



PM attends dinner hosted by Bilawal Bhutto

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday attended a dinner hosted by Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in honour of leaders of allied parties, Senators and elected representatives. The prime minister reiterated his complete support to Co-Chairperson Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election.



Message of UAE Ambassador on International Women's Day

In a greeting on International Women's Day, the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, H. E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem AlZaabi, applauds the immense efforts of women and the remarkable strides they have made in their contributions to society. He said "I sincerely congratulate all the women around the world on the International Women's Day. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Assistance

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing assistance cheques among the families of the deceased and injured in the wake of recent torrential rains and heavy snowfall on Friday.



Photo: PID

Security forces kill four terrorists in North Waziristan IBO

Adam Khan Wazir

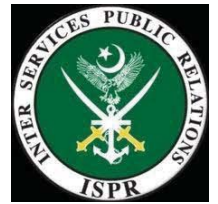
Security forces on Friday killed four terrorists in an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement.

During the operation conducted on the reported presence of terrorists, an intense fire exchange took place between troops and the terrorists, it added.

The fighting resulted in the

killing of four terrorists who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area, according to ISPR. "Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists," it said.

Meanwhile, the security forces conducted sanitisation operation to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. "Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism."



PML-N govt to appoint Mohsin Naqvi federal interior minister: sources

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker chief minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi is likely to become the next federal interior minister, sources said on Friday.

He will contest the election for the Senate seat as the ruling coalition's joint candidate, they added.

Naqvi, who is also serving as the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, will take oath as a member of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's federal cabinet.

He was elected unopposed as the chairman of the PCB on February 6 in a meeting presided over by PCB Chief Election Commissioner Shah Khawar.

Naqvi was sworn in as the caretaker CM of Punjab on



January 22, 2023, after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) unanimously decided to appoint him to the post.

As the consultations surrounding the federal cabinet intensified, sources said that PML-N leader Ishaq Dar would be made the foreign minister.

Former caretaker foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani would be the adviser to the PM on foreign affairs and Tariq Fatemi would be the special assistant to the PM on foreign affairs.

Government committed to steer country out of economic crisis: PM Shehbaz

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the government's resolve to steer the country out of the challenge of economic crisis by bringing structural reforms in the economic sector to provide maximum facilities to the people of the country. He said that the government was fully committed to increase tax to GDP ratio, tap the huge potential of natural and agriculture resources, stop smuggling, power theft, and losses of the State Owned Entities.

Addressing a cheque distribution ceremony among the affected people by torrential rains and snowfall in the area, the prime minister called for setting aside all the differences in the larg-

er national interest to work as a nation to ensure that the country was developing at a faster pace.

Currently, he said the country's tax collection target for the current fiscal year was 1.2 trillion which was not up to the true potential due to tax evasion by certain sections. He said tax evasion was one of the biggest challenge that would be resolved to increase the country's resources.

"If we have no resources, how we will build the infrastructure of health, education and other important sectors," he maintained. He said even the salaries of the federal employees were being paid with the borrowed money. Therefore, he said this was the right time to take tough and important decisions to resolve all the key challenges, the country was facing.

As regards the losses of SOEs, the prime minister informed that the SOEs were incurring losses of hundreds of billions rupees as the loss of only Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was around Rs 825 billion. Similarly, he said the country lost Rs 500 billion every year to power theft.

Talking about the losses and damages occurred due to recent rains, snowfalls and land sliding in AJ&K, the prime minister expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of eight precious lives and prayed for the grant of eternal peace to the departed soul and early recovery of those injured in the incidents. He said that the government of Pakistan always stood with its Kashmiri brothers and sisters in the hour of need. On the occasion, he also distrib-

uted cheques among the affected people.

He said Rs 2 million each would be distributed among the families of the deceased and Rs 500,000 each to those injured in the recent incidents. Similarly, Rs 700,000 each would be given to those whose houses were completely damaged while Rs 350,000 would be given to those whose houses were partly damaged. He directed the Prime Minister AJ&K to complete the survey as soon as possible so that the funds be distributed by March 13.

On the request of the AJ&K prime minister, PM Shehbaz also announced to keep a helicopter of NDMA available for the region in case of emergencies to immediately reach out to the affected people in the hilly areas.

He said Jammu and Kashmir was the jugular vein of Pakistan and it would not leave alone the people of Kashmir in this hour of difficulty. PM Shehbaz maintained that almost over 20 million children were out of school across the country. He said mosques would be utilized to provide education to such children.

On the occasion, Fatiha was also recited for those who passed away in the recent rains and snowfall in the area. Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwaar-ul-Haq thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his support in this hour of difficulty. He informed that during the recent rains, snowfall and land-sliding in AJ&K, eight people were died while 88 houses were completely damaged.

IMF responds to PTI founder's letter on election 2024 audit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday responded to the PTI founder's letter seeking an audit of the Pakistan elections 2024.

The PTI founder wrote a letter to the IMF regarding the fund's engagement with Pakistan under the loan program. The letter was received by the international lender on February 28.

"The IMF, as an international institution with a narrow mandate on economic issues, does not comment on domestic political developments. However, given the importance of the institutional environment for economic stability and growth, we do encourage the fair and peaceful resolution of all electoral disputes," the IMF spokesman said in a response to the PTI founder's letter.

"In terms of our engagement with Pakistan, our aim is to



support the implementation of strong policies to deepen financial stability, address the long-standing economic and underlying balance of payments challenges, and restore sustained and inclusive growth for the benefit of all Pakistani citizens."

This includes stronger public finances, through high-quality revenue measures to broaden the tax base while scaling up the support for the most vulnerable, restoring energy sector viability, improving institutional governance and anti-corruption effectiveness, SOE reform, building climate resilience, and creating a level playing field for private businesses to promote investment and job creation, the statement further said.

Alert issued after heavy rain forecast

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab issued an alert in the wake of expected heavy rains in the province.

According to the details, the PDMA maintained that there is a possibility of heavy rains in Punjab from March 11 to 14. The PDMA spokesperson stated that the severity of the cold is anticipated to rise following the showers.

"The heavy rains may disrupt transportation in hilly areas," he warned while directing the concerned authorities to be vigilant round the clock. All the concerned departments have been advised to take precautionary measures to avoid any human and material losses during the forecast period.

Director General PDMA Punjab Imran Qureshi directed all responsible departments to take full responsibility to cope with any unpleasant situations.

Aurat March Islamabad accuses police of beating participants



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The organisers of Aurat March Islamabad accused the Islamabad Police of beating up the participants as they were marching towards D-Chowk from the Islamabad Press Club on Friday.

The participants of the March held protests in support of Palestinian while dancing to the tune of

Palestinian songs.

The march in Islamabad was held under the theme 'Resistance and Hope', in which participants were urged to bring Palestinian flags and wear keffiyeh.

International Women's day is being celebrated across the world today (Friday) with plenty of special events being organised in Pakistan as well.

Continued on Page 8

Mehmood Achakzai asks ECP to delay presidential election

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mehmood Khan Achakzai — the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) backed presidential candidate — on Friday asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone the election as the electoral college is "incomplete".

In a letter to the chief election commissioner on Friday, Achakzai said that stated that electoral college for a presidential election was "still incomplete".

"As yet no one was elected on those reserved seats and without nominations and proper election on these seats, if the presidential election is conduct-



ed as per the schedule that would be denial of their votes, which otherwise is against the fundamental rights, law and constitution," stated the letter. "Under the above circumstances, it is submitted that the proposed election to the office of the President of Pakistan is clearly impossible, therefore the same may kindly be postponed or delayed till completion of electoral college accordingly in the best interest of justice, fair play and equity."

Jammu and Kashmir premier congratulates Shehbaz Sharif on assuming office

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwar Ul Haq congratulated PM Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif on assumption of the office and expressed good wishes for him.

While addressing distribution of relief cheques' ceremony here on Friday Prime Minister Haq also expressed gratitude to prime minister Sharif for paying a visit to AJK soon after assuming the office and expressing solidarity with Kashmiri people who suffered huge losses during the recent snow and rainfall that hit the region's upper areas particularly the Neelum Valley.

Prime minister Sharif's visit, he said, would further cement the bond between the people of Azad Kashmir



and Pakistan.

The Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's visit and his presence amongst rain and snowfall affected people of

the area has increased their courage.

The people and government of Pakistan have always supported the people and government of Azad Jammu and

Kashmir through every thick and thin", the AJK premier said. In order to cope with natural calamities effectively, the AJK premier said, " Better preparedness and concerted efforts are required to minimize the loss of life and property during natural or man-made calamities in Azad Kashmir".

He said that state institutions like SDMA and Rescue 1122 can play important role in this regard. He said that AJK is one of the regions most affected by climate change.

Referring to the natural calamities that hit the region in 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2019, prime minister Haq said that the people of the region has witnessed death and destruction at an unprecedented scale. He said that road infrastructure in AJK was severely damaged due to the landslides, snow and rainfall.

A function to commemorate International Women's Day held in Muzaffarabad

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: On the occasion of International Women's Day, a function was organized at Darulhumat Muzaffarabad under the auspices of the Department of Social Welfare and Women's Development. Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Advisor Services and General Administration Ms. Nisara Abbasi, Secretary Social Welfare and Women's Development Irshad Ahmad Qureshi, Director of Women's Development Sardar Ikram ul Haq, Chairperson State Commission for Women's Dignity Ms. Rehana Khan along with political and A large number of social personalities, civil society and women from all walks of life participated. Speaking at the ceremony, Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi said that women's rights have been given priority in the religion of Islam. Aqa e Do Jahan Nabi Rehmatal Alameen (PBUH) has ordered the payment of women's rights. The role of Khatoon Jannat Hazrat Fatima (R. A.), the daughter of King Dujahan, is a torch for women. Aqa e Dujahan told the world through the training of his beloved daughter that Islam propagates the rights of daughters. In the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, women are represented in the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the event, Ms. Nisara Abbasi, Advisor to the Government, said that on the occasion of Women's Day, we have to highlight the problems of women. There is an urgent need to end gender discrimination.

Government Secretary Irshad Qureshi, Chairperson State Commission of Women's Commission Rehana Khan, Director Director of Women's Development Ikramul Haque, Farheen Zulqarnain, Asma Shah and others also addressed the event and emphasized on women's rights issues and measures to address them. I Rustom Charli, Bilal Baloch, Dr. Abdul Basit highlighted the rights of women by performing their art especially in relation to Women's Day.

Jamaat-e-Islami believes in practical plans for the welfare of women: Dr. Humira Tariq

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Women's Day is not just a name for happy slogans, Jamaat-e-Islami believes in practical plans for the welfare of women

Secretary General of Women's Circle Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Dr. Humira Tariq and South Punjab President Tasneem Sarwar expressed their views on the occasion of Women's Day and said, "The West has a double policy against Islam and Muslims. On the one hand, International Women's Day should be celebrated and on the other hand, the oppressed women of Gaza Aid and arms are being provided to Israel, which commits atrocities against humanity, the grief of Muslim mothers of Palestine, Gaza and Kashmir is being crushed and their innocent children are being killed, will be celebrated as the day of sisters and daughters, he added that Pakistanis-Women are currently suffering from serious psychological problems along with other problems of the society, wherever Jamaat-e-Islami is guiding women in terms of education, economy, society and politics, they are understanding their psychological problems and setting up counseling desks and counseling centers. Through also trying to serve women. He added that Women's Day is not just a name for happy slogans, Jamaat-e-Islami believes in practical plans for the welfare of women. He further said that for a healthy society, it is important for mother and child to be healthy. Dr. Humira Tariq said that in this era of inflation, people are forced to pay huge fees to get health facilities. Every third woman is suffering from psychological problems. Taking measures for welfare.



Ministry of Power crackdown on electricity thieves in eight districts

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the instructions of the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), there is a strong crackdown against electricity thieves in eight districts of Fesco Region. On the instructions of Chief Executive Fesco Engineer Muhammad Amir, actions against electricity theft are being carried out in six operation circles of Fesco Region. During the night hours, during the last day, the checking Fesco teams arrested 28 electricity thieves, to whom more than 54 thousand detection units and fines of more than 21 lakh 44 thousand have been issued. A total of 6550 electricity thieves in the Fesco region during 6 months. In total, fines of more than 70 crore 80 lakh have been imposed with more than 1 crore 66 lakh detection units. During the joint operation of Fesco teams and police force, 5135 electricity thieves were arrested while cases were also registered against 6306, 6167 household consumers, 197 commercial, 169 agricultural and 17 industrial consumers were found involved in electricity theft. So far, 1,578 electricity thieves have been fined more than 39,97,000 detection units and more than 17,490,000 fines from Fesco-First Circle. So far, 1,113 electricity thieves have been fined more than 27,40,000 detection units and more than 12,170,000 fines from Fesco-Jhang Circle. More than 22 lakh 89 thousand detection units and a fine of more than 8 crore 34 lakh were imposed. A total of 955 electricity thieves from Sargodha circle were imposed with more than 19 lakh 76 thousand detection units and a fine of more than 10 crore. A total of 1674 electricity thieves were imposed with more than 34 lakh 72 thousand detection units and a fine of more than 16 crore 59 lakh from Fesco Mianwali. A total of 486 electricity thieves from Singh Circle were given more than 11 lakh 86 thousand detection units and fined more than 6 crore 15 lakh.

Souvenir

Faisalabad: Director Information Khurshid Jilani giving souvenir to Mohammad Rashid in the presence of former officers Rana Bashir, Subhan Ali and Zulfikar Shah on promotion of Mohammad Rashid as Pictorial Publicity Officer in DPR office.



Photo: Abdul Majid

Azad Kashmir Muslim Conference to consult with youth wing on organization

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan presided over a consultative meeting of Muslim Conference youth wing 'senior officials and workers of MSF regarding organization.

Chief organizer Raja Saqib in the meeting. Majeed, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Chairman Students Wing Saqlain Fida Kazmi, Sardar Wajid Bin Arif Advocate, Raja Shahid Raza, Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Syed Azhar Ali Shah, Raja Muhammad Shafiq, Sardar Asim Zahid Abbasi, Raja Waseem Khalid, Sikandar Habib, Haroon Abbasi, Shahban Asif and other senior workers



participated. Addressing the meeting, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that the youth are the valuable asset of our party.

The Youth Wing is the vanguard of the Muslim Conference and it is the ideal wing and valuable capital of the party whose organization is present all over Azad Kash-

mir and Pakistan. He said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Iqbal and Mother e Millat Ms. Fatima Jinnah are our role models. He said that along with the youth wing, women are also playing a proud role in the party. We pay tribute to them. The youth are the valuable capital of the country. Investing in the development of youth

with the aim of making them skilled, confident and empowered to play an active role in the economic stability and development of the country, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that the strength of the youth wing of the Muslim Conference There is strength. The role of the youth wing has always been historical. He said

that the Muslim Conference has always guarded the statehood and did not compromise on the unity of Kashmir. It is a heavy responsibility on the workers of the youth wing to highlight the issue of Kashmir at the international level. Play your role and convey the message of Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan from home to home. He said that the youth wing is the backbone of any party and Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan has made the youth wing strong and active.. On this occasion, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan said that Muslim Conference Youth Wing will be organized soon throughout Azad Kashmir and no minute will be taken to make the Youth Wing strong and active.

International Women's Day celebrated with great zeal in AJK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: International Women's Day was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm in the whole world, including the state of Jammu and Kashmir. There was a strong demand to stop the increasing incidents of brutal treatment of women and bloody rape in Palestine and to give public punishment to the accused. People's Party Azad Kashmir Women's Department organized ceremony in Central Press Club Muzaffarabad, Speaker Legislative Assembly Senior

Parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar was Chief guest of the ceremony. Chairperson of Affairs Ms. Faryal Talpur Asfa Bhutto Zardari, Begum Surya Khurshed, Begum Farhat Rathore Asia Andrabi, Nahida Nasreen, Shah Rooz Bano, Fahmida Sufi Farida Behni Begum Raja Haider Khan and many other women leaders who have served prominently. Rich Tributes were paid to her by displaying photographs, before a large women's rally was taken out from Azadi Chowk, in which all public and private institu-

tions including thirty-three percent of quota assemblies were held to restore women's rights and stop the worst atrocities committed on them. Speaking on this occasion, Speaker Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar proposed a bill for the allocation of a thirty-three percent quota for women in the government departments of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly and Kashmir Council local bodies. He said that most women's rights have been protected in Islam, we have to get closer to the Islamic

teachings and live our lives according to the Prophet's life and move towards the path of development. While speaking, Government Minister Sardar Javed Ayub Khan said that the respect and rights of women should start from their homes, there are international laws and there is a dire need to implement them. While speaking at the seminar, Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Central Deputy Secretary Information nominated candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven Shaukat Javed Mir said on the occasion of

International Women's Day, why were women's rights of MNCH Ignored? Through legislation, those who torture women should be given prison terms and fines through speedy trials.

They paid tribute to women who have played prominent roles around the world, including Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed. Central Vice President Ms. Shaguf-ta Noreen Kazmi, female councillor Musrat Sheikh, Fawzia Gilani, Thaman Abrar, Musbah, Shahida Raja and other speakers said that great nations around the world were created from the



lap of a woman and from the mercy of the Messenger of Allah. The creation of the world came into existence from the womb of a woman. At the end of the ceremony, certificates and Sasnad were distributed among the women.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:05 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	4:29 pm
Maghrib	6:10 pm
Isha	7:33 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80

Federal Secretary M/o NHSR & C expresses satisfaction over the progress of the project

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held in Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination (NHSR & C) under the chair of Federal Secretary NHSR & C, Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, to review the progress made on Pakistan National Health Support Project for Ensuring Health Coverage in Federating Areas. The meeting was attended by representative World Bank (WB), Manav Bhattari, representative Global Financing Facilities (GFF), Ghazna Siddiqui and Director Programs M/o NHSR & C, Dr. Mariyam Sarfraz.

The Federal Secretary (M/o NHSR & C) said that the project would ensure essential health services to the communities and improve the overall condition of the primary health centers of the targeted regions. He expressed satisfaction over the progress made on the project. He also instructed the relevant officials to utilize all necessary resources in order to expedite the execution of the project so that the people of ICT, AJK and GB could start reaping the benefits of the project as early as possible.

Mushaal pays glowing tribute to Kashmir women for playing lead role in freedom movement despite all odds

PPA

MUZAFFARABAD: Former special assistant to prime minister for human rights and women empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick paid glowing tribute to the brave and unfazed Kashmiri women who were not only facing Indian state terrorism with courage and dedication but were playing a lead role in the ongoing just movement to break the shackles of Indian slavery despite all odds.

Speaking at a seminar in MUZAFFARABAD on "World Women's Day" titled "Elevating women while embracing all and breaking barriers while building bridges", Mushaal said that the world women day was marked across the globe but the women were being treated like sub-human in Indian Illegally

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), which was deplorable and condemnable.

However, she voiced grave concerns over the plight of women in the occupied valley because the brutal and inhuman Indian forces were using women rape as weapon of war to defuse the flames of just struggle for right to self-determination.

Mushaal, who is also wife of senior unlawful incarcerated Kashmir leader Yasin Malik, stated that the Narendra Modi fascist Indian government converted the scenic valley a hell for Kashmiri women because neither their honour nor life were secured.

She demanded that the world powers, UN bodies and human rights organisations should not only focus on women rights

of western countries but they should also pay attention to the inhuman treatment of women of Kashmir and Palestine as well.

The hurriyat leader said that the India notorious regime was involved in heinous war crimes against women in IOJK, adding that Kashmiri women were the most oppressed section of the society.

Mushaal reminded that tragic incident of Kunan Poshpora village of Kupwara district, where around two dozen women were raped by inhuman Indian forces during a search operation on February 23, 1991, adding that the shameful and inhuman practice were continued unabated, as Kashmiri women were being molested, thrashed and detained every now and then during the last three decades.



Former advisor to SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Sabien Hussein Mullick who is also the Secretary-General Peace and Culture

Organization also shed light on women empowerment in today's event held on PC Muzaffarabad. Sabien also highlighted that Mushaal Malik in caretaker

government of former PM Anwar ul haq Kakar has taken a number of initiatives for women empowerment as well as upliftment in 100 days plan.

Woman Day

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi addressing during a ceremony on the eve of International Women's Day, at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Capital Non-buy Association Islamabad participates in awareness program for non-buys of Islamabad



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Non-buy Association Islamabad participation in the awareness program for the non-buys of Islamabad regarding Food Authority, DD Operation Food Authority Islamabad on cleanliness issues and other issues with Madam Dr. Tahira Siddique. Important meeting of representatives of Capital Non-Buy Association / President Sajjad Ali Abbasi, Chairman Hanif Mir, Finance Secretary Muhammad Idris, Zahoor Hussain Shah, Haider Zaman Chaudhry, Muhammad Asif Dilshad Abbasi and other representatives were present.

Launch of Heartfile's Report on status of Tobacco Control Laws Monitoring Report

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The fight against tobacco consumption took centre stage at an event held on 6th March 2024 in Islamabad, as key stakeholders convened to address the pressing issue of implementation of tobacco control in Pakistan.

Heartfile, a leading health think tank NGO, convened a dissemination event at Margala Hotel Islamabad to disseminate their findings on Status of Tobacco Control Laws (TCLs) compliance in 10 districts of Pakistan. The report aims at assessing the compliance of TCLs with respect to Pakistan's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) commitments and attempts to identify gaps and challenges in TCLs monitoring framework alongside recommendations on how to overcome these gaps.

Prominent figures from various sectors, including government officials, health and tobacco control experts and civil society representatives from all over Pakistan graced the event.

Dr. Saba Amjad, the CEO of Heartfile, elaborated the rationale of carrying out this study. Mr. Khurram Hashmi, Senior Technical Advisor at Vital Strategies provided crucial insights into the current landscape of tobacco control efforts, the pressing global challenges of Tobacco Control and global responses to these challenges.

Distinguished voices from academia and the private sector, including Dr. Minhaj Us Siraj, the CEO of Syndicate Health (Pvt) Limited, underscored the significance of effective monitoring of Tobacco Control Laws in advancing tobacco control initiatives. He further unveiled the ambitious Tobacco Smoke Free Cities (TSFC) Initiative, outlining its comprehensive approach to creating smoke-free environments across the nation.

Mr. Aftab Ahmad shared the details of the governments TSFC Initiative. He emphasized the need for grass roots sensitization of local bodies to improve enforcement of Tobacco Control Laws and emphasized that there is need for advocacy to create effective deterrence.

Water Management Institute organized the conference on 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The International Women's Day seminar titled "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" successfully concluded at, Serena Hotel, Islamabad, marking a significant milestone in the journey toward gender equality and empowerment. This seminal event, designed to echo this year's theme, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including donors, activists, and community members, to underscore the importance of investing in women as a catalyst for sustainable development and societal transformation.

The seminar started with a panel discussion on "Investing in Women-Donor's Perspective," featuring insights from representatives of international



organizations such as USAID, UKaid, EU, the World Bank, and AusAID. This session shed light on the transformative impact of directing resources towards women's empowerment initiatives and the shared commitment to fostering gender equality.

"In today's event, the primary goal is to work towards gender equality. Until we invest in women, true development remains unattainable in Pakistan. Empowering women is not just a choice but a prerequisite for progress and prosperity," Mohsin Hafeez, Director Water, Food & Ecosystems, Country Representative, IWMI.

Engr. Ahmad Kamal, Chairman, Federal Flood Commission, Ministry of Water Resources, while emphasizing the significance of women, drew upon the example of Islam and reminded the audience of the words of our Prophet (P. B. U. H) about the importance of women. He reiterated on following teachings of our

religion about the rights and importance of women in everyday matters for progress at all levels. In a comprehensive panel discussion on this crucial topic, diverse perspectives were shared by a distinguished panel comprising Mr. Bilal Anwar, Chief Executive Officer of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Ms. Naghma e Tehniat Jerral, an Economic Advisor from the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and Mr. Muhammad Nawaz, a Development Specialist representing USAID/Pakistan. Adding a valuable dimension to the conversation, female farmers from District Okara, District DI Khan, and Tank, Bahawalpur also contributed their insights.

Water Conference marks water security a big challenge for the climate-hit Pakistan to ensure water-secure future

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The two days 8th International Water Conference on "Valuing Water for Sustainability" organized by Riphah International University, PCRWR and UNICEF held with the aim to bring together experts, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss and address critical issues related to water resources management, sustainability, conservation, WASH, GLOF and climate change. Hundreds of participants gathered physically and online from 6-7th March 2023, to urgently scale up action to address the water crisis and ensure equitable access across sectors — agriculture, energy,

environment and water and its considering Climate Change Adaptability, Water Governance.

Leading academicians, researchers and representatives from development sectors included, unicef representative Ms. Kiran Qazi, vice chancellor Riphah University Dr. Anis Ahmad, former chairman perwr Dr. M Ashraf, Head of Metrology department Comsats Dr. M Athar, Chairman PCRWR Dr. Hifza Rasheed, Director Riphah Institute of Public policy Dr. Rashid Aftab, Dr. Akram Shaikh, DG Pastic, Dr. Muhammad Rizwan from U. S. Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W), Dr. Ishtiaque from University of

Baltistan. The speakers terming water scarcity a big challenge for the climate-hit Pakistan said taking urgent steps such as nature-based solutions and developing civic sense about water conservation were need of the hour. Further water-related disasters including shortages as the major sign of climate emergency and emphasized taking the issue as a major preoccupation by governments, universities, R & D Organizations, Development sector and citizens. They were of the view that integrated the approach on; water ecosystems, reducing the pressures on the hydrological system, developing water centric food systems, using technology and managing water

conservation cycles, ensuring water sanitation and hygiene, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen communities — from resilient infrastructure, reducing water losses, early warning systems against natural disasters and climate justice.

This year number of Universities, R&D and Development Sector organizations like; PCRWR, UNICEF, Riphah University, COMSATS University, Baltistan University, U. S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, UN-Habitat, Chinese Academy of Sciences, IRP participated through 50 scholarly written paper presentation and panel discussion.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Upgraded CPEC, President Xi and Shahbaz Sharif - I

As anticipated, Chinese President Xi Jinping, known for his deep and affectionate sentiments towards Pakistan, was the first head of state to extend congratulations to Mr. Shahbaz Sharif upon assuming the office of Prime Minister.

This gesture reflects President Xi's special regard for Pakistan, highlighting his reputation as one of the most benevolent leaders globally, particularly towards Pakistan.

As the leader of China, one of the fastest-growing nations worldwide, President Xi's support will give added confidence to the newly elected Prime Minister, who is soon to face significant economic, financial, and political challenges.

The brief yet impactful message not only conveyed congratulations but also emphasized a revitalized vision for the future of Pakistan-China cooperation which was delineated into five distinct areas, underlining a roadmap for their continued collaboration.

Firstly, emphasis was placed on nurturing and preserving the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Secondly, emphasized exchanges and cooperation across a wide spectrum of fields. The third to advance and upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The fourth to deepen cooperation and foster resilience. Fifth to ensure tangible benefits for the populace of both nations.

While all five elements hold significance, the joint development of an

upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) emerged as particularly pivotal, with far-reaching implications.

This revamped iteration of CPEC, built upon a reassessment of its initial framework (CPEC-1) transcends its previous focus on infrastructure, energy, and communication projects. Instead, it embraces a multifaceted approach centered on fostering economic prosperity, industrial development, ICT, livelihood projects, mining and mineral exploration and development, agriculture, political, economic, education, science and technology, cultural, and people-to-people relations. It also covers food security and research, media exchanges, space cooperation, urban sustainable development, climate change, vaccine development, transportation, energy.

In essence, the upgraded CPEC delineates five distinct corridors, each tailored to address key priorities and aspirations.

A Growth Corridor, aimed at driving economic expansion by focusing on infrastructure development projects that directly stimulate economic activity. Such as expanding existing industrial zones and creating new special economic zones to attract foreign investment. It includes improving transportation networks to facilitate trade domestically, regionally and globally, diversify Pakistan's export

basket and expand its industrial base and connect Gwadar with the landlocked countries, thus opening new vistas to the west and beyond.

The Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor aims to bridge socio-economic disparities by empowering individuals and communities by harnessing the potential of the country's youthful population and capitalize on the growing social consciousness to transition towards a knowledge-driven society. Central to this vision is the development of human and social capital alongside institutional reforms that prioritizes sustained, inclusive growth, emphasizing indigenous solutions and involving all segments of society. Creating an enabling environment for the private sector to drive economic growth and enhance national competitiveness.

It focuses on enhancing living standards through investments in education, healthcare, social services, and poverty alleviation initiatives besides uplifting rural communities aimed at improving the overall quality of life for all Pakistani citizens.

The Innovation Corridor will foster technological advancement through the establishment of research and development centers, fostering collaboration between universities and industries, and investing in digital infrastructure aimed at ushering the country into a

new knowledge revolution by introducing disruptive technologies such as micro-electronics, computers, telecommunications, human-made materials, robotics, and biotechnology. By catalyzing significant increases in productivity and giving rise to entirely new economic sectors, the corridor serves as a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to position Pakistan as a hub for technological excellence, driving economic growth and enhancing competitiveness globally. Through strategic investments and partnerships, the Innovation Corridor seeks to propel Pakistan forward as a leader in technological innovation and advancement.

The Green Corridor in Pakistan is committed to promoting environmental sustainability by prioritizing investments in renewable energy sources, clean technologies, and sustainable waste management. Emphasizing the importance of modernization, food security, and agricultural and environmental protection. This vision advocates for energy conservation, commercialization of renewable energy, and the adoption of advanced biofuels and synthetic fuels. It also calls for the implementation of alternative propulsion methods and energy-efficient urban infrastructure. Through these initiatives, the Green Corridor aims to mitigate environmental degradation, enhance energy security, and build resilient communities, ensuring a more sustainable and prosperous future for Pakistan.

To be continued



Qamar Bashir

Pakistani scholar views new quality productivity forces as inspiring for

'New Quality Productive Forces" have emerged as a central focus for Chinese delegates and members during the second session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's national legislature.

Chinese society as a whole is mobilizing to prioritize high-quality development, emphasizing the need to intensify innovation, nurture emerging industries, adopt forward-thinking strategies for developing future-oriented sectors, and enhance the modernized industrial system.

"In the midst of the country's accelerated efforts to foster new growth drivers and promote high-quality development, developing "New Quality Productive Forces" is the way forward. I believe this is a path that not only China but also the rest of the world should follow," said Mian Abrar, Chief News Editor of daily Pakistan Today, in an interview with China Economic Net.

As collaboration between China and Pakistan penetrates various sectors of development in Pakistan, including infrastructure, agriculture, energy, space science, and artificial intelligence research and development, keeping a close eye on the Chinese Two Sessions and conducting corresponding policy research has long been a norm among scholars and elites, including Mian Abrar.

"I think the core structures for future development remain modernized industrial systems. The new concept emphasizes that innovation must lead the way in cultivating new quality productive forces, as advanced productivity moves away from traditional economic growth models and paths of productivity development. It is characterized by high technology, high efficiency, and high quality, aligning with the new development philosophy," remarked Mian Abrar.

"It is worth noting that the development of new quality productive forces does not entail neglecting or abandoning traditional industries; rather, it involves pragmatically leveraging local realities, tailoring initiatives to suit regional resources, industrial foundations, and research capabilities in China. This careful promotion of new industries, models, and drivers holds significant guidance for the joint building of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Countries along the Belt and Road, including Pakistan, should, based on their own national conditions, choose the most suitable path for their development," he added.

"The development of 'New Quality Productive Forces' proposed in China also entails discourse on China's international cooperation, emphasizing proactive alignment with high-standard international economic and trade norms, steadily expanding institutional openness, enhancing the linkage between China's domestic and international markets, and consolidating the foundation of foreign trade and investment. This sends a positive signal to China's international partners such as Pakistan." Mian Abrar concluded.



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

'Women's Day and the problems faced by women in our country'

Like the rest of the world, Pakistan also celebrates International Women's Day on March 8th. News about the violation of women's rights and the statements and efforts of women's rights organizations against them continue to be published in Pakistani newspapers. But what is left unanswered, are the roles that are naturally assigned to women and men as men and women. Isn't that right? Since time immemorial, a system has been going on like this that women take care of the house and raise the family and men earn, now that both men and women are earning, women are a little more independent, so where is the "problem"? There will be a solution somewhere? Do all of them really want a solution? How much respect is given to mother, sister, daughter and wife in our society, especially in remote villages? How many rights are available? In the age of ignorance, daughters were buried alive and killed once, now Hawa's daughter does not die many times on a daily basis. The day is celebrated. On this day, various organizations take out rallies in all cities and towns of the country to protect women's rights. But all this hullabaloo ends on March 8 with March 8. Some organizations organize workshops for the awareness of women's rights, present programs on the media, but all these measures are not ending women's problems, the main reason is that women's rights are some of the major problems. The government has not been able to solve them so far and these problems require constant attention and a permanent arrangement for their solution is necessary, including inflation,

ignorance, timely provision of law and treatment. Medical facilities are included. Rising inflation in the country has a direct impact on the lives of women. What men earn through hard work while fulfilling their responsibilities cannot cover household expenses because the increase in salaries cannot keep up with the rising prices of consumer goods, but a large number of educated women turn to employment or business. Among the responsibilities of a woman, the responsibility of livelihood is a cruelty. A woman is already taking on important responsibilities like children at home, along with hard and tiring work like a job, it causes her to neglect her domestic responsibilities, which results in our There are problems of education of children, destruction of family system, gender discrimination, gender discrimination is sitting in our roots. Those who talk about gender discrimination are doing gender discrimination in their own homes. Now daughters are not buried like in Jahiliyyah era. They are sent to schools, colleges and even universities.

A job is also allowed, but despite all this, the smell of difference can be smelled in the air. The son goes to an expensive school, while the daughter goes to a slightly less expensive school, because it is closer to home. The son is sent abroad for higher education, while the daughter is sent to a nearby university here, because the environment outside is bad. When the son comes from work, the whole house is laid before him and the daughter is ordered to make tea. Thinking of son's marriage, it is asked if there is any choice, then tell me. Daughters are sent away

to strangers saying that this is your destiny, whose good fortune you have been praying for since childhood. Now, if it turns out good, then your luck, otherwise, for our honor, stay there. In our country, not only in our country, but all over the world, women face sexual harassment every day.

Not a day goes by without incidents of sexual harassment. Rape, blackmailing, abusive language, contempt, bad language and harassment have become daily routine in the country. Not only women but transgenders are also harassed in private and public institutions and public places. Despite the existence of harassment laws, the situation of these incidents is worse, while on the other hand, the conviction rate in the cases that are registered is very dismal. Many of our women also face domestic violence. The types include physical violence, psychological abuse, financial hardship, verbal abuse, harassment. This violence can be from husbands, in-laws, family members, acquaintances and strangers. Domestic violence is especially prevalent in Pakistan.

It is ignored in our country, women are asked to keep quiet and in many cases women do not even report domestic violence because the family will be defamed. But above all these, Islam has given compensation to the wife for breastfeeding her children. Paradise under the mother's feet. And the good news of getting close to the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, in Paradise for taking care of his daughters. Nevertheless, as Muslims, we are against depriving our sisters and daughters of their right to inherit. Considering them as less important than any animal in the house, they consider themselves as confirmed paradises even in spite of continuous oppression and exploitation. It is not known when this self-deception will end



Tariq Khan Yousafzai

Embrace Election Results and Move Forward - III

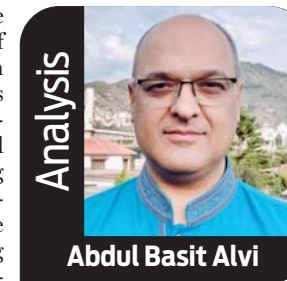
However, the integrity of the electoral process hinges not only on the act of voting but also on the acceptance of election outcomes. When citizens participate in electoral processes, they express their will through the ballot, entrusting elected officials with the duty of representing their interests and upholding the rule of law. Embracing election results is vital for upholding democratic principles such as accountability, transparency, and the peaceful transition of power. Elections stand as a manifestation of the collective will of the populace. Irrespective of individual preferences or partisan loyalties, embracing election results signifies recognition of the legitimacy of the electoral process and the authority vested in the winning candidates. It manifests a dedication to honoring the decisions made by fellow citizens and upholding the fundamental tenet of majority rule—a cornerstone of democratic governance. Following elections, the willingness to embrace election outcomes assumes paramount importance in preserving social cohesion and national unity. When both political leaders and citizens acknowledge the election's verdict, it aids in mitigating tensions and nurturing a sense of collective purpose and belonging. Conversely, rejecting election results can exacerbate divisions, amplify political polarization, and undermine societal cohesion.

Embracing election results is indispensable for upholding political stability and preventing the eruption of violence or civil discord. By adhering to democratic principles and embracing election outcomes, societies can uphold the rule of law and settle disputes through peaceful and lawful avenues. The credibility and legitimacy of democratic institutions hinge on the perception that elections are conducted freely, fairly, and transparently. When all stakeholders accept election results, it bolsters trust in the electoral process and fortifies confidence in democratic institutions.

Conversely, allegations of electoral malpractice or manipulation, coupled with the refusal to acknowledge election outcomes, corrode public confidence and undermine the bedrock of democracy.

Nonetheless, when election results are met with defiance or opposition, the repercussions extend far beyond the realm of the ballot box. At its essence, democracy relies on the tranquil transfer of power through unfettered and equitable elections. When election outcomes are contested or disregarded, it undermines the very essence of democratic governance. Rejecting the outcome of an election signals a disregard for the rule of law, diminishes public confidence in democratic institutions, and establishes a hazardous precedent for future electoral contests. One of the most immediate repercussions of failing to accept election results is the potential for political instability and unrest. When individuals or factions refuse to recognize the legitimacy of elected leaders, it can precipitate protests, demonstrations, and even violence. Political instability disrupts not only governmental operations but also undermines investor confidence, economic growth, and social cohesion. In societies already fractured along political lines, the refusal to acknowledge election results exacerbates polarization and widens the gap between opposing factions. Rather than fostering dialogue and compromise, it solidifies partisan rifts and cultivates an atmosphere of animosity and suspicion. This polarization hampers progress on critical issues, stifles constructive discourse, and impedes governments' ability to govern effectively. Public trust in democratic institutions is indispensable for the health of a democracy. When election outcomes are disputed or deemed invalid, it diminishes confidence in the electoral process and undermines trust in the legitimacy of elected officials. This erosion of trust can yield lasting repercussions, breeding cynicism, disinterest, and withdrawal from the political sphere.

To be continued



Abdul Basit Alvi

Sectarian, divisive activities disrupt pilgrimages in Agham Kot

PPA

AGHAM KOT: Sectarian and divisive activities were carried out to obstruct the arrival of pilgrims to the sacred shrine of Masooma-e-Qum (S. A), daughter of Imam Musa Kazim (A. S) in the Agham Kot, Badin district. This situation has resulted in the announcement of protest demonstrations in Gulab Laghari city, says a Press release.

However, this protest was suddenly conducted by the miscreant elements in front of the shrine of Bibi Masooma-e-Sindh (S. A.) in Agham Kot. The protest continued for several hours with sectarian slogans and incendiary activities, causing pilgrims from across the country to be forced to return without visiting the shrine. The individuals prominently involved in these reprehensi-

ble actions and sectarian incitements are the same ones who had been consistently engaged in such activities for a long time.

Agham Kot, situated in the Matli district of Badin, is home to the shrine of Bibi Masooma Khadija (S. A.), daughter of Imam Musa Kazim (A. S.), which currently a major pilgrimage destination is attracting visitors not only from Sindh province but from all over the country, with the number of visitors increasing day by day.

This shrine was known to local people for centuries, but it gained more attention after research was published in 2009, leading to a significant increase in pilgrim visits. Following the publication of three consecutive research works in 2018, numerous videos were uploaded on social media platforms, and

renowned scholars such as Allama Hasan Zafar Naqvi, Allama Aalay Ahmad Bilgrami, Allama Muhammad Asghar Dars, Allama Baqir Husain Zaidi, Allama Shabih Raza, Allama Muhammad Murtaza Laghari, and Allama Haider Abbas Zaidi also uploaded research videos, resulting in a surge of pilgrims from across the country.

When the influx of pilgrims increased, some individuals with vested interests began spreading hatred and engaging in reprehensible actions to obstruct pilgrims' visits and promote sectarianism. This led to the organization of protest demonstrations and rallies by a banned religious organization in Agham Kot and Gulab Laghari city, escalating into continuous activities of violence and disruption. After these vile actions, it

became evident that the individuals consistently involved in such activities include Mian Ghulam Rasool Qureshi, Ghulam Mustafa Qureshi, Ashraf Laghari, Syed Jaman Shah, and their associates.

The responsible authorities of the Sindh Auqaf Department played an extremely responsible role in thwarting all the conspiracies of these enemies of peace, making the situation significantly better after their efforts. In recent days, the Sindh Auqaf Department has initiated construction projects to provide basic facilities to pilgrims in Agham Kot, but the same individuals have once again engaged in reprehensible actions.

Just a few days ago, the Secretary of Auqaf Sindh laid the foundation stone for the construction of the shrine of Bibi Masooma Sindh in Agham Kot, and these individuals intensified their



incendiary actions, trying to ignite sectarian discord and halt the arrival of pilgrims.

In this situation, it has become the duty of the District Adminis-

tration of Badin, all security agencies, and the Sindh government to immediately apprehend those few individuals who have been continuously engaged in sectar-

ian disturbances and disruptions for the past few years and have also been blatantly interfering in the official works of the Sindh Auqaf Department.

China's first govt work report in Braille makes democracy touchable

Xinhua

BEIJING: When the second session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) lifted its curtain at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday, Wang Yongcheng was presented with a special government work report — a version in Braille, which is a historic first for the country's top legislature.

"It is a tangible experience of democracy," Wang said in an excited tone as his fingertips traced the raised dots.

Among the nearly 3,000 deputies to the 14th NPC who commenced their five-year term in 2023, Wang stands out as the sole individual with visual impairment.

Born in Ninghua County of Fujian Province in 1967, Wang lost his sight in an accident at the age of 18. Underdetermined, he embarked on a challenging entrepre-

neurial journey by learning massage skills and conducting non-profit training. His efforts helped over 6,000 blind individuals become self-reliant.

Following his election as a deputy to the 14th NPC, disabled friends from across the country reached out to Wang, sharing their concerns and aspirations.

He delved into each message, conducted thorough investigations, and formulated his proposals.

At last year's NPC gathering, Wang submitted four suggestions, with concerns encompassing pressing issues faced by the disabled community, such as the employment and education of visually-impaired people, and the building of an accessible environment.

One of his proposals, focusing on providing large-print textbooks for low-vision

students enrolled in regular schools, was later adopted during the legislative process of the country's law on building a barrier-free living environment, which took effect on Sept. 1, 2023.

In November last year, Wang received Braille versions of replies sent by authorities to suggestions he raised at the NPC, the first of its kind in the history of the NPC.

Upon receiving these documents, Wang said that he felt "extremely heartened."

"It reflects the NPC's full respect for the people and efforts in guaranteeing deputies' performance of duties in accordance with the law," said Wang.

The Braille versions of documents, which have provided strong support for Wang in performing his duties, were drafted by a translation team, set up for

the first time, consisting of Braille experts and experienced editors from the China Disabled Persons' Federation and China Braille Press. The team members have been closely communicating with Wang and constantly made adjustments to both format and typographic design to accommodate Wang's needs.

"The new move is not only an active practice of the law on building a barrier-free living environment, but also a vivid reflection of the whole-process people's democracy," said Wo Shuping, editor-in-chief of China Braille Press.

"We hope these documents can help deputies like Wang better fulfill their duties through barrier-free reading," said Yin Menglan, a team member.

China has been strengthening efforts to create a better and happier life for people with disabilities.

Embassy of Nepal to highlight the importance of Vipassana

PPA

ISLAMABAD: on the occasion of the 114 International Women's Day, the Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad today organized a programme 'Vipassana: Stress Management and Inner Peace for Better World' highlighting the inner peace to manage stress through Vipassana. During the programme, I shared the imprint of Vipassana in Taxila and Takht-I Bahi and other places in Pakistan that have full evidences of meditation.

As an oldest country, Nepal has preserved and practised the oldest traditions, which could be beneficial to all of us.

A large number of foreigners are visiting Nepal each year to learn, practice, and develop their skills in



Yoga and Meditation.

The yoga and meditation are non-religious and nonpolitical and beneficial for the well-being of humankind. Some of the centers in Nepal offer courses

without any charge.

In the programme, Vipassana teacher Mr. Khageshwar Aryal shared the importance of Vipassana for the well-being of people and taught

some breathing exercises and meditation. In the programme, Government officials, corporate chiefs, Human Resource Managers, Yoga teachers and practitioners were also present.

Pearl-Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi unveils Ramadan Village to celebrate the holy month

PPA

RAWALPINDI: The Pearl-Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi, recently celebrated the launch of its first Ramadan Village, a unique dining experience that will be available to its esteemed guests throughout the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

The launch event brought together valued corporate partners, dignitaries, and other stakeholders from multiple industries. Attendees were given an exclusive preview of the Ramadan Village located on the hotel's newly inaugurated lawn, where they enjoyed an exquisite array of traditional and continental dishes in a delightful dining setting.

The Ramadan Village intro-



duces an innovative dining concept, offering guests the

opportunity to enjoy their Sehri and Iftar meals under the

serene early morning and starlit evening sky. It offers open-

air seating that allows patrons to bask in the natural beauty of their surroundings and elegantly designed gazebos for families and friends looking for privacy and comfort. This unique arrangement is further enhanced by live cooking stations, where guests can watch chefs prepare various local and international dishes, adding an interactive element to the dining experience.

Aqeel Abbasi, General Manager, Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi, shared his vision for the Ramadan Village, stating, "While we have always welcomed thousands of valued guests for Sehri and Iftar, this year we wanted to make the experience more memorable with an elaborate outdoor setup, traditional

ornamentation, and personalized Ramadan gazebos. We look forward to welcoming esteemed diners from all over Pakistan for a truly unforgettable Ramadan experience."

The event was attended by Chief Executive Officer of Murree Brewery, Ispahnyar M. Bhandara, who commended Pearl-Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi's initiative to offer convenient five-star cuisine for Sehri and Iftar throughout the month of Ramadan in a unique way and encouraged families and groups of friends to venture into the heart of Rawalpindi and experience its rich heritage with delightful treats and a spiritual atmosphere.

Expressing his valued thoughts at the event, Khawa-

ja Fawad, National Director of Sales, PC Hotels & Resorts, remarked, "The support and commitment of our valued partners have been instrumental in realizing our vision of this Ramadan Village. We are grateful for their alliances and look forward to collaborating on other thrilling initiatives in the future."

Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premier conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning both national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts and PC Legacy & Hotel One brands in Pakistan and has business interests encompassing the information technology, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors.

Aurat Hunar Mela kicks off with showcasing of women's work

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th edition of 3-day long 'Aurat Hunar Mela' (National Women-at-Work Festival) kicked off with showcasing women's work, products and services at the Lok Virsa, Shakarparian, Islamabad on Friday. The showcase also included an art exhibition by 13 women artists titled 'Herself'.

The 'Aurat Hunar Mela' (National Women-at-Work Festival) is an 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 3-day event is being organized in collaboration with the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa), Federal Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

Over a dozen women artisans and women entrepreneurs put up their products ranging from clothing to food, and handicrafts. The women artists who put their artworks on display included Nigar Nazar, New York-based Nayyer Iqbal, Shahnaz Akram, Riffat Ara Baig, Saima Tahir, Saima Amir, Haticce Omar, Ambreen Anjum, Salvat Hijazi, Sabahat Amir, Beenish Azam, Shehla Moazzam, and Ambreen Bilal.

The ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva and the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed were the chief guests of the inauguration ceremony. The Executive Director Lok Virsa Muhammad Uzair Malik was the guest of honour. The Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed

briefed the audience about the event.

The ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva said Pakistan enjoys rich folk heritage where women have the backbone role in strengthening it. Women's economic empowerment plays a pivotal role in the national economy. On the other hand, women's aesthetics and creativity bring life to society. Women have played significant roles in the world of art throughout history, although their contributions have often been overlooked or marginalized.

The Federal Secretary of Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed while highlighting the Women's Role in cultural heritage said the government has been efficiently engaging marginalized women in the folk heritage promotion. They have been playing vital

roles in preserving, transmitting, and revitalizing the rich tapestry of traditions that define our collective identity.

Speaking on the occasion, the Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: The 8 March is a significant UN day dedicated to ensuring women's rights, empowerment and mainstreaming of their work. The celebration of the Day has played a key role in the global growth of women's rights campaigns, participation in the political and economic arenas and empowerment movement. Theme of 2024 International Women's Day is very close to the heart of Devcom-Pakistan, a nonprofit voluntary organization, that has been promoting and mainstreaming marginalized women's work since its inception in 2003.

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.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
65,793.75	65,603.08
Day's High	Day's Low
66,067.52	65,693.22
Index Value	Change
10,451,063,551	+190.67
Percentage	Time
+0.29%	8 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,659.74	-32.72
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	8 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,886.73	+95.38
Percentage	Time
+0.25%	8 Mar, 12:43 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,688.94	+90.23
Percentage	Time
+0.23%	8 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	743.09	751.09
Canadian Dollar	207	209.2
China Yuan	38.84	39.24
Danish Krone	40.88	41.28
Euro	304	307
Hong Kong Dollar	35.73	36.08
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	909.09	918.09
Malaysian Ringgit	59.16	59.76
New Zealand \$	170.65	172.65
Norwegians Krone	26.44	26.74
Omani Riyal	725.71	733.71
Qatari Riyal	76.76	77.46
Saudi Riyal	74.2	74.9
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	27.06	27.36
Swiss Franc	318.19	320.69
Thai Bhat	7.78	7.93
U.A.E Dirham	76.3	76.8
UK Pound Sterling	354	358
US Dollar	279.2	282

Women empowerment central to national development: Bukhari

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Syed Muhammad Abbas, Secretary General of Rawalpindi Islamabad Tax Bar Association (RITBA), said on Friday that the empowerment of women is a major issue in Pakistan that needs to be addressed.

Cultural norms, education, economic possibilities, violence, and political representation all link together in Pakistan, and we should all join hands to improve things and support women for the greater good.

Speaking at a ceremony organised in connection with International Women's Day, Syed Muhammad Abbas said that women have made a remarkable contribution in all walks of life and in the legal profession.

As the Secretary General of the RITBA, I applaud the resilience, intelligence, and dedication of women in shaping the legal landscape of the country.

He added that we should continue to work for equality and empowerment and strive for a country where gender should never be a barrier to success.

He said that the access of women to education and opportunities is frequently restricted.

Still, now the situation is improving, for which credit goes to the government and NGOs, which have been trying to advance gender justice.

Syed Muhammad Abbas said that education continues to be a great instrument for breaking down barriers and empowering women and that economic independence is crucial for the empowerment of women.

Initiatives that offer support for female entrepreneurs, as well as vocational training and micro-loans, are making a difference, he said.

The tax expert said that increasing the number of women who are able to participate in the workforce will allow us to increase their ability to make decisions.

He pointed out that the issue of violence against women continues to be a big obstacle. Critically important are the efforts that are being made to increase awareness, reinforce legal frameworks, and create safe spaces for them.

Several organisations are trying very hard to find solutions to these problems, as putting an end to violence is necessary for women to flourish and make a positive contribution to society.

He pointed out that it is critical to increase the number of women who hold political posi-



tions. The country of Pakistan has made significant headway, but there is still room for more development.

The inclusion of women in decision-making processes, whether at the local or nation-

al level, has the potential to result in policies that are more effectively tailored to meet their requirements.

The establishment of an environment that encompasses everything is essential. It entails promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and encouraging men to be allies in the fight against gender inequality.

Other speakers at the event stated that women's empowerment may be characterised in a number of different ways. These include acknowledging the perspectives of women and making an effort to elevate the position of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training.

In the face of a variety of societal challenges, women's empowerment provides them with the tools and the opportunity to make decisions that can greatly impact their lives.

They may be given the option to redefine gender roles or other roles of a similar nature, which would provide them greater flexibility to achieve the goals they wish.

By gaining economic empowerment, women are able to take control of their resources, possessions, and income and benefit from them.

Price hike

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is selling dates on his stall in Friday Weekly Bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

SECP issues concept paper on Shariah-compliant brokerage services

PPA

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 08: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has published a concept paper aimed at enabling Shariah-compliant brokerage services in the securities market through an optimal organizational and operational model.

The concept paper presents several options available for the provision of Shariah-compliant brokerage services, including the opening of an Islamic brokerage subsidiary having the license of either a Trading-Only/Online-Only or Trading and Self-Clearing category; or through the establishment of a dedicated Islamic window. A critical analysis of the available

options and a summary of international best practices have also been included.

The SECP released guidelines last year for conventional financial institutions to offer Shariah-compliant services. A separate set of guidelines was issued enabling the general public to invest in PSX while adhering to Shariah principles. The SECP is dedicated to fostering Islamic capital markets for sustainable market growth, long-term economic investment, and financial inclusion.

The paper invites the stakeholders to submit their feedback on the available options for offering Islamic brokerage services. It is available on the SECP website at the link provided below

Economy will improve with reduction in political tensions

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), on Friday welcomed the much-needed flexibility in the stance by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership.

The PTI leadership's position is becoming softer, which will reduce political tensions and improve the economic situation, he said.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said in a statement issued here today that the IMF and many international organisations appear to be complacent due to the steps taken over the last few months.

He said that the tone of the central leadership of PTI has changed, which should be answered positively so that the speed of reduction in political tension can be accelerated. The government can work for economic improvement.

With improvements in the economic situation, it will be possible for the government to provide meaningful relief to the people, he added.

Dr. Mughal said that the credit rating agency Moody's has improved the rating of Pakistan. At the same time, the IMF



has also expressed its willingness to send a new mission to Pakistan after the formation of the cabinet.

The IMF's attitude should be that it has no complaints at this time and wants to work with Pakistan.

He said that the formation of the new cabinet would be a test for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In this regard, he should ensure merit and not consider any pressure.

The failed economic experts should not be re-tried, and those elements should not be entertained in any way whose actions

have aggravated the economic crisis in the country instead of reducing it.

He said that many arrested leaders and activists of the PTI got bail, after which Imran Khan demanded to bring the perpetrators of the May 9 tragedy to justice, which shows that there is a softening of stance on both sides.

Imran Khan has also said that neither he nor anyone from his party is against the army and the establishment. On the other hand, the PTI leadership has also announced dissociation from two vloggers based in western countries.

The situation shows that there has been little progress from the PTI at the highest level, but the ice is melting and things are improving.

The tone of the opposition will benefit the government and contribute positively to the overall situation, he observed.

Reduced political temperatures will help the government deliver, and rumours will die down, which will be good for the country's future, he said.

Meanwhile, the PM has directed the formation of a review committee on the proposal of handing over the power companies to the provinces with directions to submit recommendations to him.

EIGHTEEN actively works to advance gender equality



PPA

ISLAMABAD: In celebration of International Women's Day, Eighteen hosted a delightful event honoring the women within the organization. The occasion highlighted the significant contributions and achievements of women in the professional sphere.

Eighteen is committed to cultivating an environment centered on inclusivity and equality, placing women at

the forefront.

Through the implementation of strategic initiatives, the company actively works to advance gender equality, breaking down barriers and creating an organizational culture where women can thrive.

This reflects Eighteen's dedication in nurturing the professional growth of women in the workforce, recognizing their pivotal role in contributing to the organization's success.

Rastgar Group hosts well-attended seminar on optimizing compressed air systems

PPA

MULTAN: Renowned compressed air solutions provider, Rastgar Group, partnered with the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) to host a well-attended seminar on "Optimizing Compressed Air Systems for Increased Competitiveness and Sustainability." The event focused on empowering Multan's industries to achieve cost reductions, improve energy efficiency for potential carbon credit opportunities, and contribute to the city's sustainability goals. Mian Rashid Iqbal, President of MCCI emphasized the

importance of selecting expert and reliable service providers for compressed air systems, underlining that while maintenance costs may seem insignificant compared to the overall compressor ownership cost, neglecting them can significantly impact the productivity of machinery and workforce, ultimately leading to costly downtimes and hindering business growth. He expressed his gratitude to Rastgar Group for organizing the seminar on a very important yet critical utility i.e. Compressed Air, highlighting the critical role compressed air plays in powering industrial operations. Saleem Ladhani, a renowned

expert from Rastgar Group, addressed the participants on selecting the most suitable compressors, dryers, filters, and piping systems, specifically considering Multan's hot and humid climate. Muhammad Hussain, the Country Service Manager, shed light on best practices for operating and maintaining compressed air systems during the hot summer season, emphasizing the importance of maintaining refrigerant dryers in Multan's specific weather conditions.

The seminar was attended by representatives from various prominent companies in the region, including Fazal Group, Mahmood



Group, Reliance Weaving, Indus Dyeing, Sheikhoos Sugar, Masood Fabrics, Husnain Textile, H. A. Fiber, Allahwasaaya Textile, Pak Arab Fertilizer, Hani Foods, Khawaja

Mineral, Multan Feed, International Food, Umer Fisheries, Khawaja Tannery and Multan Chamber of Commerce & Industry. This seminar aimed to educate and empower local

industries with the knowledge and expertise to optimize their compressed air systems, ultimately contributing to improved efficiency and productivity.

JS Bank and Zindigi unveil HER Debit Cards on International Women's Day

PNP

KARACHI: In a significant step towards financial inclusion for women, JS Bank and Zindigi announced the launch of the JS HER Debit Card and the HER Zindigi Debit Card on International Women's Day, marking a commitment to women's empowerment and financial inclusion.

These debit cards are designed to offer women in Pakistan convenient and secure access to financial services, tailored to meet their specific needs.

Both cards are developed specifically for female customers and provide a suite of financial services. In addition to banking services, they offer free insurance coverage for various cancers, along with special discounts, reward programs, and other benefits.



The initiative also includes the formation of a community for female entrepreneurs, offering them visibility, promotion, and financial advice.

"Today, we embark on a journey towards empowering women across Pakistan through a commitment to their holistic well-being and aspirations", commented Basir Shamsie, President & CEO of JS Bank. "These cards represent more than just a financial tool; they symbolize our belief that empowered women are the architects of resilient communities and thriving economies," he added.

As the country strives towards greater gender equality and financial inclusion, initiatives like the JS HER Debit Card and the HER Zindigi Debit Card play a crucial role in driving positive change.

By empowering women with access to financial services and opportunities, JS Bank and Zindigi are paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Faisal Khokhar assuming charge Sports and Youth Affairs Minister for Punjab

By Tahir Amin Malik

The Punjab province is entering in a new era and the provincial sports ministry will utilise all of its resources for the promotion of sports and welfare of sports community; these views were expressed by newly appointed Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar in his first press conference after assuming his charge at National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwer, Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Addressing the press conference, Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Khokhar said Punjab govt will give utmost importance to sports activities as per the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He said all the talented young players of the province will be given equal opportunities to show their true sports abilities.

He said that there is zero tolerance on corruption in Punjab's Sports Department. "It is Punjab Chief Minister's



Redline and we will ensure transparency at every level in Punjab's Sports affairs. Implementing thorough discipline in Punjab Sports Department is also among our top priority. Ghost employees have no

place in the Sports Department", Provincial Sports Minister Punjab added.

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Khokhar said a top class sports complex will be built in every city

of Punjab on the pattern of Lahore city. "I'm sports minister of whole Punjab not only Lahore and that's why we will put our focus equally on all cities of the province and their sports structure".

HBL PSL 9th Edition

All-Round Saim Ayoub helps Peshawar Zalmi qualify for playoffs as Quetta Gladiators lose second in a row

By Asim Tanveer

RAWALPINDI: Peshawar Zalmi became the second team to qualify for the playoffs of HBL PSL 9 as they inflicted a heavy defeat over Quetta Gladiators in Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi on Friday night.

Peshawar posted 196 on the board, which was comfortably defended by their bowling attack, as Quetta was bundled up for just 120 in 17.5 overs. Zalmi also became the only team to have qualified for the playoffs in all nine editions of HBL PSL.

Peshawar Zalmi got off to a flying start after being put to bat first by Quetta Gladiators. After seeing off Mohammad Amir in the first over, which yielded just a run, Babar Azam and Saim Ayub went berserk, as they amassed 46 off 22 for the first-wicket partnership.

In the fourth over, Saim took on Sohail Khan by smashing two consecutive sixes and then a four. The right-arm fast bowler avenged the onslaught by removing Saim (30, 12b, 1x4, 3x6s) on the fourth delivery, who edged one to Abrar Ahmed at short third.

Mohammad Haris joined Babar on the crease for a second-wicket partnership that yielded 47 off 25. In the fifth over, Babar took on Mohammad Hasnain, who was hit for three boundaries. At the end of the powerplay, Zalmi stood tall at 70-1.

At the end of eighth over, Haris (20, 13b, 1x4, 1x6) was run out as Rilee Rossouw perfected the throw at the non-striker's end. Haseebullah fell to Abrar shortly after, walking back for a run-a-ball six.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore, the next batter in, announced himself with two consecutive fours against Hasnain. In



the 12th over, Abrar conceded 19 runs on the back of three fours and a six while Babar brought up his fourth HBL PSL 9 half-century courtesy of a boundary on the last ball.

In the next over, Babar (53, 30b, 9x4s, 1x6) was trapped leg-before by Akeal Hosein to cut short the 36-run fourth-wicket stand. Then, Saud Shakeel caught Cadmore (33, 19b, 4x4s, 1x6) at long-on to bring Zalmi to 147-5 in 13.4 overs.

Hosein, bowling the 16th over, bagged the first hat-trick of HBL PSL 9 as he removed Aamer Jamal, Mehran Mumtaz and Luke Wood to derail Zalmi's innings. This was the sixth overall hat-trick in HBL PSL history and only the second by a foreign player.

The unbeaten ninth-wicket partnership between Rowman Powell and Naveen-ul-Haq (10 not out, 9b, 1x6), yielding 39 runs did well to help Zalmi recover after the earlier setback. Powell

(28 not out, 25b, 4x4s), facing Amir in the last over, hit three fours taking Zalmi to 196-8 in 20 overs.

Hosein was the pick of the bowlers for Quetta, accounting for four wickets for just 23 runs. Sohail, Hasnain and Abrar had a wicket each.

Chasing 197, Saud Shakeel and Jason Roy also put up a 46-run opening stand to match that of Zalmi's, earlier in the game.

Khurram Shahzad, playing his first game of HBL PSL 9, was greeted with two boundaries in his first over. In the following over, Saud hit Naveen for a four and two sixes on consecutive balls to take Quetta to 45 in four overs.

Mehran, introduced to the attack inside the powerplay, provided the first breakthrough for Peshawar to trigger the collapse for Quetta, as Khurram pounced Saud (24, 12b, 2x4s, 2x6s) at short third. In the next over, Roy (16, 16b, 2x4s) departed as well with Quetta ending the

powerplay at 56-2.

Saim, bowling the eighth over, further pushed Quetta into a corner as he delivered a double-wicket over that yielded just one run with Rossouw (8, 11b, 1x4) and Khawaja Nafay (5, 7b) falling without helping the scoreboard much.

Laurie Evans (12, 13b, 2x4s) also failed to make an impact with the bat and was caught at long-on, in the 11th over, to further trouble Quetta.

Omar bin Yousuf (10, 13b, 1x4), in his first game of HBL PSL 9, and Hosein (14, 14b, 2x4s) added 21 runs for the sixth-wicket stand before both of them fell in consecutive overs to Naveen and Wood respectively.

Amir made 13 off eight, with the help of three boundaries, before he was caught at midwicket by Saim, awarding Mehran his second wicket. Then, Khurram returned to dismiss the last two batters in the 18th over as Gladiators were bowled out for just 120, awarding Zalmi the game by 76 runs.

Mehran, Khurram, Saim and Wood bagged two scalps while Naveen and Jamal dismissed one batter each.

Scores in brief

Peshawar Zalmi beat Quetta Gladiators by 76 runs

Peshawar Zalmi 196-8, 20 overs (Babar Azam 53, Tom Kohler-Cadmore 33, Saim Ayub 30; Akeal Hosein 4-23)

Quetta Gladiators 120 all out, 17.5 overs (Saud Shakeel 24, Jason Roy 16; Khurram Shahzad 2-15, Saim Ayub 2-20, Luke Wood 2-21, Mehran Mumtaz 2-22)

Player of the match - Saim Ayub (Peshawar Zalmi)

9th March PSL Match: Lahore Qalandars v Karachi Kings, National Stadium, Karachi (7pm)

Punjab win Women Blind Cricket C'ship

By Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab downed Islamabad by nine wickets in the 3rd Women's Blind Cricket Championship, as to mark International Women's Day at Shalimar Cricket Ground. The Australian High Commission, in partnership with the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) and Serena Hotels, supported a cricket coaching clinic and tournament for visually impaired women and girls from across Pakistan from March 3 to 8 in celebration of International Women's Day.

In the morning, Punjab won the toss and elected to field first. Islamabad batters put up a strong fight, scoring a commendable 202 runs in their allotted 20 overs. Kiran Rafique led the charge with a stellar 74 runs, ably supported by Rabia Javed Hashmi's contribution of 35 runs. Esha Faisal from Punjab managed to pick up the only wicket for her team. In response, Punjab chased down the target in a nail-biting final over, show-



casing exceptional batting skill. Nisha Bux laid a strong foundation with 76 runs, while Noor Sabir's brilliant knock of 82 runs secured the win for Punjab. Noor Sabir was declared players of the match while best players of Women Championship included B1: Esha Faisal (Karachi), B2: Nimra Rafique (Rawalpindi), B3: Noor Sabir (Punjab) and Best Wicketkeeper: Samreen (Hyderabad). The event was graced by the presence of Australia's Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan, Nicole Guihot, Air Commodore Ashar Jameel (AIMS Rafique, Pakistan Air Force), Aziz Boolani (CEO, Serena Hotel Islamabad), and Syed Sultan Shah (President, World Blind Cricket Ltd & Chairman, Pakistan Blind Cricket Council). They distributed prizes among the players, celebrating their exceptional display of talent and sportsmanship. Speaking at the award-giving ceremony at the conclusion of the tournament, Nicole Guihot said Australia's continuing support was aimed to empower more women and girls with disabilities to realise their potential and broaden their horizons through sport. "We are supporting the

development of blind women cricket in Pakistan because sport breaks down barriers to inclusion, diversity and equity, fosters understanding and builds resilient communities," Ms Guihot said. Coaches Abdul Razaq, Ibrar Shah, Shahida Shaheen, and Tahir Mehmood Butt, who coached the national blind men's team, worked with the women to hone ball skills, enhance team cooperation, and strengthen leadership. Chairman of Pakistan Blind Cricket Council, Syed Sultan Shah, said: "Blind Cricket is a sport that has gained popularity in recent years for its unique approach to the inclusivity. It provides an opportunity for people with visual impairments to compete at a high level, develop their skills and confidence, and become people of vision, both on and off the field. I hope that this initiative will inspire more people with disabilities to participate in sports and lead fulfilling lives." He also revealed that the first-ever T-20 World Cup for Women Blind Cricket is happening in India in December

2025! This is a big deal because it gives these girls a chance to shine on the world stage, representing their countries. "It shows that all the hard work to develop women blind cricket is paying off, and it's a great opportunity for these girls to show what they can do." Air Commodore Ashar Jameel lauded the female players for performing well in the championship. "Pakistan women team is coming up and everyone is looking forward to it. PAF will continue to support you," he said. In 1922, two blind factory workers invented blind cricket in Melbourne, Australia when they used a tin can containing rocks as a ball. In 1928, the first sports ground and clubhouse for blind cricket was built in Kooyong, Melbourne. Today blind cricket was played at club level and nationally throughout Australia. This championship not only highlighted the cricketing potential of women with visual impairments but also served as a powerful symbol of women's empowerment and inclusion on International Women's Day.

Award



ISLAMABAD: Australian Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan Nicole Guihot giving trophy to winner team captain after the final cricket match between Islamabad and Punjab during 3rd National Blind Women Cricket Championship, on the eve of International Women's Day, organized by Australia Embassy at Shalimar Cricket Ground, in the Federal Capital. Photo: Online

Sindh Olympic Association meets after the death of Syed Saeed Jameel

By Sports Desk

KARACHI: In the Emergent Executive Committee meeting of the Sindh Olympic Association, the late Syed Saeed Jameel, Treasurer of the Sindh Olympic Association, recited Fatiha and prayed for forgiveness and a high place in Jannat al-Firdous. Sanisi Naseem Qureshi started the ceremony by reciting the Holy Quran. Khalid Rahmani prayed for the repose of late Syed Saeed Jameel and for the repose of late Syed Saeed Jameel, Senior Vice President of Sindh Olympic Association Engineer Mahfouz Haque said about Syed Saeed Jameel that he was the former Mr. Karachi, Mr. Sindh and National Champion. were Imtiaz Sheikh, Sana Ali, Tahmina Asif, Asif Azim and Mohammad Taqi also expressed their concern for the late Syed Saeed Jameel. Miss Veena Masood, Rafat Jahan, Majda Hameed, Miss Nargis, Miss Abida, present in the Sindh Olympic Association Emergent Executive Meeting, Miss Parveen, Naushad Ahmed Khan, Dr. Zulfiqar, Muhammad Nafees, Kamran Qureshi, Shah Naeem Zafar, Shahid Masood, Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Abdul Rahim, Abdul Hameed, Ahmed Sarwar, Haq Nawaz, Office Staff Najambhai, Majid, Mossadeq Hussain and Media Coordinator Kashif. Ahmed Farooqui and others were also present and along with this the House also gave Asghar Baloch the additional responsibility of Treasurer of Sindh Olympic Association. Dindh

Karachi Kings arrive in city for PSL showdown

By Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Karachi Kings' cricket squad has touched down in the bustling metropolis of Karachi after their journey from Islamabad on Friday.

Their arrival marks the commencement of their quest to conquer the remaining matches of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Scheduled to face off against Lahore Qalandars on Saturday at the esteemed National Bank Stadium in Karachi, the Kings are gearing up for a fierce battle on the pitch.

On the horizon, Monday, March 11, holds the promise of an electrifying clash as the Kings prepare to go head-to-head against Peshawar Zalmi in their final league stage encounter.

With the Kings boasting 6 points from 8 matches, Lahore Qalandars trailing at 3 points from an equal number of matches, and Peshawar Zalmi securing a commendable 9 points from their 8 matches, anticipation runs high as the PSL action unfolds.



Naqvi orders upgradation of Gaddafi, Pindi, NBP stadiums



By Sports Desk

LAHORE: of major cricket stadiums of the country in anticipation of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 to be held in Pakistan.

Presiding over an important meeting with National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) at the PCB headquarters, Gaddafi Stadium here on Friday, he directed that the upgradation of three major venues including Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pindi Cricket Stadium Rawalpindi and National Stadium Karachi should be undertaken in the country.

Director Infrastructure PCB Nasir Hameed and other officials were also present. The Chairman PCB emphasised the need for the upgradation, of Gaddafi Stadium Lahore, National Stadium Karachi and Pindi Cricket Stadium Rawalpindi, to be completed before the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

He directed the concerned departments to submit comprehensive plan for the upgradation of Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore within three days, followed by the plans for the other two venues.

Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi said that the fans should be facilitated at all costs and their ease must be kept in mind while devising the upgradation plan. The seating capacity of Qaddafi stadium should be increased and this upgradation process must be swift without compromising on the quality.

Azhar Ali expected to get 'important' position in PCB

Pakistan cricket team's former captain and Test cricketer Azhar Ali is likely to get an important position in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), sources told Geo News on Friday.

According to sources, 39-year-old Azhar might be given the responsibility in the selection committee or high-performance centre of the cricketing body. PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is in favour of taking benefit from the former cricketer's experience.

The batter announced retirement from Test cricket in 2022 after playing his last series against England.

The 37-year-old made his debut in 2010 in England against Australia at Lord's and scored his maiden Test half-century in only his second match.

Guard of Honour

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi being presented with the farewell Guard of Honour, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Friday.



Photo: PID

Govt fully committed to provide educational facilities, vocational training to women: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the government was fully committed to empower youth, particularly women by providing them better facilities of education, vocational training, and the latest technology tools so that they could help propel Pakistan on the road to economic progress.

He was speaking at a ceremony to give away "Khatun-e-Pakistan Awards" on the occasion of the International

He congratulated the

award winners and lauded them for making the name of Pakistan prominent among nations with their efforts and significant contributions.

He said the government was making its utmost efforts to facilitate the female population of the country and protect their rights.

International Women's Day was observed around the world to acknowledge the important role of women in society and Pakistan was not far behind others in providing rights and facilities to women, he added.

He said Pakistan needed

to make more policy interventions and provide more resources and opportunities to women.

"We have to provide more opportunities and resources for education and training of women."

He noted that women all around the world were contributing to the progress and welfare of society, adding there was a need to give women equal opportunities and a better environment at the workplaces so that they could easily contribute to economic progress and development.

He expressed the hope that the provincial governments would take forward the policies for women that were introduced and implemented in the past.

He pledged to make all resources available for women so that they could equip themselves with the latest technology tools. "Women can help make Pakistan a great nation by utilising all available resources," he remarked.

PM Shehbaz recalled that their previous government passed the law for the inheritance of women, launched Zewar e Taleem

programme to retain girl students in schools by giving them scholarships, adding the programme was a great success story and helped in spreading education.

Similarly, Punjab Education Endowment Fund distributed Rs 20 billion among brilliant students who achieved distinction in their education, he said.

He said now the government would establish the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support students who excel in their studies but have limited resources to continue further.

Climate Resilience & Strategic Preparedness: Safeguarding Pakistan's Security Interests

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled 'Climate Resilience & Strategic Preparedness: Safeguarding Pakistan's Security Interests'. The event discussed the challenges that Pakistan faces in the wake of global climate change, which can potentially threaten state security and social cohesion.

The seminar commenced with opening remarks by Mr Ameer Abdullah Khan, Senior Researcher at CASS, Lahore, who spoke about the different aspects in which climate change is interrelated with the national security of Pakistan. This was followed by a keynote address by Mr Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, member



Loss & Damage Fund Board and World Bank Consultant, who spoke about strategic preparedness in the face of ecological uncertainty while outlining policies and priorities from global to domestic levels.

Mr Ahmed Rafay Alam, an environmental lawyer, shed light on governance-related challenges, which augment climate-induced threats to Pakistan's security. The last speaker, Ms Sarah

Hayat, Climate Law and Policy Expert, discussed the need for climate adaptation and mitigation as a way forward to a secure future for Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman

(Retd), President, CASS Lahore, said that despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan has endured the harsh realities of climate change. He highlighted that the crisis does not stop at natural disasters, rather it extends to straining the economy, political stability, and social fabric of Pakistan, besides intensifying regional tensions.

The seminar highlighted various key points. The speakers pointed out how certain lapses in management in the past have contributed to the escalating severity of climate change threats. They also emphasised the need for inclusive climate-resilient strategies at the federal, provincial and local levels.

Japan awards MEXT research scholarships to Pakistani students



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has awarded prestigious MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan) Research Scholarships for Masters/Doctorate degrees to eleven Pakistani students for academic year 2024-25 aiming to provide them with an opportunity to pursue advanced studies and research in various disciplines at the prominent universities of Japan. MEXT research scholarship is the flagship scholarship program of the Government of Japan, operating world over including Pakistan.

The scholarship is fully funded by the Japanese government for a Master's or PhD degree, said a news release issued here on Friday. The Embassy of Japan organized a pre-departure orientation for the scholarship grantees. At the orientation, on top of the briefing on the scholarship program, Pakistani alumnus of the Japanese universities shared their knowledge and experience of studying and living in Japan with the new scholarship grantees. They gave some useful pieces of information and advice to the young students who are on their way to various universities in Japan for higher studies. After orientation session, WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, hosted a reception at his official residence to honor the members of MEXT Alumni Association of Pakistan (MAAP) as well as to bid farewell to the new scholarship grantees. In his welcome remarks, the ambassador congratulated the scholarship grantees on their achievement and wished them good luck for their journey to study in the prestigious universities of Japan. He termed the award of scholarships a good opportunity for them not only

to acquire knowledge but also to learn Japanese culture and its diverse society. He strongly recommended to the young scholars to engage in activities outside their university campuses and try learning Japanese language. "You may experience some challenges after arriving in Japan as life in Japan is quite different from that of Pakistan. But I am sure that the hospitality and friendship of the Japanese people will get you through any adjustments you need to make", the ambassador added. He hoped that the scholarship grantees, after completing their studies in Japan, would return with strong knowledge and rich experiences, utilize their skills for the brighter future of Pakistan, and become bridge of friendship between Japan and Pakistan together with other alumnus. He greatly appreciated MAAP for its continued efforts and cooperation, and for playing a vital role in strengthening the friendly relations between Japan and Pakistan through the promotion of the Japanese educational and cultural activities. The Government of Japan's MEXT Research Scholarships program was launched in 1954. Since the first Pakistani student went to Japan on scholarship in 1963, up till now a large number of students from across Pakistan have benefited from this scholarship and have returned to Pakistan after obtaining their PhD/Master's degrees in Japan. They are actively working in the academia, public and private sectors and have made significant contributions to the development of Pakistan in various fields as well as in strengthening friendly relationship between Japan and Pakistan. The Government of Japan awards graduate and post-graduate fully-funded scholarships to Pakistani students every year as well as short-term scholarships and training courses round the year.

Envoy urges Pak investors to invest in Ethiopia



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, on Friday urged the Pakistani business community to invest in Ethiopia that offered comparative advantage in form of important geographical location, cheap and clean energy and skilled human resources.

Addressing a Business Forum on Ethiopia-Pakistan Bilateral Trade at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Lahore, the ambassador said his country was hosting the Invest Ethiopia Conference from April 28-30 in Addis Ababa to showcase extraordinary investment opportunities in Ethiopia, said a press release issued here.

According to Ambassador Jemal Beker, it was a high time for the business community of Pakistan to explore the lucrative market of Ethiopia which was a gateway to the African continent of more than 1.4 billion people.

He said Ethiopia was a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement which meant that whatever produced in Ethiopia could easily be traded to the entire Africa.

The ambassador highlighted the economic reforms carried out by the reformist Government of Ethiopia to build a home grown economy to achieve a robust and sustainable economic growth by creating an enabling environment for business community and foreign investors.

He said under its economic reforms, Ethiopia had laid a major focus on its five economic sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) and tourism. The government had set up a one-window facility and introduced multiple incentives to attract the foreign direct investment, he said, adding "do not mislocate yourself, Africa is the business, trade and investment destination of the 21st century."

He said Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, had charted the country on the path of progress and prosperity with his visionary reforms paving the way for Ethiopia to become a manufacturing hub of Africa.

The ambassador said Ethiopia was producing cheap, clean and green energy close to 98 per cent from hydro and geothermal sources.

"We are exporting energy to Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan and other neighbouring countries since our prime focus is to foster regional integration by sharing our resources," he added.

As regards the efforts for boosting trade volume between Ethiopia and Pakistan, he said the Embassy of Ethiopia in Islamabad last year in March mobilized a 75-member trade delegation to Ethiopia that helped connect both countries business community.

"Now, we are planning Hijra Trip II to Ethiopia for the traders and investors of Pakistan this year in May," the ambassador said, exhorting the participants to register themselves for the delegation before end of April.

The ambassador also briefed the Pakistani business community about export potential of different products to Ethiopia including rice, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, sports items and construction material.

Aurat March

Continued from Page 1

Reports said that the ICT placed barbed wires at the site where Aurat March and Haya March were being held at the same time. Later, Aurat March Islamabad in a video alleged that the police manhandled the participants and beat them up.

In Karachi, the Aurat March participants gathered at Fawar Chowk near Saddar Market.

'Aurat Ehtajaji Mela and March' will also be organised in Karachi, set to begin from Frere Hall at 2:30 pm. The march will end at Teen Talwar.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighted the importance of women and recalled Pakistani women and their contributions towards the country.

"Islam has provided equal rights to women for 14 centuries. Today, every woman is an important part of the society," Shehbaz said in his message on Women's day.

"Today, I mark this day for different women who provided different contributions. Fatima Jinnah's political vision, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali's services towards the country, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's sacrifice, Kulsoom Nawaz's democratic struggle, Mohatma Bilquis Edhi's contribution to providing medical services and Malala's pursuit for girls' education is to be remembered," he added. He also said that his government would prioritise providing rights to women. The Aurat March was organised in three separate cities across Pakistan.

Message of UAE Ambassador on International Women's Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In a greeting on International Women's Day, the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, H. E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem AlZaabi, applauds the immense efforts of women and the remarkable strides they have made in their contributions to society.

He said "I sincerely congratulate all the women's around the world on the International Women's Day.

We celebrate international Women's Day, which is a day in which we renew our gratitude and appreciation for the legacy of the founding father, Sheikh Zayed-may Allah bestow mercy upon him-and the "Mother of the Nation," Sheikh Fatima bint Mubarak, who promoted women, raised their status, and pushed them to the ranks of leadership



in national work.

Not only today, but every day we must honor the invaluable contributions of women in shaping our world with compassion, wisdom, and grace. Wishing all women the recognition and appreciation they deserve for their tireless efforts and unwavering dedication. May every

woman be treated with dignity, respect, and equality in all aspects of life.

This women's day I want to extend my gratitude and appreciation to our Lady-colleagues in Pakistan for all their hard work. Happy International Women's Day!"