



COAS Asim Munir reaches China on four-day official visit: ISPR

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has reached China to pay a four-day official visit. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), COAS General Syed Asim Munir is currently paying a four-day official visit to China. (Details on Page 8)



Successful talks impossible without dissolving NA: Pervaiz Elahi

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Pervaiz Elahi said on Monday that political talks cannot be successful without the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA). Pervaiz Elahi said in a statement that if the government is serious for conducting elections then it will announce the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA). He made the statement while talking to different politicians who held a meeting with him. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Appreciation

CHINIOT: A farmer harvesting wheat crop at his farm field on the 3rd day of Eid ul Fitr at Sargodha Road.



Photo: APP

Marrimum accuses Imran of lying on Punjab, Pakhtunkhwa assemblies

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marrimum Aurangzeb while taking a jibe at Imran Khan, said that he was the first leader whose statement was being denied by his own party's official account. In a series of tweets, she said the PTI official account stated that "what Imran said, Imran did not say." She asked Imran not to play with people's minds and don't tell lies in the face of the nation. She said that this was a reason that a "fraudster" had to put the black canister on his face. She said that Imran was a criminal and would remain a criminal person. She said that Imran had destroyed the society, moral values, politics, economy, poisoned the minds of the masses and filled the hearts with



hatred, polluted the politics and paralyzed the country. She said that it was shameful that according to his own claim, he dissolved the assemblies on the request of Bajwa. The minister said that for the sake of power, Imran Khan insulted the people of Punjab and Pakhtunkhwa, mocked their representatives and dissolved their elected assemblies. The minister said that PTI leaders abused the judiciary, threw shoes on the picture of the Chief Justice, took the bail relief package by threatening the judiciary.

Twin blasts rock CTD police station in Swat, 12 cops martyred

Spokesman Report

SWAT: At least 12 policemen were martyred and 53 others including a lady police official sustained injuries in twin bomb blasts inside a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station in Swat's Kabal town on Monday. According to initial reports, several cops lost their lives and others sustained injuries in two bomb blasts in the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station in Kabal town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Swat district. Police said that 10 cops were martyred and 53 others got injured in the bombing incident, whereas, four persons locked up inside the police station were also killed. Two bomb blasts occurred in Swat's Kabal Town near the CTD police station. After the explosion, the electricity supply to the area was also disrupted. Heavy contingents of law



enforcement agencies (LEAs) rushed to the scene. Emergency has been imposed in all hospitals and rescue teams have also reached the site and wounded persons are being shifted to a local hospital. According to reports, sever-

al cops sustained injuries in the bomb explosions and nearby buildings were also damaged. The building of the police station was completely destroyed in the incident. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah condemned the bombing

incident and expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives. He said that the sacrifices of the martyrs will not be forgotten and the menace of terrorism will be uprooted. The interior minister sought a report on the bombing incident.

PM strongly condemns Kabal blast
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday strongly condemned a blast in Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Police Station Kabal, Swat and reiterated that security and police forces would completely eliminate the curse of terrorism. Expressing deep grief over loss of lives, the prime minister expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for the high ranks of the Shuhada, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured and directed for provision of all available medical treatment to the injured. The prime minister summoned a report from the relevant authorities over the incident. The entire nation saluted the sacrifices of its Shuhada, he added.

Govt's evacuation plan successful as 427 Pakistanis reaches Port Sudan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The evacuation plan of the government met a success as 427 stranded Pakistanis finally reached Port Sudan safely for their onward repatriation from the battle-hit country. For the last 72 hours, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was personally monitoring the emergency plan for the evacuation of Pakistani nationals, according to a PM Office statement. The evacuated Pakistanis who were being repatriated to Pakistan through special flights were provided accommodation and food by the government. The diplomatic missions of Pakistan and other countries in the region were supporting Pakistan in the evacuation process. The prime minister lauded the efforts of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar, foreign ministry officers and Pakistan's ambassador in Sudan. He particularly appreciated the military authorities and other relevant people for their expertise and dutifulness in

formulating an effective evacuation plan and its successful implementation. He also expressed gratitude to Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheed Ahmed Baber Sidhu and Director General of ISI Lt. General Nadeem Anjum for their special efforts in the evacuation process which involved multiple challenges and risks. However, the government authorities evacuated the Pakistani nations through safe routes. They are being moved in small groups from Khartoum to safe locations. The prime minister thanked the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt for extending support for the evacuation of Pakistani nationals. The measures for the protection of the stranded Pakistani nationals in Sudan were being constantly monitored and Pakistan's embassy was also in constant contact with them. The embassy had also established a helpline where the stranded Pakistanis can contact for any help or guidance.

Hajj 2023: Date for submission of passports in banks extended

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Religious Affairs has extended the last date for submission of the passports by Hujjaj in respective bank branches till the 28th of this month. The Ministry also advised the Hujjaj to use Smart-phone app 'Saudi Visa Bio' for Biometric Verification, while staying at their homes. The ministry said in case of any difficulty, they may visit the nearest Gerrys Visa Centre between 2PM to 6PM. Earlier this month, the finance ministry said in a statement that all intending pilgrims who had submitted applications for Hajj this year will perform the pilgrimage without balloting. A session of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet, chaired by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, today approved 163 million dollars for Hajj arrangements this year.

FM expresses gratitude to Turkiye, Egypt on safe evacuation of Pakistanis

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday expressed his gratitude to the governments of Turkiye and Egypt for their help in safe evacuation of Pakistanis from Sudan as the fighting raged between the two warring forces. During the whole evacuation process, the foreign minister also remained in contact with his Saudi counterpart, a press release on said. The foreign minister actively pursued the whole situation during the Eid days and appreciated all those who ensured the safe evacuation operation of expatriates from Sudan. The minister was given a daily briefing by the officials of the ministry of foreign affairs. Foreign Minister Bilawal also made the crises management cell functional in the ministry to ensure all efforts for the safe evacuation of Pakistanis and directed



for expediting the process. The officials of the embassy of Pakistan in Sudan had been in constant contact with the stranded Pakistanis and a helpline was established in the embassy under directive of the foreign minister. According to the press release, the first batch of 500 Pakistanis had reached port of Sudan from

Khartoum for their onward voyage to Jeddah. With the assistance of Pakistan International Airlines and Pakistan Air Force, they would be brought back from Jeddah. Upon the directive of foreign minister, temporary lodging and food arrangements had also been made for the stranded Pakistanis.

Bajwa described Shehbaz, Nawaz as his 'worst enemies': Imran

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Imran Khan gave an exclusive interview to ARY News on Sunday and answered questions about the party's future plans, elections, the London Plan and other issues. Answering questions asked by 'Sawal Yeh Hai' host Maria Memon, Imran Khan claimed that during his government's last days, he asked then COAS Qamar Bajwa if he was trying to bring Shehbaz Sharif to power, to which Bajwa responded that Shehbaz Sharif and Nawaz Sharif are his worst enemies. The former PM maintained that Bajwa used to 'lie a lot' and was getting extension offers but used to claim that he is not seeking an extension. Imran Khan claimed that despite Bajwa's flat refusal, some generals later approached him and persuaded PTT's bigwigs to grant Bajwa an extension.

Rana Sanaullah says 'assemblies to complete tenure on August 16'

Main Abdul Rasheed

FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Monday that the assemblies will complete its tenure on August 16 and a caretaker government will hold simultaneous elections in the country. While addressing a public gathering in Kamalpur village of Faisalabad, Rana Sanaullah said, "Fair and free elections will be held this year. It is necessary to hold fair and free elections in the country." "However, Imran Khan will not accept the election results and level vote rigging allegations if we emerge victorious in the next elections. He [PTI chief Imran Khan] wants chaos in the country," alleged Sanaullah. Criticising the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief, he said that Imran Khan rejected

to hold talks with the opposition when he was ruling the country and now, he is rejecting to hold dialogues with the government. "Khan's government did nothing in its four-year tenure and he became the first prime minister who was removed from his office via no-trust move." The interior minister also blamed the ex-premier Imran Khan for signing an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on tough conditions. He said that the incumbent government hiked the petrol prices and ended up subsidies on gas and electricity due to IMF's pressure. "We tried our best to get rid of the IMF's condition but we were bound to implement the tough condition as the agreement was signed by the former prime minister."

Solidarity

RAWALPINDI: Cricket fans waving National flags of Turkey and Syria to show solidarity with earth quake effected people of both countries during the last T-20 match between Pakistan and New Zealand at Pindi Cricket Stadium in City.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz Sharif decides taking confidence vote from NA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made a surprise move and decided to take vote of confidence from the National Assembly (NA).

Sources told that PM Shehbaz Sharif would take the vote of confidence from the National Assembly on April 27, Thursday.

Sources added that PM Sharif also completed consultations with the former premier and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif and other leaders.

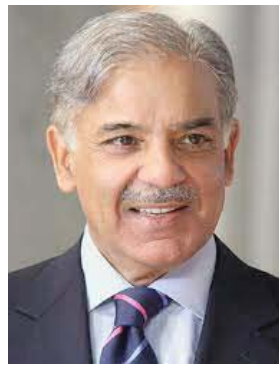
The premier also directed the NA lawmakers of all coal-

ition parties to ensure their presence in Islamabad.

The decision of confidence vote was taken after the rejection of the Election Funds Bill. A few days ago, the NA with a majority rejected the demand to disburse Rs21 billion funds to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the Punjab polls.

The premier is bound to take vote of confidence after the rejection of a government bill with a majority. PM Sharif will seek the confidence of at least 172 NA lawmakers on April 27.

Information minister rejects reports Federal Minister for Infor-



mation and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb rejected the media reports regarding the decision of Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif's vote of confidence.

In a Twitter message, Marriyum Aurangzeb said that PM Shehbaz Sharif has not taken any decision for taking the vote of confidence from the National Assembly (NA).

She said that there is no consultation held for the confidence vote not it is required to PM Shehbaz Sharif. Aurangzeb added that PM Sharif had already taken the vote for the head of the House on April 11, 2022.

"Baseless rumours are not factual. Media should refrain from airing reports regarding the prime minister without getting confirmation," concluded the information minister.

Moreover, PM Sharif also summoned a meeting of the federal cabinet on Wednesday to discuss the political situation. According to sources, the cabinet session will consider over the matters related to the election in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The cabinet will also mull over the issues that surfaced in the consultative process among the political parties.

The federal cabinet is likely to be briefed on the economic situation of the country, financing assurances from friendly countries and contacts with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources added.

Successful talks impossible without dissolving NA: Pervaiz Elahi

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Pervaiz Elahi said on Monday that political talks cannot be successful without the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA).

Pervaiz Elahi said in a statement that if the government is serious for conducting elections then it will announce the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA). He made the statement while talking to different politicians who held a meeting with him, Wajahat Hussain and Rasikh Elahi. The PTI president said that the deadline set

by the Supreme Court (SC) to the government for organising polls is going to expire soon.

"The government is running an organised campaign against the Supreme Court (SC) instead of holding talks and using dialogue option as a delaying tactic. Shehbaz Sharif will not be successful to fool the SC."

"If government is serious to conduct elections on a date then it will announce the dissolution of the NA. Talks cannot be successful without the dissolution of the NA."

"In Punjab, no one is ready to accept PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz] tick-

ets. PML-N wants to maintain its reputation by boycotting the elections which is tantamount to accepting its defeat."

Pervaiz Elahi said that the political developments clearly indicate the success of PTI in Punjab and the formation of its next government.

Earlier, Pervaiz Elahi vowed to stand beside party chairman Imran Khan despite the registration of cases and inquiries by the government.

Pervaiz Elahi said in a statement that they will not leave supporting Imran Khan despite the government's cases and inquiries against them.



He made the statement during a meeting with former Punjab Assembly speaker Chaudhry Afzal Sahi. During the meeting, they discussed the current political situation.

The PTI president said that

only Imran Khan can bring back prosperity and development to the country. He slammed the government for running propaganda and damaging the image of Pakistan globally.

Free Trade Zone Achievements, Future Development Forum held in Beijing

News Desk

BEIJING: The "Free Trade Zone Ten-Year Achievements and Future Development Forum" hosted by the Free Trade Zone and Port Professional Committee of China International Trade Association was successfully held in Beijing.

TK Law, founder and CEO of TKing Technology Co., Ltd. delivered a speech at a sub-forum to explore the development potential of "Trade + Metaverse".

TKing Technology focuses on artificial intelligence algorithms and virtual research.

After years of deep cultivation, it has made significant technological breakthroughs

and completed commercialization in the fields of ultra-realistic digital human generation algorithms, object 3D reconstruction, and 3D real-time virtual fitting.

After being appointed as a metaverse backbone node construction and operation entity for the "Spark-Chain Network" by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China, the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology King Technology using Blockchain-based Identifier (BID) and rights confirmation system and combined with industrial digital technology, created a new metaverse retail platform "TKing Meta".

Dissolution of Punjab, KP assemblies' conspiracy or strategy: Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui while mocking Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan said was it a conspiracy on part of the former prime minister to dissolve the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or a strategy.

Siddiqui said exciting facts were coming to the fore of Khan's statement that he dissolved the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the orders of former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Rashid says nation is being fooled in the name of negotiations

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former federal interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that countdown for the government will begin on April 27.

Rashid wrote on the social media website Twitter that the nation is being fooled in the name of negotiations. He called the negotiations a 'sham'.

Judiciary will open all roads. The government refuses to accept the decision of the judiciary, which tantamount to revolt against the constitution and the law, he added.

The former minister said the government has resorted to flouting the decisions of courts. Judiciary has to protect and implement its decisions, he

continued. Rashid said when the government does not respect the court decisions, civil war and chaos descend on society.

He wrote that Fazlur Rahman wants to pack the democratic system up because he himself is not a part of it. It's none of Supreme Court's business if someone boycotts or runs away from elections.

It is up to the government whether to be ousted through judiciary or face annihilation through elections, quipped Rashid.

The former minister said they cannot contest election because they cannot face masses. The government will be sent packing if it failed to release Rs21 billion [for holding elections].

COAS Asim Munir reaches China on four-day official visit: ISPR

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has reached China to pay a four-day official visit.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), COAS General Syed Asim Munir is currently paying a four-day official visit to China.

During COAS Munir's ongoing, both sides will hold discussions on enhancing the bilateral military relations, the military's media wing said.

Earlier, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir visited the Pak-Afghan border at Bajaur to spend Eidul Fitr with troops and to uplift their morale and resolve, ARY News reported quoting Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

According to the military's media wing, the COAS Munir hailed the



commitment and professionalism of the soldiers posted at the border. The army chief lauded the border security arrangements and operational preparedness.

He expressed that the military is committed towards the defence of the frontiers and Pakistan's armed forces are always ready to thwart any threat to ensure the territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Nawaz, Muqam discuss party matters in KP



News Desk

JEDDAH : Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif met Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader Amir Muqam in Jeddah on Monday.

In the one-on-one meeting, PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz was also present. In the meeting, the two leaders shed light on the economic and political situation of the country.

The two leaders had a detailed discussion on party affairs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PML-N supremo urged Mr Muqam to play his part in maintaining discipline within the party.

On Sunday, Ms Nawaz responded

to the alleged audio leak of Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial's mother-in-law.

In a statement on Twitter, Ms Nawaz expressed concern that decisions were being made based on the likes and dislikes of wives and mothers-in-law, rather than on the basis of constitution and law.

She warned that such an approach could lead to sedition and chaos, and would make development and progress nothing more than a dream.

Ms Nawaz also criticised the Supreme Court bench hearing the election case, which she referred to as a "Saas Court" or "Mother-in-Law Court."

Efforts afoot to provide maximum facilities to pilgrims: Talha

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Monday said despite difficulties, efforts were afoot to provide maximum facilities to pilgrims during Hajj 2023.

Talking to the media in Makkah, the minister said due to time constraints, he had made an emergency visit to Saudi Arabia in order to give a final shape to the Hajj arrangements for pilgrims.

He said he was holding meetings with quarters concerned for the provision of the best possible facilities to the Pakistan pilgrims in Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah.

He stressed the importance of providing adequate arrangements for pilgrims' residence, food, trans-

port, and medical needs during their holy journey in Makkah and Madina.

Senator Talha shared that the proposal of hiring services of Pakistani expatriates in Saudi Arabia who were acquainted with the local rules and regulations, areas and language were under consideration.

He believed that this step would enable the pilgrims to be entertained in a more appropriate manner and would help reduce the overall expenses, stating that bringing Moavineene-Hujjaj from Pakistan would be a costly decision.

He said inflation and the depreciation of the Pakistan rupee were the main factors affecting the overall cost of Hajj operation this year adding that he would bring all the matters and his efforts to the notice of the federal cabinet and media on his return to Pakistan.

PPP Sindh postpones its protest on April 25

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh Senator Nisar Ahmad Khuhro on Monday said that the People's Party Sindh has postponed the protest on April 25 across the province.

He said we demanded from all institutions including the judiciary to listen to the voice of the people and hold general elections on same day across the country.

He said that if the voice of the people was not heard, the date of the protest will be announced again.

Nisar Khuhro said that Pakistan cannot afford separate elections. He also said that separate elections would undermine the country's political system.

Separate elections will put question marks on the transparency of elections for ever; he said and added, elections

on same day can only strengthen the political system.

He also added that according to clause 69 of the Election Act, the elections for the national and provincial assemblies should be held simultaneously on same day across the country.

The President PPP Sindh said separate elections will divide the country into two parts and will impact the results of national and other two provincial assemblies.

Nisar Khuhro also said that we would not allow anyone to divide the country into two parts adding the Election Commission of Pakistan has the power to hold elections and any interference in the Commission's power will be an attempt to rig the polls.

The court must review its decision by constituting a full court and it must not support the conspiratorial ambitions of PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, he said.

The relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran are improving: Qureshi

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that Congratulations to the Muslim Ummah, after a long time, the Muslim Ummah is coming together. The relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran are improving. Muslim countries are seeing an improvement in the tension in their relations with each other, progress is being made in the objectives for which the OIC was created. After 12 years after the death of Syed Ali Geelani, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Zardari is going to Delhi

I hope that today he will not forget the Muslims of Occupied Kashmir and will defend the rights of Kashmiris there and strongly defend Pakistan's historical position on Occupied Kashmir.

He will investigate the ill-treatment of minorities in India. Hope he will not forget to meet the Hurriyat leadership during his visit to India. He expressed these views while speaking to the media at the premises of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria after performing

the Eid-ul-Fitr prayers.

Former Member of National and Provincial Assembly Makhdoomzada Zain Hussain Qureshi was also present on this occasion and said that Tehreek-e-Insaf wants to bring the country out of the constitutional crisis that the country has faced. The Supreme Court has given an opportunity to all the political parties to come together and take the country out of the constitutional and political crisis through negotiations.

The opportunity provided by the Chief Justice should be taken advantage of by all the political parties. Tehreek-e-Insaf is in favor of negotiations, but there should be purposeful and meaningful negotiations.

He said that there is political chaos in the country at present which is harmful for the country. Tehreek-e-Insaf wishes to end chaos in the country and move the country towards development. We want to talk but this sitting should not be a delaying tactic.

He said that if the conversation is heard, elections can be held simultaneously. If there are no negotiations, no one can stop the election on May



14. The decision of the Supreme Court regarding the election is clear. The 27th date has come.

I hope all the resources will be provided to the Election Commission on 27th. He said that PDM had

come to brought the country out of the economic crisis but the nation saw that it made the economic crisis more complicated. Regarding the security in the election, the PDM government should not spoil the image of the coun-

try so much that the country is a laughing stock at the international level.

In response to a question regarding the attack on the truck in Occupied Kashmir, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that the attack on the

truck seems like a drama even today, just like Pulwama was staged.

In response to a question regarding Nawaz Sharif's meeting with the Saudi ruler, he said, "I hope Nawaz Sharif has said good things to Muhammad bin Sulaiman."

In response to a question regarding not getting a ticket for the provincial assembly seat from PP 217, he said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan has decided to keep seven in the center in the interest of the country and to stay close to him.

Earlier, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, along with Makhdoom Mureed Hussain Qureshi, Makhdoom Zada Zain Hussain Qureshi, Makhdoom Sajjad Hussain Qureshi, Moin Riaz Qureshi and other family members offered Eid prayers in the premises of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria.

At the end of the prayer, a special prayer was offered for the security and development of the country. After performing the Eid prayer, he visited the shrines, laid wreaths of lamps and recited Fatiha on the graves of his elders buried in the court premises.

Prayers

LAHORE: Muslim devotees offer special morning prayers on the first day, to start the Eid-ul-Fitr festival at historical Badshahi Mosque in Provincial Capital.

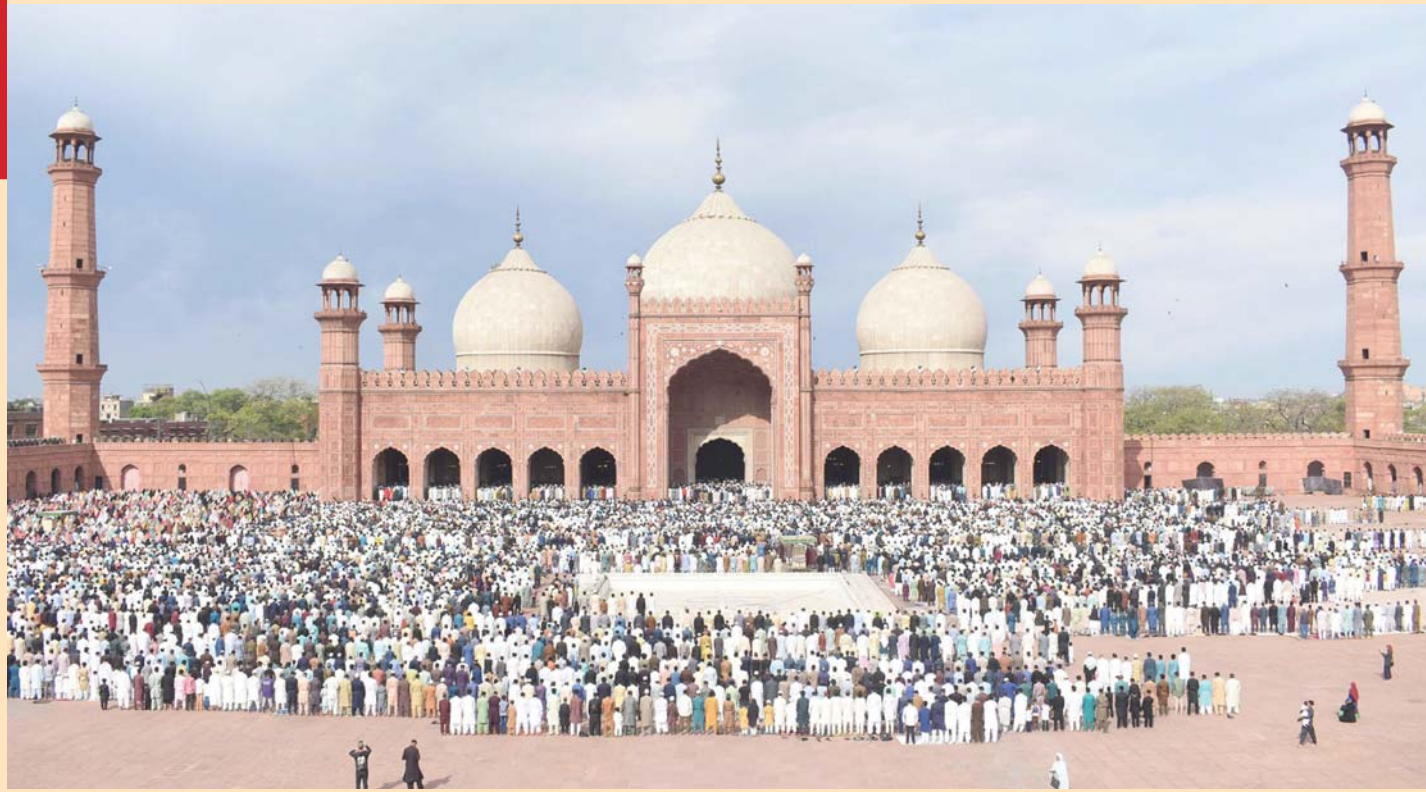


Photo: Online

Sardar Attique accuses India of intolerance over Mosque closures on Eid-ul-Fitr

Abdul Majeed Tahir

DHIRKOT: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the religious restrictions and Mosque closures of the people of Occupied Kashmir are proof of the fascism of India, not opening the Jama Masjid for Eid prayers is the religious sentiments of the people. It is an insult, cruelty is cruelty again, if it increases, it disappears. The extreme of cruelty is the illegal occupation of Kashmir by India. He expressed these views yesterday at Mujahid-e-Awal House at Ghaziabad. Delegations from all over Azad Kashmir congratulated him on Eid-ul-Fitr. Former President of Muslim Conference Muzaffarabad former Minister Shamim Ali Malik Seyad Amjad Gardazi Advocate Malik Aman City Sheikh Maqsood Ahmed, Former Assembly Candidate



Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Allama Jawad Hussain Jafari, President of Muzaffarabad District Yasir Naqvi Advocate, Syed Taswar Musavi, Haroon Azad, Ahad Qureshi, Sardar Azhar Nazar from Rawalkot, Syed Azhar Shah Member District Council Bagh Raja Tabarak Ali, Munir Qureshi, Rafiq Abbasi, Raja Munir Khan, Hamayun Chaghatai, Aamir Noor Abbasi and other political and social personalities

met and congratulated the President Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan added on this occasion and said That the United Nations and the OIC should review the internal situation of Occupied Kashmir and take concrete steps on this issue, he said that the Kashmir issue is a historical and long-standing issue that has put the peace of South Asia at stake. Ignoring this problem, there can be no peace in South Esha by freezing Kashmir. The people of this region have also made sacrifices, Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan said that the time has come for the people of the subcontinent to resolve the Kashmir issue under the United Nations for a prosperous and better future. It is not possible, the President Muslim Conference distributed Eid among the poor and the poor and small children on the occasion and a meal was arranged for the guests who came to the Mujahid-e-Awal House.

Police firing: Two innocent youngsters were killed

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the night of Eid-ul-Fitr in Multan, the youths of the police opened fire for not stopping during the night drive. As a result of the firing, the two youths lost their lives. Action is being taken to arrest the police personnel

On the night of Eid-ul-Fitr in the area of police station Shah Rukn Alam in Multan, an incident of firing on motorcycle-riding youths took place by the police officers on patrolling on the signal of not stopping. According to the police officials, a case has also been registered in the complaint of the father of the deceased Syed Sami.

The police officials further said that the policemen were patrolling the area late at night, action is being taken to arrest the policeman involved in the firing. The police officer involved in the shooting was stationed in Shah Rukan Alam police station, Multan.

PM Chaudhry Anwarul Haq offered Eid prayers at Jamia Masjid

Abdul Majeed Tahir

BHIMBAR: Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq offered Eid prayers at his native city in Bhambhar district. After assuming the office of Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq for the first time in the constituency, the Prime Ministers arrived in the constituency for the first time without any protocol. The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, offered Eid prayers at Jamia Masjid Anwarul Haq. Sending heartfelt Eid greetings to the people from all walks of life, he conveyed the message that we should value humanity, helplessness, mutual love, brotherhood. By Commissioner Mirza Aeshad Mehmood Raja Muhammad Akmal Khan, SDM Muhammad Ais Baig, DSO Chaudhry Kamal Sobhani, DSP Chaudhry Muhammad Azhar, Xion power Chaudhry Ehsanullah DIO Adnan Mukhtar along with district officers, police and other departments participated. Maulana Aftab Madani. Eid prayer was performed under the leadership of Maulana Aftab Madani.

Mastermind of bank robbery gang arrested in Miran Shah



Adam Khan Wazir

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Security agencies have successfully operated, against a bank robbery gang in North Waziristan district head-quarter Miranshah.

Naseer Ullah, the mastermind of the bank robbery gang, has been arrested by the sensitive agencies in a very short time.

Naseer Ullah revealed during interrogation that he was entrusted with the responsibility of arranging weapons and vehicles to rob the bank, against the gang, the Miran Shah police raided his house on the night of 20/21 April, after which he fled from there.

On 21 April, accused Naseer Ullah surrendered himself to the security forces, but he also handed over Rs 3.95 million to the security forces, out of the looted 7.2 million rupees, 5.42 million rupees have been recovered and deposited back to the bank.

Security forces along with other agencies are conducting raids against more accused and soon all will be brought to justice.

Security Red alert at parks and public entertainment places: Umar Jahangir

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: The district administration is present in the field to serve the citizens on Eid-ul-Fitr. Teams of WASA, Waste Management Company, Corporation, Rescue 1122 are engaged in public service, special camps of Rescue 1122 have also been established in view of public rush on rivers and canals. Dangerous swings were closed on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir

Security is on red alert at parks and public entertainment places. Umar Jahangir Deputy Commissioner Multan Camps have been set up on rivers and canals for the safety of the people. A central control room has also been set up to deal with any incident during the Eid days.

Eid Milan party was arranged by WAWA

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In District Lower South Waziristan at Government Government High School Wana on behalf of the Welfare Association (WAWA) arranged an "Eid Milan Party" in which all the General Council members present in Wana of WAWA participated fully.

Lunch was arranged by "WAWA" President Rahmat Ullah Wazir and satisfaction was expressed on all ongoing activities of Wawa.

Addressing on this occasion, President Rehmat Ullah Wazir said that in the future, all the sectors of Wana have resolved to play a more active role and deliver the message of Wana Welfare Association from door to door.

Meanwhile, the president thanked all the members whole heartedly and said that such a program plays an important role in strengthening the basic units of the organization and strengthening the inter-connection.

Mufti Mehmood family to continue service of Dera: FMC Mufti Asad Mahmood

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Federal Minister of Communications Mufti Asad Mehmood has vowed to continue the struggle for the development and prosperity of Dera Ismail Khan which has long been awaiting development-oriented initiatives.

Talking to delegations of elected local government representatives and the party's workers who called on him here at his residence, the federal minister said that the service and development of Dera Ismail Khan was part of his family's mission.

As part of such efforts, he said about Rs 10 billion on the repair of several roads in Dera Ismail Khan and Rs 4



billion were being spent on expanding and designing the bypass road according to modern requirements.

Despite financial difficulties, he said tenders had been floated for over-

all Rs 14 billion worth development projects in the district which include construction of road from Nawab Hotel to Qureshi morr and from Qureshi Morr to Rimak besides other connecting roads.

He said work on dualization of road from Yarik to Mufti Mehmood Chowk and from Mufti Mehmood Chowk onward to Sheikh Yusuf Chowk was in progress.

He said a comprehensive development plan had been worked out, featuring designing and repairing the existing Dera bypass road as per the modern requirements and beautification of the bypass road.

He said that residents of the district experienced difficulties while travel-

ing on the dilapidated condition of Dera-Multan Road, Dera-Peshawar and CPEC adjacent roads and added that those would be improved.

He said that construction of Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC), Mufti Mehmood Medical College, Mufti Mehmood Hospital, Agricultural University Dera Ismail Khan, opening of Dera Ismail Khan Pesco circle and lift canal project were giving testimony about the sincere public services by the Mufti Mehmood family.

He said that the Ministry of Communications had completed work on several other projects for the development of Dera Ismail Khan district and the public would soon get major news in that regard.



Islamabad

15° - 23° Clear

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Asif Ali Zardari says 'wants to see Bilawal as PM in my life'

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former president and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari expressed his wishes that he wants to see his son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the prime minister (PM) of Pakistan in his life.

While addressing the elected local government (LG) representatives and people of the Zardari tribe in Nawabshah, Asif Ali Zardari said that he wants to see Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the prime minister of Pakistan in his life.

He claimed that they ousted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan from the prime minister's office to save the country. "PPP is just a coalition partner of the incumbent government. We will provide employment to the people as we did in past after coming into power."

"I did so much for my people and they stand beside me after my father. Now, these people should now support Bilawal and Aseefa. You should maintain unity and harmony, as well as work hard for the next generations."



Earlier, Zardari welcomed the CJP suggestion for political parties to hold talks for the election date. The political parties have initiated talks to solve the issue regarding elections, Asif Zardari added.

He said when the PDM coalition

parties should come on the same page for the general elections then the PDM will approach the opposition as well.

The PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari further said that if the CJP gives some time then holding elections on one day will be possible through consultations.

Violation

ISLAMABAD: Bikers are climbing up the green belt in the middle of the Murree road due to the massive traffic jam outside Lake View Park, which may cause any incident any time.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

China, India holds Corps Commander level meeting

News Desk

BELJING: China and India held the 18th round of Corps Commander Level Meeting, a move Chinese experts said on Monday showed that the border issue is shifting from a standoff to normalized management.

The militaries of China and India held a deep exchange of views on resolving the relevant questions in accordance with the two heads of states' important consensus in their 18th round of Corps Commander Level Meeting held on Sunday, Mao Ning, a spokesperson at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said at a press conference.

The 18th round of meetings was fruitful, as it showed the two sides are willing to further ease



the border situation and realize normalization of bilateral ties amid the current international and regional situations, Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, told the Global Times today.

It has been almost three years since the start of the China-India border standoff, and the two sides have avoided an escalation through dialogues based

on managing differences and meeting each other halfway, Qian noted.

The China-India border issue is now gradually shifting from a conflict and a standoff to a normalized management phase, and the situation on the border is expected to become steadier and calmer in the future, Qian said. "But the border issue remains complex, so it still requires both sides to further implement mechanisms at all levels and through different channels to meet each other halfway as much as possible, so as to find a fair and reasonable solution," he said.

Citing Indian officials familiar with the matter, Hindustan Times reported on Sunday that Chinese State Councilor and Minister of

National Defense Li Shangfu is expected to visit India for a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in New Delhi from Thursday to Friday.

Li and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu are expected to hold bilateral meetings with Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday, while the main SCO defense ministers' meeting will be held on Friday, the Indian report said.

Qian said that the 18th round of military meetings between China and India will create the proper atmosphere for the SCO meeting, at a time when the SCO is expected to play a more influential role in the world under the current international situation, and as Iran prepares to join the body.

Pervez Khattak's wife dies in Lahore



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former defence minister Pervez Khattak's wife dies in Lahore on Monday.

Sources said her funeral prayers will be offered in the Punjab capital tomorrow and she will also be laid to rest here.

President Dr Arif Alvi expressed grief over the death of Mr Khattak's wife. "May Allah grant her family the courage and strength to bear this irreparable loss," he prayed.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani also expressed sorrow over the death of Mr Khattak's wife.

Celebrate Eid ul-Fitr with tight security in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock police kept mum over the rampant air firing and professional beggary during moon night particularly in sensitive areas of Gondal Mandi, Attock Khurd posing life threats and severe panic to the people despite assuring fool proof security measures by District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan.

Police reports say that 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 in the 343 mosques and 13 open places for the security. DPO Attock also directed the police to discourage the aerial firing and rioters on the occasion of Chand Raat and Eid ul-Fitr.

DPO himself supervised all the security arrangements with the direction not to compromise on security matters to avert any untoward incident in the wake of recent wave of terrorism in the country. However the inflation stricken Muslim community of district Attock also celebrated their festivities of the Eid ul Fitr in line with other parts the country from Saturday April 22-23, 2023 amid tight security cover.

Meanwhile, District Emergency Officer Attock Rescue 1122 Mr. Ali Hussain also chalked out the emergency plan to monitor all rescue cases during the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr with the placement of officials and rescue guards to provide relief to the public in case of any emergency. Rescue posts were also established at mosques, Eid places and other important areas to deal with any emergency situation. In view of the increase in temperature, rescue posts were also set up at Attock Khurd in the Indus River where rescue personnel were present at all times, DEO Attock added.

This year the announcement first came from the chief cleric of Ruet e Hilal Committee Molana Abdul Khahir 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.

Commissioner visits Murree to inspect facilities

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta on Monday visited the hill station Murree to review the arrangements made for the tourists.

Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi Division Syed Khurram Ali Shah and Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema also accompanied him.

According to Commissioner's office spokesman, he inspected the facility centres, control room, traffic plan, facilities at hospitals, cleanliness operation by RWMC and ongoing surveillance with the help of CCTV cameras.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner said that the Rawalpindi administration had devised a comprehensive plan for the tourists on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr. He said that Murree is the hub of tourism and it is the responsibility of the administration to provide the best kind of facilities to the visitors in an efficient manner.

He added that seven facilitation centres besides a central control room had been set up to aid the tourists while pamphlets were also distributed with relevant official's contact numbers in case of any convenience.

Chatta said facilitation centres had been set up at GPO Chowk, Kashmir Point, Jhika Street, Barian, Lower Topa, Kaldana and Satra Mile. He said that tourists were also informed about Murree weather and arrangements made by the administration through FM radio, print, electronics and social media.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Murree Captain Retired Qatam Ijaz has said that the representatives of administrative bodies including Murree Administration, Police, Rescue 1122, Tourism, Health Department, Civil Defense and others were also present at the facility centres to provide awareness to the tourists.

To save the tourists from rushing, a comprehensive traffic plan was also in place to monitor the traffic flow with the help of CCTV cameras.

The machinery of the highway department was also in operational condition to deal with any emergency, he added.

Qaiser on warpath against PML-N

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser launched on Monday a broad attack on the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), accusing it of mounting pressure on the judiciary.

The former National Assembly speaker said that his party was ready to accept every decision of the Supreme Court. Appreciating the role of the top court, Mr Qaiser said, "The Supreme Court has given a good opportunity to the political parties in trying to control the political conflict between each other."

Recalling the call for elections, Mr Qaiser said, "Only fresh elections can pull the country out of the quagmire." He said that we are serious about solving the problems according to the constitution.

On the other hand, PTI chairman Imran Khan said on Sunday that he was ready to negotiate with the incumbent government if it dissolves the assemblies and comes up with a "neutral" caretaker setup in May.

"If PDM has any proposal, we will be ready to discuss it. If they are saying that the elections will be held in October, then even then they will make excuses. The government wants to trap us. It is better to suggest holding elections in June or July."

Taking a jibe at PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, Mr Khan claimed, "Nawaz Sharif was guaranteed to get rid of me and PTI. Making bogus cases and arresting the PTI leaders is part of London plan. Nawaz Sharif is a criminal who looted billions of rupees."

President condoles death of Pervaiz Khattak's wife



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday expressed grief over the death of former chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pervaiz Khattak's wife.

The president prayed to Allah Almighty for peace of the departed soul.

He also sympathised with the bereaved family and prayed for strength to them to bear the loss with fortitude.

PPP for dialogue for promotion of democracy, political stability: Faisal Karim Kundi

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Federal Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi has said all state institutions should work within their constitutional domain while respecting the parliament as their mother.

He expressed these views while talking to various delegations of elders, party workers and media persons who called on him here in connection with Eidul Fitr to exchange Eid greetings.

Speaking on the occasion, Faisal Karim Kundi was of the opinion that there should not be a situation of confronta-



tion between the judiciary and the parliament which was not a debating club, rather the country's supreme institution, making laws and the rest must follow them.

Conducting elections was the responsibility of the Election Commission, while the Supreme Court was supposed

to deliver justice by announcing decisions of the majority, he maintained.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that the negotiation was a political process which was pursued by the political parties.

Under the leadership of former prime minister and

senior vice-chairman of the party, Yousaf Raza Gilani, Faisal Karim Kundi said PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had constituted a three-member committee comprising federal ministers Qamar-ul-Zaman Kaira and Syed Naveed Qamar to contact the coalition parties and the PTI in that regard.

He said that the PPP believed that Parliament was right forum for the political parties to initiate dialogue among them for resolving issues instead of any other institution or platform and no one can force anyone to negotiate.

He said PPP President Asif Ali Zardari, too, had already

clarified in his speech at the ceremony held regarding the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of Pakistan the head of the parliamentary system was the Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and unconditional talks would be held under his leadership.

He said that PPP favored dialogue in order to promote democracy and bring political stability to the country.

He said concerns of some other parties including the PPP regarding negotiations with PTI were based on reality as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had created an atmosphere of politics of hatred in the country.

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R&D and Pakistan: Firm's Perceptive

ShoaibAijaz & Amna Khan

R&D stands for Research and Development, which is a process of systematically investigating and creating new ideas, technologies, or products. R&D is crucial for firms to stay competitive, improve existing products or services, and develop new ones.

In the context of firms, R&D refers to companies' activities to innovate and create new technologies, products, and services. R&D can involve a range of activities, including basic and applied research, product design and development, and testing and validation.

Research and development (R&D) are frequently a long-term process that demands a considerable investment of time, money, and resources, but it can ultimately result in major improvements in a firm's competitiveness and profitability.

R&D stats for Pakistani companies, Pakistan spends significantly little on research and development (R&D) as compared to other nations, according to the most recent data available. The entire R&D spending in Pakistan in 2018 was 0.29 percent of GDP, which is much less than the 1.7% average for the world.

Furthermore, only a minor portion of R&D in Pakistan is carried out by the private sector; the bulk is carried out

by the government. The government contributed 0.45% of GDP to R&D in 2019–2020, while the private sector only contributed 0.04%, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Despite these difficulties, several Pakistani businesses have made R&D investments. The following notable businesses have expressed an interest in R&D: Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM), Fauji Fertil-

izers in the United States, which is regarded as one of the world's top innovators, spent \$452 billion on R&D in 2019, an increase of 7.4% from the year before.

In a similar vein, corporations in Japan—another developed country renowned for its technological advancements—spent over \$166 billion on R&D in 2019. With firms investing close to \$108 billion in R&D in 2019, Germany is one of the top-spending countries in Europe.

a few crucial areas to compete with a developed nation in terms of R&D. To encourage private sector investment in R&D, the government must first enhance financing for R&D activities. This can be accomplished by providing tax benefits or other financial inducements to businesses that invest in R&D. Pakistan should also concentrate on developing a strong R&D infrastructure that includes research labs, testing facilities, and technological parks.

Pakistani Firms can compete in R&D with established companies by concentrating on a few key areas. The following are some tactics Pakistani businesses can use to successfully compete with established businesses in R&D: Create a robust talent pipeline Pakistani businesses can do this by funding programs for education and training. This can assist businesses in luring top talent, keeping it, and growing a talented staff that can spur innovation and expansion. Focus on specialized industries Pakistani businesses might concentrate on specialized industries where they have a competitive advantage, such as biotechnology, agriculture, and renewable energy. This can assist them in creating distinctive goods and services that established businesses find difficult to imitate.

Author: ShoaibAijaz: MPhil scholar and Research Assistant (PIDE). Co-Author Amna Khan: MPhil scholar Economics and Finance in PIDE

The following are some tactics Pakistani businesses can use to successfully compete with established businesses in R&D: Create a robust talent pipeline Pakistani businesses can do this by funding programs for education and training.

Developed countries typically have robust R&D ecosystems that promote cooperation between corporations, academic institutions, and research organizations.

Pakistan has been actively engaged in research and development (R&D) in several disciplines, including engineering, information technology, and biotechnology. In terms of money, infrastructure, and a lack of coordination among many stakeholders in the R&D sector, the nation still faces several difficulties.

Pakistan needs to concentrate on

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Pakistan needs to concentrate on

Sudan War

Here we are again, with yet another state in the Arab and African arenas erupting in flames. At root, the Sudan conflict is prosaically simple—two figures are willing to burn their nation to the ground through their all-consuming desire to be president, as if the right to govern could be claimed by force rather than by the popular will.

Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, or Hemedti, is thought to have begun his career as a camel rustler before distinguishing himself with the Janjaweed militia in Darfur, carrying out genocidal campaigns along with systematic rape, looting and livestock raiding. An estimated 300,000 people were slaughtered and 2.5 million displaced during the still-unresolved Darfur conflict.

I encountered Hemedti when I traveled as a journalist with the entourage of the loathsome dictator Omar Bashir when he was president. I recall a short, inelegant and unimpressive figure, literally in Bashir's shadow. Having stabbed his mentor Bashir in the back, Hemedti's forces were responsible in 2019 for an appalling massacre on the streets Khartoum of several hundred civilian protesters who were tortured, raped, murdered and tossed in the Nile—prefiguring the savagery of recent days.

Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan was a career military officer who was a regional army commander in Darfur before ascending to the highest ranks of the military. When Hemedti and Burhan colluded in their 2021 coup against the civilian leadership, the entire nation rose in anger against them and largely thwarted their ambitions. Now Burhan and Hemedti are waging war against each other. After days of fighting, both sides boast partial control of key institutions such as the presidential palace and Khartoum airport.

The perennial outsider whose tribe is from outside Sudan, Hemedti and his Rapid Support Forces appear to have relished laying waste to prosperous central districts of Sudan's cosmopolitan capital. In the past few years there has been modest economic progress, with inflation reined in, trade deficit reductions, and progress toward debt forgiveness. But each successive military intervention undermined these advances. The latest developments will torpedo the economy completely, torching districts that are traditional motors of the national economy.

Burhan's army has control of the skies and heavier weaponry, but Hemedti's battle-hardened forces have recent experience of no-holds-barred conflict, with many having been mercenaries in Libya and Yemen. How many farcical failed ceasefires must we go through to demonstrate that neither side cares anything about the population they aspire to rule?

With streets littered with rotting corpses, citizens are making terrifying decisions about whether to hunker down or flee, with food and water becoming increasingly difficult to access. Sudan already had Africa's second-largest displaced population, with over a million civilians forcibly displaced. Even before the latest fighting, the UN predicted that 16 million Sudanese would require humanitarian assistance in 2023.



Amjad Rasmi

Naya & Purana Pakistan and Advice of Army Chief

On 23 March 2013, Khan introduced the Naya Pakistan Resolution (New Pakistan) at the start of his election campaign. He has been repeatedly saying to provide a uniform justice system for all. During his victory speech, he laid out the policy outlines for his future government. Khan said his inspiration is to build Pakistan as a humanitarian state based on principles of Riasat E Madina, the first Islamic state of Medina. He described that his future government will put the poor and commoners of the country first and all policies will be geared towards elevating the standards of living of the lesser fortunate. He promised an investigation into rigging allegations. He said that he wanted a united Pakistan and would refrain from victimizing his political opponents. Everyone would be equal under the law. He promised a simple and less costly government, devoid of showy pompousness in which the prime minister's house will be converted into an educational institute and governor houses will be used for public benefit. He said to bring a uniform education system for all. During his electoral campaign he promised to provide Fifty Lakh houses and one Crore jobs. His ideology took attention of the masses especially youth.

Opposition leaders in Pakistan hailed the historic event as Prime Minister Imran Khan became the first premier in the country's history to be removed through a no-confidence motion. The joint opposition—a rainbow of liberal, and radically religious parties—secured the support of 174 members in the 342-member National Assembly,

more than the needed strength of 172 to oust the prime minister on a day that witnessed a uncertainty with multiple adjournments of the lower house. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan lost a crucial trust vote in the National Assembly, paving way for the joint opposition to form a government ahead of upcoming elections.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif assured that the joint opposition after forming the government at the Centre, will not take revenge against their political opponents. "...we thank everyone for their sacrifices, and now, once again, a Pakistan based on Constitution and law is about to come into existence," the former Punjab chief minister told the National Assembly after the vote. He spoke of healing the divided nation as he emphasised. "When the time comes, we will speak in detail, but we want to heal the wounds of the nation; we will not send innocent people to jails, and we will not take revenge."

Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari congratulated the nation, saying "we have made history." "I would like to congratulate the whole nation and this House, as for the first time in the history of the country, a no-confidence motion has succeeded and we have made history," said Bilawal. Pakistan Former PM Benazir Bhutto's son recalled the events associated with April 10, noting that the country approved the 1973 Constitution on this day. "On April 10, 1986, Benazir Bhutto ended

her self-imposed exile and arrived in Lahore to launch her struggle against Ziaul haq," he added. The PPP leader then went on to say that on April 10, 2022, the person who was declared "selected" by the Opposition and became an "undemocratic burden" on the country faced the end of his rule. "Today, on April 20, 2022, we welcome [you] back to the Purana Pakistan," Geo News quoted Bilawal as saying.

While, PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz Sharif welcomed the ouster of the PTI government saying, "The nightmare for my beloved Pakistan is over." "Time to heal & repair," she wrote on Twitter.

The new government has been continuously blaming Khan's government for current financial crises. Government leaders have been saying that the situation of reserves and inflation was much better in Purana Pakistan and only Khan is responsible for the current worst situation. While, Khan during his period has been insisting that Opposition is a group of thieves who have been looting Pakistan since 70 years. He ensured to build a Naya Pakistan with much better living conditions. Accusations and blames have been seen from both sides which resembles as a race for point scoring.

In this race of blaming and accusing, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has called upon everyone to give up the debate of "Naya" and "Purana" and instead talk about "our Pakistan". He also explained that the current campaign against

terrorists was part of the already approved strategy of the state. "This campaign will include all the necessary components of the government like legal, economic, social and foreign besides security institutions," he said during an in-camera briefing on national security situation in the National Assembly Hall. According to sources privy to the session, Gen Asim said, "The elected representatives of people should determine the country's destination, and the army will fully support them in the journey to development and success." The MNAs welcomed the army chief's views by thumping desks while Gen Asim congratulated the parliament and its members on the 50th anniversary of the implementation of the 1973 Constitution. People exercise their right to express opinion through the Constitution and parliament, he said, adding that "sovereignty belongs to Almighty Allah and the Constitution has been empowered by the command of Allah Almighty". He added that the Constitution states that the power will be exercised by the elected representatives of the people. This was Gen Asim's first briefing to lawmakers after he took over from his predecessor Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa in November last year.

Readers, Pakistan is facing the worst economic crises in the history and during these situations the statement from our Army Chief is a good sign and have been welcomed by all segments of the society. It's time to be unite and practically work for the progress and development of the country rather than blaming each other. Nation demands from the leadership to come out of the debate of Naya and Purana Pakistan and just work for The Pakistan.

Talk doesn't cook rice

Arisha Irshad Ali

From 2018 we are hoping to be in NAYA PAKISTAN while dealing with all tactics of PURANA PAKISTAN. Hope is the only ingredient in a human recipe which makes food tasty. Everything for the human race is hope. Hoping for the best all the time won't work; we need to prepare for a variety of possibilities and take steps to make our aspirations come true. The same goes for our nation (PIYARA PAKISTAN). Naya Pakistan's objectives must be attained through action and a methodical strategy. Are the goals of the Pakistan we see being achieved by each of our individual actions? We will be held accountable for our nation through this activity.

If we look back at history, we can see that crises often provide individuals with fresh insights and chances. There is a bad side, since every circumstance is becoming worse in Pakistan due to problems. Why is that so? Is a change of perspective necessary? An emphatic yes. Individually, we commit

to fulfilling the duties listed above. Government has the authority to alter Pakistan's dynamics. Rebuilding the nation's morale and confidence is necessary. This will act as a stimulant for Pakistan's economic growth. Prosperity is built on the economy. Business is essential for boosting the economy. In order to welcome and draw in foreign investment, we must improve our infrastructure. If Pakistan doesn't have the bare minimum of infrastructure, we can't assume that investors will invest. The investment will alter the course of events for Pakistan. India welcomes foreign brands since it has proven to be trustworthy. This is a win-win situation for India as these brands will give them big bucks in the long run.

Transparency is made possible by technology, which alters the entire dynamic of the world. Similar to this, our government needs to ensure prompt responsibility for all citizens. The right check-in balance can work miracles. The things are measured and monitored. We must not opt for short-term gains for long-term pain.

Technology to represent central focus at 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market in Dubai

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: Representatives from more than 80 of the world's leading travel technology companies are preparing to exhibit at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from Monday 1 to Thursday 4 May.

Over 2,000m² of exhibition space will be dedicated to industry technology during the 30th edition of ATM, representing a 54.7% increase in sector participation compared to last year's show. ATM 2023's Travel Tech space will also be supplemented by a brand-new Sustainability Hub, which will shine a spotlight on the latest environmentally responsible travel trends and innovations.

The ATM Travel Tech Stage sponsored by Sabre, will host a selection of in-depth panel discussions that will explore how modern innovations such as artificial intelligence, big data

and Web3 are enabling seamless operations, professional development, payments, accessibility, sustainable travel and enhanced customer experiences.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "My colleagues and I are delighted to see such strong representation from travel technology professionals at this year's show. Encouraging innovation is especially pertinent to ATM 2023 as it is a crucial component of our theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero.' It is essential for our industry to support and invest in the most promising technologies today in order to build a better and more sustainable travel sector for future generations."

Sponsored by Sabre, the ATM Travel Tech Stage will host a series of innovation-centric discussions and events throughout the show. The first session, 'Technology: The Enabler of Sustainable Travel', will see industry experts discuss how online tools are making it



easier for consumers to mitigate their environmental impact when purchasing and planning trips. Moderated by Shashank Nigam, Founder and CEO of SimpliFlying, the panel will feature insights from Tom Kershaw, Chief Product and Technology Officer at Travelport; Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer and Head of ESG

Reporting at Amadeus; and Carlo Olejniczak, Vice President and Managing Director of EMEA at Booking.com.

The ATM Travel Tech Stage will also provide the backdrop for a selection of other panels, including 'The Main Trends Impacting Travel in 2023 and Beyond'. In partnership with Sabre, this session will explore the ways in which



our industry has harnessed innovation in the wake of the global pandemic, as well as how technology is likely to drive further advancements over the coming years. Moderated by Abdul-Razzaq Iyer, Vice President – Middle East at Sabre, speakers will include Andy Finkelstein, SVP – Global Agency Sales & Delivery at Sabre; Jason Hooper, Head of Digital Solutions at Dnata; and Dean Wicks, Chief Flights Officer at Wego.

ATM 2023 will feature a Sustainability Hub for the first time in the show's history. This space will offer a venue for sessions dedicated to the latest sustainable travel trends and innovations while

providing the setting for the ATM 2023 Start-up Competition – an event hosted by conference partner Plug and Play, which will see entrepreneurs go head-to-head in a 'Sustainable Tech Pitch Battle'.

ATM 2023's technology segment will host a diverse array of other industry-leading exhibitors in addition to those mentioned above, including Itrip, Traveazy DMCC, TBO.com, WebBeds FZ LLC and Expedia Inc, to name but a few. In total, the ATM Travel Tech Stage will feature more than 20 innovation-focused sessions and events during the course of the four-day event.

Salute

RAMALLAH: Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization Hussein Al-Sheikh and other members of the Executive Committee lay a wreath at the tomb of the martyr Yasser Arafat



Photo: Online

Amazing response at Eid Milan Party in Washington

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Eid al-Fitr was celebrated in the United States of America on Friday, April 21, 2023. Eid al-Fitr is observed as the accomplishment of religious duties during the month of Ramadan — month of fasting.

Americans of Azad Kashmir ancestry of Washington metropolitan area organized 'Eid Milan Party' at All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS), Virginia. There was an amazing response from the members of the community. Over 650 members of the community including women and children attended who were seen wearing the traditional dress of Kashmir. The banner of the Eid Milan read, "Happy Eid Mubarak: With prayers for the oppressed people of Jammu & Kashmir."

Gifts and certificate were given to more than dozen children who were able to fast for the first time. Masha'Allah! Certificates of appreciation were awarded to the following volunteers who were responsible for making the Eid Milan a big success; Quratul Ain Shah; Seemab Shafiq; Andleeb Waqas Khan; Nargis Mughal; and Latif Kiyani. Besides, more than 125 gift boxes were distributed among the children of all ages.

Ambassador Masood Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States was the guest of honor. Ambassador Masood Khan expressed his gratitude



to Azad Kashmir community for organizing such a wonderful event.

Sardar Zarif Khan, Secretary General of Kashmir American Welfare Association (KAWA) and main organizer of the 'Eid Milan Party' said that while we celebrate the Eid today, but we cannot turn the blind eye to the pain and suffering of our brothers and sisters in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Mir, President, World Kashmir Awareness Forum who attended the event along with other members of the board, expressed his admiration to the American community of Azad Kashmiri origin for being the advocates of Kashmir cause in the

United States.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, 'World Forum for Peace & Justice' said that it is the collective responsibility of diaspora to intensify their quest for peace and justice till they achieve the right to self-determination. He said that in recognition of all those who have laid down their lives so that the people of Kashmir may live with their heads held high, Kashmiri Americans vow to keep supporting our brethren in the occupied land.

Dr. Imtiaz Khan, Professor at George Washington University Medical Center said the purpose of attending the Eid gathering organized by Azad Kashmiris

in greater Washington DC area was to demonstrate the oneness of our cause and struggle for people in Indian occupied Kashmir.

Sardar Zubair Khan, co-organizer of Eid Milan spoke about the immense sacrifices given by the people of occupied Kashmir to regain their human rights and human dignity. Zubair Khan added that the sacrifice of the people of Kashmir will never go in vain.

Shoaib Irshad, another co-organizer of the Eid Milan said that the people of Azad Kashmir will be always there whenever people of occupied Kashmir need them. He said that Kashmiri American diaspora of Azad Kashmir ancestry demonstrates its unwavering solidarity with people of occupied Kashmir.

Raja Liaqat Kiyani, President of Kashmir House, Khalid Fahim of ICNA, Sardar Aftab Roshan Khan, Sardar Asghar Khan, Ms. Shamshad Begum, Maqsood Hussain, Zahid Kiyani of ICNA, Sardar Yameen Khan, Professor Saeed, Sardar Zahid Khan, Abdi Khan; Waseem Khan; Tariq Khan; Mohsin Khan; Sharaz Khan; Farooq Khan; Hayat Khan; Sardar Tariq Khan, Owais Khan, Bashir Khan, Sharafat Shah and Other persons who spoke included.

The Eid Milan was concluded after making special Dua for the martyrs of Kashmir freedom struggle.

New York's Empire State Building turns green for Eid



News Desk

NEW YORK: New York's iconic Empire State Building was lit in green to celebrate the Eid ul-Fitr holiday that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The green remained until the famous 102-story skyscraper closed to the public after midnight.

The skyscraper has carried out the tradition "for several years now — it is an annual lighting," a building spokeswoman said.

Muslim-Americans across the United States celebrated Eid ul-Fitr on Friday.

The Empire State Building famously shines specific colours for a number of religious holidays — pastel shades for Easter, blue and white for Hanukkah, and red and green for Christmas.

The privately-owned building receives hundreds of requests each year to be lit in particular colours for various causes and events.

Although the building does not make its selection process public, it does not accept requests for political campaigns, religious figures and organizations, or personal events.

'Eid Milan Party' held at Pakistan Embassy in Beijing

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque hosted an 'Eid Milan Party' to celebrate the day with the Pakistani community in Beijing, China on Saturday.

The members of the Pakistani community including students, teachers, businessmen, families, children and Embassy officials attended.

Ambassador Haque welcomed the guests on the auspicious occasion and exchanged Eid greetings with them.

Earlier, Eid ul Fitr prayers were offered at the mosque of the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing.

Ambassador Haque along with diplomats, officials, teachers, students offered Eid prayers.

Special prayers were offered for peace, progress and prosperity of Pakistan on the occasion.

The local Muslims as well as diplomats and students from Muslim countries also offered Eid prayers in the Chinese capital, other cities and regions with traditional zeal.

The emphasis was on family reunions, meeting friends, enjoying meals and wearing new clothes.

Pakistan assumes presidency of the Committee on Information for two-year term

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan was formally elected as chairman of the UN Committee on Information (COI), a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, for a two-year term (2023-24), with a pledge to promote fact-based information and fight against the spread of misinformation.

"We must combat hate speech," Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told COI's 45th annual session on Monday, pointing out that bad actors

were misusing digitalized platforms spawning social unrest and tensions within and among societies.

Ambassador Aamir Khan took over the chairmanship of the Committee on Information on behalf of Pakistan from Ecuador. It is the second time Pakistan has served the Committee as chairman. Over the past couple of years, Mariam Shaikh, press counsellor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, played an active role in the Committee, which examines the UN's public information policies and activ-

ities.

In his opening statement, the Pakistani envoy called for building a system that is cohesive appreciates diversity and enhances the understanding of the principles of the UN Charter.

"Bridging the digital divide and achieving universal connectivity by ensuring access to broadband and data for all is critical," Aamir Khan said, adding it will enable people to make informed decisions and contribute to the building of inclusive, peaceful, and just societies.

"It is the cure to the pandem-

ic of disinformation and hate speech," he added.

Highlighting the triple-crisis — the COVID-19 pandemic, the existential threat caused by climate change and the inter-related shocks to food, fuel and finance — the world is facing, Aamir Khan said COI's role in combating these challenges by ensuring accurate and timely information was critical.

"As we work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must persevere and renew our commitment to meeting these goals despite

challenges posed by Covid-19" he said.

He also called for confronting the existential threat of climate change, recalling the catastrophic flood in Pakistan last year, the terrible earthquake hitting Turkey and Syria this year and the threat posed by rising sea water and desertification are its serious manifestations.

"Our information systems should promote the exchange of information and best practices to accelerate the bold climate action" he urged.

Aamir Khan also underscored

the need for a technological divide and the lack of access by developing countries to reliable, factual, and multilingual information.

"We must address these gaps and create a fair, equitable and resilient global information landscape" he added.

He recalled Pakistan's initiative in the General Assembly, for the first time, adopted resolution 76/227 entitled "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", on 24 December 2021.

Later, 'Group of Friends' on Countering Disinformation was launched to advance the multidimensional response to counter all forms of disinformation, including in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Last Year, as G-77 (developing countries) Chair, Pakistan played a productive role in bringing a consensus-based resolution in the Committee on Information.

He also welcomed the new Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur of the Committee as well as new member- Estonia admitted to the Committee on Information.

Norway's Oil Fund to vote against climate resolution at BP



Commerce Desk

OSLO: Norway's \$1.4 trillion sovereign wealth fund, one of the world's largest investors, said on Saturday it will vote against a resolution calling on British oil major BP (BP.L) to adopt tougher greenhouse gas targets.

While BP already aims to reduce emissions, the motion filed by activist group Follow This ahead of an April 27 shareholder vote calls on the company to align with the Paris climate deal's goal to limit global warming.

Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), which operates the Norwegian fund, said last year that it plans to take a tougher line on companies that do not adopt credible climate plans.

It did not give a reason for rejecting the motion. But the fund has said in the past that while it sometimes backs environmental, social and governance (ESG) proposals put forward by activist groups, it carefully judges each case on its merits.

Follow This in an emailed statement said NBIM as a major investor should show leadership on climate issues.

"NBIM failed the first real test of its new climate voting policy," Follow This founder Mark van Baal wrote.

The Norwegian fund, itself built on oil and gas revenue, owned 2.73% of BP's shares worth some \$2.8 billion at the end of 2022.

BP's board has recommended that shareholders vote against the resolution saying it was "unclear" what it wanted the company to do.

Investor advisers ISS and Glass Lewis also recommended BP shareholders oppose the resolution, while Britain's Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) asked investors to back it.

In February BP rowed back on plans to slash its 2019 oil and gas output levels by 40% by 2030, and now it envisages a 25% cut, angering climate activists.

Over \$68bn withdrawn from Credit Suisse Ahead of UBS takeover



News Desk

ZURICH: More than \$68 billion was withdrawn from Credit Suisse in the first three months of 2023, the bank said Monday in what are likely its final quarterly results before it is swallowed by rival UBS.

Switzerland's long-time second largest bank saw 61.2 billion Swiss francs (\$68.6 billion) withdrawn in the first quarter alone.

At the same time, the bank saw its net profit swell to 12.4 billion francs, up from a significant loss a year earlier, after holders of high-risk Credit Suisse debt were wiped out in the emergency takeover deal.

Investors had been eagerly awaiting the results as they seek clues to the magnitude of the challenges facing UBS, which was strongarmed last month by Swiss authorities into the mega merger.

Credit Suisse said the "significant net asset outflows" were particularly heavy in the second half of March, as it was engulfed by panic prior to the hastily arranged takeover by its larger domestic competitor.

"These outflows have moderated but have not yet reversed as of April 24, 2023," the bank said in its earnings statement.

Credit Suisse had suffered a string of scandals over several years, and after three US regional banks collapsed in March unleashing market panic, it was left looking like the weakest link in the chain.

Over the course of a nerve-wracking weekend, Swiss authorities organised an emergency rescue, pressuring UBS to agree to a \$3.25-billion mega merger on the evening of March 19.

Justifying the move to parliament earlier this month, Swiss President Alain Berset said that "without intervention, Credit Suisse would have found itself, in all likelihood, in default on March 20 or 21".

In 2022, Credit Suisse suffered a 7.3-billion-franc loss, with 110.5 billion francs in outflows in the final quarter alone.

That stood in stark contrast to the \$7.6 billion profit raked in by UBS last year.

Monday's quarterly report will likely be Credit Suisse's last one, depending on how long it takes to finalise the merger with UBS, which will present its results Tuesday.

Pakistan Railways reservation system collapses

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The reservation system of Pakistan Railways (PR) suddenly stopped functioning just after the booking offices reopened after the Eidul Fitr holidays.

People having travel plans are facing great inconvenience due to the sudden collapse of the PR reservation system after it developed faults.

Sources said that the computerised reservation and advance booking system of the Pakistan Railways developed some technical faults.

It is noteworthy to mention here that the railway department announced a 33% reduction in fares during the Eidul Fitr holidays.

Due to the break down of the reservation system for several hours, the passengers are facing difficulties to get 33% discounted fares till April 25.



Millions of jobs were sacrificed to achieve the goal

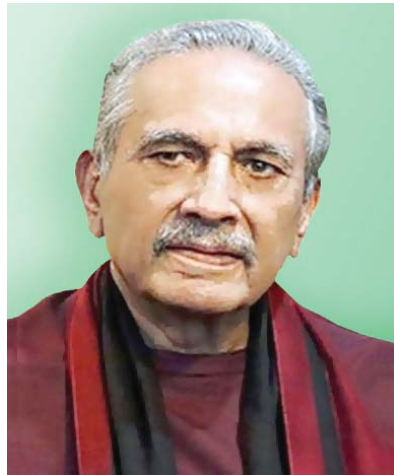
Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Monday said the first current account surplus in two years will not help stabilise the currency and the faltering economy.

The current account turned to a surplus of 654 million dollars in March against a deficit of 36 million dollars in February but it will not help the economy as it is not a result of exports, remittances or foreign investment, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the current account recorded its first monthly surplus since November 2020 but it has been achieved by reducing imports by 11.25 billion dollars which damaged manufacturing, closure of many factories, resulted in massive unemployment, reduced taxes and stoked inflation.

A massive decline in imports affected the economy as large-scale manufacturing declined by 11.4 percent, exports nosedived



and the overall economy would hardly see half a per cent worth of growth, he added.

The business leader said that exports of goods in the July-March period declined to \$21.09 billion compared to \$23.71 billion last year while exports of services increased by \$250m, he informed.

The business leader said that the government is hoping that the current account for the whole year would be around six billion dollars which is still quite a big amount for a country have dimly low foreign exchange reserves, he added.

The government is making its best efforts to convince the IMF to release the stuck-up tranche of \$1.1bn, which may also unlock inflows from other sources, but the deadlock persists.

The current development in the current account is not sustainable, as it is not backed by any positive development. Pakistan has always financed the current account deficit through borrowing which was unsustainable because it burdened the country with high-interest payments.

A very high balance of payments deficit causes a loss of confidence in local and foreign investors. Therefore, there is always a risk that investors will remove their investments causing a big fall in the value of currency that leads to a decline in living standards and lower confidence in the investors.

Tall claims, bragging does not improve the economy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday said the profiteer mafia is looting masses in such a way that it seems to be above the law.

The influential hoarders have completely escaped the writ of law due to their connections with the influential, and they are constantly robbing the public.

The entire system of food supply has been hijacked, and arbitrary prices are being charged which have broken the back of the public and for millions of people flour has become more important than their life and dignity, he added.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that tens of millions of people are unable to feed their families due to increasing inflation and shrinking income, but the government considers that it has fulfilled responsibility by providing free flour to some poor.

Those who claimed to end inflation have raised inflation to the highest level in the country's history, pushing millions of people below the poverty line, he observed.

He said that the price of fuel is increasing continu-

ously, which is exhausting the patience of the people, and that can become a big threat to the law and order situation.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal observed that crimes are increasing due to increasing poverty and people have lost faith in the country's system.

The government has no program to improve the economic conditions of the people, as it is focused on politics.

He noted that cotton production is at a 40-year low, the textile sector is collapsing, the economy is reeling due to an appreciating dollar, delayed IMF programs and dwindling foreign exchange reserves have raised concerns and there is a shortage of life-saving medicines.

Seven percent of wheat production has been affected by rains, opportunities to earn more foreign exchange through rice and sugar has minimized, and important officials are busy in an unending political circus.

He said that economic bragging by top officials does not improve the country's economy and if the situation remained the same, the country may face risk of a civil war.

Enjoying a ride

KARACHI: People are enjoying the swings at Gabool Ground during the celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Sri Lanka to gift two female elephants to Pakistan

LAHORE: After the tragic death of African elephant Noor Jehan in the Karachi Zoo, Sri Lanka has said it will gift two elephants to Pakistan, Honorary Consul General of the country Yasin Joyia confirmed to Geo News Sunday.

According to the diplomat, a request for the elephants has been sent to the Sri Lankan High Commissioner by the consul general. Meanwhile, the country's high court has

already placed a ban on sending elephants abroad in a past verdict.

Speaking with Geo News a day earlier, the diplomat said that Sri Lanka will be sending two female elephants to Pakistan — one for the Karachi Zoo and another for Lahore.

Joyia added that there is no elephant in Lahore's zoo after the death of Suzi, who passed away in May 2017 and was the only large mammal there.

Return to Pandemic Hunger Levels Could Signal Economic Fragility

Commerce Desk

ATLANTA: As economists and investors scour data on inflation, jobs, housing, banking and other bellwether indicators to determine whether the United States is headed for a recession, a visit to the nation's largest food-bank warehouse offers some ominous clues.

More than half of the shelves at the Atlanta Community Food Bank are bare, in part because of supply-chain issues, but mostly because demand for food assistance is as high as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, the nonprofit's executives said. They said two in five people seeking food assistance in the Atlanta region this year have not done so before.

"Nobody anticipated this," said Debra Shoaf, chief financial officer of the private charity, which relies on corporate and individual donations, as well as government grants, to distribute food to the hungry in 29 Georgia counties. Shoaf, who also serves on the finance steering committee for the national charity Feeding America, says she's hearing similar reports across the United

States. "We're back up to pandemic levels," she said.

In some regions, demand is exceeding even the starkest days of the COVID pandemic. In central Ohio, the local food bank says the number of households seeking aid has increased by nearly half since last year.

More than 11.4 million households collected free groceries in early April, up 15% from a year ago, according to data from the Census Bureau.

"Food banks have been around for 50 years, but this is the first time we are seeing unprecedented high food demand combined with historically low unemployment rates," said Vince Hall, chief government relations officer for Feeding America, which supports 60,000 food pantries.

The sustained demand comes as most government pandemic emergency aid ends — notably, temporary COVID-related increases to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, a federal program that provides debit cards to directly purchase food at stores.

Inflation is a major factor, too: Grocery prices have increased



23% since March 2020, when the pandemic began, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Such post-COVID demand for free food is "not a good signal" for the economy "and perhaps an indicator of an impending recession," said John Lowrey, a business professor at Northeastern University whose research focuses on food bank management and public health.

"The fact that we have a lot of

first time users who are no longer concerned about the stigma of going to a food pantry — and actually see value in it because they can no longer afford retail food — is a reasonable proxy for the health of the economy and consumers," Lowrey said.

Craig Gundersen, a Baylor University economics professor who is a prominent researcher for Feeding America, said that food banks experiencing spikes above COVID levels

are outliers. It is not surprising, he said, to see an increase in demand this year because the government provided so much assistance during the pandemic emergency. He also noted that SNAP benefits, adjusted upward following a mandated review in 2021, remain higher now than they were four years ago.

"We had the stimulus checks, for a long time people didn't have to pay their rents and unemployment benefits were higher than wages," said Gundersen.

Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, which serves 25 counties astride the Appalachian Trail in Virginia, said COVID emergency assistance masked underlying economic realities. According to the latest available figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation has outpaced wage gains since March 2020.

"What's happening now reveals the scope, scale and pervasiveness of food insecurity in this country and the effects of inequality, not just more recently from inflation, but the inability of wages to keep up with the cost of living," McKee said.

Sharjah Cricket Stadium to name stand after Sachin Tendulkar

Spokesman Report

SHARJAH: The West Stand at the iconic Sharjah cricket stadium has been renamed the Sachin Tendulkar stand in a special ceremony today.

Not only does it coincide with the birthday of the famous cricketer from India but it also marks the 25th anniversary of the famous back to back centuries he scored against Australia in 1998 to a packed stadium. The 143 he scored on April 22 and 134 two days later in the finals of the Coca-Cola Cup, a triangular series between India, Australia, and New Zealand has been recorded in the books as a veritable desert storm.

Tendulkar scored 49 hundreds in ODIs played across 34 stadiums but his 7 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium including the twin hundreds in April 1998 stand out and are lauded and celebrated by his fans around the world to this day.

"Reacting to the news of naming the stand Sachin said in a message, "I wish I was there but unfortunately I had prior commitments. Playing in Sharjah has



always been a magnificent experience. From the electrifying atmosphere to the love, affection and support, Sharjah has been a special venue for Indi-

an cricket fans and lovers of the game from around the globe. It's given us so many special moments. A big thank you to Mr Bukhatir and his team for

this kind gesture on the 25th anniversary of the Desert Storm match and my 50th birthday. Feels like the greatest 6 of them all!"

Sharjah Cricket Stadium still holds the Guinness record for most One-Day internationals played (244) and we have seen some of the most memorable moments in cricketing history occur in this hallowed ground.

Commenting on the decision to pay this tribute to Sachin on the anniversary of Desert Storm the CEO of the Sharjah stadium, Khalaf Bukhatir said, "This is our small way of expressing our gratitude to Sachin for doing so much for the game of cricket. Indeed, that was an incredible innings, and it was repeated in the finals. Right through the years of the now legendary CBFS initiative we have striven here at Sharjah to acknowledge the services of many great players even after their retirement. We believe that as administrators it is our duty to pay tribute to those who have raised the bar and dedicated their lives to the cause of cricket, and we will continue to do so."

PAK vs NZ: Chapman-inspired New Zealand stun Pakistan to level series



A Sports

RAWALPINDI: Mark Chapman's astounding unbeaten century-knock bolstered New Zealand to seal a stunning six-wicket victory over Pakistan in the fifth PAK vs NZ T20I and forced the five-match series to end in a 2-2 draw.

Put into bat first by New Zealand captain Tom Latham, Pakistan piled a massive total on the scoreboard in their allotted 20 overs at the back of a magnificent 98-run knock by Rizwan.

Earlier, Pakistan's dependable opening

pair of Babar Azam and Rizwan scripted a flying start for the home side as they raised a brisk 50-run partnership inside the batting powerplay before Blair Tuckner struck gold for New Zealand.

The right-arm pacer dismissed Pakistan skipper Babar in the sixth over, who could score 19 off 18 deliveries, laced up with three boundaries.

Pakistan then succumbed to 52/3 in just four deliveries as young batters Mohammad Haris and Saim Ayub perished on ducks.

Rizwan, on the other hand, stood firm



amid the brief collapse and stitched an anchoring partnership with in-form Ifthikhar Ahmed.

The pair raised 71 runs for the fourth wicket before Ifthikhar perished while attempting to hit back-to-back sixes off Tuckner. He smashed three boundaries and two sixes on his way to a 22-ball 36.

After Ifthikhar's departure, all-rounder Imad Wasim supported Rizwan brilliantly and further sky-rocketed the home side's total with a 68-run partnership.

Imad remained the core aggressor of the fifth-wicket stand with Rizwan as he

struck a quickfire 31 off just 14 deliveries, hitting five boundaries and a six before perishing in the final over.

Rizwan, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through but failed to convert his terrific knock into a century as James Neesham deceived him on the final delivery to deny the former's milestone.

He top-scored for Pakistan with an unbeaten 98 off 62 deliveries with the help of seven boundaries and four sixes.

Tickner led the bowling attack for New Zealand with 3/33 while Ish Sodhi followed him with one scalp.

Watch PAK vs NZ Live Match – New Zealand Tour fifth T20I

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: PAK vs NZ T20I: Today, the final T20I match of the series between Pakistan and New Zealand will take place at the Pindi Cricket Stadium located in Rawalpindi.

Both teams are gearing up to compete against each other in what promises to be an exciting showdown. At the Pindi Cricket Stadium, the fourth T20I match of the Pakistan vs New Zealand series was in progress.

However, during the 19th over of the first innings, a severe hailstorm abruptly interrupted the game. New Zealand had scored 164 runs and lost five wickets in the 4th T20I when the heavy rain began and persisted, ultimately forcing the officials to abandon the match.

Imad Wasim's exceptional opening spell disrupted New Zealand's fast start and enabled Pakistan to restrict them



to 54/3 in the seventh over. Despite losing wickets at regular intervals, New Zealand's opener Chad Bowes stood

firm and continued to score runs.

Bowes achieved a remarkable half-century before eventually becoming

ing a victim of Shaheen Shah Afridi's bowling prowess. He scored 54 runs off 38 balls, including seven boundaries and a six.

After his dismissal, Mark Chapman rose to the occasion for New Zealand and, in partnership with Rachin Ravindra, helped the team surpass the 150-run mark. Ravindra lost his wicket in the 19th over after scoring eight runs off 12 balls in PAK vs NZ 4th T20I.

Chapman was the top scorer for New Zealand, remaining unbeaten with a score of 71 off 42 balls, with the help of 10 boundaries and a six. Imad Wasim led the bowling attack for Pakistan and took 3 wickets for 19 runs, while Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf claimed one wicket each.

Pakistan leads the five-match series 2-1 and is now aiming to secure a victory by winning the final match.

Management Committee gets two-month extension

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Management Committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board has been given a two-month extension by the PCB Patron and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The notification of the extension was issued yesterday (23 April) by the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC).

The Management Committee was appointed for a four-month period on 22 December 2022 to restore the 2014 PCB Constitution in its letter and spirit. This included, among other things, restoration and integration of departmental cricket in the domestic structure so that the careers and future of professional cricketers can be secured, elections at the district/zonal/regional level and composition of a democratic and elected Board of Governors.

In this regard, significant work has already taken place. While a number of departments have confirmed their return to the domestic structure, election process at the district/zonal/regional level has recently picked up pace following last month's appointment of the independent Election Commissioner by the PCB Patron Prime Minister.

Once the elections process at the district/zonal/regional level has been completed, a Board of Governors will be constituted. This will include four elected regional presidents, four departmental appointees and two PCB Patron nominees, who, in turn, will elect the Chairman of the PCB.

It is anticipated the entire process for the revival of the 2014 PCB Constitution will be completed within the next 60 days.

Haris included in ODI squad

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Haris has been included in the ODI squad for the five-match series against New Zealand.

Pakistan's squad now consists of 17 players. He has played four ODIs and eight T20 Internationals before today's fifth and final T20I at the Pindi Cricket Stadium.

The ODI series between the two teams commence in Rawalpindi as the Pindi Cricket Stadium hosts the first two matches on April 27 and 29.

The action will then move to Karachi as the National Bank Stadium will stage the final three matches.

Pakistan squad: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Haris (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood and Usama Mir.

Torres earns Barca win over Atletico as Sevilla stun Villarreal



Ferran Torres's strike helped Barcelona emerge from a recent slump to earn a 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Sunday in LaLiga, taking a big step towards clinching their first title since 2019.

Sevilla, fresh from thrashing Manchester United in the Europa League, snatched a late winner to beat high-flying Villarreal 2-1, with Youssef En-Nesyri heading home in stoppage time.

After two consecutive goalless draws for Barca, second-place Real Madrid cut into their lead by beating Celta Vigo on Saturday, but Torres's low first-half finish restored their advantage to 11 points with eight games remaining.

Diego Simeone's Atletico, third, arrived as Spain's most in-form side but Torres stroked home from the edge of the box in the 44th minute to secure victory for Xavi Hernandez's side.

Both sides had clear chances to score in the second half but Barcelona held on to their lead to inflict Atletico's first defeat since these sides met in January at the Metropolitan.

The hosts recorded a 23rd clean sheet of the season in LaLiga, with Marc-Andre ter Stegen making a fine save to deny Antoine Griezmann an equaliser.

"I've always said Marc is among the top three goalkeepers in the world, and for our game, I think he's the best," Xavi told reporters.

"He's a guarantee, our defence too – defensive work is fundamental and Marc has been decisive at various moments."

Xavi brought Frenkie de Jong back into the starting line-up after injury, but Pedri had to make do with a seat on the bench after his two-month absence. Griezmann almost struck immediately against his former side, rattling the crossbar with a fine effort from distance within the first minute.

Barcelona broke the deadlock just before the interval, with Raphinha controlling a long ball and crossing to Torres on the edge of the box, who swept the ball home past Jan Oblak.

It was Barcelona's first goal since Torres's strike against Elche on April 1, ending a painful run of three games without finding the net. Barcelona brought on Pedri to a roar from the Camp Nou in the second half. Gavi and Raphinha both mishit efforts from point-blank range in the space of a few seconds that should have put the game out of reach, before Ter Stegen palmed away Griezmann's cunning flick.

Alcaraz claims back-to-back Barcelona titles

Sports Desk

BARCELONA: Carlos Alcaraz brushed aside Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets on Sunday to claim a second successive Barcelona title and hammer home his status as likely successor to Rafael Nadal as French Open champion.

The 19-year-old world number two won 6-3, 6-4 to bag his third trophy of 2023, after winning in Buenos Aires and Indian Wells, and the ninth of his career.

With 14-time French Open champion Nadal sidelined since January with a hip injury

and world number one and two-time Roland Garros winner Novak Djokovic struggling with an elbow problem, Alcaraz reinforced his credentials as a major contender to add the clay-court Grand Slam title to the US Open he captured last year.

On Sunday, his only blip was dropping serve in the third game of the match.

From that point on, Alcaraz powered to a 79-minute triumph against the world number five, his fourth win in four meetings with the Greek.

Tsitsipas has now lost three

finals in Barcelona after losing to Nadal in 2018 and 2021.

"It is incredible," Alcaraz said. "To feel this energy and lift the trophy in Barcelona in front of my family and friends, and most members of my team are here as well."

"Playing this level and to lift the trophy in front of them is a good feeling for me."

After Tsitsipas broke for a 2-1 lead, Alcaraz won five of the next six games to take charge.

His flamboyant shotmaking delighted his home crowd before a solitary break in the fifth game

of the second set proved decisive.

"Me and my team were talking before the match about staying relaxed," said Alcaraz who raced to the title without dropping a set.

"To want to play the tough moments, staying relaxed is the most important part for me. To forget the mistakes, and everything and be myself on court. Not to think about all the people watching, but just me, the court, the racquet and the final."

Alcaraz now heads to the Madrid Masters where he is also defending champion.

