

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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مسلمان کے لیے جن کے پاس وصیت
کے قابل کوئی بھی ماں ہو درست نہیں
کہ دورات بھی وصیت کو لکھ کر اپنے پاس
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PM says 'security, protection of Pakistanis in Sudan top priority'

PM Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the security and protection of Pakistanis in Sudan was a top priority of the government. In a statement, he said the government was closely watching the situation in Sudan and consistently monitoring the steps taken for the protection... (Details on Page 8)



Ambassador of Kazakhstan briefs media about the outcome of recently-held parliamentary elections

Ambassador Kistafin further said the idea of the press briefing was to raise awareness about the political transformation that is happening in Kazakhstan. He said the main idea is to liberalize the Kazakh society with a view to implementing democratic reforms, which ostensibly is a very important milestone in the history of Kazakhstan. (Details on Page 5)

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Prayer

ISLAMABAD: Muslims perform the last Friday Prayer of the holy Islamic month of Ramadan at Faisal Mosque as the last day of Holy month marks the end of Ramadan.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

President Xi sends congratulatory message to Lanting Forum

News Desk

BELJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to the Lanting Forum on Chinese Modernization and the World held at the Meet-the-World Lounge in Shanghai.

President Xi pointed out that realizing modernization is a relentless pursuit of the Chinese people since modern times began.

It is also the common aspiration of people of all countries. In pursuing modernization, a country needs to follow certain general patterns. More importantly, it should proceed from its own realities and develop its own features.

After a long and arduous quest, the Communist Party of China has led the entire Chinese nation in finding a development path that suits China's conditions. We are now building a strong country and



advancing national rejuvenation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization.

China will provide new opportunities for global development with new accomplishments in Chinese modernization, lend new impetus to humanity's search for paths toward modernization and better social systems, and work with all countries to advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Nawaz Sharif, Maryam meet Saudi crown prince in 'cordial manner'



Spokesman Report

JEDDAH: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Friday.

Sources said PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz was also present in the meeting when important matters were discussed. They said the meeting between the former Pakistani premier and the crown prince was held in a positive atmosphere, adding that the issues being faced by the South Asian country were also under discussion.

Taking to Twitter, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said, "Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met the Prime Minister of Saudi

Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Maryam Nawaz was also present on the occasion."

"The leaders discussed further improving Saudi-Pak brotherly relations and solutions to the issues Pakistan is facing. Nawaz Sharif expressed his good wishes for the Saudi leadership," she added.

Earlier this month, Nawaz Sharif reached Jeddah from London and joined his daughter and other family members who were already present in Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah.

King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud had invited Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to perform Umrah as royal guests during the holy month of Ramadan. Nawaz and Maryam are also expected to meet the Saudi royal family.

Uncertainty prevails over negotiations between govt, PTI

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: In wake of the government representatives contacting the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the meeting could not be decided to negotiate over holding the simultaneous elections in the country.

The inside story of the first contact of the nominated representatives of the government with the PTI to discuss the elections across the country came out on Friday.

Former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser was approached by Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, and other leaders. It was reported that the government is formally open to speaking with the PTI.

This contact was made when the hearing was going on in the Supreme Court (SC). Asad Qaiser



informed PTI Secretary General Asad Umar about the contact of the government representatives.

In terms of negotiating with the incumbent government, PTI leader Asad Umar said, "It is a good thing to communicate, and holding dialogue is a welcoming step."

Firing a fresh salvo at Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Mr Umar claimed, "They are just resorting to the tricks of delaying the elections."

After the tweet of Ms Nawaz and Mr Fazl's press conference,

the meeting between the government and PTI to negotiate became uncertain.

Earlier today, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) emir Sirajul Haq said that holding only the Punjab Assembly elections will lead to protests and civil war.

Speaking to media, Mr Haq said, "PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has also been contacted. He also wanted the country to improve. It will take time to reach the scheduled date of the elections."

Siraj-ul-Haq said, "Right now, there is a political crisis in the country. Along with the political crisis, there is also an economic and constitutional crisis. There is no case of common people in the National Assembly, Senate and Supreme Court."

Stressing the need for holding simultaneous elections, Mr

Haq said, "The issue of elections is not only for one or two parties. But the 230 million people are concerned about the elections."

Mr Haq claimed, "The judges of the court are not on the same page. They are also having a tussle among themselves. We do not want conflict. In connection with getting on the same page about holding transparent polls, we are in constant contact with political parties."

He added, "The talks have been held with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Awami National Party (ANP). The prime minister wanted us to leave this closed street. Imran Khan also gave a positive response."

"The Supreme Court itself said that the political parties should find a way by themselves until April 27. After Eid, we will speed up this process," Mr Haq added.

President imposes fine on accused in harassment case over frivolous litigation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In order to discourage unnecessary litigation filed on flimsy grounds, President Dr Arif Alvi has imposed a fine upon the accused in a harassment case to bear the airfare charges of the complainant for filing representations on flimsy grounds in a hasty manner.

The president fined the accused also for putting the alleged victim under further mental and financial hardships by making her travel from Karachi to Islamabad with her counsel to attend the hearing.

The president gave this order in a case of sexual harassment where a female Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) (the complainant) at Airport Security Force (ASF) posted in Sukkur was allegedly harassed by the airport manager.

PM felicitates nation, Muslim Ummah on Eid-ul-Fitr

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif felicitated people of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah on the auspicious occasion of EidulFitr.

In a message on the occasion of EidulFitr, he prayed that the blessed moment may bring for every Muslim immense happiness and joy of life.

He said the fasting month of Ramadanul Mubarak and worship of Allah evoked feelings of patience, contentment and empathy and EidulFitr was also an occasion to practically demonstrate these qualities.

He advised people to take care of the needy, poor, destitute and orphans around them.

These were difficult times and the sacrifice and love of the well to do and rich was needed more than in ordinary

Nawaz Sharif meets Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman: Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met with Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, said Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb in a tweet on Friday.

The minister said that Maryam

Nawaz was also present in the meeting.

She said that the leaders discussed further strengthening brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. They also deliberated on the solutions to the problems being faced by Pakistan.

She said that Nawaz Sharif expressed good wishes for the Saudi leadership.

circumstances, he said adding, "Those who are facing difficulties due to adverse circumstances should be made part of the celebrations of Eid."

Shehbaz Sharif said it was persistent effort of the coalition government to put on the

people minimum burden of the difficult economic conditions. "We are striving to the maximum to provide relief to the people. I believe that Allah Almighty will bring us out of these trying circumstances and comforts of life will return."

India starts blaming Pakistan for its failure to hold G-20 moot in IIOJK

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: India has started to blame Pakistan for the possible failure of its announced meeting of the G-20 countries from May 21-23 to be held in Srinagar, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to media reports, recently the fire that broke out in an army truck in Rajouri district at around 3 pm and resulted in the death of four soldiers was attributed to lightning.

However, at 6 pm, the Indian Army declared the accident as a grenade attack by unknown terrorists. After seven o'clock, Indian media, former government officials and pro-Modi journalists blamed Lashkar-e-Taiba and other banned organizations for the attack. Some retired Indian Army officers and analysts started to blame Pakistan.

Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 becomes law

TLTP

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly of Pakistan Friday notified Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 in spite of a stay order that an 8-member bench of the top court granted in response to identical pleas challenging constitutionality of the legislation.

A week ago while grating stay order in the matter, the eight-member bench of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umer Ata Bandial issued notices to the Federal Government, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP), political parties, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in response to pleas challenging the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure)

Bill, 2023.

The CJP led bench has termed the bill 'interference with and intrusion into the independence of the judiciary.'

However, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 - curtailing CJP's suo motu powers has become a law on Friday after being passed by the National Assembly (NA), fulfilling all the necessary requirements and regulations. The National Assembly of Pakistan shared the bill's copy on its official Twitter handle.

National Assembly Secretariat notified that the bill of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) deemed to have been assented by the president (with effect from April 21, 2023) under Clause (2) of the Article 75 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Condolence

LARKANA: Chairman PPP and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condolence with father Sudhu Mal and children of Shaheed Police official Kishore Kumar at Gharibabad Mohalla Naudero, who martyred during the encounter with robbers in the Kacha area of Ghotki.



Photo: APP

Bilawal expresses condolences with family of martyr police constable in Naudero

Bureau Report

LARKANA: Chairman PPP and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condolence with father Sudhu Mal and children of Shaheed Police official Kishore Kumar at Gharibabad Mohalla Naudero, who martyred during the encounter with robbers in the Kacha area of Ghotki. APP

LARKANA, Apr 21 (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday visited the residence of Police Constable Kishore Kumar, in Gharibabad Muhallah Naudero (Larkana) to express condolences to the bereaved family on the martyrdom of the police constable in the encounter with dacoits in the Katcha area of Ghotki district few days back.

The foreign minister while meet-

ing with the martyred constable's bereaved family and soothed some kind words and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this loss.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed grief over the martyrdom of police constable Kishore Kumar with his father Sudhumal and other heirs of the martyr.

On the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that we are proud of our martyrs who have laid down their precious lives for the establishment of peace.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid tribute to martyred police constable Kishore Kumar's bravery and sacrifice.

MNA Khurshid Ahmed Junejo, Former Sindh Minister Suhail Anwar Siyal, former MPA Muhammad Ali Bhutto, Jameel Ahmed Soomro and other PPP leaders were also present on the occasion.

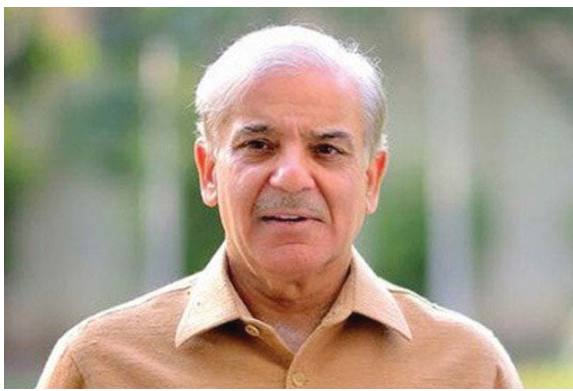
PM says 'security, protection of Pakistanis in Sudan top priority'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the security and protection of Pakistanis in Sudan was a top priority of the government.

In a statement, he said the government was closely watching the situation in Sudan and consistently monitoring the steps taken for the protection and security of Pakistani citizens.

Pakistan's embassy in Sudan



was in constant touch with the 1500 Pakistanis living in Sudan and was providing them with all possible facilities. The embassy in Sudan had formed a WhatsApp group to remain in touch with Pakistanis who were advised to stay at home.

The PM said difficulties were being faced in the evacuation of Pakistanis as the roads leading to airports are not safe, adding the government was in touch with friendly countries

and the United Nations for the security of Pakistanis and for their early evacuation.

He said Pakistan believed that the Sudanese authorities would take steps to ensure the safety of Pakistanis.

On the instructions of the prime minister, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs met Sudan's ambassador in Pakistan and also held a meeting with the Pakistani embassy in Sudan and discussed the current situation.

Allama Iqbal's 85th death anniversary observed with reverence

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 85th death anniversary of the poet of East and Hakeem-ul-Ummat (Sage of Ummah) Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal who was a true benefactor of the Muslim Ummah, a great intellectual, and a sincere leader of the Muslim subcontinent was observed with reverence across the country on Friday.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paying tribute to Allama Muhammad Iqbal, said the great poet and philosopher gave the Muslim Ummah a new dimension of thinking.

On the death anniversary of Allama Iqbal observed on April 21, the prime minister tweeted that at a time when the world was seeking guidance from Western thought to nurture their thought process, Allama Iqbal, a great poet of

East gave the Muslim Ummah a new dimension of thinking through his unique philosophy and Urdu and Persian poetry.

"The whole nation including me pays tribute to Allama Muhammad Iqbal on his 85th death anniversary," he tweeted. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal paid tribute to national poet Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal on his 85th death anniversary.

Paying tribute to the 'Mufakkir-e-Pakistan' (thinker of Pakistan), he said Allama Iqbal was one of those leaders who adopted a pensive approach and made up minds of Muslims living in the sub-continent to get a separate homeland (Pakistan) for themselves.

The minister recalled Allama Iqbal with his all titles

including Shair-e-Mashriq (the poet of the East), Musawar-e-Pakistan (the artist of Pakistan), Hakeem-ul-Ummat (the Sage of the Ummah), terming him a great philosopher, intellectual, revolutionary poet, and thinker of the 20th century.

Ahsan Iqbal said the national poet reconciled the philosophy of independence with all aspects of life in the simplest manner, adding his political acumen, foresight, and wisdom still provided complete guidance for the people of Pakistan to distinguish among the comity of nations.

He praised Allama Iqbal for his concepts of 'Khudi' (Ego or Selfhood) and 'Khuddari' (Self-respect) that remained a guarantee of Pakistan's sovereignty and prosperity.

The planning minister said Allama Iqbal's poetry and life

taught the youth to lead the nations by stepping into the world of action.

The 85th death anniversary of great philosopher, thinker and Poet of East, Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal was observed to acknowledge his struggle and services for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

He was born on November 9, 1877, in Sialkot. He was a great representative of the Muslims of the Subcontinent and one of the main exponents of the Pakistan Movement.

Allama Iqbal was a great visionary poet, who conceived the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-continent, which was ultimately materialized in the shape of Pakistan.

He died on 21 April 1938 in Lahore, Punjab, British India. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said

that the Muslim Ummah can cope with the present-day challenges by acting upon the teachings of Allama Iqbal.

In his message on the death anniversary of Allama Iqbal, he said Iqbal, through his poetry, awakened the Muslim Ummah from slumber.

The Speaker said Allama Iqbal was the proponent of unity amongst Muslims and he taught them to rely on their resources and strength.

He said the death anniversary of Allama Iqbal provides an opportunity for Muslims to reflect upon his ideology and teachings.

In his message, Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durran said the poetry of Allama Iqbal is a beacon of light for all humans. He said we can steer the Muslims Ummah especially Pakistan out of current crises by following his teachings.

China hopes parties in Sudan to jointly move forward political transition process

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said on Friday that China hoped that the two parties in Sudan will increase dialogue and jointly move forward the political transition process.

"We hope parties in Sudan will increase dialogue and jointly move forward the political transition process," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question regarding 72-hour ceasefire in Sudan.

The spokesman said that China is closely following the developments of the situation in Sudan.

Jhang Power Plant in Grid Synchronization, nearing COD

News Desk

BEIJING: The Pakistan Jhang 1263 MW thermal power plant, operated by China Machinery Engineering Corp. (CMEC), has achieved a significant milestone as its turbine generator was successfully connected to the power grid for the first time.

The unit was operating smoothly and all parameters were meeting the design requirements, thus setting a solid foundation for the next 168-hour reliability test run of the combined cycle section, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

After achieving the Commercial Operation Date (COD) of the two gas turbines in August last year, the Jhang project has completed the



installation and commissioning of the main and auxiliary systems for the combined cycle section, the steam blowing of two heat recovery boilers, hot-state flushing, PPA8.2 testing, and now, the first turbine

generator synchronization to the power grid.

The synchronization of the combined-cycle power generation unit with the power grid signifies that all equipment on site has been put into normal

operation.

"The next step will mainly involve adjusting the unit under different load conditions, optimizing the system and its degree of automation, and conducting a 168-hour reliability test," said the operation director of the project, Mr. He. "The entire project is marching closer and closer to COD."

Last year, the government-owned company Punjab Thermal Power (Pvt) Ltd (PTPL) signed a contract with China Machinery Engineering Corp (CMEC) to operate two thermal power plants in Punjab's Jhang district.

CMEC also served as the plant's engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor.

CM visits RYK Kacha area to boost police's morale



News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has reached Rahim Yar Khan to boost the morale of Punjab Police personnel taking part in the Kacha operation against bandits, reported 24NewsHD TV channel on Friday.

Mohsin Naqvi visited forward posts in Rahim Yar Khan's Kachha area. He was accompanied by Punjab IG Police Dr. Usman Anwar and other concerned officials.

He lauded the courage and passion of police personnel and greeted police personnel in the wake of Eid al Fitr.

Taliban recognition not a focus of Afghanistan meeting, says UN

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: A UN-convened meeting on Afghanistan next month will not focus on the possible international recognition of the Taliban administration, a UN spokesperson stressed on Thursday after comments by the deputy UN chief sparked concern and confusion.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is set to host a closed-door gathering in Doha on May 1-2 of special envoys on Afghanistan from various countries. His deputy, Amina Mohammed, suggested on Monday the gathering "could find those baby steps to put us back on the pathway to recognition."

"The Doha conference on the 1st and 2nd of May is not focusing on recognition and we don't want there to be any confusion about that," said deputy UN spokesperson Farhan Haq. "The point of discussion... is to build a more unified consensus on the challenges

at hand."

The Taliban seized power in August 2021 as U.S.-led forces withdrew following 20 years of war.

In December, the 193-member UN General Assembly approved postponing, for the second time, a decision on whether to recognize the Afghan Taliban administration by allowing them to send a United Nations ambassador to New York.

Earlier this month the Taliban began enforcing a ban on Afghan women working for the United Nations after stopping most women working for humanitarian aid groups in December. Since toppling the Western-backed government, they have also tightened controls over women's access to public life, including barring women from university and closing most girls' high schools.

The Taliban says it respects women's rights in accordance with its strict interpretation of Islamic law.

FS conveys concern to Sudanese ambassador about situation in Khartoum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Malik Khan Friday here held a meeting with ambassador of Sudan Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig to convey concern about the deteriorating situation in Sudan.

According to Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, the Foreign Secretary hoped the Sudanese authorities would take all

measures to ensure the safety and security of Pakistanis in Sudan.

The Foreign Secretary held an online coordination meeting with Pakistani missions in Khartoum and surrounding countries on the situation in Sudan.

She said the Pakistani government was working with partner countries to ensure the safety and security of Pakistanis in Sudan besides considering the option of evacuation.

Eid-ul-Fitr is gift of end month of Ramazan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Eid shopping is at its peak at this time, women, children and families head here after 10 o'clock. And buy ready-made clothes, bangles, mehndi shoes for themselves. While the men whose clothes cannot sew on time, they also go to the market and buy ready-made clothes.

Here, when I spoke to Tailor Muhammad Hanif, he said that Ramazan begins as soon as we receive a lot of orders for clothes and we try our best to finish these orders by 15th of Ramazan. But most of the people come after 10th of Ramazan, we get

very busy to deliver suits and after 15th of Ramazan we stop taking orders.

Even the suits of our loved ones we refuse to take after 16-17 Ramazan. Due to lack of time and labor, we are not able to complete the order, so we do not take so many orders.

Mohammad Ghazanfar shop keeper told us that Ramazan shopping starts two days before Ramazan. In the first week of Ramazan, the sell of food and drinks, pakoras, samosas, basin and sugar get increase. After that gradually people go to the bazaars to do their shopping and the bazaars are very crowded.

He said our whole year's sale on one

side and one month's sale on other side. Business in Pakistan has been affected to a great extent due to the situation of financial crisis and poor economy. But due to the blessings of Ramazan, our business becomes much better.

I also spoke to the women here, Naila Anjum, she told that almost all our shopping has been completed, now in the final round of our shopping we are buying bangles, mehndi and matching jewellery. We will apply mehndi on moon night and celebrate Eid very well with their family members.

In the month of Ramazan, where we not only worship but complete the Holy Quran, then Eid is a bless-

ing from Allah for us. This is a great gift from Allah to Muslims and a great reward for our patience. And we should remember our loved ones, especially poor on this Eid. Same as we should also reach patients of hospital and provide them food and gift on Eid. We should also include orphans on Eid and give them gifts.

I spoke to Dr. Rubina Akhtar and she said that I am a doctor but the rush of patients does not decrease even in Ramazan. And because of these busy schedules, we often cannot do our shopping on time, so our shopping is often done at the end. We are very busy with Eid shopping at this time.

WASA immediately Solve Sanitation and Sewage complaints during Eid-ul-Fitr: Umar Jahangir



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Deputy immediately solve the sanitation and sewage complaints throughout the city during the days of Eid-ul-Fitr. Commissioner Umar Jahangir has assigned a special task to the Waste Management Company to immediately solve the sanitation and sewage complaints throughout the city during the days of Eid-ul-Fitr. Despite the holiday, the cleaning staff removed the garbage piles and dirt deposits around the mosques and also installed awareness banners. The installation of new dust bins and containers in the central areas by the company management is also ongoing. Regarding this, CEO Waste Management Company Shahid Yaqoob said that all cleaning staff holidays have been canceled on Eid-ul-Fitr and 1139 control room will also be active for cleaning complaints during Eid days.

Mujahid Hospital give concession to members and employees of FCCI

Mian Rashid Asghar



FAISALABAD: Mujahid Hospital will give special concession to members and employees of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in providing medical facilities. In this regard, during an iftar party, Mujahid Welfare Council President Anjum Iqbal Butt and Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq officially signed a memorandum of understanding.

Mujahid Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr. Khalid Mehmood Fakhar, Director Cardiology Sheikh Muhammad Mushtaq, Ajmal Hussain Badr, Anwar Haq, Yousuf Gul Paracha, Salim Randhawa, Muhammad Irfan Yasin, Tahir Ayub, Daniyal Sheikh and Rana Sikan-dar Azam Khan were also present on this occasion.

President Chamber Dr. Khurram Tariq appreciated the services of Mujahid Hospital and said that due to this, people especially in the eastern part of the city are getting cheap treatment facilities.

He assured all possible cooperation from the business community in the welfare works of the hospital and thanked the hospital management for providing facilities at discounted rates to the members and employees of the chamber.

Anjum Iqbal Butt said that seven floors of the multi-storied new building of the hospital have been completed while work is going on for the rest. He said that a parking area has also been constructed under the hospital where there is a capacity to park 40-50 vehicles while the repair work of the dilapidated road in front of the hospital will also be completed soon.

Former President Mujahid Welfare Council and Director Mujahid Heart Center Sheikh Muhammad Mushtaq said that after the civil hospital, about 1500 patients benefit from this hospital every day, while medical facilities are also being provided to people under the health card. He said that the laboratory and diagnostic system have been integrated and now MIR, City Scan and X-ray among other facilities are being provided at one place.

He further informed that the ICU has started working in the hospital while facilities of angiography, echography, pacemaker and bypass are also being provided, however, the heart surgery will be started after Eid. Finally Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq and Mujahid Welfare Council President Anjum Iqbal Butt signed and exchanged MoUs.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrate in Attock also today

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Faithful living along the inter provincial bordering territory of district Attock will also celebrate the festivities of Eid ul Fitr in line with other parts the country from Saturday April 22-23, 2023 with their traditional zeal and religious fervour amid tight security cover.

This year the announcement first came from the chief cleric of Ruet e Hilal Committee Molana Abdul Khabir Azad who said Shawal moon was not sighted anywhere in the country including provincial capital as well as far flung areas of the coastal line along with the mountainous tribal areas of North or South Waziristan.

However, contrary to expectations, Mufti Popalzia also announced that the first day of Eid ul Fitr would be marked on Saturday, April 22, 2023. The federal government had also declared 21st to 25th April, 2023 (Friday to Tuesday) as public holidays on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The people will extend warm felicitation one another as they head home after Eid prayers.

They spend the day visiting relatives and neighbours, and accepting sweets as they move around from house to house. They have traditional desserts and sweets that prepared before Eid or on the morning of the first day. These foods ranged from special biscuits and bread to cakes and puddings. Children, dressed in new clothes, are also offered gifts and money to celebrate the joyous occasion.

In some areas, families also visit graveyards to offer their respects to departed family members. In some areas of the district mosques, shopping centers, state owned buildings and even their houses were also decorated with lights and hold festivities to commemorate the end of Ramazan.

Earlier, District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan also ensured fool proof security measures along with the 343 mosques and 13 open places for the security of which more than 1100 police officers including 6 SDPOs, 14 SHOs, 141 Upper Superintendents, 53 Head Constables, 844 constables, 13 elite sections and 707 volunteers were deployed.

DPO Attock also directed the police to discourage the aerial firing and rioters on the occasion of Chand Raat and Eid ul-Fitr.

Henna design competition

MULTAN: Girls participate in a henna design competition in Multan on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr. Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with great enthusiasm after the blessings and prayers of the month of Ramazan. Photo By Asim Tanveer



Photo: Online

Boy lost eye ball as boy mauled by stray dogs in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The municipal authorities in Hazro town of Attock swings in to action after stray dogs mauled an eight years old besides depriving him with his eye ball.

The gloomy and sad incident reported in Khagwani village in Chach area of Hazro tehsil when 8 years old Ayan Shah was going to local mosque to offer prayers when a group of stray dogs attacked him.

Later some passerby come to rescue him when they listen screams of the child and was shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Hazro from where he was shifted to Pakistan institute of medical sciences (PIMS) Islamabad due to his critical condition. According to Dr Muhammad Naem, medical superintendent of THQ hospital-the lad's left eye ball has



lost, right ball is intact while lids are lost, critical wounds on chest and private body parts were found when the boy was brought to hospital where surgery is not available in the district.

Deputy district officer health Dr Abdul Rasheed has said that the victim was provided anti-rabies vaccination (ARV) and other basic treatment and the boy condition is out of danger so far.

Responding a question, he said that the boy was in state of shock grade III and

were referred to PIMS for better cure as pediatric and ophthalmologist surgery facility is not available in the area.

"Soon after the incident came into the notice of local administration, the entire sanitary staff of municipal committee was mobilized and massive operation against stray dogs in Chach area was launched", said assistant commissioner Kamran Asharf. He said that different teams were constituted and on

the recommendation of former chairman of union council as well as notables the operation has launched in hotspots areas. He said that around one hundred stray dogs were neutralized during the operation to eliminate the stray dogs from the area causing constant threats to the masses.

The relatives of ill-fated boy cried before media persons in the tehsil headquarters hospital that the menace has increased manifold in their areas for which they have been complaining to the civic agencies without any result so far as they do not feel their basic responsibilities.

They said that stray dogs menace could not be reduced due to sheer negligence of relevant civic agencies' authorities to eliminate wandering dogs from the concerned areas.

FCCI chief calls for true Islamic society

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: There are ample opportunities to work on Islamic principles to establish a true Islamic society and reduce the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Pakistan.

This was said by the President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Khurram Tariq, while addressing the ceremony of completion of the Quran during Taraweeh on the 27th of Ramazan at Al-Khalil Mosque in Gulfsan Colony.

He described the philosophy of Islamic friendship and brotherhood as a lifelong and eternal ideology and said that just as the benefactor of humanity Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (peace be upon him) fourteen hundred years ago taught the people of Madinah and Makkah the relationship of brotherhood and fraternity.

It might be united even today by ending hatred and discrimination on equality. There is a dire need to create a strong and stable society.

Celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr at Pearl Continental Hotel Muzaffarabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with your loved ones at Pearl Continental Hotel Muzaffarabad and enjoy the exciting food promotions to make your Eid celebrations memorable.

Pearl Continental Hotel Muzaffarabad offers an exceptional experience for those looking for food and breathtaking views of the Neelum and Jhelum rivers, picturesque Kashmir Mountains, and Pir Chanasi.

Experience the ultimate dining experience at Marco Polo, where you can indulge in a delicious Eid Hi-Tea and Buffet Dinner. The Hi-Tea is



priced at PKR. 1,999+ tax per person and is available from 3: 00 PM to 6: 00 PM, while the Buffet Dinner is priced at PKR. 3,199+ tax per person and is available from 7: 00

PM to 11: 00 PM. Buffet and Hi-Tea offers a wide variety of mouth-watering dishes curated by the hotel's expert chefs.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to avail up to 50% off on select debit and credit cards on food. Book your tables now and experience the ultimate Eid experience at the Pearl Continental Hotel Muzaffarabad.

The hotel's beautiful architecture and stunning views add to the overall ambiance, making it a truly unforgettable experience.

Whether you are a solo traveler or a group of friends and family, Pearl Continental Hotel Muzaffarabad is the perfect place to come together and celebrate.

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Zohr 12: 07 pm
Asr 4: 49 pm
Maghrib 6: 43 pm
Isha 8: 12 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6

Solidarity

Türkiye's Embassy hosts Iftar-Dinner for Pakistani rescue teams

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Turkey, several Pakistani organizations and institutions played a crucial part in searching and rescuing those affected. In recognition and appreciation of their efforts, the Turkish Ambassador, Mehmet Pacha, hosted an iftar dinner to honor the responsible and helpful individuals and organizations, including and other welfare organizations.

The program was attended by Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik, the chairperson of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Chairman and Vice Chairman Businessman, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman, Team of Türkiye's aid agency, Team of Alkhidmat and team of NDMA and representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) other also attended.

On the occasion Ambassador Paçacı pointed out that the two countries always stood by each other in hard times, thanking Pakistan for its support following the earthquakes.

Paçacı presented Shields to the representatives of NGOs that participated in



search and rescue activities and aid efforts in Türkiye after the quakes as an acknowledgment of their efforts.

Ambassador also thanked the government and the people of Pakistan for extending their "great" support after the Feb. 6 twin earthquakes that jolted southern Türkiye and parts of neighboring Syria.

"Pakistan and Turkey are time-tested friends, who have always stood beside each other in every trying hour," said Chairman NDMA

"This bond will be further strengthened in days and years to come," he added. "Last year, Türkiye was the first country



to rush to help our brothers and sisters (affected by the floods). And this year Pakistan was one of the first countries

that rushed to help us over there," Chairman NDMA said. It is important to mention that earlier

this year; a massive earthquake hit parts of Turkey and Syria, leaving thousands of people dead and millions homeless.

Jamat ul-Vida

ISLAMABAD: People are offering dua on the last Friday Prayer of the holy Islamic month of Ramadan at Faisal Mosque as the last day of Holy month marks the end of Ramadan.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Int'l Earth Day 2023 tomorrow

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Earth Day will be marked on tomorrow (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan which aims to inspire awareness and appreciation for Earth's environment.

The United Nations calls the event 'International Mother Earth Day'.

The Earth Day is usually celebrated with outdoor performances, where individuals or groups perform acts of service to Earth.

Typical ways of observing Earth Day include planting trees, picking up roadside trash, conducting various programs for recycling and conservation, and using recyclable containers for snacks and lunches.

Some people are encouraged to sign petitions to governments, calling for stronger or immediate action to stop global warming and reverse environmental destruction. Television stations frequently air programs dealing with environmental issues.

The April 22 Earth Day, founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, was first organized in 1970 to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet as well as to encourage awareness of the growing problems of air, water, and soil pollution.

Some people prefer to observe Earth Day around the time of the March equinox. In 1978, American anthropologist Margaret Mead added her support for the equinox Earth Day, founded by John McConnell. She stated that the selection of the March Equinox for Earth Day made planetary observance of a shared event possible.

Rawalpindi reject PM Imran Khan's P-121 seat selection

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A large number of party workers and public representatives belonging to PP-121 constituency of Punjab Assembly have rejected the award of party ticket to an unpopular candidate by Imran Khan for upcoming elections and said that Tehreek-e-Insaf has never won this seat because of the decisions like this. "PTI has constantly been losing this seat owing to placing the unpopular candidates and this time once again the same practice is being repeated", they said.

Surprise and shock has also been expressed by the local political and journalistic

circles who keep a close eye on the politics of the constituency. Senior journalist Javed Iqbal Nasir, party workers Taseef Iqbal, Mian Yasir Rasheed, Farrukh Iqbal, Abbas Nawab, Zeeshan Sahil, Mohammad Farooq Hanafi, Usman Ali, Atif Ghaffar, Sabatin Abbas, MA Sial, Akhtar Sudhrai and hundreds of others shared their views in a press statement. They rejected the decision to give tickets to Choudhary Ramadan, a brother of ex-governor Punjab and termed it against the democratic opinion and merit. They said that ever since the end of Imran Khan's government, Khalid Nawaz along with his countless workers has been

leading the Zul e Shahi fanatic in all the protest rallies everywhere and at all times.

They said that Khalid Nawaz Sadhrai sacrificed his time, money and comfort and involved the largest number of workers in protest movements and rallies. Untiring and restless effort of Khalid Nawaz Sudhrai earned, for the first time in the constituency, nook and corner and the doors and walls of the constituency are witnessed that there is no other example of the large rallies taken out by Khalid Nawaz Sudhrai in PP 121.

They further mentioned that

the central leadership of PTI is also a witness of Khalid Nawaz Sudhrai's hard work, honesty and sincerity. If Imran Khan had asked his close associates Asad Umar, Humayun Akhtar Khan, Shehbaz Gul before taking a decision to award ticket for PP 121, merit would not have been killed. The unprecedented popularity that Khalid Nawaz Sudhrai had accumulated for the party has been laid to waste by giving a ticket to an unpopular and inactive parachooter candidate.

They appealed to Imran Khan to reconsider the decision of party ticket for constituency PP 121 and said that only Khalid Nawaz Sudhrai is entitled to this seat.

Juma-tul-Wida observed with religious zeal in federal capital

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The last Friday of Ramadan, also known as Juma-tul-Wida, was observed with great religious zeal and enthusiasm in the federal capital like other parts of the country.

Muslims across the city gathered in mosques to offer Juma-tul-Wida, seeking blessings and forgiveness from Allah Almighty.

The largest congregation was observed at the iconic Faisal Mosque, where thousands of worshippers came together to perform the special prayers. The atmosphere was one of spirituality and devotion, with the sound of the call to prayer echoing throughout the city.

In his sermon, the Imam emphasized the importance of unity, forgiveness, and compassion.

He urged the Muslim community to reflect on their deeds and seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty, as Ramadan draws to a close.

He also emphasized the need for Muslims to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and extend compassion and help to those in need, especially during these challenging times.

Speaking to the media, worshippers expressed their joy and gratitude for being able to observe Juma-tul-Wida in such a peaceful and spiritual environment.

They praised the government and religious authorities for ensuring the smooth observance of the holy month of Ramadan, which has helped to promote a sense of community and devotion among the people.

In addition, Mosques belonging to Hanfi school of thought were echoed with Ramadan's farewell Kalam 'Alwada Alwada Mahe Ramadan'. Faithful recited this Kalam with one voice and tearful eyes as the holy month of Ramadan approaches to an end.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi urged the people to observe the night of Lailatul-Jaiza, also known as the Night of Reward, by avoiding unnecessary roaming in markets and gathering at recreational places.

As a night of spiritual significance, he encouraged the community to spend this night in prayer, seeking blessings and forgiveness from Allah Almighty.

In his capacity as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East, Ashrafi emphasized the importance of continuing the spiritual momentum gained during the holy month of Ramadan.

He advised the people to continue their worship and seek guidance from Allah Almighty in all aspects of their lives.

Eid-ul-Fitr teaches love, brotherhood, tolerance and self-sacrifice: Qureshi

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Vice Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Sajjada Nasheen of Hazrat Bahaudin Zakaria and Hazrat Shah Ruknuddin Alam and former Foreign Minister, congratulated the Muslim Ummah and especially the nation of Pakistan in his message on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. It has also been said that Eid-ul-Fitr teaches love, brotherhood, tolerance and self-sacrifice. We can truly enjoy the joy of Eid when we involve others in the joy of Eid. On the day of Eid, we should consider those around us. The joys of Eid should be celebrated together. This day is a day of renewal for us. We have to cultivate the spirit of patience, love, brotherhood, tolerance and sacrifice. Islamic teachings for creating a positive and good society



The British Council looks into the future of English

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: English will retain its position as the world's most widely spoken language over the next decade and teachers will continue to be at the heart of English learning, even in the face of increased automation, AI and machine learning.

These are two of the findings in a landmark research publication, the Future of English: Global Perspectives, published by the British Council on 18 April.

This is the first publication in a major programme of research and global engagement started by the British Council in 2020. The Future of English research programme will shine a light on the trends driving the use of English as a global language and provide data to inform policy makers, educators, researchers, and others interested in this important topic.

The British Council will be driving

data collection globally to inform future research releases, globally. As part of our long-term commitment, we have initiated a major new Future of English research grant scheme, awarding the first four grants to UK-led international projects in 2022.

Alongside the new publication, the British Council is set to unveil a new Future of English touring exhibition. The multimedia exhibition will explore several of the report's core themes—English in education, English in the workplace, and English in the community—and feature interactive elements which will ask visitors for their views on the future of the English language. Initially opening at the British Council's headquarters in Stratford, London on 26 April, the exhibition will subsequently travel to the New Directions LATAM 2023 conference in São Paulo, Brazil from 25-27 May, the New Directions East Asia 2023 conference in Hanoi, Viet Nam on 27

and 28 October 2023. Other locations and dates will be announced for 2023, before the exhibition returns to London in early 2024.

Mark Walker, Director of English & Exams at the British Council, said: "At the British Council, English language teaching, learning and assessment are at the heart of what we do. We champion the power of English to break down barriers and help millions of learners grow their skills, build international connections, and access life-changing opportunities.

"Now we're collaborating with partners, thought leaders, teachers and learners around the world to open up new conversations and share global perspectives about the future of English."

Amir Ramzan, Country Director British Council Pakistan, said: "The Future of English report has some key findings for Pakistan. English is thriving within a linguistically diverse nation; with

economic potential driving its growth.

Technology is enabling this and we are delighted to be playing our part. Our English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators (EaSTE) programme is currently being delivered with a digital-first approach to support the continuous professional development of every primary school English teacher in Punjab (150,000 teachers). This programme is looking to make lasting positive change in the way that English is taught in the primary classroom, ensuring that children reach secondary level with the skills to learn effectively in English."

The British Council supports 100 million English learners worldwide with online resources and connects with more than four million teachers and educators online each year – the world's largest global network of teachers. The British Council also works directly with education leaders, teacher educators and teachers of English to raise standards

Emergency measures are being taken to Provide Relief to the citizens before Eid

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: under the direction of MD Wasa Chaudhry Mohammad Danish, emergency measures are being taken to provide relief to the citizens before Eid. On the occasion of Friday farewell and Eid al-Fitr, the implementation has been accelerated

WASA teams are working day and night for uninterrupted supply of water supply and drainage. Order to repair manhole covers in mosques, imam bargahs, and cemeteries

Order to all Sewerage Officers to redress grievances under their supervision. Instructions to all officers to ensure attendance in offices. Chaudhry Muhammad Danish Managing Director WASA

Attendance of operators of all dewatering pumps should be ensured. Strict action will be taken on complaints of closure of dewatering pumps

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Global Water Crisis: Time to adopt sensible approach

GM Ghalbi

It is beyond doubt that water is one of the key factors that keeps the life running across the globe but unfortunately, this main source of life is drying up rapidly in many countries.

The dearth of water has turned out to be a global issue and billions of people in several countries of the world have suffered massively due to this catastrophe and suffering continuously.

The global water crisis has affected dozens of countries but with diverse magnitude. There are 17 countries such as Qatar, India, Pakistan, Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, UAE, San Marino, Bahrain, Turkmenistan, Oman and Botswana, which have been listed in the category of most affected nations from baseline water stress.

In the prevailing scenario, the governments and people of the most affected countries need to adopt some sensible approach to tackle this grave issue. Through concrete measures and rational approach, these countries can save their people from worst dehydration and their agricultural land from being barren.

Three effective techniques: There are three effective methods through which the badly-hit countries can address this critical issue to a great extent. These useful methods are: a)

building maximum number of dams, b) wise water management and c) launching effective awareness campaigns to highlight significance of water among masses.

Significance of dams:

Undoubtedly, the construction of maximum number of dams can minimise the damages of serious water scarcity crisis greatly. Several sensible and visionary countries have built thousands of dams to meet their water needs but some countries could not build enough number of dams and resultantly now they are facing consequences of serious drought.

Pakistan, which is world's fifth most populated country with the population of 220,892,340, has only 150 dams and water reservoirs. However, there are multiple reasons such as political and economic instability due to which Pakistan could not build enough number of dams including much-discussed Kalabagh Dam.

Wise water management:

Wise water management is another key factor, through which the governments of most affected countries can save millions of cubic feet of water from being wasted in drains. This factor is need of the hour especially in an era when the population is growing swiftly at global level.

It has been observed that plenty of water is being wasted mercilessly in some countries mainly due to lack aware-

ness about importance of this life saving liquid.

If we talk about Pakistan, this kind of irresponsible behavior is quite common in Pakistani people. The overflowing water tanks can be witnessed on rooftops everywhere in Pakistan's major cities especially Lahore, a city with a population of 13,542,000.

Pakistanis and other such uncaring nations can conserve huge quantity of water by adopting cautious approach. In this regard, governments in all such countries can play a vital role by issuing strict instructions and penalties for those who used to waste water needlessly. There is dire need to develop sense of responsibility among all quarters in such countries.

Effective awareness campaign:

Different public and private departments and even NGOs can play an important role in launching effective awareness campaigns to highlight the significance of water and the relevant government departments should organize regular workshops and seminars to spread awareness among people.

The banners containing message of 'save water' should be placed on prominent places in all major cities. Similarly, the advertisements highlighting the significance of water should also be printed and televised in print and electronic media on regular basis.

Likewise, the awareness sessions regarding saving water should also

be conducted in all male and female schools, colleges and universities to take all student community on board in this noble campaign. If all these measures taken properly then one can expect that the wastage of water can be averted sufficiently.

Key factors behind Pakistan's water crisis:

Pakistan is one of the few countries, which suffered massively in the prevailing water crisis due to their political and economic instability, lack of planning, vision and management.

The mismanagement and lack of planning in Pakistan can be gauged from the fact that there has been severe scarcity of drinking and irrigational water in several parts of the country almost throughout the year but no department is ready to take any effective measure to end this dilemma.

On the other hand, some massive floodwater swept everything causing a gigantic loss in the shape of hundreds of human casualties, properties, livestock and crops worth billions of rupees at a large part of Pakistan every year but no government department bothered to chalk out a strategy to preserve this flood water in dams and other reservoirs.

Several analysts termed the grave mismanagement at government level as the major factor behind both these destructive situations in Pakistan and these predicaments can be overcome by bringing political and economic stability in the country.

Food insecurity

Floods, droughts and record low ice levels – from the top of the world's mountains to the depths of the ocean, the climate crisis took a heavy toll as it continued to intensify in 2022, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a Geneva-based UN agency, said on Friday

WMO's latest State of the Global Climate report shows that the last eight years were the eight warmest on record and that sea level rise and ocean warming hit new highs. Record levels of greenhouse gases caused "planetary scale changes on land, in the ocean and in the atmosphere".

Extensive flooding in Pakistan caused by severe rainfall in July and August last year killed over 1,700 people, while some 33 million were affected, the report said. WMO highlights that total damage and economic losses were assessed at \$30 billion and that by October 2022, around 8 million people had been internally displaced by the floods.

The report came a day after an unprecedentedly heavy hailstorm struck Rawalpindi that forced the abandonment of the 4th T20 match between Pakistan and New Zealand.

Released to coincide with this year's Mother Earth Day, the WMO report echoes UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' call for "deeper, faster emissions cuts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degree Celsius", as well as "massively scaled-up investments in adaptation and resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable countries and communities who have done the least to cause the crisis".

WMO's new figures show that global temperatures have continued to rise, making the years 2015 to 2022 the eight warmest ever since regular tracking started in 1850. WMO notes that this was despite three consecutive years of a cooling La Niña climate pattern.

WMO says concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases, which trap heat in the atmosphere – carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – reached record highs in 2021, which is the latest year for which consolidated data is available, and that there are indications of a continued increase in 2022.

According to the report, "melting of glaciers and sea level rise – which again reached record levels in 2022 – will continue for up to thousands of years". WMO further highlights that "Antarctic sea ice fell to its lowest extent on record and the melting of some European glaciers was, literally, off the charts".

Sea level rise, which threatens the existence of coastal communities and sometimes entire countries, has been fuelled not only by melting glaciers and ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica but also by the expansion of the volume of oceans due to heat. WMO notes that ocean warming has been "particularly high in the past two decades".

The report examines the many socio-economic impacts of extreme weather, which have wreaked havoc in the lives of the most vulnerable around the world. Five consecutive years of drought in East Africa, in conjunction with other factors such as armed conflict, have brought devastating food insecurity to 20 million people across the region.

The report also notes that in addition to putting scores of people on the move, throughout the year, hazardous climate and weather-related events "worsened conditions" for many of the 95 million people already living in displacement.



Afghan refugees in Pakistan dream of family, food and lost comforts

Hussna Khattak

As Ramazan began in Pakistan last Sunday, Afghan refugee Sajjad Khan remembered the comforts of the holy month of fasting back home where he enjoyed lavish suhoor and iftar meals surrounded by friends and family and always had enough to give away to the needy.

This Ramazan, him and his family will be breaking their fasts only with home-baked bread and green tea, if they are lucky.

During Ramazan, Muslims all over the world observe a dawn-to-dusk fast, aiming to show patience, modesty and spirituality. The month culminates in Eid Al-Fitr, a festival marking the end of fasting and during which people go to mosques for prayers and visit friends and family to exchange gifts and meals.

But for many Afghan refugees in Pakistan, it will be hard this year to observe the usual rituals associated with this period.

While Pakistan was already home to 1.4 million Afghan refugees when US-led forces left Afghanistan last year and the Taliban seized Kabul, at least 100,000 more have arrived in Pakistan since, according to Kaiser Khan Afridi, a local spokesperson for the United Nations refugee agency.

"Every Ramazan day in Afghanistan was like Eid day," 49-year-old Sajjad Khan, who sells fruits and vegetables at a market in Peshawar, told Arab

News. "Now we live a painful life as refugees ... My iftar consists of bread and a cup of green tea."

Khan was a fruit exporter in Afghanistan's eastern Langman province from where he fled with his parents and children only a week after the Taliban takeover last August. Now, he is among dozens of refugees who come to Peshawar's Board Bazaar each morning and wait the rest of day to find buyers for their wares.

"I work all day long while fasting and earn Rs800 [\$4.30] to feed my five kids and ailing parents," he said. "I pray that God protects everyone from refugee life. It makes you feel depressed, people look down upon you."

Yet, he said he did not want to return to Afghanistan as long as the Taliban were ruling the country. Despite few opportunities to make a decent living and the scorching weather of Peshawar summers, staying in Pakistan was still a better option.

Afghanistan's economy collapsed last year after the Taliban takeover, with roughly 23 million people experiencing acute hunger and 95 percent of the population not eating enough food, according to the UN. "Life is stressful over there with no health care or education facilities," Khan said. "I want to give a good life to my children here."

Naseemullah Khan, 46, too left Afghanistan when the Taliban seized Kabul.

"I hastily managed to flee to Pakistan and started my life from scratch," he told Arab News. "I sell fruits and vegetables to support my nine-member family."

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to fast in refu-

gee life."

Shahid Afghan, who used to own a garment store in Kabul, said he had enjoyed a "comfortable Ramazan" in his hometown, sharing iftar dinners with relatives and friends. Now, he sells children's clothes at a makeshift stall in Peshawar and can barely make ends meet.

"I hardly manage to get food for my children," he said. "I will go back [to Afghanistan] once peace returns to my country. ... fear, hunger, and uncertainty continue to haunt people over there."

Naqeeb Ahmad, a refugee from Nangarhar province, told Arab News he had lost all hope for a better life back home when the Taliban enforced a ban on girls' education.

"We opted to migrate to Peshawar for the sole purpose of educating my two daughters," said Ahmad, who owned an import and export business of dry fruits in Afghanistan but now sells vegetables on a roadside in Peshawar.

"Ramazan is really harsh here," he said. "Sometimes I burst into tears when I am alone. ... I had fruit, meat and dry fruit on my table to break my fast with. Now I just get home cooked bread and green tea."

"A refugee's life is very, very hard. It hurts me daily when I look at the plight of my children."

Afridi from the UN admitted there was no government program designed to help refugees get through the fasting month.

"Afghan refugees are being provided health and education facilities at their camps," he said, "but we do not have a Ramazan-specific program for them."

Pledge of Allegiance on the occasion of Eid

Mian Rashid Asghar

It is the duty of those who understand the philosophy of life of Islam to impart its spirituality and play their role in ensuring its observance in the society. "I have the order of the Azaan, Laa-e-lailillah" "There are vast opportunities to work on Islamic principles to establish a true Islamic society in Pakistan and reduce the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Pledge to protect and protect national interests at any cost, instead of giving priority to personal interests."

The philosophy of Islamic fraternity and brotherhood is a lifelong and eternal idea, just as the benefactor of humanity, Hazrat Muhammad Mustaf (may Allah bless him) and grant him peace, united the people of Madinah and Mecca fourteen hundred years ago in a relationship of fraternity and brotherhood, and a strong stable society based on equality by eliminating discrimination emerged. There is the dire need to create balance, because abalanced diet or system proved fruitful always.

Through Akhutand other microfinance institutions, people with less resources should be provided with the necessary financial resources to start their own businesses instead of pushing them into deprivations. We need to re-evaluate our policies to cover human rights protection and security policies. Allama Muhammad Iqbal says that! Read the lesson again about honesty, justice, courage. The task of leading the world will be taken from you. Belief is firm, action is firm, love conquers the world, These are the swords of men in the jihad of life. It is urgent to implement the teachings of getting out of the troubles and paying attention to the realities of life and this is based on Islamic principles.

If we ensure the implementation of Islamic teachings, poverty and poverty full of disappointments will surely end in smoke. It is a pity that we have been giving preference to our decisions based on political basis instead of Islamic basis, due to which we are falling further towards the untoward situations. Is it right that some people may indulge the majority of a nation into tests? We should be seen to show brotherhood and love to others in every aspect of life, not merely slogans. Politics requires how many people are benefited by this political philosophy and how successful it is in creating peace and harmony.

It is not possible to make decisions according to one's mood. Every mood depends upon the mode of ethics which must come out transparently. If the rich people's wealth does not include the needy people, then without a doubt, such people have been passing some toughest, but they don't know what test they are confronting! Where politics is at stake, "Genghis" is not bound by the rules and regulations, we politicians are certainly going to go round, but they are completely separated from the political process and don't know, recognize and believe that at that time, politics and democracy are dead.

Let's concentrate not to be broken? and unwittingly located very close to the Genghis system back from where there is no hope left for him. Our identity is reflected not only in our words but also in our attitudes, norms & actual values. On this auspicious occasion of Eid, make a pledge that we all play our part in maintaining the atmosphere of brotherhood by removing confusion and succeed in upholding the law and ethics in the society. Empower yourself for a sack of people's services to promote prosperity and happiness. Allah Almighty would observe your love with the human beings to decide paradise.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan briefs media about the outcome of recently-held parliamentary elections



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Kistafin further said the idea of the press briefing was to raise awareness about the political transformation that is happening in Kazakhstan. He said the main idea is to liberalize the Kazakh society with a view to implementing democratic reforms, which ostensibly is a very important milestone in the history of Kazakhstan.

He said that the elections for the Mazhilis and the maslikhats of all levels are surely a milestone event for Kazakhstan, marking what has been one of the most transformative periods in our country's modern history over the past year. This upcoming election is going to be yet another step towards greater participatory democracy.

As you can tell by the number of elections and reforms taking place in our country over the past year, Kazakhstan has basically become a new state. The country is undergoing a comprehensive political modernization that is unique in its scope and depth. We are building a New Kazakhstan, which means, first and foremost, a Just and Fair Kazakhstan. Today, Kazakhstan has truly become a land of change. Despite the challenges that we faced in January last year, we have managed to implement transformative reforms and amend our Constitution for the benefit of our country and people.

The realization of the reforms despite the internal and external

challenges is a clear demonstration that our Head of State is committed to his formula of "a strong President — an influential parliament — a responsible government". President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is firm in ensuring such incremental progress and change as evidenced in the whole body of reforms he initiated over the past year.

At the same time, we had to approach the reforms systematically and carefully, without rushing the process. As the President noted, "the highest value is stability", as progress and prosperity exist only where there is stability. That is why the President called for the unity of the people as the key to the successful implementation of reforms.

Ambassador inform about Background to the legislative election. He said the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev first proposed holding elections to the Mazhilis and maslikhats in his Address to the Nation on September 1 last year.

This legislative election constitutes the final stage in the political renewal cycle initiated by President Tokayev, which started with a presidential election on November 20 last year and continued with a Senate election on January 14 this year.

Significant changes have been made to the electoral system in comparison to the previous elections following constitutional amendments last year. In particular, a proportional-majoritarian model was used for the first time since 2004, where 30 percent of Mazhilis members are elected in



single-member districts.

The threshold for political parties to gain seats in parliament has been lowered from seven to five percent.

Other changes include an "against all" column on the ballots, and a 30 percent quota for women, youth, and persons with special needs in party lists.

Two new parties that participated in the election (Respublica and Baytaq) were able to register due to simplified party registration rules.

Previous legislative election in Kazakhstan took place in January 2021. Five parties participated in that election, with three parties gaining seats in the Mazhilis — the ruling Amanat party (previously Nur Otan), Aq Jol, and the People's Party.

Elections to the Mazhilis (the lower chamber of the Kazakh parliament) and the maslikhats (local administrative bodies) took place on March 19.

Seven political parties competed in the election, including two new parties.

In line with recent legislative changes in Kazakhstan, political parties need to pass the five percent threshold to gain seats in the Mazhilis, which will consist of 98 members — 69 elected by party lists and 29 in single-member constituencies. There were 281 party list candidates vying

for 69 seats and approximately 370 single-mandate candidates (including independent and self-nominated) seeking 29 seats in the lower house.

Preliminary election results

Preliminary results were announced on March 20 by the Central Electoral Commission: Amanat — 53.9% (over 3.4 million votes) Ayl — 10.9% (693,938 votes) Respublica — 8.59% (547,154) Aq Jol — 8.41% (535,139) People's Party of Kazakhstan — 6.8% (432,920) National Social Democratic Party — 5.2% (331,058) Baytaq — 2.30% (146,431) 3.9% chose the option "against all" — 248,291 votes.

The results mean that six out of the seven parties received enough votes to pass the required five percent threshold to gain seats in parliament.

Voter turnout

Preliminary voter turnout has been set at just over 54 percent of eligible voters. This means over 6.3 million Kazakh citizens out of more than 12 million eligible voters cast their ballots.

Monitoring of the election by international observers

793 international observers from 41 foreign states and 12 international organizations monitored the election. The observers noted the following:

Candidates campaigned actively and freely. The increased competition, particularly with self-nominated candidates, is a significant development. Electoral preparations were administered efficiently (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly)

The election was transparent with no interference or obstacles (Margarita Assenova, Senior Fellow of The Jamestown Foundation)

No serious violations (CIS Interparliamentary Assembly)

No irregularities (Erhan Türbedar, Vice President of the International Turkic Academy)

Active voter participation among the youth (observers from the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States)

Peaceful and orderly voting (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)

Election was in line with national legislation and international standards (Alexander Markevich, a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization's Parliamentary Assembly) **In addition, international observers made the following observations and comments about the election:**

Grigory Logvinov, Deputy Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, said no election-related problems

were witnessed by the mission in the dozens of sites visited by them. "The mission regards the election as transparent, trustworthy, and democratic."

Sadi Jafarov, Deputy Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States, said the election was transparent and competitive. The mission observed no violations of the norms of the legislation.

Pedro Roque Oliveira, member of the Parliament of the Portuguese Republic and Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, said Kazakhstan, a country that upholds the defining features of a democracy, such as the rule of law, freely elected parliament, strong opposition, and representative government, might serve as an example for the region.

Daniel Robert Kawczynski, a member of the UK Parliament, commended Kazakhstan's dedication to the expansion of freedom and democracy, saying "I must applaud the will of the Kazakh people in working together in such a short period of time, after the fall of the Soviet Union, to create this functioning democracy."

Dr Kamran Bokhari, Senior Director of the Eurasian Security and Prosperity Portfolio at the New Lines Institute, said Kazakh citizens were motivated to vote

because of new political parties that promoted different election campaigns and values.

Recep Şeker, Head of the Observers Mission of the Turkic States Parliamentary Assembly, said the mission observed all stages of the election process, noting that they are satisfied with the level of preparation and give a positive assessment to these elections, including organisational measures.

Ultimately, these elections will allow us to accelerate our national renewal — with a refreshed democratic mandate for inclusive and expansive reform.

These reforms have ushered in new democratic principles in our country, including a more influential parliament, limited presidential powers, and direct elections of rural mayors. Several initiatives were launched at the start of this year. One of them is the establishment of the Constitutional Court, to which every citizen can apply.

The reforms, including those related to the upcoming elections, serve as a solid foundation for the creation of a truly multi-party system, helping implement effective oversight mechanisms and enhance accountability across different levels of the Kazakh government.

Photos by Raja Farid

Brazil submits a candidacy to chair the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Brazil presented the candidacy of Dr. Thelma Krug for the presidency of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), for a mandate during the Panel's 7th assessment cycle from 2023 to 2028.

With a degree in mathematics from Roosevelt University, Chicago, USA, and a doctoral degree in space statistics from the University of Sheffield, England, Dra. Thelma Krug has extensive experience in climate change issues, having made a career as a full researcher at the National Institute for Space Research (INPE). In the Brazilian government, she was the secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology from 2001 to 2003, and at the Ministry of Environment from 2007 to 2008, where she held the position of director from 2016 to 2017.

Embassy of Brazil in Islamabad stated this in a press release issued on Thursday.

According to the Embassy, at the IPCC, Dr. Thelma Krug co-chaired for two assessment cycles (2002 to 2015), the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, and has held since 2015 one of the three vice-chairs of the Panel.

The candidacy of a renowned scientist



reflects the priority that the Brazilian government gives to the global efforts to combat climate change, both in adaptation and mitigation, which is also exemplified by the candidacy of the city of Belem, Para, to host the 30th Conference of the Parties of the

UNFCCC (COP 30_ in 2025.

If her election is confirmed, she will be the first woman to chair the IPCC, a clear sign of Brazil's support for gender equality. It would also be the first time that a representative from Latin America would occupy the chair of the body.

The elections will take place during the 59th Plenary Session of the IPCC, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from July 24 to 28, 2023. In addition to the presidency, the other 33 vacancies in the IPCC Bureau will also be filled in this election.

Importantly, the IPCC is the United Nations body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change. Its creation by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 was decisive in alerting about the implications and possible risks associated with the phenomenon.

It managed to mobilize political will and public opinion support for the establishment of a multilateral regime dedicated to the theme, under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which opened for signature during the Rio-92 Conference.

For more than three decades, the IPCC's technical inputs have strengthened science in the face of questions from skeptical sectors regarding the anthropogenic contribution to global warming, which enabled the achievement of ambitious international milestones such as the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015. This key role earned the Panel the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

Talha meets Al-Issa to discuss issues of mutual interest

Spokesman Report

MAKKAH: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Friday met with the Secretary-General (SG) of the Muslim World League (MWL) Dr Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, to discuss issues of mutual interest.

The meeting, which took place at Dr Al-Issa's house in Makkah, was described as inclusive and productive, with both dignitaries sharing their perspectives on various issues.

During the meeting, Senator Talha and SG MWL discussed ways to strengthen fraternal ties between their countries and talked about the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah worldwide, particularly in Sudan and Palestine.

Dr Al-Issa lauded the heartfelt attachment of the Pakistani people to Saudi Arabia and Haramain Sharifain despite difficult economic conditions.

Senator Talha's visit to Saudi Arabia was meant to enhance cooperation and collaboration between the

two brotherly countries. To achieve this goal, he had been meeting with various officials and leaders, including the South Asia Tawaf Company and Zuyuf Al-Bait Services Company (formerly South Asia Institute).

Senator Talha also toured the 3D models and archives enclosure based on Hajj facilities. He emphasized his primary focus was to decrease Hajj expenses and create maximum facilities for Pakistani pilgrims.

He stated, "I will leave no stone unturned to make this Hajj operation a success story" and directed relevant officials to provide quality facilities at minimum cost.

The meeting between Senator Talha and Dr Al-Issa is expected to contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening the bond between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. It also highlights the commitment of both countries to work together to address the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah. Senator Talha's efforts to decrease Hajj expenses and provide maximum facilities for Pakistani pilgrims demonstrate his dedication to the cause.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
41,007.82	40,499.34	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
41,086.67	40,499.34	
Index Value	Change	
4,927,251,667	+508.48	
Percentage	Time	
+1.26%	20 Apr, 2023 1: 30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,914.13	+11.52	
Percentage	Time	
+0.15%	21 Apr, 4: 35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,759.44	-27.18	
Percentage	Time	
-0.080%	21 Apr, 12: 24 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
28,564.37	-93.20	
Percentage	Time	
-0.33%	21 Apr, 3: 15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	189	191
Bahrain Dinar	756.62	764.62
Canadian Dollar	210.5	212.5
China Yuan	41.37	41.77
Danish Krone	41.84	42.24
Euro	310	313.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.24	36.59
Indian Rupee	3.47	3.58
Japanese Yen	2.15	2.2
Kuwaiti Dinar	928.3	937.3
Malaysian Ringgit	64.96	65.56
NewZealand \$	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	316.77	319.27
Thai Bhat	8.33	8.48
U.A.E Dirham	78	78.8
UK Pound Sterling	356	359
US Dollar	287.5	290

PM directs strict action against profiteering, sugar hoarding

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday here said nobody would be allowed to resort to profiteering by increasing prices of essential items particularly sugar.

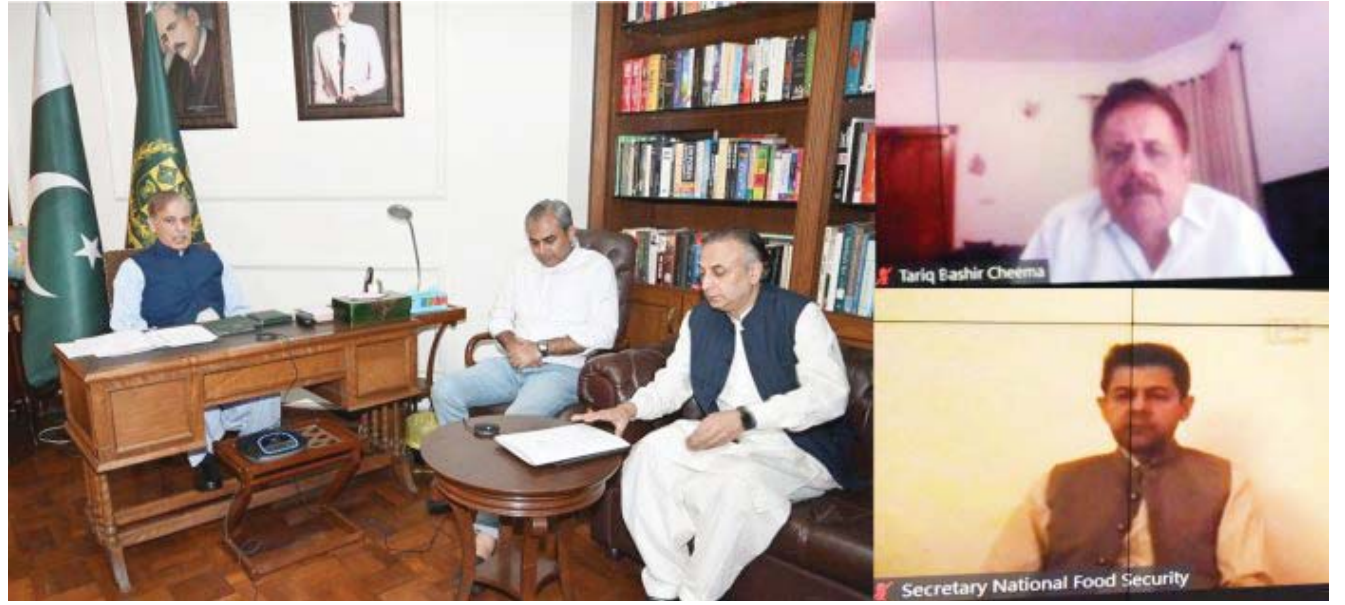
While chairing a meeting on sugar prices and on measures to stop smuggling and hoarding, he said strict action would be taken against those were creating artificial shortage of sugar in the country by smuggling the commodity.

The PM directed that the Ministry for National Food Security should include all stakeholders in the consultative process to determine the ex mill price of sugar.

He said hoarders of sugar should be dealt with iron hands, adding the sugar stocks confiscated from smugglers should be sold to the consumers at lower prices.

The Ministry for Food Security briefed the prime minister about the present ex mill price of sugar, the estimated cost of sugar and situation of present sugar stocks in the country.

He was also told about the ongoing opera-



Minister for National Food Security Tariq Bashir Cheema, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi and senior officers attended the meeting.

tion against the hoarders and about the steps being taken to stop smuggling.

China passes guidance for supporting private sector-state media

Commerce Desk

BELJING: China's ruling Communist Party has passed guidance for promoting the development of private firms, state media said on Friday, signaling more steps to reinvigorate a sector hurt by a round of regulatory curbs.

China will optimise the development environment for the private sector and will remove institutional barriers that prevent firms from participating in fair market competition, state media quoted in a meeting of a committee on deepening reforms, chaired by President Xi Jinping.

"It is necessary to fully consider the characteristics of the private economy, improve policy implementation, strengthen policy coordination, promote precise and direct preferential policies and effectively solve actual difficulties for firms," state media said.

China will guide private firms to find the right position in the country's high-quality economic development, and pursue their own reforms and upgrading, state media said.



Private firms, a key driving force behind China's economic ascent in the past four decades, account for half of the country's tax revenue, over 60% of output and provide 80% of urban employment. Chinese leaders have pledged to boost confidence, which has been hurt by a three-year crackdown on the tech and property sectors.

The party has also passed guidance for strengthening and improving the management of the state sector, state media said. Private fixed-asset investment grew only 0.6% in the first quarter from a year earlier, dwarfed by a 10% rise in investment by state entities, official data showed.

Pakistan's non-textile exports plunge 5.81pc to \$8.58bn YoY

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The country's exports of non-textile products have witnessed 5.81 per cent drop year-on-year to \$8.58 billion in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2022-23), data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reveals.

Mounting cost of production and a dip in demand from the international market are said to be the prime factors behind the decline. No growth was recorded in exports since September 2022 on a year-on-year basis.

The exports of leather garments dipped by 8.43pc in 9MFY23 from a year ago. However, the export of leather gloves was slightly up 0.28pc in July-March of 2022-23. Contrary to this, the exports of raw leather also decreased by 17.93pc.

The export of cement dipped by 32.07pc during the first nine months this year from a year ago. The decline was also noted in the export of cement in quantity terms during the months under review.

The exports of pharmaceutical products also surged by 28.55pc during the months under review, while the export of surgical instruments swelled 9.11pc in 9MFY23 over the same period last year.



The export of footwear increased by 18.69pc in 9MFY23 from a year ago. This growth was mainly contributed by an increase in the export of leather footwear, followed by canvas footwear.

The export of carpets dipped by 7.17pc while that of sports goods grew by 17.78pc in 9MFY23. The sales of footballs were up 33.67pc. Pakistan was the official football supplier to the FIFA World Cup held in Doha, Qatar in November 2022.

The export of jewellery declined 43.68pc

during the period under review but the exports of gems posted growth of 6.32pc. The export of furniture is up by 45.23pc, followed by an increase of 2.32pc in molasses, 100pc in handicrafts, and 3.05pc in gur and gur products, respectively.

The export of engineering goods posted growth of 11.22pc in the first nine months of the current fiscal year from a year ago, while the export of electrical fans fell by 9.05pc during the months under review, the PBS data shows.

Indian business delegation to visit Russia to explore agri exports

Commerce Desk

NEW DELHI: An Indian business delegation will visit Russia on April 24-27, the Indian exporters' body said on Friday, a fresh sign of expanding bilateral trade ties as Moscow increasingly turns east in response to Western sanctions imposed over the Ukraine war.

The announcement follows a visit by Russian trade and industry minister Denis Manturov to Delhi earlier this week which included discussions on the signing of a free trade agreement (FTA) in the near future.

"The 50-member delegation would meet buyers in Moscow and St Petersburg," said A. Sakthivel, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), adding they were aiming to expand Indian exports to Russia to \$5 billion in the current financial year that started this month.

The exporters expect to

sign deals for selling a wide range of products including tea, sugar, coffee, dairy, meat, and marine products, the official said.

Moscow earlier sent a list of more than 500 products for potential delivery including parts for cars, aircraft, and trains as the Western sanctions squeeze Russia's ability to keep vital industries running.

India has not explicitly condemned Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and has called for dialogue to resolve the conflict.

India's imports from Russia more than quadrupled to \$46.33 billion over the last fiscal year, mainly through oil, while exports declined nearly 12% year-on-year to \$2.8 billion for the 11 months ending in February.

Exporters said sales to Russia had declined mainly due to payment difficulties as both countries are still trying to work out a trade settlement mechanism in local currencies.

Guyana rules out offering crude oil export discounts to India

Commerce Desk

HOUSTON/NEW DELHI: South America's fastest-growing oil producer has turned down the Indian government's request for discounted crude oil purchases during trade discussions, Guyana Vice President Bharat Jagdeo said on Thursday.

Guyana's oil production in total has tripled from a year ago to about 380,000 barrels of oil per day. The government has rights to about 12.5% of the barrels, which are marketed under a one-year contract reached with BP (B.P.L.) last November.

India and Guyana have discussed a potential bilateral oil agreement for two years. The countries have failed to



reach mutually agreed terms for now, Jagdeo said, with talks continuing on agriculture, health care and other areas.

"Any sale of our crude will have to be on commercial terms, not discounted terms," Jagdeo said at a briefing. "We don't have a proposal at this point in time (from India) to buy crude".

Guyana has been also trying to attract Indian companies to take part in its first competitive oil auction, which will offer 14 offshore blocks to the highest bidders.

Pakistan reports current account surplus of \$654 in March 2023

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Current Account Balance (CAB) of Pakistan posted a massive surplus of \$654 million in Mar 2023 against a deficit of \$36 million in Feb 2023, ARY News reported on Wednesday, citing the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) statement.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday announced that Pakistan's current account surplus of \$654 million in March 2023 against the deficit of \$36 million in February 2023, Cumulatively Current Account Deficit (CAD) reduced to \$3.4 billion in Jul-Mar FY23 against a deficit of \$13.0 billion in Jul-Mar FY22.

According to the State Bank, the current account deficit in the previous fiscal year was \$13.01 billion, which indicates that Pakistan's current account situation has improved significantly in the current fiscal year.

Earlier in the day, the incumbent finance minister claimed that by receiving a commitment from the UAE for extending a loan of \$1 billion Pakistan has come very close to clinching the staff-level agreement with the IMF.

It is widely believed that Pakistani economic policymakers are not really cognisant of the width of the \$350 billion Pakistani economy that is now struggling to cope with the mounting structural issues.

Pakistani economy however has fallen so badly that the assistance fatigue was clearly manifest as in the last few years China, Saudi Arabia and UAE have already placed \$9 billion deposits with Pakistan's central bank and this amount was quickly consumed and Pakistan is now seeking rollovers every year.

This situation is indicative of the fact that international lenders are getting tougher by the day as was evident by the IMF having asked Pakistan to arrange \$6 billion in fresh loans including \$3 billion to be raised before reaching a staff-level agreement. Reportedly it is still not clear whether the IMF has withdrawn its condition for Pakistan to arrange \$2 billion from a bilateral source and the remaining \$1 billion from either commercial banks or other multilateral institutions.

Stock market today: Wall Street remains quiet, P&G gains

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Stocks barely moved in morning trading on Wall Street Friday as investors close out a quiet week of mostly mixed corporate earnings reports.

The S&P 500 was mostly unchanged as of 10: 20 a.m. Eastern. The benchmark index has been wavering over the last several days and is on track for a slight weekly loss.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 51 points, or 0.2%, to 33,840.13 and the Nasdaq fell 0.2%.

Banks and technology companies were mostly lower and weighed on the broader market. Healthcare companies and a range of consumer product makers gained ground and tempered losses elsewhere.

The latest corporate earnings and forecasts have been the big focus for

investors this week, as they try to get a better sense of how companies are handling high inflation, a slowing economy and fears about a recession. The market has a handful of earnings reports to assess Friday.

Hospital operator HCA Healthcare rose 5.3% after the company topped estimates for the first quarter and raised its full-year profit forecast. Procter & Gamble, the maker of Charmin toilet paper and other iconic consumer products, rose 4% after beating estimates thanks to price increases.

Information technology services company PC Connection slumped 10% after giving investors a disappointing financial update. Regional bank Regions Financial fell 3.4% after reporting discouraging earnings.

Companies have so far been beat-

ing Wall Street forecasts this earnings period. Analysts had forecast this would mark the sharpest drop in S&P 500 earnings per share since the pandemic stunned the economy in 2020. Analysts polled by FactSet expect profits to contract by 6.3% for companies in the S&P 500.

The latest earnings come as investors worry about the potential for a recession amid the Federal Reserve's fight against inflation. The central bank aggressively raised interest rates through 2022 and into 2023. The rate hikes have weighed on economic growth and while inflation has eased it remains high and is still squeezing consumers.

The Fed will meet again in early May and is expected to raise its benchmark interest rate by another quarter point. Wall Street is betting that the Fed will take a break from



raising interest rates after that meeting.

Wall Street is anticipating more economic data next week that could provide greater insight into inflation's impact and the economy's path. The reports will include consumer

confidence for April, first-quarter gross domestic product and another government update on prices and inflation.

Markets in Europe were showing small gains Friday, while exchanges in Asia declined overnight.

Watch: Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan ask Iftikhar Ahmed for Eidi

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: A video of Pakistan captain Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan asking teammate Iftikhar Ahmed for Eidi is going viral on social media.

Weather played spoilsport in the fourth Pakistan-New Zealand T20I at Rawalpindi as the match was abandoned due to a hailstorm. However, the players enjoyed themselves in the locker room.

The Pakistan Cricket Board shared a video of the players reacting to the hailstorm.

The clip also showed Babar Azam asking Iftikhar Ahmed for Eidi. Mohammad Rizwan, after seeing this, joined in with the captain also.

Moreover, pacer Naseem Shah was seen distributing Eidi as well.



It is pertinent to mention that the fourth game of the five-match series

ended without a result due to bad weather.

New Zealand – being sent to bat first – were 164/5 in 18.5 overs when the game was brought to a halt. Mark Chapman and opener Chad Bowes were stand-out players with the bat as they scored half-centuries.

Mark Chapman top-scored with his unbeaten 71 from 42 balls. His knock included 10 boundaries and a six. Chad Bowes struck seven fours and a maximum on his way to 38-ball 54.

As far as Pakistan's bowling was concerned, all-rounder Imad Wasim returned with figures of 3-19 in his four overs. Pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf took a wicket each.

Pakistan lead the five-match T20I series 2-1. The fifth match will be contested at the same venue on March 24.

Pakistan cricketers greet the nation on Eid-ul-Fitr



A Sports

RAWALPINDI: Pakistani cricketers including Babar Azam, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Iftikhar Ahmed and others wished the entire Muslim community on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In a video released on the official social media platforms by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the Pakistani cricketers extended their wishes and gave important messages to the nation on Eid.

Pakistani skipper Babar, who scored a magnificent century in the second PAK vs NZ T20I, also took the opportunity and wished the whole Muslim community on the behalf of his entire team.

"A very happy Eid to all of you from my side and on the behalf of my entire team," said Babar.

"Hope that all of you will enjoy this day with your loved ones, with your elder ones and will take care of them and also hope that you will keep on supporting the Pakistan team," he added.

Besides Babar, Pakistan's T20I vice-captain Shadab, ace pacer Shaheen, Iftikhar, Imad Wasim, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf also wished 'Eid Mubarak' to all the Muslims around the world.

It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan are hosting New Zealand for a five-match each T20I and ODI series.

The home side currently lead the five-match T20I series 2-1 with one game to spare.

Tsitsipas sweeps into Barcelona semi-finals

Sports Desk

BARCELONA: Stefanos Tsitsipas eased into the semi-finals of the Barcelona Open on Friday, beating Alex de Minaur 6-4, 6-2 to stay on a collision course with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Tsitsipas claimed the lone break of the opening set and then reeled off five straight games in the second as he won for the ninth time in as many meetings with Australia's De Minaur.

The Greek second seed will play Lorenzo Musetti on Saturday as he bids to reach the Barcelona final for a third time. He was runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2018 and 2021.

Tsitsipas, the losing finalist at January's Australian Open, is bidding for his first title of the season. He lost to Alcaraz in the quarter-finals in Barcelona last year.



Musetti advanced via walkover earlier in the day when fellow Italian Jannik Sinner had to pull out because of illness.

"Sad to have to withdraw from my match today in Barcelona," tweeted Sinner,

who beat Musetti in the Monte Carlo quarter-finals last week.

"I've been feeling unwell for a few days now. Today the sickness got worse and I'm not able to play. I'll take some time to rest and recover."

Top-seeded Alcaraz faces Spanish compatriot Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the quarter-finals later on Friday.

Alcaraz, 19, is looking for his third trophy of the season after triumphing in Buenos Aires and Indian Wells.

Jadeja led Chennai's win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL

Sports Desk

CHENNAI: Ravindra Jadeja's 3-22 led Chennai's dominance in spin-friendly conditions at home for a smooth seven-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League Friday.

The visitors managed just 134-7 after being sent in to bat and Jadeja's four-over spell for the Super Kings choked their innings before it could get going.

"It is a good track to bowl on for me," Jadeja said. "The ball stops a bit here and I am able to trap the batsmen bowling straight."

Opener Abhishek Sharma was the one bright spot for Hyderabad with 34 off 26 balls before the home town's spinners applied the



squeeze. Harry Brook, who scored this IPL's first century two innings ago, only managed 18 off 13 balls.

Apart from Sharma, only number three batter Rahul Tripathi crossed the 20-run mark for Hyderabad.

Skipper M.S. Dhoni put on a clinic behind the

stumps, snapping up Aiden Markram before stumping Mayank Agarwal. Later he also ran out Washington Sundar, overcoming a troublesome knee injury.

The hosts eased to 138-3 in reply with eight balls to spare as opener Devon Conway scored his third consecutive tournament

half-century.

Conway finished undefeated on 77 from 57 balls with 12 fours and a six although the capacity home crowd were a little disappointed at not getting to see Dhoni at the crease.

Speculation is rife that this tournament will be the beloved 41-year-old's last, but Dhoni could return to his home ground next month with Chennai now third on the table.

The IPL finals schedule was announced before the match with the first qualifier and eliminator to be played in the city on May 23 and 24.

Ahmedabad, home ground of last year's winners Gujarat Titans, will host the second qualifier and the 2023 final on May 26 and 28.

Wahab Riaz announces hefty cash prizes for the Punjab athletes

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz has announced hefty cash prizes for the Punjab athletes participating in the upcoming 34th National Games 2023 scheduled to be held in Quetta next month.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz, in a statement on Thursday, said that the players representing Punjab in the grand event of National Games will be given prizes of lakhs of rupees.

Revealing prize money details, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz informed that in individual competitions, Gold medalists will be given Rs 5 lakh, silver medalists Rs 2.5 lakh and bronze medal winners Rs 1 lakh respectively. "In team



competitions, Gold medalists will be given Rs 10 lakh, silver medalists Rs 5 lakh and bronze medal winners Rs 2.5 lakh respectively," he added.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz has urged the provincial athletes to work hard for the upcoming mega event. "The huge cash prizes will definitely be a big

attraction to motivate the Punjab players. Steps are being taken to promote sports culture in Punjab," he added.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz further said that the welfare of the players is among the top priorities. "Such big cash prizes have never been given in the history of province."

PAK vs NZ: Twitter reacts to Imad's opening spell in rain-hit 4th T20I



A Sports

RAWALPINDI: All-rounder Imad Wasim stirred social media after his sensational opening spell in the rain-abandoned fourth match of the PAK vs NZ T20I series at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

Imad gave Pakistan a colourful start in the match when he picked up three wickets to contain New Zealand at 54/3 in the seventh over.

Before the hailstorm interrupted the play in the 19th over of the first innings, the Black-caps had accumulated 164 for the loss of five wickets thanks to Chad Bowes' brilliant 38-ball 54 under pressure.

Though the Green Shirts and its fans would not be happy with the way the game had concluded, Imad headlined for his stunning figures of 3 for 19 in four overs.

The all-rounder, who forced his return to the national T20I side last month following his exploits during this year's Pakistan Super League, had been unexpectedly snubbed from the team after the 2021 T20 World Cup.

Ever since he earned a recall, he has been performing consistently to solidify his position in the team.

His tremendous effort with the ball last night was appreciated by the cricket fans who took to Twitter to praise the left-arm spinner.

Faldo Series Asia Grand Final Golf Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

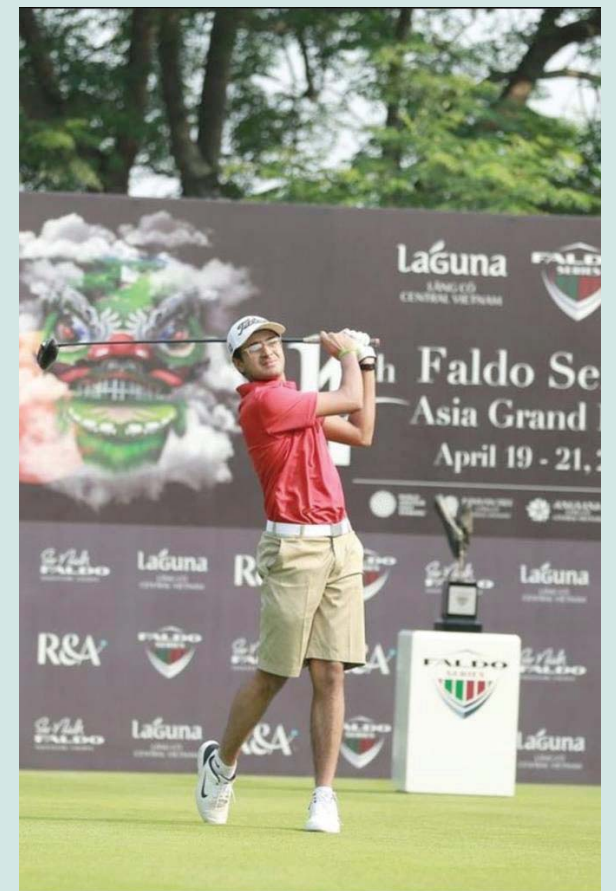
LAHORE: The 14th edition of Faldo Series Asia Grand Final Golf Championship came to an imposing conclusion after completion of three rounds (54 holes) at the Nick Faldo designed Laguna Golf Lang Co Golf Course in the Phu Loc District of Thu Thien Hue Province of Viet Nam. Young champions looked formidable players of the future and displayed their golf playing skills admirably well. Male competitors were divided into age groups 23 years and above 21, next age group was 21 years and under, and age 16 and under. For females it was 21 years and under and 16 years and under.

All through the three rounds of international golf attainment, the young Pakistani Syed Yashil Shah has been in the foreground and though his final round score was not as excellent as the scores in the first two rounds, he was successful in emerging on top in his own age category of 21 years and under. His scores for the championship were 69, 69 and 77 and a total aggregate of 215. Runner up was Jui Shen Lee of Taiwan, his championship score being 216 and he lost the first position to Syed Yashil Shah by one stroke. An exceptional performance by Syed Yashil Shah for which he was complimented by the Pakistan Golf Federation Team.

In the 16 years and below age group Nguyen Anh Minh of Viet Nam came first and he was also first in overall rating. His scores for the championship were 68, 69 and 67 and an aggregate of 204. Isaac Lam of Hong Kong was the runner up in this age group with an aggregate score of 209 followed Yung Cheng Lo and Le Khanh Hung of Hong Kong. Omer Khalid of Pakistan came sixth.

In age category 23 years and above 21 years the first position holder was Isaac Lam with scores of 70, 70 and 69 and match aggregate of 209.

Smart City 62nd National Amateur Golf Championship



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LAHORE: The Smart City 62nd National Amateur Golf Championship of Pakistan will set out classy golfing activity at the historic par 72, Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course soon after Eid Holidays. Though the Nation is engaged in Eid related festivities, diligent and conscientious people like Malik Kamran of Pakistan Golf Federation and Organizers at Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club are engrossed in Course preparations, management of logistics for foreign players, data collection for registered champions seeking to compete in this national event and also giving shape to multiple other tasks that require attention and finalization. For those involved in managing this National Event it is devotion time reflecting immense fondness with success of this golfing phenomenon.

In accordance with the eligibility criteria for this championship only players with a handicap of seven and below can participate and one can foresee quality golf on all four days of the grand event. Of course the more established contenders are competitors who are in national reckoning and the Pakistanis who fall in this category are Salman Jehangir, Qasim Ali Khan, Saim Shazli, Hussain Hamid and Mohsin Zafar. To oppose them in the race for attainment will be youngsters like Omar Khalid, Saad Habib, Damil Atallah and Syed Yashal Shah. These four are currently in Viet Nam for the Nick Faldo Asia Finals and will feel technically equipped for a battle of golfing skills and their application.

India should make first move and come over to Pakistan: PCB chief

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Najam Sethi has called on the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to make the first move on the road to normalisation by crossing over the border to play Asia Cup in Pakistan.

Sethi said that they have been told to allow organising Asia Cup at a neutral venue; however, visit India to play the World Cup.

"Our contention is that India should make the first move and come over to Pakistan to play the Asia Cup," he said assuring that Men in Green will definitely go to India once the normalisation starts.

Sethi's remarks came in response to a question regarding Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's forthcoming visit to India to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's meeting scheduled in Goa May 4-5.

It should be noted that soured political relations between Pakistan and India have complicated matters and cricket finds itself caught in the geopolitical crossfire between the feuding neighbours, who play each other only in multi-team events.

The deadlock is still there between the two countries with several options coming up to save the Asian and world events. A hybrid model for Asia Cup has already been discussed on the sidelines of an ICC meeting last month.