP always targets congress scion?

News Desk

**ISLAMABAD:** Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi has never been a minister in a federal or state government, has not led his Congress party to a general election victory, and quit as party chief after it was demolished in the last parliamentary polls in 2019.

Yet he remains at the centre of India's opposition politics and the main target of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Now, his conviction and two-year jail sentence in a defamation case, and consequent dismissal from parliament on Friday, could galvanize his party and its allies to step up their opposition to the BJP government a year before the next general elec-



tion is due.

The conviction on Thursday came barely two months after Gandhi, 52, concluded a 4,000-km cross-country march from India's southern tip to Kashmir in the Himalayas in a bid to revive his party and refurbish his image in what he called a Bharat Jodo Yatra, or unify India march.

Gandhi's jail sentence has been suspended for 30 days allowing him to appeal to a higher court but he will

also not be able to contest the next general election unless he gets his conviction suspended or overturned.

At the heart of his central role in opposition politics is the fact that his party has ruled India for 54 of its 75 years since independence from Britain, and his father, grandmother and great-grandfather were prime ministers for more than 37 of those 54 years.

Congress was the largest national political party with

a footprint across the country of 1.4 billion people until it was overtaken by the BJP in 2014.

Although now a shadow of its former self, the Gandhi family - which includes Rahul's Italian-born mother and former party chief Sonia, and his sister Priyanka - still dominates Congress and commands fierce loyalty.

It is this potent lineage and legacy that Modi and his party seek to attack when they say dynastic politics has no role in a democracy, analysts say. Modi often refers to Rahul as a prince in his speeches.

Even though Congress withered in 2019, winning less than 10% of the 545 seats in the lower house, it commanded nearly 20% of the vote - the largest for any opposition group - against the BJP's 38%.

# Azerbaijani army takes appropriate measures to prevent further provocations by Armenia on Lachin road

Spokesman Report

**ISLAMABAD:** According to the information of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on March 25, Azerbaijani army units took appropriate control measures in order to prevent the use for illegal activities of unpaved roads north of the Lachin road, as well as further escalation of the situation and potential provocations by the transportation of weapons and ammunition to the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia.

As it is known, in recent days, the transportation of military

personnel, weapons and ammunition, landmines, as well as other military equipment for the Armenia's Armed Forces in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian Peacekeeping Contingent is temporarily deployed, has intensified. In addition, in the last days, the activation of illegal road construction works by Armenians on the Khankendi-Khalfali-Turshu road and Khankendi-Kosalar-Mirzeler-Turshu road that passes north of this route, was recorded by relevant means of surveillance.

Despite numerous appeals

from the Azerbaijani side and discussions held in this regard, no necessary measures have been taken to prevent the transportation of weapons and other military equipment.

Moreover, the martyrdom and injury of Azerbaijani servicemen as a result of provocations by Armenia on the Khankendi-Khalfali-Turshu road on March 5, as well as in the direction of Zangilan district on March 20, demonstrated Armenia's intention to deliberately aggravate the situation.

It should be noted that the aforementioned military prov-

ocations by Armenia were also along with the aggressive rhetoric of the Armenian leadership in recent days. In particular, the repeated statements by the Armenian President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister against Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity are vivid examples that this country has not yet given up its territorial claims against Azerbaijan.

These steps of Armenia have shown its intention to purposefully disrupt the peace process, as well as its lack of interest in ensuring peace and stability in the region, amid the recent reviv-



al of international efforts for a peace agreement.

We call upon Armenia to refrain from provocative actions and statements that aggravate the situation in the region, to interfere in Azerbaijan's internal affairs, and to fulfill its obligations instead of continuing to try to confuse the international community.

The recent provocations by Armenia demonstrate that in order to prevent illegal activities in the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan, it is necessary to establish a border control checkpoint between Azerbaijan and Armenia at the end point of the Lachin road.

## The Armenian side subjected to fire the Azerbaijan Army positions



News Desk

**BAKU:** On March 24, in the evening, the positions of the Azerbaijan Army stationed on the Azerbaijani-Armenian conditional border and in the Karabakh economic region were subjected to fire several times, Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan said.

The Armenian armed forces units from combat positions stationed in the various directions of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conditional border using various caliber weapons subjected to fire the opposing positions of the Azerbaijan Army.

Moreover, members of illegal Armenian armed detachment in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeeping forces are temporarily deployed, subjected to fire the Azerbaijan Army positions stationed in the direction of the Khojavand region. AZERTAC

## Iftar ban to promote austerity among civil servants



**JAKARTA :** Responding to public outcry against the ban on iftar gathering for government workers, Cabinet secretary Pramono Agung Wibowo defended the policy on Thursday, saying that the policy was aimed at promoting a modest lifestyle among civil servants. In a statement published on the YouTube channel of the State Secretariat on Thursday evening, Pramono said that President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo came up with the new policy after considering the barrage of criticism directed toward government workers who displayed their allegedly ill-gotten wealth on social media. "Government workers are currently under this glaring spotlight and because of that the President calls on members of the civil service to break the fast in a modest way and not invite senior government officials to the event," Pramono said.

**Pakistan's exports, remittances in freefall: FPCCI**

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI : Mr. Suleman Chawla, Acting President of the apex body, i.e. FPCCI, has strongly criticized the team of country's economic managers for lack of direction; non-existent consultative process between the government & the business community and an unprecedented long-drawn-out waiting period before the IMF deal could be revived. He reiterated FPCCI's stance that most of the major economies of the world have a share of regional trade in upwards of 70 percent; whereas, Pakistan's trade with the regional countries have never been able to take off and now it seems to have gone into a reverse gear.

Mr. Suleman Chawla added that exports & remittances – the two mainstays of generating foreign exchange for the country – are in a freefall; as exports to nine regional trade partners have declined by 18.3 percent in the first eight months of FY23; over all textile exports have declined by 11 percent with a contraction of 30 percent in February 2023 on a MoM basis and decline in country's exports has been steady over the last eight months.

Acting FPCCI Chief noted that remittances experienced a 32-month low in January 2023 with a mere \$1.89 billion inflows; which should have sent shivers down the spine of country's economic managers. He added that country's total foreign exchange reserves (FER) would have been close to \$15 billion currently; if the government had managed only one aspect of the external inflows, i.e. worker's remittances well and if they had not declined by 20 percent on a YoY basis – and that, by now, would have been the decisive factor in the successful materialization of IMF's 9th review.

Mr. Suleman Chawla maintained that Pakistan's total FER are just above \$10 billion after accounting for the reserves with the commercial banks as well and SBP has only \$4.6 billion. SBP reserves are what really counts, he added.

FPCCI has demanded that the government should bring forth some transparency & clarity vis-à-vis its management of external account; and, what exactly is hampering the IMF staff-level agreement (SLA). Mr. Chawla also demanded that government should also outline the subsequent steps for stabilization of the economy after and if IMF deal is finally struck.

**KE launches digital stamp on e-bills!**

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: K-Electric has taken another innovative step towards moving to a paperless ecosystem, by introducing digital stamps for customer bills. This will allow customers to maintain digital proof of payment of KE bills, with the record accessible from KE Live App, Website, and WhatsApp Self Service Portal.

This step furthers KE's environmentally friendly 'Hara Qadam' initiative and a vision to give customers a seamless and improved digitally connected experience. Paid bills for any month will display a green stamp on the top left corner indicating that all dues are cleared. In case a customer is clearing their dues in installments, a blue stamp will be shown on the top left corner indicating that current payments have been received. These stamps will be automatically updated on the bill within 24 hours of respective payments. Prior records of up to 6 months will be accessible from KE's digital channels as well. Beside this, these digitally stamped bills will be acceptable by other stakeholder as well where the customer needs to show proof of payment for any financial transactions.

Elaborating on the initiative, Spokesperson KE and Director Communications Imran Rana stated, "We understand that conventionally, customers would keep stamped copies of their bills in files to maintain records. However, today, with over 1 million digitally connected subscribers, we are seeing the trend shift significantly and Alternate Delivery Channels account for an estimated 62% of our total payments. Our innovative step is a way to facilitate this transition, while also contributing positively towards the environment by encouraging paperless systems."

**ICCI calls for finalizing food standards in consultation with stakeholders**

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD : Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the business community welcomes the establishment of Food Authority in Islamabad as it will ensure the supply of safe and unadulterated food to the citizens. However, he emphasized that the Food Authority should finalize the food standards and laws in consultation with the stakeholders, which will yield better results for both sides. He said this while talking to Dr. Tahira Chairperson Islamabad Food Authority during her visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) should conduct awareness sessions in markets to educate and sensitize the business community of the food sector about food standards. He said that ICCI will cooperate with IFA for awareness sessions and is ready to provide its auditorium for this purpose. He said that a committee comprising representatives of ICCI and IFA should be formed to play a role in solving the problems of the food sector and move forward with consensus.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Tahira, Chairperson, Islamabad Food Authority said that the aim of her authority is to ensure the availability of quality food to the citizens and hoped that the business community of the food sector would cooperate in achieving this goal. She



said that the business community of the food sector, including restaurants and bakeries, will be provided comprehensive guidance about food safety measures to save them from fines and punishment. She hoped that the business community would provide all possible support in advancing the mission of IFA. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI,

said that ICCI should first be taken on board about any complaint against any restaurant, bakery or any trader so that such issues can be solved with joint efforts and food interests of citizens can be better protected.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI, Khuram Khan President Islamabad Restaurant Association, Ajmal Baloch President Anju-

man Tajaran Pakistan, Khalid Chaudhry, Haji Mumtaz Ahmed, Saqib Abbasi, Ashar Hafeez, Saifur Rehman Khan, Khawaja Junaid, Umar Riaz, Muhammad Yahya, Rohail Butt Shikarpuri, Muzaffar Hashmi and others also spoke at the occasion and emphasized the need for taking business community on board for enforcement of food standards.

**Sasta Bazar**

FAISALABAD: Police personnel searching visitors during Sasta Bazar at Jhang Road, in the City.



Photo: Online

**KE acts against power theft, defaulters in various parts of Malir**

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: KE has taken action against power theft in Darakhshan Society, Malir. Illegal connections supplying electricity to around 100 homes have been disconnected. KE operatives also removed several hook connections from Qureshi Mohalla. Around 55 homes were found to be using power illegally, despite their meters being disconnected due to defaulting payments. Facilitation camps have also been established to support residents in the locality Malir A area but

to little avail. Power theft through hook connections not only poses a safety risk to those in the immediate vicinity but also disrupts



the power transmission and distribution system on a wider scale. KE requests customers to make timely bill payments and report incidences of theft in order to improve the power supply.

**Pakistan and Republic of Korea are working jointly on seed potato production: Chairman PARC**

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) held a Media briefing on "Progress and Future Plan for Seed Potato Production through Aeroponics technology": a joint Project between KOPIA and PARC at NARC Islamabad. Pakistan and Republic of Korea are working jointly on seed potato production through Aeroponics technology and 2nd crop is ready to harvest at PARC-National Agricultural Research Centre Islamabad. PARC and KOPIA are collaborating on a project for Aeroponic Potato Seed Production System, with the goal of achieving

higher productivity, reducing post-harvest losses, promoting farm-level processing, developing human resources, and creating significant job opportunities.

Potato is one of major cash crop of the country and during 2022 it was cultivated on an area of 313,000 ha with total production of 7937,000 tones. Potato seed in Pakistan is mainly imported from Holland, which is not only expensive but also of the fifth generation or above. Pakistan's annual import of potato seed is around 12,000 to 15,000 tons, which costs around Rs. 2-3 billion. The local production of seed through this technology will help minimize this import bill. During the event, Dr.

Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman PARC, expressed gratitude towards the Korean government and KOPIA team for their efforts in establishing Aeroponic technology for potato seed production at NARC Islamabad. Dr. Ali emphasized the significance of potatoes as a vital crop globally and the need for research initiatives to promote indigenous seed production in Pakistan, thereby reducing heavy imports. He also mentioned that over 30% of the seed requirement can be met from tissue culture labs already operating at NARC, and private sector involvement in seed production is crucial due to its potential for business growth.

Dr. Cho Gyoung-Rae, the Project Director of KOPIA,



provided an update on the progress of the potato seed production project during the briefing. According to Dr. Gyoung-Rae, the project aims to establish additional green-

houses at NARC to produce 400,000 nucleus seed potatoes. These seeds will then be multiplied in 35 greenhouses, resulting in the production of 4,000,000 first-generation

seed potato tubers for large-scale cultivation. The project's goal is to produce 150,000 tons of high-quality fourth-generation seed potatoes within five years.

**Serena Faisalabad hotel to offer Ramzan Buffets in lowest prices**

**Mian Rashid Asghar**

FAISALABAD: Keeping in view the economic conditions of the common person, Serena Faisalabad has arranged Aftaar Dinner Buffets on regular basis in lowest prices especially in this holy month of Ramzan where a common person can enjoy with his family.

Serena management has taken this step introducing a system to accommodate each and every person in special Ramzan Buffets in low rates.

In this regard new items have also been introduced so that in minimum rates the people may enjoy maximum tastes.

Hotel Management which is playing a key role in this regard. Rasheed-ud-Din, General Manager of Serena Hotel assured to many institutions including Shipco Transport Private Limited, National Bank, Bank of Punjab, Bank Al Habib, Chaudhary Travel, Sahar Oil, New Dairy Baz, White Cable, Hot Seven Hunza, Hazara Hotel & Restaurant and Real Test

Restaurant to visit for Aftaar Dinner which would facilitate comparatively luxurious in low prices. Rasheed-ud-Din further said that hoteling can provide enjoyment to thousands of people's minds in minimum sources. Rasheed-ud-Din said that hospitality and good food presentations are the values of Serena.

In a meeting with media persons, Nasir Yusuf Wahra an elite businessman said that political crisis, unrest, high inflation and chaos have sunk the country's economy where a common person had been reaching out in such hotels are now facing hesitations due to high rates. He appreciated the Serena management in managing all and sundry to get benefit despite economic conditions.

Although the economic situation is very bad, but Serena management has introduced such kinds of items to whom an ordinary person can enjoy easily in low rates.

Wohra said that, All the attention of the rulers is on saving their seats, while the problems of the common man have increased exponential-



ly but a management of good strategies can facilitate. Prominent businessman Alhaj Naseer Yusuf Wahra President Cloth Board Ittehad Group Faisalabad has further said that

the avenues of investment in the country are almost closed. Pakistan is going through the worst economic crisis in its history, the wheels of Mills, factories and industries have stopped.

There is desolation in the markets. According to the report, the statistics of the banks show that due to the worst economic conditions in Pakistan, capitalists are forced to keep their capital in the banks.

He further said that the coalition statements of the political parties will not make any difference to scale up the economic development, rather the crack in the economy of Pakistan is becoming a serious situation 'which is not being realized'.

There is a dire need of such a sincere leader in the country who can give relief to the people in real sense, otherwise we all are going to drown. He informed that, in fact Pakistan's economy has stuck with worst conditions.

Nasir Wohra appreciated the Serena Hotel Faisalabad that has launched various types of food items which are in the access of ordinary person.

There is no need of reservation appropriate costs & fear of great Rates which have been minimised in the regard of Ramzan.

# Qatar Sheikh submits new \$6bn bid for Manchester United

**Sports Desk**

DOHA: Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani has submitted a new bid to buy Manchester United which is believed to be worth around 5 billion pounds (\$6.12 billion), Sky News reported on Saturday.

Sheikh Jassim, a son of Qatar's former prime minister, launched the bid in February. A spokesperson representing Sheikh Jassim said at the time that the bid was completely debt free, via Sheikh Jassim's Nine Two Foundation.

Finnish entrepreneur Thomas Zilliacus also placed a bid on Thursday and told Reuters that he was willing to pay a premium for the English soccer club.

Manchester United's current owners, the Glazer family, began looking at options for the record 20-times English champions in November, including new investment or a potential sale, 17 years after they bought the Old Trafford club.

Manchester United did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.



## Shadab backs 'talented youngsters' despite Afghanistan loss

**Shahid Hashmi**

SHARJAH: Pakistan captain Shadab Khan lent support to his young side despite the first-ever international defeat at the hands of Afghanistan in the first T20I of the three-match series here on Friday.

Pakistan fielded a young side in the first T20I, marking the debuts of Tayyab Tahir, Saim Ayub, Zaman Khan and Ihsanullah.

Meanwhile, Shadab, leading the fresh-look squad against Afghanistan, backed his youngsters and asserted that the nerves of international cricket may have affected their performance.

"This series is for our youngsters. We tried to give them confidence. Some-



times, this can happen due to the nerves of international cricket but we have to back them because they have the talent, and hopefully, they'll show it in the next game," said Shadab.

"These players are talented and we are sure about that. We should not make

someone a star after just one good performance or discard them after one failure. We will back these players and give them full opportunity to perform during the series," he added.

Opting to bat first in the opening T20I, Pakistan's batting lineup faltered

and the side could amass a meagre 92/9 in the allotted 20 overs, their fifth-lowest in T20Is.

Shadab also acknowledged the shortcomings of his side's batting in the first T20I while hopeful that the young players will do better in the next game.

"Our bowling and fielding was really good but unfortunately our batting was not up to the mark. However, I'm hopeful that these players will step up like they did in the PSL," Shadab stated.

It is pertinent to mention that all-round Nabi-inspired Afghanistan downed Pakistan by six wickets in the first T20I to mark their first-ever triumph over the green shirts in international cricket.

## Sam Billings defends decision of prioritizing PSL over national duty



**A Sports -**

KARACHI: England's wicketkeeper batter Sam Billings, who represented Lahore Qalandars in the recently-concluded Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight, defended his decision of preferring the franchise league over national duty.

Billings was among the few English players, including Alex Hales and Liam Dawson to prioritize lucrative PSL contracts rather than play for the national side in Bangladesh.

The wicketkeeper batter, who made his England debut in 2015 urged the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to review their white-ball contracts.

According to the details, English cricketers, without central contracts, can earn around £5,000 for a one-day international, and £2,500 for T20 internationals, which is considerably less than the value of franchise contracts.

"Personally, the central contract situation has to resolve itself because we're seeing it more and more where opportunities if you're not centrally contracted... (are not significant)," the Independent quoted Billings.

"And I think it's been said by numerous people at the ECB as well - they completely agree with what the decision we made was.

"For me, you balance these situations, you look at it from all the different angles and I think it (playing in the PSL) was the best decision for me.

"I'd feel hard done by if people say I haven't put England cricket first over the last eight years, running the drinks instead of passing up these opportunities.

Billings then also highlighted the need of reviewing the contract systems for the betterment of the players.

"I felt when I didn't get picked for the ODI's in South Africa, after not doing too badly in Australia, that I would do what I like to do - it probably took a little while to get to that point," Billings said.

"But I think the fundamental issue is the contract situation and the opportunities now that most of the players can get, it's a really tough ask.

"But in world cricket at the moment we've got way too much cricket going on and there needs to be that levelling out period where everyone can benefit - but there has to be a timescale for it to work," he concluded.

## PHF announced players of Pakistan Juniors U-21 Hockey Training Camp

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: After the final approval of President Pakistan Hockey Federation Brigadier Rakhali Sajjad Khokhar, Pakistan Hockey Federation has announced the players and officials of the Pakistan Juniors U-21 Hockey Training Camp for the preparation of the Junior Asia Cup. Olympian Hanif Khan is appointed as team manager. After the stage of open trials in Lahore and Karachi, a five members selection committee consisting of Olympian Nasir Ali, Olympian Rahim Khan, Olympian Shakeel Abbasi and Laeeq Lashari International headed by Olympian Kaleemullah Khan selected the athletes. The National Hockey Selection Committee selected the following players for the National Juniors Hockey Training Camp.

**Goalkeepers:**

Ali Raza (Punjab), Muhammad Raffay (Sindh), Saif ur Rehman (Punjab), Faizan Janjua (Islamabad), Taimoor Sheikh (Sindh), Bilal (Balochistan)

**Defenders:**

Muhammad Abdullah (MPCL), Arbaz (MPCL), Rao Aqeel Ahmad (Wapda), M Uzair (Punjab), Bilal Aslam (Punjab), Yasir Shinwar (KPK), Arsalan Khalid (Sindh) Abdullah Nazakat

(Punjab), Zohaib Ehsan (Punjab)

**Midfielders:**

Sufyan Khan (Navy), Ehtesham Aslam (WAPDA), Arbaaz Ayaz (Sindh), Murtaza Yaqoob (WAPDA), Hamza Fayyaz (Punjab), Baqir (Punjab), Nadeem Khan (KPK), Zain Shahzad (Punjab)

**Forwards:**

Arshad Liaquat (MPCL), Murtaza Yaqoob Jr (Punjab), Abdul Haman



Shahid (WAPDA), Abdul Rehman (WAPDA), Abdul Wahab (Sindh), Qais (Sindh), Rana Shoaib (Punjab), Rana Waleed (Punjab), Sultan Mehmood (Sindh), Numan Khan (Sindh), Hamad Rizwan (Sindh), Zakaria Hayat (Navy), M Adnan Ladoo (Sindh), Qayyum Dogar (Punjab), Waqar Ali (Punjab), Basharat Ali (Punjab), Bilal Akram (Punjab), Shoaib Khan (MPCL), Ahmad Raza (Punjab), Haseeb Masood (Punjab), Taimur Javed (Punjab), Faizan Malhi (Islamabad), Abdul Wajid

(Balochistan), Murad Ali (Punjab).

Olympian Hanif Khan has been appointed manager of Pakistan Junior Hockey Team. The coaches panel includes Adnan Zakir International, Olympian Mudassar Ali Khan, Asif Ahmed Khan International, Olympian Zeeshan Ashraf, Drag Flickers Coach Rana Zubair, Goalkeepers Coach Mazhar Abbas International. Team Media Officer/Video Analyst Syed Ali Abbas, Team Doctor/Dietist Dr. Mesaq Rizvi, Physical Trainer Imran Khan and Physiotherapist Muhammad Aslam have been appointed.

The training camp of Pakistan Juniors Hockey Team will be held from March 28 at Defense Hockey Arena, DHA Lahore. Pakistan Hockey Federation has issued instructions to all players to report to Director Domestic Development Punjab Rai Usman Akbar on Tuesday, March 28 at 10:00 AM sharp. The first training session will be held on March 28 at 4:00 PM. All the players will be tested for fitness in the camp. Instructions have been issued by the PHF that all the players will bring their original documents (NADRA Family Registration Certificate/Identity Card etc.). Original age proof documents must be submitted at the time of admission to the camp.

## Bowlers script Afghanistan's first-ever triumph over Pakistan

**A Sports -**

SHARJAH: Afghanistan bowlers wreaked havoc to restrict Pakistan to a meagre 92/9 before Mohammad Nabi's sensible 38-run knock powered the hosts to their maiden victory over Pakistan in the first T20I here at Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Set to chase a modest 93, Afghanistan comfortably sailed over in the 18th over with six wickets to spare, thanks to Nabi's unbeaten 38.

Earlier, the openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran started off well for Afghanistan in the run chase as the pair raised 23 runs in just four overs.

Making his debut, Ihsanullah wasted no time in announcing himself on the international level as the Pakistan Super League

(PSL) bowling sensation struck on the first delivery of his international career to remove Zadran on nine.

The young pacer then struck again on the third delivery of his career as Gulbadin Naib fell for a two-ball duck.

Ihsanullah's twin strikes ignited the young Pakistan side with momentum as Naseem Shah struck in the next over to draw third success for the green shirts as he outdid Gurbaz with a short-pitch delivery, who could score 17 off 16.

With Afghanistan reeling at 27/3, Karim Jannat joined experienced Nabi in the middle and looked to anchor the run chase with a brief partnership before Imad Wasim castled the former. He could score seven off 16 deliveries.

Jannat's dismissal resulted in

Afghanistan slipping to 45/4 in the 10th over, needing a further 48 runs when Najibullah Zadran joined Nabi in the middle.

The pair soaked the pressure put on by Pakistan bowlers and kept pushing towards the pursuit before Nabi finally smoked one off Ihsanullah in the 18th over to register Afghanistan's first-ever triumph over Pakistan in international cricket.

The seasoned all-rounder top-scored for Afghanistan with a run-a-ball 38 that featured three boundaries and a six while Zadran remained undefeated with his 23-ball 17.

Ihsanullah led the bowling attack for Pakistan with 2/17 while Naseem and Imad could pick up a wicket each.

Opting to bat first, the young Pakistan side could accumulate 92/9 in their allotted 20 overs

as they seemed clueless against a disciplined bowling attack put on by spirited Afghanistan.

The green shirts were off to a dismal start to their innings as their young opening pair of Mohammad Haris and Saim Ayub could only add 17 runs to the total before Fazalhaq Farooqi dismissed the former on six.

Abdullah then joined Saim with their side in heaps of trouble and he too, could not get going as the right-handed batter fell victim to Azmatullah Omarzai for a two-ball duck.

Saim continued his brief resistance with a cautious 15-ball 17 before Naveen-ul-Haq castled him at the brink of the first powerplay. He smashed two boundaries and a six amid his fighting knock.

Pakistan then endured another setback on the first delivery of the



seventh over as Tayyab Tahir, who looked to turn the tables with his aggressive knock, fell victim to Rashid Khan. Tayyab could score 16 off nine deliveries, hitting three boundaries.

Making his return to the national side after a gap of almost two years, Azam Khan had a comeback to forget as the wick-

## Ballance, Madhevere star as Zimbabwe win ODI series



**Sports Desk**

HARARE: Half-centuries from Gary Ballance and Wesly Madhevere helped Zimbabwe defeat the Netherlands by seven wickets and win a World Cup Super League one-day international series 2-1 on Saturday.

After two midweek thrillers that were won in the final over, the home side were always ahead on run rate after restricting the tourists to 231 for nine.

Sikandar Raza hit the match-winning four, taking Zimbabwe to 235 for three with 50 balls remaining at Harare Sports Club.

Zimbabwe have often battled in all three formats due to poor top-order batting, but openers Madhevere and captain Craig Ervine excelled this time by putting on 96 for the first wicket.

After their departures, former England batter Ballance and Sean Williams maintained the dominance of the Dutch attack to deliver a 96-run third-wicket partnership.

While Ballance top scored with an unbeaten 64, including eight fours, Madhevere (50), Ervine (44) and Williams (43) played significant roles.

Teenage Dutch leg-spinner Shariz Ahmad, who took five wickets on Thursday in a one-run second match loss, captured another two, but they came at a high price as he conceded 71 runs.

Opener Max O'Dowd top scored with 38 for the Netherlands after captain Scott Edwards won the toss for the first time in the series.

Colin Ackerman (37) and Edwards (34) also made valuable knocks. However, none of the trio could manage a six, with O'Dowd hitting six fours, Ackermann two and Edwards four.

The tourists' lone six came from Aryan Dutt, who batted at number nine and scored 15 off 14 deliveries.

Williams was the most impressive Zimbabwe bowler, capturing three wickets for 41 runs, including those of Ackermann and Edwards.

With both countries out of contention for direct entry to the 2023 World Cup in India, they used the series to prepare for a qualifying tournament Zimbabwe will host in June and July.

## PFF and community resolve the long standing problems



**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The normalization committee of Pakistan Football Federation and the football community joined hands to resolve the long-standing problems.

The joint meeting held at a local hotel in Lahore was chaired by the Chairman of the Normalization Committee Haroon Ahmed Malik along with other members Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar and Haris Azmat.

On the occasion, detailed discussions were held to ensure free and transparent elections of PFF as per its Statutes as early as possible.

It was unanimously decided that the meeting participants will send their recommendations to the PFF by March 30, in the light of which, further steps will be taken.

## Salman Butt talking about the tournament

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Ghani

Institute of Cricket Lahore DHA announced that they are going to organise the biggest Ramadan cricket tournament in Lahore, from 28th March to 5th April in which International cricketers of Pakistan, including Babar Azam will also take part.

The Director Cricket of the organisation, former test cricketer captain of Pakistan Salman Butt addressed the media in Lahore and told that eight teams will take part in the event, and each team will have two International cricketers of Pakistan.

It was also disclosed that player of the match in every game will be given Rs. 30,000 cash prize whereas many junior cricketers will get an opportunity to play against big stars.

