



FM attends Third Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani attended the Third EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels at the invitation of the EU High Representative/Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. Speaking at the roundtable discussion on "Shared Prosperity, Economic Resilience, and Investments", the Foreign Minister called for enhanced cooperation between Europe and its partners to confront global challenges.



Pakistan to keep supporting just struggle of Jammu and Kashmir: Mushaal

Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Husseain Mullick has said that Pakistan will continue to extend its unwavering political, moral and diplomatic support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in determining their destiny through the right of self-determination. She was addressing a seminar organized by Press Information Department (PID)...

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Briefing

ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Solangi, Federal Ministers for Information and Broadcasting addressing a press conference along with Special Secretary ECP, DG Political Finance, Spokesperson MoFA, EDG External Publicity Wing and PIO, MOIB on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Caretaker PM satisfied at growing cooperation between Pak, UAE businesses



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday expressed his satisfaction over the growth of exchanges, interaction and cooperation between businesses in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. The prime minister witnessed the signing of an agreement between The Authority of Karachi Port Trust Pakistan and Abu Dhabi Ports Group, UAE. The agreement is a commercial understanding for the Outsourcing of Operations of Bulk and General Cargo Terminal at seven (7) Berths of East Wharf Karachi Port, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Caretaker Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar along with other high officials from Pakistani side and UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi along with other high officials from the UAE side were present in the ceremony. The agreement aims to strengthen the bilateral relations in the marine and logistic sectors of Pakistan and UAE. Meanwhile: The prime minister was talking to UAE Minister for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi who called on him. The caretaker prime minister said that during his recent visit to the UAE, both the countries had signed MoUs which would open a new era of economic cooperation between the two countries. "The UAE is a home to 1.8 million Pakistanis who are playing a role in the progress, prosperity and economic development of both brotherly countries," the press release quoted the prime minister as saying. During the meeting, Caretaker Minister for Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar, UAE ambassador in Pakistan and other relevant senior officials were also present. The UAE minister expressed the resolve to further strengthen trade ties with Pakistan.

Arrangements for conducting peaceful, free elections in Pakistan finalised: Solangi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister of Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi, said on Saturday that all arrangements had been finalized for conducting peaceful, fair, free, and transparent elections in Pakistan on February 8. Briefing the foreign observers and media persons in Pakistan to monitor and cover the February 8 elections, he said that in Pakistan, which is now the fifth largest democracy in the world, elections are only four days away. Flanked by officials of the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Interior, and the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said that now Pakistan is the fifth largest democracy in the world. He said that elections were

being held for the National Assembly (NA) of Pakistan and the provincial assemblies of four provinces, including Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). He said that some elements had been spreading rumors in the recent past about the elections, citing the severity of the weather, the law and order situation, or some other issues. "Full security arrangements have been made at the polling stations, and the government will ensure peaceful and transparent elections on February 8," he added. "Police would be in the first tier, Rangers and Frontier Constabulary would perform duty in the second tier, while the third tier of security would be with the Pakistan Army as a quick response force." He said media in Pakistan enjoyed full freedom and every-

one had the right to express opinion and criticize the government. The minister said that the total number of voters in Pakistan was 12,85,85,760, out of which 69263704 were male voters and 5,93,22,056 were female voters. To a question, he said that law and order and terrorism were not new issues in Pakistan, as it has been battling the scourge of terrorism for the past few decades. He recalled that the 2008 and 2013 elections were conducted under the shadow of security threats. He said, "Since 2021, with the change of guard in Kabul, terrorist groups of various hues and colors having safe sanctuaries in a neighboring country have become more active. He said that Pakistan was taking action against terrorists and that peaceful elections would be ensured at all costs." "Our battle-hardened securi-

ty forces are fully prepared for the elections," Murtaza Solangi maintained. Responding to a question, he said that the economic initiatives taken during the caretaker government were in the background of the Special Investment Facilitation Council to attract investment. He said that various economic agreements have been signed with friendly countries under the SIFC. The minister said that the caretaker government took important steps to improve the economy. He said when the caretakers came to power in August last year, the dollar was not available in the open market for even 350 to 400 rupees, but due to steps taken by the present dispensation, now the rupee is stabilized and the economy is in a far better position. He said, "92 international

observers from different countries will cover the elections. He said that observers belonged to the European Union, Commonwealth, Russian Federation, Japan, South Africa, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Hungary, Sweden, Azerbaijan, and Germany." In response to a question about the allegations of victimization of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and party workers, he said that these allegations were baseless and absurd. Solangi said that some PTI activists were arrested, but they were detained in connection with their involvement in May 9 incidents or other criminal acts. The minister said the PTI leadership was free to criticize the government and the court's verdicts. Moreover, they have other legal options, including knocking on the doors of courts, including the superior judiciary.

ECP refutes private news channels' claims on EMS

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) strongly dismissed deceptive tickers and reports disseminated by certain private news channels, aiming to mislead the public regarding the capability and utility of Election Management System (EMS). An ECP spokesperson stated that certain private channels, including Hum News, Bol News, and GTV, are spreading false propaganda regarding the non-functionality and faults in EMS. He stated that, indeed, the functionality of EMS has undergone multiple tests, leaving no doubt about its efficiency. Earlier, the spokesman in another statement, said that the Election Commission of Paki-



stan (ECP) smoothly conducted another experimental mock test of the Election Management System (EMS) on Saturday, successfully achieving all the required steps and goals. The system works with the same speed and efficiency in both online and offline modes. Today's pilot exercise proved the EMS to be fully operational and efficient. Throughout this exercise, the repetition of the process for generating and transmitting election results via Form 47 revealed the satisfactory performance of the EMS in this regard.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi disqualified for five years

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday disqualified former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi for five years following his conviction in the cipher case this week. The disqualification comes five days before the February 8 general elections, which the PTI is contesting amid a state crackdown and without its iconic electoral symbol - bat. According to a notification - a copy of which is available with ARY News, the former foreign minister has been disqualified over the 30 January judgment, handed down by Special Court judge in "The State versus Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi and Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi" case. "Shah Mehmood Qureshi has been held guilty u/s 5(3)(a), 5(1)(c) punishable u/s 5(3)

(b) of OSA, 5(1)(d) Punishable u/s 5(3)(b) of OSA and Section 9 of the OSA read with 34 PPC and has been held guilty in light of charge u/s 5(3)(a) of the OSA, 1923 read with section 34 PPC and convicted and sentenced u/s 5(3)(a) read with section 34 PPC and sentenced u/s 5(3)(a) read with section 34 PPC and punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term of 10 years, guilty in light of charge u/s 9 read with section 5(3)(a) of OSA, 1923 and is convicted and sentenced u/s 5(3)(a) of OSA, 1923 with rigorous imprisonment for a term of 10-years," read the notification. As a consequence, the notification stated, Qureshi has become disqualified under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution of Pakistan read with Section 232 of the Elections Act, 2017.

PTI founder, Bushra Bibi react to conviction in Nikah case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have lamented the verdict in "un-Islamic" Nikah case, saying that the case was created to "humiliate and disgrace" them. An Islamabad court sentenced former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to seven years in jail each in a case related to their marriage during the latter's Iddat period. Senior civil judge Qudratullah announced the reserved verdict on the complaint filed by Bushra's former husband Khawar Maneka in a makeshift court at Adiala jail. The court also imposed Rs500,000 fines each on the couple. In an informal conversa-

tion with journalists, Imran Khan said that the case against him was created to "humiliate and disgrace" both him and his spouse, Bushra Bibi. "This marks the first instance in history where a case related to Iddat has been initiated," he added. Furthermore, the PTI founder reiterated that he has neither accepted nor would accept in future any deals, adding that he would "choose death over making a deal with anyone." He pointed out that it was also the first time that someone was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in a Toshakhana case. He added his party's top leadership was targeted right after the announcement of the election schedule. "Now, election candidates are not even being allowed to run their campaigns," he rued.

Imran Khan said that Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by Supreme Court of Pakistan, but "all the cases were closed after formation of a JIT [joint investigation team]". He regretted that the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) had a strong case against Shehbaz Sharif, but it was also closed. Meanwhile, Bushra Bibi - while reacting to the verdict - said the matter of "iddat" was present in the Holy Quran and every bit is clear. "This is a war of honor and dishonor," she said, adding that the nation has to make a decision. The verdict comes in the same week Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were sentenced to 14 years in the Toshakhana case. Imran and fellow PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi also received a 10-year sentence in the cipher case this week.

Hua Chunying calls on foreign journalists to report on China objectively, fairly

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: China's Assistant Foreign Minister Hua Chunying attended a reception for foreign journalists based in Beijing. Speaking on the occasion, Hua called on foreign journalists to report on China objectively and fairly. She added that China's diplomacy in 2023 has been upholding integrity, pursuing innovation, and continually forging ahead. Faced with the ever-changing and intertwined world, she said China has firmly



chosen the path of peace, openness, cooperation, and unity, and remained the promoter and maintainer of world peace and stability. Around 600 people attended the event, including journalists from international media outlets, diplomatic envoys, as well as representatives of Beijing Municipality.

Kashmir day event held at Vensum College of Gomal varsity Dera

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: On the instructions of Vice Chancellor Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan Prof. Dr. Shakibullah, a ceremony was organized in connection with Kashmir Day at Vensum College of Gomal University, Dera on Sunday.

The chief guest of the event was Dr. Fateh Khan Suleman Khel, Principal of Wensum College, while he was accompanied by Director of Admission Riaz Ahmed Bettani, Coordinator Quaid-e-Azam Campus Dr. Allah Noor, Head Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Dr. Kamal Shah, Director of Students Affairs Dr. Nafid Khan, Head of Male Section of Vensum College Madam Arifa Rani, of Quaid-e-Azam Campus. In-charge Dr. Mudasar, a large number of teachers, and students of University Wensum College, including PRO Alam Zeb, were present.

In the event, the students gave speeches regarding the expression of solidarity with Kashmir and the Kashmiri people, while the children

enthralled the participants by presenting a special tableau.

In the ceremony, Hafiz Zakiur Rehman performed the duties of reciting the Holy Quran while Naat Rasool Maqbool (Ziaur Rehman) recited.

Qari Inayatullah Usmani performed the duties of the stage secretary and Ayesha presented the song Milli to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir.

Addressing the ceremony, Principal Wensum College Dr. Fateh Khan said that on the special instructions of the Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Shakibullah, a ceremony is being organized regarding Kashmir Day.

The principal said that the aim is to convince the World Human Rights Organization, the world media and the United Nations.

He said that his criminal silence on the atrocities in Kashmir is a question mark, is Kashmir and other Muslim countries including Palestine where there is a hot market for violation of human rights and brutality.

He said that why the United Nations and other international human rights



organizations and especially the international media are silent there.

He further said that India's Modi government should hear that Kashmir is the aorta of Pakistan, while India is violating the honor of our sisters and martyring our youth by oppressing them.

The principal said that the pain is not only for Kashmiris but it is tantamount to hurting the hearts of every old, young, men, women and children of Pakistan.

Which we will never tolerate and inshAllah one day will come when

Modi will officially give your father too.

He said that freedom because it is the right of Kashmir and the people of Kashmir and it is our belief that Allah Almighty will give us the right.

Dr. Allah Noor, Riyaz Ahmed Bettani, Dr. Kamal Shah, Madam Arifa Rani said in their joint address.

They said that international human rights organizations oppose cruelty and violence while all religions of the world forbid cruelty and harshness.

They said that the world teaches peace and tranquility, but which religion does India follow?

The speakers further said that we strongly condemn Kashmir, Palestine and other Islamic countries where unjust oppression, abuse and violence are going on.

Speakers questioned whether international human rights organizations and international media, including the United Nations, do not see oppression in these countries and his criminal silence is a question mark?

The speakers said that these institutions have to play their positive role for peace in the world.

The speakers further said that in

Dera Ismail Khan Division, Gomal University and Wensum College were the first to prove this by organizing a program to show solidarity with Kashmiris.

They said, all management, teachers, officers, employees and students including the Vice Chancellor of Gomal University stand with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

In the ceremony, Director Admission Riyaz Ahmed Bettani also distributed cash prizes among the students by Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr. Shakibullah.

A return to the past

ISLAMABAD: People are sitting around fire to keep warm themselves during cold weather in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

CTD operations in Punjab against terrorism: Five militants arrested: spokesman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Punjab province has foiled a major terror plot by arresting 5 suspected terrorists linked with a different banned out-fits during operations in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 70 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 71 suspected persons were interrogated and 5 alleged terrorists were arrested with weapons, explosives and other prohibited materials.

Among the arrested terrorists are Sharafat Ullah, Muhammad Yasin, Talha, Abdul Rahman and Muhammad Usaid, he said and added that they belong to the banned organizations Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

He said that the arrest of these terrorists was carried out during intelligence-based operations in Mianwali, Jehlum, Okara and Hafizabad. He said that Explosives 1700 grams, IED bomb 02, detonators 10, protective fuse wire 21 feet, pistol 30 bore 01, bullets 5, books of banned organization 02, stickers 3 and cash of Rs. 8730 have been recovered from the possession of terrorists.

Who join the People's Party will be given a legitimate position and respect: Gilani

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: People's Party candidate from National Assembly Constituency NA-148, former PM Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that those who join the People's Party will be given a legitimate position and respect. The position is given which can be inferred from the fact that the first lady The Prime Minister also belonged to the People's Party, the first speaker of the National Assembly was also from the People's Party, and the first female foreign minister was also from the People's Party. PP 214 candidate Syed Mudassar Shah was also with him, former Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani welcomed Multan's well-known female political leader Hina Shah on joining the People's Party and said that the party will become stronger with her arrival. Other political leaders thanked the Former Prime Minister on the occasion Hina Shaheen and Sheikh Brothers Sheikh Waseem and Sheikh Nadeem. Sheikh Shahid along with the workers announced to join the People's Party and support Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani and run an election campaign while on this occasion Rubina Shaheen and Hina Shah also tied him as Imam Zaman for the success of Syed Yousuf Raza on this occasion.

We have done a lot of developmental work in Lodhran: Ali Tareen

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jahangir Tareen's son Ali Tareen has said that Multan is our ancestral home. From here we started our education and business. We are lucky to be contesting elections from our home and we cannot forget the love given to us by the people here. Ali Tareen said that whenever we did politics to serve politics. We have done a lot of developmental work in Lodhran and given recognition to Lodhran. We are indebted to the people of Lodhran that they also won us with a lead of 40 thousand. Inshallah also from Multan, he will be successful here in collaboration with PML-N brothers Syed Babar Shah and Shahid Mahmood Khan. Youth will be the asset of this country by bringing programs for the youth that will teach them skills and give them business opportunities. I want to tell women that we have to empower women and provide them with equal rights and opportunities. On this occasion, Candidate for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP 215 Shahid Mehmood Khan, Candidate for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP 216 Syed Babar Shah, Former MPA Nawab Zaheeruddin Alizai, PML-N leader Malik Anwar, Bilal Butt, Sheikh Athar Mumtaz and others also addressed.

Over 83 lakh bales of cotton coming to factories by 31st January 2024: Zikar Ullah Khalidi

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) has released the data of arrival of cotton factories, according to which 83 lakh 49 thousand 553 bales of cotton arrived in the country's ginning factories till January 31, 2024.

Till January 31, 2023, 47 lakh 63 thousand 609 bales of cotton came to the factories. Compared to the same period of last year, 35 lakh 85 thousand 944 bales of cotton came to the factories more.

The rate of increase was 75.28%. 42 lakh 38 thousand 434 bales of cotton have arrived in the factories of Punjab province, which is 13 lakh 45 thousand 340 bales more than the crop of 28 lakh 93 thousand 94 bales of cotton coming in the factories in the same period of last year.

The rate of increase in Punjab was 46.50 percent. 41 lakh 11 thousand 119 bales of cotton came to the factories in the Sindh province, which is 22 lakh 40 thousand 604 bales more



than the 18 lakh 70 thousand 515 bales of cotton coming to the factories in the same period last year. The increase rate in the province of Sindh was 119.79 percent. Coming to factories by 31st January 2024 83 lakh 8 thousand 790 bales of cotton were produced from cotton. 151 ginning factories are operational in the country.

Exporters/traders have purchased 292 thousand 726 bales of cotton this season while the textile sector has purchased 76 lakh 84 thousand 117 bales of cotton.

The Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has not purchased cotton for the 2023-24 season. 137 ginning factories are operational in Punjab

province and 42 lakh 1 thousand 329 bales of cotton have been produced. 66 thousand 500 bales of cotton in Multan district, 94 thousand 115 bales of cotton in Lodhran district, 2 lakh 17 thousand 107 bales of cotton in Khanewal district, 80 thousand 516 bales of cotton in Muzaffargarh district, 3 lakh 68 thousand 889 bales of cotton in Dera Ghazi Khan district, 31 thousand 825 bales of cotton in Rajanpur district. 2 lakh 27 thousand 613 bales of cotton in District Leh, district Wahari 2 lakh 18 thousand 244 bales of cotton, 1 lakh 98 thousand bales of cotton in Sahiwal district, 6 lakh 18 thousand 769 bales of cotton in Rahim Yar Khan district, 5 lakh 69 thousand 309 bales of cotton in Bahawalpur

district, 11 lakh 47 thousand 870 bales of cotton in Bahawalnagar district. 16 lakh 94 thousand 691 bales of cotton in Sanghar district, 1 lakh 35 thousand 900 bales of cotton in Mirpur Khas district, 1 lakh 78 thousand 615 bales of cotton in Nawab Shah district, 3 lakh 20 thousand 976 bales of cotton in Nav Shahro Feroze district, 3 lakh 58 thousand 188 bales of cotton in Khairpur district, 5 lakh 48 thousand 9 bales of cotton in Sukkur district. 60 bales of cotton, Dist 63 thousand 200 bales in jam shoro Cotton and 2 lakh 30 thousand 167 bales of cotton in Hyderabad district and 1 lakh 87 thousand 221 bales of cotton in Balochistan province. Unsold stock is 372 thousand 710 bales of cotton and cotton.

Baluchistan govt to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with sincere non-profits to educate children from deprived areas

PNP

KARACHI: The Balochistan government will work shoulder-to-shoulder with the committed non-profits that opt to work in the province to provide quality education to children from underprivileged and remote areas.

This was stated by Balochistan Health Minister, Dr Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi, at a ceremony organized by the non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) at a hotel. A large number of noted businessmen and industrial-

ists attended the event and announced donations for the charitable work of the GCT in the education sector in Sindh.

Dr Jozgezi appreciated that the GCT in the last 29 years had established a total of 166 charitable schools having an enrolment of over 31,799 students from the deprived communities in Sindh.

He said the concerned non-governmental organisations and charities could play a vital role in providing quality education, health services, water supply, and other basic necessities



ties of life to people in remote areas in

Balochistan.

He also greeted the GCT for establishing its first charitable school in Balochistan in the Winder area of Hub District.

He assured the audience that the Balochistan government would provide the fullest support whenever the GCT and other education sector charities decided to extend the footprint of their charitable work in the province to enrol a greater number of children from destitute families in the province.

He announced a donation of a piece

of land to the GCT for setting up a charitable school in Balochistan.

GCT CEO, Zahid Saeed, expressed gratitude to the business community for extending uninterrupted support to the campaign of his non-profit to enrol out-of-school children in Sindh.

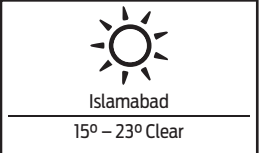
He said it was high time that sincere NGOs, provincial governments, and the private sector joined hands and worked together to enrol millions of out-of-school children in the country aged between four and 16.

He lamented that despite the

expenditure of hundreds of billions of rupees annually the provincial governments couldn't provide basic academic and infrastructure facilities at its schools.

He said the concerned NGOs in the education sector and government by forging partnerships could jointly work to overcome the serious issues of the state-run schooling system.

On the occasion, Bank Al Falah donated a cheque to the GCT CEO for building a state-of-the-art school campus building in Khoski, Badin.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:38 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:02 pm
Maghrib	5:40 pm
Isha	7:05 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

Muslim Conference workers should play their role for success of PML-N candidate: Sardar Usman



Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and the election campaign of Muslim League-N candidates of Ahedidran is going on in full swing. Chief Organizer Muslim Conference Raja Saqib Majeed Khan, Secretary General Ms. Mehrul Nasa, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan intensified communication for the success of Muslim League-N candidates. Participated in corner meetings at various places. Attended and addressed the corner meeting as a special guest. Chairman Muslim Conference Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan addressed the corner meeting held during the election campaign of PML-N candidate National Assembly Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry in Behara Koh. Assembly Road. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry addressed the corner meeting in Bonth. Muslim Conference Punjab Province General Secretary Sajid Qureshi, Muslim Conference Rawalpindi Islam Circle President Sardar Asim Zahid Abbasi, Raja Qamar Salam, Imran Ilyas, Secretary General Muslim Conference Ms. Maher Nisa, Sardar Abid Razaq Khan attended and addressed the corner meeting. In which Muslim Conference Rawalpindi and Islamabad workers participated in large numbers. Speaking at the corner meeting held at different places, Central Chief Organizer Raja Saqib Majeed, Secretary General Muslim Conference Ms. Mehrul Nasa, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Central Leader of Muslim Conference Sardar Abad Razzak said that the Muslim Conference workers have chosen the elected candidates of Muslim League-N.

Pakistan to keep supporting just struggle of Jammu and Kashmir: Mushaal

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that Pakistan will continue to extend its unwavering political, moral and diplomatic support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in determining their destiny through the right of self-determination. She was addressing a seminar organized by Press Information Department (PID) in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. Principal Information Officer Dr. Tariq Mehmood Khan and members and representatives of All Kashmir Newspapers Association (AKNA) also addressed the occasion. DG Information Service Academy Arshad Munir, DG PID Ambreen Gul, President AKNA Amjad Choudhary and members of civil society and other media associations also attended the seminar.

Addressing the seminar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister said that the Kashmir Solidarity Day serves as a testament of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the resolution of the Kashmir issue as per the UN resolutions and provision of justice and peace to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir (IIOJK), Mushaal said that India had been involved in genocide, extra judicial killings, torture in custody, the use of chemical weapons, violence against children and women, enforced disappearances, pellet gun usage, collective punishment, black laws, false flag operations, and fake police encounters in its failing effort to suppress the freedom movement of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister expressed concerns over Modi's move of establishing illegal hindu settlements in IIOJK to alter the demographic landscape and turn Muslim majority into a minority in the region. She said the issuance of Kashmiri domiciles to non-Kashmiri by India had seen a significant increase after the Indian illegal actions of August 05, 2019.

Mushaal raised alarms over the unjust and illegal persecution of peaceful Kashmiri leadership. She said that Kashmiri leaders are either languishing in jails or kept under house arrest. She further said that the grave of the late Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Gilani had been turned into a sub-jail by India, making it inaccessible to visitors. She urged the world to be watchful as false and fabricated charges might be used by Modi led regime to impose death sentence on Yasin Malik through



biased legal proceedings.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister said that Pakistan was a target of Indian terror operations and irrefutable evidence of Indian involvement in targeted killings inside Pakistan were available. She further said that the global reach of the terrorist network was a threat to global

peace.

Mushaal urged the international community and the UN to stand in solidarity with people of Jammu and Kashmir, acknowledge their rights and make efforts to ensure the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue as per the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the relevant

UN resolutions.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister extended her heartfelt commendation to the Press Information Department for organizing seminar in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day to raise awareness and understanding about the Kashmir issue.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Picnickers are enjoying pleasant weather at Damn-e-Koh, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Internationally renowned artist Imran Qureshi to unveil solo show 'The Garden'

LAHORE: Merging painting, video, miniature painting, sculpture and installation, Sitara-e-Imtiaz recipient Imran Qureshi unveils "The Garden", a new solo exhibition, at Nasir Bagh, Lahore in collaboration with Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) on the 4th of February 2024.

Nasir Bagh is an historic landmark dating back to pre-partition Lahore, re-named post partition after Egypt's second President, Jamal Abdul Nasir. Through time, this park has been a host to some of the nation's most consequential socio-political events, that have left an indelible mark on Pakistan's history. Recognizing its symbolic significance, the PHA has recently revamped the park, now featuring a state-of-the-art public gallery, The Barracks, so named after the actual barracks present within the space, hark-



back to the park's colonial lineage. This new gallery will debut with a solo show of globally lauded artist Imran Qureshi, titled "The Garden", organized by Imran Ahmad. Through "The Garden", Imran Qureshi aims to explore the relationship between various facets of the landmark's history by transforming the

underground bunkers present at Nasir Bagh into an immersive space through an interdisciplinary approach that explores the relationship between ecology, beauty, and violence.

"I wanted to use the unexpected presence of the barracks in the garden to create unanticipated associations with envi-

ronment and history; with imagery that infiltrates the entrance of the underground space just like water seeping in from above. So that when the viewer enters, there is a deluge of imagery flooding and transforming the space," explained Imran Qureshi.

As explained further by Mr. Tahir Wattoo, Director General Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA), "Imran Qureshi's 'The Garden' at The Barracks is art in the city's heart."

On the park revamp and the introduction of a gallery, Imran Qureshi added: "The aim is to change the way people think about the park. What I am most excited about is for people to have this unique contemporary gallery in the middle of the city. Interventions such as this can mark the beginning of a new era in Pakistan's public art scene."

Press conference

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan Central Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan Ulema Council said in his special statement that on February 4, Sunday, the central leaders of Pakistan Ulema Council and the central leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-N will hold a joint press conference at the center of Jamia Osmania, Razaabad, and the press conference will be held at exactly 2 o'clock

And there will be joint important announcements. We will continue the joint struggle for national security and stability of Pakistan. Pakistan Ulema Council has always played an important role in ending terrorism and extremism and for economic stability and security and Pakistan Ulema Council will play its important role in the election as well.

Pakistan People's Party urges Kashmiris to celebrate Kashmir Solidarity Day with full zeal and devotion



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: President Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir and Member of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin issued instructions to celebrate Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 in a full zeal and devotion and said that seminars and rallies should be held at home and abroad and flags of Pakistan Azad Kashmir should be hoisted. February Kashmir Solidarity Day Kashmiris around the world should celebrate in a full way and prove that the of founder chairman Pakistan People's Party, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed, a historic strike was held for the first time in Occupied Kashmir on February 5. The memory of the war will be renewed for a year. Chairman Pakistan People's Party and former foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is a ray of hope for Kashmiris and under his leadership the Kashmir problem will be solved.

February 5 Love and commitment to Kashmiris. It has become a history. This day is an expression of the fact that the hearts of Pakistanis and Kashmiris beat together.

The country of God Pakistan is currently suffering from economic problems and the Kashmiri nation is suffering from serious problems and thoughts in this regard because the strong Prosperous Pakistan is the guarantor of the freedom of Kashmir. The monster of terrorism has opened its mouth. The soldiers of the law enforcement agency and the forces of Pakistan have given and are giving eternal sacrifices in the war against terrorism. Pakistan is currently involved in international conspiracies. The need of the hour is to create a national consensus. We pay our respects and salute the soldiers of the Pakistani forces who sacrificed their lives for the defense of the homeland and against terrorism. Can't be successful

Battling Cancer

Urgent Policy Action Needed to Curb Unhealthy Food Consumption in Pakistan

World comes together to observe World Cancer Day on February 4th. Annually 10 million deaths are associated with cancer globally. In Pakistan situation is same. Non communicable diseases claims the lives of almost 2100 people daily, with cancer being significant factor in this statistic. These casualties of different age groups, including the young and those

in their productive years. There deaths not only cause a social loss for their family but it also adds to an economic loss of the country as these individuals are unable to contribute to economic activities. it is imperative for Pakistan must confront a pressing health issue that often goes unnoticed-the link between cancer and the consumption of unhealthy foods. In recent years, the rise in cancer has been alarming, with lifestyle factors playing a significant role in the concerning trend. Among these factors, the

excessive consumption of sugary drinks and ultra-processed foods has emerged as a silent culprit, contributing to the growing cancer burden in the country. Studies have consistently shown a direct correlation between a diet high in sugar and ultra-processed foods and an increased list of developing various types of cancer. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in the availability and consumption of such products, often leading to detrimental health outcomes. The need for urgent policy actions

to address this issue is paramount, and World Cancer Day as a poignant reminder for the



Sanullah Ghumman

government to take decisive steps to protect the health of its citizens.

The impact of sugary drinks on cancer risk cannot be overstated. These beverages are not only high in empty calories but also contribute to weight gain and obesity - both established risk factors for cancer. Ultra-processed foods, characterized by their high levels of additives, preservatives, and refined ingredients, have also been implicated in the rise of cancer cases. These products often lack essential nutrients and are associated with an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases - all of which are interconnected with cancer development.

To combat this growing health crisis, the government of Pakistan must consider implementing comprehensive policy measures aimed at reducing the consumption of unhealthy foods. These actions could include an increase in taxes on sugary drinks which is an evidence-based first and most effective policy action to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy drinks. Similar-

ly, Front of Pack Nutrition Labels on Ultra-processed foods increases the consumers' awareness of healthy food choices. On World Cancer Day, let us unite in the fight against this pervasive disease by addressing one of its preventive causes. The government of Pakistan must take decisive action to create an environment that fosters healthier food choices, safeguarding the well-being of its citizens and working towards a future free from the burden of preventable cancers.

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Selection Before Elections

In late 2015, key PML(N) figures, including Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid, former Governor Sindh Mr. Zubair, Daniyal Aziz, and Mr. Talla, a prominent associate of the Incharge of PML(N)'s social media cell, convened in a critical meeting. They expressed deep concerns over the diminishing visibility and influence of the PML(N) leadership, including the Prime Minister, across media platforms and governance arenas. This meeting, highlighted a sense of urgency and helplessness in countering the narrative that was constricting their political space. The discussion underscored the challenges they faced in maintaining their presence and authority within the public sphere and governance structures, signaling a significant moment of introspection and strategizing within the party ranks.

During a pivotal period in late 2015, the PML(N) leadership faced a stark realization that their tenure in power was nearing an end and their successor was being groomed. The systematic campaign to marginalize PML(N) was lodged culminating in the dramatic ousting of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The campaign extended beyond legal actions to include media bans and a broad range of measures aimed at erasing PML(N)'s political footprint. This orchestrated effort not only targeted Nawaz Sharif with convictions and lifetime disqualification, his daughter who never held a public office was jailed, but also ensnared his allies, signaling a concerted effort to reshape the country's political landscape by sidelining a once-dominant party.

Following the ousting of PTI in 2022, the legal cases against numerous PML(N) figures began to collapse with astonishing rapidity, raising questions about the initial validity or motivations

behind these charges. Observers were left to ponder whether these cases were inherently flawed, perhaps motivated by political vendettas, or if their rapid dismissal was itself a departure from legal propriety. This situation highlighted a dilemma regarding the judiciary's effectiveness, especially when influential interests are at stake.

To ensure a favorable electoral landscape for PML(N), PTI has been significantly fragmented. The party faces numerous challenges: loss of its iconic election symbols, the incarceration of its chairman, leaders either imprisoned or in hiding, workers facing intimidation, and public assemblies being curtailed or forcefully disbanded. PTI's campaign efforts are hamstrung by restrictions on media access and other forms of electoral campaigning.

Despite these hurdles, PTI perseveres, aware of the unpredictable nature of Pakistan's political climate, where democratic processes are seldom left to their own devices. The prevailing political environment in Pakistan is characterized by a tightly controlled system where the parliament, government, judiciary, and media operate under significant constraints, often yielding to pressures that skew the natural course of expression and decision-making towards preordained outcomes.

Maryam Nawaz's candid admission in a spirited address, claiming PML(N)'s only competition is within its own ranks, starkly highlights the altered political landscape favoring PML(N) and the constriction of politi-

cal space for PTI, its principal competitor. Despite facing numerous challenges, PTI continues to hold significant public support, as evidenced by various polls. According to a Gallup Pakistan survey from 2023, Imran Khan was deemed the most popular leader with a 61% approval rating, outpacing other political figures. However, this support has seen a decline, tilting towards PML(N), as newer surveys indicate a shifting preference among the electorate. In Punjab, a 2024 IPOR poll showed PML(N) in the lead with 45% support over PTI's 35%. Conversely, in Sindh, PPP led with 42% in a Gallup Pakistan survey, while PTI trailed at 19%. Yet, PTI maintained a strong foothold in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 45% backing, as per a Gallup Pakistan survey conducted in January 2024. This evolving political sentiment underscores the dynamic and fluid nature of Pakistan's political arena.

Despite polling data suggesting PTI's leadership position, it's evident that the full weight of state resources has been leveraged to undercut the party's presence. Across the nation, the state apparatus has been deployed to thwart PTI's attempts at organizing public gatherings. In instances where PTI has managed to conduct rallies, especially within the KP province, against the odds of state intervention, their visibility has been significantly diminished by the mainstream media's reluctance to broadcast these events, thereby diluting their potential impact.

Pakistan's position in various global indices underscores deep-seated concerns

about its governance, rule of law, and freedoms. The World Bank's political stability percentile, Lowy Institute's ranking, and the Fragile States Index's "Warning" category highlight Pakistan's volatile political climate, marred by frequent leadership turnovers and military influence.

The World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2023 places Pakistan alarmingly low, underscoring deficiencies in regulatory enforcement, civil, and criminal justice systems. Similarly, the Global Competitiveness Report 2022 reflects concerns over the efficiency of Pakistan's legal-regulatory framework. Moreover, Freedom House's 2023 report on judicial independence categorizes Pakistan as "not free," with a notably low score, revealing a judiciary under duress.

These rankings collectively paint a grim picture of a nation grappling with systemic challenges that hinder democratic processes and the safeguarding of fundamental freedoms.

Drawing on decades of experience within the bureaucracy, it's clear that the civil service adeptly senses and aligns with the prevailing political currents, now veering towards PML(N), distancing from PTI and others. This pivot reflects a broader understanding, shared by political entities, the populace, and global observers, that in Pakistan, the sequence of selection before election is a recognized norm, shaping the political landscape and influencing the bureaucratic stance. This adaptation by the bureaucracy underscores the intricate dance between governance and power dynamics in Pakistan.

Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Despair

Thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have continued to flee intense hostilities in Khan Younis towards the massively overcrowded southern city of Rafah which UN humanitarian officials described as a "pressure cooker of despair." The warning from the UN aid coordination office, OCHA, comes nearly four months since Israel commenced a devastating bombing campaign after October 7.

"In recent days, thousands of Palestinians have been fleeing to the south to Rafah, which is already hosting over half of Gaza's population of some 2.3 million people," OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke said. Repeating deep concerns that nowhere in Gaza is safe amid reports of Israeli shelling on the periphery of Rafah on Friday, Laerke told journalists that most of the new arrivals were "living in makeshift structures, tents, or out in the open. Rafah is now a pressure cooker of despair and we fear for what happens next." To date, 100,000 people in Gaza "are either dead, injured, or missing and presumed dead" as a result of bombing raids and fighting on the ground between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants, according to the UN World Health Organization (WHO). Sixty per cent of the 27,019 fatalities reported by the enclave's health authorities have been women and children, the UN health agency reported, with more than 66,000 now injured and requiring medical care that remains difficult to access. Highlighting the "extremely challenging" task of replenishing hospitals and medical centres throughout the war-torn enclave, WHO Representative in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Dr. Rick Peepkorn explained that of 15 planned missions to the north in January, three had been carried out, four had been impeded by impassable routes, one postponed and eight were denied. Dr Peepkorn added that of the 11 planned missions to the south last month, four had gone ahead, two were postponed, two were impeded either because checkpoints opened late or owing to excessive delays. Authorisations were denied for three missions.

"Lack of safety guarantees and humanitarian corridors in Gaza are making it increasingly challenging to safely and rapidly carry out humanitarian operations," the WHO official said, speaking from Jerusalem. "Lack of sustained access to hospitals could dismantle the health system." The development came as UN Children's Fund UNICEF reported that at least 17,000 children in Gaza are unaccompanied or separated. "Each one, a heartbreaking story of loss and grief," said Jonathan Crickx, UNICEF Chief of Communication in the State of Palestine. Speaking from Jerusalem to journalists in Geneva, the UNICEF official described meeting youngsters in Gaza earlier this week. Among them was 11-year-old Razan who lost almost all her family during a bombing raid in the first weeks of the war. "Her mother, father, brother, and two sisters were killed," Crickx continued. "Razan's leg was also injured and had to be amputated. Following the surgery, her wound got infected. Razan is now being taken care of by her aunt and uncle, all of whom have been displaced to Rafah." Because of the lack of food, water and shelter, extended families are struggling to look after themselves, let alone orphaned or unaccompanied children, the UNICEF officer said. "I met these children in Rafah. We fear that the situation of children who have lost their parents is much worse in the north and the centre of the Gaza Strip."



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

Plight of Kashmiri People Needs Attention - I

Naeem Shamsi

Imagine a Valley that possesses some of the most scenic and beautiful landscapes found on Earth, with green mountains surrounding breathtaking lakes and rivers and an air of tranquility. Then imagine the same Valley littered with army check posts, barbed wires and locked down with the presence of hundreds of thousands of soldiers marching tyrannically and intimidating the local population. This is the reality of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), today.

Today, despite the passage of more than seventy-six years, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains one of the oldest unresolved disputes on the agenda of the UN Security Council. In these years, India has waged a ruthless campaign of oppression, committing grave human rights violations with impunity against the innocent Kashmiris in IIOJK. India's sole purpose has been territorial hold at any cost.

Despite repeated commitments and assurances to the United Nations, India continues to deny the Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination. This right was promised to the Kashmiris by numerous UN Security Council resolutions which enunciate that the "final disposition" of Jammu and Kashmir would be determined through a free and impartial plebiscite held under the United Nations. These resolutions also called for demilitarization of the region and for ensuring

that demographic identity of the region would be protected and preserved.

Sadly, India has reneged on its commitments, made to the Kashmiri people, the UN, and Pakistan. In 1950, the Indian Constitution provided a special status to Jammu and Kashmir under its Article 370. This was later supplemented in 1954 through a Presidential Order to include Article 35-A that empowered the State Assembly to define "permanent residents" and confer special rights and privileges to them such as the right to purchase land, to vote and contest elections, seek employment and avail other state benefits. Non-permanent residents of the State were not entitled to these 'privileges'.

While these measures were neither consistent with the United Nations resolutions, nor held any legal standing, nevertheless, they preserved the unique identity and special nature of the land and the residents of IIOJK.

Enter Narendra Modi in 2014. The BJP government of Prime Minister Modi came to power riding the wave of a Hindutva-dominated India and powered by the chauvinistic ideals of the RSS ideologues. The BJP government repeatedly claimed that it would "solve" the Kashmir issue and that it would revoke Article 370. Thus, it was no surprise when, on 5 August 2019, India carried out a so-called "legal coup" and illegally and unilaterally revoked the special status of the state of IIOJK by abrogating Article 370 and 35 A of the Indian Constitution. The region was converted into two so-called "Union Territories" of

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, under direct control of New Delhi. The rationale given by the BJP was that this step would break the back of "militancy" and usher an era of normalcy, peace and development.

Deplorably, in its judgment of 11 December 2023, the Supreme Court of India has endorsed the Indian government's actions of 5 August 2019. Evidently, domestic legislation and judicial verdicts cannot absolve India of its international obligations under the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. In the eyes of international law, any process, subservient to the Indian Constitution, cannot be invoked to determine the final status of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an internationally-recognized disputed territory.

The Indian Supreme Court's verdict failed to cater to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, who have already rejected India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019. The Kashmiri leadership also expressed disappointment over the judgement.

As Jammu and Kashmir is an international dispute, the Indian government or its judiciary have no right to take unilateral measures against the will of the other parties to the dispute i.e. Kashmiri people and Pakistan.

Parallel to these legal and judicial measures, an oppressive campaign to crush dissent is in full swing. The brutality of Indian Occupation Forces has led to the killing of more than 800 innocent Kashmiris since 5 August, 2019.

To be continued

Benazir Bhutto to Bushra Bibi: Politics of beset and moral turpitude

Bushra Begum who is a housewife and has got nothing to do with politics against her the PMLN government have made absurd and vulgar propagandas. Various articles were also written to humiliate Ms Bushra Imran. And the journalist who wrote the article were also given facilities as a reward.

This is actually frustration and perceive political revenge against Ex Prime Minister Imran Khan. This family has also done it in the past with Martyr Ms Benazir Bhutto to leave the political field and withdraw from politics. But Ms Benazir Bhutto remained steadfast and bravely faced everything. She bore every hurtful word and accent on herself. And now the same character assassination is being used on Imran Khan's wife Bushra Begum to break Imran Khan. Which has been done since Imran Khan's government till now. While Bushra Begum is neither related to politics nor to any business. Who is a homely and veiled woman. And she has never wanted to be in politics. Era is different but the pattern of PML-N is the same as it has been in the past.

In the past, Ms Benazir Bhutto was also called shameful words like Yellow Taxi by PMLN. Even fake photos of her were thrown from the helicopter.

So that she get afraid and become indifferent to politics. To save their politics, the Sharif family has always targeted and humiliated women.

Never before in the political history of Pakistan has a housewife been used to break and weaken her husband.

Pakistan, which we got in the name of Islam so that we can live here according to our religion of Islam, respect for women is essential in Islam. Islam is the only religion in which the importance of respect for women is clear. But we saw that the political governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan laid hands on a veiled and chaste woman for their revenge. But the woman patiently endured all the dirty propaganda and shameful words against her who decided to support her husband in all circumstances and remained firm. And who knew that judgment would come against her.

Setting a high example of courage and bravery, she was

neither afraid nor cowed, but the lady Khan bravely submitted to the arrest, respecting the law. Who must be thinking in solitude what was her fault, maybe it is that she is the wife of the leader of the world of Islam.

The PMLN government made false and bogus cases against Bushra Begum.

Political opponents touted Bibi's character through their social media. Talked dirty against Imran Khan and Bushra Begum's personal life. But despite all the propaganda, conspiracies and character assassination, they could not break a woman.

It was another sad day in Pakistan's judicial history" and questioned its legitimacy. "The Judiciary is being dismantled. A flawed judgement meant suspension by the High Court, as evidently the witnesses were compromised. The witnesses were replaced... without question. No final argument has been given, and the decision comes across as a pre-determined process. This ridiculous decision will be challenged in the higher courts."

It is to be asked from those NGOs, Women Rights Defenders, participants of aurat march and the supporters of Mera jism Meri marzi why they are silent on the dirty propaganda against Ms Bushra Imran? Is Bushra Begum not a woman? Or she is veiled? and their standards & goals are something else? What will be the women's march agenda for this year? Who do not question the ongoing desecration of women in Pakistan.

In fact, the political system of Pakistan is a system steeped in filth. In which the opponents do not even leave the women of the house. And political opponents use it as a regular weapon. Of course, in the past it happened to all women political leaders and workers. But the surprising and shameful thing is that now even the housewives and domestic women are not spared in the name of their political goals. Ms. Bushra Imran, like her husband Imran Khan, is not only brave, but she is facing the situation stubbornly.

Targeting household women is new in the history of Pakistan. And it has pushed this ugly system further down. And this thing has trampled and violated not only democratic but also social moral and religious values of Pakistan.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

Xi pays visit to grassroots officials and residents in Tianjin ahead of Spring Festival

Xinhua

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping visited primary-level officials and residents in Tianjin ahead of the Spring Festival. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, extended Chinese New Year greetings to the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese. Xi wished the Chinese people both at home and abroad good health, a happy family and good luck in the Year of the Dragon, and wished the motherland peace and prosperity.

From Feb. 1 to 2, Xi, accompanied by Chen Min'er, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee, and Zhang Gong, mayor of Tianjin, inspected a village, a historic and cultural block and a revolutionary memorial museum, and brought the CPC Central Committee's care and best wishes to local officials and residents.

On the morning of Feb. 1, Xi arrived at Diliubu Village in Xinkou Township, Xiqing District as soon as he got off the train. In late July and early August last year, extremely heavy rain in north China caused floods in the Haihe River Basin that inundated much of the Dongdian flood storage and detention area in Tianjin. Xi was briefed on the damages the flood had caused to Tianjin as a whole and to Xiqing District. He walked into a greenhouse to check out the growth of vegetables, and asked farmers in detail about how their greenhouses were restored, vegetables were replanted, and about the sales of their vegetables. He gave local people credit for their rapid response, self-reliance and self-motivation, as they proactively organized production to help themselves and seized the time to grow vegetables in as many fields as possible when the flood had ever subsided. He thanked them for their hard work in adding more vegetable choices to urban residents.

Xi walked into the house of Du Honggang, a villager with four generations of his family living under one roof. Xi sat down with the family to learn about their life and calculated the financial losses the family had suffered from the flood and their revenue from post-flood production and the additional income from employment. Du told the general secretary that the family's more than 10 mu (about 0.67 hectares) of corn fields and vegetable patches were damaged by the flood, but with the help of the Party and the government, they were able to recover quickly, and their vegetable greenhouses, in particular, were swiftly repaired, allowing them to have a good harvest of vegetables in season. With the Spring Festival around the corner, the family has stocked up a satisfactory variety of festive items, and thanks to a series of cultural events arranged by the village, people are all in a cheerful



mood. Quoting a Chinese idiom about national prosperity and social harmony, Xi noted that a country is prosperous only when its people live in peace, saying that the CPC Central Committee and governments at all levels are concerned about everyone's safety and well-being at all times. He also expressed the hope for villagers to rebuild their homes and create a happy life with their own hands.

When the general secretary was ready to leave, villagers gathered closer to greet him. Xi waved to the crowd over and over again and said in an amiable tone that he was delighted to see that their production and life have mostly recovered, and they have a warm home through the winter.

"Since last year, other regions in our country have also been hit by natural disasters such as floods, typhoons, earthquakes, landslides, snow and ice storms. I have been concerned about them all," Xi said. Party committees and governments at all levels put the people first, and officials along with the general public united as one, and thus achieved major triumphs in their fight against the disasters, he said. "The Spring Festival is approaching, on behalf of the CPC Central Committee, I would like to give best wishes to those people who were affected by the disasters, and to all the officials and those who have been working at the front for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction," Xi added. Party committees and governments at all levels must do an even better job in making meticulous arrangements for people's life and work in the disaster-affected areas, Xi said.

In the afternoon, Xi arrived at Tianjin's Ancient Culture Street. Walking along the street that has an air of antiquity, he stepped into several unique shops such as Guifaxiang 18th Street Mahua, Nut Products Zhang, Clay Figurine Zhang, and Yangliuqing New Year Painting, asking about categories and sales of their products, and the inheritance and development of traditional cultural heritages. He also talked with shop owners, employees, and residents around. He stressed that Party committees and governments at all levels must secure the production, distribution, and supply of essential consumer goods, ensuring that they are in abundance, great diversity, and sound quality. Then residents can be at ease to consume, and have a happy Spring Festival. Xi pointed out that Chinese modernization cannot be achieved without the inheritance and promotion of fine traditional culture, and Tianjin is a city with distinct characteristics and charm. It is necessary to protect and make good use of historical and cultural blocks so that they can add to the beauty of this modern metropolis.

On the streets, drums and music were clanging, dragon dance and lion dance performances were lively. People cheered enthusiastically when they saw the general secretary coming. Xi walked closer to everyone and extended New Year greetings to the people of Tianjin and the people of all ethnic groups in China. Xi said that seeing local residents and tourists beaming when they enjoyed traditional folk performances, he felt the thick flavor of the New Year. Noticing the coming lunar

year is the Year of the Dragon, Xi said that in Chinese culture, the dragon has multiple connotations, such as courage and endeavor, infinite vitality, good luck, etc., and carries people's good wishes for and visions of the future. He said that everyone should have confidence in the coming year and live a better life. During the Spring Festival, local governments may organize more cultural activities that are popular with the people, so as to make the festival more festive and cheerful.

On the morning of Feb. 2, Xi visited the Peking-Tianjin Campaign Memorial Museum. From time to time, he stopped to look at the exhibits and communicated with everyone, stressing that the history of Chinese revolutionary war should be studied. He said that we should cherish what have been hard won, carry forward the revolutionary tradition, strengthen the spirit of struggle, and have the courage to overcome all kinds of difficulties and obstacles on the road ahead.

On the afternoon of Feb. 2, Xi was briefed on the work of the CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee and the Tianjin municipal government, and affirmed the achievements the city has made in various aspects of its work. He expressed the hope that Tianjin, under the strategic guidance of the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, focuses on economic development as the central task and high-quality development as the primary mission, actively forges ahead to build itself into a socialist and modern metropolis and writes its own chapter in advancing Chinese modernization.

Xi noted that Tianjin, as

an advanced manufacturing, research and development base, should give full play to its advantages such as its rich scientific and educational resources, and strive to take the lead in developing new productive forces. He called on the city to attach equal importance to scientific and technological innovation and industrial innovation, strengthen the building of parks for sci-tech innovation, further integrate the digital economy with the real economy, and promote the high-end, smart and green development of its manufacturing sector. He also called on Tianjin to strengthen its coordination with Beijing on sci-tech innovation and the integration of industrial systems, so as to jointly build world-class advanced manufacturing clusters.

Xi stressed that reform and opening up are the key source of momentum for the development of all causes. He called on Tianjin to conscientiously summarize how its reform measures were implemented, and make plans for implementing new measures in accordance with the new developments in situations and missions, so as to ensure that the reform is more accurate, targeted and effective. It is particularly important to achieve greater progress in improving the systems underpinning the market economy, working unwaveringly both to consolidate and develop the public sector and to encourage, support and guide the development of the non-public sector, developing new systems for a higher-level open economy at a faster pace, advancing regional integration, and innovating the systems and institutions for improving Beijing-Tianjin inte-

grated development.

Xi pointed out that culture should serve to enlighten and bring tangible benefits to people, grace a city, promote industries of a city, and provide a city with its unique characteristics. These are supposed to be what a city is meant to achieve when it endeavors to inherit and develop its urban culture, as well as foster and nourish its urban civility. Tianjin should extensively explore its historical and cultural resources, and strengthen the protection of historical, cultural, and revolutionary heritage. In addition, it should improve the modern systems for cultural industries, and markets and public cultural services, and create distinctive and profound cultural brands, so as to demonstrate the modern features of Tianjin.

Xi stressed that it is a major task to advance the modernization of urban governance in order to build a modern metropolis. Tianjin should materialize the principle that cities should be built by the people and for the people, and make it a top priority to ensure that people live and work in peace and contentment. The supply of basic public services should be gradually expanded, and work should be done to secure the basic living needs of the disadvantaged, and to constantly increase people's sense of gain. It is imperative to adhere to the development path that brings out the full potential of a city. The way of urban governance should be innovated and the construction of a resilient and safe city should be reinforced. Proactive measures should be taken to initiate urban renewal projects to increase development potential, optimize development

space, and continually improve business form, functionality, and quality of the urban environment.

Xi pointed out that since the theoretical study program for the whole Party to study and implement the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is coming to an end, it is imperative to establish a long-term mechanism to consolidate and expand what has been achieved in the study program. Leadership teams and leading officials at all levels should have a correct understanding of what it means to perform well and continuously combat pointless formalities to reduce burdens on community-level officials. It is essential to guide Party members and officials to dedicate themselves to work and make all efforts to promote the solid implementation of the decisions and arrangements of the CPC Central Committee.

In the end, Xi stressed that as the Spring Festival approaches, Party committees and governments at all levels should attach great importance to people's well-being and security, ensure the supply of essential necessities and energy, and maintain social harmony and stability so that people can have a joyful and peaceful Spring Festival.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee, accompanied Xi on the inspection tour.

Li Ganjie, He Weidong, He Lifeng and leading officials from relevant central Party and government departments accompanied him on part of the inspection tour.

FM Jilani visit to Brussels to attend the Third Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani attended the Third EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels at the invitation of the EU High Representative/Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell.

Speaking at the roundtable discussion on "Shared Prosperity, Economic Resilience, and Investments", the Foreign Minister called for enhanced cooperation between Europe and its partners to confront global challenges, foster green partnerships, and to attain Sustainable Development Goals. Noting the rapid pace of technological change, he underlined the need to balance risk regulation with optimal utilization of technology for sustainable devel-



opment.

The Foreign Minister called for opposing divisive geopolitical contestation that could further aggravate global and regional tensions. He added that restrictions on trade and investment, and new forms of protectionism were antithesis to the objectives of shared prosperity, sustainability, and inclusivity.

Foreign Minister Jilani also elaborated on Paki-

stan's vision of connectivity and regional economic integration. He introduced Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council as a renewed promise for fast-tracked, single-window facilitation of foreign investments in profitable ventures in key areas of agriculture, mining, energy, and Information Technology.

On the sidelines of the Indo-Pacific Ministerial

Forum, the Foreign Minister met with the High Representative Josep Borrell; Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib; Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares Bueno; and Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg.

The Foreign Minister also held meetings with senior EU officials, including Commissioner for Climate Action Wopke Hoekstra; Secretary General of the EU External Action Service Stefano Sannino; Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the EU, Frans van Daele; and Special Envoy for Afghanistan Tomas Niklasson. He also held a meeting with the Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Countries of South Asia, MEP Nicola Procaccini.

Kazakhstan Temir Zholy registers record net profit of \$344 million in 2023

Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA: Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) national railway company's net profit hit a record 154 billion tenge (US\$344.2 million) in 2023, four times more compared to the last year, said KTZ Chair Nurlan Sauranbayev during a Feb. 1 meeting with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, reported Akorda.

According to Sauranbayev, the company's production figures have shown growth over the past three years. In 2023, freight turnover increased by 7% and reached 270 billion ton-kilometers. The volume of transit traffic increased by 18% and exceeded 27 million tons. As a result, the company's revenue increased by 29.3% compared to last year, totaling 1.9 trillion tenge (US\$4.2 billion).

Sauranbayev reported on the implementation of large infrastructure projects, including the construction of second tracks on the Dostyk



- Moynty section, a railway line bypassing the Almaty station and others. To date, more than 350 kilometers of tracks have been laid. The launch of these projects will increase the capacity of interstate connecting points.

Tokayev learned details on the completion of the construction of a cargo terminal in the dry port of Xian, located in the largest logistics hub in China. It will ensure stable cargo flow in the direction of Kazakhstan and will open access to

new markets for Kazakh exporters.

With the world's leading companies Huawei, Wabtec and PSA, work is underway to implement the Smart Railway project. The introduction of new solutions will increase railway capacity, optimize fuel consumption and improve train safety.

Following the meeting, Tokayev noted the importance of implementing Kazakhstan's investment projects and focused on the development of the country's transport and transit potential.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
63,002.91	62,393.73	
Day's High	Day's Low	
63,075.30	62,448.72	
Index Value	Change	
8,117,414,186	+609.18	
Percentage	Time	
+0.98%	2 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,615.54	-6.62	
Percentage	Time	
-0.087%	2 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,630.80	+110.96	
Percentage	Time	
+0.29%	2 Feb, 1:18 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
36,158.02	+146.56	
Percentage	Time	
+0.41%	2 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	184.8
Bahrain Dinar	743.54	751.45
Canadian Dollar	206	208
China Yuan	39.21	39.61
Danish Krone	40.75	41.15
Euro	304	307
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	909.3	918.3
Malaysian Ringgit	58.52	59.12
New Zealand \$	171.76	173.76
Norwegians Krone	26.76	27.06
Omani Riyal	726.14	734.14
Qatari Riyal	76.83	77.53
Saudi Riyal	74.45	75.2
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.74	27.04
Swiss Franc	325.92	328.42
Thai Bhat	7.85	8
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	356.5	360
US Dollar	280.1	281.8

CDA Chairman assures to address the issues of the business community

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Capt. (Retd) Anwar ul Haq, Chairman CDA said that the business community plays a key role in the development of the local economy and CDA would take all possible measures to address their key issues to facilitate them in the business development. He said that efforts are underway to develop transparent and financially viable systems in CDA to better serve the citizens and the business community. He said that CDA is working on an automated parking system to address the parking issue in markets and the Islamabad Citizen Club would soon be made operational. He said this while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during its visit to the CDA Head Office led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Capt. (Retd) Anwar ul Haq said that the CDA is ready to hand over

public toilets and filtration plants to ICCI for their maintenance and operation on mutually agreed terms. He said that CDA is also ready to hand over its hospital to ICCI for maintenance and operation after its upgrade. He said that CDA is considering outsourcing the water supply and waste management systems to make them hassle-free services for the citizens. He said that CDA is digitizing the land record to facilitate the business community and the citizens. He also updated the business community about other important initiatives of CDA including the introduction of electric buses and, tree plantation drives to make Islamabad an environmentally friendly city.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry briefed the Chairman CDA about the key issues of the business community and stressed that the civic body should take urgent meas-



ures to address them. He said that ICCI is constructing water filtration plants in G series, which should be handed over to the Chamber for their maintenance and operations. He said that CDA should set up flower markets in Marakaz, complete slaughter house project, operationalize the Citizens Club, and set up a wholesale poultry market in the federal capital. He urged that CDA should focus on the better development of all markets and replace all old sewerage lines in Islamabad with new ones to address sewerage issues.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI briefed the Chairman CDA about the issues of the industrial sector and stressed their early redressal.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Ajmal Baloch, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Zahid Qureshi, Khalid Chaudhry, and others were in the delegation.

Poorness

LAHORE: Volunteers distributing food among people at Gulberg Area on Saturday.



Photo: APP

FPCCI supports FBR's restructuring by the Finance Minister: Atif Ikram Sheikh

PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that the business community supports restructuring plan of Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) as visualized by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Federal Caretaker Minister for Finance & Revenue. The underlining principle of separation of tax policy and collection functions will help resolve contradictions, conflict of interest and maladministration; and, that's why, FPCCI supports the restructuring proposals, he added.

It is pertinent to note that Dr. Shamshad Akhtar paid a detailed, high-profile visit to the apex body's head office in Karachi and briefed prominent trade & industry leaders of Karachi on the measures the caretaker government has taken to stabilize the economy, control exchange rate volatility



and restructure FBR.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stated that the bifurcation of inland revenue and customs will streamline the operations of FBR; and, will not only align it with international best practices, but also remove the concerns of international financial institutions like IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank. This is specifically important in Pakistan's peculiar case as the country will continue to depend on

external financing for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that the input of apex body must be incorporated in budget-making and taxation policies as FPCCI is undertaking a massive exercise to formulate its budget proposals for the federal budget 2024-25 through aggregating feedback from all chambers, associations and trade bodies from across Pakistan.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar agreed with FPCCI's demand that its representatives should be included in all important and relevant committees of the finance and revenue ministries as the business community is real stakeholder of the economy. She also appreciated active participation of the business community in government's consultative process with the private sector from the platform of FPCCI.

Pakistan's weekly inflation dips by 0.28%

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.28 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on February 1, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 317.65 points in Pakistan as compared to 318.55 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 39.45 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, decreased by 0.85



percent and went down to 310.42 points from last week's 313.09 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517; Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above Rs. 44,175, decreased by 0.71 percent, 0.53 percent, 0.41 and 0.06 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 12 (23.53%) items increased, 17 (33.33%) items decreased and 22 (43.14%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (18.28%), eggs (7.77%), onions (6.99%), LPG (1.53%),

tea packet (1.29%), potatoes (1.25%), pulse masoor (0.80%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.36%) and mustard oil (0.28%).

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves drop by US\$78.9m: SBP

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included petrol (5.20%), chicken (1.88%), diesel (0.95%), energy saver (0.70%), bananas (0.68%), salt powdered (0.55%), pulse moong (0.34%), mutton (0.33%), gur (0.21%), beef (0.15%), tea prepared (0.14%) and georgette (0.10%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included gas charges for q1 (1108.59%), cigarettes (92.30%), tomatoes (90.40%), chillies powder (81.74%), wheat flour (61.97%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), sugar (54.79%), gents sandal (53.37%), gur (51.67%), salt powdered (40.97%) rice irri-6/9 (38.79%) and pulse mash (37.38%).

National Foodpreneur Program launches officially marking a culinary milestone



PNP

KARACHI: The National Foodpreneur Program is a collaboration between National Foods Ltd and MasterClass Pakistan, designed to empower individuals passionate about culinary arts to excel in the food industry.

The National Foodpreneur Program was officially launched in Karachi, Pakistan. The event, held at the MasterClass facility, brought together the talented students, the project team, and the esteemed leadership of National Foods. This convergence of culinary passion and industry expertise marked the beginning of a transformative program designed to empower aspiring chefs. The launch event

saw the vibrant gathering of the first cohort of 21 students, each with a shared passion for the culinary arts, creating an atmosphere charged with excitement and anticipation.

The National Foodpreneur Program aims to empower individuals to become successful entrepreneurs in the food industry or secure employment in the culinary field by providing a well-rounded education, training, and certification. On the occasion, Zahid Majeed the Chairman of National Foods Limited said "Empowering dreams is at the heart of our mission. The National Foodpreneur Program is not just about culinary education; it's about giving individuals the tools to turn their passion into a life-changing experience."

High fuel prices push inflation to over 38%: DFPA

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA) has warned that the record inflation and high cost of doing business continued to hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as weekly inflation has surged to new highs for the third consecutive week.

Quoting the data, the DFPA President Ahsan Shahid revealed a year-on-year increase of 38.66 percent in short-term inflation for this, marking an alarming trend in rising prices. The ongoing depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, coupled with soaring petrol prices, sales tax burdens, and

mounting electricity bills are identified as the primary contributors to the persistent inflationary trend.

Ahsan Shahid said that the high cost of production is damaging Pakistan's trade and industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He urged the government to shut down all costly oil-fired power plants in order to ensure consumers had access to cheaper energy. He lamented that the previous administration did not prioritize the rehabilitation and maintenance of older power plants, resulting in multiple system constraints and significant losses.

FRIA rejects DISCOs demand of more jump in electricity cost for second quarter

PPA

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association Lahore (FRIA) senior vice chairman and PIAF leader Shahbaz Aslam has opposed the Power distribution companies (DISCOs) fresh demand of putting a burden of another Rs82 billion on consumers by raising electricity tariff for the second quarter of

current fiscal year amidst already highest energy rates in the region.

While describing the government's decision to increase electricity tariff further as harmful for the trade and industry, as the businesses are already under financial stress, the FRIA leader Shahbaz Aslam urged the government to reverse the proposed jump in power charges.

SECP publishes Consultation Paper on adoption of AAOIFI standards for Islamic finance

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has published a consultation paper to seek comments and feedback of stakeholders on implementation of a new strategy for adoption of AAOIFI's Shariah, accounting, auditing and governance standards.

The proposed new strategy aims to enhance the adoption of Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) standards by introducing a more comprehensive and interactive approach, with a phased implementation of all standards to ensure effective compliance. By considering the maturity level of industry and practical difficulties in adopting all standards at once, the proposed strategy suggests a staggered approach to implementation. Presently, only 7 Shariah standards have been adopted, whereas the adoption of 10 more Shariah standards is in process. However, the existing approach, which includes picking standards based on necessity, produces an inadequate framework since many significant and consequential features offered in accounting, auditing, governance, and other Shariah-related standards may be missed out.

Therefore, a new strategy has been envisaged emphasizing comprehensiveness, integration, interaction, feedback, and preparedness for global and domestic Islamic finance growth. All of AAOIFI's standards shall be adopted as non-binding guidelines, and institutions will be encouraged to voluntarily adopt them while conducting Islamic financial transactions. After a period of general sensitization, compliance will shift to a "comply or explain" approach with penal action for non-compliance (not less than three years; the period will be announced later). The final phase mandates full compliance with notified standards, and it is believed that the gradual implementation aims to better equip the industry for smooth compliance.

It is expected that the new strategy will increase the quality of Islamic financial services being offered in regulated sectors and greatly assist in enhancing transparency and compliance in Islamic financial transactions, thereby enhancing stakeholder confidence.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan observes Kashmir Solidarity Day tomorrow

Naveed Ahmad Khan

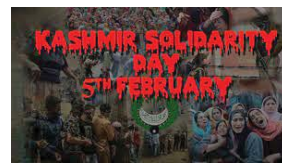
ISLAMABAD: Pakistanis will observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on Feb 5 (Monday) with a renewed commitment to support the just struggle of the Kashmiris for their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The people and the government of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir observe Solidarity Day every year not only to renew their love and affection with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) but also to reiterate

their commitment and dedication to the liberation of occupied Kashmir from Indian occupation.

People from different walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, social activists, students and others will hold rallies and demonstrations, forming human chains across the country to infuse new spirits into the Kashmiris, who have long been fighting for their freedom.

All Pakistani missions abroad will organize seminars and photo exhibitions to draw the world's attention towards the worst form of subjugation and human rights violations committed by India in



the IOJ&K.

The national media, both electronic and print, will air special programmes and print special supplements to highlight the significance of Kashmir Solidarity Day and the decades-long struggle of Kashmiri people against the illegal Indian occupation.

Banners highlighting the plight of innocent Kashmiris have been put on display across the country, including airports,

railway stations, and national highways.

Observance of this day is also aimed at highlighting the long-standing unsettled dispute of Jammu and Kashmir internationally and apprising the people of occupied Kashmir that they are not alone in this hour of trial and turmoil.

India has kept a major part of the internationally acknowledged disputed Himalayan Jammu Kashmir state in its illegal and forced occupation since October 27, 1947, against the aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

India is using state terrorism against the Kashmiris, includ-

ing extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, fake encounters, and staged cordon-and-search operations. Over 900,000 Indian occupation forces have turned IIOJK into an open prison, but the desperation of the RSS-BJP dispensation to control the indigenous Kashmiri movement has completely run aground.

Jammu and Kashmir's dispute is one of the oldest pending items on the agenda of the UN Security Council. The dispute remains unresolved due to India's obstinate refusal to honor its commitments and its disrespect for fundamental human rights and international law.

President upholds 'dismissal from service' penalty upon woman harasser

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the penalty of "dismissal from service" imposed upon a bank manager after he was found guilty of the charges of sexually harassing a female colleague at workplace.

While rejecting the representation filed by Mr Muhammad Munir Akhtar (the accused), a former employee of the Askari Bank Ltd (ABL), against the decision of the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAAH), the President said that the incidents narrated in the complaint against the accused, when juxtaposed with the

evidence, established the guilt of the accused for the charges of harassment.

As per details, a female employee of ABL (the complainant) had filed a harassment complaint under section 8 of the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 against the accused within the departmental hierarchy of ABL stating that she was harassed by the branch staff of the ABL, Hassanabdal. According to her, the accused Muhammad Munir Akhtar, Bank Manager along with his friend had made it difficult for her to work in the branch by creating an offensive workplace environment. She alleged that the accused had forced her to go with his friend



and after she was transferred to another branch, when she went to collect her card from the Hassanabdal branch, she was verbally abused by the accused and he refused to hand over her ATM card. The Departmental Harassment Committee probed into her allegations and, after inquiry, concluded that the accused

was involved in harassment and was accordingly dismissed from service. The accused filed an appeal with FOSPAAH, which was dismissed, after which, he filed a representation with the President.

The President highlighted that the main objective of the Protection against Harassment of Women at Work-

place Act 2010 was to create a safe working environment for women, free of harassment, abuse and intimidation with a view toward fulfillment of their right to work with dignity. "Harassment is one of the biggest hurdles faced by working women preventing many who want to work to get themselves and their families out of poverty", he stated.

The President concluded that there seemed to be no reason for the complainant to file a false complaint against the accused when there existed no previous grudge, ill-will or malice. He, therefore, rejected the representation of the accused against FOSPAAH's decision and upheld the penalty of "dismissal from service" upon him.

General elections postponed in four constituencies

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has postponed the elections in four constituencies of the national and provincial assemblies, citing the unfortunate deaths of the candidates.

According to a statement issued today, delayed elections impact one national constituency and the remaining provincial ones in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, specifically NA-8 Bajaur, PK-22 Bajaur, PK-91 Kohat, and PP-266.

Independent candidate Rehan Zeb Khan, running for National Assembly constituency NA-08 and provincial assembly constituency PK-22 in Bajaur-IV, was gunned down, leading the ECP to cancel elections.

Additionally, elections for NA-91, Kohat-II, were postponed following the passing of Asmat Ullah Khan.

UAE Ambassador reaffirms commitment to mend divides, foster religious harmony and cooperation among people of all cultures and beliefs

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Islamabad H. E. Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi said: On 4th International Day of Human Fraternity, we celebrate the spirit of mutual respect and solidarity that binds the world communities together as one human family.

The Ambassador highlighted that the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 4 February as the 'International Day for Human Fraternity' annually beginning in 2021. The initiative to observe such day was co-introduced by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain,



Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in acknowledgement of the meeting between His Holiness Pope Francis and the His Eminence Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, on 4 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi, which resulted in the signing of the 'Document on Human Fraternity for World

Peace and Living Together'. Ambassador Hamad Al Zaabi further added that International Day of Human Fraternity celebrated to recognise the valuable contributions of people of all religions and beliefs to humanity, and underline the role of education in promoting tolerance and eliminating discrimination based on religion or belief. It commends all international, regional, national, and local initiatives and efforts by religious leaders to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

Al Zaabi said: On this day I would commend the efforts and achievements of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity in promot-

ing human fraternity values in communities around the world to fulfill the aspirations of the Document on Human Fraternity through Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi and Zayed Award for Human Fraternity and other youth and Women initiatives.

The UAE Ambassador concluded that human fraternity begins with advancing dialogue and promoting co-existence among religions and cultures, and encouraging tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect. The UAE will continue to uphold these values by fostering mutual respect and ensuring robust participation by all stakeholders, including regional and international partnerships.

Thirtieth Anniversary of the Establishment of Pakistan-Belarus Relations



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus are today celebrating thirty years of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani has exchanged messages of heartfelt felicitations with Belarusian Foreign Minister, Sergei Aleinik. The respective ambassadors in Islamabad and Minsk have called on the Foreign Ministers and presented the congratulatory messages.

Pakistan-Belarus bilateral relations are characterized by mutual respect and trust and constructive dialogue based on the Islamabad Declaration of Pakistan-Belarus

Partnership and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 2015. This relationship has continued to grow with frequent high-level exchanges and robust collaboration in economic, industrial and agriculture sectors.

In his message to Foreign Minister Aleinik, Foreign Minister Jilani has appreciated the positive trajectory of bilateral relations over the last thirty years. He has expressed commitment of the Government of Pakistan for even deeper mutually beneficial partnership with Belarus.

As a testament to mutually beneficial relationship, Pakistan and Belarus have also concluded a Visa Abolishment Agreement for Diplomatic and Official Passports holders.

MoFA Liaison Office in Lahore

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: We regret the inconvenience faced by the public at our Liaison Office in Lahore in the initial days of operation from its new premises. As announced earlier, the consular services were suspended for a few days as the Liaison Office was temporarily closed on account of relocation to a new site.

Since the resumption of consular services on 1 February 2024, our dedicated and efficient staff has been

working extra hours to service the public. We expect the backlog to clear over the next few days. We appreciate public's understanding during this time of transition.

Earlier this week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also opened its Liaison Office in Gujrat, which is expected to relieve pressure on the Lahore Liaison Office.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs remains committed to facilitate the public and to provide efficient and timely consular services.

PTI to challenge Nikah case verdict, says Barrister Gohar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on Saturday the allegations hurled at the PTI founder and his wife in the Nikah case were highly unethical.

He said the decision was expected. "I told the judge that such a decision was not expected from you as it's a frivolous case," he said.

He said the cleric claimed that Aun Chaudhry brought him here. He said the judge had yet to sign the verdict. All of it was being done illegally and unethically, he added.

"Law stipulates that the judge seeks signature of the convicts and hands over a copy of the verdict," he said.

Gohar said the PTI founder was unlike other politicians. "It's for

the first time in history that the intra-party elections of just one party were scrutinised. All possible efforts are being made to oust us from elections and this fact is as clear as day," he bemoaned.

He said the PTI wanted to move court against the decision and "we hope to get justice in the case." He said the event mentioned during the course of case proceedings was meant for prayers, not Nikah, he said.

He said the PTI founder had conveyed a message to workers that they should remain peaceful and the only deal he would enter into would be related to country's prosperity.

Barrister Gohar said the party would also challenge Bushra Bibi's confinement to one room. She should be allowed to move about freely in her house, he added.

Kashmir 'not tired or hopeless' in fight for freedom: APHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu Kashmir and Pakistan (APHC-AJK) Chapter Secretary Information Imtiaz Wani on Monday reiterated Kashmiris resolve to continue struggle against Indian illegal occupation against all

August 5, 2019, India left no stone unturned to demoralize Kashmiri people by breaking all world records of oppression, but despite all these cruelties, Kashmiris stood fast to continue their struggle.

Naqash thanked Pakistan and people of Pakistani for their unflinching support to Kashmir



odds till the goal of freedom is achieved "Kashmiris are not tired or hopeless. In contrary, the Indian oppression and state terrorism has further strengthened their resolve and commitment for freedom," the Imtiaz Wani said in a statement on the eve of February 5, the Kashmir Solidarity Day.

He said that Kashmiris would not give up their principled position and continue their struggle to end forcible and illegitimate occupation, come what may.

The APHC leader said that after

struggle. He said that Pakistan literally became Kashmiris' ambassador and made their voice be heard all across the world.

He appealed world community to pressurize Indian to take tangible and concrete steps for the resolution of Kashmir issue.