

SOS Village Iftar-Dinner

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi in a group photo with the children of the SOS Village after the Iftar-Dinner on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Punjab elections: Intelligence Agencies officials brief SC Judges on security

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Top officials of the country's intelligence agencies have reportedly met with Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and other two apex court judges who are hearing a case related to the elections in Punjab on May 14.

According to sources, ISI and MI chiefs gave a briefing to the judges on the security issues confronting the country.

Sources further revealed that the meeting between the judges and the security officials continued for over two hours in the



CJP's chamber.

A three-judge bench - led by

the chief justice and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Ijazul Ahsan - on April 4 declared Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to postpone the election for the Punjab Assembly as "unconstitutional" and ordered it to hold polls in the province on May 14.

The same bench on April 14 ordered the SBP to directly issue Rs21 billion for the election and submit its report on April 18.

The National Assembly yesterday disapproved a supplementary demand for a grant for

elections in Punjab.

Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the supplementary demand of Rs 21 billion in the House to meet the expenditures for elections in Punjab. He said the Federal Cabinet had referred the matter to the National Assembly which had the authority to approve or disapprove additional expenses under Articles 82 (2) and 84 of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has convened a meeting of his coalition partners today [Tuesday] to discuss the current political situation.

PTCL group posts double digit revenue growth of 23%

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the leading provider of telecom and ICT services in the country, has announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2023 registering double digit growth of 23 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The announcement was made during a Board of Directors' meeting held here, said a news release on Tuesday.

During the first quarter of 2023, PTCL Group sustained its momentum and strengthened its position as the leading integrated telecom service provider in Pakistan. This substantial growth in revenue is primarily attributable

to strong performance in the fixed broadband, mobile data, business solutions, and banking services.

PTCL Group's revenue of Rs 43.2 billion in Q1, 2023 is 23.2% higher as compared to the same period of last year. The Group's profitability was, among other factors, particularly affected by the significant bout of devaluation as the Group has unhedged FOREX liabilities. The Group has posted a net loss of Rs 5.7 billion.

PTCL continued its growth by posting 17.1% YoY revenue growth in Q1, 2023. PTCL's revenue of Rs 22.95 billion for the quarter is 17.1% higher than Q1 2022, mainly driven by growth in carrier & wholesale and broadband segments.

The company has posted an operating profit of Rs 1.5

billion with a 54.7% growth over last year and a net profit of Rs 5.5 billion for the quarter.

PTCL further strengthened its flag ship FTTH brand, 'Flash Fiber', by acquiring the highest net adds in the industry, this was possible through exceptional customer experience and aggressive expansion of fiber network across the country. The rapid rollout of FTTH and strong performance in the carrier & wholesale segments ensured PTCL's topline growth.

PTCL's recently launched an OTT streaming platform 'SHOQ', that provides premium entertainment, sports, and news content to all data users, is bridging the gap for need of high-quality content at an affordable cost.

NADRA launches 'AFIS Technology' for biometric identification

City Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) on Tuesday launched its cutting-edge Automated Finger Identification System (AFIS), branded as "NADIR", for biometric identification.

With the launching of its cutting-edge AFIS technology for civil purposes, NADRA has joined the ranks of premier biometric identification technology providers worldwide.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik said: "The right kind of innovation builds not only organizations or govern-

ments - it also builds countries. Indigenous development of AFIS is a groundbreaking development not only in the field of civil identification but in the pursuit of nation building as well.

With its advanced technology, we can now accurately and quickly store the fingerprints and identify individuals for a wide range of purposes as a public good, from immigration to border control to social services."

The global market of biometric identification technology is mostly dominated by providers from developed countries like USA, UK, Russia, Japan, France, Germany and others.



PML-N wants 2023 elections to be exemplary: Dastgir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Engr Khuram Dastgir Khan on Tuesday said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) wants the 2023 general elections to be exemplary, the results of which will be accepted by all political parties with an open heart.

Talking to a private news channel he said that in October we [all the stakeholders] will be fully ready for the election because by then all the hurdles will be removed.

He said unconditional talks with PTI, can settle for holding elections sooner or later, apart from that, we can talk about what steps should be taken to make the election ideal.

In response to a question, he said that Imran Khan, after trying all the tactics including dissolving assemblies was now stuck in the blind street.

Therefore, PTI should dialogue in a democratic way, he added.



Hindu leaders' blasphemous words against Harmain AL-Sharifain, Baitullah not acceptable: Ashrafi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday said the blasphemous words by Indian Hindu leaders against Harmain Al-Sharifain and Baitullah were not acceptable to the Muslims.

Talking to the media, Ashrafi who is also the Secretary General of International Tazem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Council, said the Muslim Ummah was quite disturbed over the blasphemous words of Hindutva leaders as India was currently under the rule of an extremist and terrorist group that had made the so-called secular country a hell for the minorities.

It should be known to the Hindutva preachers that the Muslims would not hesitate in sacrificing their lives for the honor of Harmain Al-Sharifain and Baitullah, he added.

Ashrafi said as the successful mediation of China had culminated in a rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, then its role for the settlement of the Israel-Palestine issue would be fully supported.

Beijing always asks overseas Chinese to observe local laws, traditions: Spokesperson

News Desk

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Tuesday said that China had always urged its citizens living abroad to observe local laws and regulations as well as traditions and customs.

The Chinese government always asks our citizens overseas to observe local laws and regulations as well as traditions and customs, he said during his regular briefing held at International Press Center (IPC). About the arrest of a Chinese citizen working at a dam construction project in Pakistan, he said that the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad was verifying the situation.

If this matter concerns Chinese nationals, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan will provide consular protection and assistance within the scope of our duty, he added.

According to media reports, "A Chinese supervisor at a dam construction project in Pakistan is currently being held in police protection after workers accused him of blasphemy."



PM, FM discuss political situation



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday discussed in detail the

political situation of the country.

During the meeting, the foreign minister also briefed the prime minister about the matters pertaining to the ministry of foreign affairs, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

'Imran Khan will not appear before IHC over security concerns'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan will not appear before IHC today due to security concerns, confirmed his lawyer Barrister Gohar Ali on Tuesday.

Imran Khan had to appear before IHC today as his interim bail in eight cases is going to expire today. Barrister Gohar Ali, citing security concerns said Khan will not appear before the Islamabad High Court.

He said a plea for a day exemption from court appearance will be filed in the IHC today as there are no 'proper' security arrangements taken ahead of the former prime minister's court appearance.

It may be noted that Khan is facing over 100 cases and had been complaining about security threats.

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) sought a response from the federal government in a plea moved by Khan for revoking his security.

The case was taken up by Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq. The former prime minister filed plea in the IHC after 'threatening' statements from Interior Minister, Rana Sanaullah.

At the outset of the hearing, the top judge asked Is Imran Khan being not provided security as former prime minister?

Khan's security was revoked by the interior ministry, Faisal Farid advocate replied to the IHC CJ query.

Alkhidmat Foundation hosted Iftar Dinner in the honour of Orphans

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Alkhidmat Foundation hosted grand Iftar Dinner in the honour of Orphans The Eid Gift Distribution Ceremony was also held during the event. The Alkhidmat's work is highly commendable. Local Government Minister, Ibrahim Hasan Murad Alkhidmat Foundation organized a Grand Iftar and Eid gift distribution ceremony for 2,000 orphans, widows, and elderly people living in old age homes, in collaboration with UMT. Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Ibrahim Hasan Murad addressed the ceremony. The event was aimed at raising awareness about the challenges faced by these vulnerable groups and sharing the joys of Ramadan and Eid with them.

Addressing the ceremony, Minister of Local Government Punjab, Ibrahim Hasan Murad said that orphans and homeless elderly are the attention-seeking section of our society. He said we need to take steps individually and collectively for this noble cause and play a role in development. The minister said that he

was delighted to learn about amazing work of Alkhidmat Foundation for humanity especially for orphan children. The minister emphasized the need for collective efforts to support these deserving sections of society.

Secretary General of Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, Syed Waqas Jafri, shared how the Foundation is sponsoring over 22,000 orphans and organizing shopping and gift ceremonies for them during Ramadan and Eid.

Vice-President AKFP, Dr. Mush-taq Mangat highlighted the importance of sharing the joy of Eid with orphans and helpless elderly people, which is a right that they deserve.

The event was attended by a large number of people from different walks of life, including representatives from youth societies, brave mothers of orphans, and elders from old age homes. The dignified ceremony was hosted by Shoaib Hashmi, Senior Manager Media Relations, and was an excellent platform for highlighting the work being done by Alkhidmat Foundation to support vulnerable groups in society.

ECP accuses Fawad Chaudhry of spreading misleading propaganda

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry of making baseless and misleading propaganda against the ECP chief.

The ECP spokesperson released a statement denying Mr Chaudhry's claims that money was being spent on renovating the ECP chief's house. According to the spokesperson, the chief election commissioner was currently residing in a flat, and no money was spent on its renovation.

The spokesperson further revealed that a plot had been allotted in Islamabad's Minister colony for the construction of the ECP chief's house during the PTI government's tenure.

However, the ECP spokesperson clarified that no funds had been released for the construction of the house, and the project had been



canceled, even though it had already been approved.

The spokesperson added that even if the project were to start now, it would not be possible to complete it during the incumbent ECP chief's tenure.

Fawad Chaudhry had earlier demanded the resignation of the ECP chief, alleging that money was being spent on renovating his house. However, the ECP's statement categorically denied these claims, stating that the chief election commissioner was currently residing in a flat, and no funds had been spent on its renovation.

Country can progress only through education and training: Governor Punjab

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman has said that the previous government brought Pakistan to the brink of economic collapse, but the present government took difficult economic decisions without caring about its political reputation for national security and economic stability. To get out of this crisis, he expressed these views while addressing the ceremony of distribution of electric wheelchairs to 45 students of 11 different universities of South Punjab under the Prime Minister's Youth Program at Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan.



with physical challenges in universities across the country.

A large number of vice chancellors, regional heads, teachers and students of various government universities including Vice Chancellor Bahaudin Zakariya University Dr Muhammad Ali Shah, Senator Rana Mahmood Al Hasan, Project Director HEC Darshwar participated in the ceremony. Dar Shahwar, Project Director of Higher Education Commission for Provision of Wheelchair Scheme, said that this program was started in 2017 to provide ease of education to special students

the occasion, Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman said that the youth of the new generation should adopt the habit of research and reflection instead of believing what they hear. He said that students should refer to authentic institutions instead of fictitious stories to get statistics so that they can be aware of the facts.

Governor Balighur Rahman said that a nation and a country can progress only through education and training. Therefore, for the promotion of higher education, Muslim League-N had allocated funds of 120 billion rupees in the past so that students could learn modern sciences in a modern way. Keeping in view the contemporary requirements, free laptops were given to the students so that they can join the progress and race of the times, this scheme benefited a large number of students. He said that the economic indicators have always been positive during the PML-N government

The Governor of Punjab said that despite the power crisis and terrorism in the past, the PML-N government successfully continued the journey of public welfare and still the best strategy is being adopted to end the difficult economic conditions. Said that the students should not be victims of hate speech but should promote love and unity in the society. Governor Punjab went to their seats and distributed electric wheelchairs and certificates to 45 special students.

Social Welfare Department distributed 37 Cheque to the disabled persons



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Deputy Commissioner Tribal District Lower South Waziristan Muhammad Nasir Khan distributed 37 checks to disabled persons/special persons.

Lower South Waziristan Muhammad Nasir Khan and Additional Deputy Commissioner of Lower South Waziristan Kashmir Khan distributed 37 checks to disabled people with the support of Social Welfare Department, 50,000 check per person was given to

disabled persons.

On this occasion Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi, representatives of Social Welfare Department, Tehsil Wana Chairman Maulana Saleh Wazir and tribal elders were also present in the ceremony.

The disabled person thanked the administration and the representatives of the social welfare department and expressed hope, that the Department of Social Welfare will continue its cooperation with disabled persons/special persons in the future.

Crackdown against hoarding of sugar throughout the Multan District: Umar Jahangir

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the Direction of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, the district administration has launched a comprehensive crackdown against hoarding of sugar throughout the district. During the raids of the Commissioners, thousands of bags of stored sugar were seized. Assistant Commissioner City Samil Mushtaq recovered 800 bags from the warehouse during the action in People's Colony, Mumtazabad, while Assistant Commissioner Jalalpur Pirwala Raheel Mirzas found 600 bags hidden in the shop. The sacks were taken into custody. The warehouses were sealed after confiscating the exported sugar and cases were registered against the accused. Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir said that the mafia involved in the black marketing of sugar will be dealt with iron hands.

Three drivers' dead bodies were recovered & eight others were injured due to a landslide

Adam Khan Wazir

KHYBER : According to the report issued by the office of Deputy Commissioner District Khyber Abdul Nasir, 15 to 20 cargo vehicles were crushed by a landslide on the Pak-Afghan border Torkham Export Road



3 drivers died while 8 people were seriously injured due to the landslide.

The fear of more casualties is being expressed as the drivers were sleeping in some vehicles at the time of the accident, as soon as the news of the accident was shared on social media, the news spread like wildfire.

Thousands of people including Rescue 1122, District Administration, Police, Army Rescue Squad reached the spot and started the rescue operation.

While two cranes also came from Afghanistan and took part in the operation,

the incident happened at two o'clock last night when the transporters were preparing for dawn, due to the fall of debris, three containers caught fire and the dead and injured are said

to be from Afghanistan.

The rescue operation is going on till the last report, but due to the hard and big mudslides, there are difficulties in removing the debris

According to Rescue 1122 Bilal Faizi, there are difficulties in the operation to get the trapped people out of the rubble immediately. Because heavy machinery is needed to remove the debris, all resources are being used to try to remove the trawlers as well.

It should be noted that the construction work is going on at the multi-billion rupee terminal in Torkham, which has a contract with NLC.

The reason for which was a big fire at two o'clock last night where goods vehicles were parked in three lines on the export road.

But due to which there has been a large financial loss, the NLC is being severely criticized by the common people on social media, that the multi-billion rupee project does not have heavy machinery with NLC to remove that debris.

PCBDDA briefs caretaker provincial minister on fully sustainable CBD Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Housing Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Punjab, Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir visited the Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), in Lahore to witness the ongoing sustainable development projects. Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), is tasked to establish Pakistan's first business district and register the country on the global economic map.

Punjab, Mr. Fazeel Asif Jah, Executive Director Commercial, Mohammed Omer, Executive Director Legal CBD Punjab, Barrister Bilal Afzal Khokhar, Director Marketing CBD Punjab, Wasim Siddiq and other officials of CBD Punjab were present during the briefing session

While briefing about the revenue generation activities the Caretaker Provincial Minister was informed that CBD Punjab, did its first auction in September 2021 where the authority sold five mixed-use commercial plots for an area marked as Lahore Prime and the second auction for Lahore's first planned central Downtown was conducted in September 2022, authority sold seven mixed-use commercial plots. CBD Punjab has over 100 plus

plots situated in the heart of Lahore with an estimated potential of PKR 500+ billion.

CBD Punjab is currently undertaking several ongoing projects, including the remodeling of the main boulevard from Liberty to Kalma Chowk CBD Punjab Boulevard, planning of Lahore Grand Souk (1122 Site), Infrastructure development of phase I, Car Parking Plaza, and remodeling of Walton Road. The remodeling of the Kalma Chowk underpass project is almost complete with no PCI revision and soon will be fully functional for traffic

Caretaker Provincial Minister Housing Urban Development and Public Health Engineering, Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, was impressed with the progress of CBD Punjab and the

ongoing initiatives that will transform Lahore's economic landscape. He expressed his appreciation for CBD Punjab's commitment to sustainable development and revenue generation for the government, stating that the project would pave the way for Pakistan's economic growth.

CBD Punjab is also constructing the CBD Quaid district flyover, connecting the main boulevard to Walton Road and Bab-e-Pakistan. Other ongoing projects are Sirius Tallest Skyscraper of Punjab, Regalia Branded Residencies, Node Digital District, Runway Retail District, and Sano Medical District.

CBD Punjab is determined to establish Pakistan's first business district and put the country on the global economic map. The ongoing sustainable devel-

Sardar Attique appealed to Muslim Ummah to pray for the early liberation of Occupied Kashmir and Palestine

Abdul Majeed Tahir



MUZAFFARABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has appealed to the Muslim Ummah to pray for the early liberation of Occupied Kashmir and Palestine on the occasion of the auspicious day of

Friday Jammu tulwida. Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that the people of Kashmir and Palestine are constantly going through hardships. I pray that their suffering ends soon and one day they too can celebrate Eid in a free environment. On the one hand, Kashmiris are being targeted for demanding the right to self-determination and the population ratio has been changed to change the Muslim majority identity of the region. And on the other hand, the fault of the Indian Muslims is their belief in the religion of Islam and India is forcing the Kashmiris to chant "Jai Shri Ram" and "Hail Shri Ram". Sustainable peace in South Asia is related to the resolution of the conflict in Kashmir according to the resolutions of the United Nations and the aspirations of the Kashmiris.

Security forces officials met with tribal elders regarding peace in Sarveikai area



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: security forces officials met with elders and dignitaries in Sarveikai area of tribal district of Upper South Waziristan

On the occasion of the meeting, the regional situation was discussed that no area will be evacuated during the operation.

On this occasion, the tribal elders said that they will continue to cooperate with the security forces for peace, so as to improve the IT literacy rate in the area, more IT centers will be opened so that the people of the area can get employment opportunities.

The security forces made it clear that they should not allow Afghan terrorists to enter the area, which poses a great threat to the area, and should not shelter any miscreants.

The people in the area should keep an eye on the miscreants and ensure their cooperation with the local security forces authorities in this regard.

On this occasion, security forces officials said that talks are going on with the cellular company to provide mobile networks in the area, Inshallah, the network problem will be solved soon.

Meanwhile, the security forces officials distributed Eid gifts to the local people and tribal elders, the residents of the area thanked the security forces officials for giving the gifts.

The elders expressed their solidarity with the security forces authorities and said that they will not hesitate to make any sacrifices for the country and the area.

Rather, we all will work together to promote peace, prosperity and development in the entire area.

Anjuman Tajran Allied Group has host an Iftar dinner



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Tariq Qadri Senior Vice President Anjuman Tajran Allied Group has organized an Iftar dinner in the honor of the city's business community, social workers and civil workers of the administration in a local morquee in which Anjuman Tajran Cloth Board Alliance Group President Alhaj Sheikh Naseer Yousaf Vohra, DSP Police Station Sargoda Road and Nishatabad Touseef Khan, Mian Tanveer Riaz General Secretary Anjuman Tajran Punjab, Mian Yaseen President Developer Association, Chaudhry Zafar President Canal Road, Maher Shakeel. Vice President Punjab and others participated in the iftar dinner. On this occasion, Alhaj Sheikh Naseer Yousaf vohra has expressed his views and said that the situation in the country has taken a very critical turn if the businessmen and the people do not play their role in it, then we may picture the country like Iraq, Syria, Palestine. It might enter into a situation like Sri Lanka and Libya. Pakistan's army is considered to be the best army in the world. If ALLAH wills it, Pakistan's army and people will clean this country from dirty politics and take Pakistan on the real path of development. Tariq Qadri Senior Vice President Anjuman Tajran Allied Group has said to promote local industry, boycott imported goods. While Mian Tanvir Riaz General Secretary of Anjuman Tajran Punjab has said that going abroad brings foreign exchange, it should be taken positively. DSP Police Station Sargoda Road and Nishatabad Touseef Khan has said that the students should keep an eye on the situation in the country and do not despair of ALLAH's mercy. The development of Pakistan is possible through these youth.



Chief Secretary Muhammad Usman Chachar meets Prime Minister AJK Kh Farooq Ahmed at Muzaffarabad.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:06 am
Zohr 12:07 pm
Asr 4:48 pm
Maghrib 6:41 pm
Isha 8:09 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

The Holy Quran is the best guide for humanity says NA Speaker



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: While inaugurating the Exhibition of rare Manuscripts of The Holy Quran in connection with Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Constitution at Parliament House, Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that the Holy Quran is the best guide for

humanity and implementing its teaching in letter and spirit will lead all Muslim umma out of current socio-economic challenges. He also said that this Exhibition would make our next generation familiar with rich Islamic values and traditions. He added, "both Pakistan and Iran enjoy mutual ties based upon shared culture of Islamic values and traditions."

The Exhibition of rare manuscripts of the Holy Quran was organised by National Assembly Secretariat in collaboration with Iranian Consulate and Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies. Parliamentarians, Media Representatives, Students and large number of public witnessed the Exhibition. The exhibition was held in connection with Golden



Jubilee Celebration of Constitution and sacred Day of 27th Ramadan.

Iranian Ambassador in Pakistan Seyyed Muhammad Ali said that both Pakistan and Iran enjoys cordial mutual ties based upon shared Islamic culture and traditions. He also expressed his grati-

tude to Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf for extending cooperation to hold this exhibition.

Later on, in response to a query by Media Representatives Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that improving ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia

is pivotal for regional peace and progress. He said that recent positive developments in relations between both Iran and Saudi Arabia is good omen for Muslim world.

Photos by Raja Farid

The politics of revenge should be buried forever: Faisal Bhatti



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Faisal Anwar Bhatti, Central Deputy Secretary Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum has said that the country has suffered a lot in the battle of wild elephants and the people are suffering from poverty and inflation. If the country is there, then everything is there, so for the sake of the stability of Pakistan, the politics of revenge has to be buried forever. Faisal Anwar Bhatti said that national institutions need to review their role. He said that I ask those who are responsible for this crisis whether the cases of the people have ended or the Supreme Court does not want to give relief to the people. Has the fire of burning Kashmir been extinguished or has India's war frozen our veins? Have we completed the CPEC and now we don't care about the economy???

Please for the sake of God, and for the development of Pakistan, it is necessary that we move forward with constructive thinking. He said that I personally appreciate Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Siraj-ul-Haq's efforts for reconciliation between the two sides and fully support his efforts.

Birds flying back

ISLAMABAD: Passengers coming to the Faizabad bus station in Federal Capital to return home to spend their Eid-ul-Fitr holidays with their loved ones.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Journey of Construction and development in South Punjab should be accelerated: Balighur Rahman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has expressed his satisfaction over the effectiveness and performance of South Punjab Secretariat and has stress to take more steps to accelerate process of development in the region. He asked to review the establishment of endowment fund in colleges of South Punjab and to strictly implement law of compulsory teaching of Holy Quran in private schools. He said this while presiding over a meeting

on Tuesday in South Punjab Secretariat Bahawalpur. Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar briefed the Governor Punjab about the performance of South Punjab Secretariat.

Administrative Secretaries of South Punjab were also present in the meeting. Governor Punjab asked Secretary Primary and Secondary Health Care South Punjab to report within two days about the functioning of dialysis machines in all hospitals. Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman also asked to direct the staff in all the Union

Councils of South Punjab to facilitate the visiting citizens in a more better manner. Governor Punjab issued instructions to complete the Motorway Jhangara Link Road by June 30 this year and said that in case of lack of funds for the link road, he will personally talk to the Punjab government. He said the issues of blockage of sewage lines in Bahawalpur city be resolved permanently. The Governor of Punjab praised the management of Bahawalpur Waste Management Company for its excellent performance. Additional

Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar, in his briefing, said that the establishment of South Punjab Secretariat has accelerated the process of development in the region and it was a matter of pride that unique projects have been started in various fields. He said, in the budget of new financial year, the South Punjab Secretariat is expected to get more financial autonomy, which will enable the administrative secretaries to issue budgets to the subordinate institutions. This step will make the monitoring system more effective, he concluded.

Senator Naseebullah Bazai meets DG Census



Raja Furqan Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Senator Naseebullah Bazai met Director General Census (Admn) Dr Amjad Javaid Sandhu in Islamabad. According to the details, Senator Naseebullah Bazai discussed the ongoing census. During the meeting, Bazai said that the population of Quetta has decreased as compared to the previous census. Meanwhile, DG assured Senator Naseebullah Bazai that his team will look into this matter and promised to extend the Census date. Earlier, the Statistics Bureau of Pakistan (SBP) extended the date of the digital census till April 20 (Thursday). SBP Spokesperson said the digital census was extended till April 20th. SBP Chief Statistician Naacem Al Zafar said 99 per cent of the census work is completed in Punjab while 98 per cent of census work is completed in Sindh and 82 per cent of work is completed in the country's largest province Balochistan. Zafar said 100 per cent of work has been completed in Azad Jammu Kashmir A(JK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). "90 per cent of the work has been completed in 131 out of 156 districts," Naacem Al Zafar said.

Metro donates PKR 1 million to the Citizens Foundation



Bureau Report

LAHORE: METRO Pakistan the leading international wholesale company, donates Rs. 1 Million to The Citizens Foundation as part of its Care & Share Program. This initiative was led by METRO's Employee Well-Being CFT with the aim of supporting quality low-cost education in the country.

Sharing his thoughts, Ms Zahra Hussain, Director Human Resource Metro said, "Pakistan has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children in the world and that is primarily due to lack of availability of low-cost quality education. METRO, being a socially responsible organization, is diligently supporting the cause of child education. For this we have partnered with TCF, which has built schools in the heart of rural population, providing quality education through their 30,000-strong all-female teaching staff."

TCF is a non-profit organization and one of Pakistan's largest privately owned networks of low-cost formal schools. The foundation operates a network of 1,833 school units, educating 280,000 students.

METRO and TCF also agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for launching further initiatives through mutual collaboration to support child education and development.

Hina Mansab condemns Roots International School for charging Cambridge Exams fees early

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Like traditional private schools, Roots International School Richmond Branch has also started charging fees early from parents showing stubbornness. Although the fee has been collected until April as per the earlier statement, now it is being demanded to deposit the fee until August. Students are being blackmailed by threatening not to handover the Statement of Entry (SOE is required in order to be seated in the exams which start around EID-ul-Fitar), despite already collecting Cambridge Exams fees. According to the parents, there are still four months left for the new session to start, but the Roots International School management is pressuring the parents to deposit the advance fees immediately in trade for SOEs.

Diabetes and blood pressure are among the major causes of kidney diseases

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Diabetes and blood pressure are among the major causes of kidney diseases. It is evident that high consumption of sugary drinks is one of the major causes of diabetes. If we want to reduce the kidney diseases, we need to reduce the use of sugary drinks from our day to day life. This was said in a program organized by Pakistan Kidney Patients Welfare Association at a local hotel in Islamabad. Those who participated in the event were Chairman Pakistan Kidney Patients Welfare Association Dr. Zahir ud din, Technical advisor PKPWA Brig. Shehzad, Secretary PKPWA Col. Sardar Khan, health and policy experts, civil society and media.

Dr. Zahir ud din said that kidney diseases are increasing day by day in



Pakistan at an alarming level. There are different reasons of kidney diseases but our diet plays a very important role in these diseases. Excessive use of sugarsalt and ultra processed foods has important role in kidney diseases. We need to avoid using sugary drinks from our life if we want to reduce diabetes

and blood pressure that are among the major causes of kidney diseases. According to a meta analysis of different studies in 2020 & 2021, daily use of one small glass of sugary drinks increase the risk of diabetes by 19% and blood pressure by 10%. This ultimately increases the risk of kidney

diseases. Government shall take policy actions to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy drinks. An evident based policy action is to increase the tax on these unhealthy drinks. In many countries when they increased tax on sugary drinks, the consumption of these drinks decreased significantly. We demand government of Pakistan to increase taxes on these drinks to minimum of 50%. This will help decreasing the kidney diseases when consumption of these drinks will reduce.

Other speakers also emphasized the government to take immediate policy measures to reduce the fast growing kidney diseases. They said that imposition of higher taxes on SSBs will not only reduce the disease burden but will also give additional revenue to government that can be used on health care activities.

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Death Anniversary of General Ayub Khan

The nation of Pakistan could never forget April 19, 2023 the death anniversary of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khana five-star general officer who was serving as the second President of Pakistan From 1958 until his forced resignation in 1969. Ayub Khan's eldest son Gohar Ayub Khan was Pakistan's Foreign Minister in the Nawaz Sharif government and his grandson Omar Ayub Khan was briefly Pakistan's Minister of State for Finance. His daughter Begum Nasim Aurangzeb was married to Miangul Aurangzeb, the Wali of Swat. Nowadays his grandson Omar Ayub Khan has a very staunch position in Pakistan Tehreek Insaf who was a cabinet member of former Prime Minister Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan. Ayub Khan was born on 14 May 1907 in the village of Rehana in the Haripur District of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Ayub Khan was enrolled in a school in Sarai Saleh for his basic education. He enrolled at Aligarh Muslim University in 1922, but did not complete his studies there, as he was accepted into the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Ayub Khan embraced private-sector industrialization and free-market principles, making the country one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. He built several infrastructure projects, including canals, dams and power stations, and began Pakistan's space programme. Ayub's reign also saw increasing political tensions in East Pakistan. In 1960, he held an indirect referendum of his term in power.

yes or no to the question by winning 95.6% of the vote to formalise new system. Ayub Khan moved to have a constitution created, and this was completed in 1961. Ayub Khan introduced the Muslim Family Laws through an Ordinance on 2 March 1961 under which unmitigated polygamy was abolished, consent of the current wife was made mandatory for a second marriage, brakes were also placed on the practice of instant divorce. The Arbitration Councils set up under the law in the urban and rural areas were to deal with cases of family matters. His economic policies were based on the model of capitalism and followed the Free-market economics principles, industrialization that took place in his term is often regarded as "Great Decade" in the history of the country (both economical and political history).

The "Great Decade" was celebrated, which highlighted the development plans executed during the years of Ayub's rule, the private consortium companies, industries and credited with creating an environment where the private sector was encouraged to establish medium and small-scale industries in Pakistan. This opened up avenues for new job opportunities and thus the economic graph of the country started rising. He also introduced new curricula and books for schools. Many schools and colleges were constructed during his time. He also introduced agricultural reforms according to which no one could occupy land less than 12.5 acres

(500 irrigated land and 1000 unirrigated.) An oil refinery in Karachi was set up, and these reforms led to 15% GNP of the country that was three times greater than that of India. Despite the increase in the GNP the profit and revenue was gained by the 22 families that controlled 66% of the industries and land of the country and 80% of the banking and insurance of Pakistan.

The education reforms were steadily improved, and scientific efforts were at a rising level during his years, leading the world-acclaim of Pakistan where his image was regarded more positively. This policy could not be followed for a long time after 1965, the economy collapsed and the economic decline which he was unable to control. He subsidized fertilizers and modernized agriculture through irrigation development, spurred industrial growth with liberal tax benefits. In the decade of his rule, gross national product rose by 45% and manufactured goods began to overtake such traditional exports as jute and cotton. He shunned prestige projects and stressed birth control in a country that has the seventh largest population in the world: 115 million. He dismissed criticism with the comment that if there was no family planning, the time would surely come when "Pakistanis eat Pakistanis. Aggravating an already bad situation, with increasing economic disparity in the country under his rule, hoarding and manipulation by major sugar manufacturers resulted in the controlled price of 1 kg sugar to be

increased by 1 rupee and the whole population took to the streets. As Ayub's popularity plummeted, he decided in 1969 to give up rule.

Ayub Khan had moved the capital from Karachi to Rawalpindi, in anticipation of the construction of a new capital: Islamabad. In 1960, Khan's government signed the Indus Waters Treaty with archival India to resolve disputes regarding the sharing of the waters of the six rivers in the Punjab Doab that flow between the two countries. Khan's administration also built a major network of irrigation canals, high-water dams and thermal and hydroelectric power stations. Ayub Khan adopted an energetic approach toward economic development that soon bore fruit in a rising rate of economic growth. Land reform, consolidation of holdings, and stern measures against hoarding were combined with rural credit programs and work programs. The turning point in his rule was the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, and it ended in a settlement reached by Ayub at Tashkent, called the Tashkent Declaration. The settlement was perceived negatively by many Pakistanis and led Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to resign his post and take up opposition to Khan. In 1971 when war broke out, Ayub Khan was in West Pakistan. He presented himself for fighting in war but the government turned him down on account of his age and ill-health. He did not comment on the events of the war. He lost his breath on 19 April 1974 but the nation will ever remember his good deeds and social-development policies.

Writer is Senior Journalist based at *Attack*



Analysis

Qazi Shoaib Khan

Functioning as a kind of electoral college, close to 80,000 recently elected village councilmen were allowed to vote

Hindu leaders' blasphemous words for Baitullah: Not acceptable

In another Islamophobic diatribe, Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati, a Hindu militant priest, notorious for hate-mongering and misogynist speeches, has once again spit venom against Muslims, now urging his followers to attack Makkah and seize Kaaba.

"Hindu Rashtra is a dream, we will not only capture but also Makkah... Mahadev's Ganga flows in the form of Zam Zam there," he said adding, "If you don't capture the Makkeshwar Mandir (Kaaba), no power on earth can defeat Islam," Narsinghanand said in a video being viral on social media.

The priest is no stranger to controversy as earlier had called Muslims "demons", threatened to "eliminate" them and said he is striving to create an India "free of Islam".

"Our goal is not only to take over Afghanistan, but also to conquer Makkah," the priest said in the video. He claimed that the holy Zam Zam water belongs to their deity.

In the recent past, he was booked and arrested for insulting women after a video of him describing female politicians as mistresses of their male counterparts went viral.

According to the media reports, the top BJP officials, particularly Kapil Mishra, who has a close relationship with Narsinghanand, are actively promoting the trends that support him. Kapil Mishra had previously launched a fundraising campaign for Narsinghanand's goal to "remove Islam and Muslims from the face of the Earth."

In April of last year, he and other hate mongers were arrested for making hate speeches at a "Hindu Mahapanchayat" that "50 percent of Hindus will convert" in 20 years if a Muslim becomes the country's prime minister, as per media reports.

The Narsinghanand's video has drawn anger from Muslims from across the globe. Many have marked his speech as "hate speech" for inciting violence against Islam and Muslims calling for an apology to the Muslims. Many others also called upon the Indian government to take a strict legal action against the repeat offender. Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, in a tweet strongly condemned the threat of an attack on Makkatul Mukarrama by a "Hindu terrorist". Any attempt targeting the soil of Harmain Sharifain will be forcefully thwarted," he wrote on Twitter.

"He is the famous Hindu priest Yati Narsinghanand. He urged his Hindu followers to attack the global Islamic religious center Kaaba and turn it into the Hindu Makkeshwar Maharaj temple, claiming Zamzam water is Ganga Makkah. Never arrested for hate speech," tweeted a user Shameela.

"Therefore, if any leader, regardless of their religious or political affiliation, incites violence or hatred against any community, they could face legal action. Did Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati just hint at an Indian invasion of Saudi Arabia? wrote the manager of the Twitter handle Saffron Diaries.

India showing its hate on Islam and Muslims, burning of houses of Muslim families, and Masjids was on going for the past days and now this extremist Hindutva priest showing it extremist thoughts about Holy place of Muslims," Zoha wrote on Twitter.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is seeking for Nooruddin Zangi (R.A) and Salahuddin Ayubi (R.A) - II

The Holy Prophet ﷺ took a walk from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa on the night of Ascension, and the strange wisdom is that this walk started from Masjid al-Haram, which is the first mosque built on earth, and the final destination of this earthly walk was Masjid al-Aqsa. This is the second mosque to be built on earth. In this way, two Qiblas and their virtues were collected for the Prophet ﷺ and with this, there is also an indication that he ﷺ is the last of the Prophets.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is the only auspicious place where the greatest gathering in human history took place. More or less 125000 prophets, that is, from Hazrat Adam, (peace be upon him), to our Prophet Muhammad, ﷺ. All the prophets have Offered prayer in Imamate of Muhammad ﷺ. In which there was a message that this Prophet ﷺ is the Imam of all the Prophets and it was also a message that now the caliphate and

inheritance of this blessed place is being entrusted to the Ummah Muhammadiyah. Now the religion will be accepted that which was brought by Muhammad ﷺ and whoever enters his ummah will be successful.

Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestine problem is not only the problem of the people of Palestine, but it is an Islamic problem and cause, and since its keys were handed over to Sayyiduna Hazrat Umar (RA), by this right of all the Muslims of the world has been attached to it. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the religious heritage of Muslims. Therefore, its leadership should also be in the hands of Muslims. The encouragements of the Prophet ﷺ were also present on him and he ﷺ instilled his love in the hearts of his Companions (RA). Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ also

gave them the good news of the conquest of Bayt al-Maqdis. Hazrat Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: A person who prays in his house has the same reward as one prayer, and his tribe the reward of praying in a mosque is equal to twenty-five prayers, and in a mosque where Friday is offered, the reward of praying there is equal to five hundred prayers, and the reward of praying in Al-Aqsa Mosque is equal to fifty thousand prayers. And the reward of praying in my mosque, Masjid Nabwi is equal to fifty thousand prayers, and the reward of praying in Masjid Haram is equal to the reward of one hundred thousand prayers. Even today, the first Qibla of Muslims looks towards rulers like Nooruddin Zangi (RA) and Muja-

Analysis



Javed Ullah Raja

hids like Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi (RA). Because since the day when Palestine and Israel separated, the aggression of Jews and Israeli forces on Muslims is not ending. Today, the apathy of Arab and Muslim countries rulers is sealed that whenever the holy month of Ramadan comes, Israel does provocation to Muslims. Even on the occasion of this Ramadan, Muslims are being prevented from praying in Al-Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli forces and attacks are also being carried out on Lebanon, but the Muslim Ummah is silent.

The sayings of Allah and the Prophet ﷺ are enough to awaken the importance of Al-Aqsa Mosque to the Muslim rulers and the entire Muslim Ummah. The first Qibla of Muslims today calls for the rulers of the Muslim Ummah to gather on one platform to establish an independent Palestinian state based on the principle of self-determination for Palestine.

Concluded

G20 members' willingness to Srinagar meeting lending legitimacy to India's brutal actions in Kashmir - II

Shaikh Yaqoob

What phenomenon had all through these decades been most humiliating and painful was the unyielding indifference and apathy of the free world and the UN as it stood a silent spectator to this gory spectacle of state repression and terrorism.

With the advent of the "Butcher of Gujrat", things took turn for the worst and the world witnessed the modern era's worst communal and expansionist regime unleashing tyranny and worst form of state terrorism nonstop, and emboldened by the silence and apathy of the democratic world this wicked expansionist urge ultimately, culminated on August 5, 2019, in the colonization of Kashmir through colonial legislations that stripped the occupied state of its individual historical identity and bifurcated it into two territories to be directly ruled by Delhi as union territories.

And yet the UN and the free civilised world remained tight-lipped and unconcerned which was tantamount to sanctioning this illegitimate Indian annexation and merger of the disputed state with the universally established and recognised principles of equality and justice, and the lofty ideals of freedom, liberty and human rights the casualty.

How hideous and unfair it is that all human values that the civilised world boasted of upholding and championing were sacrificed at the altar of material desires and pursuits. India now is contemptuously smiling at our helplessness as it is gearing to host the upcoming G20 summit this year. And what else one could infer from the reported willingness and consent of the G20 member states to participate in a summit meeting proposed to be held on the soil of the occupied territory of Kashmir other than their complicity in the occupation, oppression and colonization of Kashmir? Were these states, one may ask, ready to condone the mass massacres, carnages, egregious human rights excesses and the unremitting persecution of the poor Kashmiris and lend legitimacy to the August 5 unilateral Indian measures of colonising the territory and its inhabitants?

We make a passionate appeal to the G20 member states not to grant such evil Indian wish, committing treachery against the defenceless subjugated people of the state and your own sublime human values and ideals you claim to uphold and stand for.

And as it was not enough, the conduct of the United Nations, the G20 countries are part of, which unflinchingly prides itself in upholding and proclaiming the principle of "equality and self-determination of people's" as the basis of international peace and its very raison d'être

(Art. 1(2) of its Charter) was to add more pain and agony to our oppressed lives. Let us Kashmiris be very candid and straight forward with this August Institution and the world fraternity and make it plain and clear in unambiguous terms that we won't ever abandon our legitimate and noble resistance against this colonial occupation and rule of our motherland and warn the world that its criminal silence was a precursor of the worst nightmare for the region and the world at large as Kashmir was a powderkeg and a nuclear flashpoint and if left unaddressed could anytime explode into a cataclysmic conflagration reducing to ashes all fabric of regional and global peace security and trigger a human catastrophe of unimaginable proportions.

Therefore, we appeal to the UN and the democratic and civilised world to shun their apathy and intervene to resolve this longest unresolved item of the UN agenda to defeat and deny colonial mindsets of tearing the world peace and humanity through any expeditions or invasions upon the universally accepted norms of democracy, self-determination, freedom, liberty, equality and justice that characterize the most celebrated global document, the UN Charter. Kashmir seeks world attention!

Concluded
 Shaikh Yaqoob is senior leader APHC can be reached at.....Abuyaqoob2012@gmail.com

IS Made in Pakistan Aircraft and Drones

Outcome of the students' dynamic approach and creative skills

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: A generation of engineers and students are engaged in efforts to create civil drones for Pakistan. The last two decades have reshaped the technological landscape of the world and the digital revolution has evolved and expanded exponentially. The civilian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or drone has gone through a silent but drastic evolution of its own. Many institutes are pushing their students to make innovations with drones, and the students are doing wonders.

Team Swift, comprising students of different engineering disciplines at Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology, is a group of talented and innovative individuals who are geared up and ready to compete in the AUVSI SUAS Competition 2023 in Maryland, USA.

The AUVSI-SUAS competition is the premier unmanned aerial vehicle competition for students that



is held each year at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The competition requires students to design, integrate, report on, and demonstrate a UAS capable of autonomous flight and navigation, remote sensing via onboard payload

sensors, and execution of a specific set of tasks. It develops industry partnerships through mentors, panels, and faculty who have experience with UAVs.

With a passion for designing and manufacturing state-of-the-art

unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the team Swift led by Huzaifa Ansari has already created six successful drones, including a quadcopter that delivers medicine to remote areas under the name of Made in Pakistan.

Aside from their accomplishments

in creating functional UAVs, Team Swift is also dedicated to showcasing their creations through airshows, demonstrating their versatility in various industrial applications. The team's members are continuously pushing their limits and explor-

ing new frontiers in UAV design and application.

Furthermore, the team takes great pride in their inclusivity, with female members taking the lead in creating an aircraft for International Women's Day. This aircraft, along with their purpose-built UAV flown on Pakistan Resolution Day, is a testament to the team's commitment to innovation and excellence.

With their extensive experience and expertise in UAV design and implementation, Team Swift of the GIK Institute is poised to make a lasting impact in the AUVSI SUAS Competition 2023 and beyond.

Sharing his experience of trials and errors, the team leader Huzaifa Ansari said, "It was really a challenging task. With a series of tests and errors, correcting ourselves, and finding solutions, ultimately we successfully achieved the target. It was a product of passion and dedication. This experience has allowed me to network with employers in my industry and develop my problem-solving skills."

Manuscripts of Quran

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci taking keen interest in "Manuscripts of Quran" during exhibition in Iranian Embassy at National Assembly in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Uzbekistan shows interest to invest in E-Commerce, trade, industry in Pakistan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Uzbek Ambassador to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov, called on Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on Tuesday and shown keen interest to invest in E-Commerce, trade and industry in Pakistan

During the meeting, Syed Naveed Qamar acknowledged the enormous potential for trade between the two countries and said that there was a need to identify new sectors for cooperation.

He assured the Ambassador of his full support and cooperation to explore avenues for mutual investments to meet actual potential of the trade and appreciated the Ambassador's efforts to enhance bilateral trade.

The Ambassador expressed his interest in trade, industry, and e-commerce sectors and emphasized the need to take more practical steps to meet the 1 billion action plan between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

He said bilateral trade relations had shown a positive trend, and trade data of FY 2021-22 reflects a growth of nearly USD 91 million (with exports amounting to USD 57 million)

Whereas Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan have doubled from US \$36.56million in July-March FY 2021-22 to US \$73.12million during July-March FY 2022-23.

He also agreed with the minister that if we could remove unwanted barriers then the trade volume could touch the 5 billion very easily.

The Ambassador also acknowledged and appreciated the Minister's efforts for recent consolidation among political parties to bring them all on the negotiation table.

The two sides agreed to continue working closely together to identify opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, and other sectors.

The UN Refugee Agency organized an Iftar dinner

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The purpose of the Iftar dinner was to have close coordination with the UNHCR and journalists and strengthened the relations with media partners.

Ms. Aoife McDonnell, UNHCR's External Relations Officer appreciates the efforts and hard work of the journalists/correspondence, who are always willing to report on humanitarian works and highlighting refugee issues and plight and are ready to be available for reporting on the humanitarian cause.

More than 30 journalists, photographers, and camera-person participated in the Iftar dinner.

The journalists also thanked and appreciated the UNHCR for hosting an Iftar dinner.

Chaudhary Abdul Karim organized Iftar party

Arif Choudhary

MANCHESTER: Prominent UK and Manchester political entrepreneur Chaudhary Abdul Karim and his son Chaudhary Property Chief Executive Chaudhary Faisal Karim organized an Iftar party in honor of Greater Manchester's Pakistani Kashmiri community at a local restaurant in Manchester, which included Member of Parliament Shadow Minister Afzal Khan Pakistan, Consul General Tariq Wazir-Commercial Trade Secretary Chaudhary Akhtar, Chairman of Pakistan Community Center Manchester Chaudhary Haroon Akhtar Khatana, other leading figures and a large number of commu-

nity participated in the Consulate.-Former Superintendent Jail Chaudhary Azam-Honorary Commercial Trade Advisor to the Government of Pakistan in Italy Shahr Yar Khan Former Candidate for European Parliament Chaudhary Aslam-Owais Chauhan-Chaudhary Akhtar Malwana-Chaudhary Adeel Chaudhary Rasib Khan-Chairman PTS Mian Amjad-Former Lord Mayor of Manchester Abid Chauhan, President of PTI, Malik Imran Khalil, Former President, Rana Abdul Sattar, President of Muslim League-N North West, Raja Sajjad Hussain, Business personalities Chaudhar Sarwar-Chaudhry Mansha-were among those who participated in the honor of reciting



the Holy Quran. On this occasion, the host Chaudhary Abdul Karim and Chaudhary Faisal Karim thanked all the guests and said that for many years we have been gathering all our friends, businessmen and political personalities in the holy month of Ramadan. This series will continue in the future- Member of British Parliament

Shadow Minister Afzal Khan and former member of British Parliament Faisal Rasheed said that people from every sector of Greater Manchester participated in the Iftar party. Consul General Tariq Wazir has given a message of love and unity to the community. The message was given by PTI president Malik Imran Khal-

il and former president businessman Rana Abdul Sattar said that every year Chaudhary Abdul Kareem brings together all the communities in Ramadan, which increases mutual love. West President Raja Sajjad Hussain and entrepreneur Chaudhry Sarwar said that Chaudhary Abdul Karim has gathered everyone together and made a garland of flowers. The community is proud of him.

The efforts made by Chaudhry Abdul Karim and Chaudhry Faisal Karim to bring together the entire community of Greater Manchester on one platform and educate them about the virtues and importance of the month of Ramadan is commendable and enviable.

TIC session to shine spotlight on industry financing at ATM 2023

News Desk

DUBAI: Industry experts will gather in the UAE to discuss sustainable decision-making and financing during the International Tourism & Investment Conference (ITIC) Middle East Tourism Investment Session at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from Monday 1 to Thursday 4 May.

Saudi Arabia is leading the GCC's tourism development activities with a pipeline of 100,071 hotel rooms, according to data released by STR. Dubai is the region's second most active market with 27,095 rooms under contract, followed by Qatar (17,145), Oman (10,292), Bahrain (3,452) and Kuwait (1,369). In total, there are 159,424 pipeline rooms under contract in the Gulf

at present. Related opportunities and challenges will be placed under the microscope throughout ATM 2023, thanks to a range of panel discussions and events related to industry financing. In addition to the ITIC panels, this year's show will feature sessions highlighting industry-critical issues such as travel tech investment, the contemporary geopolitical landscape, urban regeneration, future markets, space tourism and more. Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "With nearly 160,000 hotel rooms under development across the GCC, this region is undoubtedly a global hotspot for industry investment right now. Thanks to the participation of ITIC and a host of other finance-related sessions, ATM 2023 represents the ideal forum

for travel, tourism and hospitality professionals from around the world to explore the latest investment opportunities and novel financing models with some of the biggest names in our sector."

Taking place on day three of ATM 2023, the ITIC Tourism Investment Session: Making Sustainable Decisions will feature insights from an array of industry experts. The sessions will begin with a tourism economic outlook for 2023 from Gerald Lawless, Director of ITIC Ltd, Invest Tourism Ltd and Ambassador for the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

ATM 2023's ITIC sessions will conclude with an interview with Elizabeth Maclean, Co-Managing Director of Herdwick Communications, and Dr Lubna Bader Salim Al Mazroei, Manager - Economic Diversifica-

tion Investments at Oman Investment Authority, during which the two will discuss growing opportunities for women across the Middle East's tourism industry.

The 30th edition of the show will also feature 'Plug and Play: Sustainable Tech - Startups Pitch Battle', which will see seven entrepreneurs pitch their innovative solutions in front of a panel of independent industry experts at ATM 2023's brand-new Sustainability Hub. This year's judges will include Natalie Seatter, Chief Product Officer at OAG; Jalil Mekouar, Founder and CEO of inHovate Solutions; Kristi Choi, EarlyStage Tech Investor at Plug and Play; Winnie Chiu, President of Dorset Hospitality International; and Essam AlZahrani, Tourism Startup Studio Programme Manager at Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism. The winning start-



up will receive a range of industry support, including access to Plug and Play's Startup Accelerator cohort and exhibition space at ATM 2024.

ATM 2023 is held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre and its strategic partners include Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) as

the Destination Partner, Emirates as the Official Airline Partner, IHG Hotels & Resorts as the Official Hotel Partner and Al Rais Travel as the Official DMC Partner.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
40,448.05	40,246.67
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,484.29	40,221.08
Index Value	Change
1,854,729,623	+201.38
Percentage	Time
+0.5%	18 Apr, 2023 1:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,909.44	+29.93
Percentage	Time
+0.38%	18 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,961.50	-25.68
Percentage	Time
-0.07%	18 Apr, 1:04 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
28,658.83	+144.05
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	18 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	189	191
Bahrain Dinar	755.96	763.96
Canadian Dollar	210.5	212.5
China Yuan	41.9	42.3
Danish Krone	42.7	43.1
Euro	310	313.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.66	37.01
Indian Rupee	3.49	3.6
Japanese Yen	2.15	2.2
Kuwaiti Dinar	926.44	935.44
Malaysian Ringgit	64.96	65.56
New Zealand \$	176.41	178.41
Norwegians Krone	27.93	28.23
Omani Riyal	739.05	747.05
Qatari Riyal	78.6	79.3
Saudi Riyal	75.7	76.4
Singapore Dollar	210.5	212.5
Swedish Korona	27.32	27.62
Swiss Franc	318.14	320.64
Thai Bhat	8.33	8.48
U.A.E Dirham	77.5	78.3
UK Pound Sterling	354.5	358
US Dollar	287	289.5

Zong 4G's Initiative to Promote Women Empowerment in Pakistan

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD : Zong 4G, one of the leading telecom operators in Pakistan, has joined hands with Pakistan Bait ul Maal (PBM) to create an opportunity that is truly empowering and inspiring for women in remote areas of Pakistan.

Together, Zong 4G and PBM launched an initiative to promote women's empowerment and create employment opportunities for women who often have limited access to economic opportunities. As part of this initiative, more than 130 talented women from 14 PBM Women Empowerment Centers (WECs) spread across some of the remotest areas of Pakistan hand-stitched and embroidered cloth sleeves for Zong 4G's 2023 Sustainability Reports.

This initiative is not only showcasing women's artistic talent but also promoting Pakistan's rich cultural heritage. These women, enrolled in the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal's women empowerment center, were given a chance to earn money and support their families while exhibiting their skills. Zong's initiative not only promotes the work of these women, but



also serves as a symbol of their commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

The embroidered sleeves created by these talented women showcase their skills and

creativity and carry a special sentimental value. Zong 4G used these cloth sleeves for their Annual Sustainability Reports and it not only highlights the importance of empowering

women in their community but also provides a platform for their work to be appreciated and recognized.

For the readers and recipients of the report, these sleeves represent a powerful message of hope, resilience, and progress. They serve as a reminder that small actions can have a big impact on people's lives, and that by supporting women's empowerment initiatives; we can help build stronger and more sustainable communities.

Zong's official spokesperson commented, "We are proud to partner with PBM to provide opportunities to talented and deserving women. Our company believes that every woman has the potential to fulfill her potential and contribute to the society, and we are committed to breaking down the barriers that prevent women from doing so. This partnership is an important step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society."

The partnership between Zong 4G and PBM is a step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society in Pakistan. By promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, Zong 4G and PBM set a positive example and inspire others to do the same.

Purchasing

ISLAMABAD : People buying watermelons from a vendor at a weekly bazaar in the Federal Capital.



Photo: APP

TPL life signs with hello doctor to expand its app-based Telehealth platform

By Commerce Report

KARACHI: TPL Life, Pakistan's fastest-growing insurtech, signed a 'memorandum of association' with Hello Doctor, a subsidiary of the Rehability UK group. The partnership aims to establish convenient bridges of communication and access between doctors and patients via the TPL Life app.

On occasion, Mr Saad Nissar, chief executive officer of TPL Life, said, "We, as a torchbearer for life and health insurance innovation in Pakistan, are always working towards developing & onboarding state-of-the-art solutions that can either create or increase value for customers. This collaboration between the two entities is another such initiative by TPL Life to continue on its journey for creating and increasing value for our customers."



Mr Umair Khalid, Chief Operating Officer of Hello Doctor, said that the need for high quality, international stan-

dards, efficient and cost-effective primary and preventive healthcare as a single patient journey on the mobile phone had been Hello Doctor's aspiration for the past few years. "we are so proud to have partnered with an organization with the same passion and aspiration that we have on driving change in the health of the people in Pakistan," he said.

During the signing ceremony, Mr Saad Nissar, CEO of TPL Life, and Mr Umair Khalid, COO HD, were accompanied by Mr Humayoon Asghar, Chief Strategy & Retail Officer of TPL Life, along with senior management from both alliances.

About TPL Life: TPL Life is Pakistan's 1st Life & Health InsurTech that offers an extensive suite of life and health solutions. We are committed to delivering quality financial care to every Pakistani via our insurance solutions that are: innovative, simple, affordable, convenient, accessible, and yet empowering.

IMF continues to ignore many distressed countries

By Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Tuesday said the IMF is sitting on more than 1000 billion dollars but it is constantly ignoring many poor countries that are stuck in difficulties.

The policies of the lender are affecting its influence and reputation, and many countries are not listening to it, he said.

Saifuddin Sheikh said that despite massive capital, the international organisation is ignoring many countries that are asking for one to three billion dollars, which is reducing confidence in

this institution. The IMF continues to alter its conditions for loans for political gains; therefore, it would be better to call it the Western Monetary Fund instead of the International Monetary Fund because it has focused on the development of western countries.

The business leader said that many countries are frustrated with the IMF and are now looking to China for loans.

Currently, 65 countries have to return 15 percent of their external debt to China. And in the case of Pakistan, about 30 percent of its external debt is taken from China, which is

increasing. He said that the IMF never presses poor countries to raise taxes on the privileged class; it always targets the common man. The IMF has been subject to a range of criticisms, generally focused on the conditions of its loans; it has also been criticised for its lack of accountability and willingness to lend to countries that are known for corruption of rulers and wastage of funds.

The IMF always stresses reducing government borrowing, increasing taxes and interest rates, and lowering spending. It also calls for allowing failing firms to go bankrupt. Its structural adjustment, privatisation,

and deregulation have seldom worked as expected.

He recalled that during the Asian crisis of 1997, many countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand were required by the IMF to pursue tight monetary and fiscal policies to reduce their budget deficits and strengthen exchange rates.

However, these policies caused a serious recession with very high levels of unemployment in these countries, which was a failure of the lender.

He noted that it is very difficult for a country to develop under the IMF's umbrella, which is why the number of countries that take help from it is reducing.

A sustainable economic agenda is needed to bring Pakistan out of the current crisis: Vohra

By Mian Rashid Asghar



FAISALABAD: Alhaj Sheikh Naseer Yousaf Vohra President Central Cloth Board Itihad Group has expressed that Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) in collaboration of other chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan must formulate a sustained economic agenda to drag out Pakistan from the prevailing crisis in consultation with all stakeholders.

He highlighted that after 9/11 internal as well as external turmoil inflicted major shock to the fragile economy of Pakistan and we are still experiencing its ill impacts. He further said adding that external factors are beyond our control but we could eliminate political uncertainty in addition to creating much needed consensus on the charter of economy and in this connection FPCCI will have to take an appropriate comprehensive steps to consult the stakeholders and business community from all over the country & take offshore in confidence.

He feared that drop in GDP and unprecedented rise in unemployment might create the worst law and order situation in the country during 2023. He elaborated that in order to control the situation, the business community must pool its energies and pressurize the government to

formulate viable, result oriented and reliable policies for the sustained economic growth in the best interest of the nation and country. Vohra clarified that, let's make a serious effort from the platform of all CCI to evolve consensus on important economic issues among the local trade bodies but in view of the gravity of the situation such efforts must be made at the federation and national levels.

On government level we need to take initiatives to create consensus on the charter of economy but said that political parties and influential circles might also be taken on board so that the economic agenda could not be affected due to regime change or political confrontation. Vohra also dwelt at length on prudent policy measures to minimize the import of fuel, fixing business hours and privatization of loss-making State-Owned Entities (SOE) these would be incorporated in the proposed draft of the charter of economy, on the formulation of economic policies.

foodpanda launches pandago



By Commerce Desk

KARACHI : foodpanda, Pakistan's leading delivery platform, proudly introduces pandago for consumers, an innovative on-demand delivery service tailored to cater to the evolving needs of consumers. Initially an exclusive B2B service, pandago now extends its benefits to C2C deliveries, granting users seamless access to foodpanda's extensive rider fleet for affordable, anytime deliveries. Launching initially in Karachi, pandago has its sights set on Lahore and Islamabad for expansion very soon.

pandago's commitment to prompt deliveries makes it the go-to solution for urgent parcels, including perishable items and crucial documents. To request a foodpanda rider, customers simply need to update their foodpanda app, click on the "pandago" tile, and take advantage of the real-time tracking feature to

stay updated on their delivery status.

Muntaqa Peracha, CEO of foodpanda Pakistan, shares the company's vision: "We understand that delivery is central to people's lives now, and with pandago, we hope to make our customers' lives easier and more convenient. pandago C2C is a valuable addition to our logistics infrastructure, enabling us to provide an effortless and reliable service for parcel deliveries. With our extensive rider fleet and round-the-clock availability, customers can rely on us for their deliveries at any time of the day."

pandago has empowered small and medium enterprises to manage delivery costs effectively by only spending when necessary. With the expansion of pandago to C2C deliveries, all users can now experience the advantages of this user-friendly and dependable on-demand delivery service.

PCB to play its part in reducing carbon emission

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board will use its reach to create awareness about the need to reduce carbon emission by joining hands with Minus2Degrees (M2D).

As part of its corporate social responsibility, the PCB will promote practices that encourage recycling during cricket events with the aim of achieving net zero carbon emission.

The first step towards this cause will see the PCB and M2D plant as many as a thousand trees on Lahore's famous Canal road.

Over the course of the next two years, the PCB will benefit from the M2D's research on bringing down the carbon emission and will adopt recommended practices for the betterment of environment that will help the sport and Pakistan cricket fans at large.

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Mr Najam Sethi: "The climate change is a real threat to our existence



and it is extremely important that we play a role in create awareness about the need to reduce carbon emission.

"Cricket is the most loved and followed sport in the country and we have signed a MoU with Minus2Degrees

to use the game's reach for a cause that will benefit this and the future generations.

"The PCB has always been a supporter of eco-friendly campaigns and we will support M2D in this cause. Together,

we can make changes and contribute to our society, making it a habit to use eco-friendly, recycled, and sustainable products to reduce pollution."

President M2D Mr Fawad Sarwar: "It is with the utmost honor and overflowing joy that I stand before you today to announce a momentous collaboration between my company Minus2Degrees (M2D) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on their remarkable Net Zero initiatives. Aligning ourselves with the PCB is akin to joining hands with the heart and soul of the Pakistani people, and we are humbled and privileged to be able to assist them in reaching their goals.

M2D's vision is to assist countries, industries, businesses, and sports organizations in adopting environmentally sustainable practices that are aligned with the United Nation's (UN) net-zero goals for 2030 and 2050. Through these efforts, M2D aims to protect the Earth from the disastrous effects of global climate change."

PAK vs NZ: Run-fest expected on batting-friendly Pindi pitches

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: After an exhilarating three T20Is, the ongoing five-match series PAK vs NZ T20I series approaches a key stage as the action shifts to Rawalpindi, known for delivering high-scoring contests on batting-friendly surfaces.

The ongoing PAK vs NZ T20I series is turning out to be a cracker, dominated by the home side until the touring side finally tasted triumph after a final-over thriller in the third fixture.

The three-match stint entertained Lahore fans to the fullest and they acknowledged it by filling up Gaddafi Stadium in each contest.

Meanwhile, the action now shifts to Pindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi, which hosted astonishingly high-scoring clashes amid the recently-concluded eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Considered a nightmare for bowlers and paradise for the batters, the highest total in the history of the PSL was also recorded on the same



surface.

Things will be no different this time around, primarily in the last two Pakistan vs New Zealand T20Is as the head curator of the Pindi Cricket Stadium Sarfraz Ahmad revealed there will be batting-friendly pitches.

"We have prepared different pitches for the four matches scheduled to be played at the Pindi Stadium during the next 12 days," said

Ahmad while talking to a local publication.

"The pitches during the T20I matches will be more or less the same that was available during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches in March.

"Keeping in view the interest of cricket fans, T20 wickets should be more inclined toward the batter. The surfaces are being curated keeping in mind that

aspect.

It must be noted here that New Zealand won their maiden T20I against Pakistan on the latter's home soil last night and reduced the hosts' advantage to 2-1 in the five-game series.

Set to chase 164, Pakistan failed just five short of victory as the home side could raise 159 before bundling out in the final delivery despite Iftikhar's quickfire 60.

Mickey Arthur in Pakistan for three days

ISLAMABAD:

Former head coach Mickey Arthur — who is expected to be appointed as director of the Pakistan team — reached Islamabad on Tuesday.

According to a statement released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Arthur will stay with the Pakistan men's team till April 20 before leaving for England, where he is Derbyshire's Head of Cricket.

Arthur has previously served as head coach of the Pakistan team for three years, having taken up the mantle in 2016. During his tenure, Pakistan also won the ICC Champions' Trophy in 2017.

However, the cricket board decided to not renew the contracts of Arthur and his support staff, following the team's fifth-place finish at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019.

The PCB had earlier confirmed that it has been in talks with former national team head coach Arthur with a view to appointing him as the head coach to guide the side through the ACC Asia Cup, ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

However, owing to Arthur's long-term contract with Derbyshire, PCB also discussed a proposal to act as a consultant to the team on a time-sharing basis with Derbyshire.



Liverpool hit Leeds for six after controversial Gakpo opener

Sports Desk

LAHORE: LEEDS: Liverpool crushed Leeds 6-1 as Cody Gakpo's controversial opener provided the spark for the Reds' first win in five Premier League games on Monday.

Jurgen Klopp's side took the lead at Elland Road when Gakpo's goal was allowed to stand despite the ball striking Trent Alexander-Arnold's arm in the build-up.

It was reported the VAR official did not check the incident because it happened too far back in the move, but Leeds were furious at the perceived injustice.

Mohamed Salah rubbed salt into Leeds' wounds when he



increased Liverpool's lead four minutes later before Luis Sinistera got one back for the struggling hosts.

Diogo Jota's double, another Salah strike and Darwin

Nunez's late effort ensured Liverpool ended their five-game winless run in all competitions.

After coming within a whisker of winning a quadruple last season, Liverpool have been

reduced to scrambling to reach next season's Europa League or Europa Conference League, with the Champions League seemingly out of reach.

With that target in mind, the eighth-placed Reds are now within two points of seventh-placed Brighton.

"It's the best game we've played this season from all different perspectives," Klopp said.

"My favourite part was in the 92nd minute when we chased the poor boy on the ball from Leeds. The counter-pressing was the best for, I want to say, decades!"

Klopp has compared fan criticism of Liverpool potentially not making big-money trans-

fers in the coming close-season as like a five-year-old asking for a Ferrari for Christmas.

But on the evidence of this composed display and the recent fightback from two goals down to draw 2-2 with leaders Arsenal, Liverpool still have the foundations in place for a return to prominence next term.

"The second half against Arsenal was super important to us. We have to do what we did tonight again and again," Klopp said.

"I hope these one-and-a-half games gives us the right sign for the end of the season.

"I would like to see us with the same desire and passion. That's the job, to bring it consistently."

Renowned climber Noel Hanna dies on Nepal peak



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Renowned Northern Irish climber Noel Hanna has died in Nepal while descending from the top of the treacherous Annapurna mountain range, officials said Tuesday.

The 56-year-old adventurer was returning after a successful summit of the 8,091-metre (26,545-foot) peak when he died at Camp 4 on Monday night.

"His body has been brought down and flown to Kathmandu," Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks told AFP from Annapurna base camp.

Hanna had summited Everest ten times and climbed the highest point on all seven continents.

In 2006, he climbed the world's highest peak and then cycled from the route's base camp to the sea in eastern India, reaching the Bay of Bengal after a marathon two-week bike ride.

Annapurna, the world's tenth highest mountain, is avalanche-prone, technically difficult and has a higher death rate than Everest.

Rescuers and helicopters were busy on the mountain on Tuesday in efforts to locate three other Indian climbers.

Record-holding Indian climber Baljeet Kaur, 28, and compatriot Arjun Vajpai, 30, were both rescued after a search lasting hours, the tourism department said.

Another 34-year-old Indian climber, who fell into a crevasse on Monday, is yet to be found.

The spring Himalayan climbing season had a tragic start last week with the death of three Nepali climbers on Everest.

The trio were crossing the treacherous Khumbu icefall on Wednesday as part of a supply mission when a block of glacial ice fell and swept them into a deep crevasse.

Nepal is home to eight of the world's 10 highest peaks and welcomes hundreds of adventurers each spring climbing season, when temperatures are warm and winds are typically calm.

The government has issued more than 700 climbing permits for various Himalayan mountains this season, including 319 for Everest.

Pakistani mountaineers rescued from Mount Annapurna



KARACHI: A day after climbing Mount Annapurna, Pakistani climbers Naila Kiani and Shehroze Kashif Tuesday were rescued from the peak which stands at 8,091 metres, after their descent was disrupted due to bad weather.

Both Naila and Shehroze summited the world's 10th-highest mountain in northwest Nepal on Monday.

"The efforts to rescue the two mountaineers who were stranded on Annapurna at 7000m have been successful," said Karrar Haidry, secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, in a brief statement.

"A helicopter was dispatched from Kathmandu to the higher camps of Annapurna, and the climbers have been safely picked up and taken to Annapurna Base Camp. Thank you to all the friends for their support and assistance in this matter."

Naila is the first woman from the South Asian country to reach Annapurna's peak, meanwhile, Shehroze is the youngest climber to summit 11 out of the world's 14, 8,000-metre mountains. He is aiming to become the youngest to summit all 14 peaks over 8,000 metres.

Earlier, Indian climbers Anurag Maloo and Baljeet Kaur also went missing and efforts are underway to search and rescue them.

It must be noted that on Saturday, Pakistan's Sajid Sadpara added another feather to his cap after summiting Annapurna without using supplementary oxygen.

According to ExplorersWeb, Annapurna is the most dangerous of all the 14 8,000'ers after K2. Its south side is a formidable ice face, while the normal north side route includes large sections exposed to avalanches and falling seracs.

Imagine Nepal's Mingma G had also warned that conditions this season are particularly perilous.

"We had a drought all winter and now it is snowing almost every day. The effect is clear on Annapurna: deep snow, frequent avalanches, and several crevasses," he said.

Pakistan street cricket comes to life after dark during Ramadan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: After midnight during Ramadan, makeshift floodlights transform a central Karachi basketball court into an urban cricket arena, where dozens of young Pakistani men chase taped-up tennis balls zipping through the night air.

Donkeys watch on from the outfield and goats rummage through nearby piles of rubbish, breaking occasionally for a pitch invasion.

"After the Taraweeh (special Ramadan prayers), people crave entertainment so that is why many play cricket," batsman Waqas Danish told AFP. "They play all night, because some people can't wake up for breakfast if they sleep."

In this picture taken on April 7, 2023, cricketer Owais Afridi (R)

delivers a ball during the tape ball night cricket tournament during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in Karachi — AFP

Tape-ball games are ubiquitous across Karachi's streets throughout the year, but Ramadan sees night tournaments pop up in most neighbourhoods.

The uninitiated may struggle to unravel the mayhem of multiple overlapping matches in a cramped space, but for Karachi's street cricketers, there is method in the madness.

The frenetic matches of between four and six overs per innings are concluded before sehri, the meal consumed ahead of daytime fasting.

They range from pick-up games on improvised concrete pitches to professional competitions on dusty ovals.

In this picture taken on April

11, 2023, residents watch the tape ball night cricket tournament during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in Karachi —

Money is often involved — even though gambling is illegal in Pakistan — and big-hitting mercenaries are occasionally lured from surrounding neighbourhoods to play under lights that craftily tap into overhead power lines.

A tennis ball is tightly bound with electrical tape, giving it extra weight so it swings much like a cricket ball, yet is less damaging if it hits a spectator, window — or even a passing rickshaw.

'Amazing' speed

Matches played in the poorest neighbourhoods can draw hundreds of spectators, with many onlookers admitting that watching cricket all night helps

with the day's fast.

"All day they are sleeping. Maybe they go to their jobs for four or five hours," 19-year-old spectator Rahman Khan said.

After Partition in 1947, cricket was considered the domain of the upper class, played at Karachi's posh clubs and elite schools.

But as the population boomed through the 1960s, cricket adapted to the sprawling metropolis and tennis balls emerged as a substitute to the hard ball.

The cheaper alternative — which also removes the need for costly equipment like batting pads — took on several experimental forms in the following decades, and is credited with bringing the sport to the everyday Pakistani.

There is no consensus on when the first tape ball delivery was bowled or by who, but



legends abound — and the one thing historians and fans agree on is that it originated in Karachi.

A young cricketer wraps electric tape on the tennis ball before the start of the tape ball night cricket tournament during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in Karachi — AFP

"The tennis ball without tape lacked speed," said veteran Nasir Ali, who recalls the 1980s as the formative years for the tape-ball game.

"On an experimental basis we wrapped the ball with red tape and when it was bowled the speed was amazing," said the

64-year-old, who hosts an annual competition in his apartment block's courtyard.

— "Watch the ball" —

From legendary all-rounder Wasim Akram to modern-day pace star Shaheen Shah Afridi, many of Pakistan's top players credit street cricket as a positive influence on their techniques.

"In cricket there is a saying: 'watch the ball' — it doesn't matter if it is a tennis ball or a taped ball or a hard ball," Pakistani national youth coach Mohammad Masroor told AFP.

"If a batsman can hit any ball, he can play cricket."

Watching young cricketers at a street pitch wedged between an elevated expressway and an apartment block in central Karachi, Masroor said rules adapted to the urban landscape hone a batsman's skills.