

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے موسیٰ نے بیان کیا کہ تمہوں نے کہا
ہم عبادتیں تمہیں اور ان سے عبد اللہ بن
زید نے بیان کیا کہ اگر حجرت ہوتی تو میں
انصار کا ایک فرد ہوتا اور اگر لوگ کسی وادی
یا کھائی میں چلیں تو میں انصار کی وادی یا کھائی
میں چلاں گا۔ اس روایت کی متابعت ابو اسحاق
نے کی، ان سے اس رضی اللہ عنہ نے نبی کریم
ﷺ سے اس میں بھی روئے کا ذکر ہے۔
(بخاری: صفحہ نمبر 7245)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



PM directs uninterrupted gas, power supply during Ramadan
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for ensuring uninterrupted gas and power supply to the consumers during the holy month of Ramadan. He also directed for provision of every possible facilities to the private sector, local and foreign investors in the exploration of gas and oil, refining and distribution of these natural resources. (Details on Page 8)



'Muslim Ummah is facing a serious social, economic and political situation'
Quaid Millat Jafariya Pakistan Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi in his message on the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan 1445 AH, describing the virtues and characteristics of this holy month in the Holy Quran, said that God has said, "The holy month of Ramadan is that month. In which the Holy Qur'an was revealed, which is a guidance for the people. It is said that 'Ramazan is called Ramazan because it turns away sins.' (Details on Page 2)

Oath taking ceremony

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering oath of office to members of Federal Cabinet at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is also present on the occasion.



Photo: PID

Many old faces set to return to cabinet

PM Shehbaz's 19-member cabinet takes oath

Naveed Ahmad Khan
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's cabinet took oath on Monday, with many old faces returning to his team. The oath was administered by President Asif Ali Zardari in a ceremony at the President House.
The prime minister had moved a summary containing 19 names who will be appointed as federal ministers to the president of Pakistan. Under the constitution president is the appointing authority for federal minister but functions on the advise of the prime minister.
The summary seen by Aaj News indicates that the cabinet will have a total of 19 members and will include both ministers and advisors. The final portfolios will be announced in a notification.
There is a strong likelihood that multiple ministries will be held by a combination of advisors and ministers.
Muhammad Aurangzeb will be the advisor on finance, while Azam Nazeer Tarar will be the law minister.
After falling out of the race of finance minister, Ishaq Dar is likely to head the foreign affairs ministry.
Atta Tarar will be minister for information, Khawaja Asif will be minister for defence and Ahsan Iqbal will be minister for planning. Musadik Malik is expected to be made minister of petroleum.
Mohsin Naqvi is likely to be made advisor for interior while Ahad Cheema will also join the cabinet despite serving in the caretaker cabinet.
Here is the full list of cabinet members moved by the PM:
MNs as federal ministers
Khawaja Asif
Ahsan Iqbal
Tanveer Hussain
Azam Nazeer Tarar
Chaudhry Salik Hussain
Jam Kamal
Amir Muqam
Awais Leghari
Attallah Tarar
Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui
Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh
Riaz Pirzada
Senators as federal ministers
Ishaq Dar
Musadik Malik
Non-parliamentarian ministers
Muhammad Aurangzeb
Ahad Cheema
Mohsin Raza Naqvi
State ministers
Shaza Fatima Khawaja

Govt. given public mandate, is answerable to masses: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday while highlighting the huge economic challenges said that the masses had given them the responsibility to address these serious issues and they were equally answerable to the people who had given them a mandate to form the government.
Addressing the first meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister said that Allah Almighty had bestowed upon them the responsibility to serve the nation and reiterated to meet their expectations by striving day and night.
He urged the members of the cabinet to serve the nation and country with new fervor and commitment so that in the history, they could be remembered for delivering on their promises.
After February 8 general elections, the political parties received a split mandate, the PML-N, PPP and the allied parties were given the mandate to form the government.
Now, this mandate should be respected which also required



that they should concentrate their energies and move on the path of progress rapidly, he added.
The prime minister said that during their previous 16-month government, the people had witnessed their performance, adding that they saved the country from running into default.
The prime minister said when they assumed the reigns of the previous government, they had two choices; either to sit as silent spectators or be counted, at that time they had decided to take responsibility of the country.
Then the interim government followed them but the economic situation in the country was stable and did not worsen, he opined.
The prime minister said that once more, they took the responsibility of steering the country out of the huge challenges and without wasting time, they should tread upon that path leading to destination.
Felicitating the nation on the arrival of Ramadan, he said that about Rs12 billion Ramadan Package was being initiated under which the edible items at the Utility Stores and mobile utility stores would be provided to the poor and deserving.
Besides, under Benazir Income

Support Programme (BISP) millions of rupees were being distributed among the poor as additional cash amount.
He underlined the need of strict monitoring of the distribution of different items under Ramadan package so that the food stuff should be readily available to the deserving.
The prime minister said that government functionaries performing well would be appreciated and encouraged but the black sheep would be exposed.
He further said that the youth bulge of the country was a huge asset which required to be converted into great opportunity, adding that they would formulate an complete economic plan in this regard.
The prime minister also termed the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), as an effective mechanism in improving the investment environment in the country, and cutting the red tape and serious delays.
The prime minister said that Pakistan would seek foreign investment instead loans and highlighted various steps in this regard.

Major break through in search operation of missing fishermen

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy (PN) in coordination with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) recovered 10 dead bodies out of 14 missing fisherman of boat Al-Assad in a joint search and rescue operation.
Search and Rescue operation was started on 05 March 24 in open sea. Despite dense marine traffic in vicinity of accident, time lapse and choppy sea conditions the dead bodies of 10 missing fishermen were successfully recovered today.
The fishing boat Al-Assad with an onboard crew of 45 capsized in open sea off Hajmro creek on 5 March due inclement weather. Search operation involved multiple assets of PN and PMSA includ-



ing aircraft, helicopters, ships and speed boats.
Major break through of search efforts materialised today when PMSA REHMAT upon receipt of information from deployed units recovered 10 dead bodies of missing fishermen.
The recovered bodies have been handed over to concerned civil authorities for further formalities.
Conduct of continuous Search and rescue operation by PN & PMSA is a manifestation of PN's resolve to assist in every civil calamity at Sea.

Former HBL CEO Aurangzeb takes over as finance minister

City desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Habib Bank Limited CEO Muhammad Aurangzeb has taken over as the finance czar of Pakistan, the finance ministry said on Monday.
Aurangzeb was sworn in as a federal minister earlier in the day in a ceremony at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad. He is part of the 19-member federal cabinet.
Aurangzeb resigned from his position as leader of the country's largest bank, HBL, said in a letter to the stock exchange. "Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, has tendered his resignation to the Board of Directors of Habib Bank Limited ("HBL") and shall step down as President and Chief Executive Officer of HBL.

Independent judiciary, media integral to vibrant democracy: PBC

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) on Monday reiterated its unwavering commitment to upholding the independence of the judiciary and ensuring the freedom of expression in Pakistan.
"These foundational principles are integral to a vibrant democracy and are essential for the protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law," the PBC said in a statement issued today.
According to the statement, PBC Chairman Farooq Hamid Naek and Vice Chairman Riazat Ali Sahar have expressed their concerns that professional journalists who are discharging their duties within the parameters of judiciary are facing threats and impediments against their fundamental rights.



"The council condemns the move to suppress the free and independent journalism voice, through ulterior motives, which is violation of constitutional rights as enshrined in the Constitution i.e. rights to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 within their professional obligations," read the statement.
However, the PBC said, it is imperative to clarify that while media independence is paramount, there exists a delicate balance that must be maintained to prevent the

dissemination of malicious and slanderous campaigns.
"No individual, including those within the media, should be permitted to engage in unethical practices or levy baseless allegations, particularly against esteemed Judges of the Superior Judiciary," it said.
The council further stated that it is crucial that judges were able to fulfill their duties impartially, devoid of any influence or bias, and in strict adherence to the law and principles of justice.
"The Pakistan Bar Council remains vigilant in its efforts to defend the independence of the judiciary and the freedom of expression, and it will continue to monitor developments closely and take all necessary steps to uphold these fundamental principles," the statement concluded.

Justice Naem Akhtar takes oath as SC judge

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, Chief Justice of Pakistan on Monday administered the oath of office to Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, as Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. An oath taking simple and dignified ceremony was held here in this regard, said a press release. The judges of SC, Attorney General for Pakistan, senior lawyers, Law Officers and officers of Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan attended the ceremony.
Registrar Supreme Court of Pakistan conducted the proceedings of oath taking ceremony. Officers and staff of the Supreme Court of Pakistan were also present on the occasion.

China firmly opposes Narendra Modi Arunachal Pradesh visit

Spokesman Report

BELJING: China firmly opposes a visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a disputed area on the China-India border and views the relevant moves by India only complicates the boundary question, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday.
"Zangnan area is Chinese territory. China never recognized the so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally set up by India and firmly opposes it," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to question about Indian PM visit to Arunachal Pradesh to inaugurate a tunnel and other projects on March 9.
He said, "The China India boundary question has yet to be solved. India has no right to arbitrarily develop the area of Zangnan in China and added,

"relevant moves by India only complicates the boundary question."
Wang Wenbin said, China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to the leader's visit to the eastern section of the China-India boundary, adding, "We have made solemn representations to India."
As per Chinese media reports, Arunachal Pradesh was established largely on three areas of Monyul, Loyul and Lower Tsayul which are currently under India's illegal occupation.
These three areas, located between 'McMahon Line' and the traditional customary boundary between China and India, have always been Chinese territory.
None of the successive Chinese governments have ever recognized the McMahon Line.

Muslim Ummah is facing a serious social, economic and political situation: Allama Sajid Naqvi

Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: Quaid Millat Jafariya Pakistan Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi in his message on the beginning of the holy month of Ramazan 1445 AH, describing the virtues and characteristics of this holy month in the Holy Quran, said that God has said, "The holy month of Ramazan is that month. In which the Holy Qur'an was revealed, which is a guidance for the people. It is said that "Ramazan is called Ramazan because it burns away sins. Similarly, Hazrat Fatima Zahra, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, said, "Allah Almighty has made fasting obligatory in order to strengthen the sincerity



of people." He said that the social, economic

and political serious situation facing the Muslim Ummah in the present time The present is facing the best means of reforming this holy month of Ramazan.

Allama Sajid Naqvi said that on the arrival of Ramazan, on the one hand, the responsibility of the government is to ensure the immediate and affordable supply of basic necessities to the people. "To control terrorism and provide peace and security to the people' respect for the month of fasting while on the other hand, it is necessary for the Muslim Ummah to make every possible effort to reap the blessings of the holy month and perform the stages of worship and austerity for the sake of self-purifica-

tion with full sincerity and diligence, because the Muslim Ummah Distraction, unrest and social injustice can be eradicated only through self-purification. It is possible.

Quaid Millat Jafariya Pakistan emphasized that it is important for the Muslim Ummah to make it a habit to study the Holy Quran during the holy month and to pay special attention to its meanings and meanings. Examine the mysteries and mysteries in me closely and understand them in your own individual way. It should be implemented on the collective life so that humanity can face the worldly and hereafter success by walking on the path of welfare and guidance.

Preparation holy month

ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranges his stall outside a mosque selling prayer skull caps, miswak, teeth cleaning twig and other items in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Women's struggle no less than that of men: Gulzar Fatima

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Member of Assembly and Secretary of Red Crescent Gulzar Fatima has said that the struggle of women for great causes is no less than that of men. She was speaking as the chief guest at the function organized by the Central Bar Association on the occasion of International Women's Day. Abbasi Advocate, Senior Advocate Shahnaz Gilani Advocate Supreme Court, Rahat Farooq Raja Advocate Supreme Court also addressed the event. Gulzar Fatima said that women are an integral part of the society and no society can develop without recognizing this fact. After increasing awareness, there is a change in the discriminatory laws and social attitudes and customs against women, but there is still a lot to be done in this regard.



It is inevitable to recognize women with a separate existence and a separate identity. He said that the world 'The role of women in the history and revolutions is no less than that of men. The example of occupied Kashmir is in front of us, where women fought every oppression of India

during four decades. Even today, many women are imprisoned because of their political ideas and thoughts. Addressing the event, Shazia Kayani Advocate said that working women are still suffering from many problems. They have to work hard to make their place. The govern-

ment should give priority to women lawyers. But assign responsibilities in various institutions and women lawyers should be appointed as legal advisors in banks and other institutions in Azad Kashmir like Pakistan. Speaking on this occasion, Shahnaz Gilani, Advocate, said that women play an important role in creating an ideal society, but as working women, they face many problems. The role of governments in solving these problems is very important. Rahat Farooq Raja Advocate said that the purpose of Women's Day is not to celebrate a day, but the purpose of this day is to recognize the rights of women and to create a sense of giving them opportunities for development. Understand and implement these goals. Without this day the real objectives cannot be fulfilled she added.

Mobilink Bank and BizB partner to drive financial inclusion, empowering women micro-entrepreneurs

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank partnered with BizB, a leading marketplace in Pakistan, welcoming the company as a 'Brand Ambassador Organization,' to drive financial inclusion and bolster women micro-entrepreneurs nationwide. This symbiotic partnership strives to offer easily accessible financial services and support the endeavours of female entrepreneurs in the growing e-commerce landscape. Through this partnership, women micro-entrepreneurs under BizB's W-Empower will not only have access to a platform for buying and



selling preloved apparel but will also enjoy the full range of features provided by the

Dost App, ensuring smooth and convenient transactions. Mobilink Bank is part of the

VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population.

BizB revolutionizes Pakistan's fashion industry with sustainable practices, offering preloved clothing to empower urban women economically and environmentally, fostering community and reshaping fashion consumption for a conscious, inclusive future.

Sharing his thoughts, Atta-ur-Rehman, Chief Branch Business Officer Mobilink Bank said, "We at Mobilink Bank are proud to

support BizB's W-Empower and enable women to become micro-entrepreneurs.

Sehrish Raza, CEO and Founder BizB said, "I am thrilled to announce our strategic collaboration with Mobilink Bank. Together, we are not only revolutionizing Pakistan's fashion industry but also empowering women through financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.

Mobilink Bank is resolute in its pursuit of gender equality, extending inclusive support to women. Beyond the provision of formal financial services, the Bank places a paramount focus on fostering skills and imparting financial literacy.

Pakistani IT Wizard Becomes Advisor at Arab ICT Organization

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-born Dr. Noman Ahmed Said, an emerging IT expert, has been appointed as an honorary advisor by the Arab Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Organization, a regional think tank for Arab ICT ministers and senior decision-makers from the public and private sectors.

The ICT think tanks acknowledged his services and contributions for the promotion of IT trade ties with Pakistan and Arab countries, mainly on the occasion of the recent mega IT event, GITEX Global, held in Marrakech, Morocco.

The Secretary of the Arab ICT Organization, Eng. Muhamed Ben Amor, expressed his profound gratitude for the invaluable support of Noman

Said in a letter written on behalf of the ICT think tank based in the Arab region.

Your expertise and insights were instrumental in showcasing technological advancements and innovations to our members. Your participation significantly enhanced the event's success and fostered a spirit of collaboration and knowledge sharing among all attendees, the letter reads.

Your expertise and guidance will be invaluable as we continue to strive for excellence in our endeavors, as the letter further mentioned.

Dr. Noman Ahmed Said is the founder and CEO of SI Global Solutions.

His expertise included artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, and digital marketing. Dr Noman Said is the only

Pakistani consultant with local and international experience for safety city projects. He wrote various research journals on various topics, including human talent management and digital marketing. He is an advocate for promoting tech education and women's empowerment across Pakistan.



15 March International Consumer Day



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: With reference to March 15 International Consumer Day and the month of Ramazan, Helpers Business Forum and Azan Human Rights Commission of Pakistan officials Provincial President Punjab Mulazam Hussain Khan Khara, General Secretary Malik Ashfaq Ahmad Gara Sandila, President Multan Ghazanfar Malik, Legal Advisors Malik Qaswar Abbas Sandila Advocate, Chaudhry Imran Advocate, Malik Owais Sandila Advocate, Senior Vice President Sajjad Ahmad Bhatti, Culbe Abid Khan and Khawaja Dilshad Ahmed while holding a press conference on March 15 International Consumer Day and the month of Ramazan have said that proper monitoring and check-end of food items from hoarding and illegal profiteering grain market and vegetable market should be done. Due to lack of balance Inflation has reached the sky in the markets of the city and cantt. Due to the lack of affordable delivery of food items, it is impossible to control inflation at the retail level, despite the consumer law and the authorized forum, the worst economic exploitation of the consumer citizens continues. Vegetable demands from the district administration And practical steps should be taken to provide practical relief to the consumer citizens in the month of Ramazan by ensuring cheap delivery of food items and fruits from the grain markets.

Bank of Khyber to provide Peshawar city employees with Shariah-compliant consumer financing

PPA

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) has signed an MoU with Capital Metropolitan Government, Peshawar (CMGP) to provide their employees with Shariah-Compliant Consumer Financing. The agreement was signed by Waheed Ur Rehman, Director General Capital Metropolitan Government Peshawar and Irfan Nisar, Divisional Head Consumer Finance Islamic Banking Group, in the presence of senior executives from both organizations, including Ali Khan Arbab Group Head (Acting), Islamic Banking, Ijaz Sarwar Director Finance, Muhammad Rehman Khattak Director East, amongst others.

Through this collaboration, BoK will offer CMGP employees a wide range of Shariah-compliant consumer financing options on convenient and easy monthly instalments. This will empower them to purchase desired goods without any financial burden.

First Edition of Design SUMMIT Unveils intricacies of design Discourse

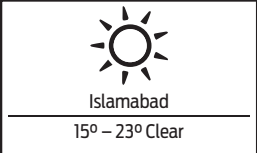
PPA



ISLAMABAD: Design Summit Lahore 2024, a pioneering event poised to unravel the intricacies of design discourse in Pakistan and the Global South, has officially kicked off. Hosted by the Mariam Dawood School of Visual Arts and Design (MDSVAD) at Beaconhouse National University (BNU), this groundbreaking summit promises to showcase diverse facets of design through exhibitions, conversations, projects, and pavilions.

Under the theme "Everything that has been designed or will be designed is being designed right now," coined by Prof. Ijal Muzaffar of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), the Design Summit aims to foster a rich and expansive dialogue on design.

Conceived by Rashid Rana and his colleagues at MDSVAD, BNU, the Design Summit is a collaborative effort with the Punjab Walled Cities Authority, Rhode Island School of Design, and IAP, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's design landscape. As part of BNU's 20th-anniversary celebrations, the event will be held at the historic Walled City of Lahore and BNU Campus from March 7 to 13, 2024, with pavilions remaining on display at Lahore Fort until April 15, 2024.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:01 am
Zohr 12:18 pm
Asr 4:31 pm
Maghrib 6:13 pm
Isha 7:35 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& 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

Competition Appellate Tribunal upholds CCP's order against P&G Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal has upheld an order passed by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) against Procter and Gamble Pakistan (P&G) for engaging in deceptive marketing practices. The Tribunal dismissed P&G appeal to set aside CCP's ruling.

In its ruling, the Tribunal also stated that the CCP has the authority to determine the legitimacy of a complaint and to decide whether to accept or dismiss it based on the complaint's merits.

The CCP had imposed a penalty of 10 million rupees on P&G for falsely advertising its product Safeguard as Pakistan's No. 1 anti-bacterial soap. However, the Tribunal reduced the penalty to five million rupees, considering P&G's compliance-oriented approach and the fact that P&G had dropped the No-1 claim shortly after the initiation of enquiry by the CCP in 2014.

The enquiry was initiated based on a complaint filed by Reckitt Benckiser Pakistan Limited, alleging that P&G's advertisement campaign for Safeguard was misleading. The CCP concluded that P&G's advertisement campaign violated Section 10 of the Competition Act by creating the overall impression that Safeguard was Pakistan's top-rated anti-bacterial soap. It lacked reasonable basis to substantiate the claim.

During the appeal, the Tribunal noted that the studies cited by P&G to support its claim were based on public opinions and lacked scientific research. While the exact monetary loss due to such claims could not be assessed, the Tribunal acknowledged the potential harm such claims could have on competitors' business.

Hashoo Group and Government of AJK forge strategic partnership to boost regional development

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to catalyze the socio-economic growth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Hashoo Group, in collaboration with the AJK Government, has announced a new partnership aimed at advancing the region's educational, hospitality, tourism, and community development sectors. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), symbolizing a shared commitment towards the prosperity of AJK, was formalized in a ceremony at the Kashmir House, Islamabad, earlier this week with dignitaries from the AJK government and Hashoo Group's senior leadership in attendance.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Mr. Haseeb A. Gardezi, Chief Operating Officer of the Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group, and Mr. Dawood Muham-

mad, Chief Secretary, AJK.

The collaboration aims to enhance AJK's tourism and hospitality sectors through the educational and economic empowerment initiatives of Hashoo School of Hospitality Management and Hashoo Foundation, which offer specialized training to empower the local workforce and stimulate economic development. The multi-faceted partnership encompasses several key aspects to boost AJK's development across various sectors and promote sustainable growth. There will be a focus on areas like education and the economic upliftment of marginalized communities and women, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to improve residents' overall well-being.

To boost AJK's tourism appeal, the partnership will also focus on upgrading infrastructure and services, emphasizing the integration of Hashoo Group's pres-

tigious Pearl-Continental Hotels and Resorts, PC Legacy, and Hotel One brands.

Deputy Chairman & CEO of Hashoo Group, Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, highlighted the partnership's significance. "This partnership embodies our dedication to strengthening AJK's potential and enriching the lives of its people through sustainable development initiatives. We aim to make significant strides in education, tourism, and community empowerment projects, especially for women. We are thrilled to collaborate with the AJK Government and look forward to a prosperous journey."

Prime Minister AJK, Mr. Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, shared his enthusiasm: "We are grateful for Hashoo Group's expertise and enthusiasm in uplifting our communities through education, development initiatives, and employment avenues. There is massive potential within



our diverse communities, and we hope to work closely with various stakeholders to realize this potential very soon."

AJK, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes, offers unique potential for growth and development. This self-governing territory, known for its mountain ranges, rivers, and plains, attracts tourists seeking its

natural beauty and warm hospitality.

Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premium conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning both national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts, PC Legacy, Hotel One & Pearl Residences brands in Pakistan and has business inter-

ests encompassing the information technology, education, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors. Complementing its corporate initiatives, Hashoo Group also gives back to the communities through the Hashoo Foundation, its sustainability arm, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development.

Awards winners

ISLAMABAD: A group photo of the awards winners and penalists of the CSR for Women Development Conference here at the Islamabad Serena Hotel.



Photo: Raja Farid

Al-Shifa Trust treated 30 million people in three decades

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Al-Shifa Trust (AST) Eye Hospital Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan on Monday said that diabetes is becoming more and more common in Pakistan, which is one of the primary reasons for vision problems.

Recent reports suggest that every fourth person in the country has diabetes, and 25 percent of them do not know they have the problem, which results in severe eye problems, he said.

Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan said that diabetic retinopathy, a condition where the blood vessels in the eye's retina are harmed, is on the rise.

Talking to the media, he said that diabetic retinopathy is the most typical reason for vision problems. Finally, losing one's sight.

Every day, hundreds of people in Pakistan lose their vision also due to avoidable conditions like cataracts, he added.



He said that over 2.6 million individuals suffer from preventable visual impairments, and cataracts are a significant contributor to preventable blindness in those aged 50 and above. About 42 percent of school-age children suffer from refractive error-related disorders.

Since the founding of Al-Shifa Trust, 30 million people have received treatment, and

90,000 surgeries have been completed.

Almost one million OPD patients are received in a month, and ten thousand surgeries are performed monthly at the trust's hospitals in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Kohat, Muzaffarabad, and Sukkar.

He said that the scope of services would increase with the completion of the under-construction hospital at Gilgit-Baltistan and the new block at Chakwal Hospital.

Together with the Eye Bank, Light House, Research Center, Eye Cancer Center, Glaucoma, Retina, and Paediatric Referral Services departments, AST runs the most cutting-edge children's eye hospital in Asia.

At its six facilities, AST offers all services to 80 percent of patients free of charge. It also manages the most extensive outreach program, setting up free eye camps nationwide, particularly in remote places.

According to him, 70 percent of the Rs 4 billion in annual costs are funded by donations.

COMSTECH and LRBT Successfully Complete Cataract Eye Camp in Muzaffar Garh

PPA

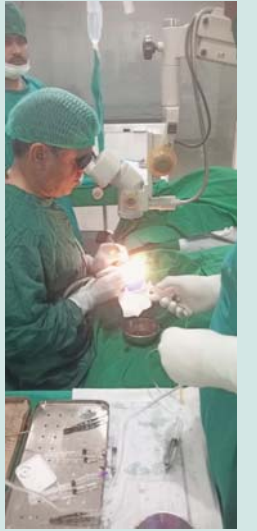
ISLAMABAD: The Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in partnership with the Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust (LRBT) and the local community, has successfully completed a 12-day free Eye Camp in the remote area of District Muzaffar Garh at Basti Merani, Mori Sahara, Tehsil Ali Pur.

The objective was to provide essential eye care services to the marginalized segments of society, raise awareness about eye health and restore vision by conducting cataract surgeries enabling individuals to regain their sight.

The committed medical team from LRBT attended to over 1,000 patients, providing them with free medicines and eyeglasses. Additionally, 188 individuals were identified for further investigation and cataract surgery.

Selected patients were transported from the remote locations to the LRBT Secondary Hospital in Larr, Multan. Where, they received high-quality cataract surgeries, resulting in improved vision and enhanced quality of life. A total of 169 persons benefited from these surgical interventions.

"We are proud to have played a role in restoring sight and improving the lives of those who need it the most," said Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH. He further mentioned that this collaborative effort exemplifies the positive impact that can be achieved through partnerships and extended his gratitude to the leadership of LRBT and its team of experts.



Open day ceremony held at City School campus Islamabad.

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The City School G-15 Campus hosted an Open Day under the theme "Be Hold The Bold and The Brave." The event featured diverse learning stations spanning English, Urdu, Maths, Science, and Robotics. Each class delivered exceptional performances, demonstrating their talents and knowledge.



Adding star power to the occasion, renowned actress Mashal Khan graced the event as the chief guest. The atmosphere buzzed with enthusiasm as students and parents explored the various educational offerings and engaged with the interactive displays.

The festivities extended beyond academics, with delectable food stalls enhancing the overall experience. The event received resounding approval from parents, who expressed their delight and positive feedback. City School G-15's Open Day proved to be a vibrant celebration of learning, creativity, and community engagement.

Huawei & Ufone 4G win prestigious GSMA Global Mobile (GLOMO) Award

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ufone 4G & Huawei won the GSMA GLOMO award for the category 'Best Mobile Innovation for Emerging Markets' at the Mobile World Congress for groundbreaking solution of Microwave SuperHub. The global first-ever trial and commercial deployment of the SuperHub feature was done in Ufone network during Q4 2023 enhancing the spectral efficiency of the microwave spectrum.

Microwave spectrum, a critical asset in today's digital landscape, demands efficient utilization to meet the ever-growing demands of wireless technologies, as the challenges facing microwave backhaul networks have intensified, particularly in emerging

markets such as developing countries with lesser optical fiber footprints.

In response to these challenges, Huawei and Ufone 4G joined forces & unveiled the groundbreaking SuperHub solution. Designed to overcome the hurdles posed by limited spectrum resources, spatial constraints and frequency acquisition difficulties, SuperHub has enabled Ufone to maximize microwave spectrum reuse with unprecedented efficiency. This was made possible by reuse of same microwave frequency channel across multiple links at aggregation site with a spatial separation as low as 20 degrees. Ufone recorded a remarkable 50% spectrum saving without any compromise on quality. Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technol-

ogy and Information Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G commented, "We are absolutely delighted that Global Mobile (GLOMO) Awards, which are the industry's most prestigious accolade with over 200 independent judges and 30 awards across 6 categories, have recognized the joint contributions of Ufone and Huawei in finding an innovative solution to optimizing microwave spectral efficiency, enhancing capacity and reducing interference. This advancement in global backhaul connectivity represents a paradigm shift in how terrestrial microwave networks will be built in future, and we are proud to be the front-runner in this journey."

James Zeng, Global President of Huawei Microwave Product Line,



explained, "With increasing demands on existing network infrastructure,

systemic optimizations are critical to improve performance and experience. Our SuperHub solution innovation uses existing frequencies to greatly boost bandwidth, enhance user experience, and optimize the TCO for operators. We are confident that this technology breakthrough will help Ufone release more capacity from their existing spectrum resources and also pave the way for future dense network deployments and evolution."

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, Huawei and Ufone 4G remain committed to driving innovation and empowering networks with cutting-edge solutions that address the most pressing challenges in the telecommunications industry.

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BRICS Influencing Blue Economy

Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik

In 2006, Brazil, Russia, India and China created the "BRIC" group, which was joined by South Africa in 2010 by making it "BRICS". BRICS was designed to unite the most significantly developing nations to challenge the political and economic power of the wealthier nations of North America and Western Europe. BRICS includes 42 per cent of global population, 30 per cent of global land, 26 per cent of global GDP and 20 per cent of global Exports and imports. During August 22 to 24, 2023; The BRICS countries met during summit in Johannesburg during the fifteenth summit six new member countries Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, were admitted, who will officially join the group in January 2024. Ten Council of Councils experts from BRICS members and beyond reflect on the future of the grouping and what expansion means for global governance. It has sent a strong signal that the post-World War II order should accept the multipolar reality and change with the times.

The addition of six new members underlined the BRICS' determination to create a bloc of major emerging economies to represent the interests of the developing world. With expansion of the BRICS to a BRICS+ hype about a common BRICS currency might be impractical and premature, but trading in national currencies is becoming a reality. An expanded BRICS would have 72 per cent of rare earths. The expanded bloc would also hold 75 per cent of world's manganese, 50 per cent of the world's graphite, 28 per cent of the world's nickel, and 10 per cent of the world's copper.

With the addition of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran, this expanded group would include three of the world's largest oil exporters and would constitute 42 per cent of global oil supply. BRICS, will also seek to increase public and private investments in critical minerals supply chains among allies. Saudi Arabia has already made a significant investments worth \$ U. S. 2.6 billion in lithium and other critical minerals in Brazil. Saudi

Africa. Through this expansion China can enhance its influence in Indo-Pacific Region against U. S. as it will have more economic and diplomatic leverage in oil and gas producing Persian Gulf, hydrocarbon transporting Strait of Hormuz, Djibouti where five countries, including United States, France, Japan and China have military bases and Suez Canal through which 30 per cent of global commercial trade passes through. The BRICS expansion apart

kered deal has eased tensions, Saudi Arabia and Iran remain historical rivals for regional dominance in the Middle East. The challenges and opportunities presented by expansion will test the BRICS' cohesion and effectiveness. Its ability to remain a credible force for reshaping global governance will depend on its capacity to forge consensus among its diverse members.

The expansion in combination with the countries which have applied for BRICS membership can make it easier for China will be in position to establish the sixth Island Chain in the Atlantic from the Azores archipelago to the Trinidad islands, stretching over 4500 km to strategically block an already ocean-trapped U. S. Moreover the inclusion of oil producing countries including, Saudi Arabia, Iran and United Arab Emirates in BRICS can help Indian Ocean 23 Indian Ocean littoral Muslims to resolve Muslim territorial conflicts in Indo-Pacific Region. Hence now it is incumbent upon the Muslim Indian Ocean littoral states to adopt a common strategy to work in unison with a view to address their concerns of peace and stability and also to be able to monitor more than 70 per cent of global trade and passage warships including submarines through the choke points.

Writer is Ph. D; International Relations, Fellow Research Member with Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation (UK), Member Board of Advisor "The Beacon" Research Journal of Pakistan Navy War College, Fellow Research Member with Environ Monitor, Fellow Research Member with National Foundation for Environment Education & Research and Research Member with Research Gate.



Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two of the world's largest oil and gas exporters, supply most of China's energy imports. Brazil, the last BRICS member to approve the expansion, specifically requested Argentina's inclusion, which was reportedly a precondition for Brazil agreeing to the expansion as a whole.

The expansion includes major global oil producers near crucial trade choke-points, such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-al Mandab Strait in Indian Ocean. The expansion of BRICS is likely to improve the economy, social development and oil supplies to China, India, Russian and South

from International North-South Transport Corridor will also have implications on the recently announced India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor which has been planned to bolster economic development by fostering connectivity and economic integration between Asia, Persian Gulf and Europe. Russia's 2024 BRICS presidency will focus primarily on using local currencies and payment systems, steered by discussions among finance ministries and central bank governors. However, a larger membership also means greater challenges to reaching consensus and adds new layers of complexity. Although a Chinese-bro-

China, Pakistan enjoy great potential in marine energy exploration

China and Pakistan can engage in more comprehensive cooperation on joint marine energy exploration and development, and strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, said Yan Hongtao, a deputy to the National People's Congress and the general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Tianjin. As the pioneer of offshore oil and gas resource exploration in China, CNOOC has actively participated in the construction of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". In a bid to enhance bilateral friendly cooperation in science, it also took part in the 91-day China-Pakistan joint marine geological survey in the Indian Ocean starting from December 2019.

During the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, the two heads of state hope that both sides will seize the 10th anniversary of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as an opportunity to develop an "upgraded version" of the corridor focusing on growth, livelihood, innovation, greenness and openness. They aim to enhance cooperation in areas such as industrial parks, agriculture, mining, and new energy, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework, if we continue to conduct geological surveys and research in Pakistani waters, we will undoubtedly establish a robust data foundation for delineating potential oil and gas areas, selecting favorable zones, evaluating resources, and analyzing the oil and gas potential in this region. It will promote our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to a new level," said Yan. Firstly, Yan suggested to promote China-Pakistan joint energy exploration and development cooperation along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in Pakistan's exclusive economic zone in the Indian Ocean. "Secondly, we can help Pakistan explore its marine energy in the marine exclusive economic zone along the Indus Fan Basin, including collecting gravity, magnetic, and seismic data, ocean drilling, and sampling," he added. In addition, Yan suggested conducting joint energy surveys with countries along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, including Vietnam and East African coastal countries, to achieve more energy breakthroughs.



Cartoon by Anjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Azcat)

Clear Message from Army Chief and Corps Commanders Conference - II

The forum observed that the Armed Forces of Pakistan, despite their primary responsibility, diligently ensured a secure environment for the conduct of GE-24 as mandated, refraining from involvement in the electoral process. However, it expressed disappointment at certain small segments of the political arena and media, particularly social media, for unjustly maligning the Armed Forces of Pakistan with unfounded allegations of interference, which is highly condemnable. It is regrettable that instead of addressing real issues such as governance, economic revival, political stability, and public welfare, these vested elements focus solely on creating political instability and uncertainty by attempting to scapegoat others for their own shortcomings. The forum stressed the importance of adhering to legal procedures with evidence and proof rather than resorting to unconstitutional and unwarranted baseless political rhetoric and emotional outbursts.

In essence, anti-army propaganda undermines the nation's security framework, leaving it susceptible to external aggression and internal turmoil. Propaganda, by its very nature, breeds division and discord. Anti-army propaganda exacerbates existing societal divisions, intensifying polarization along political, ethnic, or sectarian lines. It nurtures an "us versus them" mindset, fostering a rift between civilians and the military and aggravating social tensions. In a country as diverse as Pakistan, where ethnic and sectarian divisions already present significant challenges, such polarization jeopardizes social cohesion and stability, hindering the nation's advancement and progress.

A thriving democracy relies on vigorous debate and dissent. However, when dissent descends

into propaganda, it stifles authentic discourse and impedes the democratic process. Anti-army propaganda frequently aims to discredit the military's governance role, casting doubt on its commitment to democracy and constitutional order. This not only undermines the military's institutional integrity but also undermines public trust in the democratic system overall, perpetuating a cycle of distrust and instability.

For Pakistanis, the armed forces embody national pride, bravery, and sacrifice. Anti-army propaganda diminishes this sense of pride, tarnishing the military's reputation and, by extension, the nation's image. It erodes the collective identity of Pakistanis, diluting the sense of unity and patriotism that binds them together. In doing so, it diminishes the nation's resilience and determination, depriving it of the fortitude necessary to overcome challenges and forge a path toward progress and prosperity.

The forum also voiced concerns over the ongoing repression of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and condemned India's continued human rights violations. It reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, and moral support for Kashmiris at all levels. Additionally, the forum expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned the severe human rights abuses and war crimes occurring in Gaza. The Chief of Army Staff stated, "The Palestinian people have the diplomatic, moral, and political support of the Pakistani nation, and we will continue to uphold our brethren's principled stance for a lasting resolution of the Palestinian issue."

The forum expressed satisfaction with the smooth democratic transfer of power at the national and provincial levels. It expressed hope

that the post-election environment would usher in the desired political and economic stability, resulting in peace and prosperity for the people of Pakistan. Furthermore, the forum strongly believed that democratic consolidation is the way forward for the country. The forum affirmed the military leadership's awareness of the wide spectrum of challenges and threats and reiterated its commitment to fulfilling its constitutionally mandated responsibilities, with the support of the resilient people of Pakistan. It also reiterated its commitment to providing full support to the government in combating security threats and promoting socio-economic growth in the country, including offering wholehearted assistance in curbing illegal activities such as smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementing the One Document Regime, and ensuring the respectful and safe repatriation of all illegal foreigners. The COAS emphasized to field commanders the importance of maintaining high standards of professionalism, operational readiness, and motivation during operations, as well as achieving excellence in training formations.

It is heartening to see the Army Chief and the Pakistan Army fully committed to supporting the civilian government in addressing all issues. In any nation, the relationship between the civilian government and the military is pivotal for ensuring effective governance, national security, and the preservation of democratic values. Civil-military cooperation, characterized by mutual respect, coordination, and collaboration between civilian authorities and the armed forces, lies at the heart of a stable and prosperous society.

Readers, the unwavering stance of the Army Chief, Corps Commanders, and the entire Armed Forces of Pakistan is deeply appreciated by the populace. Their steadfast position echoes the sentiments of the nation's people, paving the way for Pakistan to progress further towards prosperity and success under the guidance and cooperation of this dedicated military leadership.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



Analysis

Hafiz Arqum Zain

Wi-Fi over Li-Fi: The Future of Li-Fi in Pakistan

As Pakistan embraces the digital age and seeks to enhance its connectivity infrastructure, the emergence of Li-Fi technology presents a promising avenue for revolutionizing wireless communication in the country. While Wi-Fi has long been the dominant force in providing internet access, the advent of Li-Fi offers a glimpse into a future where data transmission occurs through light waves rather than radio waves. "In the case of Wi-Fi, we use Routers and Radio Frequency (RF) waves to transmit data, whereas in Li-Fi we use LED bulbs and Light signals to transmit and receive data." Pakistan, like many developing nations, faces challenges in providing seamless and reliable internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas and densely populated urban centers. Traditional Wi-Fi networks often struggle to penetrate obstacles and may suffer from interference and congestion, leading to slower speeds and unreliable connections.

Li-Fi technology offers a solution to these challenges by leveraging LED lights to transmit data through modulated light signals. This approach not only promises higher speeds but also reduces interference and provides more secure communication, making it an attractive option for addressing Pakistan's connectivity need.

In Pakistan's urban centers, where the demand for high-speed internet connectivity continues to grow, Li-Fi holds the potential to transform the way people access and interact with digital services. The deployment of Li-Fi networks in public spaces, offices, and smart buildings can provide residents with faster internet speeds, improved reliability, and enhanced security.

In the realm of education and innovation,

Li-Fi presents opportunities for research and development initiatives in Pakistan. Universities and research institutions can collaborate with industry partners to explore the potential applications of Li-Fi in various fields, including telecommunications, healthcare, and transportation.

By fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, Pakistan can position itself as a hub for Li-Fi technology development and deployment, attracting investment and talent to drive

economic growth and technological advancement.

Despite its potential benefits, the widespread adoption of Li-Fi in Pakistan may face certain challenges. Infrastructure investment, regulatory frameworks, and public awareness are critical factors that need to be addressed to ensure the successful integration of Li-Fi technology into the country's communication landscape.

Additionally, the interoperability of Li-Fi with existing Wi-Fi networks and devices will be essential to ensure seamless transition and compatibility for users across Pakistan.

As Pakistan navigates the complexities of the digital age, the emergence of Li-Fi technology offers a promising opportunity to enhance connectivity, spur innovation, and drive economic growth. By embracing Li-Fi alongside traditional Wi-Fi networks, Pakistan can unlock new possibilities for communication, education, and urban development, paving the way for a brighter and more connected future. In short Li-Fi is more secure than Wi-Fi. Li-Fi offers less opportunity for interference than the radio frequency technology that powers Wi-Fi. Li-Fi wireless communications can travel through ocean water. Li-Fi technology functions well in high-density regions.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Canadian High Commissioner discuss economic relations

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon met Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif at the Chief Minister's office. Also present at the meeting were Executive Director Pakistan Region Neil Steward, First Secretary Alicia Sosa, and Trade Commissioner Ali Khan.

High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon congratulated Maryam Nawaz Sharif on becoming the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab. The meeting focused on exploring avenues to enhance economic relations between Canada and Punjab. Discussions included increasing scholarships for Punjab students at Canadian higher education institutions. Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed her commitment to elevating economic ties with Canada.



Messages

UAE Ambassador Wishing Ramadan Mubarak

Salam Alaikum and Ramadan Mubarak. As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, I extend warm greetings and best wishes to you and the people of Pakistan. May this blessed month bring you peace, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment. Wishing you and your loved ones a Ramadan Mubarak filled with blessings, joy and prosperity. Warm regards, Hamad Obaid Ebrahim Alzaabi UAE Ambassador in Islamabad



Iranian Ambassador 'pray for integrity of the Muslim World'

Message of H. E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Honorable Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan on the arrival of the Holy month of Ramadan 2024:

I congratulate my Muslim brothers and sisters, especially the great nation of Pakistan on the arrival of the Holy month of Ramadan. I pray for the honor, unity and integrity of the Muslim World. "A" Unique God, Prophet, Holy Book and Qibla connect us all together like a thread; an unbreakable bond of belief. Ramadan is a manifestations of this common bonds. This Ramadan, unfortunately, the Muslim world deals with the genocide of the innocent women, children and men in Gaza. We pray for the end of this cruelty and genocide.



China to beef up efforts to bolster youth employment

Xinhua

BELJING: China has pledged to stabilize and expand employment and improve people's livelihoods as a priority of its overall socio-economic development efforts.

How to promote employment, particularly for young job-seekers, is a hot topic widely discussed by national lawmakers and political advisors during this year's "two sessions."

The current employment situation has generally improved with the stabilization and improvement of the economy, said Mo Rong, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body.

The number of young job-seekers keeps growing, making competition in the job market steeper. However, there are many positive factors available to boost the job market, such as economic growth and policy support, added Mo, president of the Chinese Academy of Labor and Social Security.

Over 11.7 million students are expected to graduate from college this year. More efforts should be made to promote employment for young people and provide better guidance and services to help them secure jobs or start businesses, according to this year's government work report unveiled last week for deliberation.

Wang Jinsong, a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legislature, said keys



to enlarging the job market include accelerating industrial restructuring and high-quality development, cultivating advanced manufacturing, modern agriculture and service industries, and creating more intellectual and technical posts for college students.

"Many new jobs and occupations will emerge, providing young people with more new career choices and new space for development," said Wang, also dean of the Graduate School of Tianjin University of Technology.

The government work report puts forward a slew of measures, such as making traditional industries higher-end, smarter and more eco-friendly, fostering emerging industries and future-oriented industries, and opening up new fields such as quantum technology and life sciences.

According to Minister of Human Resources and Social Security Wang Xiaoping, there is already strong demand from the job market for talent

in fields such as artificial intelligence and big data. After emerging industries create new job opportunities, reform of education and training can help young people meet such job demand.

The government work report said China will enhance vocational skills training to meet job demand in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, modern services and elderly care.

Wu De, an NPC deputy and president of Sichuan Agricultural University, said that to improve the quality of student education and training, the university has since 2020 been cutting or optimizing majors that are difficult for students to find a job.

The university has also been improving its curriculum based on its own characteristics, and is placing greater emphasis on practical training in cultivating talent, Wu added.

"It is obvious that our graduates now have a wider range of job opportunities, and they are more adaptive," Wu said.

Israel deploys 23 military battalions in the West Bank: Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The occupying state deliberately deploys more than 23 battalions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and turns it into a real military barracks, as if it is reoccupying it by force again. This is in addition to thousands of battalions and police teams that are sweeping the city of Jerusalem under the pretext of the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, as well as deploying more than 750 military checkpoints throughout the length and breadth of the West Bank, cutting off the West Bank, and closing the checkpoints and iron gates erected at the entrances to the Palestinian camps, villages, towns, and streets whenever it wants.

The Ministry confirms that the occupying state, with these provocative and escalatory practices, ignites new, unjustified tensions on the battlefield, especially since its military checkpoints and iron gates do not have any security function. Rather, it uses them to impose more collective punishments on Palestinian citizens, torture them, and humiliate them at the checkpoints, where they often attack Closing many main streets with checkpoints for hours before breakfast during the month of Ramadan, forcing citizens, including families with their children and women, to wait long hours to pass



through the checkpoint and reach their destinations. The Ministry also believes that forcing the weak military forces present in the Gaza Strip into the West Bank falls within the framework of the occupation's attempts to demoralize the people. The Palestinians are stigmatized with violence and terrorism, giving a false impression to the international community that the occupation is targeting the Palestinians, knowing that Palestinian citizens are subjected to the worst forms of oppression, abuse, ethnic cleansing, and collective punishment by the occupation forces, militias, and settler terrorist elements, which continue

their attacks on citizens, their lands, property, homes, and sanctities. The Israeli government also With these large numbers of its army, it is trying to establish military security logic by dealing with the issue of our people, their rights, and their existence as an alternative to negotiated political solutions to the conflict.

The Ministry calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to activate the international protection system for the Palestinian people, and stresses that the military logic based on the brutality of force does not provide security and stability to anyone.

Ramazan in Gaza

'We used to adorn our street, now everything around us is bleak'

Aseel Mousa in Gaza / Jason Burke in Jerusalem

Seventy days after they were forced to leave their house in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, Hanaa al-Masry, her husband and their six children are preparing for Ramadan in their new home: a dilapidated tent. Here, there will be no decorations, no joyous family meals and no reading of the Qur'an under the lemon and orange trees in the garden.

The Muslim holy month – a time for friends and family as well as religious contemplation, prayer and fasting – starts on Monday and will be like none that anyone in Gaza can remember.

The Masry family fled Khan Younis after receiving leaflets from the Israeli military telling them to relocate for their own safety. They made their way to the city of Rafah on the border with Egypt and now live in a crowded makeshift camp, sleeping and eating amid a jumble of salvaged possessions.

"My daughters used to carefully save their money to buy decorations and every year I would choose a new Ramadan lantern," Hanaa al-Masry, 37, said. "It is very depressing, very difficult."

This year, there will be no lanterns. Masry will prepare neither suhoor, the meal taken before the start of the ritual day-long fast, nor iftar at its end.

It saddens her: "I used to love preparing a meal of cheese, jam, beans and eggs to sustain my family throughout the fast and then something tasty for iftar."



Conditions in Rafah are better than in the north of territory, where local health officials say 20 deaths by starvation have been recorded, but basics are still in short supply. Many are surviving on flatbread cooked over wood fires or basic gas hobs, and tinned goods trucked in by humanitarian agencies from Egypt. Half a kilo of sugar now costs \$10 and salt is almost unobtainable. Fresh fruit or vegetables are rare and very expensive.

"I am not the only one yearning to uphold our customs. My neighbours and I used to adorn our street with lights and lanterns, but now everything around us is bleak. The streets bear the scars of Israeli bombings, and the community is in mourning," said al-Masry.

The war was triggered in October when Hamas militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and abducting 250 more, of whom about half were freed in a short-lived truce in November.

More than 31,000 people in Gaza have been killed in the Israeli offensive launched after the Hamas attack, most of them women and children, according to officials in the territory. Much of it has been reduced to rubble.

Hanaa al-Masry's daughter Lamar in their tent as the family prepare for Ramadan

Hanaa al-Masry's daughter Lamar in their tent as the family prepare for Ramadan. Photograph: Aseel Mousa

Israel blames Hamas for the high civilian death toll, saying the militant organisation, which has run Gaza since 2007, uses civilians as human shields. Hamas denies the charge.

Hussein al-Awda, 37, arrived in Rafah more than a month ago after spending much of the war in a UN-run shelter near Khan Younis. A programme officer with an international NGO, he has barely eaten meat since the conflict began, and recently has been surviving on tinned beans.

"There are some nuts and dried fruits in the market, the sort of thing we would have to break our fast in Ramadan, but they are just so expensive. Iftar will just be more beans," Awda said.

Electricity was cut off by Israel at the beginning of the conflict, most of the sanitation and power infrastructure has been destroyed and the minimal amounts of fuel allowed into the territory are insufficient for running pumps or generators. Everywhere, donkey carts have replaced cars as the principal mode of transport.

Children queuing for food in Rafah on Sunday. Photograph: Ahmad Hasaballah/Getty Images

Awda, whose house in Gaza City was destroyed in the first weeks of the war, spent all his savings on getting his wife and three young children to Cairo last month. He stayed to look after his elderly and unwell parents, who are too frail to travel.

"We've always been together for Ramadan. To be split up like this ... I don't know how to explain it to my children. My youngest is

beginning to talk and I can only hear him on my phone if I can find some internet connection but even that is very hard," he said.

Alaa al-Shurafa, a lecturer at the Islamic University, was told by the Israeli military to flee her home in Gaza City five months ago. Since then she has been living with her parents in a small room in an abandoned apartment block in Rafah.

Her family are scattered. One sister is in Gaza City, another is elsewhere in Rafah. "We are now isolated from our loved ones, uncertain of when we can return to our home in Gaza," Shurafa said.

Palestinians transport their belongings on a donkey-pulled cart as they flee Khan Younis

Looming over all those trying to celebrate Ramadan in Rafah is the prospect of an imminent attack. Israeli officials say Hamas leaders are based in the city along with four battalions of militants – the only major remaining fighting force of the Islamist organisation.

Though Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, pledged last week to continue to seek "total victory", he is under intense international pressure to halt Israel's military operations and allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The prospect of a military assault in a city home to more than a million displaced people that is also a major logistics hub for aid operations has raised deep concerns. "We are just sitting here waiting for our fate ... The hardest thing is we have no idea how long it will be like this," said Awda.



in Khan Younis daily after the dawn prayer. "I used to find solace in sitting in my garden, reciting

the Qur'an and offering prayers to God. Now, my garden lies in ruins." Courtesy by The Guardian

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
65,755.30	65,793.75
Day's High	Day's Low
66,119.34	65,698.76
Index Value	Change
9,172,838,502	-38.45
Percentage	Time
-0.06%	11 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,669.23	+9.49
Percentage	Time
+0.12%	11 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,727.81	+5.12
Percentage	Time
+0.013%	1 Mar, 2:34 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,820.49	-868.45
Percentage	Time
-2.19%	11 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	743.38	751.38
Canadian Dollar	207	209.2
China Yuan	38.9	39.3
Danish Krone	41.02	41.42
Euro	304.4	307.4
Hong Kong Dollar	35.74	36.09
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	910.17	919.17
Malaysian Ringgit	59.64	60.24
New Zealand \$	172.68	174.68
Norwegians Krone	26.84	27.14
Omani Riyal	726.01	734.01
Qatari Riyal	76.79	77.49
Saudi Riyal	74.1	74.85
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	27.37	27.67
Swiss Franc	318.8	321.3
Thai Bhat	7.9	8.05
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	76.6
UK Pound Sterling	355	359
US Dollar	279	281.8

Gohar Ejaz, Aurangzeb Khan, and Naqvi are hot favourites: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the new Federal Cabinet would be the best combination of understanding, competence, and experience.

He said Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Aurangzeb Khan, and Mohsin Naqvi's experience and abilities should be fully utilized in the new federal cabinet.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that immediate progress should be made towards a new agreement with the IMF and that fundamental economic reforms should be initiated.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government will resolve

long-delayed matters and will be taken forward rapidly, in which the role of President Asif Ali Zardari and the People's Party will be laudable.

The business leader added that the presence of Asif Ali Zardari in the presidency would be a boon for the system.

Specific terms of the agreement with the IMF need to be fully implemented and the lender's leniency is appreciable because the situation is improving because of it.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that according to the agreement with the IMF, the clause regarding the permission of imports is not being implemented. Imports have not been eased as agreed which has reduced the current account deficit.

He observed that by keeping the current account under control, the speed of the dollar leaving the country has been controlled, which does not deplete the foreign exchange reserves rapidly.



One of the reasons for the IMF's leniency is that foreign investment is negligible. Loans are unavailable; if imports are allowed in this situa-

tion, foreign exchange reserves will be depleted.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the agreement with the IMF included freeing the exchange rate. Still, it is being managed quietly, which has caused the value of the rupee to be stable for several months, even in the current economic situation, which has boosted the business community's confidence.

Suppose the exchange rate is left to the will of the market, the value of the rupee can decrease rapidly, which will further affect the people and the economy, which the lender understands.

This decision by the IMF is helping to stabilize the economy. Despite the violation of the agreement, it is ready for a new deal. The lender is ignoring the childish actions of failed politicians.

Hopefully, despite the new contract, the IMF will not stress the full implementation of import and exchange rate policies, which will significantly relieve Pakistan.

Hardwork

KARACHI: Labourers are working at Kareemabad Flyover Project in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

ICCI launches Asaan Sehat Card Program

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly And PMLN Leader Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has said that Government is a very difficult task in present times, we have come to power with the spirit of service. Differences in politics are based on ideology, it should not be turned into personal enmity, the government has accepted the mission of serving the people. At this time, all the leadership of the country is mature. Everyone is requested to promote understanding for the development and prosperity of the country, we will change the shape of Islamabad in the next 5 years.

Addressing the launch ceremony of Digital Sehat Asaan Card at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday, he said that bringing Sehat Card at private level for all business community is a great achievement of President ICCI. Since last 30 years the population of Islamabad has increased many times but new hospitals have not been built. At least three more hospitals like PIMS should be established in Islamabad. In the next five

Speaking at the event, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Bakhtawari said that asan sehat card was a dream for the business community which they have been able to fulfill. With the digital health card, the business community of Islamabad will get better



health facilities.

Senior Vice President ICCI Fad Waheed said Chairman of CDA should be from Islamabad, only he can better understand the problems of the city. Pims Hospital can be run better if the chamber is included in the board. CEO MEDXOL Health Company Ali Iqbal said that medical camps will be organized in every center and market of Islamabad. More than 120 hospitals from all over Pakistan are on MEDXOL's panel. All set to provide better healthcare facilities to the business community.

Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that the credit for bringing Asaan sehat card goes to President ICCI Ahsan Bakhtawari. Not only the members of the Chamber but all the small and big businessmen of Islamabad will benefit from Asaan Health Card.

Addressing the ceremony, Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that there is a request from the government to include the representatives of Islamabad in the federal Cabinet. The Prime Minister is requested to include Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry in the federal cabinet. If the representatives of Islamabad are not included in the federal cabinet, the problems of city power will not be solved.

Addressing the event, President Anjuman Tajran Pakistan Ajmal Baloch said that the work done by President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Bakhtawari during his tenure for the business community has never been done in history. Ahsan Bakhtawari is working for the business community by investing money from his own pocket. Ahsan Bakhtawari also established a hospital and school for the businessmen of Islamabad.

Novacare Hospitals to open Pakistan's first internationally affiliated hospital in Islamabad in 2026

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Novacare Hospitals (Private) Limited announced today that it will start constructing a state-of-the-art hospital in Islamabad, and has signed an international affiliation agreement with Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, a leading UK teaching hospital group. The total investment in the project will be USD 110 million, and the hospital will be located on a 50-kanal (225,000 square foot) plot in DHA Phase-V, along the main DHA Expressway.

The leadership team at Novacare will include seasoned healthcare professionals with local and international experience. Novacare is led by Mr. Johannes (Hans) Kedzierski who has

previously served as the CEO of leading hospitals in multiple geographies including Medical Center Alkmaar, Netherlands, one of the largest Dutch teaching hospitals, Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, and, King's College Hospital London in Jeddah.

The affiliation was closely supported and facilitated by the U.K.'s Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) in Pakistan, along with the UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) in London. A signing ceremony took place in London on March 6, 2024, at the offices of the UK DBT at Admiralty House, which was attended by representatives from Imperial College Healthcare, Novacare, and the UK government.

Visa and Western Union announce expanded collaboration

PPA

LAHORE: Visa (NYSE: V) announced a 7-year agreement with Western Union (NYSE: WU). Under the new deal, Western Union customers will be able to receive money from their family and friends' eligible Visa cards and bank accounts in 40 countries across five regions.

The agreement encompasses card issuance, Western Union's integration with Visa Direct, and value-added services delivery including risk products. Western Union customers will also be able

to receive Visa prepaid cards in select markets offering an innovative solution that bridges the physical and digital world.

Western Union and Visa are also developing disbursement programs for humanitarian organizations and governments to support the delivery of critical funds during a disaster. The programs are intended to support emergency and humanitarian payouts, cross-border pension payouts, and domestic benefits and disbursement payouts.

Zong 4G introduces emergency pack for prepaid users with low balance

PPA

ISLAMABAD 11TH MARCH 2024: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecom operator ensures that users get unlimited connectivity despite having low balance with its newest value-added service, Zong Emergency Pack.

Acknowledging the daily challenges faced by its users, and the critical role of seamless communication as an indispensable service, Zong 4G strives to offer uninterrupted connectivity capabilities to its prepaid users, especially in times of emergency. This initiative is a reflection of Zong 4G's struggle to maintain top-notch and seamless communication services for its users.

Zong 4G introduced Zong Emergency Pack to facili-



tate users with low-balance, ensuring that they never have to face any disruptions. With Zong's Emergency Pack, prepaid users can enjoy an elaborate set of resources including, 2 calls (One onnet and one offnet), 10 missed calls, 20 SMS and 20 MB data priced only at Rs.7+tax. Prepaid users can easily subscribe through My Zong App or EasyPaisa App or through dialing *9110#.

The spokesperson for Zong 4G, while highlighting the company's exceptional commitment to its users, stated, 'Zong 4G's primary aim is to ease the life of its users through digital empowerment.

NTDC establishes control rooms to ensure smooth power supply during Ramadan

PPA

LAHORE: In compliance with the instructions of Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has completed all preparations to ensure smooth power supply throughout the country in Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, especially during Sehri, Iftar and Taraweeh prayers.

Asset Management (North) and (South) teams have also been formed for immediate response in case of any fault at NTDC grid stations or transmission lines across the country. The concerned officers will be present at the grid stations all the time during Ramadan.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan has directed the concerned formations to remain more vigilant for ensuring smooth power supply during the holy month.

New govt asked to improve investment climate

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Brigadier (retd) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Monday that the new government should try to improve the country's investment climate.

He said that high electricity and gas tariffs and record interest rates discourage local and foreign investors.

Aslam Khan said that business people are not ready to invest in Pakistan, which has the most expensive electricity and gas and interest rates ranging from 23 to 25 percent.

He said that international banks are refusing to lend to those planning to invest in Pakistan and encouraging them to invest

in India and Bangladesh on soft terms, which is unfortunate.

He said economic affairs cannot be conducted as before, and extravagant expenditures cannot be made.

The time has come to decide on merit; therefore, politicians should be kept away from the Ministry of Finance, and the Planning Commission should not be put at the mercy of a politician.

Pakistan lacks funds; therefore, he demanded that the practice of creating new institutions be stopped.

Aslam Khan said that the National Highway Authority was created because some influential people were obsessed with building roads by taking huge loans. They did not want any interfer-



ence from the Planning Commission or other institutions; therefore, a new institution was created.

The deficit of the NHA has exceeded twelve hundred billion rupees, so these failed institutions should be closed down.

He said the average growth

estimate for 2024 is two percent, presenting a weak economic rebound. The threat of inflation is quite natural and is predicted to remain higher than 20 percent. The rate of unemployment and poverty has increased, and the trade deficit is putting pressure on reserves.

Risks connected to subpar investment, low exports, low productivity, and a crisis in the energy sector hinder sustained recovery. Suppose the tax system's shortcomings are fixed. In that case, it will be easier for the government to raise the necessary funds for development expenditures.

Pakistan's external payments demand massive financing that goes above the present SBA. Debt

sustainability is highly risky, and the net debt stock is anticipated to be high at 70% of GDP.

He said that in the grim economic situation, some political actors have conspired to bring under their control an institution that earns hundreds of billions of rupees annually, which should be reversed; otherwise, that institution will also be destroyed due to corruption.

He said that just as chartered democracy has nothing to do with democracy, the chartered economy cannot improve the economy because investors decide by looking at ground realities instead of fancy words.

Speeches and slogans can fool people. But not the investors, he said.

Alpine Club of Pakistan organises trials to place athletes in elite pool for international competitions

The Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) organized trials to place the athletes in an elite pool for participation in forthcoming international competitions. Culbers from different parts of the country and departments participated in it.

The trials are held for Sport Climbing Speed, Bouldering and Lead. The trials were conducted by the secretary, Karrar Haidri and Najeeb Khatkhat. Some other previous athletes and coaches provided technical support for the trials.

The athletes showed their performance, which has been documented and considered for further training of athletes and their participation in international sport climbing events.

Mr. Karrar Haidri, Secretary, ACP on this occasion, welcomed the athletes. He is informed that according to fresh instructions from PSB, the trials are being conducted. Although

ACP has been placing athletes in an elite pool on merit.

He assured every kind of support to athletes who would improve their performance. Mr. Najeeb Khatkhat also provided tips to athletes for their training and nutritional needs.

He also informed us that necessary fitness tests should be carried out after Ramzan. Mr. Abu Zafar Sadiq, encouraged and motivated the athletes for their higher performance. He said that ACP has been extending support to the athletes not only for training but also for their participation in international climbing competitions.

He said once the improvement in performance is witnessed, the athletes should be supported further. Keeping in view the challenges being faced by athletes, he assured that a flexible training schedule should be shared by each athlete for the month of Ramazan so that their fitness level could not decline.



Margallah Hills Half Marathon held with diverse participation of 200 runners

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd Margallah Hills Half Marathon was organized by Margallah Trail Runners (MTR) club at the Margallah Hills National Park where passionate runners from Islamabad and other parts of Pakistan took part along with the diplomatic community. This one of the kind half marathon is held annually in Pakistan with the uphill route of Margallah Hills in the capital city, Islamabad, a news release said.

Sponsored by Season Canola and supported by prominent organizations including Fatima Group, Hiker.pk, SpaceMan Studios, Optimize Digital, and nibl foods, concluded with resounding success as near 200 runners participated in the event. The route for the Half Marathon was scene as it started on Trail at the backdrop of Margallah Hills and went all the way from Margallah Ave to Daman-e-Koh, passing Monal and ended at the border crossing into Khyber Pakhtunkh-



wa at Pir Sohawa. It was an elevation of 800 members, which was at times challenging for the runners but with perfect weather conditions all runners that a great time doing the Half Marathon. The event witnessed enthusiastic partici-

pation from various clubs and age groups, showcasing the spirit of unity and athleticism. Apart from members from Margallah Trail Runners club participating clubs such, Islamabad Running Club, Islamabad Run with Us, Falcon Triathlon

Club, Critical Mass Lahore, Hiker.pk, and Pakistan Road Runners, along with representatives from the diplomatic community from the USA, UK, Canada, Netherlands, and Philippines, contributed to the event's success through their

enthusiastic involvement and sportsmanship. The winners of the Margallah Hills Half Marathon, Faizan Zulfiqar and Sehr Ali, demonstrated exceptional endurance and skill, emerging victorious amidst fierce competition. In men's Faizan Zulfiqar came first and completed his Half Marathon in 1 hour 25 mins and 55 seconds, Shahban stood 2nd with 1 second gap while Mubarez Bukhari got the 3rd spot with 1 hour 32 minutes and 45 to complete his run. In the female athletes Sehr led with 2 hours 37 minutes to complete her Half Marathon, followed by Anum Uzair with 2 hours 42 minutes and Hajira Rehman with 2 hours 46 minutes to get to the finish line. The Margallah Hills Half Marathon showcased the power of sports to unite people from different walks of life and promote a culture of fitness and well-being. The event would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors and the unwavering dedication of participants, organizers, and volunteers.

Newly-appointed DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal takes charge of his office



Tahir Amin Malik

Newly-appointed Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal assumed the charge of his office at National Hockey Stadium on Monday.

Pervez Iqbal, who has vast experience of administration, had also served on key posts like Special Secretary Local Government, Director General Special Education and Deputy Managing Director Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) in the past.

After taking charge, Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal met with SBP officers. During the meeting, the officers gave a detailed departmental briefing to new DG Sports Punjab about the performance and other major features of their respective departments.

During the briefing, the new DG Sports Punjab was told that there are 538 sports facilities in the province and the work is in progress on 81 schemes. There are 41 Tehsil Sports Complexes while 21 cities of Punjab have the facility of hockey turf.

Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Director Admin Muhammad Kaleem, Project Director PMU Qaiser Raza, Deputy Directors Ata ur Rehman, Tariq Khanzada and Zahoor Ahmed were also present in the meeting.

Talking to SBP officers, newly-appointed Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that the welfare of sportsmen is our mission and we will take all possible measures for the promotion of sports in the province. "Sports Board Punjab will work hard for the development of sports under the leadership of provincial sports minister and in accordance with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz."

Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that the development of sports is top priority of Punjab govt and Sports Board Punjab will utilize all resources for this noble cause. "Best facilities will be provided to players so that they can excel in sports competitions appropriately in future," he added.

Earlier, the outgoing Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail in his farewell meeting, thanked all the officers and staffers for their cooperation during his stay in Sports Board Punjab.

Lahore Qalandar's Sikandar Raza fined for violation of code of conduct

Sports Desk



KARACHI: Lahore Qalandars' Sikandar Raza has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for a Level 1 breach of HBL PSL's code of conduct for showing dissent at an umpire's decision.

The incident occurred during the Lahore Qalandars vs Quetta Gladiators game at National Bank Stadium, Karachi on Sunday night.

Sikandar, on three different occasions during the game, raised his arms, shook his head and gestured that the delivery should have been called a wide ball, leading to a violation of article 2.8, which deals with a player showing dissent at an umpire's decision during an HBL PSL game. On-field umpires Chris Gaffaney and Rashid Riaz leveled the charge against Sikandar Raza while match referee Ali Naqvi imposed the fine.

Timberwolves' Anthony Edwards misses potential 'dunk of the season'

Minnesota Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards on Sunday was so close to making the "dunk of the season" during their game against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Midway through the first quarter of the Timberwolves' face off against the Lakers, Edwards drove straight towards Anthony Davis with the meanness of intentions.

The moment as Edwards tried and closely failed to dunk over Davis' outstretched arms prompted a collective gasp from the crowd at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California.

Edwards' failed attempt to dunk led him to score 25 points, seven rebounds and assists in

a 120-109 loss against the Lakers.

Davis was clearly the better Anthony in the contest as the Lakers star finished with a Wilt Chamberlain-esque stat line of 27 points, 25 rebounds, 5 assists, 7 steals, and 3 blocks.

Davis benefitted from the Timberwolves being severely undermanned Sunday, particularly in the paint. Karl-Anthony Towns remained sidelined with his concerning knee injury.

Defensive Player of the Year favorite Rudy Gobert, who would have likely matched up against Davis, was a surprise addition to the injury report due to a hamstring issue.

Irfan's blitz in vain as Peshawar Zalmi edge Karachi Kings in last-ball thriller

KARACHI: Muhammad Irfan Khan's gutsy 31-run knock went in vain as Peshawar Zalmi registered a narrow two-run victory over Karachi Kings in the 29th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here at National Bank Stadium on Monday.

The enthralling victory lifted Peshawar Zalmi to the top of the PSL 9 standings with 13 points in 10 matches, followed by Multan Sultans with 12 points, who are yet to play their final group-stage match.

Chasing 148, the home side managed 145/5 despite Tim Seifert's anchoring 41 and Irfan's blistering 39.

The Kings had a steady start to the pursuit as James Vince and Seifert notched up an anchoring 61-run stand.

The hosts were marching comfortably until Naveen-ul-Haq broke the partnership in the ninth over by dismissing Vince,

who scored 21 off 27 deliveries.

Karachi Kings then lost two more wickets in quick succession as their skipper Shan Masood (0) and mainstay Seifert walked back in consecutive overs as Peshawar Zalmi struck back.

With the scoreboard reading 68/3 in 10.3 overs, Irfan joined experienced Shoaib Malik in the middle and attempted to anchor the run chase.

The pair added an important 49 runs before Naveen struck again to provide another important breakthrough to Peshawar Zalmi as he cleaned up Malik in the 18th over.

Malik scored a gritty 22 off 25 deliveries, hitting one boundary.

Kings then sustained another massive blow to their pursuit when Luke Wood outlasted Kieron Pollard (1) with a slower delivery in the next over.

But Irfan showed grit and smashed Wood for a boundary

on the last delivery of the penultimate over as Kings then needed 17 off the final over.

All-rounder Anwar Ali brought them in touching distance by hitting back-to-back boundaries on the third and fourth delivery but only managed a single on the fifth.

Kings needed four off the last delivery with set batter Niazi on strike. Aamer Jamal held on to his nerves and bowled a perfect yorker to seal a thrilling victory for Zalmi.

Irfan Niazi scored 39 off 26 deliveries with the help of seven boundaries.

Naveen led the bowling attack for Peshawar Zalmi with 2/22 in his four overs, followed by Wood, Jamal and Ayub, who bagged one each.

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Opting to bat first, Peshawar Zalmi managed an average total

on the board despite a solid start to their innings.

Their in-form opening pair Babar Azam and Saim Ayub looked in control in the early phase of the innings and led Zalmi to 54 for no loss at the conclusion of the batting power-play.

Shan Masood's decision to bring Zahid Mahmood into the attack bore fruits as the leg-spinner struck in his first over to break the threatening partnership by dismissing Saim.

The left-handed opener scored a cautious 19 off 18 deliveries with the help of three boundaries.

Meanwhile, Babar Azam was joined briefly by Mohammad Haris and Haseebullah Khan as both the young batters had a short stay at the crease.

The skipper led Peshawar Zalmi's batting charge from the front against a disciplined bowling attack of Karachi Kings and



amassed his half-century with authority by smashing Mahmood for a boundary in the 14th over.

But he perished in the same over while attempting a quick double, courtesy of an exceptional fielding effort from Mahmood.

Babar remained the top-scorer for Zalmi with 51 off 46 deliveries, including an impressive tally

of five fours and a six.

His dismissal halted the flow of runs for Zalmi, putting their batters under pressure.

Consequently, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, in a desperate attempt to hit big, fell for a scratchy nine off 14 deliveries, bringing Zalmi down to 113/5 in 16.5 overs.

Later, Rovman Powell's swash-buckling cameo, which lasted in the final over, bolstered Zalmi to a decent total.

He smashed three boundaries on his way to an 18-ball 30.

For Karachi Kings, Hasan Ali, Arafat Minhas, Daniel Sams and Zahid Mahmood made one scalp each.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding petroleum sector on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM directs uninterrupted gas, power supply during Ramadan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for ensuring uninterrupted gas and power supply to the consumers during the holy month of Ramadan.

He also directed for provision of every possible facilities to the private sector, local and foreign investors in the exploration of gas and oil, refining and distribution of these natural resources.

The prime minister chaired

a high level meeting on petroleum sector, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Senators Ishaq Dar and Dr Musadik Malik, Sheza Fatima Khawaja, Ahad Khan Cheema, Jahanzeb Khan, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaiz Malik and relevant senior officers.

Addressing the participants, he said that the government was not meant for doing businesses rather its responsibility was to extend all kind of facilities to the private sector and ensure protection of the

rights of the consumers especially the vulnerable segments of the society.

He also asked for taking steps for promotion of global investment in exploration of Tight Gas and undersea oil and gas reserves, regretting that Pakistan's maritime area was huge in size when compared with Balochistan province but no steps were taken to explore its hidden natural resources.

He called for merit-based appointment of capable persons in the energy sector

and sought the presentation of short, mid and long term strategies on the energy sector reforms.

The prime minister also directed for presenting a strategy on country's mineral resources, their exploration and enhancement of exports.

The meeting was told that country's oil and gas reserves were depleting fast and petroleum products worth \$4 billion were being exported annually and the local exploration would save foreign exchange worth billions of dollars.

The meeting was also apprised of the reserves of tight gas and undersea oil reserves and the interest of the foreign investors in the sector.

It was told that work on LPG Policy 2024 was underway and consultation with the stakeholders was in progress.

The participants were also briefed about the energy consumption and mineral sector.

The prime minister instructed the relevant authorities to implement the energy sector reforms on priority basis.

Transforming Pak-Saudi ties into strategic, economic partnership govt's priority: PM



City desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that his government's priority was to transform the time-tested Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties into a mutually beneficial, strategic and economic partnership, with a focus on attracting Saudi investment for bankable projects in Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki, who called on him, thanked Saudi authorities

for expanding the scope of the "Road to Makkah" initiative, that would facilitate Pakistani Hajj pilgrims.

He thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz, and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, for their kind wishes on his re-election as prime minister.

Given the special fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the prime minister said the Saudi ambassador was the first envoy he received after assumption of office.

Extending an invitation

10-member Sindh cabinet to take oath in first phase

Dastagir Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) leaders including Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah held a meeting in Islamabad to finalise the members for the provincial cabinet.

According to the details, the recently elected Sindh CM also consulted with President Asif Ali Zardari to finalise the names for the cabinet. The sources privy to the development said that around 10 members of the Sindh cabinet would take oath in the first phase.

The sources said Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Sharjeel Inam Memon, Syed Sardar Shah, Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, Saeed Ghani, and others would be part of the provincial cabinet.

In a meeting, in which PPP Women Wing President Faryal Talpur was also present, the portfolios of the proposed ministers were also deliberated.

It is pertinent to mention here that Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah took oath on February 27 and has not announced his cabinet yet. On the other hand, the provincial cabinets of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have already been sworn in.

PTI Spokesperson vehemently rejects newly sworn in fake federal cabinet

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson vehemently rejected the newly sworn in federal cabinet, saying the appointment of the rejected clique of criminals as ministries was a slap in the face of the so-called democratic system.

PTI Spokesperson strongly reacted to the swearing-in of the federal cabinet and said that the cabinet was fake and unconstitutional because it was based on the stolen mandate.

He stated that the fake prime minister's fake cabinet appeared to be a continuation of the unconstitutional caretaker government.

PTI Spokesperson said that after electing unelected persons to the slots of Prime Minister and President, all these characters were made unlawfully as members of federal cabinet who faced humiliating drubbing at the

hands of people of Pakistan in general elections February 8.

He recalled that the appointment of those responsible for plunging the country's economy deep into quagmire during the last two years was nothing but a sheer enmity with people of this country.

PTI Spokesperson stated that Pakistani nation had been paying the price for the performance of around 100-member cabinet of Crime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of PDM government.

He noted that the inclusion of people like Mohsin Naqvi in the federal cabinet put a stamp on the biased and unconstitutional role of the caretaker government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

PTI Spokesperson went on to say that giving special favors to special servants of Sharif and Zardari families in exchange of their services was an insult to democracy and the people.

President stresses upon empathy for vulnerable sections of society during Ramadan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon realizing the plight of poor, orphans, destitute and vulnerable segments of society during the holy month of Ramadan by extending all possible support to them. He also appealed to the well to do and prosperous people to contribute towards this noble cause by giving away Zakat and alms and support these stratas of society with financial support and continue this kind gesture throughout the year.

The president, in a message on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan 1445 Hijrah, also urged the international community and the Muslim Ummah to help the oppressed Palestinians and ensure immediate ceasefire and end to their genocide. He observed that the holy month brought with it message of sympathy, affection, sacrifice, brotherhood and cooperation. He also extended his felicitation to the Pakistani nation and the Muslims across the world on the arrival of holy and blessed month, President Secretariat



Press Wing said in a press release on Monday. The president observed that the holy month of Ramadan provided them opportunities to realize the real spirit of the holy month.

The Muslims follow the commands of Allah Almighty by maintaining piety with regular praying and obeying which helped them to earn blessings and absolve them of their sins.

He also referred to the Quranic verses which had explained the reasons behind keeping fasts which also saved a faithful from falsehood, use of foul language, cheating, hoarding, adulteration in food stuff and other sins. The president also prayed for the progress and prosperity of the country.

Election on 48 vacant Senate seats set for April 2

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan will hold the election on 48 vacant seats of the Senate of Pakistan on April 2, the electoral body said on Monday.

The ECP will issue the election schedule for the election on March 14 while the candidates can submit nomination papers from today (Monday).

As many as 52 seats in the upper house will fall vacant after the expiration of the 6-year term of the incumbent Senators on Tuesday.

However, the election would

be held on 48 Senate seats as four reserved seats for the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas had been abolished after the 25th Constitutional amendment.

With this, the total seats in the Senate will fall to 96 from the earlier 100 seats.

Voting would be held to elect members against seven general seats, two women, two seats for technocrats, including Ulema and one seat for non-Muslims from four provinces.

Members of the National Assembly will elect one general seat and one seat for technocrats, including Ulema from the federal capital, it added.

President Zardari, Tajik President reaffirm to further strength bilateral cooperation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon on Monday reiterated their desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the areas of mutual interest. Tajik President made a telephone call to President Asif Ali Zardari and extended his warmest felicitations to him on becoming the President of Pakistan, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to his Tajik counterpart, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan highly valued its ties with the brotherly country of Tajikistan which were based on shared religion, culture and history. He said that both countries needed to work together for further improving bilateral cooperation.

While appreciating Tajikistan's high potential in hydel resources, President Zardari expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Tajikistan



in this important area for the mutual advantage of the two brotherly countries.

The president also exchanged greetings on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan and also felicitated the Tajik President on the upcoming Nowruz, Persian New Year celebrations.

The Tajik also extended an invitation to President Asif Ali Zardari to visit Tajikistan. President Zardari fondly recalled his earlier visits to Tajikistan and accepted the invitation.

The president thanked his Tajik counterpart for his congratulatory message and good wishes.

Pakistan-Iran train service suspended as rains damage track in Balochistan

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The train services were suspended between Pakistan and Iran following heavy rains in Dalbandin city of Balochistan a day earlier, district administrations said.

The railway track was drowned under the rainwater that had inundated streets and destroyed several houses in Dalbandin, which is the headquarters of the Chagai district, it added.

According to officials, heavy rains lashed the city along with Sargisha and Chhattar on Sunday night and also destroyed standing crops in rural areas while several families were displaced as rainwater damaged infrastructure.

The district administration continued the dewatering operation while distributing tents and sheets to the displaced residents of several areas.

PTA's QoS survey evaluates cellular Services

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: To measure the performance and quality of Cellular Mobile Operators' (CMOs) services being provided to customers, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) carried out an Independent Quality of Service (QoS) Survey in 17 cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh Balochistan and three cities of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK).

Survey routes were selected to cover main roads, service roads, and key sectors/colonies, totalling 14,000 kilometres in 79 days to cover the maximum area

said a news release.

Mobile handsets, set to technology auto-detect and 3G locked modes, were employed for Voice Calls, SMS, and Mobile Broadband/Data sessions, especially in AJ&K cities.

The survey included 0.25 million tests for Data, 45,000 for Voice & SMS, and 0.13 million tests in Ookla, utilizing automated QoS Monitoring & Benchmarking Tools to ascertain compliance with Next Generation Mobile Service (NGMS) licenses as well as Cellular Mobile Network Quality of Service (QoS) Regulations 2021.

Based upon the compliance level of each KPI in

surveyed cities against the threshold defined in the respective licenses and QoS Regulations, CMOs were ranked 1st to 5th in Mobile Network Coverage and Voice Services. In the Mobile Broadband Speed segment, rankings were based on factors like highest data download & upload speed, network latency, and webpage loading time. The survey results indicate that CMOs are compliant concerning upload and download speed to a great extent, with improvements in network latency and webpage loading time compared to previous surveys.

However, certain Voice

KPIs fall below licensed thresholds in specific areas. Operators employing advanced technologies like LTE Carrier Aggregation and Voice over LTE deliver better quality of services.

Instructions have been issued to operators for necessary improvements to meet quality standards. Survey results are available on PTA's website (<https://pta.gov.pk/en/consumer-support/qos-survey/qos-survey>).

PTA field teams are diligently conducting service quality monitoring to encourage operators to enhance mobile services and promote healthy competition.

Air Chief calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal, Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu on Monday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif there.

The Air Chief congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office, a PM Office press release said. In the meeting, they discussed the professional matters of the Pakistan Air Force.