



**Maryam Nawaz to unveil plan after becoming Punjab CM: Marriyum Aurangzeb**

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Secretary Information Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the party's senior vice president and newly-elected MPA Maryam Nawaz would unveil her plan for Punjab after being elected as the chief minister on Sunday (today).



**Overseas workers keen to boost Pakistan's economy: Sardar Attique**

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan President Muslim Conference, ex-Premier AJK has said that great keenness of overseas workers to contribute for economic boost of Pakistan needs to be harnessed with national economic planning and execution apparatus. He was briefing political and youth delegations who called on him in his Mujahid Manzil residence Saturday to congratulate him on his successful 10-day public interactive tour... (Details on Page 2)

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**Illuminate**

FAISALABAD: An illuminated view of a Mosque decorated with colourful lights in connection with Shab-e-Barat, in the city.



Photo: Online

**X, formerly Twitter, services restricted in Pakistan for 7th day**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The services of X, formerly known as Twitter, remained restricted for the seventh day across Pakistan.

Netblocks, an independent observer, confirmed that the accessibility to the social media platform remained fully or intermittently restricted for most users on Saturday.

"Live metrics show that X/ Twitter has now been restricted in #Pakistan for over one week, with service remaining fully or intermittently restricted for most users; the incident comes amidst a surge in internet censorship during elections marred by irregularities," the observer noted in a post on X. The current outage began on



Saturday, February 17 as users complained of slow or non-existent accessibility to the platform.

Meanwhile, reports said that the demand and usage of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) in Pakistan surged significantly following the continuous disruption of social media platforms in recent months.

Quoting an official of VPN provider Proton VPN, TechRadar reported a steady increase in VPN users in the country in recent months.

**PTI takes back Aslam Iqbal's name for Punjab CM slot over arrest fears**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced to change its nominee for the post of chief minister of Punjab over fears of Mian Aslam Iqbal's arrest.

"The police of the entire province are present around the Assembly to arrest him. In this situation, the party leadership in consultation with Mian Aslam Iqbal has nominated Rana Aftab Ahmad Khan for the election of the chief minister," a post on the PTI's X account read. Iqbal had secured a transit bail from the Peshawar High

Court to protect himself from arrest. However, the party said that the police were deployed around the Punjab Assembly to arrest the PTI leader.

Iqbal was among the several PTI leaders who were declared absconders in the May 9 case. An anti-terrorism court in Lahore had labeled 11 PTI candidates as absconders on May 9, 2023.

In Friday's maiden session, 85 members of the PTI who have joined the Sunni Ittehad Council were sworn in.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has fielded Maryam Nawaz as its candidate for chief minister.

**PML-N's Malik Ahmed Khan elected as Punjab Assembly Speaker**

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Malik Ahmed Khan was elected as Punjab Assembly (PA) speaker on Saturday, beating out the candidate fielded by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) in a secret ballot, ARY News reported on Saturday.

The second session of the newly-elected Punjab assembly, presided over by outgoing Speaker Sibtain Khan, saw members of PML-N and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) — which includes MPAs who won with PTI's backing — chanting slogans against each other.

As many as 327 MPA-elects cast their votes during the polling for assembly speaker. Almost 16 candidates did not take oath today as they remain absent from the election.

Malik Ahmed Khan received 224 votes and opposition's candidate Ahmed Khan Bachar secured 96. Two votes were rejected in the tally.

The election for the post of deputy speaker was also won by a PTI candidate:



Suri. He garnered 183 votes and edged out Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's (MMA) Maulana Asad Mehmood, who received 144 votes.

Outgoing speaker Sibtain Khan subsequently administered the speaker's oath to Malik Ahmed Khan amidst loud chants by PML-N lawmakers.

Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan administers the oath to PML-N's Malik Ahmed Khan.

A heavy contingent of police was present outside the assembly to ensure the maintenance of law and order during the assembly session.

Today, six MPAs — including PML-Q

leader Chaudhry Shafay Hussain and SIC's Hafiz Farhat Abbas and Waseem Khan Badozai, and independent candidates Rai Murtaza Iqbal Khan, Fateh Khaliq, Tashakul Abbas Warraich, who were not present in the House's inaugural session on Friday — took their oaths.

The elections for the speaker and deputy speaker were held via a secret ballot under Rules 9 and 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab, 1997.

PML-N's Malik Ahmed Khan and Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channer submitted their nomination papers for the slot of Punjab Assembly speaker and deputy speaker.

Sunni Ittehad Council fielded Ahmad Khan Bhachar and Muhammad Moenuddin Riiaz for the speaker and deputy speaker positions, respectively.

A day earlier, outgoing speaker Sibtain Khan administered oath to 313 newly elected MPAs of the Punjab Assembly in the inaugural session.

Out of these 321 legislators, 221 belonged to the PML-N its allied parties, 98 members of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and one each of the Tehreek-e-Lab-

baik Pakistan (TLP) and PML-Zia.

It may be noted that PML-N has become the largest party in the Punjab Assembly after the induction of 13 MPA-elects from PPP, 10 from PML-Q and five from the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP).

Having the majority, PML-N has announced to form the government in the province with Maryam as its head.

Meanwhile, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza termed the assembly's proceedings "illegal" without the presence of the party's MPA-elects on the reserved seats.

He claimed that SIC members were being barred from attending the assembly sessions. "A new history of politics of revenge is about to be made," he added.

Taking the floor in the provincial assembly, SIC leader Rana Aftab said that the Punjab Assembly was "incomplete" as he vowed to challenge any move made by the House in the court.

The SIC leader said that 27 reserved seats for women and minorities are yet to be decided by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

**Misleading propaganda on some foreign media and social media**



**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Several Indian media and social media accounts have been caught spreading false information regarding an alleged incident involving the killing of commander of Jaish ul Adl by Iranian Forces within Pakistani territory.

However, credible sources have vehemently denied such claims. Stating that no such event has taken place within Pakistani borders. Instead, it has been revealed that the fabricated narrative stems from a crossfire incident between two rival smuggler groups which has been erroneously misrepresented by these outfields

**Bilawal vows action against those involved in Election Day violence**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaking to media in Karachi on February 24—Screengrab via YouTube/Aaj News

Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Saturday vowed to take action against those involved in violence during the election.

"Our workers were beaten up on election day. We will apprehend those involved in attacking our workers," he told media after visiting the home of a party supporter who was killed in a firing incident on February 8.

Zardari criticised the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)

for their filing a first information report against the family of the worker who was killed in the firing.

The former foreign minister directed the upcoming chief minister of Sindh to take swift action against those who were involved in violence against workers of political parties during the election campaign.

"We will form a joint investigation team to investigate all such incidents. We will apprehend those involved in such activities and bring them to justice," he added.

Without naming anyone, he said that political parties who wish to bring political violence to Karachi, will not be allowed by the PPP's provincial government to do such things.

**ECP allocates KP, NA women's seats to parties based on election results**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a notification distributing special women's seats in the National Assembly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa among different political parties based on the proportion of seats won by each party in the National Assembly elections held on February 8.

According to the notification, Shaista Khan from the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) has been declared the winner of a special seat in proportion to her party's won General seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Similarly, Shahida Begum, a candidate nominated by JUI, has secured a seat in the National Assembly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Election Commission is still considering the distribution of the remaining reserved National Assembly seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

**Newly elected Balochistan MPAs to take oath on Wednesday**

**Bureau Report**

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has convened an assembly session on February 28 (Wednesday) at the Balochistan Assembly Building, during which newly elected members of the Provincial Assembly will take the oath.

The outgoing Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali, will preside over the session and take the oath from the elected MPAs.

After taking oaths by the newly elected members of the provincial legislature, the schedule for the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be announced.

**KP Assembly elected members to take oath on Feb 28**

**Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has summoned the inaugural KP Assembly session on February 28, according to a notification from the assembly secretariat.

The assembly session has been summoned on February 28 at 11:00am where the newly elected members of the provincial assembly will take oath.

The election of the chief

minister, speaker, and deputy speaker will be held in the same session.

It is pertinent to mention that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidates emerged victorious by securing 91 seats out of the total 112 seats where the election was held on February 8.

JUI-F secured seven seats in the provincial assembly, PML-N won five seats while PPP ended up with three seats.

# Inauguration of CBD Route 47 marks a milestone in Punjab's infrastructure development

PPA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated CBD Route 47, a significant addition to Lahore's infrastructure that promises to enhance connectivity and ease traffic congestion in the bustling city.

CBD Route 47 spanning 4.2 kilometers links Main Boulevard Gulberg to Walton Road serving as a vital artery connecting key districts within Lahore. The inauguration ceremony, held in Lahore witnessed the presence of eminent dignitaries including Minister of Housing Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin, IG Punjab, CCPO Lahore, Secretary Housing and Commissioner Lahore.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi addressing the gathering, expressed his appreciation for the diligent efforts of CBD Punjab in spearheading transformative projects across the region. He emphasized the crucial role of infrastructure development in propelling Punjab towards progress and prosperity.

Minister of Housing Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir commended the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders involved in the realization of CBD Route 47 underscoring its significance in enhancing Lahore's urban landscape.

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin reiterated the organization's commitment to delivering projects of paramount importance thanking Chief Minister Naqvi and the Government of Punjab for their



unwavering support.

CBD Route 47 a six-lane thoroughfare with a project cost of one billion rupees, exemplifies CBD Punjab's dedication to modernizing its infrastructure. Its completion within a remarkable timeframe of 60 days underscores CBD Punjab's efficiency and capability in executing ambitious projects.

This milestone project bearing the name as a trib-

ute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as his plan was landed first time at this point after the partition. Reflects Punjab's unwavering resolve to honor its rich heritage while embracing progress.

The construction of the Walton Road Railway Crossing Flyover is in progress and will be completed in due course after completion of the project, CBD Route 47 will be opened for general traffic.

## Two-day annual URS of Damri Wali Sarkar celebrate



Bureau Report

MUZZAFFARABAD/MIRPUR: The two-day celebrations of the annual Urs of the great spiritual leader of the subcontinent, Hazrat Baba Peer i Shah Ghazi, known as Damri Wali Sarkar, have started at Khari Shareef. In this ceremony was held at the Astana of Wali Sarkar. Raja Sarfraz, Sajjada Nashin of Bari Imam, Commissioner Chaudhry Shaukat Ali, Superintendent of Awqaf Sardar Tariq Mehmood Rabbani, Deputy Commissioner Yasir Riaz, SSP Kamran Ali, SP Raja Azhar Iqbal, Chaudhry Sohob Arshad, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Yasir Mahmood, Asst. Commissioner Raja Zahid Hussain, Tehsildar Chaudhry Imran Yusuf, Allama Dr. Zubair Ahmad Naqshbandi, officers of the Department of Awqaf, and other people bathed the Darbar Sharif with rose water and covered them with chador. The Naat-e-Khawans concluded the ceremony by presenting the speech of Rumi Kashmiri Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. Karam will address and Naat Khan will present the mystic speech of Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh.

Fool-proof security arrangements have been made on the occasion of Urs. Police personnel are present in teams and are patrolling. Hundreds of Farads were present in Darbar Sharif at the beginning of the Urs celebrations, who performed bath and cloak ceremony. On this occasion of participation, Allama Dr. Zubair Ahmad Naqshbandi prayed for the elevation of the religious ranks of the elders and for the elevation of occupied Kashmir and the world of Islam, including the Kingdom of God, Pakistan.

## First Punjab Painting Competition held at Jhelum

PNP

RAWALPINDI: First Punjab Painting Competition held at Government Post Graduate College Tallainwal Jhelum. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad was the chief guest of the prize distribution ceremony. While addressing the participants of the competitions Waqar Ahmad said that Punjab is a talismanic region of culture and history. Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with attractive and attractive natural landscapes, beautiful valleys, historical heritage and fascinating cultural tradition. Punjab, the land of five rivers, is rich in rich heritage, natural scenery, tourism to religious places, historical places and buildings, culture, fairs, festivals, wonderful traditions, rare wildlife and flowers. He further said that Arts Council has always promoted new talent. Pakistani youths are endowed with natural talent. Encouraging young artists enhances their work. The artists trained by the Arts Council have made Pakistan famous all over the world, he added. Deputy Director Muhammad Shakoor said that the artists have captured the beautiful views of nature in colors. Artists always play a positive role in society. Since its inception, Punjab Arts Council has played an active role in highlighting the culture and traditions of Punjab and various regions. Undoubtedly, this cultural institution has its own distinct and unique identity throughout Pakistan. Dozens of candidates from 16 to 35 years of age participated in the competitions. Majida Bibi, Nida Arif and Afifa Naz won the first, second and third positions in the painting competitions. At the end of the function, the chief guest also distributed checks and certificates of appreciation to the position holders.

## Handmade Items

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is selling traditional handmade items to a customer at his roadside workplace along Murree road, in the Federal Capital. ONLINE PHOTO



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

# Overseas workers keen to boost Pakistan's economy: Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan President Muslim Conference, ex-Premier AJK has said that great keenness of overseas workers to contribute for economic boost of Pakistan needs to be harnessed with national economic planning and execution apparatus. He was briefing political and youth delegations who called on him in his Mujahid Manzil residence Saturday to congratulate him on his successful 10-day public interactive tour of the United Arab Emirates. Our national economic planners should ensure a greater working role for overseas work-



ers in the Pakistan's economic planning and execution processes, he stressed. "I feel urgency of forming Pakistan economic councils comprising overseas

workers and investors having working advisory facilitation in the national economic development initiatives. Pakistan's and Kashmir's manpower overseas showed great keenness to contribute for Pakistan's economic strength. Their enthusiasm needs to be channeled in our national efforts sooner the better", he pointed out.

Regarding growing anti-Kashmir and anti-Kashmiris atrocities by India in occupied Kashmir he said that the international opinion is well informed of ill designs of India in the region. "In my interactive meetings during my 10-day UAE visit I pointed out that under UN Kashmir resolutions Indian

presence in Kashmir is illegal. India is alien in Kashmir. She is Kashmir occupier. Over one million Indian armed forces today occupying Kashmir are busy reducing the Kashmiri demography in the state, he said.

India has herself seen that even after jailing hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri nationals, youth, women and teens Kashmiris continue their self-determination right movement with full political and moral might. India is stealing the geographic resources of the state, depriving Kashmiris of their economic and political rights, he added. In this inimical circumstance how can she stay in Jammu and Kashmir, he queried.

# Sindh Govt, SAF, GCT renew pledge to work together to enroll millions of out-of-school children under accelerated drive

News Desk

KARACHI: Two leading charities and the Sindh government have renewed their pledge to work together to build quality learning facilities to enrol hundreds of thousands of out-of-school children in the province in the shortest possible time.

The chiefs of Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), non-profits Shahid Afridi Foundation (SAF), and Green Crescent Trust (GCT) spoke at the SAF-GCT annual dinner and came up with the consensus view that the government, concerned philanthropists, and sincere non-governmental organizations had to combine their efforts and resources to overcome illiteracy in the province.

On the occasion, memorabilia associated with sports legends Shahid Afridi, Jahangir Khan, and other renowned athletes were auctioned in the presence of Karachi's leading businessmen and industrialists. The proceeds of the auction will be used to fund the joint charitable campaign of the SAF-GCT to educate children from deprived families in Sindh.

Speaking on the occasion, SAF Chairman, Shahid Afridi, reiterated the resolve of his non-profit to fulfill the basic needs of the underprivileged communities in the remotest parts of the country where other NGOs generally don't serve due to lack of resources.

SEF Managing Director, Abdul Kabir Kazi, said the public-private partnership was the way forward for the concerned quarters including the governments, NGOs, private sector, and philanthropists to build new educational facilities for enrolling out-of-school children.

He said the SEF was the arm of the Sindh government, which in partnership with committed non-profits like SAF and GCT opened new educational facilities in the remotest parts of Sindh at an accelerated pace.

GCT CEO, Zahid Saeed, expressed gratitude to Karachi's business fraternity for keenly participating in the auction of sports memorabilia to become a partner in the drive to educate children from needy families in Sindh.

He said that educating each and every child irrespective of his or her socio-economic background could transform Pakistan on the lines of China and become a superpower in a few decades with a complete focus on education.

SAF CEO, Zafar Malik, shared with the audience the vision of his non-profit to impart technical skills to children from impoverished areas in addition to formal education to enable them to earn for their families in the shortest possible time. He said the SAF had been introducing the programme of providing food rations to children enrolled in its charitable schools to care for their basic health and nutritional needs. He said the SAF had also been building a network of mobile clinics to provide basic healthcare facilities to the rural population especially women in remote areas.

The event was attended by several leading philanthropists, businessmen and industrialist including, Former Governor Sindh, Imran Ismail, President KATI, Jouhar Qandari, Asif Ismail, Zubair Chayya, Ferooz Bukhari, Muhammad Ali Majid, Chaudhry Israr, Dr. Kaiser Waheed, Haroon Qassim, Emran Assad, Noor ul Hassan, Ijaz Nisar and Others.

# Global Education Expo Facilitated Unparalleled Opportunities for Students

PPA

LAHORE: In a bid to foster global educational opportunities, TCL Global organized the "Global Education Expo" to provide a platform for students to explore international academic avenues. This event offered students attractive scholarships as per students varied interests and also hosted renowned international stakeholders, university representatives of more than 20 top ranked universities, and key players such as the British Council (IELTS) and PTE



for students' counseling and guidance.

The expo was curated to offer students an immersive experience, with a special focus

on informative kiosks and one to one interactive session. The event's highlight was Mr. Ryan Powell, Global Director of Partnerships, TCL Global who

presented the global perspectives and led insightful sessions on various facets of international education.

Mr. Powell emphasized the importance of global education and said "Education knows no boundaries, and the Global Education Expo provides platform for students to explore the vast world of possibilities. Students receive important insights from their connections with institutions and global stakeholders that extend beyond the classroom and textbooks. This occasion serves as evidence of the influ-

ence that international cooperation will have on the direction of education."

Faisal Mahmood, the Country Director of TCL Global Pakistan, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "The Global Education Expo served as a gateway for students to explore endless possibilities in the world of education. We believe that fostering global connections is crucial for personal and professional growth, and this expo aimed to bridge the gap between aspiring students and international opportunities."

# Futech Energy - MD Rana Kashif speaks about company's role in green energy

Interview by Tahir Amin Malik

The Managing Director of Futech Energy, Lahore, Rana Kashif, said that I have been working in the solar and energy business since 2008, and I started my career in Business from Lahore regularly in 2015. Talked about his education, he said that he had done a Master of Business Administration from Agricultural University, Faisalabad in 2008.

He said that Futech Energy was established in 2016 and aims to provide renewable energy to the people of Paki-

stan for protect the environment and purely to protect and to save our future as well.

He said that due to the bad environment and due to petrol and carbon, this should be reduced. And then we decided to start this company so that we could go in renewable energy. He said we are based in Lahore with Futech Energy Company near Darogha Wala, Lahore and doing business at National Level throughout Pakistan and running our business and receiving wonderful respond from our customers and working day and night so that the life system of our country can run a better way.



He further said we do outdoor activities as well and always do the work on different projects. He said in 'Tear-1 grade we have completed all the projects. He said, for the repute of our company and country, we have completed Jinko solar, J. A, Prina, Candian Solar, and Longi Solar projects, which is a great honor for me and my Company. He said that these 5 brands are very effective for our customers, and we are doing more work



on these projects and working on the latest technology and modules.

He said that the Solar Pakistan Industry is the hottest product and its consumption is on peak and solar products are sailing out rapidly, and they are being consumed at a high level due to which this business is progressing fastly day by day. He said "I think that the future of solar is very bright, and the upcoming time is Solar and Energy Time and the business of solar is generating every day, and we are also receiving

huge respond from customers and our customers are very happy with us about our projects and their return of investment is outstanding.

He also said that solar projects is only project which gives you a good return and the solar system is the only system which provides you a good opportunity in business, and I think people are moving towards solar with that and I think that is the future of Pakistan and this is the reason that we kept the name of our company as Future Tech Company.

He said God has made our son the source of energy so that we can use this energy through blessing and can get more advantage. He said we should move into solar and renewable energy to save the world, the country and the environment of our society.

Finally, Rana Kashif said that we have displayed our Solar and Energy stalls in Dubai and China and exhibitions always play a vital role for promotion of solar and energy products nationally and internationally.



## Lahore museum presents 10-day sculpture exhibition of more than 50 artists



PPA

LAHORE: Lahore museum organized a 10 day sculpture's exhibition of more than 50 artists from all over the Pakistan today at museum's main hall. The exhibition was curated by Restoration and exhibition officer of Lahore museum Arshia sohal.

The exhibition was inaugurated by the Ambassador of United Arab Emirates H. E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi. The ambassador took keen interest in the outstanding work of the artists and hailed the role of Lahore museum for



promoting the sculpturing art.

He said that the artists highlighted the different national and international

issues through their work. The ambassador also shown interest to display a pictorial exhibition of art and culture of UAE at Lahore

museum soon. At the end of openin ceremony the deputy director Lahore museum presented a souvenir to the ambassador.

## Colombia to recover lost treasure worth billions from 18th century shipwreck

Colombia has announced plans to retrieve the lost treasure from the 316-year-old wreck of the legendary San Jose galleon with the help of a robot, CBS News.

The Spanish crown galleon carrying emeralds, silver and gold worth billions sank in 1708 due to an attack by the Brit-

ish navy while on its way to the court of King Philip V of Spain from the New World. Out of its 600-man crew, only a few survived. Eight years after its discovery, Colombian Culture Minister Juan David Correa has announced that an underwater robot will be dispatched to

retrieve part of its riches.

According to Correa, the robot will only retrieve a few objects from "the surface of the galleon" in April and May to test "how they materialise when they come out of the water and to understand what we can do" to retrieve the other riches.

## Decent Sky Energy is providing Dynamic services to the customers

Ghazala Hospital Sheikhpura, Naemia Academy Islamabad and E-Strats IT Company are our major clients. Says Hasnain Riaz, CEO, Decent Sky Energy, Islamabad

Tahir Amin Malik

Hasnain Riaz the Ceo Decent Sky Energy said in any interview that our Company was established in 2020 and with the idea behind that there were more crises in the shape of more Load shedding in the our country and particularly the high prices in people electricity bills.

He said that first of all we were doing the consultancy work and then we started regularly in 2022 our company. He said that our public is facing too much crisis in the electricity bills which prices are quite high and for such kind of difficulties overcome our company has been providing dynamic services to the customers and giving the cheapest solar systems so they could overcome these problems.

He said there is too much pollution also in our country and we are also helping out to make Pakistan green and also trying to Pakistan to save in Energy as well. Hasnain further said that Hybrid Inverters, Inverex Nitrox, Zunic Inverters, and grow watt our main products and we are also the distributors. He said Longi, Jinko, Candian Solar, J. A, and Phono Solar are our maine Solar panels.

He said Decent Sky Solar is top 10 company consists in Pakistan and we are providing new technology in Solar and our customers response is excellent and our rates are if you compare with other Solar Companies its suitable and cheapest and we keep our margin less and serving our customers and giving them good package.

He said we try to make strong relationship with our customers after sale our products. He said for this we have separate department which is maintaining



## 141 days after the genocide

# Israel has not taken any step to protect civilians and secure their basic needs: Palestine Ministry

News Desk

After 141 days have passed since the genocidal war committed by Israel against our people, and in light of the precautionary order issued by the International Court of Justice and Security Council Resolution 2720, and with increasing international and international warnings about the risks resulting from the deepening of the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip, including famine and displacement, and in the face of dozens of demands Despite the international appeals issued by many countries or UN officials regarding the

catastrophic conditions in the Gaza Strip, the occupying state has not taken any step that would protect Palestinian civilians and secure their basic humanitarian needs in a sustainable manner, most notably security, food, potable water, medicine, and electricity. Rather, Israel is committed to committing more crimes. Mass massacres through the brutal bombing of homes, residential towers, centers and facilities, including health facilities, and the humanitarian catastrophe and famine among their ranks deepens day after day, especially in the northern Gaza Strip and the central and southern

regions of the Strip as well, and continues to transform the Gaza Strip into a completely destroyed area that is incapable of human habitation, which means Preparing for the implementation of plans for the forced displacement of the population of the Gaza Strip. Perhaps the crimes of demolishing homes, blowing up residential squares, and demolishing all buildings in the Gaza Strip are clear evidence that there is no safe place in the Gaza Strip, and there are no homes for citizens to return to. The Ministry believes that the international failure to force Israel to protect civilians and secure their basic human-

itarian needs is unprecedented and strikes what remains of the credibility of United Nations institutions and international legalities, and reveals the falsity of the positions of countries that claim to be keen on the principles of human rights and international law, and at the same time confirms the futility of work mechanisms. International law and its failure to respect international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially since this failure is associated with a deliberate absence of international justice and the principle of accountability and punishment.

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# First ever, Blind Singing Idol of Pakistan

**S**yed Farah Saadia, a leading figure in Pakistani media and the face of ATV's iconic daily morning show, "Morning With Farah," recently hosted a remarkable event that will soon capture the nation's heart. The All Pakistan Al-Mudassar Blind Idol Singing Competition, a platform dedicated to showcasing the extraordinary talents of visually impaired individuals, culminated in a heartwarming finale.

The contestants were drawn from across Pakistan, including distant regions like Hunza, bustling cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, Wah Cantt, Islamabad and Hyderabad and underdeveloped areas like Bahawalpur and far flung towns and villages.

A poor contestant, Mohammad Akhtar from Bahawalpur, who didn't even have enough money to buy proper shoes emerged the winner. His exceptional performance not only earned the admiration of the judges and fellow contestants but also secured him a grand prize of one hundred thousand rupees, courtesy of Syed Mudassar Shah affectionately called Shahjee, the founder and chairman of Al-Mudassar Trust. The performances of Mr. Ramzan from Bahawalpur, Miss Sadaf from Faisalabad and Master Fawad Alam from Hunza who stood second, third and fourth were equally impressive.

The competition's three-day journey, beautifully orchestrated by Farah Saadia, is set to air in the first week of March 2024. This special segment promises to offer a blend of melodious talent and heartening narratives that underscore resilience, talent, and the human spirit. This was Shahjee's idea which was finally translated into reality.

Shahjee introduced me to the Al Mudassar Trust during my tenure as Press Minister at the Embassy of Pakistan in France. Initially skeptical of Shahjee's descrip-

tions, my visit to Al-Mudassar Trust upon returning to Pakistan transformed my perspective entirely. Nestled just off the GT Road at Barwal Kharian, the complex was an unexpected revelation. Far beyond Shahjee's narratives.

What sets this complex apart is its architectural inspiration, drawn from the grandeur of French palaces, a concept brought to life by a team of French architects. This design choice not only provides an aesthetically pleasing environment but also an atmosphere that stimulates learning and growth.

The notion that such a magnificent edifice was dedicated to over 500 special children, who approach each school day with joy and eagerness, was profoundly touching. The building, with its enchanting allure, seemed to cast a spell of happiness and tranquility, affecting everyone within its walls—from the devoted teachers and supportive staff to the visiting guests. I had the pleasure of discussing this groundbreaking initiative with Farah Saadia, whose exceptional talent and intellect have established her as one of the most distinguished anchorpersons of our era. Having previously collaborated during my tenure as MD of SRBC and CEO of ATV, where Farah led the channel's Ramzan Transmission with unparalleled grace, I knew she was the perfect person to bring this vision to life.

Embracing the concept with her characteristic enthusiasm, Farah and the devoted team at Al-Mudassar Trust set in motion what seemed an Herculean task. With a blend of innovation and relentless effort, they reached out across Pakistan, tapping into every available medium to unearth visually impaired talents hidden in the

farthest corners of our nation. These gifted individuals were then welcomed into the nurturing embrace of Al-Mudassar Trust's luxurious hostel facilities, where they were treated to not only comfortable accommodations but also delectable cuisine, setting the stage for a celebration of their talents.

On the 20th of February, an extravagant gala unfolded, drawing guests from across the country to witness a spectacle of musical prowess. This event wasn't just a competition; it was a platform for these extraordinary artists to shine, culminating in the selection of the top twenty-five contenders.

These finalists were then ushered to the ATV studios on the 21st of February, where they took part in a historic competition to crown Pakistan's first grand Blind Singing Idol. This event, a testament to human spirit and creativity, not only showcased their incredible talents but also marked a significant milestone in promoting inclusivity and recognition for differently abled individuals in the arts.

My wife and I were privileged to witness a truly mesmerizing musical event, featuring an array of young talents, aged 10 to 20, displaying an extraordinary blend of vocal prowess and passion for music. Each contestant, regardless of gender, brought a unique vibrancy to the stage, making the judges' decision incredibly challenging.

The climax of the evening was the awarding of the grand prize of one hundred thousand to a remarkably talented yet underprivileged contestant. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the award, he shared his humble background, living in a small, leaky thatched room with his sibling, making the victory even more

poignant. The second-place winner, awarded fifty thousand, expressed his aspirations to invest in a mobile phone and a harmonium, showcasing his dedication to furthering his musical journey.

The heartwarming stories didn't end with the winners; the participants who didn't clinch a prize also shared their gratitude. Their sheer joy at having the opportunity to showcase their talents on a platform as prestigious as the one hosted by Farah Saadia on ATV was palpable.

Their appreciation for the Al-Mudassar Trust's exceptional hospitality and for the chance to step out of their usual confines and onto a stage where their voices could resonate in countless homes was deeply touching. This event was not just a competition; it was a celebration of music, hope, and the unifying power of art, leaving an indelible mark on both the participants and the audience.

This momentous event, the All Pakistan Al-Mudassar Blind Idol Singing Competition, not only showcased the remarkable talents of these visually impaired singers but also highlighted the transformative power of compassion and collective effort. As viewers of ATV and members of the broader community, we have the unique opportunity to support the Al-Mudassar Trust in its noble mission. By extending our help, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word, we can contribute to a future where every individual, regardless of their abilities, has the chance to shine and achieve their dreams. Let's join hands to empower these extraordinary talents and make a lasting difference in their lives and our society.

*Writer is Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan in France, Former MD, SRBC*



Qamar Bashir

## Gaza attacks

**A**ny transfer of weapons or ammunition to Israel is likely to be used in its war against Gaza and must cease immediately, a group of UN experts warned Friday. "All States must 'ensure respect' for international humanitarian law by parties to an armed conflict, as required by 1949 Geneva Conventions and customary international law," the experts said in a joint statement.

States must accordingly refrain from transferring any weapon or ammunition – or parts for them – if it is expected, given the facts or past patterns of behaviour, that they would be used to violate international law. "Such transfers are prohibited even if the exporting State does not intend the arms to be used in violation of the law – or does not know with certainty that they would be used in such a way – as long as there is a clear risk," they said. The group issuing the statement includes more than 30 experts working for the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council, including; Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and Claudia Mahler, Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. The Dutch court pointed to the extensive civilian casualties, including thousands of children; the destruction of 60% of civilian homes and extensive damage to hospitals, water and food supplies, schools and religious buildings; widespread severe hunger; and the displacement of 85% of Palestinians in Gaza. It also highlighted evidence of the prolific use of imprecise "dumb bombs"; deliberate, disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks; failures to warn civilians of attacks; and incriminating statements by Israeli commanders and soldiers. Over 29,313 Palestinians have been killed and 69,333 injured in Gaza since 7 October 2023, the majority being women and children. "Israel has repeatedly failed to comply with international law," the experts said. The experts noted that States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty have additional treaty obligations to deny arms exports if they "know" that the arms "would" be used to commit international crimes; or if there is an "overriding risk" that the arms transferred "could" be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law. European Union member states are further bound by EU arms export control law. "The need for an arms embargo on Israel is heightened by the International Court of Justice's ruling on 26 January 2024 that there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza and the continuing serious harm to civilians since then", the experts said. The Genocide Convention of 1948 requires States parties to employ all means reasonably available to them to prevent genocide in another state as far as possible. "This necessitates halting arms exports in the present circumstances", the experts said. The experts welcomed the suspension of arms transfers to Israel by Belgium, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and the Japanese company Itochu Corporation. The European Union also recently discouraged arms exports to Israel. The experts urged other States to immediately halt arms transfers to Israel, including export licenses and military aid. The United States and Germany are by far the largest arms exporters and shipments have increased since 7 October 2023. Other military exporters include France, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. The experts noted that arms transfers to Hamas and other armed groups are also prohibited by international law, given their grave violations of international humanitarian law on 7 October 2023, including hostage-taking and subsequent indiscriminate rocket fire. The duty to "ensure respect" for humanitarian law applies "in all circumstances", including when Israel claims it is countering terrorism. Military intelligence must also not be shared where there is a clear risk that it would be used to violate international humanitarian law. "State officials involved in arms exports may be individually criminally liable for aiding and abetting any war crimes, crimes against humanity or acts of genocide," the experts said. "All States under the principle of universal jurisdiction, and the International Criminal Court, may be able to investigate and prosecute such crimes."



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

## Inflation should be the top priority of the newly elected government!

**R**egarding the claims of working for the welfare and prosperity of the people by the caretaker Prime Minister, it begs the question of which country's citizens they are referring to, as during the past 4 months, they have done nothing for the welfare and prosperity of Pakistanis. If they have done anything in this regard, then please name one initiative that has provided relief to the poor people of this country.

According to the latest report from the statistics department, there was a 1.8% increase in inflation in January. The report indicates that inflation was 30.2% in urban areas and 25.7% in rural areas last month. The average inflation rate from July to January remained at 28.73%. Just a few days before his resignation, the outgoing Prime Minister, in a surprising move, approved significant increases in medicine prices, along with all possible measures during his 4-month tenure, even depriving sick citizens of affordable food. He also claimed, "We will continue to work for the welfare of the people." It can be questioned whether such decisions could have been postponed for a few days to allow the incoming government to decide on them, and whether the decision to increase or not increase medicine prices could not have been left to the elected government. The haste shown by the outgoing Prime Minister in signing off on the summary of price increases suggests that these decisions were made in collaboration with pharmaceutical companies, as the amount of kickbacks is evident from the signatures without any further investigation.

A caretaker government is a temporary administration that is formed to ensure a smooth transition of power from one elected govern-

ment to another. The term of a caretaker government is limited to 60-90 days, depending on whether the term of the legislature expires or is prematurely dissolved. In 2013 the apex court held that the caretaker government had limited powers and authority, and could not make major policy decisions, appointments, transfers, or promotions that would affect the future elected government. On July 26, 2023, the joint session of Parliament proposed over 54 amendments to the 2017 Act including amendments to Section 230. The amendments were proposed by the ruling PML-N, which claimed that they were necessary to protect the economic interests of Pakistan and to ensure the continuity of ongoing projects and agreements. While there was consensus on all other clauses, subclauses relating to changes in Section 230 prompted controversy and discussion in the parliament. The concerns raised by allies and opposition members led to these clauses being reviewed. Despite the 'review', the amendments remain a controversial topic as opposition parties and civil society accuse the government of trying to interfere in the electoral process and extend its influence beyond its constitutional mandate.

Regarding the claims of working for the welfare and prosperity of the people by the outgoing Prime Minister, it begs the question of which country's citizens they are referring to, as during the past 4 months, they have done nothing for the welfare and prosperity of Pakistanis. If they have done anything in this regard, then please name one initiative that has provided relief to the poor people of this country.

We believe that the outgoing Prime Minister should reconsider the decision to increase medicine prices and compel pharmaceutical institu-

tions to reduce prices instead of increasing them, as it is a fact that medicine prices in Pakistan are much higher compared to neighbouring countries. Instead of making such anti-people decisions, the outgoing Prime Minister should focus on packing up, because now it will be up to the discretion of the incoming government to decide whether to allow increases in medicine prices or to adopt alternative methods to ensure the provision of medicines to the poor people of this country at affordable prices, as the priority of the incoming government will be to relieve the people from inflation and control inflation.

Controlling inflation and stabilizing the economy is not a difficult task if anyone wants to do it, but it requires courage, because in the first phase, it will be necessary to end the extravagance of the elite, which amounts to \$17 billion. If these extravagances are eliminated, then there will be a net saving of less than \$17 billion, after which the IMF or any other entity will not need to extend their hands to fulfill their imposed conditions, and the people will not need to suffer in the grindstone of inflation. Federal and provincial governments need to create a solid mechanism for this purpose, which will enable two to four classes of the poor to afford food in time of need. At present, the class living below the poverty line economically cannot express their suffering in words. If the government cannot control inflation in these circumstances, it will be difficult to maintain the physical and spiritual relationship of extremely poor people, and there will be anxiety among the people at the grassroots level due to inflation, and it will become difficult for those who already have weak purchasing power to fulfill the necessities of life. The restlessness among the people is increasing with each passing day, and if the incoming government does not control it, there is a risk that the government and the ruling party will suffer severe damage to their popularity.



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

## Towards Hepatitis C elimination

Haziq Siddiqi

**W**hile it has been known that Hepatitis C is a widespread disease in Pakistan, the full extent of liver infection burden in Pakistan was previously unclear. A recent paper published in the Journal of Viral Hepatitis in April of this year sought to use modeling to better characterize the extent of Hepatitis C in Pakistan. They then used this information to propose what an evidence-based path towards Hepatitis C elimination would entail.

This project was an international collaboration consisting of 24 authors representing twelve different organisations – including the Center for Disease Analysis Foundation (US), the Ministry of National Health Services in Islamabad, representatives from all provincial hepatitis control programmes, in collaboration with liver experts from both private and public sector.

The unique approach that this team used to start with provincial data to extrapolate the national prevalence of Hepatitis C. Based on their calculations, they estimated that 9.7 million patients in Pakistan are currently infected with Hepatitis C.

We discussed the feasibility of such a plan with Dr Huma Qureshi, another co-author of this paper and prior national lead on hepatitis management in Pakistan with the Ministry of National Health Services. Dr Qureshi commented via email, "The cost of this is estimated to be PKR 70 billion. Currently, the 4 provinces are supporting hepatitis testing and treatment through their own budget but their budget is not enough to cater for all the population."

Dr Qureshi emphasized, "We, therefore, requested the Prime Minister to support hepatitis C elimination as a national health emer-

gency, to which the PM agreed," explaining that "There would be no cash transfer, the federal government shall buy commodities ie rapid screening tests, PCR and treatment and give to the provinces on their need and performance basis. An electronic medical record system has been developed for the registration of the people who undergo screening, testing, and treatment. This system shall have unique identifiers to avoid duplication and monitor the progress."

She also explained additional interventions that can be pursued to limit the spread of the virus. She specified that "to prevent new infections, the injections have to be made safe by introducing the auto-disposable syringes (cannot be used once used), infection control in the health care settings shall be ensured through the infection control committees of the hospitals and the overall supervision of the provincial healthcare commissions, safe blood shall be ensured through the blood transfusion authorities of the provinces. Compliance from these stakeholders shall be taken regularly to ensure adherence and proper coverage."

Such interventions have been successfully conducted in low and middle-income countries. Dr Qureshi gives the example of Egypt. "In the past decade, Egypt had the highest Hepatitis C disease burden in the world but they were able to eliminate the disease using a similar approach. A great awareness campaign was undertaken to inform the people about the disease and where to go for testing. All testing and treatment was done in the public sector with the shortest waiting time."

Dr Qureshi emphasized that while this may seem ambitious, she is hopeful it is possible, adding that "In 2023, Egypt was declared free of hepatitis C by the WHO. Egypt is the 1st country in the world to achieve this gold medal and we think that Pakistan would be the 2nd country to eliminate this disease."

# 10th Aurat Hunar Mela to showcase women's work from March 8

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th edition of 3-day long 'Aurat Hunar Mela' (National Women-at-Work Festival) to showcase women's work, products and services at the Lok Virsa, Shakarparian, Islamabad from March 8. This is the annual flagship event of Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) to mark the UN's International Women's Day that falls on March 8. This year the event is being organized in collaboration with the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa), Federal Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

Speaking to this scribe, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: Over 100 marginal-

ized communities and self-employed women will showcase their products, skills and services. They will be coming from different far flung areas such as northern parts including Chitral, Gilgit and Baltistan, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and South Punjab. This is in essence the theme of this year's International Women's Day that emphasizes "inspire inclusion".

He said several women folk singers will perform all three days while paintings of women artists will also be put on display at the Heritage Museum Gallery at the Lok Virsa. A conference on CSR for Women Development will highlight the importance of the corporate sector's initiatives for women development. Some of the best initiatives will be recognized with awards.

Ahmed said: Devcom-Pakistan founded "Aurat Hunar Mela" (National Women-at-Work Festival) was founded in 2012 to celebrate women's work to inspire more women to enter into different sectors with proactive approaches. This event especially includes, promotes and mainstream women's human rights and economic empowerment, and the work of community women to strengthen their voices for social, economic and political participation.

From this year, Munir Ahmed said, Devcom-Pakistan will launch awards to recognize, encourage and appreciate the corporate sector for their great work under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for women development. The Devcom-Pakistan CSR

Award for women development will include significant initiatives of the organizations in the corporate sector contributing to the women's education, health and hygiene, food and nutrition, skills development, economic empowerment, and to ensuring the women friendly policies and practices with women's internal engagement.

Munir Ahmed said CSR plays a pivotal role in community development to educate and empower women, and also to keep them active and healthy. There are many such initiatives but not accounted for in Pakistan's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the way it should be. The importance of CSR for SDGs must be highlighted and counted in the progress of national SDGs.

## Checking

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel busy in checking documents from motorcyclists at a road sector G-8 due to motorcycle lifting case increasing in Islamabad, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## Free 'plant for Pakistan' campaign drive in Wana, SWL

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: South Waziristan Lower (SWL) Deputy Commissioner Nasir Khan formally inaugurated the "Plant for Pakistan" campaign organized by the Forest Department SWL.

Fruit trees of walnut, apple and apricot were distributed among the local farmers by three committees in the office of Forest Department Wana during the plantation campaign.

DC Nasir said that Wana is not only an agricultural area but most of the people here depend on the agriculture sector.

He said that agriculture is the backbone in reducing the economic difficulties of the people.

He said, planting fruit trees on one hand reduces the economic problems and on the other hand also increases the beauty of the area.

Azmat Wazir, Forest



Officer of the Forestry Department, told the media that these fruit trees were sent to the farmers by the UN organization FAO.

He said that around 25,000 fruit trees were

distributed free of cost in the formed committees and the heads of the same committees further divided them into 2000, 2000 thousands farmers and landowners on a regional basis.

Forest Officer Azmat Wazir said that the Plant for Pakistan campaign has been successfully launched and this campaign will bring about a significant change in the agriculture of the region.

## Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad to lead Mashreq Pakistan operations as new CEO

PPA



KARACHI: Mashreq, one of the leading financial institutions in the MENA region, proudly announces the appointment of Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad

as the Chief Executive Officer for Mashreq Pakistan.

Mashreq Bank Pakistan Limited is actively progressing towards acquiring a restricted license from The State Bank of Pakistan to commence its digital retail banking operations. This marks an important step in its journey towards becoming a fully licensed banking entity in Pakistan. The In-Principal Approval (IPA) received in 2023 is a testament to the bank's commitment to contributing to Pakistan's financial landscape, aiming to introduce innovative digital banking services that align with the country's vision for a digitally empowered economy.

Muhammad Hamayun brings with him a stellar track record of leadership within the financial sector, having been an instrumental figure in catalysing transformation and driving success for financial institutions across the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions.

At Mashreq, Muhammad Hamayun's role will encompass the strategic expansion of the bank's operations across Pakistan, fostering a culture of innovation, and ensuring the delivery of exceptional customer experiences. Well-recognized in the industry for his strategic vision, innovation leadership and unique blend of creative, commercial and technical expertise, Muhammad Hamayun aims to solidify the bank's position as a reputed global financial institution, that brings with it a rich legacy of innovation, challenger mindset and a profound understanding of the local customer base. He will be responsible for realising Mashreq's vision to be a digital banking transformation catalyst in the market through the expansion of the bank's award-winning digital ecosystem and its full suite of products including NEO, NEOBiz, and NEOPAY.

## Korean Exim Bank project 'Automation of Post Offices' put on fast track

PPA

KARACHI: On the directions of the Federal Minister of Communications, Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar, The project "Automation of Post Offices" has been put on fast track for operationalization. This project is being financed by the Korean Exim Bank at exceptionally soft terms and will completely digitalize services at Post Offices across the country. The project scope covers provision of all types of IT hardware and software besides complete training of the staff of Pakistan Post. The Minister and the top Management of Pakistan Post are hopeful that this project is going to be a game changer in terms of provision of state of the art modern facilities at Post Offices to the public. The project will be initiated by 31st May, 2024. The Federal Minister also extended special gratitude to Exim Bank of South Korea and stated that the unprecedented Pak-South Korea relationship is cherished equally by both the countries

## LUMS Gurmani Centre and ADA Hosted DSR

PPA

LAHORE: (Architecture Design Art) (Architecture Design Art) The day long Symposium organized by ADA (Architecture Design Art)—a Karachi-based international publishing house, as their DSR (Designer Social Responsibility) campaign. ADA is a multidisciplinary platform that unites the industry's leading minds in sharing stories of intervention for a socially unified better world.

Discussions and debates in the day-long symposium will revolve around the destiny of architecture, urban planning and more generally the design disciplines in an era that seems to consider only, or at least with absolute priority, the evolution of single modal spaces and related devices spurred by technology. If today, and in the future increasingly so, the theme of life and development is no longer about further densification but resilience and environmental quality—how do designers navigate between aesthetics, sustainability, climate adaptation and depleting natural resources for a better world?

The stellar minds joining this symposium are: Arif Hasan, Yahya Jan (UAE), Dr. Fiona Gray (Australia), Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Maria Aslam, Rashid Rana, Faraz Maqsood Hamidi, Seif Al Rashidi (Egypt), Sergii Rodionov (Ukraine)

The speakers will dwell on city making, place making and environment degradation activism. By embracing design with a purpose, the creative industry have the opportunity to create visual narratives that celebrate the beauty of nature and advocate for sustainable practices. From promoting eco-friendly products and services to encouraging responsible consumption, our designs can carry a powerful message of environmental consciousness.

As creative industry stalwarts, comprising of architects, artists, and designers together with social scientist, researchers, academia, designers hold the key to influencing perceptions, behaviors, and social change. One of the most pressing challenges facing our world today is environmental sustainability. With our creative abilities, we can play a crucial role in raising awareness and inspiring action to protect our planet. AS THERE IS NO PLANET B, for all living beings and it is us humans responsible for the anthropogenic epoch that we are witnessing.

## Nitasha Syed's Shaam Ki Chai Season 3 Releases Second Episode



PPA

LAHORE: Shaam Ki Chai, the acclaimed digital series conceived and hosted by Pakistani-Canadian media entrepreneur Nitasha Syed, premiered Episode 2 of her latest season, featuring the Founder of ProperGaanda and PG Bazaar, Hamza Ghaznavi – the voice of the new generation.

With a focus on the 1947 partition, this episode's conversation delves into the multi generational impact of partition, trauma and the effect it had on education as well as media.

In their dialogue, Hamza and Nitasha talk about the generational disconnect in discussions on partition between those who lived through it, and those who live in today's Pakistan. A digital news media pioneer for the youth, Hamza talks about the young pulse of Pakistan and their perspective on what lies ahead for the nation.

## Legacy of STEAM festival in Sujawal will continue, says DC

Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

SUJAWAL: More than 12000 students from over 50 government and private schools and science enthusiasts visited the three-day first ever 'Sujawal STEAM Learning Festival' that concluded at the Govt Boys High School Ground here on Saturday.

The festival was jointly organized by Thar Education Alliance (TEA), UNICEF, Reform Support Unit (RSU) and Sindh Education and Literacy Department.

TEA's Partab Shivani, Senior Program Manager RSU Mujeeb Khattai and Tooba Noor from UNICEF told journalists that the largest science festival held for the first time ever in Sujawal was a shining example for all. "Such events are especially impor-

tant to familiarise school administrations, teachers and students with unique ways to teach and understand STEAM concepts in an interesting and engaging manner," they said.

They said that it was a pleasant shock for them to see unprecedented response from students and community of the Sujawal, Thatta and Badin, considered to be one of the climate hit areas and last in district education ranking. Students from three districts of Laar set up over 60 stalls to showcase their creative works on different themes and aspects of science, they said.

The students expressed their joy and gratitude for getting an opportunity to display their innovative science models.

The organisers gave away awards who had clinched top

three positions in the festival.

In a panel discussion on 'Climate Change and its impact on education / Education in Emergencies' a speaker, Munawar Memon emphasizes that climate change is not a recent phenomenon; our globe has been witnessing its impact for a century. However, the present situation is markedly different. People inhabiting Earth are actively contributing to the destruction of nature and resources while merely trying to sustain their lives. Individual efforts can play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change, starting from one's home and potentially influencing the broader context of a country.

Akif Sattar from the Malala Fund states that it's the age of information and adaptation. When discussing disasters, they

are not merely natural but often man-made. In this tech era, we must embrace new ways and approaches. Introducing resilient practices and positive behavior can contribute to the betterment of our environment. When you translate your learnings into action, it will undoubtedly create a significant impact.

Abbas Khoso mentioned that the climate change debate gained prominence after the 2010 flood, and the recent flood in 2022 disrupted the education system. Numerous schools were directly or indirectly damaged. In cases where some schools remained intact, internally displaced persons (IDPs) found refuge there for safety. Unfortunately, there is a lack of studies providing data on how many children were able to resume their education after these



emergencies.

Muhammad Khan expressed that Sujawal, Badin, and Thatta remain distressingly affected areas, with a majority of the population bearing the impact. Historical records and ground realities

over the years show a consistent situation. Seven out of 14 tehsils in these three districts are directly connected with the sea, and due to local policies, the community suffers from this hazardous environment. Over the past 25

years, numerous villages have been forced to migrate, leaving their homes. Furthermore, when disasters strike these areas, the damage to education is extensive. Although we may design plans for the retention of children in schools, the challenges in this region persist every alternate year.

During the closing ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Wajid Shaikh expressed his surprise at the abundance of talent and enthusiasm for STEM learning approaches in Sujawal. He mentioned that he hadn't expected such a vibrant community.

Mr. Shaikh declared that the local administration will host similar festivals in the future, aiming to provide exposure and opportunities for the children of Sujawal and nearby areas.

*Country's biggest and only dedicated alternative energy exhibition will open its doors in Lahore*

PPA

KARACHI: Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd., country's leading exhibitions organizing company will be organizing a flagship event Pakistan Sustainability Week (PSW) alongside Solar Pakistan - 14th International Renewable Energy Exhibition & Conference and Electricity Pakistan - 7th International Exhibition for Energy Storage and Power Industry from 27th - 29th February 2024 at Expo Centre Lahore.

Pakistan Sustainability Week will be the biggest gathering of key industry leaders, policymakers, investors, manufacturers, suppliers, traders and distributors. The event aims to create a platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange that will elevate the alternative energy industry in Pakistan.

The three-day mega exhibition is expected to have more than 175 eminent global companies from 15 countries including Austria, China, Czech Republic, France, Japan, Pakistan, Singapore, and UAE etc. with a number of versatile technologies to be debuted at the event.

Alongside the exhibition, Sustainability Innovation Summit will also take place which will focus on highlighting technical innovations, alternative energy initiatives bringing industry stakeholders, government officials and thought leaders under a common platform to share their valuable insights, market overview and experiences.

Mr. Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. stated that "Pakistan Sustainability Week has played a pivotal role in the development of alternative energy industry by introducing efficient technologies and solutions for manufacturers and the event is all set to augment success and growth for the industry."

Pakistan Sustainability Week has proved to be a worthy platform for professionals to get acquainted with latest industry trends and technology up-gradation in the alternative energy domain and successfully bridged the gap between industry and consumers.

*High production cost a real threat to SMEs, economy: APBF*

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has said that ever-increasing cost of production in the country is the real threat to small-scale businesses (SMEs), as frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar are posing further threat to the economy.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses, many of which have closed their operations, while the remaining are struggling for survival. With a view to deal with fiscal challenges, he asked the upcoming elected government to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where the government should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector. As a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors by extending facilitations and providing all the requisite supports. In the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security and implementing effective and comprehensive Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures holding accountable and taking to task all those who are involved in illegitimate activities, undermining both our economy and national interests.

*Gold price jumps on softening US dollar*

After losing for two straight weeks, gold prices finally logged a modest 0.75 percent gain in the week gone by. Gold futures contract on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) for April 2024 expiry finished at ₹62,325 per 10 gm level on Friday. In the international market, spot gold price ended at 2,035 per ounce levels, logging an impressive 2.15 percent rise from its two-month low of ₹1,992 levels that it had touched at the end of the first fortnight of February.

According to commodity market experts, gold prices are finding support from the softening US dollar and the Middle East crisis. They said that the US Fed minutes released last week didn't signal any timeline for interest rate cuts and re-iterated the challenge of achieving the target of a 2 percent inflation rate. Hence, gold prices are expected to remain sideways.

# SIFC transforming Investment landscape of Pakistan: Masood Khan

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: "Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has transformed investment landscape of Pakistan with speedy approvals, smooth execution of projects and guaranteed returns," said Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan.

Ambassador Masood Khan made these remarks during a virtual meeting with the business leaders heading various chambers and business entities in Houston, California, and other parts of the United States.

The meeting was part of Embassy's initiative of connecting business organizations and trade bodies and create the required synergy for promoting business activities between Pakistan and the United States.

Addressing the participants the Ambassador paid tribute to Pak business community in the United States which was playing a critical role in cementing trade relations between Pakistan and the United States and investing their resources in the motherland. He said that the Embassy's initiative to connect trade bodies was meant to create a strong network for greater economic impact. Chairman Pakistan Chamber of Commerce Mr. Amir Piprani told the participants that PACC was playing its role since past 27 years and was regularly holding trade shows, exhibitions and seminars to promote bilateral trade. This year, PACC would be holding a Trade Expo in October and



was working closely with TDAP for the purpose. He invited suggestions from the participants for successful holding of the expo.

CEO Ka'aba Fusion Dr. Sohail Masood, pioneer in the Home Infusion Industry, an accomplished entrepreneur and philanthropist, shared his success story with the participants. He informed that Ka'aba Fusion has also established office back in Pakistan to create job opportunities for Pakistani professionals in healthcare. He further stated that Ka'aba Fusion was also in the process of introducing home infusion services in

Pakistan which would provide quality healthcare to the people at their doorstep and would open up huge job opportunities for healthcare workers and professionals. Mr. Maqsood Ali, CEO of TSI Engineering, Inc and alumnus of the Civil Engineering Department UET Lahore, said that UET alumni had raised \$150,000 last month for their alma mater. He also said that they were helping Pak engineers and had also set up an office in Faisalabad for the purpose.

Director Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) Ahmed Chinoy highlighted new and exist-

ing business opportunities in Pakistan where the business community was enjoying great returns for their equity. He specially highlighted the returns on treasury bills and Roshan Digital Accounts. Other participants also spoke on the occasion and underscored their commitment to contribute towards economic betterment of the country. Ambassador Masood Khan thanked the business community for their commitment in supporting efforts to strengthen Pak-US business ties.

"Invest in Pakistan with full confidence. Your trust in Pakistan would encourage your counterparts in United States to choose Pakistan as their preferred investment destination," said the Ambassador.

The meeting was attended by President Pakistan Chamber of Commerce-USA (Houston) Amir Piprani, Chairman PACC (Los Angeles California) Waqar Ali Khan, President Houston-Karachi Sister City Association Muhammad Saeed Sheikh, President Georgia Pakistan Business Council Imran Niazi, Renowned entrepreneur and CEO of Ka'aba Fusion Dr. Sohail Masood, Director Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) Ahmed Chinoy, and other leading businessmen including Usman Arshad, Syed F Ismail, Mr. Maqsood, Afsah Khan and Maqsood Ali from Sacramento. Pakistan's Counsel Generals in Los Angeles and Houston along with trade and commerce officers were also present during the meeting.

## Hoping

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying strawberry at his roadside workplace attraction for customers, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## Global Lubricants Giant Gulf Oil enters Pakistani market: Tariq Mehmood

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a breakthrough development for the Pakistani oil market, global lubricants giant, Gulf Oil has entered into the Pakistani market in partnership with OTO Pakistan. It will attract the interest of global petrochemical companies into the Pakistani oil market as a safe trade, investment and joint ventures destination, said Tariq Mehmood, CEO of OTO Pakistan.

It is pertinent to note that CEO of Gulf Oil UK, Mike Jones, has signed the agreement with his Pakistani counterpart in their corporate headquarters in London.

Tariq Mehmood explained that Pakistan is a huge market for lubricants and retail fuels; with a population of 245 million and at least 8 million vehicles. Whereas, Gulf Oil has been established since 1901 and supplies lubricants to 1,400 ports around the world. It is pertinent to note that oil trade is the mother of all trades and an essential one for the economic development of any country, he added.

Tariq Mehmood said that the prerequisite to bringing foreign direct investment (FDI)



to Pakistan is to project Pakistan's soft image and present it as a lucrative market for international companies. In this specific case, Gulf Oil is a huge company with presence in 100

countries across the globe and their doing business with Pakistan will set an example for other global petrochemical conglomerates to tap into the Pakistani market, he added.

## Ufone 4G introduces data roaming bucket for Spain to facilitate 'Mobile World Congress 2024' delegates

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani cellular company, Ufone 4G continues its legacy of fulfilling the evolving telecommunication needs of all customer segments by introducing an affordable international data roaming bucket for Spain to facilitate Pakistani delegates attending the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2024 in Barcelona later this month.

Each year, Mobile World Congress (MWC) attracts a large number of industry leaders, innovators, and business community members from Pakistan. However, the attendees often face challenges due to the lack of data connectivity while on the move. Ufone 4G's seamless data roaming in collaboration with global telecom partners, 'Orange' and 'Vodafone' will help the

delegates stay connected at all times and outside Wi-Fi hotspots, without having to purchase local connections during their brief sojourn.

The 'Spain Data Roaming Bucket' comes at the industry's lowest price of Rs. 2,199+tax for 15 days, which comfortably covers the entire visit. Ufone 4G customers can dial \*506# to avail the bucket. The offer expands Ufone 4G International data roaming landscape that earlier covered the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, Iraq, Italy, and Australia.

Ufone 4G's steadfast commitment to customer satisfaction transcends beyond borders to foster an unbreakable bond of trust and loyalty, duly acknowledged by the company in its resonant mantra, 'Tum Hi Tou Ho!'

## Pakistan's weekly inflation hits 30.68pc

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Friday reported that the weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) witnessed an increase of 0.04 percent during the week ended on February 22.

During the week, the prices of 23 items increased 4 items decreased and 20 items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included onions Rs 29.17, eggs Rs 34.32, LPG cylinder Rs 58.96 and flour Rs 10.6 (20kg bag).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis

included tomatoes Rs 24.53, chicken Rs 5.79 per kg, sugar Rs 1.25, mutton Rs 15.7, beef Rs 6.26 and Yogurt Rs 1.53.

On January 19, the weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.34 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 18.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.00 points as compared to 317.92 points during the past week. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 0.61 percent and went up to 314.12 points from last week's 312.23 points.

## CCP approves three KSA-based mergers with stake in Pakistan's Steel Sector

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval to three mergers concerning M/s Saudi Iron and Steel Company (Hadeed), having a presence in Pakistan's steel market. The overall transaction comprises of restructuring of two entities divided into three stages of transactions.

Based in the Saudi Arabia, Hadeed is a well-established company, producing a range of steel products. It deals in spot sales in Pakistan's steel market and exports to Pakistan through international traders.

Initially, M/s. The Public Invest-

ment Fund (PIF) sent a pre-merger application to CCP to acquire 100% shareholding of Hadeed from M/s. Saudi Basic Industries Corporation ("SABIC"). PIF is a sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia and known for its diverse investments in various sectors globally. PIF has entered into a share purchase agreement with SABIC, under which SABIC agrees to sell its entire share capital of Hadeed to PIF.

Moving on the next step, Hadeed was to acquire 100% shareholding of Al Rajhi Steel Industries Company from M/s. Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz Al Rajhi & Sons Investment. Al Rajhi Steel, established in 1978, is a subsidiary of Al Rajhi Invest and is known

for its steel manufacturing capabilities in Saudi Arabia. This involved a share exchange agreement between Hadeed and Al Rajhi Invest.

In the third stage, PIF intends to dispose off its 44.5% shareholding in Hadeed to M/s. Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz Al Rajhi & Sons Investment thus sharing control over Hadeed and Al Rajhi Steel for improving their respective production capabilities and increasing their operational efficiency.

These transactions, as per the information available, are not anticipated to raise any competition concerns in the relevant market.



The steel sector in Pakistan is one of the most important industries in the

country. It plays a vital role and with investments it can help raise the GDP and bring benefits to both the economy and investors.



## Hurdles

KARACHI: A view of a road block during the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), JUI-F, Jamaat-e-Islami, and PTI protest, as they protest alleged rigging in the elections in front of the Sindh Assembly during lawmakers take oath, in Provincial Capital on Saturday.



Photo: Online

# Opposition parties end hours-long election rigging protest in Karachi

At least 60 out of the total 148 took oath as MPAs

By Datagir Bhatti

KARACHI: Protesters began dispersing as the opposition party's ended hours-long protest against the alleged election rigging in Karachi on Saturday.

Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) cleared the Shahrah-e-Faisal as traffic flow returned to normal.

Earlier, police blocked some of the main arteries of Karachi before the Sindh Assembly session as opposition parties protested against the alleged rigging in elections.

Due to the blockade, heavy traffic was seen at the alternate routes while the track connecting Karachi and Hyderabad was also blocked by the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam in protest against alleged rigging in elections.

The provincial government has banned gatherings of more

than five people under Section 144 of the CrPC. The decision was taken after opposition parties, which claim elections were not transparent, called for protests ahead of the session.

The proceedings of the maiden Sindh Assembly session in Karachi began more than 40 minutes behind schedule because lawmakers were late to arrive on Saturday amid JUI-F, GDA, PTI, and JI protests outside the chamber against alleged election rigging.

Police detained several protesters, including women, outside the assembly amid a ban on the gathering of more than five people in the city.

As many as four political parties announced on Friday that they will greet the assembly's maiden session. The announcement was made in a joint press conference by representatives of the Grand

Democratic Alliance, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat-e-Ulema Islam.

148 lawmakers take oath As many as 148 newly elected representatives including the chief minister-in-waiting Murad Ali Shah took oath as MPAs in the maiden session. Around 60 MPAs were sworn in as lawmakers for the first time.

At the outset of the proceedings, PPP leader Agha Siraj Durrani took oath as the speaker of the House and thanked his party for again bestowing him with the post.

Around 13 members of the opposition did not participate in the ceremony as they protested against the alleged rigging in the election. The Election Commission of Pakistan has so far issued the notification for 163 lawmakers.

The session was adjourned

till 11am Sunday.

**Roads blocked**

The Sindh administration blocked the roads leading to the assembly in view of the protest call by four political parties against alleged rigging in elections. A police contingent was deployed in the Red Zone.

Leaders of GDA stated on Friday that they would block the roads surrounding the assembly and block the session proceedings.

Police have blocked the road at the Nursery in the Shahrah-e-Faisal area that leads to the assembly, leading to traffic jams.

They have also deployed a contingent at the FTC which is diverting the traffic to the Korangi Road.

Meanwhile, workers of the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl were protesting at Karachi's Toll Plaza. JUI-F Sindh Secre-

tary General Allama Rashid Mahmood Soomro is leading the protest, saying that the party workers want to stage a protest outside the provincial assembly.

The protest has disrupted traffic flow at the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway.

'Protest will continue until demands are met'

The protesting political parties have also announced that they will not take oath as members of the assembly. The protest will continue as long as the mandate of the people is not accepted, they added.

The protest has to be organised because the mandate of 60 million people "was stolen in Sindh", GDA leader Safdar Abbasi said.

JUI's Hafiz Naemur Rehman described the MQM-P as a "rejected" party and accused it of stealing the votes of PTI and JI.

## ECP assigns non-Muslim special seats to parties following February elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a notification allocating non-Muslim special seats to various political parties in proportion to the seats won by each party in the National Assembly elections held on February 8. According to the notification, out of a total of 10 minority seats, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) clinched 4 Non-Muslim seats, while the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) secured 2 seats, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) obtained 1 seat, making a total of 7 seats distributed among the parties.

PML-N's non-Muslim members in the National Assembly include Kesoo Mal Kheal Das, Darshan, Nelson Azeem, and Isphanyar M Bhandara. For the PPP, Ramesh Lal and Naveed Aamir won non-Muslim seats in the NA. Mohan Manjaini secured a seat in the NA as an MQM nominee. Likewise, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a notification has been issued for 5 seats specifically design-



ated for women on reserved seats in the provincial assembly. Two seats each for women have been allotted to the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Jamaat Ulema e Islam (JUI), while the Pakistan People's Party has been allocated one reserved seat for women in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly. JUI's declared elected MPAs for reserved women seats include Rehana Ismail and Asima Alam. PML-N's declared elected MPAs for reserved seats include Sobia Shahid and Shehla Bano. The declared elected MPA for PPP is Nelofar Babar. The Election Commission is still deliberating on the allocation of specific seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council, as well as deciding on 26 seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, which include 21 reserved seats for women.

## PTI founder seeks permission for 'dental checkup'

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, who is currently incarcerated in Adiala Jail, has sought permission for 'dental checkup'.

During a hearing of £190m settlement case today, Imran Khan asked Accountability Judge Nasir Javed Rana that he wanted his dental checkup done as he is 70 years old now.

Responding to the case, the judge said he can go to the jail doctor. To this, PTI founder said it's been seven months since he went for a medical check-up.

The judge then directed the

deposed prime minister to file a petition in this regard and the court will give an appropriate order. After this, the PTI founder filed an application in this regard.

During the hearing, the lawyers of founder PTI and Bushra Bibi requested to provide copies of the reference. Later, the court adjourned the hearing by setting a date of February 27 for the indictment proceedings in the £190 million reference.

Imran Khan has been facing a number of legal challenges since his ouster in April 2022 through a no-confidence motion. Meanwhile, his party emerged as the largest group in the National Assembly in the February 8 elections.

## Sher Afzal Marwat, Barrister Gohar reconcile; video goes viral

City Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, Sher Afzal Marwat Khan and Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, have reconciled with each other after the former made claims against party's former chairman.

The development came after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) issued a show-cause notice to party leader Sher Afzal Marwat after he made claims against Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

The PTI, in the notice, asked Marwat to submit an apology letter within two days, warning of a 'disciplinary action' in case of a non-satisfactory answer. "A tense situation has arisen due to your statement," said the former ruling party in its statement.

A day earlier, Marwat claimed that Barrister Gohar Khan was "removed" as the PTI chairman over "unsatisfactory" performance.

Speaking to a private news channel, Marwat said: "Incompetence and



poor performance are the reasons behind Gohar's removal as chairman. Barrister Gohar is a gentleman but his performance was not satisfactory."

Meanwhile, a video has emerged on social media in which the two PTI leaders can be seen hugging each other - announcing to end all sorts of misunderstandings and rivalry between them.

## CM Naqvi briefs Maryam Nawaz on development projects in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi Saturday met with Punjab Chief Minister-designate Maryam Nawaz here at Raiwind on Sunday.

As per details, Mohsin Naqvi congratulated her for being nominated for the slot of Chief Minister. He said that it will be a great honour to be the first woman chief minister of the largest province of the country and expressed good wishes for her.

He said he was sure that she would write a new chapter of people's service in Punjab. Mohsin Naqvi said that he would continue extending his support



for the welfare of Punjab and its people.

Maryam Nawaz thanked him for his good wishes and appreciated his role as caretaker CM and the initiatives taken for the welfare of the people. Mohsin Naqvi also briefed her about development projects in the province.

It is pertinent to mention here that PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif announced that the party's chief organiser Maryam Nawaz would be their candidate for the chief minister Punjab slot.

After the induction of independent MPA-elects in the party, PML-N has become the largest party in the Punjab Assembly which has announced to form government in the province as Maryam Nawaz its head.

## Pakistan's Presidential Election likely on March 09

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's presidential election will be held on March 09, citing sources at the election commission.

The presidential election's schedule is likely to be announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan today.

The ECP sources said that the President will be elected before the Senate's election after formation of governments in the centre and provinces.

After oath-taking of assemblies

presidential election will be held.

Sources said that Asif Ali Zardari will be presidential candidate of the coalition partners including the PML-N, People's Party and other allies.

Sources shared that the election of the 14th President of the country will be held on March 09.

The PPP and the PML-N were agreed over the name of Asif Zardari to be elected as head of the state during their power-sharing dialogue.

Electoral College



The electoral college for indirect presidential election comprises of the members of the Senate, National Assembly and four provincial assemblies.

In the election, the Senate and

National Assembly's members votes are counted as single votes.

The votes cast by the provincial assembly legislators are adjusted so as to give each province an equal share in the election. Therefore, each provincial assembly has 65 votes equivalent to the strength of Balochistan Assembly, which has minimum number of members.

The weightage of the total members of other provincial legislatures will be decided according to fixed number of 65.