



US summit for Democracy will be yet another sham aimed at endangering human rights: Nikolai Patrushev

Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev's interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Interview on Page 6)



Imran vows to continue struggle for democracy

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan reiterated on Friday that his party would continue its struggle for democracy. A delegation of journalists called on the deposed premier, during which he said that there would be no compromise in terms of the freedom of the judiciary and constitution. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ramzan Relief Package

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits free flour distribution points established as part of Prime Minister's Ramzan Relief Package for deserving families.



Photo: PID

PM orders removing hurdles in CNIC verification at free flour points

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities at the flour distribution centres to remove the hurdles faced by citizens in the verification of their Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs).
The prime minister stated this during his visit to a flour distribution centre, where the federal government is providing free-of-cost flour bags to needy persons.
PM Sharif asked the relevant authorities to chalk out a facilitatory mechanism for the

Petrol, diesel prices to remain unchanged, announces Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has announced that the prices of petrol and diesel will remain unchanged for the next 15 days.
The federal government decided to maintain the petroleum products prices for the next 15 days.

Ishaq Dar said in a press statement that the government kept the petroleum products prices unchanged till April 15. He further said that the kerosene oil and light diesel prices were
The petrol price was maintained

at Rs272 per litre and the diesel price at Rs293 per litre till April 15. After the revision, the petrol price rose to Rs272 per litre, the diesel price to Rs293 per litre while LDO remained at Rs184.68 per litre.

centre and interacted with the people waiting to receive the free flour bags.

He lauded the commissioner and deputy commissioner of Islamabad for the excellent arrangements made at the flour distribution centre.

He expressed satisfaction with the proper seating arrangement for the people to avoid making them stand in long queues.

The prime minister lauded the Commissioner and deputy commissioner of Islamabad and expressed confidence that all related operational issues would be addressed on an urgent basis.

person who could only present the photocopy of his CNIC in case the original card was gone missing.

The prime minister, in this regard, sought a report to be presented to him by evening

suggesting an alternative way. He directed setting up a priority in the distribution of flour bags among aged persons and women.

It was also decided to give away two flour bags instead of

one so that the people do not need to visit the distribution centres frequently.

Flanked by Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, the prime minister took a round of the flour distribution

Chinese premier meets IMF chief in Boao



Xinhua

BOAO, HAINAN: Chinese Premier Li Qiang met with Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva on Wednesday in Boao, Hainan Province, pledging to deepen cooperation with the IMF to make global governance more just and equitable.

Noting that since the beginning of this year, China's economy has shown a momentum of stabilization and recovery, Li said China has a solid economic foundation, broad prospects for development and a promising future. China will strengthen macro policy regulation, unleash the potential of consumption

and investment, unwaveringly open up to the outside world, comprehensively improve the business environment, and prudently forestall and defuse risks.

"We have the confidence and ability to promote overall economic improvement and achieve the full-year development targets," he said.

In the face of complex and severe challenges, the international community needs to work together to address them, Li said, calling on the international community to uphold multilateralism, strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination, and maintain the security, stability and smoothness of global industrial and supply chains.

Maryam Nawaz accuses Imran of 'attacking judiciary'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice-President of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Maryam Nawaz on Friday accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan of attacking the judiciary after the Supreme Court's ruling that Imran Khan's actions were in a violation of the Constitution.

In a scathing response to Imran's tweet, Maryam Nawaz shared a video and asked "who threw shoes at the photos of judges when Imran was given the title of 'Abrogator of the constitution,' and who parked trucks outside the courts."

Maryam went on to say that the disgrace that Imran's facilitators had brought to them-



selves would follow the latter as he [Imran] would not be able to relieve himself from the ever-lasting insult.

In another tweet, Maryam Nawaz, announced the relaunch of the Muslim Students Federation (MSF), a student organization that played a crucial role in Pakistan's creation. Maryam invited interested students to join the MSF by using a link or scanning a QR code mentioned in her Twitter account.

SC rejects request for formation of full court bench to hear KP, Punjab polls case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday rejected the request of Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan seeking the top court to constitute a full court bench to hear the case with regard to the delay in elections of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

A three-member bench of the top court headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the petition of PTI against the decision of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for postponing the polls in two provinces.

Earlier in a fresh development, a four-member bench of the top court was dissolved after Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail recused himself



from the case. After this, the CJP constituted a new three-member bench and a supplementary cause list was issued.

At the outset of hearing, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Chairman Executive Council Hasan Pasha arrived at court rostrum and prayed for a full court bench to decide the matter. He requested the bench to hold a full court meeting if the full court bench couldn't be constituted.

The CJP remarked that the court would hear him later. He also observed that some people

had been "criticizing the judges", adding that the court would also view this matter.

Meanwhile, the attorney general said that there was a need to decrease political tension in the country as it would reduce with the passage of time.

The chief justice remarked that this court had always preferred to hold the supremacy of the Constitution. He remarked that the assembly had a term of five years but the "head of the house has the authority to dissolve it".

The CJP reminded that the 90-day time period was going to end in the month of April after the dissolution of two provincial assemblies.

The president himself had to announce the date of the elections in Punjab, adding that the ECP had not briefed the president on why it was not announcing the date.

The chief justice remarked that the court was not sitting here to create difficulties, adding that there was the question before it related to the postponement of elections till October 8.

The CJP said that the court could hold a break in the proceedings for some days if the government and opposition sit together to find a way out of this quagmire, otherwise the court would play its constitutional role.

Imran solely responsible for all crises in country: Rana Sanaullah

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah on Friday said it was imperative to oust Imran Khan from the political arena as he was solely responsible for all the crises being faced by the country.

Talking to the media outside the Supreme Court, Rana Sanaullah said today Justice Mandokhail had recused himself from the Supreme Court bench hearing the case pertaining to elections in the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa writing a dissenting note.

It was an irony that the nine-member bench had been reduced to just three members now, he added.
The interior minister said, "A 'Fitna' (Imran Khan) has first created a political and administrative crisis and now judicial issues and that is why it becomes all the more important to oust him from politics."

There was a need to probe how he (Imran Khan) was "launched" in politics and the judiciary should also play its role in that regard, he added.

Full court SC bench imperative to avert constitutional crisis: Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday urged the Supreme Court to form a full court bench to hear a case regarding polls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for averting any constitutional crisis in the country.

The proceedings of the case regarding the polls' delay started with a nine-member bench, whose strength had now been relegated to three judges only, the minister said while talking to the media outside the Supreme Court.

Marriyum said Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan, who had recused himself from hearing the suo moto case regarding the polls delay, should not be part of the bench hearing the contempt case.

She said the Pakistan Demo-

cratic Movement member parties had already called for the constitution of a full bench for the case as the three-member bench had become "controversial". There was an impression that the three-member bench had lost its credibility, she added.

Referring to the circular issued by the SC registrar, she said it was the "decision of one person".

Castigating PTI Chairman Imran Khan, the minister said a "mentally sick person" wanted to set the whole country on fire by creating chaos and anarchy. In the first place, he concocted the story of a cipher while waving a paper in a party rally and then illegally dissolved the National Assembly to prevent his ouster from power in the wake of the no-confidence motion moved by the then-opposition.

Unfortunate

KARACHI: A devastate view of the Site Area factory as at least 11 people passed away in Zakat distribution by local welfare Organization, in Provincial Capital.

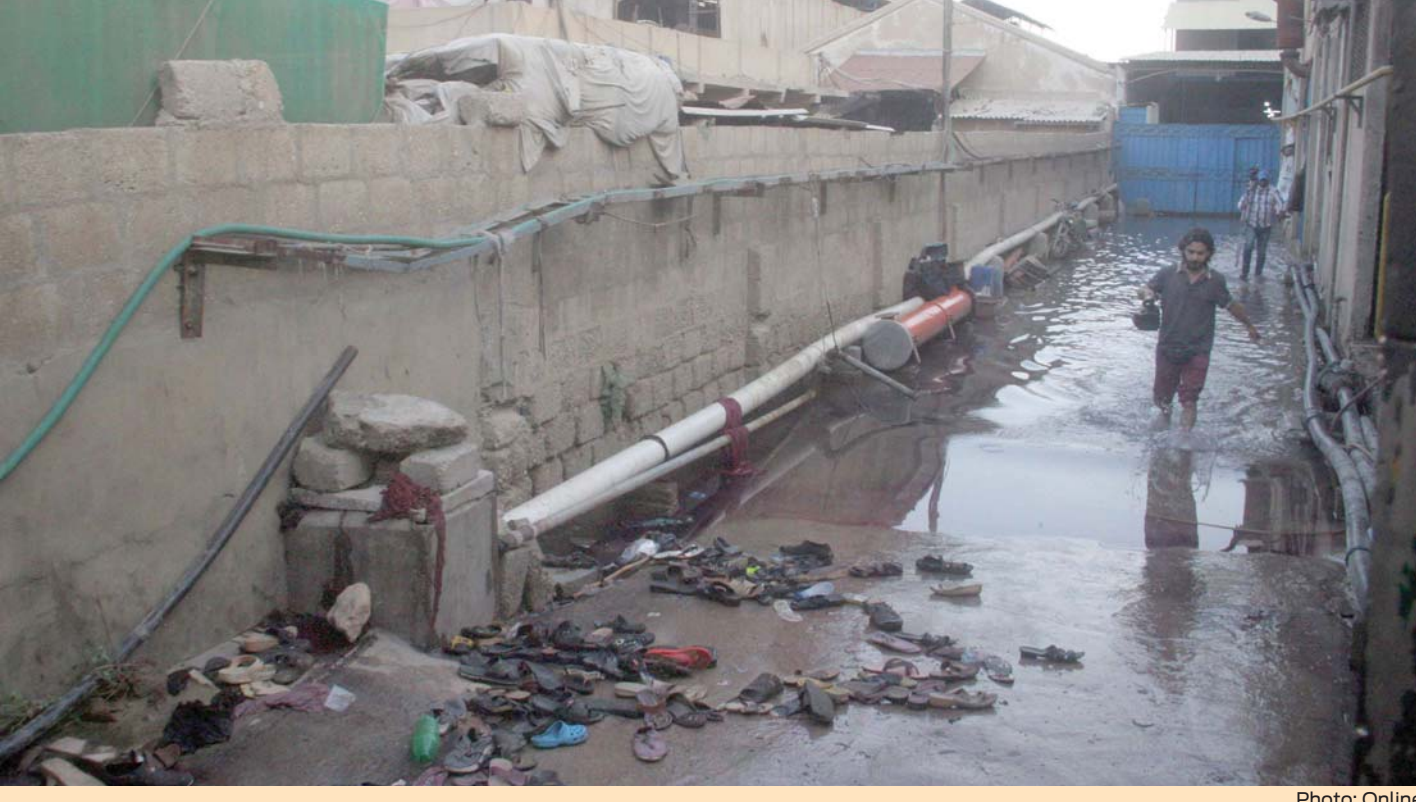


Photo: Online

Heart-wrenching quest for dole-outs snatches 11 lives in Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: As many as 11 people, three children among them, were killed in a stampede at Sindh Industrial & Trading Estate (SITE) area factory where free food and alms were being distributed on Friday evening.

Rescue personnel said eight women were killed and several others fell unconscious when the crowd swelled at the designated point for dole-outs. They said the injured were taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital. Three children lost their lives, they added.

The Keamari SSP said a police contingent dashed to the spot to control the situation. The factory administration called out police as the crowd



went uncontrollable at the time of distribution of dole-outs.

Police claimed to have registered a case against the factory owner.

This is the latest of several

incidents of mismanagement and uproar at a dole-out point. Some of the incidents have claimed lives in parts of Punjab in the last few days.

Superintendent of Police (SP)

Muhammad Mughees Hashmi said the incident took place as a lot of people gathered at the site and told that the police were not informed prior to distribution. He added that the burst of

the water line also compounded the situation raising fears that the number of deaths could increase.

On the other hand seven people were arrested and an investigation had been launched against them. Sindh Information Minister Saeed Ghani confirmed the arrests.

Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori took notice of the incident and directed Karachi Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Memon to submit a report.

PTI senior vice president Fawad Chaudhry wrote on Twitter, "It is the practical depiction of the state of Pakistan's economy. We regret that rulers are only interested in inflicting cruelty and barbarism on people for the sake of their power".

Imran vows to continue struggle for democracy

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan reiterated on Friday that his party would continue its struggle for democracy.

A delegation of journalists called on the deposed premier, during which he said that there would be no compromise in terms of the freedom of the judiciary and constitution.

He reiterated that the only transparent elections could take the country out of the quagmire, adding that he was ready for negotiations, but only according to the constitution and law. Mr Khan further stated, "We will talk with all the parties that will



be geared up to stand against the conspiracy".

Firing a broadside at the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mr Khan said, "The PML-N is resorted to the old tactics against the

judiciary in a bid to escape the elections."

"I want the nation to get ready to pour onto the streets in connection with defending the supremacy of the constitution, democracy, and law,"

he added.

Mr Khan urged the lawyer community to play its role in defending the supremacy of the constitution and law, like they did back in 2007.

On Thursday, Mr Khan said that the Supreme Court bench would make no difference to his party.

Taking to Twitter, the deposed premier said, "All we want to know is if elections will be held within the 90 days' constitutional provision. Before we dissolved our two provincial assemblies, I consulted our top constitutional lawyers, all of whom were absolutely clear that the 90-day constitutional provision on holding elections was

inviolable."

Slamming the political opponents, Mr Khan said, "Now the imported government of crooks, their handlers, and a compromised Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) are making a complete mockery of constitution. By cherry picking which articles of the constitution they will abide by, they are threatening the very foundation of Pakistan, which is the constitution and rule of law."

"So petrified are they of elections and so desperate to whitewash their convicted leaders that they are prepared to destroy the constitution and any semblance of rule of law," added Mr Khan.

Sohail Ali posted as Addl Secretary Incharge Information Division

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: Sohail Ali Khan, a BS-21 officer of Information Group was posted as Additional Secretary (Incharge), Information and Broadcasting Division with immediate effect.

According to a notification of the Establishment Division on Friday, the officer was presently posted as Additional Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Division. While Shahera Shahid, a BS-22 officer of Information Group, presently posted as Secretary Information and Broadcasting Division was transferred and directed to report to the Establishment Division with immediate effect.

Glaucoma in children increasing at a rapid pace

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The prevalence of glaucoma in children is increasing at a rapid pace in Pakistan which require proper intervention, Al-Shifa Trust eye hospital said Friday.

Glaucoma in children is a vision-threatening condition and is highly prevalent in our population. This may be due to the high incidence of consanguinity or family marriages in Pakistan, it said.

Timely medication and surgical treatment can help control this disease with a good visual outcome and can save many children from lifelong visual disability or blindness, Prof. Dr. Sumaira Altaf, Head of the Paediatric department at Al-Shifa Trust.

She said that glaucoma in children has become a growing cause of concern worldwide and in Pakistan as millions are suffering from it.

Treatment of glaucoma in children needs specialised medical and surgical care and frequent follow-ups hence parents of children suffering from childhood Glauco-



ma have to face psychological and financial stress, she added.

Dr. Sumaira Altaf said that Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital provides free of cost medical and surgical treatment to 80 percent of patients who are treated by experienced and skilled Paediatric Ophthalmologists.

On average 22 to 25 paediatric eye surgeries are performed daily including various types of surgeries for glaucoma,

she informed.

The successful treatment of these patients has resulted in a high number of referrals to the trust's hospital from all over the country.

A large number of cases of paediatric glaucoma have secondary causes either due to trauma, previous eye surgery, associated eye anomalies or injudicious use of steroids.

Dr Sumaira highlighted that the vision of many unfortunate children has been compromised because of the careless use of over-the-counter steroid eye drops.

Moreover, harmful medicines are frequently prescribed by salesmen at pharmacies, relatives, quacks, and sometimes by general practitioners, who are ignorant that these medicines lead to complications and irreversible blindness.

Pharmaceutical companies should also mention the side effects of these medicines on their packaging as knowledge regarding paediatric glaucoma is scarce, she said, adding that examination at birth by an ophthalmologist is recommended for every child to rule out any eye abnormalities.

Martyr Pakistan Army soldier laid to rest in KP: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The funeral prayer of Pakistan Army's Sepoy Irshad Ullah Shaheed was offered at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district.

The martyred Sepoy Irshad Ullah was laid to rest with full military honour.

Sepoy Irshad Ullah embraced martyrdom while fighting bravely during an exchange of fire between the terrorists and security forces in

the general area of Mir Ali, North Waziristan District, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

It added that senior serving and retired officers, soldiers, relatives, and a large number of people attended the funeral.

"Armed Forces of Pakistan stand resilient against terrorism and reaffirm the resolve to eradicate this menace of terrorism at all costs," the ISPR said.

Bilawal, Chairman IPO discuss ways to protect intellectual property



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan Ambassador Farukh Amil called on Minister of Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here on Friday.

They discussed ways to strengthen the intellectual property ecosystem in Pakistan, necessity of accession to the international intellectual property treaties for economic empowerment and the creation of opportunity for Pakistan's youth.

Salik asks Polish, Swedish Ambassadors to explore investment policies in Pakistan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI) Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday assured the foreign investors that the government would facilitate them in doing business in the country and asked them to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan as there are immense investment openings in different sectors.

He expressed these views while talking to Mr. Maciej Pisasrski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Pakistan and Mr. Henrik Persson, Ambassador of Sweden in Pakistan who separately called on him in his office. Director General, BOI Nadeem Bashir was also present in the meetings.

Chaudhry Salik briefed the Polish

and Swedish Ambassadors about the investment friendly policies of the government and urged them to take the maximum benefit from these policies. He highlighted the immense foreign investment opportunities in automobile and electric vehicles (EVs) sectors and said that there is no customs duty on the import of plant and machinery for the manufacturing of EVs.

Talking to the Ambassador of Poland, Chaudhry Salik Hussain said Pakistan has investment from two Polish companies in Oil and Gas exploration sector, however he said that keeping in view the close friendly ties between the two countries, more companies from Poland should come forward to invest in Pakistan.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi criticizes Imran Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former PM and PML-N central leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi criticised the PTI chief and said that the country's situation would be worse if Imran Khan stays in power today, ARY News reported on Friday.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said in a statement that the citizens of Pakistan are aware of the prevailing situation in the country. He added with each passing day, those politicians are exposed who brought instability to the country.

He alleged that the PTI chairman Imran Khan was bought to power by rigging the general elections. He added that those who brought Khan also admit their mistake, adding that if Imran Khan was in power today, the situation would be worse.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that the PML-N handed over Pakistan to the caretaker government in a developed status back in 2018. He added, "After staying in power for 3.5 years, Imran Khan should tell the nation about at least one achievement of his government."

Over 17 million children immunized in first phase of Polio drive

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has successfully completed the first phase of polio vaccination campaign to immunize more than 17.41 million children under the age of five years in Sindh and Punjab.

The five-day vaccination campaign was held in two phases due to the concurring activities of the seventh national census.

In the first phase, over 17.41 million children under the age of five in 13 districts of Punjab and 16 districts of Sindh and Islamabad were vaccinated from March 13 to 17.

The second phase will be held from April 03 to 07 - during the second week of Ramadan - to vaccinate more than 4.12 million children in 12 districts of Balochistan and 26 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the seven endemic districts in the southern region of the province.

Oath-taking ceremony of IIA

We are overcoming serious challenges: Ishaq Dar

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday said the situation is improving and Pakistan will have 12 to 13 billion dollars in reserves by June.

He said that Pakistan is not like Sri Lanka and it will not default on its obligations.

Ishaq Dar said this while speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of the Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA).

Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood, newly elected president IAA Muhammad Ahmed, newly-elected senior vice president IAA Karim Aziz Malik, outgoing president IIA Zikria Akbar Zia, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, and Malik Sohail, Secretary-General US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce Malik Sohail and others were also present at the occasion.

Ishaq Dar said that we took over in 2013 when the country was getting



bankrupt but the same was ranked 24th economy in three and a half years. All indicators were positive and Pakistan was respected globally.

By then, we had 24 billion dollars in foreign exchange reserves, interest rates were at six percent and inflation was under control

But later, some experiences pushed the country to the 47th slot in the glob-

al ranking of economies and now the whole country is reeling under problems due to that experience.

He said that the business community should understand the gravity of the situation and cooperate with the government to resolve issues.

We will soon steer the country out of the current mess and put it on the path of progress and prosperity, he added.

The Senator said that all the problems of the industrialists of Islamabad would be resolved on preference so that they can play a positive role in national development.

Earlier the leaders of the business community informed the minister about their problems, demanded the issue of LCs be resolved, and sought early resolution of the rest of the problems including a new industrial estate in Islamabad.

The Finance Minister of Pakistan Senator Ishaq Dar, urged friendly countries to fulfill their commitments to Pakistan to pave the way for a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the revival of the economy. He exclusively talks to Daily The Spokesman.

Dar highlighted that Pakistan was expected to become the world's 18th-strongest economy in 2016 but is now facing serious economic challenges. He reassured that Pakistan would not default and that the government is doing everything in its power to overcome the difficulties.

Meeting between Asad Mahmood and Mohsin Naqvi

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting was held between Federal Minister for Communications Asad Mahmood and Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi at Chief Minister House today, wherein it was decided to assign powers like that of Magistrate to General Managers and Senior Officers of NHA with sole objective of controlling price hike of food items provided at service areas and rest areas located along Motorways and National Highways network. Federal Secretary Communications Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha, Chief Secretary Punjab, Chairman P&D, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Member Finance NHA Muhammad Tayyeb, Director to Minister Muzamil Tanveer and other senior officers were also present.

The meeting agreed to undertake strict measures to control the axle load limit for protection of the NHA



network. Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi issued an order to the Provincial Transport Department to ensure implementation of rules and regulations for controlling axle load limit to avoid overloading strictly. The meeting considered a proposal to launch a coordinated operation for removal of encroachments on both sides of the GT Road. It was told in the

meeting that the provincial Government will start a comprehensive operation soon for removal of encroachments. Mr. Asad Mahmood on this occasion emphasized upon the need for speedy issuance of vehicle fitness certificates in a much better way.

Such steps of Punjab Government will help stop traveling of unfit vehicles on National Highways. Mr. Asad

Mahmood said, our endeavor is to provide all possible travelling and civic amenities to the users of Motorways and National Highways. We are determined to provide environmentally friendly Motorways and National Highways to the travellers. The Federal Minister further said, necessary measures are underway to control accidents on roads and provide people with a safe and sound journey.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi assured the Federal Minister of Communications Asad Mahmood that the Punjab Government would extend all possible cooperation during construction of Muzaffargarh-Mianwali (MM) Road. The Chief Minister Punjab commended the efforts of National Highway Authority for keeping the road network in good condition. Mr. Asad Mahmood also appreciated the active role of the Punjab Government for solution of Public problems at large.

Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar in Multan City

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: An amended grant agreement for state of the art project titled "The Project for Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar in Multan" was signed today by Mr. Yasumitsu KINOSHITA, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office, and Ms. Sheena Ali Mansoor, Joint Secretary Ministry of Economic (EAD).

The purpose of the amendment of the grant agreement is to increase the amount of a grant aid from 2.042 billion Japanese Yen (equivalent to around 14.99 million USD) to 2.802 billion Japanese Yen (equivalent to around 20.57 million USD) responding to market price escalation.

Pakistan has a high

frequency of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, cyclones, and earthquakes. Quite notably, every year, Pakistan experiences heavy damages to the large parts of the country due to floods triggered by heavy rains during the monsoon season.

This project aims to improve the Pakistan Meteorological Department's capabilities in meteorological observation, weather forecasting and dissemination of warnings through the installation of a sophisticated radar system in Multan, thereby contributing to mitigate damages caused by natural disaster in Pakistan.

The Government of Japan and JICA continues to enhance the disaster risk management initiatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.



Meetings of Board of Governors of Divisional Model College and Sandal College

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Divisional Commissioner Faisalabad Ms. Silwat Saeed has said that more comprehensive & necessary steps are being taken to improve the quality of education in Divisional Model College and Sandal College so that local students can be provided with standard educational facilities at low fees. She was addressing with separate meetings of Board of Governors of Divisional Model College and Sandal College.

The Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamar was also accompanying with this. Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Dr. Khurram Tariq, principals of both colleges and other board members participated in the meeting.

Apart from the regular agenda, other issues were also discussed in the meeting. Here Dr. Khurram Tariq appreciated the quality of these educational institutions and said that besides curricular and co-curricular activities, necessary sports facilities are also being provided to their students.

He also stressed on character development of students and said that students of these colleges are serving in key positions in various fields after graduation.

He said that the admirable temperament, excellent moral and social behavior of the students of these colleges clearly distinguish them from the students of other educational institutions and conscious efforts were made to make these qualities a clear part of their personality.

He further said that with the efforts of Commissioner Ms Silwat Saeed, the measures taken to improve the quality of education should get good results soon.

Laxity in duty is intolerable, says DIG PHP

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: DIG Punjab Highway Patrol Dr. Muhammad Athar Waheed visited the PHP Regional Office, FC Faisalabad. SSP PHP Mirza Anjum Kamal accorded warmth welcome and presented bouquet. DIG PHP laid floral wreath on Yadgar-E-Shuhda and offered prayer. Afterwards, he planted a tree in order to buttress the clean and green moment of Pakistan. Moreover, he conducted meeting with SSP PHP, District officers, office staff and post Incharges. He reiterated that the purpose of patrolling is safeguarding the highways



and prevention of accidents. There should be pro-active and problem oriented policing to curb the crime.

Black spot should be identified to reduce the chances

of fatal accidents. Moreover, he said that negligence in discipline and turn out is unforgivable. He further said that the usage of E Police App, travel eye and

E-gadgets is every effective to control the crime and apprehend the criminals. The incharge post, Moharar and all PHP personnel should work hard to get the trust of public. Moreover, he took the orderly room and decided the appeals. He appreciated the command of SSP PHP Mirza Anjum Kamal and Incharge Mobile Education Unit M Rizwan Bhatti for the consummation of MOUs, built of Yadgar-E-Shuhda, and diverse awareness campaigns. He directed the DSPs to monitor the patrolling and ensure their presence on the highways to alert the patrolling especially at black spots.

A protest against non-payment of salaries



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In Lower South Waziristan tribal District Wana protested against the non-payment of salaries to hundreds of negehbans/guards (enclosures) recruited for the maintenance of the forest department for the last one year.

Zahid Noor Wazir, Tariq Wazir and Hayat Wazir, who led the protest in Azam Warsak Bazar, strongly demanded the Secretary Forest Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and District Forest Officer (DFO) South Waziristan to release the withheld salaries of our negehbans/guards, immediate orders should be issued for fund release.

On the other hand, DFO South Waziristan Zeeshan has sent a letter to the higher authorities regarding the release of closed salaries (enclosures) negehbans

In which it is said. It is submitted that for the last nine to ten months, there has been no release or meager release of funds under 10-BTTP which has triggered a difficult situation for this office. There are 375 Enclosures established in this Forest Division under 10-BTTP and subsequently Negehbans are employed for the look after of these Enclosures. But it is pertinent to mention that this office is unable to pay their wages due to nonavailability of funds.

The protesters held placards in their hands demanding the release of their salaries.

Enclosures/Guards/negehbans talking to the media said that if our salaries are not released soon, we will stage a dharna in front of the forest office along with a polio boycott.

If our problem is not resolved here, we will sit in front of the office of the concerned authorities in Peshawar, The sit-in will continue until our salaries are released.

Journalism is the fourth pillar of the state: Naeem Akhtar



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: North Waziristan: Journalism is the fourth pillar of the state and journalists are the eyes and ears of the nation the journalists of North Waziristan have systematically performed their duties even under the most difficult conditions and by offering a lot of sacrifices, the news of the people has been conveyed to the higher authorities.

These views were expressed by GOC Seven Division Miran Shah Major General Naeem Akhtar while talking on the occasion of visiting District Press Club Miran Shah yesterday.

On the occasion of Major General's visit to the press club, besides Deputy Commissioner Rehan Gul Khattak, officers of other civil and military institutions were also present.

On reaching the Press Club, the GOC was welcomed by the members of the Press Club and the President of the Press Club, Safdar Dawar, briefed the GOC about the Press Club and the journalists.

Major General Naeem Akhtar said in his speech that in the present era, heavy responsibility is placed on the shoulders of journalists, because due to the presence of social media, obtaining authentic news has become a challenge and only a good journalist can perform this task.

Press Club President Safdar Dawar, Waziristan Union of Journalists President Syed Ayub and other members have thanked the GOC and other officers.

AJK Govt: to provide shelter for patients in visionary Teaching Hospital



Abdul Majeed Tahir

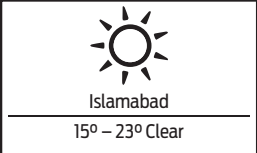
MIRPUR: Under the vision of the Prime Minister Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, to provide accommodation facilities for the relatives of patients in the Visionary Teaching Hospital Mirpur in collaboration with the hospital administration and social organization Anjuman Falah wa Behood Insaniya at a cost of Rs. 52 lakhs. On this occasion, the Ministers of Azad Kashmir Government Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Malik Zafar Iqbal, Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni, Chaudhry Maqbool, MS Dr.

Amir Aziz and the President of Social Organization Anjuman Falah wa Bahboud Insaniya Dr. Tahir Mahmood, Principal Bey, inaugurated the constructed shelter. Nazir Medical College Prof. Dr. Faisal Bashir, Prof. Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, Dr. Shoaib Khan, Dr. Adnan Marghoub, Dr. Majid Altaf, Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed Raja, Dr. Gohar Latif, Dr. Ahmed Naeem Kayani and other doctors were also present. The Prime Minister visited Mirpur Hospital. He also assured to build similar shelters for model patients in all divisional headquarters hospitals of Azad Kashmir.

Corruption of billion rupees

Bureau Report.

FAISALABAD: Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Faisalabad Chaudhry Zubair Nath was summoned by anti-corruption on the charge of corruption of one billion rupees. On behalf of the director of anti-corruption, the municipal secretary has been asked to present the Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Zubair Nath along with the record on April 3. In the anti-corruption report, it is said that Chaudhry Zubair Nath, Tehreek-e-Insaf MP Latif Nazir, Shakeel Shahid Corporation funds with Mian Waris Aziz and MNA Farrukh Habib playing the role of frontman. Clean-up campaigns. Corruption of more than one hundred million has been done in the context of whitewashing and setting up a daily market.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:33 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 4:40 pm
Maghrib 6:27 pm
Isha 7:52 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 Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Yousaeid ensures AAA Associates' commitment to its CSR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The renowned real estate brand AAA Associates ensures it will continue its commitment to social responsibility by supporting social uplift activities. The company carries out these social activities through its NGO named Yousaeid Foundation. There are a number of social uplift activities that come under the framework of the NGO. This year, the same activities will be continued as part of the social corporate responsibility.

Yousaeid Foundation manages food distribution campaigns that target hundreds of people living in destitute and absolute poverty. This food distribution campaign continues in Ramzan as well. This year the food distribution campaign will target needy individuals in twin cities. During the floods in Balochistan and Sindh Yousaeid Foundation distributed food among the affected people through an organized campaign. The campaign involved distributing food packages and parcels to be transported to the inundated regions and relief camps of the two provinces.

Pakistani society is also filled with people who are deserving of help but are not identified. Yousaeid Foundation identifies such individuals in society and then takes initiative to help them out.

International Day of Zero Waste

The delegation of Turkmenistan took part in high-level events of the UN General Assembly

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On 30 March the United Nations General Assembly under the presidency of Turkmenistan convened a High-level meeting on the role of zero waste as a transformative solution in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting was attended by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, the First Lady of the Republic of Türkiye, Ms. Emine Erdogan, the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, high-level delegations of the Member States, and the heads of relevant specialized agencies of the UN system.

The United Nations Secretary-General in his statement called to use the momentum of the International Day of Zero Waste, proclaimed at the initiative of the Republic of Türkiye and celebrated for the first time, as a starting point for more active efforts to promote efficient consumption

and production patterns, minimization of waste levels and rational management of resources. It was emphasized that every year, more than 2 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste is created, but 33 per cent of it is not properly managed in controlled facilities, and every minute, the equivalent of one garbage truck full of plastic is dumped into the ocean.

In this regard, it was announced that an Advisory Board of Eminent Persons on Zero Waste had been established under the auspices of the United Nations, which would continuously produce analytics and development recommendations in this area for national governments, international organizations and other stakeholders.

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, in turn, drew attention to the challenges of waste management and the transition to closed consumption systems faced by growing cities around the world. It was emphasized that platforms such as the Network of Zero Waste Cities and the Adop-

tion of the Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production have been adopted to unite efforts in this direction.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan in his speech during the meeting, expressing gratitude to the Republic of Türkiye for the initiative in organizing the event and launching a global campaign to achieve the zero waste goals, noted the importance of consolidating the efforts of the world community to develop circular economy models that minimize the impact on the environment and thus contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Attention was drawn to the measures taken by Turkmenistan at the national level to establish waste management systems in urban areas, introduce modern technologies for the disposal of household and industrial waste in order to improve the living conditions of the population of Turkmenistan and reduce the gap between the regions due to the



advanced development of rural communities.

As a vivid example of the transformations carried out in this area in the country, the new city of Arkadag was cited, the model of which is based on the adaptation of circular technologies, advanced methods of modern environmentally friendly architecture and building materials, as well as on the principle of reducing urban waste to zero.

In this context, it was empha-

sized that Turkmenistan considers the promotion of the concept of zero-waste cities, in close cooperation with the UN Human Settlements Programme, a key element for achieving practical results in this sphere and a powerful tool for achieving the goals of sustainable urbanization.

On the afternoon of 30 March, the delegation of Turkmenistan also took part in a side event to observe the International Day of Zero Waste, organized joint-

ly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Habitat with the support of the Government of the Republic of Türkiye.

At this event, a presentation of the new city of Arkadag was held. In particular, emphasis was placed on demonstrating modern waste-free technologies used in the city, smart transport and communication systems and innovative environmental solutions.

Pleasant weather

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the dark clouds on sky during rainy weather as the World Second most beautiful Capital is going through very pleasant weather these days.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

First National Tour Guide Training concluded

ABC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in collaboration with Department of Tourist Services (DTS), Sustainable Tourism Foundation Pakistan (STFP), College of tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM), Pakistan Association of Tour Operators (PATO) and Legend Hotels has organized a First National Tour Guide Training Program in Islamabad from March 18, 2023 to March 31, 2023.

The aim of this training workshop was to improve the knowledge and skills of tour guides about the tourist destinations, tour group management, communication skills, and professionally handling all the aspect of tours reflecting high standards of tour guid-



ing, customer service and operational best practices.

24 trainees from different parts of Pakistan participated in the two weeks training program which was conducted by international and national trainers and experts of tourism industry. Certificates were distributed among the trainees at the successful conclusion of first National Tour Guide

Training program today on March 31, 2023 in Islamabad.

Speaking at this occasion, Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director PTDC congratulated all the participants on completing this training program and thanked all the trainers who shared their valuable time to conduct this training program. He said that there is a serious shortage of

trained tour guides in Pakistan. To fill this gap, PTDC has launched a National Tour Guides Training Program. Through this training initiative 1000 tour guides from all over Pakistan will be trained in one year. Under this initiative, PTDC will organize a series of tour guides training workshops in all the provincial capitals in collaboration with provincial tourism departments and private sector. He further said that this will provide an opportunity to our youth to learn a useful skill of tour guiding and get job opportunities in the field of tour operation in Pakistan. On this occasion, participants and trainers also shared their views about the training program and highly appreciated the efforts of PTDC and partner organizations for taking this important step.

Enhancing multi-sector partnerships at LUMS

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Investing in education is a time-tested way forward to create a significant impact of strengthening communities, the nation and beyond. LUMS recently hosted a series of events for existing and prospective donors and alumni in Karachi, Faisalabad, and Lahore to recognize and appreciate their unwavering support over the years. Prominent business leaders, philanthropists, and LUMS alumni attended these events.

The University's senior leadership, including the Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Rector, Mr. Shahid Hussain, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Arshad Ahmad, Provost, Dr. Tariq Jadoon, Ms. Nuzhat Kamran, Director, Advancement, and Mr. Mohammad Ali Khan, Executive Director, Strategic



Initiatives, were present to lead and host these events. LUMS shared its strategic vision to build on achievements in research, pedagogy, and community outreach and presented opportunities for more students to access quality education at LUMS through platform learning.

Dr. Ahmad thanked LUMS supporters and emphasized the University's commitment to addressing the grand challenges facing Pakistan and how

our faculty is focusing on interventions related to energy, water, and entrepreneurship. He said, "If we are to produce exceptional higher-level learning and its impact, whether delivered by universities, companies, or other types of organizations, we must continue to champion solutions that address real problems the nation faces.

Director of Mitchells Fruit Farms Limited, Mr. Mehdi Mohsin said, "Through the years, we have seen the

institution's impact on the industry. We are glad to contribute to this great cause for education in Pakistan, and I wish LUMS all the best for the future." Ms. Fatima Asad Said, a Member of the LUMS Board of Trustees added, "I believe in the mission of LUMS. Together we can collaborate to build, not only a world-class institution but also building a sustainable world for the next generation. So, thank you very much for this opportunity to give back more."

GDA leaders strongly condemn the killing of Dr. Birbal Ginani

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Former Senator and Secretary General of Grand Democratic Alliance Dr. Safdar Abbasi and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Political Secretary Naheed Khan have expressed deep concern over the death of well-known ophthalmologist Dr. Birbal Ginani and the injuries to Dr. Quratul Ain in the firing incident in Karachi. While demanding the arrest of the killers and providing full protection to the citizens, they expressed these views in their statement they regretted over the death of Dr. Birbal Ginani in the firing incident on the Lyari Expressway. While demanding the arrest of the killers soon and providing full protection to the citizens, they added that Dr. Birbal Ginani was a great messiah who gave light and happiness to millions.

They further added that government has completely failed to maintain law and order throughout Sindh, especially in the city of Karachi and citizens of Karachi have been held hostage by a handful of criminal elements.

But the administration is busy with their own affairs, they said that they share the grief of Dr. Birbal Ginani's family and express their deepest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Public enjoyed flower exhibition in Multan: DG PHA



Bureau Report

MULTAN: Park and Horticulture Department (PHA) Multan has prepared a comprehensive plan for littering around the parks. Actions will be taken to inform the public. They will go. They have made a coordinated plan for effective actions against encroachments. They are ensuring the planting of flowers and plants in the spring season. PHA has organized a magnificent flower exhibition at Qila Qohna Qasim Bagh, Multan, in which hundreds of different types of flowers were displayed.

This flower exhibition was attended by thousands of people from Multan and other areas and saw the flowers adorned with the unforgettable combination of nature's colors and expressed their happiness to see the creative process of nature in the form of flowers. These views were expressed by Director General PHA Multan Asif Rauf Khan in a meeting with the directors. On this occasion, Director Marketing Hafiz Usama, Director Horticulture Saad Qureshi and Director Engineering Adnan Butt were present. He further said that inside and outside the parks. Cleanliness should be taken care of. Parks are for healthy activities.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special orders of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police's "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign, various teams of Islamabad capital police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the problems faced by the citizens.

In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 189 tenants and house servants of 193 houses from Aabpara police station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital Islamabad adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements involved in any kind of suspicious activity.

Citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes comes to their house in order to collect the data.

Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.

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Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis

Spokesman Report

March 31 – Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis, when the memory of Azerbaijanis killed by Armenians for their ethnic and religious affiliation, subjected to a policy of racial discrimination, ethnic cleansing and genocide is commemorated.

105 years ago, in March-April 1918, Dashnak-Bolshevik armed groups operating under the mandate of the Baku Soviet carried out brutal massacres against tens of thousands of peaceful Azerbaijanis in Baku, as well as in Shamakhi, Guba, Irevan, Zangazur, Garabagh, Nakhchivan and Kars regions. As a result of massacres, more than 16,000 people were brutally murdered and 167 villages were destroyed in Guba alone.

The systematic and planned nature of the massacres, which were an integral part of the radical nationalist Armenians' policy of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis, manifests itself in the confessions of Stephan Shaumyan, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Caucasus, an ethnic Armenian, that 6,000 armed soldiers of the Baku Soviet and 4,000 armed soldiers of the Dashnaksutun Party took part in the massacres.

After the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), the



government created the Extraordinary Investigation Commission for the investigation of grave crimes committed by Armenians, where the best lawyers of that time, including different ethnicities, such as Russians, Jews, Poles, Georgians and even Armenians were represented. As a result of the Commission's investigation and based on evidence, criminal cases were opened against 194 persons accused of different crimes against peaceful population, and 24 people were arrested in Baku and about 100 in Shamakhi for their crimes. However, the continuation of this first step towards a political and legal assessment of the policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis was interrupted due to the occupation of the Republic of Azerbaijan by Soviet

et Army.

An adequate political assessment to the events was given after the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Genocide of Azerbaijanis" dated March 26, 1998 signed by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, when according to this Decree, March 31 was declared as the "Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis". Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis is of exceptional importance in informing the world community about the policy of ethnic cleansing and crimes of genocide committed against Azerbaijanis.

Ethnic cleansing, genocide and other crimes against humanity, which are an integral part of Armenia's policy of

ethnic hatred and intolerance against Azerbaijanis, were continued during the 30-year long policy of military aggression against Azerbaijan, as well as during the 44-Day Patriotic War. Our compatriots who were expelled as a result of the deportation of Azerbaijanis living in Armenia, as well as the occupation of Azerbaijani territories from their homes were subjected to the policy of ethnic cleansing by Armenia; the civilian population became victims of acts of genocide, including Khojaly, numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity. Missile attacks against civilians in Ganja, Barda, Tartar and other cities of Azerbaijan outside the frontline during the 44-Day Patriotic War once again proved the continuation of the Armenia's state-level policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis.

On the 105th anniversary of the March massacres, we commemorate the innocent victims of the policy of genocide, racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing committed by Armenia against Azerbaijanis with deep sorrow, as well as reiterates the importance of ending Armenia's impunity to prevent such crimes and their recurrence.

Azerbaijan, believing that the restoration of justice will make a significant contribution to the establishment of peace and security in the region, will continue to take measures to end impunity in the international legal framework.

Acts of Quran desecration undermine interfaith harmony

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has, at a meeting of the Human Rights Council, called the recent acts of desecration of the Holy Quran as not just a provocation to Muslims, but a step to sabotage inter-faith harmony and peace.

"This year we have witnessed at least five incidents of public desecration of the Holy Quran in Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands – as the latest manifestation of racial hatred and xenophobia," Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Khalil Hashmi, said in a general debate of the 47-member Council on Friday, speaking on behalf of the OIC.

"The OIC Group echoes the outrage of nearly 2 billion human beings whose faith is anchored in the message of the Quran," Ambassador Hashmi told the delegates, citing a verse from the holy book that said, "Let there be no compulsion in religion".

That affirmation came over a millennia before freedom of religion and belief and freedom of expression got enshrined in legal instruments.

In this context, the Pakistani envoy said an unequivocal condemnation should have been the starting point of the international community's response to these acts.

"Sadly," he added, "some chose to hide behind the self-serving interpretation of human rights."

"Absence of preventive legal deterrence, inaction, and shying away from speaking out encourages further incitement to hatred and violence," Ambassador Hashmi said, noting that unsurprisingly more incidents have followed.

"If those responsible for prevention were not complicit earlier; They are now," he said, adding, "They are in violation of their obligations under international human rights laws."

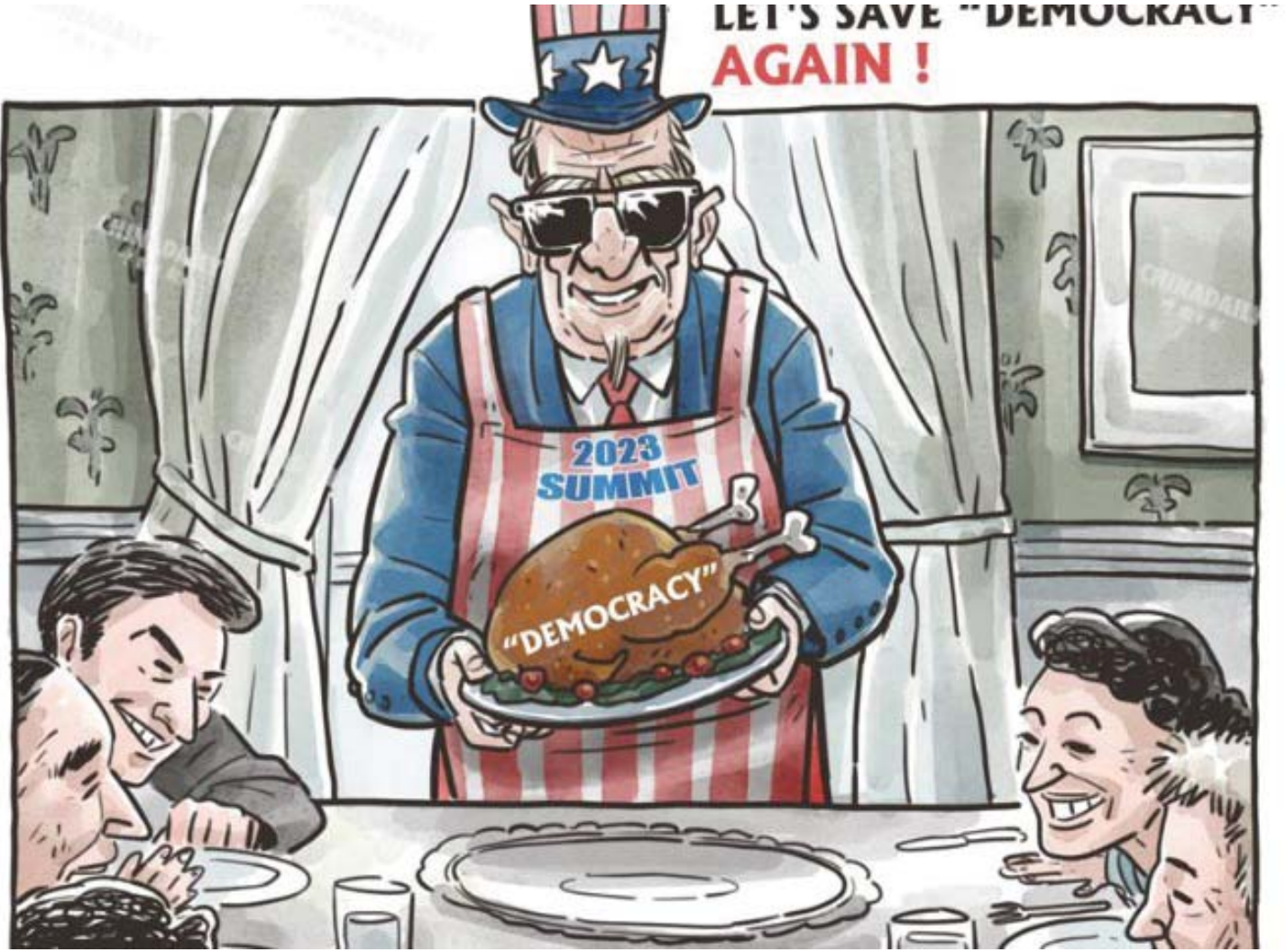
The Pakistani envoy also said he was appalled at the human rights machinery's general apathy towards these incidents.

"We particularly note with disappointment the choice made by Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and Freedom of Expression to not call out these deliberate acts of hate," he said, pointing to speaking in nuanced terms, without condemning these incidents, starkly contrasts with their practice of often naming countries and pronouncing publicly and clearly on events incomparable in magnitude or impact.

"We reject selective academic interpretations of human rights law. The selectivity and partiality on these issues, incidents, and interpretations is at variance with high standards of objectivity and independence expected of them.

"It has shaken our faith in their work," Ambassador Hashmi added.

"Finally, we have a message for those enjoying impunity in desecrating our Holy book! When you hold the next copy, try reading it."



China Focus: China, ASEAN aim for deepened agriculture cooperation

Xinhua

Durians from Thailand, bananas from the Philippines, passion fruit from Vietnam, longans from Cambodia, and coffee from Malaysia. More and more agricultural products from ASEAN countries are well-received by Chinese households, thanks to better China-ASEAN cooperation in agriculture.

China has been the ASEAN's largest trading partner for the past 13 years, and trade in agricultural products plays a vital role, said Kao Kim Hourn, ASEAN secretary-general at the ongoing Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) annual conference.

Kao Kim Hourn also noted that China and the ASEAN launched many projects on trade in agricultural products such as grain, meat, vegetables, and fruits, as well as personnel exchanges and technical exchanges.

Representatives at the forum from China and ASEAN countries widely recognize that the two sides have deepened their agricultural cooperation comprehensively.

Fruitful achievements have been made by China and the ASEAN in terms of investment and trade, scientific and technological exchanges and cooperation, food security, green and sustainable development of agriculture, and inter-governmental policy coordi-

nation, which is a significant contribution to fostering a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future.

China's agricultural investment in ASEAN countries accounts for 40 percent of its total overseas investment. The trade volume of agricultural products between China and the ASEAN reached 61 billion U.S. dollars in 2022, topping the other countries and regions worldwide, according to Sui Pengfei, director general of the international cooperation department under China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Statistics from China's General Administration of Customs show that nearly 1,500 kinds of agricultural and food products from the ASEAN have been exported to China. High-quality agricultural varieties and technologies from China also boosted the development of agricultural industries in ASEAN countries.

The academy has signed cooperation agreements with 25 scientific and educational institutions in ASEAN countries, such as Kasetsart University in Thailand and Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia.

South China's Hainan Province is building several cold chain logistics and trading centers to process and store tropical agriculture products for the ASEAN to strengthen the connection between the two tropical-product markets.

In recent years, Hainan and ASEAN countries have jointly carried out the R&D and utilization of excellent tropical fruit and vegetable resources and deepened cooperation in the planting and processing trade, seeing a steady increase in imports and exports of tropical agriculture products.

Hainan will make good use of the free trade port system and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to promote the deep integration of the industry chains, supply chains, and value chains between China and ASEAN countries, according to Xie Jing, vice governor of Hainan Province.

China mainly exports fish, garlic, citrus, apples, condiments, and other products to the ASEAN and imports fruits, vegetable oils, aquatic products, grain, and other primary agricultural products from the ASEAN. Sui Pengfei said if the two sides keep improving the trade level, the related trade volume may reach 100 billion U.S. dollars in the next five to seven years.

Representatives to the forum also said China and ASEAN countries should cooperate in setting the standards for planting and processing tropical agriculture products and in enhancing food security.

China and EU key players in multipolar world

Chen Weihua

The visits by European Union leaders to China this week and in coming weeks show many countries still believe in a multipolar world despite the United States' efforts to maintain its unilateral hold over a better part of the world and check China's rise.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez started his state visit to China by attending the Boao Forum for Asia annual conference and then meeting President Xi Jinping in Beijing. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Spain has a big role to play in the EU given its six-month rotating presidency of the Council of European Union from July at a time when the bloc is haunted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, high inflation and the US' pressure to trigger a new Cold War.

China has been consistently calling for de-escalation and negotiations to help end the Ukraine-Russia conflict. And its recent diplomatic efforts, including a 12-point document on ending the Ukraine crisis, have raised hopes that China could play the role of peace-broker between Russia and Ukraine. The key role China played in helping Iran and Saudi Arabia agree to restore diplomatic ties is the latest proof of such Chinese peace efforts.

Sanchez's visit to China will be

followed by the visits of French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in early April. The first EU leader to visit China after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, however, was German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (late last year) followed by European Council President Charles Michel.

A few months into Ukraine conflict, the EU basically gave up diplomatic efforts to help end the conflict and, instead, has been focusing on supplying arms and other military equipment to Ukraine. Macron is probably one of the few European leaders who tried to push for a diplomatic solution, but he has often been criticized for "appeasing" Russia or being politically incorrect or both.

The EU has announced nine rounds of economic sanctions against Russia, but the sanctions have hurt the EU as much as Russia.

The reciprocal airspace ban by the EU and Ukraine on one side and Russia on the other has caused passengers and airlines to suffer and increased carbon emissions, because planes now have to fly longer distances to reach their destination. And by boycotting inexpensive Russian oil and gas to buy expensive LNG from countries like the US, the EU states have imposed on themselves very high economic costs.

Peaceful co-existence and cooperation, instead of confrontation, is the only way forward. A prolonged and escalated conflict between Russia and

Ukraine, which is exactly what some countries are pushing for, will be a disaster for the EU and the world.

The EU leaders should reach out to countries such as China, India and South Africa, which have not taken sides in the conflict and can truly help promote peace talks between Russia and Ukraine to help end the conflict. China's peace plan could be a good start, for it calls for negotiations to end the Ukraine crisis.

Moreover, the EU leaders' visits to China show that most EU leaders don't want a new Cold War despite the US' efforts to trigger one. No one suffered more during the Cold War than the Europeans, as people in one part of Europe treated those in other parts as enemies, and vice-versa.

The visits will also help the EU leaders better understand China. China is far from perfect, but the latest Ipsos happiness survey that ranked China first with 91 percent Chinese people saying they are happy and China's consistent top ranking in Edelman Trust Barometer show China is not as bad as some make it out to be.

China and the EU could and should be key players in a multipolar world to boost cooperation and tackle common challenges, such as maintaining regional and global peace, tackling climate change and nuclear proliferation, improving global governance and boosting global growth. That's also what the leaders should focus on in their meetings.

(Courtesy China Daily)

Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev's interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta

US summit for Democracy will be yet another sham aimed at endangering human rights: Nikolai Patrushev

News Desk

Question: Mr Patrushev, the United States will hold its second Summit for Democracy in a couple of days. In its wake, if we are to believe the Department of State, Washington will speed up the so-called democratic renovation of the world. What do you think about this "gathering of Washington's vassals" event?

Nikolai Patrushev: Organised by the White House, the Summit for Democracy is being held as part of the US presidential race that has got under way. It will be yet another meeting in favour of a world system where Washington wants to play the central role, while the dissidents, as should be expected, will be branded as "undemocratic states."

The United States will once again declare itself the defender of international law and is sure to claim that the world must live according to its rules. Its geopolitical adversaries will be heaped with patently false accusations of military crimes and corruption, but, as usually, they will turn a blind eye to the real acts of genocide and financial machinations perpetrated with the White House's approval. They will promise to feed the hungry and free unjustly imprisoned individuals. But they will keep silent about the fact that the US prison population amounts to about one-fifth of the entire world's prison population, including people sentenced to several life terms. They will show especial zeal in defending sexual minority rights and imposing their green agenda on the world, thereby aggravating the energy crisis in their satellite countries.

While hypocritically speculating about the freedom of choice, the United States, the self-appointed global dictator, will in fact scoff at countries whose sovereignty and democracy it has trampled underfoot.

Question: They will probably say again that the US is a paragon of democracy for the entire human race, and will not wish to hear any criticism about themselves?

Nikolai Patrushev: This goes without saying. After all, the main task of the political regime in the present-day US is to mislead their own population amid the system-wide crisis they are facing.

Their democracy is nothing more than a pretty façade of a state structure designed to cover up how they ignore the rights of the common American. Those who have taken a closer look at the US legal and socio-political system have no illusions about whether there is freedom of speech or freedom of expression. How can there be freedom of opinion, if even the former president of the United States is prevented from speaking on the social media or in the press about issues that interest the public, and while the media are propaganda outlets for major companies and elite groups?

While defending competition by word only, the American authorities have made the country's economy dependent on corrupt and lobbying ties traced to the White House and the Capitol. The political process has degenerated into a clash between corporations, which put their people in key positions in the bodies of power. They also shape the US foreign policy and seek to maintain US global domination by creating hotbeds of tension all over the world for the sake of their billion-dollar profits from various contracts, the imaginary transparency of which they themselves control.

Though proclaiming democratic slogans in season and out of season, Washington has long become a champion in violating the sovereignty of states, in the number of war and conflicts unleashed, and in the brutal and illegal hunting of citizens of other countries.

If the US really decides to advance towards democracy and stops humiliating its allies/vassals, we will only welcome that.

Question: Will we hear at the summit pompous statements about how Kiev, with the support of the good people from NATO, is standing up to the universal evil embodied by Russia?

Nikolai Patrushev: I am sure this issue will top the discussion. In fact, NATO countries are a party to the conflict. They made one large military camp out of Ukraine. They are shipping weapons and ammunition to Ukrainian troops, provide

them with intelligence, including with the help of satellite imagery specialists and a fair number of UAVs. NATO instructors and advisers are training the Ukrainian military, and mercenaries are fighting as part of neo-Nazi battalions. In an attempt to draw out the military confrontation as much as possible, they are not hiding their key goal, which is to defeat Russia on the battlefield and then dismember it.

Question: This policy of Washington never changes, because the American elite were never able to come to grips with a strong and independent Russia, correct?

Nikolai Patrushev: Yes. The US authorities' unchecked push to maintain their leading role around the world has been the source of escalation of tensions on a global scale since at least 1945. They believe two great powers, Russia and China, are standing in their way and prevent them from achieving this goal. The Russian Federation is a problem because in addition to pursuing an independent policy for strengthening the multipolar world, it defeats America spiritually, morally, and militarily. China is the United States' main economic

ing the United States, in case it is faced with an existential threat. **Question: However, the West is betting not only on a military defeat, but on the economic attrition of Russia as well...**

Nikolai Patrushev: This is clearly so. Many Western companies left the Russian market under pressure from Washington. However, they were seriously mistaken in their projections concerning the collapse of our economy and the growth of protest sentiment.

In the last decade, the West has been implementing the idea of creating a technological order where it was the only beneficiary of economic prosperity, while the rest of the world was destined to remain on the fringes of socio-economic progress. Therefore, its leaders are irate at Russia's measured response to sanctions pressure. Russia is a pet peeve for the rulers in the United States and Europe as a country that is independent in terms of its economy, raw materials, and scientific research. For their part, Western countries are completely dependent on transnational companies and global supply chains. If sanctions of the same level were to be imposed on the United Kingdom or France, they would

ablaze in a belief that they can get away with anything.

Question: One gets an impression that the collective West is not even thinking about learning from the past.

Nikolai Patrushev: The Western Internationale has challenged our country more than once under the banners of the Poles or the Swedes, Napoleonic eagles, the British flag or Nazi swastika. The result has always been the same and the attempts to crush Russia were futile. The Westerners are unwilling to learn their lessons and keep looking for trouble.

Washington is not happy with stability in Asia that came as a result of WWII and the liberation movement, either. The US Indo-Pacific strategy is an attempt to create an Asian NATO. The new alliance will be another aggressive bloc directed against China and Russia and will be used to subject independent states.

Rearming the Australian Navy under the new AUKUS alliance, including the supply of nuclear submarines, and military support for Taiwan and South Korea have a long-term goal of establishing US and NATO dominance over Eurasia on its

act of genocide.

Nikolai Patrushev: People who know history and are not attempting to falsify it are well aware of the fact that access to food was a bigger problem in the RSFSR than in Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s. This is a well-documented state of affairs, and facts abound to back it up. The biography of the Hero of the Soviet Union Grigory Boyarinov is a case in point. His 100th birth anniversary was marked at the end of last year. He was a renowned intelligence officer and a participant in the Great Patriotic War and many special operations. He died while leading the assault on Amin's palace in Afghanistan. He was born in 1922 in the Smolensk Region. His father was chairman of a collective farm. However, in the 1930s, his family relocated to Ukraine, where food was more readily available and survival was more likely.

The Americans are using famine slogans on a global scale and accuse our country of provoking a global food crisis. I have no doubt that during the summit for democracy they will focus on this issue as well. Meanwhile, the Westerners are blocking exports of Russian grain and

sea change in the EU's economic model based on a mix of cheap energy from Russia and advanced European technology.

The implementation of joint plans with Washington to reduce raw material and technological dependence on Beijing will deal an equally devastating blow to Europe. In addition, the EU is facing a migration dead end. Many migrants are not only unwilling to become integrated into the European family, but create their own caliphates and force the local governments and residents into living according to their laws. Criminals and gunmen are coming to Europe with other migrants. Most recent high-profile terrorist attacks in London, Brussels and Paris were committed by EU citizens hailing from ethnic enclaves. Keeping in mind that Al-Qaeda, ISIS (these international terrorist organisations are outlawed in the Russian Federation) and other terrorist organisations were created by the United States, and terrorists in Syria and Iraq are trained by the CIA instructors, it cannot be ruled out that the terrorist attacks in Europe were made possible by the same individuals who seek to destabilise the situation in

later US neighbours south of the border will take back the territories that were stolen from them. **Question: The United States is torn by multiple internal contradictions. There is no unity even within the American elite.**

Nikolai Patrushev: That's right. The antagonism between Republicans and Democrats is exacerbating. Differences between various financial entities and transnational corporations that care about nothing, not even America's prosperity, but their own capitalisation are mounting. The US elites who think of themselves as untouchables never thought of themselves as part of the American people.

Their projects like BLM, or Black Lives Matter, and the sweeping inculcation of transgender theories are aimed at spiritual degradation of the public, which is already in a state of apathy. The Americans' individualism and consumerism will play a cruel trick on the country. Ordinary citizens will not lift a finger to keep America whole as they are fully aware that the government does not need them. The US authorities don't know what they are doing and are slowly destroying them-



rival. Their attempts to suppress Russia will be followed by Washington's taking on the PRC.

As you may be aware, concrete steps to destroy the Soviet Union were approved 75 years ago in a well-known NSC directive "US Objectives with Respect to Russia." The West went euphoric with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The euphoria did not last long, though, because Russia corrected its mistakes. Today, our country can ensure not only domestic stability, but national security against external threats as well.

Question: Earlier this March, a US strategic bomber practiced a simulated nuclear strike on St Petersburg from a distance of 200 kilometres above the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea in a deliberate attempt to exacerbate tensions. They don't fear anything any more?

Nikolai Patrushev: For some reason, the US politicians, who are held captive by their own propaganda, remain confident that in the event of a direct conflict with Russia, the United States is capable of delivering a preventive missile strike that will render Russia unable to retaliate. This is a case of shortsighted and very dangerous foolhardiness.

Some people in the West have forgotten the lessons of history and are talking about turning the tables and prevailing militarily over Russia. We can say only one thing in response to this: Russia is a patient country and does not intimidate anyone with its military advantage. However, it has unique modern weapons that can destroy any enemy, includ-

have quickly plunged into chaos.

However, Russia is not going to keep the rest of the world cut off from its economy. It will remain open and integrated with the economies of those sovereign countries that are concerned about their own prosperity, which is based, among other things, on cooperation with us. **Question: Clearly, undermining the Russian economy and bleeding the Russian army dry are two sides of one strategy that the West has been trying to implement for centuries now?**

Nikolai Patrushev: No doubt about it. One should not naively believe that economic aggression is softer and more humane. European countries and Japan have stopped supplying a number of medicines, including vital ones, to Russia. In this regard, the Western pharmaceutical industry deserves an honourable mention as a successor to the "traditions" established by its predecessors. It's a known fact that most of these companies have at some point worked on developing toxic gases and gas chambers commissioned by Nazi Germany, thus fully supporting the ideology substantiating the genocide of the "superfluous" nations.

Think back to how the Anglo-Saxons nurtured Nazis in the 1930s in hope of using them against the Soviet Union. Having reaped financial and geopolitical benefits from the outcomes of World War II, Washington and London are again conniving with Nazism and fascism. They have no qualms about using Ukraine to set Europe or the entire world

eastern flank.

Washington nudged Tokyo to begin another militarisation. The Japan Self-Defence Forces are about to become a full-fledged army capable of conducting offensive operations. This has been confirmed by Japanese legislation, which in fact is a gross violation of one of the most important outcomes of World War II. Focusing on attack weapons, Prime Minister Kishida said his country was about to purchase 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the United States.

In addition to arming Japan, Washington is trying to revive the spirit of Japanese militarism, which seemed to have been uprooted in 1945. It appears that someone plans to turn residents of that island state into kamikazes dying for other people's interests. The Westerners choose not to recall or deliberately keep silent about using Japan's aggressiveness against the Soviet Union and China at the beginning of the 20th century, but, in the end, the Japanese turned their weapons against the Americans, the British and their allies. **Question: The American and European politicians tend to not only conveniently forget about awkward facts from their past, but also deliberately rewrite history, even when it runs counter to common sense. This can be seen from the hypocritical campaign to rehabilitate Nazism. They have even gone as far as claiming that Ukrainians were the only soldiers to liberate Europe from Nazism. They are touting the myth about the Holodomor as an**

fertiliser abroad, robbing Ukrainians of their grain, which they resell at exorbitant prices to poor countries on predatory terms, as their colonial ancestors did.

Question: Sometimes it looks like the West is digging itself into a hole. The events underway in the EU evoke strong feelings about its uncertain future.

Nikolai Patrushev: The collapse of the EU is not far off. Of course, the Europeans will not continue to put up with this supranational superstructure, which not only failed to justify its existence, but is also pushing the Old World into an open conflict with our country. The United States is prepared to fight Russia not only to the last Ukrainian, but to the last European as well. Even during the Cold War, at the slightest sign of a threat from the Soviet Union, the Pentagon was ready to turn Europe into a radioactive wasteland. I don't think the US strategists have changed their minds in this regard.

Question: How does this rhyme with the fact that the United States and Europe are the main allies in words?

Nikolai Patrushev: The irony is that Washington has a stake in seeing the EU disintegrate in order to eliminate an economic competitor and to prevent Europe from prospering through cooperation with Russia. The Americans have done a lot to make sure the Old World loses its status of a strong economic player. In many respects, Washington has been fomenting the anti-Russia sanctions exactly for this purpose. We are witnessing a

Europe, whose future the United States doesn't care about.

The United States is ruling the roost in Europe, ignoring the fact that the leading role on this continent has historically been assigned to Russia. In the 19th century it was the Russian Empire, and in the 20th century the Soviet Union. So it will be in the 21st century as well.

Question: Is the United States confident of its own robustness? Does it think decline can be a threat to anyone but them? I think the United States may be facing the risk of disintegration as well.

Nikolai Patrushev: The United States acquired the status of a great power as a result of economic achievements based on cynical seizure of territories, resources, exploiting peoples and profiting from other countries' war tragedies. Still, they remained a patchwork quilt that can easily burst at the seams and cleave into North and South the way things were early on. Moreover, we cannot rule out that the South will not start moving towards Mexico, whose lands the Americans seized in 1848.

We are talking about over 2 million square kilometres. By the way, Latin American leaders are not hiding the fact that their awareness of the United States' destructive role has become widespread. The fact of creating the Guantanamo base is considered an outright theft of Cuban sovereignty. This is just one of the many examples of systematic encroachment on independence of the Latin American countries. There's no doubt that sooner or

selves.

America's problem is that it has got carried away with playing geopolitical games and left its own pressing problems unattended. While the United States is busy developing new viruses in its military biological laboratories to destroy the peoples of objectionable countries, the once clean American cities are drowning in filth and garbage.

Built with the help of the printing press, the US financial pyramid keeps faltering. The model that is based on unchecked emissions, where economic issues are literally flooded with money, cannot remain viable forever. With over \$31.5 trillion in foreign debt, the US is on track to default. The eroding confidence in the dollar that is not backed by actual goods and in inflated stock market speculations will plunge the United States into a devastating financial crisis.

Question: No matter how ostentatious it may sound, Russians not only don't want war, but they don't want to see the demise of the United States or any other country.

Nikolai Patrushev: Absolutely. Our centuries-old culture is based on spirituality, compassion and mercy. Russia is a historical champion of sovereignty and statehood of all nations who turned to it for help. Russia saved the United States at least twice, once during the Revolutionary War and then again during the Civil War. I believe helping the United States to maintain its integrity this time would be pointless.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
40,000.83	39,848.35	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
40,000.83	39,729.44	
Index Value	Change	
68,756,703	+152.48	
Percentage	Time	
+0.38%	31 Mar, 2023 5: 00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,631.74	+11.31	
Percentage	Time	
+0.15%	31 Mar, 4: 35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,123.92	+264.89	
Percentage	Time	
+0.81%	31 Mar, 1: 02 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
28,041.48	+258.55	
Percentage	Time	
+0.93%	31 Mar, 3: 15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.5	189.9
Bahrain Dinar	754.25	762.25
Canadian Dollar	206.5	208.7
China Yuan	41.16	41.56
Danish Krone	41.49	41.89
Euro	308	311
Hong Kong Dollar	36.11	36.46
Indian Rupee	3.45	3.56
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.3
Kuwaiti Dinar	924.86	933.86
Malaysian Ringgit	64.14	64.74
New Zealand \$	176.37	178.37
Norwegians Krone	27.16	27.46
Omani Riyal	736.57	744.57
Qatari Riyal	77.87	78.57
Saudi Riyal	75.5	76.5
Singapore Dollar	209.5	211.5
Swedish Korona	27.35	27.65
Swiss Franc	310.26	312.76
Thai Bhat	8.29	8.44
U.A.E Dirham	77.2	77.9
UK Pound Sterling	350.5	354
US Dollar	283.7	286.5

UAE's investment company delegation calls on the Prime Minister

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook al Maktoum, Chairman of Hayat Bio-Tech and a member of the ruling family of the UAE, along with a delegation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad today.

Welcoming the delegation, the Prime Minister said that the brotherly relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates are deep rooted in history. He underlined that Pakistan attaches great importance to further expanding brotherly ties with the UAE in diverse fields including trade and investment.

The Prime Minister welcomed the keen interest of Hayat Bio-Tech to invest in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector, especially in vaccine manufacturing. He also invited the visiting delegation to invest in the renewable energy sector and assured that foreign investors will be provided all possible facilitation.

H.H. Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook al Maktoum said they are aware of huge investment potential of Pakistan and UAE was looking forward to further expanding its footprint in the energy and health sectors. He expressed keen desire to further expand UAE's investment portfolio in Pakistan. The dignitary also briefed the Prime Minister about their ongoing 1200 MW power



plant project undertaken in collaboration with the Government of Sindh which would be a hybrid power plant of solar and wind energy. Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and senior officials of the concerned government departments also attended the meeting.

FINCA Microfinance Bank and CIRCLE Women Partner to empower women through digital and financial literacy

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited (FMBL), the first microfinance bank in Pakistan to open an all-female staff-led branch, has announced a collaboration with CIRCLE Women, a social enterprise dedicated to women's economic empowerment and leadership development. The collaboration aims to empower women from low-income strata by promoting digital literacy and financial inclusion under CIRCLE Women's Digital Literacy Program (DLP).

Through this collaboration, CIRCLE Women will train 1,000 female customers of FMBL in digital skills, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. By partnering with FMBL, the 1,000 DLP participants will expand their businesses and benefit from FINCA Pay, the digital mobile application that offers convenient and secure financial transactions. CIRCLE Women's developed DLP curriculum, approved by master trainers and experts, shall be utilized



in all trainings. We share this belief with CIRCLE Women that financial services can serve as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. Our collaboration will focus on adding more women to Pakistan's financially included segment, thereby advancing our shared social mission," said Jahanzeb Khan, CEO of FINCA Microfinance Bank Ltd. Sadaf Abid, CEO and founder of CIRCLE Women, also stated that, "The digital and financial inclusion of women in Pakistan's economy is no more a luxury—it is a necessity of our time. When a woman is financially enabled, she invests back into the health, nutrition and education of her family.

Three nuclear-armed nations facing hunger

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said the people of the three nuclear powers are suffering from hunger.

The people of North Korea are facing starvation due to international sanctions, and millions of people in India are suffering from the government's incompetence, war frenzy, religious fanaticism, and corruption, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the neighboring country also has a large population that is not easy to feed while the people of nuclear Pakistan are suffering from the violation of the constitution, corruption, higher spending, political instability, and endless elitism.

Talking to the business community, the veteran busi-



ness leader said that in view of the geographical importance of Pakistan, the attention of most governments has been focused on obtaining loans.

Pakistan received a lot of dollars due to the interest of powerful states in past but it was wasted instead of paying off the debt or using it for the country's development, he said.

The business leader noted that now in view of Pakistan's strong economic and geographical potential, the world wants nuclear Pakistan to stand on its feet.

The world wants Pakistan to widen its tax base, privatize failed government institutions, and give full attention to energy, agriculture, and exports, he added.

Bank Alfalah and SAWiE join hands to promote climate-smart agriculture in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah, a leading commercial Bank in Pakistan and SAWiE, a digital platform offering smart farm advisory services to smallholder farmers, signed an MoU to promote climate-smart agriculture practices within Pakistan. Under this MoU, SAWiE will leverage its systems to combine geospatial data with machine learning and AI applications to provide sustainable solutions to farmers.

According to the MoU, the two organisations will offer climate farm advisory services for farmers, linking them with external markets and supporting green banking to achieve net zero and access to finance.

This initiative aims to empower farmers by increasing their capacity and competitiveness through various activities, including developing a concept of climate-smart villages, promoting climate-smart agriculture technologies, and developing innovative approaches to serving farmers through regular advisory services and training.

Moreover, Bank Alfalah and SAWiE will encourage soil testing of the bank's existing and new farmers to develop soil health solutions, which will help save water, improve plant health, and protect the natural environment. By promoting ESG principles, the initiative will also support sustainable agriculture practices, which can help ensure the long-term viability of the sector.

This is a crucial step towards supporting sustainable agriculture practices in Pakistan. By offering climate farm advisory services, linking farmers with external markets, and promoting green banking, this initiative aims to empower farmers and increase their capacity and competitiveness while promoting ESG principles and climate-smart agriculture practices.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey, agriculture contributes 22.7% to the GDP and employs around 37.4 percent of the labour force. However, the agricultural sector in Pakistan is facing several challenges, including climate change, which adversely affects the country's farming, Agri-food systems, and supply chains.

Iftar-Dinner

RAWALPINDI: CEO Murree Brewery Group of Companies Mr. Isphanyar Bhandara hosted a sumptuous Iftar dinner at Rawalpindi Garrison Club.

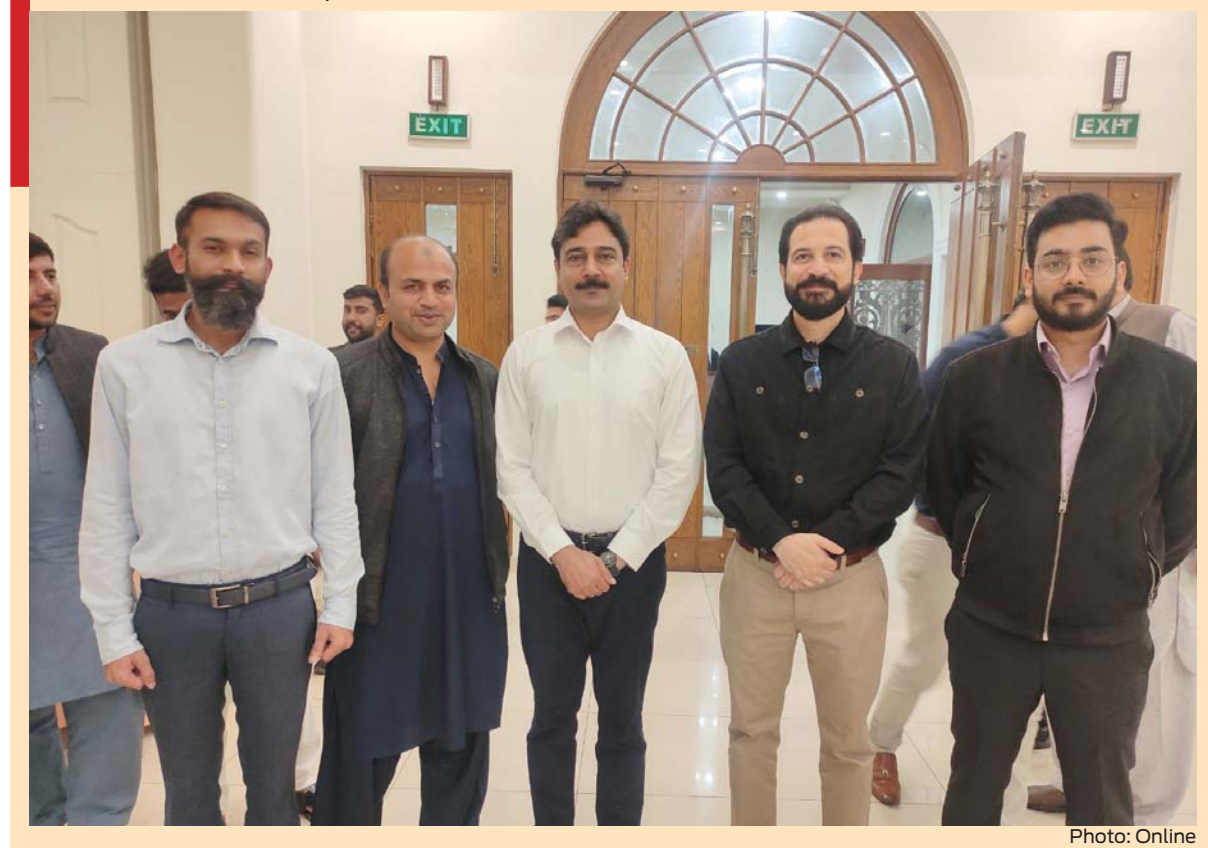


Photo: Online

Huawei Releases 2022 Annual Report:

Steady operations, sustainable survival and development

Spokesman Report

CHINA: Huawei released its 2022 Annual Report today. The company reports steady operations throughout 2022, having generated USD92.37 billion in revenue and USD5.12 billion in net profits. Huawei continues to strengthen investment in R&D, with an annual expenditure of USD23.22 billion in 2022, representing 25.1% of the company's annual revenue and bringing its total R&D expenditure over the past 10 years to more than USD 140.55 billion.

"In 2022, a challenging external environment and non-market factors continued to take a toll on Huawei's operations", said Eric Xu, Huawei's

Rotating Chairman, at the company's annual report press conference. "In the midst of this storm, we kept racing ahead, doing everything in our power to maintain business continuity and serve our customers. We also went to great lengths to grow the harvest - generating a steady stream of revenue to sustain our survival and lay the groundwork for future development."

Also present at the event was Sabrina Meng, Huawei's CFO. She noted, "Despite substantial pressure in 2022, our overall business results were in line with forecast. At the end of 2022, our liability ratio was 58.9% and our net cash balance was USD25.35 billion. In addition, our balance of total assets reached 0.14 trillion USD, largely



composed of current assets such as cash, short-term investments, and operating assets. Our financial position remains solid, with strong resilience and flexibility. In 2022, our total R&D spend was USD23.22 billion, representing 25.1% of our total revenue - among the highest in Huawei's history. In times of pressure, we press on - with confidence."

In 2022, revenue from Huawei's carrier, enterprise, and consumer businesses was USD40.84 billion, USD19.15 billion, and USD30.84 billion, respectively.

Huawei is a strong proponent of growing together with its ecosystem partners, and believes that openness and collaboration lead to shared success. The company has continued to open up its platform capabilities across its HarmonyOS, Kunpeng, Ascend, and cloud portfolio, focusing on improving developer experience as well as enabling and supporting its ecosystem partners on all fronts. Huawei currently works with more than nine million developers and over 40,000 ecosystem partners to

fuel ecosystem-based innovation and create greater value for its customers.

"2023 will be crucial to Huawei's sustainable survival and development," Xu noted. "Plum blossoms tend to grow sweeter from a harsh winter's freeze. Today, Huawei is like a plum blossom. While it's true that we have considerable pressure ahead of us, we have what it takes to come out the other end - with opportunities to grow, a resilient business portfolio, a unique competitive edge, the enduring trust of our customers and partners, and the courage to invest heavily in R&D. We are confident in our ability to rise above any challenge that comes our way, laying a solid foundation for sustainable survival and development."

Chairman NEPRA reviews progress of SCADA Phase-III system project



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: A detailed presentation on Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Phase-III Up-gradation Project was given to Chairman NEPRA Engr. Tauseef H. Farooqui in the presence of Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, at WAPDA House, today.

DMDs NTDC, GMs, CEs NTDC, professionals and representatives of NEPRA, Hitachi Energy,

CMEC China, CPPA-G and the NPCC were also present during the presentation. The contractor consortium comprising of CMEC China, Hitachi Energy Switzerland, Hitachi Energy Sweden were given an opportunity to present the technical and current progress status of the project. This was followed by a presentation from the Project Director SCADA Phase-III Project from NTDC. During the presentation, a question-answer session also took place.

India-Pakistan deadlock persists over Asia Cup, World Cup participation

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The hybrid model to host the matches of Pakistan and India during the ICC Men's ODI World Cup and Asia Cup at a neutral venue is likely not to go ahead after the Board of Cricket Control in India's (BCCI) flat refusal.

Earlier, a report emerged that the two cricket boards were gradually moving towards a compromise and had nearly agreed to host India's matches on a neutral venue while the rest of the Asia Cup will be played in Pakistan.

As per the latest development, however, the BCCI has refused the hybrid proposal for both events and once again demanded to shift the Asia Cup entirely from Pakistan.

Following BCCI's initial refusal to tour Pakistan, the PCB also hinted at not touring India to participate in this year's World



Cup. Although PCB has not said anything officially on the prospect of using the hybrid model – India playing Asia Cup matches on a neutral venue – for the

ODI World Cup but has hinted it will be discussed at the ICC forum.

"This is not to say that the hybrid model will not be advocated at the proper ICC forum at the right time," the last line of a

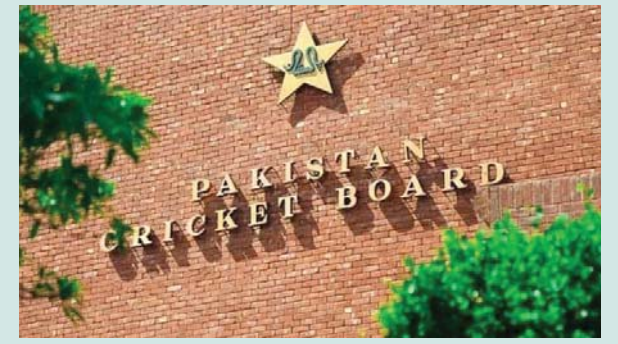
PCB release said, while denying the hybrid model was discussed in last week's ICC meeting.

Pakistan will due to suffer an extra expense of half a million dollars to broadcast India's neutral venue matches in the Asia Cup. But the consequences of Pakistan not playing in India will be greater, both in terms of sponsorship and broadcast expenses. In that India has to add a Co-host for the event.

"Situation is very fluid," said a top source dealing with the situation. "A final decision will only be made in June and by that time the ICC will adopt a wait and see policy."

It may be noted here that the uncertainty around the 2023 Asia Cup began in October last year when the ACC president, and BCCI secretary, Jay Shah refused to send the Indian team to Pakistan and has since been trying to shift the tournament to a neutral venue.

PCB clarifies factual position on Asia and World Cups



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has today clarified the position taken by its Chairman Management Committee Najam Sethi regarding the holding of Asia Cup 2023 at a "neutral" venue instead of in the host country Pakistan.

Referring to the media talk in Rawalpindi/Islamabad on Thursday, Mr Najam Sethi said he had briefed the media on the hybrid model he had presented to the ACC officials for the ACC Asia Cup to end the impasse that had been created following the BCCI's decision to not send its team to Pakistan.

"This proposal – to play India's matches at a neutral venue and the rest in Pakistan – is under discussions within the ACC."

"At no stage during Thursday's media interaction, did I give any reference to the ICC or made any remarks on the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, which is scheduled in October. This matter has not been mooted or discussed at any ICC forum so far."

"In this background, the PCB is disappointed that a leading English language newspaper has misquoted, misinterpreted and misrepresented Mr Sethi's comments and gave the impression that PCB's hybrid model was presented and discussed at the ICC, which is factually incorrect. At this stage, the PCB is only in discussions with the ACC over the hosting of the ACC Asia Cup and no discussions regarding the World Cup have taken place with the ICC."

"This is not to say that the hybrid model will not be advocated at the proper ICC forum at the right time."

South Africa move closer to World Cup qualification with Netherlands win

Sports Desk

BENONI: South African captain Temba Bavuma took his team a step closer to automatic qualification for the Cricket World Cup when they beat the Netherlands by eight wickets in the second one-day international at Willowmoore Park on Friday.

Bavuma made 90 not out in Benoni as South Africa achieved a victory target of 190 with 20 overs to spare.

Another win in the final match in Johannesburg on Sunday – or a no-result – will take South Africa into the eighth and final qualification place for the World Cup in India in October and November.

Bavuma said his own form was linked to "a certain level of backing and confidence that is going around in the environment at the moment".

Bavuma did not refer



directly to the appointment of Rob Walter as head coach following the resignation of former Test wicketkeeper Mark Boucher but said: "I think a lot of the guys are feeding from the environment. We are also quite clear about how we want to go about things."

Fast bowler Sisanda Magala was named man of the match. He took three for 37 as the Netherlands were bowled out for 189. He dismissed both openers after Vikramjit Singh (45)

and Max O'Dowd (18) put on 58 off 66 balls, then came back to claim the wicket of top-scorer Teja Nidamanuru, who made 48.

South Africa lost Quinton de Kock for nine to off-spinner Aryan Dutt, who shared the new ball and took one for nine in four overs.

But Dutt injured his right knee in a collision in the outfield with Musa Ahmed and had to leave the field. He came back later but was clearly in discomfort and

conceded 21 runs in two more overs.

Bavuma and Rassie van der Dussen (31) put on 70 for the second wicket before Bavuma and Aiden Markram (51 not out) went on the attack to add an unbeaten 102 off 69 balls to finish the match on a cold, blustery evening when there was a threat of rain which did not materialise.

The match was the second in a three-match series. The first encounter in November 2021 was rained off and the remaining two games were postponed because of a Covid scare.

With Sri Lanka having been eliminated when they lost to New Zealand earlier on Friday, a win for South Africa on Sunday will take them to the World Cup unless Ireland win all three matches in a series against Bangladesh in England in May.

Sri Lanka fail to earn direct World Cup qualification after NZ defeat



By A Sports -

HAMILTON: Sri Lanka missed out on direct qualification for the ICC ODI World Cup 2023 after New Zealand defeated them in the third and final ODI by six wickets on Friday.

Electing to bat first, Sri Lankan batting lineup struggled against the Kiwis' pace attack as Matt Henry (3/14), Henry Shipley (3/32) and Daryl Mitchell (3/32) jointly led the charge and bundled out New Zealand for a paltry 157.

Pathum Nissanka (57 off 64), Dasun Shanaka (31 off 36) and Chamika Karunaratne (24 off 42) were the only batters to show some resistance as Sri Lanka failed to fire in yet again.

In reply, New Zealand underwent a shaky start as they lost three wickets inside the first seven overs. Four of their batters – Chad Bowes, Tom Blundell, Daryl Mitchell and Tom Latham – failed to cross single-digit.

However, Will Young and Henry Nicholls anchored the chase afterwards and took the hosts over the line. The pair gathered a valiant 100-run partnership with Young and Nicholls remaining unbeaten on 86 and 44 respectively to steer New Zealand to 2-0 series win.

With the defeat, Sri Lanka have failed to snatch the direct qualification spot from the West Indies. Sri Lanka end their Cricket World Cup Super League Campaign on 81 points, seven behind West Indies.

Sri Lanka will now travel to Zimbabwe in June to compete in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier to secure a place in the mega event scheduled later this year in India.

West Indies, however, could still lose the direct qualification race to South Africa (78 points) or Ireland (68). South Africa will take on the Netherlands in two home ODIs, while Ireland have a three-game ODI series against Bangladesh in May.

Stirling leads Ireland to maiden Bangladesh win

Sports Desk

CHITTAGONG: Paul Stirling hit an aggressive 77 off 41 balls to lift Ireland to their first win against Bangladesh on Bangladesh soil in Friday's third and final T20 match.

The visitors lost the opening two matches but raced to 126-3 in 14 overs after bowling out their hosts for 124 in Chittagong.

Shamim Hossain struck his maiden 50 to lift Bangladesh from a precarious 41-5 but it was not enough to deny Ireland their first win of the tour.

Stirling hit 10 fours and four sixes, including a six and three fours off consecu-



tive deliveries, to hasten his team's victory.

Taskin Ahmed bowled Ross Adair for seven before Shoriful Islam dismissed Lorcan Tucker for four, but Stirling shared a 68-run partnership with Harry Tector for the third wicket

to keep Ireland on course.

Ireland were well in control by the time debutant leg-spinner Rishad Hossain had Stirling caught by Najmul Hossain at long on.

Curtis Campher sealed the win with a six off Taskin.

Mark Adair led Ireland's bowling attack with 3-25, while Matthew Humphreys picked up 2-10, denying Bangladesh the opportunity to build any significant partnerships.

Adair dismissed the in-form Liton Das for five off his first ball in the second over.

Shamim, who came at number six, hit five fours and two sixes to take Bangladesh past the 100-run mark before he became the last man dismissed.

Bangladesh won the preceding one-day international series 2-0. The two teams will now play a one-off Test starting on Tuesday in Dhaka.

Wahab Riaz announced sports competitions of six games under the title of Ramazan Sports Series

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz has announced to organize the sports competitions of six games under the title of Ramazan Sports Series from April 4, 2023.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz made this announcement while presiding over an important meeting of Punjab Sports Department at the National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman, Director General Sports Punjab



Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan, Director Sports Nadeem Qaiser and other officials attended the key meeting.

Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi gave a thorough briefing in the meeting regarding Ramazan Sports Series competitions. Addressing the meeting,

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said the teams from all divisions will participate in the competitions of hockey, football, kabaddi, badminton and

table tennis while the teams of Lahore cricket clubs will feature in tape ball cricket event.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz further said that hefty cash prizes will be given to top position holder teams of Ramazan Sports Series. "The Ramazan Sports Series competitions will be played under floodlights after the Ifari time," he added.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman on this occasion said that Ramazan Sports Series will provide a suitable platform to young talented players of the province to demonstrate their talent in the above mentioned games.

Michael Vaughan cleared of racism charge by ECB



By Zahid Noor -

LONDON: Former England captain and renowned commentator Michael Vaughan has been cleared of racism charges by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) disciplinary committee.

According to the ECB, the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) has today published its decisions in relation to charges brought by the ECB against Yorkshire CCC and a number of individuals.

In light of the CDC decisions, Michael Vaughan has been found not liable for a breach of ECB Directive 3.3, which states: "No such person may conduct themselves in a manner or do any act or omission which may be prejudicial to the interests of cricket or which may bring the game of cricket or any Cricketer or group of Cricketers into disrepute."

Vaughan took to Instagram in advance to reveal that the charges against him had been dismissed.

"Now that the ECB's charge against me has been dismissed, I want to thank the panel for their careful attention in very difficult circumstances and to thank all of those who have given me their support during an incredibly difficult period in my life," he wrote on Instagram.

However, a number of prominent former England cricketers Tim Bresnan, John Blain, Andrew Gale, Matthew Hoggard and Richard Pyrah have been found liable for a breach of ECB Directive 3.3 for their alleged use of racist and/or discriminatory language.

Yorkshire County Cricket Club and Zimbabwe batter Gary Ballance had previously admitted charges of breaching the same Directive.

It is pertinent to mention here that the ECB started the investigation after the former Yorkshire CCC player Rafiq made racism allegations and claimed to have experienced 'inhuman behaviour', within the club.

Mickey Arthur 'happy' to get another opportunity from PCB

Mickey Arthur, who had been Pakistan's head coach, expressed his excitement in reuniting with the team, saying that he is happy to get another opportunity from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), ESPNcricinfo reported.

Arthur, who served as the Pakistan team coach previously from 2016 to 2019, has signed a deal as the team director and will fulfil his job remotely.

Currently, the former coach is performing his duties as a head coach at Derbyshire. "Derbyshire is as dear to me as Pakistan. I have been telling Najam Sethi that Derbyshire is very important to me," he added.

"I've got a four-year contract here and I'm only year one into a project. With my proposal and the schedule I've put in place, I know that it is possible. But the nitty-gritties, we're just going through at the minute."

"I have been in contact with the Pakistani players and I have very good relations with them, I've seen them grow up in front of me. The challenge is when I had them they were young boys," said the 54-year-old, adding that "they've grown into men with egos now!"

Arthur said that managing Pakistan's team will be important but he has great relationships will all the players. "I just can't wait to put that all together. I know I can and it's going to be quite an attractive package for both Derbyshire and Pakistan," he expressed.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the former Pakistan coach will not be required to travel with Pakistan for any bilateral series including Sri Lanka's tour which will take place in June and July. However, the former cricketer is expected to attend the Pakistan team's preparation camp ahead of the ODI World Cup which is scheduled to take place in October.

Under Arthur's coaching, Pakistan won its first-ever Champions' Trophy title in 2017. Pakistan also won a record 11 consecutive T20I series.