



**Fawad sees apex court's existence in danger if Punjab Assembly polls not held**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Wednesday that the existence of the Supreme Court (SC) would be in danger if the Punjab Assembly elections were not held. (Details on Page 8)



**Govt increases BISP allocation from Rs250bn to Rs400bn**

Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Ms. Shazia Marri was informed that during the last one year, the government has increased the budgetary allocation of Benazir Income Support Programme from Rs 250 billion to Rs 400 billion which is 60% increase in this budget. (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Feed Back**

DG KHAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif taking feed back of an elderly citizen on Free Flour Distribution Mechanism.



Photo: PID

**PM visits free flour distribution center**

**Spokesman Report**  
DERA GHAZI KHAN :Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday visited the free flour distribution centre here and reviewed the overall arrangements. The prime minister inquired about the problems faced by the beneficiaries of the scheme gathered there to receive free flour bags under the PM's Special Ramadan Package and directed the concerned authorities to immediately resolve all their issues. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb also accompanied him. He was informed that so far, some 4.9 million flour bags had been distributed among the deserving families in the Dera Ghazi Khan Division. On the occasion, the prime minister said the distribution process of free flour was going on smoothly under the supervision of the caretaker Punjab Chief Minister. He also directed giving priority to women, the elderly and the handicapped during the distribution process. He also personally distributed free flour bags among the elderly as well as differently-abled people. PM Shehbaz said the country was facing challenges but with the blessings of the Almighty, the coalition government was on track to steer it out of the crisis. He said for the first time in history, the government was providing free flour to the needy. After Ramadan, he said the government would continue subsidies on wheat flour for the deserving. He also expressed his resolve to build Pakistan as per the vision of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

**Delay in elections not acceptable in democratic set-ups: President**

**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday delays in elections are not acceptable in democratic set-ups. The president expressed his views while talking to a private news channel. He said that he always had a firm conviction that neither Pakistan would go into default nor it would derail from the path of constitutionalism and democracy. Responding to various queries, the president expressed his optimism that election in the two provinces would be held and the Supreme Court that had been seized of the matter would make a final decision. "I still expect, that the democratic path will emerge from the Supreme Court's proceedings," he added. To a question, the president said in democratic countries, elections were not dependent upon the availability of funds, census



or security issues, quoted the state news agency. "In democratic set ups, delays in elections are not acceptable," he said and added that in his letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), he had quoted two former US presidents who held elections despite different challenging issues. The president opined that the election in Punjab province could not be postponed on the basis of census and security situation as the situation in the country was better than in 2018. "There is no way out except holding of elections on time as no deviation is permissible under the constitution," he stressed. Responding to another question, he observed that few individuals in the ruling parties wanted to postpone the elections, but there were others who did not. The economic situation of the country was not good; he said and termed delay in holding of election in the provinces as unfortunate. To a question, the president said

that he considered the current parliament as incomplete as it was functioning without a major political party. He reiterated that he was not a president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) owing to holding of the office of the President of Pakistan. He said every office had dignity and all the institutions should be respected. During his maiden meeting with the incumbent prime minister, he had talked about the dignity of institutions, the president added. To another question, the president said that the biggest administrative exercise was carried out during the general elections, adding there were two aspects of the ECP; first holding of free and fair elections and second, of making administrative efforts. The president opined that currently, the ECP was being pressurised and cited the independent functioning of an election governing body in the neighbouring country. About the Supreme Court (SC), the president said that as an institution, it should rise above the occasion. He regretted that the situation had given rise to concerns among the nation. Unanimity and consensus in the apex court would encourage the nation, but the situation had, so far, upset the nation, he added. The president agreed with a question that the Supreme Court was under stress. If an institution was put under stress, it led to breakdown and the country's judiciary was also facing such stress. The president replied that he had sent the reference against Justice Qazi Faez Isa to the Supreme Judicial Council after applying his mind and forming an opinion as there were certain allegations. So, he adopted the constitutional approach and sent it to appropriate forum because the president office had no powers to investigate it, he emphasized.

**Andrew Dagleish commends measures of economic stability**



**News Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Acting British High Commissioner to Pakistan Andrew Dagleish Wednesday commended the measures being undertaken by the incumbent government for economic stability and offered all possible help from the 'British Government' for the people of Pakistan in mitigating the socio-economic crisis. The Acting British High Commissioner called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed the current macroeconomic situation of the world as well as Pakistan. The Finance Minister also briefed the envoy on the progress in talks with the International Monetary Fund and apprised the overall economic outlook of the country. The Finance Minister briefed the envoy on pragmatic policies and programs of the government being taken in terms of revenue generation and bringing economic stability and growth. The High Commissioner commended the practical measures being undertaken by the present government and offered all possible help from the British Government for the people of Pakistan in mitigating the socio-economic crisis. The Finance Minister appreciated the British Acting High Commissioner for his cooperation and support. The Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Special Secretary Finance, and other senior officers from Finance Division also attended in the meeting.

**Ahsan reviews progress of digital census**

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday directed the constitution of a committee, comprising the Planning Secretary, Provincial Chief Secretaries and Chief Census Commissioner, to devise a mechanism and look into the matter of 'under-count' in big cities. The body would suggest a way forward to resolve the confronted issues, ensuring a transparent and credible Census Field Operation. The minister made these directions while chairing a meeting via Zoom to review progress over the ongoing exercise of Census Field Operation, a news release said. Among others, the meeting was attended by Sindh Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Information Technology

**Enforcement of ethics during coverage of acts of terrorism global norm: Marriyum**

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that enforcement of ethics, especially during the coverage of acts of terrorism, was a global code as well as part of the national law. Using her twitter handle, she said some concerns had been expressed regarding a recent order issued by Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) about coverage ethics of violent scenes involving acts of terrorism and their aftermath. "The order prohibits broadcasting gory scenes, dead bodies, wreckage, and

**FIA Confirms arrest of Imran Khan's security in-charge**

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has confirmed the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan's security in-charge Iftikhar Ghuman. The FIA spokesperson said in a statement that Iftikhar Ghuman was arrested in a raid at his residence. The spokesperson added that Ghuman was accused of money laundering. Condemning the arrest, Imran Khan said in a Twitter message, "When Ali Amin was abducted, the DPO told sessions judge in DIK that he would take a contempt charge but had to take custody of Ali Amin as orders came 'from above'." "Today, my security incharge Iftikhar Ghuman has been abducted. This is all part of London Plan where Nawaz Sharif was given assurances PTI would be crushed. So now people close to me, along with my leadership, are being harassed, abducted, tortured & confronted with sham cases across Pakistan in total violation of the Constitution & Rule of Law," he added. He said that vengeful actions are being taken against the PTI leaders and workers. He claimed that Imran Khan's aide on security Iftikhar Ghuman was 'abducted' in a 'fake case'. He condemned the arrest of Iftikhar Ghuman by the authorities.

**UN resident, humanitarian coordinator calls on FM Bilawal**



**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations in Pakistan Julien Harnais on Wednesday called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here. During the meeting, they discussed Pakistan-UN cooperation including in development and humanitarian domains. The foreign minister appreciated the United Nations for its partnership with Pakistan to advance its socioeconomic development. He particularly appreciated the world body's assistance to Pakistan following the devastating floods in the country. The foreign minister said that Pakistan was an active member of the United Nations and reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue to play an active role at international forums.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Chinese Charge d' Affairs, Ms. Pang Ehunxue at Parliament House on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

## PM Shehbaz holds meeting with legal team, takes key decisions

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has chaired an important meeting with the legal team and took 'key decisions', citing sources.

Sources told ARY News that the participants reviewed the notices issued by the Supreme Court (SC) following the non-implementation of the orders related to the elections. They held consultations over the next strategy ahead of the court proceedings.

It has been decided that

the federal government will defend the Supreme Court (SC) Practice and Procedure Bill. Moreover, the premier also summoned a high-level session of the political leadership on Thursday.

The upcoming session will be attended by the top leaders and ministers of the coalition parties, sources told ARY News. They added that the federal government will devise a strategy for the cases being by the top court.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court (SC) issued notices to the finance secretary, State Bank of Paki-

stan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) over the non-implementation of its order passed on April 4 to disburse funds for Punjab and KP elections.

SC to hear constitutional petitions

Earlier in the day, it was learnt that an eight-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will hear the constitutional petitions against the Supreme Court (SC) Practice & Procedure

Bill on Thursday (today).

The CJP-led larger bench will hear the constitutional petitions against the Supreme Court (SC) Practice & Procedure Bill today. The petitions sought nullification of the bill.

Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Muzahir Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi were included in the bench.

### Bill challenged in LHC

Earlier today, the Supreme Court (Practice and Proce-

dures) Act, which aims to curtail the suo motu powers of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act was challenged by a citizen named Mashkoor Hussain through his lawyer Nadeem Sarwar in the LHC.

After approval from both Senate and National Assembly the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill has become an act, the plea said and added that the right to appeal in suo moto cases is against the constitution.

## SC fixes pleas against bill curtailing CJP's powers for hearing today

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday fixed pleas against Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill 2023 for hearing on April 13 (Thursday).

An eight-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Muzahir Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Shahid Waheed would hear the pleas.

The bill had, earlier, been passed by both houses of the parliament for the second time after amendments proposed by PML-N MNA Shiza Fatima and was again sent to President Dr Arif Alvi for assent.

Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar had said the opposition showed ignorance over

the matter adding that the president left a negative comment on the parliament's prerogative to legislate. "Mr Alvi should have avoided this," he added.

The bill aims at curtailing the powers of CJP regarding taking suo motu notice under clause (3) of Article 184 of the constitution. If the bill is signed into law by the president, it would give the power of taking suo motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior SC judges including the CJP.

It further stated that any matter invoking the exercise of original jurisdiction under clause 3 of Article 184 of the constitution should first be placed before the committee for examination, and if the committee reckoned that if a question of public importance concerning enforcement of any of the fundamental rights was involved, it should constitute a bench comprising not less



than three judges of the apex court that might include the members of the committee for adjudication of the matter.

As per the constitution, if the president did not sign the bill within ten days, assent would be deemed to have been given.

On April 8, President Alvi had returned the bill for reconsideration to parliament, stating that the legislation "prima-facie travels beyond the competence of the parliament and can be assailed as a colourable legislation".

The president had returned the bill unsigned as per the provisions of Article 75 of the constitution. The president said he thought it fit and proper to return the Bill, in accordance with the constitution, with the request for reconsideration in order to meet the scrutiny about its validity (if assailed in the Court of Law).

The president said several aspects were required for due consideration. Firstly, "Article 191 of the constitution empowers the Supreme Court

'to make rules regulating the practice and procedure of the Court'. Under such enabling provisions of the constitution, the Supreme Court Rules 1980 have been made and in force duly validated - and adopted by the constitution itself. These time-tested Rules are being followed ever since the year 1980 - any tinkering with the same may be tantamount to interfering with the internal working of the court, its autonomy, and independence," he highlighted.

He said the constitution was founded on the concept of trichotomy of power - three pillars of the State whose domain of power, authority and functions are defined and delineated by the constitution itself.

He also cited Article 67 and Article 191 of the constitution which define the limits of parliament and the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

### PM issues directives for payment of salaries, pensions before Eid: Marriyum

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has issued directives for the payment of salaries and pensions to the government employees for the month of April before Eid-ul-Fitr.

The PM had formally directed Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for the payment of salaries and pensions before Eid-ul-Fitr for the convenience of the employees, she said in a statement. Meanwhile, Dar had instructed for the immediate implementation of the directions of the prime minister in this regard, she said.

## Punjab Polls: SC Summons Finance Secretary, AGP over Non-Provision of Funds

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday issued notices to the finance secretary, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) over the non-implementation of its order passed on April 4 to disburse funds for Punjab and KP elections.

On April 4, the Supreme Court set April 10 as the deadline for the government to disburse Rs21 billion in funds to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and told the ECP to report back to it on April 11.

The government meanwhile, has referred the matter to Parliament to decide.

In a notice issued by the SC registrar today, the apex court issued notices to the SBP governor, finance secretary, AGP and directed them to appear before the cham-



ber of the judges on Friday, April 14 at 11am.

It also directed them to bring the record and details of money owned by the federal government.

The top court noted that the report submitted by the election commission yesterday stated that "no funds have at all been released and provided to it as required by the order of the Supreme Court".

"The failure of the federal government to comply with the order of the court as aforesaid is prima facie disobedience," it observed.

## AJK SC to hear ex-PM Tanveer Ilyas's plea against his disqualification today



### Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: (Dunya News) - The Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) fixed a petition by disqualified AJK Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan against his disqualification for hearing on Thursday.

A full bench of the AJK's top court would hear the appeal.

Earlier, the Supreme Court dismissed his petition, he had filed against a decision of the high court's full bench regarding his ouster over contempt of court, after raising objections to it.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Raja Saeed Akram objected to the title of the petition, saying Mr Khan had been mentioned as prime minister in it despite his disqualification. "Why have you addressed him as current PM instead of former in the plea?"

the top judge rebuked the legal team of Tanveer Ilyas.

The top judge asked him to come up with a new plea tomorrow (Thursday) after which the court would decide about its maintainability.

On Tuesday, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) High Court disqualified Tanveer Ilyas Khan from holding any public office after he was found guilty of contempt of court. A full bench announced the verdict in a contempt notice taken after he criticised the stay orders issued by court at a public meeting. The former premier had also appeared before the court and tendered his unconditional apology over using contemptuous remarks against the judiciary.

Meanwhile, senior minister Khawaja Farooq Ahmed has been appointed acting prime minister of AJK by President Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

## Fawad sees apex court's existence in danger if Punjab Assembly polls not held



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Wednesday that the existence of the Supreme Court (SC) would be in danger if the Punjab Assembly elections were not held.

Taking to Twitter, Mr Chaudhry said, "The apex court's order in line with the holding of the Punjab Assembly elections on May 14

should be implemented at any cost. Not only the SC's issued order, but also the instructions that are given to implement it should be followed."

The SC has summoned the officials exclusively and sought the facts in terms of holding the elections in the province, he maintained.

Mr Chaudhry urged the stakeholders, who take an oath in a bid to protect the country's constitution, to play their roles positively for the sake of holding the elections.

## Zardari believes in policy of reconciliation, says Aitzaz Ahsan

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Aitzaz Ahsan said on Wednesday that former president Asif Ali Zardari believed in the policy of reconciliation.

Speaking during a programme on Dunya News, Mr Ahsan said, "There is a dire need to support the policy of reconciliation in a bid to move the

country forward."

He took a dig at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, saying, "I have no confidence in the Sharif brothers. They [Sharif brothers] use people for their own interests."

Mr Ahsan fired a broadside at the PML-N supreme, saying, "Nawaz Sharif is an absconder."

## MF official's assurance on agreement gives a shot in the arm

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Ministry on Wednesday once again sounded hopeful for inking the long-awaited staff-level agreement (SLA) with the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the latter "expressed its confidence" in signing it "soon".

Taking to Twitter, the Ministry of

Finance wrote that the IMF Director Middle East and Central Asia Department Jihad Azour "expressed confidence" for the SLA to be inked "soon" at a meeting with the Pakistani delegation comprising Special Assistant to the PM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Minister of State Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Pakistani ambassador to the US Masood Ahmad Khan, Tariq Pasha, and State Bank of Pakistan governor Jameel Ahmad.

# Punified action to check sugar smuggling, control prices in Punjab to be initiated: Caretaker CM

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over a meeting at CM Office with regard to prevention of sugar smuggling in which it was decided to undertake monitoring of sugar transportation at the exit routes of Punjab province and the proposal to enforce Inventory Management System in the sugar mills was reviewed.

It was reviewed in the meeting to formulate a mechanism regarding registration and inspection of godowns of the brokers and dealers. Mohsin Naqvi ordered to take immediate measures with regard to increase in the prices of sugar and prevention of sugar smuggling. Mohsin Naqvi



directed that effective steps should be undertaken so as to bring stability in

the prices of sugar and prevention of sugar smuggling. Mohsin Naqvi directed that a durable strategy should be chalked out so as to check artificial hike in the prices of sugar.

Mohsin Naqvi asserted that hike in the prices of sugar tantamount to negligence of the concerned departments adding that selling of sugar at soar prices is not at all tolerable to the masses. It was apprised in the meeting that a surplus stock of sugar is available in Punjab and there is no possibility of its shortage. Provincial Minister for Industries SM Tanveer, Chief Secretary, IG of Police, Secretary Industries, Secretary Excise and Taxation and Secretary Food, Cane Commissioner, DG Industries and concerned officials attended the meeting.

# The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the wheat procurement drive

**Menahill Rashid**

FAISALABAD: The Commissioner Ms. Silwat Saeed and Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamar inaugurated the wheat procurement drive by distributing bardana among the farmers at Wheat Procurement Center Set III.

DD Food M.Umar, District Food Controller Waqar Yousaf and other officers of Food Department were also present. The Commissioner said that administration would successfully complete this important mission of wheat procurement from farmers.

She said that all the administrative machinery is active to monitor the wheat procurement drive so that the necessary facilities are maintained for the farmers as the Punjab government is taking serious steps for



the service and welfare of the farmers.

The Commissioner warned the staff that any kind of dishonesty in the procurement process would not be tolerated and even minor grievances of the farmers would be addressed immediately. She expressed her satisfaction

over the arrangements of the center and said that there should be no momentary stagnation or weakness in them till the end of the campaign.

She said that apart from fair and transparent distribution of bardana, regular procurement of wheat, easy payment of price

and comfortable arrangements for the farmers at the centers are an important part of the policy of the government under which full attention is being paid to transparency and provision of all possible facilities to the farmers and in this regard the interests of the farmers would not be

jeopardized.

She informed that 535000 metric ton wheat would be purchased and 43 centers would be functional. Deputy Commissioner said that 11 centers have been set up in the district for procurement of wheat.

He said that applications are being received online for bardana and on daily basis 4% bardana of total target is being provided. He said that apart from Food Green Inspectors of Food Department, staff of Revenue Department has also been deployed.

Wheat procurement centers have been set up at Sarshmeer, Dar ul Ehsan, Jaranwala City, Buchiana, Rodala Road, Jhok Ditta, Tandlianwala City, Kanjwani, Mamun Kanjan and Samundari where all arrangements are being monitored for the convenience of the farmers.

# Protest in Kashmir against Indian illegal settlements

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: A protest demonstration was organized by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir against the distortion of the population ratio in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K).

According to details, large number of citizens participated in a protest chanting slogans against Indian government's illegal actions in IIOJ&K.

The protesters carried placards and banners demanding the United Nations to take notice of the illegal settlement of Indian citizens to distort the population ratio.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, Usman Ali Hashim, Javed Ahmed, Muhammad Tanveer has said that India has illegally occupied large part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Its occupation is a clear violation of the passed resolu-



tions and international regulations of the United Nations Security Council", they maintained.

Speakers stated that Indian government has brought its citizens in Jammu and Kashmir through military force and black laws like Israeli did in occupied Palestine.

They also cautioned that state domiciles have also been illegally issued to the citizens of India.

"Narendra Modi is taking worst steps to distort the population ratio of Jammu and Kashmir", speakers added.

While expressing concerns, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat

said that if the world does not play role to stop the Bharatiya Janata Party from committing these heinous crimes, then in the near future the Kashmiri citizens in South Asia will have to face worse situation like Palestine.

Ghazali appealed the government of Pakistan, OIC

and international organizations to take effective measures to stop the Indian government from changing the population ratio in IIOJ&K.

He said that the people of the occupied state are defending the land through resistance movement.

"In such difficult situations, the base camp government, parliamentary parties and the people must raise their voices against Indian brutality and terrorism in the occupied state", he opined.

"The struggle of the Kashmiri people will continue until they get the right to self-determination besides freedom from Indian usurpation", Uzair reiterated.

Indian government has issued domiciles to 4.2 million Indian citizens and 185 Indian citizens has bought land in the disputed state contrary to United Nation Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

## Delegations of Gujranwala and Okara District Bar Association Call on Mohsin Naqvi

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE : Delegations of District Bar Association Gujranwala and Okara held separate meetings with the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at CM Office today. The office-bearers of Gujranwala and Okara Bar Associations apprised him about the problems being faced by the lawyers community. Caretaker CM assured them to resolve the problems of the lawyers community at the earliest adding that all possible measures will be taken for the betterment of lawyers community and their families. Mohsin Naqvi apprised that e-stamp both of Bank of Punjab will be opened in the District and Sessions Complex Gujranwala and Bank of Punjab ATM machine will also be installed.

He remarked that we would also extend cooperation for the construction of lawyers chambers in Gujranwala and Okara adding that provision of best education and health facilities will be ensured for the lawyers community. Mohsin Naqvi revealed that a doctor will be deputed immediately at the dispensary being established for the lawyers community in Okara.

Mohsin Naqvi stated that we would contact the Federal government for establishing NADRA Desk and Passport Desk in the court premises of Gujranwala. Mohsin Naqvi remarked that the conduct of lawyers community is appreciable with regard to provision of justice to the common man adding that his doors always remain open for the lawyers community. Delegation of District Bar Association Gujranwala comprised general secretary Hafiz Wazir Ali Malik, vice president Malik Nisar Ahmad, joint secretary Sohail Noor Gujjar, finance secretary Abid Majeed Sindhu, Waqas Jamil, Malik Tahseen Ullah, Rana Qasim and others. Delegation of District Bar Association Okara was headed by its president Mian Taltat Mehmood and delegation comprised Muhammad Umar Rehman, Rana Raza Mohiyudin and Ghulam Mustafa Sadiq.

## SSP Patrolling signed an MOU with Concordia Group of Colleges

**Menahill Rashid**

FAISALABAD: SSP Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region Mirza Anjum Kamal signed an MOU with Concordia Group of Colleges Faisalabad Region for the welfare of Patrolling Police.

The 22nd MoU has been signed for the welfare of patrolling police.

According to the details, a meeting held under the chairmanship of SSP Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region Mirza Anjum Kamal signed an MOU with Concordia Colleges Principal Professor Bilal Raza for the welfare of patrolling police. According to which, free education for the children of martyrs, while the admission fee has been discounted from 50% to 70% for the children of the present service employees. Will give training. It should be remembered that even before this he had 21 different MOUs have been signed with hospitals, educational institutions and laboratories in which special discount packages have been arranged for the health and education of the families of martyrs and employees of patrolling police. During the mutual discussion, the Principal Concordia Colleges Professor welcomed the measures taken to improve the welfare and innovation of the Patrol Police. SSP Patrolling Police Mirza Anjum Kamal while appreciating the efforts of Mobile Education Unit directed to continue the mission with the same spirit.



## A jirga was held between tribal elders & security forces

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: A jirga was held between tribal elders/prominent local people and security forces in Sherwanga area of Upper South Waziristan tribal District, in which various issues were discussed.

During the discussion, the strategy to deal with the negative propaganda of terrorists against the forces was discussed in details.

Locals were also asked to inform the forces about any suspected terrorist activity and its facilitators.

The tribal elders and local people pledged their full support for the establishment of peace in the area so that the ongoing development can proceed smoothly.

On this occasion, the tribal elders said that the services of Pakistan Army and FC South are as clear as light, we are proud of their completed and ongoing development projects in the different areas

While we were always with our forces, we are standing and we will continue to stand, we are always ready to make any kind of sacrifice for the country.



# Sindh cabinet approves establishment of Electric Power Regulatory Authority

**Pirbux Noonari**

KARACHI :Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a cabinet meeting at CM House decided to establish Sindh Electric Power Regulatory Authority (SEPPRA) to improve energy equity and eliminate energy poverty in the province. Mr. Shah termed the cabinet decision a historic step toward power generation, transmission, and distribution. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisors, special assistants, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, and other concerned officers. SEPPRA: Minister Energy Imtiaz Shaikh briefing the cabinet said that Sindh was blessed with an entire value chain of energy resources inter-alia coal, solar, and wind, with cost-effective access through air, land, and sea routes, which could be utilized for the generation of electricity, wheeled through the transmission network of Sindh Grid Compa-

ny to meet the demand of household, commercial and industrial consumers of the province at affordable prices. Imtiaz Shaikh said that the constraints faced by the provincial power projects, especially the renewable projects wind and solar development, within the national framework in terms of non-inclusion in the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan 2021 (IGCEP 2021), and lack of further processing by the federal entities. At this, the CM said that it was imperative that a holistic legal, policy, and regulatory framework for generation, transmission, distribution, and regulation was formulated so that energy equity was improved and energy poverty in the Province was eliminated.

The cabinet was told that under Section (7)(4) of the NEPPRA Act 1997 the provinces have been allowed to construct power houses and grid stations and lay transmission lines for use within the province and determine the tariff for the distribution of elec-

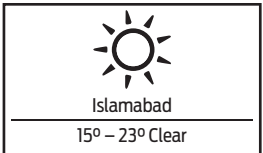
tricity within the province. The cabinet after a thorough discussion approved the establishment of the Sindh Electric Power Regulatory Authority. BRT Red Line: Minister Transport Sharjeem Memon told the meeting that Karachi BRT Red Line Project was being implemented in collaboration with ADB and co-financer including AIIB, AFD, and GCF, at a cost of \$ 503.2 million. He added that TransKarachi was an implementing agency for this project. The BRT project corridor passes through urban areas of the city originating from Malir Halt and terminating at Tower via Malir Cantonment, Safoora, University Road, and Numaesh. The land of Aladdin Park which is nearby the Mosamiyat Depot has been identified to be used as the Project's other depot. At the request of the Transport dept, the cabinet approved the proposal to provide 16-acre land of Aladdin Park to the Transport dept to develop it as a Bus Depot/staging facility. The features of the Bus depots include a bus park-



ing facility, Bus Inspection area, filling station (biogas), workshop, offices, bus wash, and vacuum facility, watch

towers, security, and main entry gates, a water recycling plant, and fire pump room. The cabinet also directed the

Transport dept to take over the land of the slaughterhouse to establish a biogas plant for the BRT Red Line project.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 4:15 am  
Zohr ..... 12:09 pm  
Asr ..... 4:45 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:36 pm  
Isha ..... 8:03 pm

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Bomb Disposal ..... 15  
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Emergency Ambulance ..... 1122 & 4451122  
Motorway Police ..... 9266044  
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**Women Police Stations**

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**HOSPITALS**

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MH ..... 561116  
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RDA ..... 5555864  
TMA ..... 5770886  
Cantonment Board ..... 9270151-3  
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation ..... 9209224  
Potohar Town ..... 9209224  
Rawal Town ..... 5773343  
Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11 ..... 9204654  
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 ..... 9203883

**WB by Hemani launched**  
*Hareem Farooq's signature luxury scents*



**News Desk**

KARACHI: WB by Hemani celebrated the successful launch of Hareem Farooq's signature luxury scents with a star-studded intimate Suhoor night in uptown Karachi. Designed with a labor of love and scented by the diva Hareem Farooq herself with her choice of fragrances, this exclusive collection takes inspiration from beautiful emotions of JOY, HOPE, LUV, and FAITH.

Hareem Farooq has designed her signature luxury scent JOY—a musky fragrance for women who enjoy little joys of life, HOPE—a citrusy, floral, and musky scent for the woman who has her hopes high, LUV—with chypre, floral, and musky scent for her who is full of love, and FAITH—a floral, amber, and musky fragrance for her who has faith in everything. This four exclusive eau de parfums are crafted and designed by Dominique Moellhausen, a top perfumer and Perfumer of the Year 2020.

The intimate celebratory Suhoor night showcased the four exclusive emotive fragrances named JOY, HOPE, LUV, and FAITH for the select media and guests to enjoy and experience.

# Govt increases BISP allocation from Rs250bn to Rs400bn

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Ms. Shazia Marri was informed that during the last one year, the government has increased the budgetary allocation of Benazir Income Support Programme from Rs 250 billion to Rs 400 billion which is 60% increase in this budget.

She was presiding over a meeting to review the progress of BISP initiatives at its HQ on Wednesday.

The Secretary BISP, Yusuf Khan and DGs of the Programme briefed the minister on the progress on various initiatives.

The meeting was briefed that Rs 70 billion were disbursed among 2.8 million flood-affected families at the rate of Rs 25,000 per family. Moreover, Rs 16.7 billion were also given as fuel subsidy among 81 lakh families at the rate of Rs. 2000 per family.

The Chairperson BISP was further briefed that the Government has also increased Benazir Kafaalat funds by 25 percent for the deserving people of the country. These quarterly stipends has been enhanced from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8750.

Currently, Rs 8500 are being disbursed against the quarterly installment of January to March, while Rs 9000 will be paid



for the installment of April to June. The number of beneficiaries of Benazir Kafaalat has also been increased from 7.6 million households to 9 million households.

The minister was further informed that the total number of students under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme has reached 7.1 million.

Regarding Benazir Nashonuma Program, Shazia Marri was informed that the initiative has been expanded to every district of the country under which 510,000 pregnant and lactating mothers and newborn babies across Pakistan are receiving benefits through 472 Nashonuma Centers.

It was also informed that 92,000 students have been awarded scholarships under another initiative called Benazir Scholarships for undergraduate.

She was further apprised that Transgender Person have also been included in Benazir Kafaalat Programme.

Ms. Shazia Marri was also apprised of the latest developments on the new Dynamic Registry initiative launched on 25th February 2023 which will update the existing beneficiary data, whereas this survey, which is free of cost, will also enable new/ eligible families to be registered in the programme.

## Protest

ISLAMABAD: Lawyers holds placards and shouting slogans during protest rally in the favor of their demands at Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

## Alliance of China-Pakistan Research Centers launched

**TDI**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for BRI and China Studies- Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies and Pakistan Research Center, Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, China have established the Alliance of China-Pakistan Research Centers to enhance collaboration and understanding between Pakistani and Chinese academic institutions. This alliance aims to strengthen the longstanding bond between the two countries. The alliance's launch marks a significant step towards promoting academic collaboration between Pakistan and China.

The coalition will facili-



tate joint research projects, exchange programs, and other academic activities to promote mutual learning and understanding.

During the launch event, the directors of participating institutions discussed various ideas to advance the

alliance practically, including creating a combined research journal, establishing a website to share information, implementing joint research programs, enhancing the capacity of research centers, fostering student and research exchange, publishing

joint research papers, hosting research events, and inviting institutions to join the alliance. The speakers emphasized the importance of research center alliances in fostering academic exchanges, promoting joint research projects, and enhancing the quality of higher education in both countries.

Dr. Farhat Asif, President of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, highlighted the significance of the alliance and its core aims and objectives. Prof. Tang Jun, Director of Pakistan Research Center, Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, described the alliance as a timely initiative catering to the need for research and development.

## Pakistan, Turkiye agree to keep up cooperation in multiple fields



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye on Wednesday agreed to keep up bilateral cooperation in multiple fields including trade, investment, defence, education and culture.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the Ambassador of Turkiye in Islamabad Dr Mehmet Paçacı, who called on him here. The foreign minister said that Pakistan and Turkiye enjoyed fraternal brotherly relations as both countries stood by each other in the hour of distress.

The Turkish envoy thanked Pakistan for extending support following an earthquake in his country. Foreign Minister Bilawal also thanked Turkiye for supporting Pakistan following the devastating floods.

Both sides also resolved to continue cooperating with each other on bilateral as well as multilateral forums.

## VC IUB Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob met to Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob today met with Chairman Higher Education Commission, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad in his office at Islamabad. On this occasion, bilateral matters and mutual cooperation were discussed between the both institutions. The Vice Chancellor briefed the Chairman Higher Education Commission about the ongoing teaching and development activities in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is a historical educational institution of the region which has become a major university in the country in terms of the number of students. Jamia Islamia strives to promote high quality teaching and research in accordance with the policy guidelines of the Higher Education Commission. He said that Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed is playing a commendable role in the Higher Education Commission for the promotion of higher education in the country. Chairman Higher Education Commission appreciated the important role of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur in the promotion of higher education in the region and said that all possible support will be provided to the Islamia University of Bahawalpur in all fields. He said that steps will be taken for immediate provision of funds to the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob also invited Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed to visit Islamia University Bahawalpur, which he accepted.

## Beaconhouse and Akhuwat Foundation join hands for a more equitable society

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: Beaconhouse Group, the country's largest network of private educational institutions, and Akhuwat Foundation have signed an MOU to leverage their respective strengths and collaborate in their philanthropic efforts which include collecting clothes, toys, and other in-kind donations for the less privileged.

Under this MoU, the Beaconhouse Group will assist Akhuwat Foundation by setting up Akhuwat Clothes Banks (ACB) at various Beaconhouse campuses across Pakistan and will encourage its faculty and student body volunteers to actively participate in the foundation's ongoing efforts and initiatives aimed at serving the less privileged members of society.

As part of the partnership, the Beaconhouse Group has committed to providing Akhuwat with social support by launching an awareness campaign aimed at familiarising its students with Akhuwat's diverse charitable initiatives, including Akhuwat Clothes Bank and other poverty alleviation programs. By raising awareness about Akhuwat's cause, Beaconhouse seeks to inspire its students to become active participants in building a more socially aware and equitable society.

Akhuwat Foundation will reciprocate these efforts by formally endorsing the student volunteers and interns through certificates of participation and holding a mega disbursement event in collaboration with the school.

At the signing of the MOU, Ali Raza, Group Director Beaconhouse said, "This partnership marks the beginning of a significant collaboration between our two organisations, and I am optimistic that it will lead to many more joint endeavors in the future. Not only does Akhuwat gain from accessing the physical locations of our schools and volunteers from our student body, but we see this as an opportunity to instill the valuable lessons of compassion and generosity in our students."

# Developing countries facing education crisis in areas of equity, quality & relevance: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, APR 12 (APP): Pakistan has called for transforming education to cater to the needs of the young and growing population, especially in the developing countries, in an effort to achieve quality education for all by 2030.

"Along with the triple economic crisis of finance, fuel and food, the developing countries are also facing a triple crisis in education – of equity, quality and relevance," Ambassador Munir Akram told the 56th session of the Commission on Population and Development which is taking place against the backdrop of a global learning crisis.

In this regard, the Pakistani envoy underscored the need for addressing —

on an urgent basis — the factors leading to the denial of the right to education of children and youth, such as conflict, poverty, malnutrition, access to the internet and gender digital divide.

Also, Ambassador Akram said that millions of children and youth living in situations of conflict and foreign occupation must not be forgotten and deprived of their fundamental right to education and development, as also those with disabilities, migrants and other vulnerable groups.

"The UN's Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved, at the national and international level, without transforming education to cater to the needs

of the young and growing population, especially in the developing countries," he added.

To achieve those goals, the Pakistani envoy urged the world's nations, singly and collectively, to ensure universal access to quality education at all levels.

Investments in education was also needed to create awareness of environment and sustainable development and the demographic trends that impinge on the scarce resources, he said.

Lifelong learning should be made available across the age range, especially in developing countries, enhancing their employment prospects by teaching transferable skills, Ambassador Akram said.



The international community, he said, should provide technical and financial assistance for population data collection to developing countries, as financing was critical in bridging the digital and resource divide to deal with the education

emergency.

"The most important investment in creating a peaceful and inclusive world's education – where every child, without discrimination, has equitable access to basic and quality education," Ambassador Akram said, adding, "This must be a key priority for all our nations, acting individually and collectively."

Highlighting the transformative potential of education for individuals and their societies, Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), asked Delegates to "imagine a girl standing at a fork in the road."

If she is able to stay in school, she's

well set on a path of lifelong health and well-being, but if she is forced to drop out of school, to marry as a child or if she becomes pregnant while still a child herself, she will face a cascade of challenges that jeopardize not only her health and well-being but also her society's prospects for prosperity.

"UNFPA knows this girl," she added, underscoring that better-educated women are healthier, marry later and are more likely to plan the number and spacing of children.

Education also reduces the likelihood of harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation and lowers risk of gender-based violence.

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# Reduced Height and Drought Tolerance in Wheat

Pakistan has a diverse climate, ranging from hot and arid in the south to temperate and cold in the north. The country experiences four distinct seasons: summer, winter, monsoon, and post-monsoon. Each season brings its own unique weather conditions. Pakistan is an agricultural country and its weather patterns are highly variable and unpredictable due to its location in a region that experiences a wide range of climatic variations. The climatic change and seasonal variations are becoming serious threat to agricultural crop production and food security in the country. Wheat is the major cereal crop and staple food in Pakistan and grown on an area of 8.97 million hectare from with annual production of 2.81 t/ha which is less than that of Russia (2.97 t/ha), Bangladesh (3.09 t/ha), United States (3.34 t/ha), India (3.43 t/ha), Canada (3.51 t/ha), Mexico (5.53 t/ha) and UK (8.93 t/ha) which are the highest wheat yielding countries of the world. One reason of low yield is type of wheat being cultivated i.e., spring wheat which yields 37% less than winter wheat types. It means more than 50% (5 M ha) of wheat cultivated area in Pakistan is facing drought or salinity problem, and current wheat varieties cultivated in these areas are not contributing much in deed.

Historically, wheat yields were revolutionized through the introduction of semi-dwarfing genes Rht-B1b (Rht1) and Rht-D1b (Rht2), which was a major event in breeding high yielding varieties during the Green Revolution. This increase was brought by changing the wheat plant structure featur-

ing reduced height, increased harvest index, improved lodging resistance and responsive to higher doses of fertilizers. Currently, gibberellic acid (GA) insensitive semi-dwarfing genes Rht1 and Rht2 are widely used to reduce plant height and increase grain yield in wheat breeding programs worldwide including Pakistan - more than 70% of wheat varieties in the world contain Rht1 or Rht2 gene. Wheat grain yields from current wheat cultivars containing Rht-B1b or Rht-D1b alleles may be approaching their limits, while a changing climate may reduce the usefulness of these genes in the future. Rht1 and Rht2 genes based reduced stature also contributed to reduced seedling vigor, coleoptile length and reduced crop water-use efficiency, which are undesirable attributes in rain-fed or semi-irrigated environments. In irrigated and fertilized environments, excessive height and severe lodging are evident in semi-dwarf varieties, meaning these alleles are insufficient to reduce height in these environments. Comparatively, high yielding winter wheat mostly containing GA responsive reduced height genes.

These issues, combined with potential restrictions on the use of growth retardants and chemical fertilizer, highlight the need to find and incorporate novel alternate dwarfing gene system and to restructure wheat plant like in those varieties being cultivated in high yielding countries of the world. Short stature wheat with reduced peduncle and high grain number carrying GA sensitive reduced height alleles will improve yield and sustain it in the face of erratic climatic changes. The alternative height-reducing genes (GA-sensitive) Rht8 and Rht13

shorten plant height and enhanced grain yield. The GA-sensitive (Rht13) is the most important dwarfing gene that controls the plant height of wheat without influencing the seedling growth, grain number and grain yield. Rht13b dwarfing allele reduces plant height by up to 34% compared to Rht13a, Rht1 and Rht2, depending on the growing conditions and genetic background. Limited work was done on the effect of the Rht13 gene on wheat growth and yield under drought stress.

Based on the role of these GA-sensitive genes, a comprehensive study conducted by Mr. Muhammad Arslan Khalid, Ph.D. Scholar at the Institute of Plant Breeding and Biotechnology, MNS University of Agriculture, Multan under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali. The title of his thesis was "GA-Sensitive Rht Gene (s) Mediated Phenotypic Alterations to Enhance Drought Tolerance in Wheat". The objectives of his study were to characterize and categorization of wheat germplasm for GA-sensitive and GA-insensitive reduced height and drought tolerance response. Find the association of GA-sensitive reduced height with drought tolerance and grain yield. Improve drought tolerance and grain yield through pyramiding GA-sensitive and GA-insensitive Rht gene(s).

Diversified germplasm containing 200 wheat genotypes were characterized based on the presence of GA-sensitive Rht genes and drought tolerance. The finding of this study showed that the genotypes having GA-sensitive Rht genes showed increased drought tolerance compared with the genotypes having GA-insensitive Rht genes.

The GA-sensitive genotypes produced a greater number of seminal roots (5), coleoptile length (3.5 to 5.0 cm), shoot length (16 to 19 cm), less lodging% (0%), increased grain number per spike (60 to 70) and grain yield (350 to 400 g/plot) compared with checks AAS-11 (5, 0.3 cm, 16 cm, 0%, 56 and 340 g, respectively) and Galaxy-13 (3, 0.3 cm, 15 cm, 10%, 62 and 308 g, respectively). It was also observed that these genotypes having Rht13 gene showed enhanced expression in the middle part of peduncle internode both under normal and drought stress. It was concluded that the hybridization of the parental genotypes having various GA-sensitive and GA-insensitive Rht genes produce new phenotypes that results in increased drought tolerance and grain yield. The genotypes having Rht13 gene showed 18 to 25% reduction in plant height and 15 to 18% increase in grain yield compared with the genotypes having Rht1 genes. Utilization of GA-sensitive Rht13 genes may be the best possible solution to reduce lodging%, enhance the nutrient use efficiency, drought tolerance and grain yield. Higher wheat yields as proposed in the project will improve economic conditions of the poor farmers. Developments by prospering farmers would thus indirectly generate employment in rural areas. Wheat procurement, logistics, storage and processing would need -18% more labor. The genotypes produced in this study is under the different varietal approval trial.

Article contributed by **Muhammad Arslan Khalid, Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Dr. M. Hammad Nadeem Tahir, Dr. Abdul Ghafar and Dr. Javed Ahmed**

## G-20 meeting has no relevance for Kashmir

It has always been noted and acknowledged by members of the world body that Kashmir is a disputed territory and its future remained unsettled since, while the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been martyred in large numbers and thousands put behind bars during the last 32 years for rising peacefully against India's terror, tyranny and human rights atrocities in and along the besieged region of the Kashmiris.

Therefore, there's no sense in calling an international conference in the region, said Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir People's Freedom League and ex-Convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference to bring the disputed and volcanic situation of the region in focus.

He said that India was hoodwinking the world opinion, particularly the G-20 members for its nefarious regional designs and trying to convey the message that all was well in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The reality, he emphasized was totally different and the inhabitants of the area were under surveillance and siege from all sides; all basic civil rights and fundamental freedoms remain strangled there, thousands were in jails all across India, press and platform was taboo for the people since the day of its merger with India in 2019.

He stated India not only violated bilateral agreements with Pakistan but it did not abide by the two CHR Commission reports of 2018 and 2019 on Jammu and Kashmir and continued to ridicule and flouting the international law, UN resolutions on Kashmir and other international obligations with regard to suggestions for the solution of the dispute.

India was following a catch and kill policy and search operations in Kashmir were carried out to terrorize the majority of the population and to detain young men in as many numbers as possible.

He said, nobody was safe and police intelligence agencies were chasing youth with ill intentions in their mind. Students and youth affiliated with political parties or not or civilians were being targeted in every part of the IIOJK.

He appealed to the UN to take cognizance of the threatening situation of Kashmir and invoke its relevant resolutions and rules to give relief to the suppressed population of the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

At the same time he urged on the Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir (OIC), to call a conference on the latest developments, especially the G-20 meeting called by India in Srinagar, which was in total violation of the international resolutions as Kashmir was an internationally recognised dispute, he maintained.



## Impact of tourism on economic growth of Pakistan

Tourism has the potential to boost Pakistan's economy. Pakistan is a country with a rich cultural heritage and diverse natural beauty, from the towering Himalayan mountains to the golden beaches of its southern coast. Pakistan is home to some of the world's highest mountains, including K2 (the second-highest peak in the world), Nanga Parbat, and Gasherbrum. These mountains attract mountaineers and hikers from all over the world. It has a long coastline along the Arabian Sea, with some beautiful beaches such as Clifton Beach in Karachi, Astola Island in Balochistan, and French Beach in Karachi. Pakistan has a rich cultural heritage and is home to several historical and cultural sites such as the ancient city of Mohenjo-daro, Taxila, and the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore. It has a diverse range of wildlife, including rare species such as the snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, and the markhor (a species of wild goat).

Pakistan is becoming popular for adventure sports such as paragliding, white water rafting, and skiing in the northern areas. Pakistan has a rich culinary tradition, with dishes such as biryani, kebabs, and curries that are popular with tourists. These attractions provide a wide range of tourism options for visitors to Pakistan, and if promoted and developed effectively, can help boost the country's tourism industry and economy.

A nation's economy depends extensively on the tourist industry to grow. Numerous visitors go to ancient Sikh and Hindu temples, particularly the Guru Nanak shrine. The opening of the Kartarpur Corridor brought a surge of pilgrims to Pakistan. In order to promote tourism, Pakistan should fully utilize the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). With the CPEC initiative, several infrastructural and electrical projects are being created in Pakistan, which will be advantageous to the visitors. Furthermore, Chinese people frequently travel, which makes it simple for them to visit Pakistan. Pakistan possesses all the necessary components for a self-sustaining tourism industry, including a growing labour force and a renowned culture of hospitality.

Despite the potential for significant economic growth, neither the federal nor provincial governments of Pakistan ever prioritized the tourism industry. It is tragic for Pakistan that a number of obstacles as well as issues have prevented it from becoming the best or most well-liked tourism location on the globe. This study did not set out to critique or bemoan Pakistan Tourism's prior errors. To maximise

its potential, it must go through a number of present and future challenges. The vast majority of studies on tourism-related firms in underdeveloped countries concentrate on the possibilities and advantageous aspects of the industry. Further, there was a dearth of information offered on the challenges the tourism industry faces and possible remedies.

One of the most significant impacts of tourism is economic growth is job creation. In Pakistan, the tourism industry has the potential to create employment opportunities in various sectors such as hospitality, transport, and handicrafts. With a large number of young people entering the job market every year, the tourism industry can provide much-needed employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas. Tourism can also contribute to foreign exchange earnings in Pakistan. The inflow of foreign exchange through tourism can help to stabilize the country's balance of payments and reduce the country's reliance on foreign aid.

Tourism can also stimulate business activity in the country. As more tourists visit Pakistan, there is an increase in demand for goods and services, leading to the growth of

various industries such as transport, accommodation, and food services.

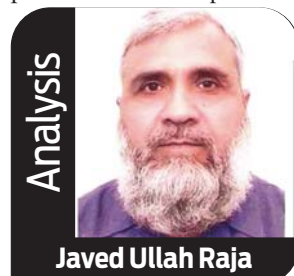
The development of tourism in Pakistan can also lead to infrastructure development in the country. The government and private sector can invest building and upgrading infrastructure such as roads, airports, and public facilities to support tourism activities. Tourism can also promote cultural exchange, allowing visitors to experience the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan. This can foster a better understanding and appreciation of the country's culture and traditions, leading to increased cultural exchange and dialogue.

If Pakistan can continue to make progress in promoting its tourism industry, it has the potential to provide a significant boost to the country's economy. Tourism can create jobs and stimulate economic growth, particularly in rural areas where other economic opportunities may be limited. It can also help to increase foreign exchange earnings and promote cultural exchange. However, there are challenges that Pakistan must address in order to fully realize the potential of its tourism industry, such as improving security and infrastructure, ensuring environmental sustainability, and addressing issues related to social and cultural norms. If these challenges can be addressed, however, tourism could become an important driver of economic growth and development in Pakistan.



Analysis

M Faiz-ur-Rehman



Analysis

Javed Ullah Raja

## Shab e Qadr, is better than a thousand months - II

Abu Saeed Al-Khudri (RA) narrated from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that I was shown this night and then it was forgotten from me. The sign of this is that I saw myself prostrating in the mud on that night, the morning after the night of Qadr. Look for it in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramazan. The narrator says that it rained that night and the thatched roof of Masjid was dripping and I saw with my own eyes the effect of mud on the blessed forehead of the Prophet ﷺ on the morning. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (RA) has quoted the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Allah Ta'ala commands a preacher in every night of Ramazan to shout three times: "There is one who asks to whom I will grant, and there is one who repents." I accept his repentance, there is someone who wants forgiveness that I forgive him, who lends money to the rich, a rich person who is not poor, a person who pays in full and does not lack in the slightest. The Prophet ﷺ said: Allah every day in Ramazan Sharif, at the time of breaking the fast, Allah grants mercy to one million people who were deserving of Hell, and when the last day of Ramazan comes, the number of people who were freed from Hell-fire from the first day of Ramazan to this day is freed in that one day.

And on the night of Qadr, Allah commands Hazrat Jibreel (AS) to descend to the earth with a large army of angels. They carry a green flag with them, which they place over the Kaaba. There are a hundred arms of Hazrat Jibreel (AS), of which two arms are opened only in this night (i.e. Shab al-Qadr) and as soon as they are spread from the east to the west, then Hazrat Gabriel (A.S.) asks the angels that the

Muslim who stands on this night or If they are sitting, praying or doing zikr, greet and shake hands with the people and say Aamen to their prayers the situation remains until morning. When morning comes, Hazrat Jibreel (A.S.) calls out that the group of angels should now leave and go. The angels asked Hazrat Jibraeel (AS) what did Allah Ta'ala deal with the needs and wants of the believers of Ahmad's Ummah. They say that Allah Ta'ala paid attention to them. He forgave all of them except four people. The Companions asked who those four people were.

It was said that one is a person who is addicted to alcohol, the second is a person who disobeys his parents, and the third is a person who is unkind and breaks relationships. The fourth is the person who has a grudge and is a seaver relationship. More and more prayers should be arranged so that these prayers have been seen the hours of acceptance.

A prayer which is a hadith of Al-Tabrani Sharif:

لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له احد الصمد ابدى ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد  
 That its reward is 2 million good deeds in normal days. In Ramazan, the reward increases 70 times, so it is 14 million. Is there a machine that can figure it out. Lets consider these moments and the few days left of Ramazan. Reduce our busyness and turn to Allah Almighty. How much is the favor of Allah on this ummah in which we are all. Pray in this night for your self, for your family, for country and for all the Muslim Ummah. May Allah forgive the lack and omission of what is written and read. May Allah grant us the ability to follow the religion, practice it and convey it to others. Aamin **Concluded**

# Iran delegation arrives in Saudi Arabia

News Desk

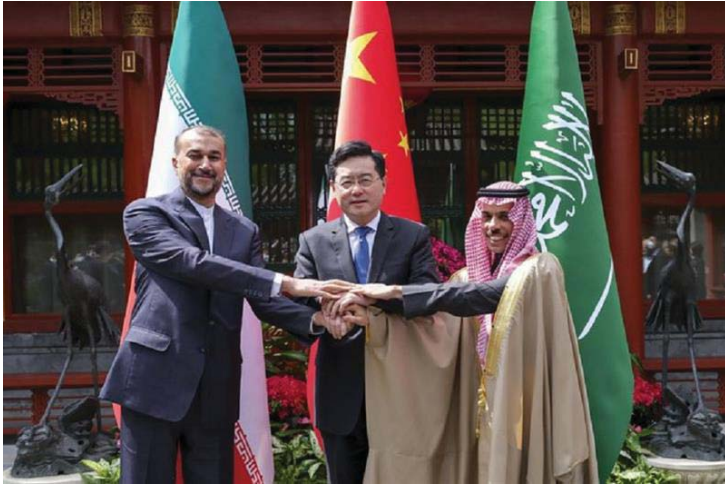
TEHRAN: An Iranian delegation arrived in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, Tehran said, to pave the way for reopening diplomatic missions as the Gulf rivals prepare to normalise relations, seven years after an acrimonious split.

The announcement came just days after a Saudi delegation made a similar visit to Iran's capital, following a historic meeting in China between the two governments' foreign ministers who vowed to bring stability to the turbulent region.

"In accordance with the implementation of the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia on the resumption of diplomatic activities... the Iranian technical delegation arrived in Riyadh at midday Wednesday and was welcomed by Saudi officials," said Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani.

"The Iranian delegation will take the necessary steps to reopen the embassy in Riyadh and the consulate general in Jeddah as well as the activities of Iran's permanent representative in the (Jeddah-based) Organisation of Islamic Cooperation," he said in a statement.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has been invited to Saudi Arabia, accord-



ing to Tehran, in what would be the first visit of its kind since Mohammad Khatami made the trip in 1999.

The flurry of diplomatic activity follows last month's landmark, Chinese-brokered announcement that Iran and Saudi Arabia, who have backed opposing sides in conflicts around the Middle East, would work towards resuming ties.

Riyadh broke off relations in 2016 after Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions following the

execution of Saudi Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr — one in a series of flashpoints between the long-time foes.

Since the March 10 announcement, the two countries' foreign ministers have met in China and a Saudi technical delegation met Iran's chief of protocol in Tehran last week, according to the official Saudi Press Agency.

The Saudi delegation, which arrived in Tehran on Saturday, is due to fly on to Iran's second city Mashhad on Thursday, Kanani said.

Yemen truce talks

As the contacts grow, Saudi Arabia is also negotiating with Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels, eight years after launching a military intervention aimed at dislodging them from power in its impoverished neighbour.

Saudi ambassador Mohammed Al-Jaber travelled to Sanaa, Yemen's rebel-held capital, this week hoping to "stabilise" a lapsed truce and work towards a "comprehensive political solution" between the Huthis and the ousted government.

Saudi Arabia gathered a multinational coalition to fight the Huthis in 2015, after the rebels took control of Sanaa and large swathes of the country, forcing the government to flee.

It has become a major battleground of Riyadh's proxy wars with Tehran, which also include conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.

Analysts say Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, now wants to exit the eight-year war to focus on domestic projects aimed at diversifying its energy-dependent economy.

Washington has cautiously welcomed the rapprochement between the Saudis and Iran despite the role of China, which it sees as its biggest global challenger.

## FM Bilawal, Nepal ambassador discuss bilateral ties, cooperation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Nepal in Islamabad Tapas Adhikari on Wednesday called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here.

During the meeting, they discussed historic bilateral ties and ways to enhance cooperation in multiple fields.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said that both Pakistan and Nepal were among the founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The foreign minister also expressed good wishes for his Nepalese counterpart.

## RCCI hosts Iftar-Dinner in the honor of diplomat community



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) hosted an Iftar Dinner in the honor of the Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Diplomats and Commercial Counselors in Islamabad.

A large number of ambassadors and diplomats were present on the occasion, including the Dean of Ambassadors, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Mulamov, Ambassador of Turkey, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Iran, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Morocco.

Federal Minister Energy Khurram Dastgir and Federal Minister Petroleum Musadiq Malik were also present on the occasion.

RCCI Group Leader Sohail Altaf and President Saqib Rafiq thanked the ambassadors, dignitaries and businessmen for the overwhelming gathering.

President Saqib Rafiq said that Rawalpindi Chamber considers the diplomatic community an important pillar for promoting trade ties and RCCI always believes in better connectivity with all diplomats. RCCI Iftar dinner for diplomats is being held every year to promote a positive and true image of the country, he added.

Group leader Sohail Altaf in his remarks said that we are thankful to Federal Ministers Energy Khurram Dastgir and Federal Minister Petroleum Musadiq Malik for joining us today. This is a great opportunity for networking and we are very honored to host the large number of ambassadors and commercial counselors, he added.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former presidents, President FCCI, Dr. Khurram Tariq, President Small Chamber Tariq Jadoon, President WCCI Rifat Shaheen, members of the executive committee and representatives of district and local administrations, representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajir and a large number of members and businessmen attended the Iftar dinner.

## Italy adopts state of emergency over migrants

ROME: Italy's cabinet on Tuesday announced a state of emergency on immigration following a "sharp rise" in flows across the Mediterranean, a statement said, in a move aimed at better management of migrant arrivals and repatriation facilities.

The state of emergency will be backed by initial funding of 5 million euros (\$5.45 million), the Ministry for Sea and Civil Protection said; and will last for six months.

"Let it be clear, we are not solving the problem, the solution can only depend on responsible intervention by the European Union," said Nello Musumeci, the civil protection minister.

The measure will allow Giorgia Meloni's right-wing government to more quickly repatriate those not allowed to stay in Italy, boosting identification and expulsion orders, a government source said.

The government, in office since October, has pledged to curb mass immigration but some 31,300 migrants have arrived in Italy so far in 2023, interior ministry data shows, up from around 7,900 in the same period last year.

# Zayed Humanitarian Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of United Arab Emirates in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, affirmed that "Zayed Humanitarian Day" is an annual national occasion through which we salute the values established by the Founding Father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in the fields of giving, generosity and cohesion, and it is the humanitarian message that the wise leadership of UAE carried, consequently the UAE, with this approach, became a global model and an example to follow in advancing and developing humanitarian initiatives.

The Ambassador Al Zaabi in his speech on the occasion of "Zayed Humanitarian Day" which falls on

the 19th of Ramazan every year, said: "The principles of Sheikh Zayed, contributed to reach the white hands of the UAE and goodness and giving over more than five decades to all countries of the world through support and assistance and charitable and humanitarian initiatives and projects and providing aid and relief, which spread hope and happiness, and consolidate the foundations of security, peace and stability for societies suffering from wars and various natural disasters.

His Excellency added that Zayed Humanitarian Day comes in recognition of the role of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, as the UAE leadership, government and people were keen to commemo-

rate this memory by following his approach of giving and continuing the humanitarian and welfare work, inspired from his wisdom.

H.E. Al Zaabi said that Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan followed his footsteps, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE continues the path of goodness and giving, the reason that the UAE has for many years ranked first in the world as the largest donor of humanitarian aid.

His Excellency pointed out that the charitable and humanitarian initiatives and projects implemented by the UAE and its humanitarian organizations in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are a practical translation of the

directives of the wise leadership, which has been keen to adopt many humanitarian initiatives to provide aid and support in all fields within the framework of the well-established historical relations between the two friendly countries and peoples.

The Ambassador added that this humanitarian support from the wise leadership represents continuation of the approach and journey of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in the areas of humanitarian field, as his planting has become ripe fruits across the Islamic Republic of Pakistan through the construction of roads, bridges, schools, colleges, hospitals, health clinics, water supply projects, vocational training centers and infrastructure facilities.

# Pakistan, Bulgaria discuss ways to further enhance relations in diverse fields

Spokesman Report

SOFIA: The fifth Round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Bulgaria was held in Sofia on 11 April 2023. The Pakistani side was led by Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe) Muhammad Saleem while the Bulgarian delegation was headed by Mr. Petar Kraychev, Director General (Bilateral Relations), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and discussed ways and means to further enhance them in diverse fields.



They reiterated mutual resolve to cement relations in the fields of political, economic, trade, investment, higher education, agriculture, ICT and people-to-people contacts.

The two sides agreed on the importance of early convening of next session of the Pakistan-Bulgaria Intergovernmental Commission, and active linkages between the

private sectors of the two countries. Possibilities to enhance Pakistani workforce to address the existing labor shortage in Bulgaria were also discussed.

Pakistani delegation thanked Bulgaria for playing a supportive role in Pakistan's active engagement with the EU, especially in context of GSP+ status.

Regional and global issues of mutual interest were also discussed including peace and security, counter-terrorism and climate change. The two sides also underscored their keen interest in maintaining close cooperation at the multilateral platforms, especially the UN.

# India asks Britain for increased monitoring of Khalistan supporters

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: India on Wednesday asked Britain for increased monitoring of UK-based supporters of Khalistan movement, a Sikh separatist movement, following a "breach of security" at its High Commission in London, an incident that has raised tension between the two countries.

At a meeting in New Delhi between senior British and Indian home ministry officials, the Indian side "specifically conveyed its concerns on the misuse of UK's asylum status by the Pro-Khalistan elements to aid and abet terrorist activities in India and requested better cooperation with UK," an Indian government statement said.

New Delhi has been upset with Britain after protesters carrying



"Khalistan" banners last month detached the Indian flag from the diplomatic mission's building to protest against recent police action in India's Punjab state against a Sikh separatist leader. The incident comes as the two countries are trying to strike a deal on a delayed free trade agreement.

Khalistan Demand Alive And Kicking Similar protests and vandalism

were seen outside Indian missions in some places in the United States and Canada. Khalistan refers to an independent Sikh state sought by separatists, but which does not exist.

Police in Punjab, where Sikhs are in the majority, launched a hunt for separatist leader Amritpal Singh last month after he revived talk of an independent homeland.

His comments raised concerns of a return to the separatist violence of the 1980s and early 1990s that killed tens of thousands of people.

Khalistan supporters claim the action against Singh is unjustified.

Britain's Foreign Minister, James Cleverly, said last month the country would review security at the Indian High Commission in London following "unacceptable acts of violence" towards its staff.

News Desk

BEIJING: The digitization of Pakistan has been fundamentally progressing and will accelerate in the coming decade. We are confident about the benefits of a digital society and I am certain that through our converged technologies and innovative solutions, we will make more contributions to digital Pakistan, highlighted Wang Hua, Chairman and CEO of Zong 4G in their recently released annual Sustainability Report for the year 2022 titled "Building Pakistan - Building a Better Future".

A report titled "Pakistan's digital journey, Recommendations for Digital Transformation in Pakistan" released by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OICCI) argues that digitization has

the potential to add \$60 billion to the economy by 2030 if the government creates a favourable investment climate for local and foreign investors to fill in the large gaps in digital infrastructure and connectivity.

The importance of digital innovation in Pakistan cannot be overstated as it can help the country overcome the barriers of distance and connectivity that have been challenges for many years. Pakistan has attached great importance to the development of digital economy in recent years, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The country has established safe cities in Islamabad and Lahore, China-Pakistan fibre-optic cable, smart classrooms and other projects in collaboration with Chinese enterprises to improve Pakistan's transpor-

ation, education, scientific and technological development and industrial production.

In the financial sector, the principal operators have increased their investment in the digital economy and released heavyweight apps such as easypaisa and jazzcash, which have effectively changed people's business behaviour and lifestyle.

Chinese companies have been investing heavily in Pakistan in recent years. Since its inception in 2008, Zong 4G has prioritized sustainability as its primary agenda by investing in school initiatives, introducing various digital services and preserving the environment. The company has positively impacted 2.5 million individuals directly through 15 campaigns across 17 cities in Pakistan in 2022.

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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
40,126.05	39,804.71	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
40,172.76	39,803.95	
Index Value	Change	
2,184,078,647	+321.34	
Percentage	Time	
+0.81%	12 Apr, 2023 1:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,824.84	+39.12	
Percentage	Time	
+0.50%	12 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,796.62	+111.83	
Percentage	Time	
+0.33%	12 Apr, 12:28 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
28,082.70	+159.33	
Percentage	Time	
+0.57%	12 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190.5	192.5
Bahrain Dinar	761.94	769.94
Canadian Dollar	214	216
China Yuan	41.57	41.97
Danish Krone	41.67	42.07
Euro	315	318
Hong Kong Dollar	36.5	36.85
Indian Rupee	3.49	3.6
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.3
Kuwaiti Dinar	933.04	942.04
Malaysian Ringgit	64.96	65.56
New Zealand \$	177.63	179.63
Norwegians Krone	27.26	27.56
Omani Riyal	744.11	752.11
Qatari Riyal	78.6	79.3
Saudi Riyal	76.5	77.3
Singapore Dollar	215	217
Swedish Korona	27.32	27.62
Swiss Franc	314.37	316.87
Thai Bhat	8.33	8.48
U.A.E Dirham	78.7	79.5
UK Pound Sterling	362	365
US Dollar	292	295

# Regulatory reforms crucial for attracting investment: BOI workshop panelist

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Board of Investment (BOI) on Wednesday organized a workshop on Regulatory Framework of Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward, in collaboration with Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

The workshop aimed to discuss opportunities for enabling business environment. It also discussed regulatory challenges between private sector and regulators.

Addressing the workshop Ambreen Iftikhar Additional Secretary BOI said, the government believes in providing level playing field to business community and would safeguard their interests.

She said that regulatory reforms are crucial for fostering economic growth, attracting foreign investment, and improving the overall business environment in the country.

Ambreen Iftikhar said that the government has introduced a number of reforms to simplify the tax system and reduce the compliance



burden for businesses.

She said that the government would introduce reforms that make it easier for businesses to start and operate in Pakistan, adding that this

include simplifying the regulatory framework, reducing the time and cost of setting up a business and improving the efficiency of government services. She said that the government

would strengthen the enforcement of regulations by focusing on ex-post regulations and adopting risk-based ex-ante regulations.

Additional Secretary BOI said that government would establish principle-based regulations that ensure compliance with regulations and deter non-compliance.

She said that regulatory reforms are crucial for fostering economic growth, attracting foreign investment, and improving overall business environment in Pakistan. BOI is always ready to provide maximum support to the business community for investment in Pakistan, she added.

Vice Chancellor PIDE Nadeemul Haque in his opening remarks highlighted the importance of regulatory framework in Pakistan.

Director General BOI Zulfikar Ali presented his copy titled 'Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative'.

A discussion between the private sector and regulators titled regulatory challenges were also part of the programme.

## Political infighting rapidly bankrupting country: Mian Zahid Hussain

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said the unending struggle of politicians has engulfed the entire country.

Not a single important institution has been spared from this conflict which is bringing the country down, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the whole country had become a battlefield and we have become a laughing stock in the community of nations.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that in these circumstances, the agenda of economic reforms in the country had been put on the back burner and it has become impossible to improve the conditions and run the economy.

According to the IMF, Pakistan's growth rate is expected to be only half percent this year and if the political conflict continues, the problems of the people will increase further, and unemployment and inflation will touch new heights, he said.

The business leader said that along with the political war for early elections in



Punjab and KP, a legal war has also started between the government, the opposition and the judiciary, which has disturbed the people and has scared the business community.

The tendency to settle political issues in an apolitical manner has widened the gulf between key officials and key institutions, further weakening democracy and jeopardizing the credibility of the entire system.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in these circumstances, the people are constantly getting the message that some politicians want to bankrupt the country and that their disputes are only for power.

Some failed politicians care more about their own interests than the problems of the country and masses and they have put the integrity of the country at stake.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that inflation is increasing continuously. Crisis after crisis is frustrating the masses and the cost of food, beverages and transportation has increased by forty-five percent, while the entire country is affected by a ban on imports.

People's purchasing power has eroded, due to which 89 percent of people have stopped eating and drinking outside the home because of which the hotels restaurants and fast food businesses are collapsing.

Many small businesses are unable to pay their employees' salaries, their electricity and gas bills and rents, and their employees are losing their jobs.

Hotels, restaurants and most fast food brands use a lot of imported ingredients in their products, which are not available due to the import ban while increased sales tax is also damaging this sector.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that on the one hand, the price of electricity and gas and taxes are increasing, on the other hand, the value of the rupee is decreasing on a daily basis, which is affecting the entire country.



Islamabad: Mohammad Ahmed President Islamabad Industrial Association & USPICC and Malik Sohail Hussain Secretary General US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association called on Chairman CDA & Chief Commissioner Islamabad.

## Worst inflation resulting in human tragedy

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Wednesday said the country is facing the worst nutritional, educational and psychological crisis due to increasing inflation and shrinking income.

Managing food has become a problem for the majority of the population as profiteers and hoarders have been given a free hand, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that people are taking children out of school and putting them to work to get some additional income to survive.

People all across the country are facing

problems, but the worst situation is in the former FATA and in Balochistan.

The business leader said that hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity have become common in the country. On one hand, the World Food Organization is saying that at least fifteen million people in Pakistani need immediate help to fill their stomachs and seven million children need emergency nutrition.

While on the other hand, the elites have looted the treasury, therefore the public cannot be provided with any facilities including treatment, education, and clean drinking water.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that falsification of inflation and poverty data does not reduce inflation in the country

and for this practical steps will have to be taken, which is not possible at the moment because politicians and several important institutions are engaged in the battle for power.

Bangladesh has substantially improved food security, food diversity, maternal and reproductive health.

The Bangladesh government is providing clean drinking water, education and proper sanitation and vitamins are added to flour, rice and edible oil for public health, while the situation in Pakistan is different.

The largest population and the largest number of flour mills are in Punjab, where essential nutrients are not added in the flour, he informed.

## SECP publishes Digital Lending Applications Whitelist



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pursuant to Google's updated policy for digital lending apps from Pakistan, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has published Whitelist of Digital Lending Applications on its website.

The Whitelist will serve as reference point for Google to validate regulator's approved apps before listing them on Play Store with effect from May 31, 2023. The list will be updated as and when an app gets approved or rejected by SECP.

The Whitelist contains the names of approved apps owned by licensed Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), as well as the apps of licensed NBFCs which were operating as on December 27, 2022 and have applied for approval. Cyber security certification from a PTA approved firm, certifying that the apps don't get access to customers personal data.

Circular 15 mandates compliance with digital lending standards, inter-alia the placement of adequate cybersecurity measures and controls to ensure confidentiality, integrity and the restriction from accessing borrowers' phone books or photo galleries.

SECP encourages all NBFCs engaged in digital lending activities to comply with the updated requirements specified in Circular 15 and submit requisite documentation for app approval at earliest to avoid any inconvenience. Potential borrowers are also encouraged to verify the app status from SECP's Whitelist before taking any exposure with the any digital lending app.

SECP remains committed to promoting a secure and transparent digital lending ecosystem in Pakistan.

## MMBL and MateSol unite to improve MSMEs Cash flow through state-of-the-art Invoice Financing

**Commerce Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading microfinance institution, Mobilink Microfinance Bank Ltd. (MMBL) and MateSol, a blockchain-based invoice verification platform with a global footprint, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to offer better access to invoice financing for Micro Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). As per the partnership agreement, MMBL will utilize MateSol's innovative blockchain-based invoice management system 'Invoice-Mate' to finance invoices, offering MSMEs swift, hassle-free, secure, and transparent invoice financing solutions. With Specialization in Web 3.0 and Enterprise Blockchain, MateSol offers solutions for different verticals of the industry. Invoice-Mate being world's first-ever



invoice management system on the blockchain, is the flagship product of MateSol.

MMBL is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives by creating opportunities for increased digital inclusion and by driving economic growth across countries that are home

to more than 8% of the world's population.

Under the subject partnership, MMBL's MSME customers will experience increased operational efficiency and reduced paperwork, resulting in a more streamlined and agile financing process. The Bank's commitment to innovation and customer-centricity is reflected in its adoption of cutting-edge financing solutions, which will enable MSMEs to thrive in a

rapidly evolving business landscape.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Mohammad Abubakar, Chief Operating Officer (COO) MMBL said: "Our collaboration with MateSol is set to revolutionize the financial landscape for MSMEs through digitized processes. We understand the challenges faced by these enterprises in obtaining financing, especially in today's uncertain economic climate.

## Metro participates in Ramazan Bachat Bazaar

**News Desk**

KARACHI: METRO, the leading international wholesale company, as part of its corporate social responsibility initiative is participating in the ongoing Ramazan Bachat Bazaar initiated by the Commissioner Karachi for providing essential items to the people on discounted prices.

Mr. Marek Minkiewicz, Managing Director, METRO Pakistan, paid a visit to the METRO stall at the Ramazan Bachat Bazaar and appreciated the administration for taking this initiative. Sharing his experience, he stated, "METRO is always ready to cooperate and work with the authorities for betterment of the people.

In these testing times when inflation is running very high, METRO has initiated its strategy of Buy more Pay less (BMPL) to offer wholesale prices to common people, where they can buy more on reduced prices".

Prior to his visit to the Ramazan Bachat Bazaar, the Managing Director METRO Pakistan also called upon the Commissioner Karachi, Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Memon, to appreciate his Ramazan Bachat Bazaars initiative and assured full cooperation for any Public interest initiative.

The Commissioner Karachi thanked METRO for participating in Ramazan Bachat Bazaar and for supporting the initiative of bringing relief to the general public.

## Ericsson Consumer & Industry Lab: Flexibility is the new work life currency



**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: A new report, Future of Work Life, from Ericsson Consumer & Industry Lab examines how employees and employers navigate the current work environment and their views on the future of work shaped by the pandemic, digitalization and the fluctuating labor market.

The way people spend their work hours has been the same for a long time, but the pandemic was a major disruptor of this. Work has changed and will continue to change going forward.

Almost half (48 percent)

of the employees in the study say that they enjoy increased flexibility at work. 52 percent consider flexible work hours or locations as key requirements, and 25 percent say that flexibility is the top priority if they would start to look for a new job. Doing work rather than going to work is seen as central in this new way of thinking about work life.

Employers need to embrace digitalization and flexible workforce management, and this can be done by creating a workplace of the future that supports human collaboration, simplifies work and values employee input in decision making.

# Series against New Zealand offers chance to Rizwan, Babar to get closer to top ranking

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing battle at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Batter Rankings continues to heat up as Pakistan duo Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam get the chance to close in on India starlet Suryakumar Yadav at the head of proceedings.

Babar moved up to third on the rankings that were updated by the ICC on Wednesday and will get further opportunity to make inroads on Suryakumar when Pakistan commence their five-game T20I series against New Zealand on Saturday.

Both Babar and Rizwan sat out Pakistan's most recent T20I series against Afghanistan and will be keen to score freely against the Black Caps, who are coming off a narrow 2-1 series triumph over Sri Lanka at home.

While Suryakumar currently holds a commanding lead at the top of the T20I rankings for batters with 906 rating points, second-placed Rizwan (811) and third-placed Babar (755) could make gains while the India star is plying his trade in the IPL.

Ironically, it was Devon Conway's absence from New Zealand's series against Sri Lanka that led to Babar improving one place to third on the latest set of rankings,



with the Kiwi batter also at the IPL with the Chennai Super Kings.

A host of New Zealand and Sri Lanka stars that did feature in the recently completed T20I series were rewarded for their performances with young spinner Maheesh Theekshana the biggest eye-catcher as the 22-year-old rose to a career-high rating and equal fifth-place on the rankings for bowlers.

Theekshana was the match-winner for Sri Lanka in the first match of the series for his efforts during the Super Over and the off-spinner backed up that performance with a pair of strong showings while opening the bowling in the final two matches.

Teammate Wanindu Hasaranga was expensive during the series and duly dropped two places to fourth on the T20I

bowler rankings, with Afghanistan pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi (second) and Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood (third) both rising a place as a result.

It also means Afghanistan hold the top two spots on the T20I bowler rankings, with spinner Rashid Khan leading Farooqi in what is a tight ongoing race for top spot.

Sri Lanka dasher Kusal Mendis (up 11 spots to equal 25th) and New Zealand right-hander Tim Seifert (from outside the top 100 to 36th) were the other big winners on the latest set of T20I rankings for batters, while there was some movement on the Test rankings following Bangladesh's victory over Ireland in Mirpur.

Experienced right-hander Mushfiqur Rahim moved up five places to 17th on the Test batter rankings after scores of 126 and 51\*, while spin duo Tajjul Islam and Shakib Al Hasan were rewarded on the list for bowlers.

Tajjul collected a valuable five-wicket haul during the first innings and moved up three places to 20th as a result, while the Bangladesh skipper improved two spots to equal 26th following his figures of 2/26 when opening the bowling in the second innings.

# Radio Pakistan organizes cricket fiesta to mark Golden Jubilee celebrations of Constitution

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Scorpion Nights have won Radio Pakistan Ramazan Cricket Fiesta beating FM94 by nine wickets in the final of the tournament in Islamabad.

The tournament was organized by Radio Pakistan to mark the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan.

A total of 12 teams participated in the five-day cricket tournament. In the final, FM 94, batting first, scored 72 runs for the loss of just one wicket in the stipulated six overs.

In the nail-biting contest, the Scorpion Nights managed to achieve the target on last ball of the last over.

At the prize distribution ceremony, the chief guest Controller General Accounts Maqbool Ahmad Gondal along with Director General Radio Pakistan Tahir Hassan and Director News and Current Affairs Radio Pakistan Aman Ullah Sipra distributed prizes among the winners and the runners up.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest lauded Director General Radio Pakistan Tahir Hassan's efforts for the revival of the

National Broadcaster and organizing such a healthy activity on the occasion Golden Jubilee celebrations of the constitution. He said this tournament is the manifestation of enjoying civil rights, which have been guaranteed in the constitution.

On the occasion, Director General Radio Pakistan Tahir Hassan while appreciating the government's initiative to hold month-long celebrations of Golden Jubilee of the constitution, thanked sponsors, listeners and spectators of the tournament for making it a success. He said this tournament

is part of Radio Pakistan's series of events that have been planned to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the constitution. The Director General said such activities remind us of the liberty of life that has been protected under the constitution. He also vowed to continue such healthy activities to promote sports and culture.

A large number of spectators including men, women and the youth enjoyed the matches while many others watched the live-streaming and live commentary at Radio Pakistan's social media platforms and channels.

# Babar jumps to No.3, Rizwan retains second spot in latest T20I rankings

By A Sports -

DUBAI: Pakistan all-format captain Babar Azam has improved his standing on the T20I batters' list after the latest ICC rankings update on Wednesday.

Babar jumped a spot to third on the charts after New Zealand Devon Conway's absence from New Zealand's series against Sri Lanka led to a slump in his rankings.

Kiwi batter dropped two places to fifth on the latest set of rankings with South Africa's Aiden Markram taking fourth place. No.1-ranked Suryakumar Yadav and second-placed Mohammad Rizwan, however, retained their positions on the table.

Babar and his opening partner in the shortest format, Rizwan, have an opportunity to close in on the Indian star as the duo will be in action when Pakistan commence their five-matches home T20I series against New Zealand on Saturday.

"While Suryakumar currently holds a



commanding lead at the top of the T20I rankings for batters with 906 rating points, second-placed Rizwan (811) and third-placed Babar (755) could make gains while the India star is plying his trade in the IPL," said ICC in a media release.

Meanwhile, on the bowler rankings, Maheesh Theekshana moved up to fifth on the list while his teammate Wanindu Hasaranga dropped two places to fourth, thanks to their contrasting performances in the recent T20I series against hosts New Zealand.

# Zahmena gives Pakistan consolation win in Paris Olympic Qualifiers



By A Sports -

HISOR: Zahmena Malika's decider helped Pakistan women's football team beat hosts Tajikistan 1-0 and grab the consolation win in their maiden qualifying campaign for the Olympics on Tuesday.

The England-based forward netted the ball in the 25th minute as Pakistan, already out of the race to advance to the second round of qualifying for next year's Paris Olympics, ended their campaign on a positive note and finally got some points on the board.

With the win, Pakistan finished third in Group E after having lost to the Philippines and Hong Kong in the previous matches.

The London Seaward forward got on the end of a superb through ball by Amina Hanif, springing the offside trap before running through and calmly slotting it past the Tajikistan goalkeeper to give her side the lead. It was also Pakistan's first goal in the qualifiers.

The London Seaward attacker connected with Amina Hanif's excellent through ball, beating the offside trap before slotting Pakistan's first-ever goal in the Olympics qualifiers.

The Philippines, who beat Hong Kong 2-0 earlier on Tuesday, secured a ticket to the next round.

In the first round of Olympic Qualifiers, 26 Asian teams, divided across seven groups, participated.

Winners from each group will join Asia's five highest-ranked teams – North Korea, Japan, Australia, China and South Korea – in the second round of the Paris 2024 Olympic women's football qualifiers to be held in October.

The three group winners and one best-placed runner-up from the second round will play for the two spots for Paris 2024 Olympic in the final round to be held in November-December 2023.

*Sports promote peace, tranquility, and harmony in society: Dr Amjad Saqib*



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Dr. Amjad Saqib, Chairman of Akhuwat Foundation, said that sports teach us patience, tolerance, discipline, self-control, and forbearance on how to express it when we win and accept loss with dignity.

These values which we learn through sports give birth to a noble society. If the flag of peace is raised through sports, it will go to every field, city and country around the globe. He expressed these views while addressing at a ceremony held at the historic NJV School in Karachi regarding "Peace Through Sports Day" under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations.

Individual member of the Pakistan Olympic Association Syed Waseem Hashmi, Media Advisor Asif Azeem, Ambassador of Akhuwat Foundation and Wonder Woman Association Pakistan Ambassador Saima Hashim, Member of POA Environment Commission Tehmina Asif and other personalities were also present on this occasion.

Dr. Amjad Saqib said that the world needs peace today as much as it has never before. For the spread of peace on the globe, social, economic, and political justice, along with the development of knowledge, sports are also a great and beautiful means of establishing and developing peace and harmony today. Millions of children around the world are looking for peace. We can bring peace to the world by connecting with playgrounds and foster sportsmen spirit.

"I congratulate the President of the Pakistan Olympic Association, Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Syed Arif Hasan, Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mehmood, and the entire Olympic family, which organizes various events all over Pakistan every year on this day.

Later, Dr. Amjad Saqib along with other guests and sports personalities waved white cards and expressed the message of peace through sports.

*PAK vs NZ T20i: Preparations enter final phase at Gaddafi Stadium*



Bureau Repot

LAHORE: Preparations for the upcoming PAK vs NZ T20I series have entered the final stages at the iconic Gaddafi Stadium Lahore (GSL) here.

With Pakistan's home white-ball season about to kick off with a five-match T20I and ODI series against New Zealand, the preparations are in full swing at the iconic GSL which will host the first three T20Is of the five-match series.

According to the details, the ground staff is working on the outfield, enclosures, stadium building and most importantly on the pitch.

The international and local broadcasting crew has also raced their preparations and have begun installation at the stadium. Digital boundaries are also being installed whereas large posters of cricketers are also being posted across the stadium.

It is pertinent to mention that the Gaddafi Stadium Lahore will host the first three PAK vs NZ T20Is, scheduled on April 14, 15 and 17.

# Modric rejects €60m offer from Saudi Arabia

Real Madrid's veteran midfielder Luka Modric has rejected an enormous offer of €60m for a two-year contract from Saudi Arabia, Spanish media reported.

Reportedly, the Croatian player is desirous of retiring in Madrid, which is why he turned down the offer.

The 37-year-old joined the Los Blancos in 2012 and has played a key role in five Champions League titles. His contract with the side will expire at the end of the current season.

"I am doing everything I can to give my best and deserve the chance to continue here. I can't do more, I have always had a very good relationship with the club and that's not going to change," Modric said in February earlier this year.

"Just like last year, there's no rush, we're halfway through the season and there are many challenges ahead. I'm focused on that, on getting back to my best level, let's see what happens," he added.

# Australia end England women's 30-game unbeaten run

News Desk

BRENTFORD: Australia upset England women 2-0 in a friendly at Brentford on Tuesday, to end the Lionesses' 30-match unbeaten streak.

Sam Kerr, who plays for nearby Chelsea in the English Super League, gave the injury-hit Matildas a first-half lead and Charlotte Grant added the second after the break.

For European champions England, who beat Brazil on penalties to win the inaugural women's Finalissima at Wembley last week, it was the last warm-up game before the World Cup in New Zealand and Australia.

The Lionesses begin their campaign against Haiti in Brisbane on July 22.

Kerr, who was rested for Australia's loss to Scotland on Friday, pounced on a weak back header by Leah Williamson to lob England goalkeeper Mary Earps after 32 minutes.

Kerr turned provider in the 67th minute sending in a cross that Grant headed in off the unlucky Williamson for a first international goal.

"It doesn't feel great. A big learning game against a very physical and well-organised Australian side," said Sarina Wiegman, after her first defeat as England coach.

"We made some mistakes," she added.

In Le Mans in France, the hosts beat Olympic champions Canada 2-1 as coach Herve Renard continued his winning start as coach.

Tamires and Ary Borges scored in the first half as Brazil rebounded from their defeat at Wembley to beat Germany, second on FIFA's women's rankings, 2-1, in Nuremberg.

Third-ranked Sweden drew 3-3 with Norway in Gothenburg. Olivia Schough gave the hosts the lead a minute into added time but Frida Maanum levelled with her second of the game, six minutes later.

Norwegian star Ada Hegerberg who refused to play in the last World Cup, limped off after 29 minutes.

Spain, ranked eighth, and Netherlands, ranked ninth, both enjoyed three-goal victories.

Spain beat China 3-0 on Ibiza and the Dutch beat Poland 4-1 in Rotterdam.

