



Donald Trump makes last-ditch effort to delay hush money trial

Former US President Donald Trump has sought to delay his upcoming trial in New York, where he faces allegations of paying hush money to a porn star. The former president wants the Manhattan court to wait until the Supreme Court decides on his claim for "presidential immunity" in another criminal case.



New technologies, AI to help improve governance, enhance transparency in system: Shaza Fatima

Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja has stressed the need for adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning by modernizing the country's education system and curricula to prepare the youth for skilled jobs, to empower and make them at par with rest of the world. (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding IT and Telecom Sector on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM-IT-Meeting

PM for a complete roadmap to enhance IT exports

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a comprehensive roadmap to boost IT exports. He said the government would take steps to fully avail of the billion dollars potential of the country for IT exports, besides, the young people would be provided with required facilities of education, skills development and startups. The prime minister chaired a review meeting on IT and Telecom sector. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muham-

mad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmed, Shahzad Saleem and the relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister said that during their previous tenure, positive outcome was witnessed from the initiation of different projects in the IT sector. He stressed upon resolution of all issues of startups, freelancers and IT companies relating to

banking. Expressing his satisfaction over the IT export volume of more than \$3 billion in the current year, he emphasized upon its further increase. For bringing Pakistan's IT sector at par with the international standards, they would have to work hard, he observed. The prime minister also asked for submission of a comprehensive report regarding special technology zones. The meeting was apprised of progress on IT package announced by the prime minister during June 2023.

During the previous tenure, due to special attention of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the IT exports witnessed 13 percent increase during the first seven months of the current fiscal year when compared with previous corresponding year. Under the Digiskills programme, a total of 4 million students of 17 batches, comprising 28 percent females, had been imparted training. Pakistan had emerged as the second top country in the world on the basis of numbers of freelancers. Pakistan was exporting IT products to 170 countries of the world, it was

further added. The meeting was informed that during the previous year, an investment of \$400 million was made in Pakistani startups. The prime minister directed for taking all necessary, legal and policy related steps to attract investment and boost IT exports. He also asked for expediting work on projects meant to enhance professional and technical training of youth for complete utilization of potential in IT sector. The meeting was also informed about the steps and progress on IT, E Rozgar, startups, cyber security, telecom sector and launch of 5-G.

President Putin's congratulatory message to H. E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin congratulated H. E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari on his election as President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Mr. Putin highlighted friendly nature of Russia-Pa-



kistan relations and expressed his confidence in their further consistent development.

Turkish President congratulates President Asif Ali Zardari



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tuesday called President Asif Ali Zardari and congratulated him on assuming the office of the President of Pakistan. Both the leaders exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance and underscored the need for further improving cooperation in all areas of mutual interest,

a press release issued by the President House said. President Asif Ali Zardari thanked the Turkish President for his telephone call and warm wishes. President Asif Ali Zardari wished Happy Ramadan to Turkish nation and desired to see role of Turkish women in Islamic world. He also desired to invite President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan.

Attaulah Tarar assumes charge as Minister for Information and Broadcasting

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Attaulah Tarar on Tuesday assumed charge as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid along with other senior officers of the ministry welcomed the minister on his arrival at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Attaulah Tarar is a senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) who was elected Member of National Assembly from Constituency NA-127 from Lahore in the February 8



elections. After taking oath as Federal Minister in the President's House, today he assumed his duties in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. On his arrival at the Ministry of Information, Attaulah Tarar said the doors of the Ministry of Information would remain open for the journalist community.

IHC allows Hiba Fawad to travel abroad

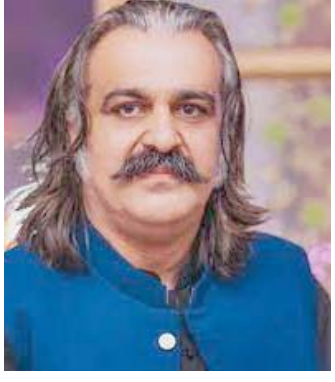
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has granted permission to the wife of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry to fly out of the country. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani heard the plea of Hiba Fawad on Tuesday, seeking permission to travel abroad. During the hearing, the assistant attorney general apprised the court that Hiba Fawad's name was not included on the no-fly list. Therefore, she can travel abroad. Consequently, the court allowed Hiba Fawad to travel out of the country and directed her to submit a report about her smooth travel upon her return to the country.

ECP summons KP CM Gandapur on 26th over disqualification case

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has ordered Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to appear before the district election commissioner on March 26 in the disqualification case. "We have heard preliminary arguments which need consideration on merits. Office to issue notice to respondent No. 5 (Ali Amin Gandapur) for the date fixed through the district election commissioner concerned," the country's top electoral authority said in its order on Tuesday. "The service report of DEC shall reach this office before the date fixed. Case to come up on March 26, 2024," it added. The development came hours after Gandapur sought a plan of action within a month to recov-



er the province's arrears from the Centre. He directed the provincial authorities to seek legal experts' services to raise the issue before the federal government. The electoral body issued the order on a petition filed by JUI leader Muhammad Kafel, seeking the disqualification of Gandapur who was elected MPA from PK-113

in Dera Ismail Khan. The petitioner contended that 735 kanal land in Mouzah Girah Muhabbat and Muzah Rohri, Tehsil Kulachi, district DI Khan was transferred in the name of the KP chief minister on a "temporary basis while Asif Khan was the real owner." It added that Gandapur was the "ostensible owner" while Asif Khan was the "sole and absolute owner" of the property. "That in assets and liabilities forms furnished for the year 2020 and duly published respondent No. 5 has shown the purchase of vehicle, Toyota Land Cruiser, from the funds which he received from the sale of 735 kanal land ie the subject property. Contended that on account of such wrong declaration, the respondent is not qualified to hold the office of member provincial assembly," it said.

JUI-F forms alliance with PPP for Senate election

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) on Tuesday announced to form an alliance with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for the Senate election set for April 2. Leaders of both parties held a joint press conference in Islamabad where they announced support for each other's candidates. JUI-F's Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri said that his party will support PPP leader Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in the Senate election. It is pertinent to mention that JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had earlier refused to participate in the parliamentary politics.

CM meets US Consul General, discusses economic cooperation



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met with US Consul General Kristin K. Hawkins, here on Tuesday. The American Consul General congratulated Maryam Nawaz Sharif on her election as the first female Chief Minister. Discussions in the meeting focused on promoting

economic cooperation and increasing scholarship opportunities for Pakistani students in American higher education institutions. The need for joint efforts between the United States and Punjab to address climate change was also discussed. Maryam Nawaz Sharif commended the US Consul General's efforts to enhance relations between Punjab and the US.

Talks with IMF to begin this week: Aurangzeb

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will begin talks with the International Monetary Fund for the second review of the stand-by agreement in the ongoing week, according to newly-appointed Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb, CEO of one of the

largest banks in Pakistan, was sworn in as finance minister on Monday. He formally took charge later in the day. The minister also added that 2024 would be a 'difficult' year for Pakistan's economy. A successful second review would unlock the final tranche of the SBA, worth \$1.1 billion.

However, speculation has been afoot that Pakistan's talks with the IMF could extend to more than just the final review of the SBA and Islamabad could look to secure a new medium-term bailout. The Fund has already expressed its optimism about negotiating with a new government in the country. "We look forward to engag-

ing with the new government to complete the second review under the current stand-by arrangement and, should the government request, support the formulation of a new medium-term economic program," IMF spokesperson Julie Kozaek said recently. She added that during the tenure of the interim government,

the authorities had "maintained economic stability". "This has been done through strict adherence to fiscal targets while also protecting the social safety net. It has been done by maintaining a tight monetary policy stance to control inflation and to continue to build up foreign exchange reserves," she said.

Pakistan is an obstacle to India's expansionist ambitions: Ex-PM

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/LAHORE: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that Pakistan is an obstacle to India's expansionist ambitions, Occupied Kashmir Pakistan's dream of achieving independence is unfulfilled.

In India, which is on the eve of democracy, oppression and injustice is happening to minorities under the government's patronage. has started, property of Kashmiri people are being burnt, houses are being burnt, innocent Hurriyat leaders in jails are not even given medical facilities, many freedom fighters were brutally martyred inside the jails, occupied.

There is no street in Jammu and Kashmir that has not been a victim of Indian state terrorism, in such a situa-



tion, the Kashmiris who migrated from occupied Jammu and Kashmir to Azad Kashmir have become very anxious that the cruelty and brutality that is going on in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the end of the world is on this side.

Earlier, President of Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan arrived in Lahore

on his visit to Lahore.

President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan offered Fatiha to his sons and other dear relatives on the death of Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari, head of Qayyum League Pakistan, central leader of Pakistan Assembly of Muslim Youth in Kathiala Warkan. Sahibzada Jodat Aziz Geelani, Sajid Qureshi Advocate, Sardar Asim Zahid Abbasi, Dr. Abid Abbasi and Abdul Ghaffar Abbasi were also present. He added that in this blessed month, we should also take care of the poor and needy around us and help them generously so that they can also help their children. May you fast in this blessed month of Ramadan.

I congratulate the 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. Allah Almighty, the Prophet of Islam, the Holy Quran and the Qibla connect us all like a thread which is an unbreakable bond of faith, Ramadan is the manifestation of this common bond.

He said that unfortunately in this month of Ramadan, the Muslim world are facing the genocide of innocent women, children and men in Gaza, we pray for the end of this cruelty and genocide.

President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan in Lahore to Brigadier Khalid Bashir Khawaja. The wife and Khawaja are condoling with Babur on the death of his wife. Sahibzada Jodat Aziz Geelani, Sajid Qureshi Advocate, Asim Zahid Abbasi, Dr. Abid Abbasi and Abdul Ghaffar Abbasi also accompanied him.

Azad Kashmir demands urgent OIC meeting on Jammu and Kashmir, Israel



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker Senior Parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar has asked the OIC to convene an emergency meeting of the Security Council to stop the increasing bloodshed of oppressed and condemned people in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. demanded to play a role and said that the occupying countries of Islamic countries, including Pakistan, should adopt a common strategy to stop the terrorism and lawlessness of India and Israel. can wrap up, due to which the conditions of starting a terrible war are developing rapidly. Which is a danger alarm for the lives of 3 billion people. Last day in his office chamber on the massacres in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Israel. Expressing his strong reaction, he said that both India and Israel have violated international laws and have also committed violations of the Geneva Convention, so the rulers of both the aggressive countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Netanyahu. Cases should be registered in the international courts of war crimes and justice. India has reached the extreme of cruelty and brutality through nine million occupying forces in Occupied Kashmir, and this is the case of Israel in Palestine.

Subsidized flour

ISLAMABAD: A labourer unloading subsidized flour on a Utility Store at the Federal Capital on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

Govt to provide all possible relief to the people: Zahoor Dharija

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Saraiki National Council Zahoor Ahmed Dahreja Said On the arrival of the month of Ramazan, the political tension should be relieved and the poor people should be given relief. The newly elected federal cabinet is similar to the Punjab cabinet. The rest of the provinces, including Saraiki and Wasib, should also get adequate representation. These views were expressed by the Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Council, Zahoor Dharija, while addressing the audience to congratulate them on the success of Saraiki Ajrak Day. On this occasion, Masihullah Khan Jampuri, president of Saraiki Thinker Council, famous artist Zameer Hashmi, Shoaib Nawaz Baloch, Saraiki singer Ashraf Pathane Khan, Thobia Malik, Akram Khan, Shabbir Baloch, Baba Mumtaz, Malik Nadir Khokhar, Tahir Dharija, Afzal Butt, Ramzan Ansari, Abid Khan and Malik Zubair Vance and others were present to congratulate.

Pakistan is not the name of only the Punjabi elite, giving representation to all Hogi, Masihullah Khan Jampuri said that the Saraiki Ajrak Day was a grand success, hailing the Chairman of the Saraiki National Council, Zahoor Dharija, who has dedicated his entire life to the service of Saraiki Wasib. Masihullah Jampuri demanded that the way Punjabi Culture Day was celebrated at the official level, the Saraiki Culture Day should also be celebrated at the official level and Wasib should be given a plaque on the Saraiki literary and cultural institution.

Three storied building collapse in Multan due to gas cylinder blast

Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: On the first Sehri of the holy month of Ramazan, a Horrific Tragedy was observed in the Jogian area of Haram Gate police station. As a result of an explosion due to the Fire catching and Gas Cylinder Blast. To keep the fast, the three-story building collapsed on the neighbor's house and 9 people, including 7 members of the same family, were killed while 2 people were seriously injured, rescue 1122 emergency personnel including police and district administration officers reached the spot. The team of Rescue 1122 under the leadership of Dr. Kaleemullah, in-charge of Rescue 1122 Multan, pulled out the people buried under the debris and took out all the 9 bodies including 2 injured and shifted them to Nishtar Hospital Multan. According to the incident, Musrat, the wife of a person named Naseeb Rahman in Jogiwala area of Haram Gate area of Multan, operated the cylinder in the house due to lack of gas to prepare suhoor on the third floor of the house around 3:30. The fire spread and suddenly the cylinder blasted and there was a loud explosion. As a result of which the house's lintel fell on the neighbor's house, nine people including the husband and wife in the house lost their lives, while the woman operating the cylinder was burnt and one person was seriously injured. Rizwan Qadir and City Police Officer Sadiq Ali Dogar went immediately to the incidentreached and supervised the relief operation. After the incident of the gas cylinder explosion, an atmosphere of mourning was established in the area, while the sound of the explosion also spread severe panic in the area. Commissioner Multan Miss Maryam Khan, Deputy Commissioner Rizwan Qadir and CPO Multan expressed deep sorrow and shock over this incident and condoled with the bereaved, they directed the police officers to take full part in relief activities, and the injured persons were sent to Nishtar Hospital. were transferred, while seven of a family were killed People including Faheem Abbas son of Najaf Abbas, Sanobar wife of Faheem Abbas, Danish Faheem, Waseem Faheem, Ameer Ali, Bakhtawar Amin, Komal, Abdullah son of Nasser Rahman, Naseeb Rahman son of Khalil Rahman and 9 people including Muhammad Waqar son of injured. Naseebullah and Musrat Bibi, wife of Naseeb Rahman, are among those who died. He was laid to rest after performing mass funeral prayers.

In Innerwell Club declares 'honor' of women on International Women's Day

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Innerwell Club District 340 Chairperson Rizwana Tabasim Durrani and Vice Chairman Rizwana Malik have said that a woman is sacred in every relationship and foremost in every form. Aj's women are working side by side with men in the development of the country. A woman is a blessing in the form of a mother, wife, daughter and sister. In whose arms a child receives the training that even the highest educational institution in the world cannot provide. To get rid of the scourge, the government has to make a policy to provide employment to these ideasHe expressed this while addressing an event organized by Innerwell Youth Club District 340 at Mix Institute regarding International Women's Day. President of Innerwell District 340 Youth Club Ayesha Ikram, EM



Punjab Hands Sadia. Nawaz, Nader Khan Chief Executive Stream Club and Manager Mix Bilal SultanWhile speaking, he said that the govern-

ment will have to make stricter laws against violence against women and acid attacks, only then will women be able to get protection. Finally, Nadir

Khan and Bilal Sultan distributed shields and prizes to the guest women and wrote songs in the ceremony. Stalls were presented about women's rights.

Bhutto was equally popular with the people as well as the army: Mian Sajid Pervez

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's long-time associate and former MNA Mian Sajid Pervez said that after the Supreme Court's decision, those responsible should be determined and the abuse done to Bhutto should be remedied immediately.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his photo to pay tributeA commemorative note should be issued and a guard of honor should also be presented at his mausoleum in addition to building a memorial at the place of execution. Former MNA Mian Sajid Pervez said while talking to the media, I congratulate Bilawal Bhutto. He has fulfilled the right of his grandfather Zulfikar Ali



Bhutto. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a very powerful prime minister but he was killed unjustly. Bhutto was equally popular with the people as well as the army. But went and welcomed them and they had a strong desire that the armyThe loss of dignity should be

restored.

He strengthened the army. He said that no matter what the cost, he will make the atomic bomb, otherwise India will make us slaves. Bhutto was a great leader who thought not of himself but of the nation. After the tragedy of East Pakistan, Bhutto put Pakistan back on its feet. Mian Sajid Pervez said that with Bhutto's efforts, the leaders of the entire Muslim Ummah were brought together under one roof and this happened for the first time. It was decided that the world's largest and most modern with Arab investment in Pakistan. An oil refinery will be installed whose products will be sold worldwide.

Similarly, after Bhutto's efforts, the then Afghan President was convinced

that the Durand Line was the permanent border and an agreement was to be signed in this regard. After all these efforts, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to know. It was decided to remove them as part of a global conspiracy.

It is also a global conspiracy that education, health and employment facilities are not provided to the people in Pakistan according to international standards and this is happening till now. The intervention of the countries has also increased a lot, which is of the moment. Bureaucracy The authoritarian attitude is also making the people suffer. People of small provinces as well as less developed areas are crying of deprivation, this has a lot to do with the bureaucracy as well as the weaknesses of our regional leaders.

Training session held for 'Home-Based Workers' in Baldia Town

PNP

KARACHI: Home Net Pakistan organized a training session for "Home-Based Workers" of garments and textile supply chain in Baldia Town. Training was provided to empower home-based workers of garments and textiles so they could efficiently use social media daily and protect themselves. The training session took place at the British Nursing College Baldia Town. Program Manager of Home Net Pakistan, Babar Raza, expressed happiness for those working with Home-Based Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of empowering women to meet their financial and household needs through hard work and honesty. Under Babar Raza's leadership, Home Net Pakistan has undertaken various commendable initiatives, playing a significant role. Training facilitator Maheen Arif mentioned that women face various challenges in her life, leading many to prefer working from home. She also emphasized that trading is considered appropriate in Islam. At the conclusion of the training, Program Manager of Home Net Pakistan, Babar Raza, thanked the partners for their participation.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:59 am
Zohr 12:18 pm
Asr 4:31 pm
Maghrib 6:13 pm
Isha 7:36 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Al-Khidmat Foundation distributes wheelchairs to special persons in SWL



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Al-Khidmat Foundation South Waziristan Lower on Tuesday distributed wheelchairs to disabled and special persons of Wana.

On the occasion of wheelchair distribution, President Umar Wazir said that Al-Khidmat Foundation provides support to people in every difficult situation of the region.

He said, it works on projects such as medical aid, provision of educational facilities, and projects for social development.

He said that the main purpose of wheelchair distribution was this, that is to improve the lives of differently abled people in the area by helping them.

Later, Maulana Umar Wazir, president of South Waziristan Lower Al-Khidmat Foundation, said while talking to the media, inshallah Al Khidmat Foundation will play a leading role in every difficulty.

He hoped that Al-Khidmat Foundation will play an important role in finding solutions to social problems in the future as well.

New technologies, AI to help improve governance, enhance transparency in system: Shaza Fatima

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja has stressed the need for adopting Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning by modernizing the country's education system and curricula to prepare the youth for skilled jobs, to empower and make them at par with rest of the world.

She was speaking at a seminar titled, "The Challenges and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Cybersecurity in Pakistan", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute here.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI said: "we are living in the age of unparalleled information and have become knowledge managers with limitless data, which is easily accessible". However, with this opportunity, he added, "we must take on the responsibility for the ethical use of information".

Prof. Dr Nasir Mahood, Vice-Chancellor, AIOU stressed the need for corresponding our response speed to the speed of AI transformation, increase investment in AI and ICT sector to promote indige-

nization to match the pace of rest of the world.

Brig. Muhammad Yasin (retired), Senior Advisor Emeritus, SDPI said that AI is modernizing industries, agriculture, manufacturing, etc. to boost productivity. "While AI can transform the cybersecurity landscape, its rapid adoption often leaves critical protection gaps causing breaches into critical government and private data.

Dr Mukarram Khan, Director-General, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, said that PTA is using big data and trend analysis to track cybercriminals, improve telecommunication services and has introduced Cybersecurity Strategy 2023-28 to meet emerging cybersecurity challenges.

Mudassar Hussain, Vice-President, Jazz, said that cybersecurity regulations must take a whole-of-tech approach. He called for avoiding over-regulations for sustainability and creating demand for AI use in public procurement systems and private sector.

Muhammad Aslam Hayat, Senior Policy Fellow, LIRNEAisa said that leveraging AI in cybersecurity can enable much faster response, threat detection, and preven-



tion for better cybersecurity. He stressed that cybersecurity regulatory frameworks must be developed to ensure interpretability, scalability, and innovation.

Dr Yasir Ayaz, Chairperson of National Centre for Artificial Intelligence, NUST highlighted that revenues from AI software market is expected to reach \$126 billion by 2025 with 37% organizations having implemented AI in some form already and AI use in enterprises has grown by 270% in the past four years.

Dr Mehreen Afzal, Executive Director, N-CERT said that policymakers must carefully assess how to regulate the use of AI technologies, balancing the need to keep powerful weapons out of the hands of malicious actors without stifling innovation.

Dr Faisal Nawaz, Deputy Director-General, Artificial Intelligence, Ministry of Defense stressed the need for collaboration and linkages with countries leading the AI transformation, data sharing

mechanisms and long-term national policies and plans to effectively embrace and utilize AI.

Mr Zakir Syed, Director, Internet Governance, Ministry of Information Technology, remarked that global AI market is expected to reach the potential of \$1 trillion by 2030. By channelizing regulatory infrastructure and skill development for labour through government-industry and academia linkages, a highly skilled AI trained workforce can be developed in the next five years, he added.

Dr Hajira Ahmed, Dean of Faculty of Sciences, AIOU, said Pakistan must equip its students to adapt to these emerging trends by updating our curricula through well-thought-policy reforms.

Dr Kashif Naseer, Associate Professor, University of Limerick, Ireland highlighted that FIA Cybercrime Wing registered 84,764 cybercrime complaints in 2020 with financial fraud through social media being most common complaint. The emerging cybercrimes can be addressed through AI threat detection and prevention, automating incident response, and predicting future cyber-attacks through trend and data analytics, he added.

Below the poverty

ISLAMABAD: An old balloon seller rests under the shade of a tree while an aged laborer waits for livelihood at Federal Capital.

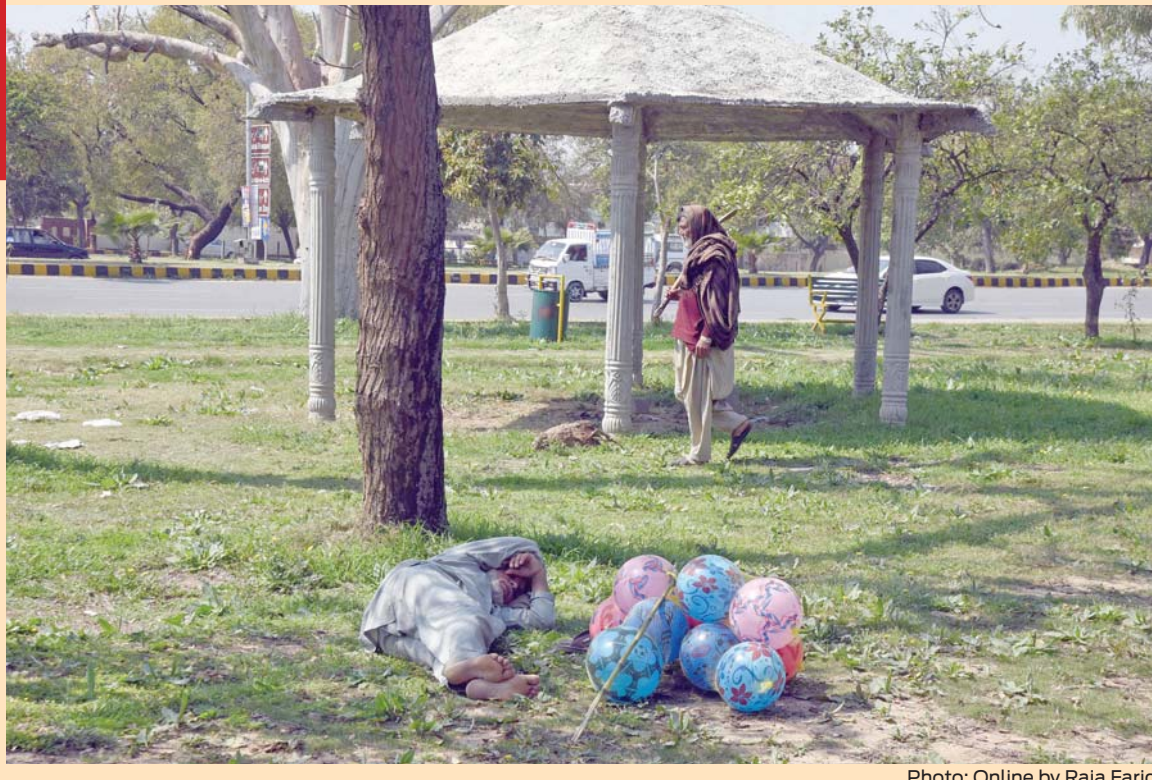


Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Pakistan urged to reevaluate subsidies on Ramazan food in light of health concerns

PNP

ISLAMABAD: As Ramazan approaches, the government of Pakistan is set to continue its tradition of providing subsidies on various food items through Utility Store Corporations, Ramazan Bazars and other means. While this practice has been beneficial in ensuring food affordability during the holy month, concerns have been raised about the nutritional content of some subsidised items.

In particular, a concern has been raised by civil society regarding the subsidies given to certain items, such as sugar and banaspati ghee/oils, which are linked to increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases. The evidence suggests that high consumption of sugar and trans-fatty acids present in banaspati ghee/oils are linked with increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer and several other chronic diseases.

Munawar Hussain, In-Country Coordinator for the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), emphasised the need for a shift in subsidy focus: "While ensuring food accessibility is crucial, we must be mindful of the impact of these subsidies on public health and the behaviour of the people on food consumption.

Recognising the importance of this issue, Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Director of the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), stated, "It is essential to strike a balance between affordability and health.

Afshar Iqbal, Director of Communications and Advocacy at Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), added, "World Health Organization in their obesity prevention framework recommend removing subsidies on all types of fats/oils and sugar.

The call for a re-evaluation of subsidies aligns with global efforts to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases linked to diet in general and the incidence of industrially produced trans-fats in particular. Public health advocates are hopeful that the government will consider these recommendations and prioritise the health of the nation in its subsidy allocations.

Cheezious Celebrates Annual Employee Event with Gratitude on the 1st of Ramazan

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Cheezious, the renowned Pakistan's number one fast food brand, took a momentous pause in its daily operations to honor and appreciate its invaluable team during the annual employee event held on the 1st of Ramazan. In a remarkable gesture of gratitude, Cheezious demonstrated its unwavering commitment to its employees, recognizing their significant role in the company's growth.

The event, which included a temporary halt in business operations, was a heartfelt tribute to the hardworking individuals who have been instrumental in the success and growth of Cheezious. The management acknowledges that every milestone achieved by Cheezious is a testament to the dedication and effort put forth by its exceptional team.

On this occasion Head of Marketing at Cheezious Zohaib Hassan Said, "I am thrilled to lead initiatives that not only showcase our brand's culinary excellence but also underscore our commitment to our most valuable asset - our employees. The annual employee event, held on the auspicious 1st of Ramazan, is a moment of reflection and gratitude for the hard work and dedication our team brings to Cheezious.



'Main Aik Kahani' wins 1st position in Theater Competition

PPA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Division's drama "Mein Ek Kahani" won the first position in the Provincial Theater Festival organized by Punjab Council of the Arts in Lahore. The play has been written and directed by Waqar Azeem. The characters of the play included Shazia Sheikh and Rani. The drama on women's rights and domestic violence won the first prize in the divisional competitions. Deputy Director Arts Council Muhammad Shakoor congratulated Shazia Sheikh for getting the first position across the province. Mohammad Shakur further said that plays written on reform themes are closer to reality, due to which their impact is also long-lasting. Arts Council is always trying to promote family dramas. The golden age of stage drama would return when families flocked to theaters to watch dramas. The Deputy Director further said that providing the best entertainment to



the public is the top priority of the Arts Council. The platform of the Arts Council is always open for quality plays. Our endeavor is to provide quality entertainment to the people, so that people have faith in staged dramas.

Hamdard Foundation distributes blankets among suffering humanity

PPA

KARACHI: Hamdard Foundation distributed blankets among deserving people in different cities, towns and villages of Pakistan during the winter as part of its annual relief program under which this year, 300 blankets were distributed in Quetta, 250 in Peshawar, 300 in Lahore, 300 in Othal, Lasbella, Hub; 400 in interior Sindh, 288 in Islamabad, Rawalpindi; 150 in different areas of Karachi including Mahmoodabad, Hazara Colony, and Azam Basti.

Speaking in this regard, Hamdard Foundation President Ms Sadia Rashid said that her organization's aim had always been to help and serve the suffer-

ing humanity. She further stated that by carrying forward the mission of Shaheed-e-Pakistan Hakim Mohammed Said, the Hamdard Foundation had been working since last several decades to distribute blankets and ration among needy people besides organizing free medical camps for them in different cities and districts of Pakistan.

In this regard, Director Admin & HR, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan Syed Muhammad Arsalan said that under the leadership of President Hamdard Foundation Ms Sadia Rashid, the relief work was being carried out with great effort for the welfare of suffering humanity.

As part of the relief program, free

medical camps were also set up in different areas of Sindh including Lok Bajer Methi, Goth Mokhai of Taluka Nagar Parker and Goth Lal Khan Leghari, where 1500 men and women were physically examined and medicines were also provided to the patients.

Apart from this, free medical camps were also set up in different areas of Balochistan, including Vendar, Daam, Goth Ghulam Muhammad and Goat Chakar where 700 people were examined by the qualified doctors of Hamdard Foundation.

This initiative of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan was greatly appreciated by the local population. Special prayers were offered for the success of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, which has been



an example of the welfare and goodness of humanity in the spirit of service to humanity in the past and in the future.

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Imran Khan's oration delivered at UN juxtaposed with Putin's discourse directed towards Western youth - I

Imran Khan's address on Islamophobia at the United Nations resonated as a masterstroke, compelling global leaders, including Putin, to contemplate the unification of discerning minds worldwide on pressing global issues. His speech catalyzed a paradigm shift in Western perceptions of Islam, prompting introspection among individuals. To truly grasp Imran Khan's caliber, one ought to acquaint oneself with Vladimir Putin's discourse delivered at the Youth Festival, which underscores the depth and breadth of Khan's impact on the global stage.

In the contemporary discourse on the Palestinian matter, a noteworthy observation emerges: a greater number of non-Muslims than adherents to Islam are spotlighting the hypocritical stance of their respective governments, ostensibly aligned with the plight of the oppressed Palestinians. Concurrently, various nations have instituted legislative measures deeming blasphemy a societal transgression against the sacrosanct realm of freedom of expression.

Vladimir Putin, in a compelling address to the youth of America and the Western hemisphere, has advocated a mindset akin to that propagated by Imran Khan, fostering a parallel ideological perspective.

In his discourse, Putin articulated,

"America is a notable and distinct nation in its own regard. The American populace managed to elevate it to the status of a superpower within merely 300 years, marking the briefest timeframe for such an ascension." He underscored the significance of renowned American politicians, tycoons, and cultural icons, acknowledging their exceptional abilities. Furthermore, he reminisced about the historical alliance between America and Russia during the conflicts against Nazism and Fascism, prompting contemplation on subsequent developments.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union, by means of their respective allies, embarked upon a geopolitical delineation, fostering international relations and shaping the contemporary framework of international law within the confines of a precarious balance of power. Subsequently, the Soviet Union succumbed to a myriad of factors, ultimately leading to its collapse.

The dissolution of Russia primarily stemmed from internal factors. With America emerging as the sole superpower, one may inquire about the advantage

reaped by your elite from such global dominance. Reflecting on the present global landscape, it appears evident that the United States has faltered in shouldering the weight of this obligation. The United States established a monopolistic framework and endeavored to fortify it. My discourse pertains to the American ruling class, distinct from the American populace.

As they sought to fortify their monopoly, they swiftly discerned widespread global disfavor toward their methods.

In the burgeoning global landscape, there exists palpable resistance towards the emerging world order, perceived by numerous nations, even among erstwhile allies, as inherently exploitative. Many countries, constrained by economic interdependence and multifaceted reliance, exhibit reticence, hesitating to voice dissent. This hesitancy extends to their media outlets, which often refrain from articulating deeper concerns. Indeed, it is evident that even allies of the United States harbor reservations towards this paradigm shift.

The American elite made the decision to discard the post-World War II international relations framework, asserting

their status as the sole superpower and advocating for reforms in international law. This shift was evident in actions such as the unapproved attacks on Iraq, Syria, and Yugoslavia, where authorization from the Security Council was bypassed. The consequences of these actions, particularly in Iraq, Syria, and Yugoslavia, reveal the unleashing of a disruptive force by the United States. This prompts the question: if such actions are permissible for one nation, why are others not afforded the same latitude to safeguard their fundamental interests? The Yugoslav situation, in particular, underscores the complexities and ramifications of this paradigm shift in global affairs.

My colleagues have iterated, albeit with variation, that notwithstanding the absence of Security Council endorsement, the protracted conflict spanning numerous years necessitated intervention to terminate the eight-year epoch of carnage. Furthermore, they argue that Russia's intervention in Donbas, where civilian casualties including children and elderly women were prevalent, was justified under the pretext of safeguarding its populace. Hence, they question the legitimacy of criticisms levied against Russia's assertion of sovereignty and defense of its citizenry.

To be continued



Analysis

Kiran Asim

Yarn Expo in Shanghai

As many as 18 Pakistani textile companies made a strong impression at the Yarn Expo Spring 2024 and Inter-textile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics-Spring Edition 2024, two of the world's most influential textile and apparel exhibitions, held in Shanghai, China. The Pakistani contingent, representing a diverse range of textile manufacturers and suppliers, showcased their latest products and innovative technologies, attracting significant interest from global buyers.

Participating companies, spanning the yarn, fabric, finished goods segments and accessories, exhibited a wide array of high-quality products, including cotton, polyester, blended yarns, wool carpets and specialty fabrics. Pakistan's textile industry has long been renowned for its quality, competitiveness and ability to meet the evolving demands of the global market. Hussain Haider, Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, while talking to China Economic Net at the expo expressed his pride and optimism regarding the strong participation of Pakistani textile companies at the two major exhibitions.

Highlighting the significance of the presence of the Pakistani textile industry at the expo, he stated that it was a testimony to the rich textile heritage of the country and its commitment to innovation and quality. Pakistan's textile industry has emerged as a leading exporter, generating US\$1.9 billion in annual exports, consolidating its position as the largest industry in the country, the Consul General pointed out. Pakistani textiles are known for their competitive pricing, making them an attractive option for buyers seeking quality products at affordable prices. This competitiveness is backed by the country's skilled workforce, efficient manufacturing processes, and strong supply chain network.

He further spoke about the growing collaboration between Pakistan and China in textile trade, highlighting Chinese investment in Pakistan, the exchange of technological know-how and Pakistan's intention to learn from China's innovation and management skills. He also emphasized the potential application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the textile industry.

In addition, the Consul General highlighted the role of exhibitions like Yarn Expo and Inter-textile Shanghai in promoting trade and cooperation between Pakistan and China. He said that such platforms provide excellent opportunities for Pakistani companies to network with industry peers, explore business opportunities, learn new trends, expand exports and strengthen their global presence. It is worth mentioning that many companies highlighted their eco-friendly manufacturing processes and commitment to sustainability, aligning with the global trend towards more environmentally conscious production by showcasing their sustainable products. Nadeem Waqar, Marketing Manager, Kohinoor Mills Ltd highlighted the need to adopt environmentally friendly manufacturing processes, use sustainable materials and reduce waste.



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

Upholding Democratic Values: Navigating Pakistan's Electoral Challenges

Fariha Rafiq

In recent decades, Pakistan has grappled with a tumultuous journey towards democratic governance. While the country has made significant strides, it continues to face multifaceted challenges that undermine the essence of democracy. These challenges, ranging from institutional fragility to socio-political turbulence, demand meticulous attention and proactive measures to safeguard democratic principles.

One of the foremost obstacles to democracy in Pakistan is the recurring dominance of the military establishment in political affairs. Despite periods of civilian rule, military interventions have disrupted democratic processes, impeding the development of robust democratic institutions. The interference of non-elected actors in governance undermines the people's right to choose their representatives freely and erodes trust in democratic institutions.

Moreover, Pakistan's democracy suffers from systemic corruption, which corrodes public trust and undermines the rule of law. The nexus between political elites and vested interests perpetuates a culture of impunity, hindering accountability mechanisms and obstructing the delivery of essential services to citizens. This culture of corruption not only undermines democratic values but also exacerbates socio-economic disparities, widening the gap between the ruling elite and the marginalized populace.

Pakistan's democratic journey is a tapestry woven with threads of resilience and struggle. Yet, recent events underscore the persistent challenges that threaten to unravel the fabric of democratic governance. From historical precedents to contemporary electoral dynamics, the trajectory of democracy in Pakistan is a nuanced

narrative that demands a critical examination. Historically, Pakistan has witnessed a recurrent cycle of military interventions that have disrupted democratic processes and weakened institutional frameworks. Despite transitions to civilian rule, the specter of military influence looms large over the political landscape, casting a shadow on the democratic aspirations of the Pakistani people.

The 2018 general elections, hailed as a milestone for democracy, were marred by allegations of electoral malpractice and manipulation. Instances of vote rigging and irregularities tarnished the credibility of the electoral process, undermining public confidence in democratic institutions. The controversy surrounding the 2018 elections serves as a stark reminder of the fragility of Pakistan's electoral democracy and the imperative for reform.

Furthermore, Pakistan's democratic fabric is frayed by systemic corruption, which permeates every echelon of society and erodes trust in governance. Recent scandals, such as the Panama Papers leak, exposed the extent of corruption among political elites, reinforcing perceptions of a kleptocratic ruling class disconnected from the plight of ordinary citizens.

Ethnic and sectarian tensions continue to pose formidable challenges to Pakistan's democratic stability, exacerbating social divisions and impeding national cohesion. The politicization of identity and the exploitation of sectarian grievances by opportunistic politicians fuel a cycle of violence and mistrust, undermining efforts to foster a pluralistic and inclusive democracy.

In the face of these challenges, there are glimmers of hope and avenues for reform. The recent emergence of youth-led movements and civil society activism signals a growing appetite for change and a demand for greater accountability and transparency in governance. Grass-

roots initiatives, such as the Aurat March and Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, underscore the potential of bottom-up mobilization to drive meaningful democratic reform.

Moreover, Pakistan can draw inspiration from its own history of democratic resilience, exemplified by the restoration of the judiciary in 2009 and the peaceful transfer of power in 2013. These moments of triumph demonstrate the power of democratic institutions and the resilience of the Pakistani people in the face of adversity.

Moving forward, concerted efforts are needed to strengthen democratic institutions, safeguard electoral integrity, and combat corruption. Electoral reforms, including the depoliticization of electoral bodies and the introduction of stringent oversight mechanisms, are essential to restoring public trust in the electoral process.

Additionally, fostering interfaith harmony, promoting social cohesion, and addressing socio-economic disparities are imperative for building a more inclusive and resilient democracy. By investing in education, empowering marginalized communities, and promoting dialogue and reconciliation, Pakistan can forge a path towards a more equitable and participatory democratic system.

In conclusion, Pakistan stands at a crossroads in its democratic journey, facing formidable challenges yet brimming with potential for renewal and reform. By drawing on its rich history of democratic struggle and harnessing the collective will of its people, Pakistan can overcome its democratic deficits and emerge stronger and more vibrant than ever before. The road ahead may be fraught with obstacles, but with determination, courage, and a steadfast commitment to democratic values, Pakistan can realize its democratic aspirations and chart a course towards a brighter future for generations to come.

Traffic issues in Multan

The current traffic situation in Multan city has deteriorated significantly, with problems escalating rather than being addressed. Unfortunately, it appears that the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) is not fully aware of the severity of these issues. This lack of awareness, combined with the irresponsibility of traffic wardens, has resulted in frequent and prolonged traffic jams on both major thoroughfares and smaller streets throughout the city.

The consequences of these traffic jams are far-reaching and impact various aspects of daily life for residents and commuters. Businesses may suffer from delays in receiving goods and services, employees may struggle to reach their workplaces on time, and students may face difficulties attending classes punctually. Furthermore, emergency services such as ambulances and fire trucks may encounter delays in reaching their destinations, potentially jeopardizing lives in critical situations.

The escalating traffic problems in Multan are not only causing inconvenience but also impacting the mental well-being of its citizens. The lack of effective action from the administration in addressing these issues is indeed concerning and reflects a disregard for the plight of the people. It is distressing to hear that citizens are experiencing such extreme levels of frustration and stress that they are developing psychological symptoms. This situation underscores the urgent need for the administration to prioritize resolving the traffic congestion problem and implementing measures to alleviate the burden on the residents. The administration must recognize the severity of the situation and take immediate steps to improve traffic management, such as increasing the presence of traffic wardens,

implementing better traffic control measures, and investing in infrastructure improvements. Additionally, efforts should be made to engage with the community and seek their input on potential solutions.

It's alarming to write that the traffic signals in Multan have been inactive for years, contributing to unsafe road conditions and increasing the likelihood of accidents. In rush

hours the absence of traffic wardens further exacerbates the situation, allowing wrong side driving to become a common occurrence, which poses significant risks to road safety. To effectively address these traffic issues, the administration must take decisive action to end the obstruction and enforce traffic regulations rigorously. Strict enforcement of laws against wrong side driving, particularly at critical locations like Katchary Chowk, is essential to prevent accidents and improve overall traffic safety. Additionally, it's crucial for the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) to actively patrol the city on a daily basis, staying informed about the challenges faced by the people firsthand. This proactive approach can help identify problem areas and implement targeted solutions to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance road safety measures.

To address these pressing issues effectively, it is crucial for the authorities, including the CTO and traffic wardens, to acknowledge the gravity of the situation and take proactive measures to alleviate traffic congestion. This may involve implementing better traffic management strategies, improving infrastructure such as roads and intersections, and increasing public awareness of traffic rules and regulations. Additionally, regular monitoring and enforcement of traffic laws are essential to ensure compliance and maintain smooth traffic flow in Multan city.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

ISSI welcomes Ambassador of Russian Federation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) welcomed H. E. Albert P. Khorev, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, for his inaugural visit. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, the Director-General of ISSI, chaired the meeting, which was attended by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) ISSI; Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP); and Mr. Taimur Khan, Research Associate at CSP-ISSI.

Extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Khorev, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood hoped that Pakistan-Russia relations would continue to grow during his tenure. He also highlighted the Institute's history as well as scope of work and ISSI's activities reinforcing closer Pakistan-Russia relations.

During the discussion, both sides expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Russia bilat-



al relations, cooperation on regional issues, and collaboration in multilateral fora. Noting multiple complementarities, the two sides acknowledged the importance of exploring new avenues for mutually-beneficial cooperation, particularly in the economic, trade, energy, security, and people-to-people domains. The reinforcement of ties

through close collaboration in forums such as SCO was highlighted. Russia's chairmanship of BRICS this year and Pakistan's interest in BRICS membership were also discussed.

It was also agreed to pursue activities that would help promote closer interface between scholars, area specialists and academics as well as

think-tanks on both sides to foster deeper mutual understanding and strengthen ties between Pakistan and Russia.

The meeting concluded with Ambassador Khalid Mahmood presenting the Institute's memento to Ambassador Khorev on his maiden visit to ISSI and a group photograph.

Ikram Sehgal's 'Terms of Frustration' series launched in Abu Dhabi



PPA

ABU DHABI: Under the patronage of HH Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Cabinet Member and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, the Pakistan Business Professional Council (PBPC) hosted the book launch of "Terms of Frustration," the 13th volume of Ikram Sehgal's series, "A Personal Chronicle of Pakistan" on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at the Le Royal Meridien Abu Dhabi. Dr. Qaiser Anis, the Founding President of the PBPC, welcomed the assembled guests and dignitaries highlighting the collective efforts of the council in promoting Pakistan's interests and various initiatives, such as vocational training for Pakistani workers and efforts to reduce the cost of doing business.

Expressing his admiration and respect for Ikram Sehgal, HH Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan acknowledged his contributions to Pakistan, praising his wisdom, intellectual capacity, and courage. Highlighting the importance of Ikram Sehgal's book, he said, "It is a work of both current and historical importance offering readers an invaluable perspective on Pakistan's journey." He called it an outstanding series that documents personal thoughts and experiences related to Pakistan enhancing its history and position in world affairs.

"A Personal Chronicle of Pakistan" meticulously chronicles significant events and lesser-known anecdotes from 1980 to 2020. Comprising over 7570 pages, this includes over 2000 articles, offering readers a journey through the nation's socio-political evolution. Each volume explores key events and sheds light on the country's social, political, and economic landscape. It is a vital reference for understanding Pakistan's trajectory and shaping its future.

A defense and security analyst, Ikram Sehgal shared his profound experience as a former Pakistan army officer. His previous works include "Escape from Oblivion" and "Blood over Different Shades of Green". Expressing his deep gratitude and admiration for HH Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, he highlighted their journey over the past 25 years. He acknowledged the invaluable guidance and encouragement he has received, particularly regarding the complexities of corporate governance and banking. He also expressed a desire to preserve this history of their shared experiences, emphasizing the importance of HH's contribution as UAE's Minister of Higher Education for over 25 years to shaping the UAE's success in education.

PBPC extend its heartfelt appreciation to all supporters, collaborators, and attendees who contributed to the success of this momentous event.

Pakistan, Danish envoys to EU discuss issues of mutual interest



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Anma Baloch on Tuesday called on Permanent Representative of Denmark to the EU, Carsten Gronbeck-Jensen. In the meeting, they held "interesting" discussions on the issues of mutual interest in the light of international developments, the embassy wrote on its X timeline.

China, Iran, Russia hold joint naval drills near Gulf of Oman



Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The navies of China, Iran, and Russia are holding joint naval drills in the Gulf of Oman from March 11 to 15, the Ministry of National Defense of China announced.

The drills, dubbed "Security Bond-2024," were aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation and safeguarding regional peace and stability, according to the ministry.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy sent three ships to participate in the drills, including the guided-missile destroyer Urumqi, the guided-missile frigate Linyi, and the comprehensive supply ship Dongpinghu.

The drills were held in accordance with the annual plan and the consensus reached by all parties. They were organized and implemented in the vicinity of the Gulf of Oman, the ministry said.

P@SHA Chairman, PSEB CEO welcome equity acquisition in SuperNova by Saudi Arabia-based investor group

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Aisha Moriani, CEO of Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), said that it is a pivotal investment into Pakistan's IT industry—and, SuperNova Solutions will represent Pakistan's IT industry and its private-sector's capabilities on an international scale. Joint efforts of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), PSEB and P@SHA are producing tangible results, she added.

Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), has welcomed the equity partnership of Saudi Arabia-based investors with Pakistan's SuperNova Solutions; and, apprised that Pakistan is fast emerging as the next big tech destination internationally.

Mr. Rashid Hakeem, Chief Executive of SuperNova Solutions, apprised that the investment is one of its kind and a substantive leap forward in Pakistan's investment landscape. This investment makes us go global; establish a strategic presence in the regional IT market and encourage



other investors to embark on more partnerships, collaborations and JVs. The partnership will enhance Pakistan's competitiveness, digital transformation and ERP implementation competencies, services & exports, he added.

Muhammad Ghazali, Saudi Arabia-based investor, specifically thanked Khaled Saad Al-Sabti—a key investor from Saudi Arabia in IT & tech sectors—for investing into Pakistan's IT sector. His trust and confidence in Pakistan will bring a renewed

attention of the world investors into Pakistan's IT industry, he added.

Mr. Ghazali highlighted the strategic rationale behind the move as SuperNova will become an important part of the Saudi group's investment portfolio. He highlighted that Saudi Arabia is rapidly progressing towards its Vision 2030 goals; and, digital transformation has emerged as a key enabler, revolutionizing industries; government services and societal interactions.

Noman Khan, a renowned techpreneur & an investor in the deal, stressed that the acquisition aligns perfectly with our vision of driving digital transformation and innovation. By combining our resources and expertise; we are well-positioned to help businesses harness the power of ERP solutions to achieve their strategic objectives, he added.

Backed by a well-established track record of over two decades and a reputation for excellence, SuperNova Solutions is a trusted source for cutting-edge ERP solutions and related programs.

Federal Ombudsman disposes of 193,030 complaints

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman office (Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat) has disposed of 193,030 complaints, which is 22 percent higher than the previous year. Briefing the delegation of Associated Press of Pakistan's (APP) Youth Media Training Program (YMTTP), Senior Advisor, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Moiz Bokhari said that during the outgoing year 2023, this office received and processed a record number of complaints which stood at 194,106 that is 18% higher than the preceding years.

Federal Ombudsman disposes of 193,030 complaints He said that a system of strict monitoring, follow up and verification of the implementation of each and every decision was in place and an impressive implementation rate of 85.4% was recorded in 2023, adding that 88% complaints were disposed of within the prescribed limit of 60 days.

The senior advisor informed the delegation that the officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Office were dispensing justice to the people at their doorsteps. Our Investigation Officers visited the remote and far off areas of the country and decided 3149 cases, which spared the complainants from taking the trouble of visiting the Wafaqi Mohtasib office at the headquarters or the major cities of the country, he added. Dilating on the international linkages of this office, the senior advisor observed that the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib was an active member of the International Ombudsman's Institute (IOI) the OIC Ombudsman Association (AOA) (OICOA)



and the Asian Ombudsman Association.

Federal Ombudsman disposes of 193,030 complaints He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib was re-elected unopposed as President of the AOA by the General Assembly of the Asian Ombudsman Association, which was a 47-member strong professional body of Ombudsmen of the Asian Region representing more than two third of the world population, which was indeed a great honour for the country. He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat was often referred to as the poor man's court since it strives to bring administrative justice to the people especially to those belonging to the marginalized and deprived segments of the population. He said that owing to the hard work and dedication of our officers and by employing instruments like the Khuli Katcharies and the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) programmes,

this office had been able to redress large number of public complaints, thereby providing relief to a sizeable segment of the people in a hassle-free manner.

It was started in April 2022 in some offices but latter extended to other as well in view of its massive success in speedy resolution of public problems. He said that there was a great deal of improvement in redressing the public complaints which are lately exhibiting an upward trend due to increase in population and other factors. He elaborated that during the year 2022 this office received 164,174 complaints, which swelled to 194,099 in 2023 which is, a reflection of the public trust and confidence in this office.

He particularly referred to the steps taken for resolution of the problems and welfare of the Overseas Pakistanis, pensioners and prisoners specially the women and juvenile prisoners in jails, which resulted in

considerably improving their lot. He informed that now there were 18 Regional Offices and four Complaints Collection Centers, covering nearly the entire length of the country.

Advisor (Appraisal) Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat Shahid Hamayyun, Advisor Media Inam Ul Haq Javed, Registrar Muhammad Saqib Khan and Director General Admin Muhammad Safdar also briefed the delegation. Incharge APP's Youth Media Training Program and Additional Director APP's Video News Service (VNS) Yawar Abbas informed that the APP had been serving the nation since 1947 by providing an accurate and uninterrupted flow of news to the people. He said that under the dynamic leadership of present Managing Director APP, Muhammad Asim Khichi, the national news service was implementing a comprehensive strategy to transform the existing news operations into a

forward-looking service which was APP Digital Service for its diverse subscribers and the general public.

He said that on the direction of MD APP the digital service had been striving to serve as a rich online source of information for latest news, reports, analytic write-ups on Pakistan, and events and issues of regional and international importance. He added all APP services were being made available on a range of digital platforms. Adhering to the guiding principles, as per its Charter, the APP, aims at providing authentic news content through its multiple platforms within the shortest possible time, to the widest possible audience.

He said that the APP's Youth Media Training Program was launched as per vision of the government of Pakistan and on the direction of the MD APP, realizing its responsibility as major national media organization to impart training to unskilled educated youth, with having objective to polish their skills so that they can earn for their families on completion of training. He said that this training program offered an unparalleled opportunity to acquire hands-on expertise in key facets of media, shaping the next generation of media industry leaders.

He added the initiative was actually a transformative journey for the country's youth with a government news agency. He said that Youth Media Training Program was a premier initiative tailored for students of journalism and media. With this training program, students can seize a chance to propel their media career to new heights.

Multan Sultans crush Quetta Gladiators to set Qualifier clash with Peshawar Zalmi

A Sports

KARACHI: An all-round performance led Multan Sultans to ease past Quetta Gladiators by a massive margin of 79 runs in the 30th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here at National Bank Stadium on Tuesday.

The emphatic victory helped Sultans to reclaim the top spot in the PSL 9 standings with 14 points and also booked their Qualifiers clash with Peshawar Zalmi, who moved to second with a point less.

More to follow...

Put into bat first, the Sultans registered a formidable total on the board, courtesy of a collective effort from their batters.

The Sultans, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as they lost their opener Yasir Khan (12) in the third over with just 16 runs on the board.

Following the early blow, in-form Usman Khan joined Mohammad



Rizwan in the middle and knitted an anchoring partnership.

Their second-wicket stand yielded 52 runs before Abrar Ahmed cleaned up Usman with a quicker delivery.

Usman managed 21 off 23 deliveries, hitting three boundaries.

Meanwhile, Rizwan stood his ground firm and partnered strongly with Johnson Charles to put Sultans in control.

They added 65 runs for the third wicket before Rizwan fell victim to Mohammad Amir in the 17th over.

He remained the top-scorer for the Sultans with a 47-ball 69 which featured one boundary and four sixes.

Later, Iftikhar Ahmed joined forces with set-batter Charles and bolstered the Sultans' total with belligerent hitting.

The duo added a quickfire 46 runs to the tally before Charles finally perished in the final over.

He remained a notable run-getter for the Sultans with 53 off 29 deliveries, hitting six boundaries and three sixes.

Iftikhar, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through with an unbeaten 20 off eight deliveries which included two boundaries and a six.

Mohammad Amir led the bowling charge for Quetta Gladiators with two wickets but was expensive while Abrar and Akeal Hosen and Mohammad Wasim Jr picked one each.

Pakistan Day Celebration Marks Exciting 70 km Cycling Race

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: In commemoration of Pakistan Day, the Punjab Cycling Association and Punjab Olympic Association collaborated to organize a thrilling 70 km cycling race. The event took place with great enthusiasm, featuring 61 cyclists from various corners of the country, including participants from the Pakistan Army, Pakistan WAPDA, Railways, Higher Education Commission, and other talented athletes.

The race kicked off at the historic Punjab Stadium in Lahore, extending to a challenging route towards Kasur and concluding at Kalma Chowk Lahore. Notable dignitaries, including the esteemed Sports Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar as the Chief Guest, along with Secretary Punjab Olympic Association Idrees Haider Khawaja and Chairman Punjab Cycling Association Moazzam Khan Klair, graced the occasion.

Pakistan Army emerged triumphant in the competition, with Amir securing



the first position, followed by Bilal in second place and Arsalan clinching the third spot. Adeel from Punjab claimed the fourth position, while Husnain from the Army and Shakeel secured the fifth

and sixth positions, respectively.

Sports Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar, showing his support for the athletes, attended the event and actively encouraged the participants. He personally

distributed medals, trophies, and cash prizes, motivating the cyclists to achieve greater heights in their sporting endeavors. Expressing his passion for cycling, Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar announced his intention to participate as a player in the upcoming races. This commitment was met with approval and appreciation from officials and athletes alike, setting a positive example for the sporting community.

Secretary Punjab Olympic Association Idrees Haider Khawaja, Chairman Punjab Cycling Association Moazzam Khan Klair, and other distinguished guests, including Waqar Ali, Shahzada Butt, Shakawat Shah, Qaiser Masih, Umar Butt, and Amjad Khan, were present to witness and support the event.

In concluding the festivities, Moazzam Khan Klair extended gratitude to everyone involved and commended the efforts of the media, Punjab Police, and rescue teams for their valuable contributions to the success of the event.

Union Club Essity Tennis Championships concludes

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The inaugural Union Club-Essity Tennis Championship concludes at the hard courts of Union Club. Mr. Shafiq Ahmed, Finance Manager Essity Pharmaceutical Pvt. Ltd. was the chief guest at the Closing Ceremony.

In his speech Shafiq Ahmed emphasized on the need to generate more and more physical sports activities for the youth of country for the wellbeing of society.

Muhammad Khalid Rehmani, President Karachi Tennis Association, thanked Sponsor for supporting tennis. He also thanked Union Club for allowing KTA to hold the tournament at Union Club. In his speech he highlighted the performance of Karachi Division's Tennis Teams Male and Female, which performed excellently in 18th Sindh Games. He also thanked all the guests from various walks of life who graced the Closing Ceremony.

KTA also awarded Excellence Trophies to the Karachi Division's 18th Sindh Games tennis Gold and Silver medalists,



One performance Shield was presented to Fida Hussain Pakistan, s Number One Wheelchair Tennis Player who won all the five additions of Commissioner Karachi Marathons wheelchair races.

KTA also presented shields of recognitions to Saeed Ahmed, Naila Jawad, and Naseem Bukhari for their contributions to promote tennis in country,

Prominent present were, Ahmed Ali Rajpoot, SOA, Shakil Aslam KTA, Altaf Hussain STA, Veena Masood, Swimming, Nargis Rehmatullah, Swimming, Javed Rao PIH, Ghulam Yaseen, Kabbadi, Muhammad Saeed Dart, Saeed Ahmed, Rotary and KTA, Ayazuddin Qazi Rotary, Abdul Hameed Karate, Naila Jawad, KTA, Erum Bukhari, Beach Tennis, Raisa

Ashfaq, KTA, Perween Akhter KTA, Humaira Qazi, Rotary, Naseem Bukhari Rotary & KTA Ishrat Zehra, KTA, Amberen. DPE, Ali Asgher. DPE, Umer Farooq, promotor, Jahangir Alam, Cycling, Kalimawan Cycling, Masood Akhter, GBSS, Nafes Ahmed, GBSS, Shagufta Samadani, KTA, Aqeel Ahmed Rotary, and many more.

Final results,

Men's Singles Final
Farhan Altaf beat Aftab Ismail 6-3, 6-0
Under 15 Singles Final
Shamoon Hidayat beat Ismail Aftab 6-1, 7-6
Ladies Singles Final
Eschelle Asif beat Tahreem Yousuf 8-1
Mens Doubles Final
Rayan Ahmed and Mahateer Muhammad beat Muhammad ali and Zubair Raja 8-2
Under 13 Singles
Tariq Rafi Winner (Round Robin)
Under 11 Singles Final
Tariq Rafi beat Qazi ahyar 4-0, 4-1
Under 8 Final
Azan Imran beat Sophie 10-4, 10-6.

Rafael Nadal expected back on the clay at Monte Carlo

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Rafael Nadal is set to make his return to the ATP Tour on the clay courts of Monte Carlo next month, tournament organisers announced on Tuesday.

"You never know what he's going to do, but I saw him training with his coaches on a private court... and I had the impression I was listening to a wild beast. He hits like he's never hit before," said tournament director David Massey at a press conference in Paris.

"He felt some discomfort, so he was scared and decided not to play at Indian Wells, but the tests he underwent showed nothing," he added.

Rafael Nadal, with 22 Grand Slam titles to his name, has dropped to 652nd in the ATP rankings this week and used a protected ranking of ninth to get into



the main draw in Monte Carlo, the first clay-court Masters 1000 event of the 2024 season.

The clay specialist has won the tournament 11 times in his career but since

his last victory in 2018, he fell at the semi-finals in 2019, the quarters in 2021 and missed the 2020, 2022 and 2023 editions.

"We sent him two boxes of balls to

Mallorca so that he could practise (with the balls that will be used in the tournament)," said Massey.

Nadal missed almost all of the 2023 season with abdominal and other injuries and has played only the Brisbane International this season, where he suffered a flare-up of a hip injury.

The 37-year-old Spaniard was set to make his comeback at the Indian Wells Masters but pulled out of the hard-court event last week without playing a point.

The bombshell decision came four days after he lost a Las Vegas exhibition to compatriot and world number two Carlos Alcaraz.

The Monte Carlo Masters begins on April 7 and marks the beginning of the clay-court season where Rafael Nadal may well play his last-ever French Open, a Grand Slam event he has won a record 14 times.

Tickets refund for HBL PSL 9 washout games to begin on Wednesday

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will start tickets refund on Wednesday for the HBL PSL 9 washout games, which were abandoned on March 2 at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi. The refund will start at designated TCS centres in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar and Lahore, said a press release.



The refunds will take place between March 13 to 20. Any claim later than the set date will not be entitled to a refund. As communicated before, tickets purchased through TCS Express centres will require the buyers to present the original CNIC used for purchasing tickets, along with the physical tickets. Refunds for tickets purchased online will directly be credited to the buyers' respective bank accounts without the provision to present physical tickets. Tickets purchased through a corporate entity will only be refunded to the corporate entity. Given below is the detail of the designated TCS centers for tickets refund. Ticket buyers can visit them from Wednesday onwards between 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

- TCS Area Office Khanna, Rawalpindi
- TCS Saddar Express Center, Rawalpindi
- TCS Area Office I-9, Islamabad
- TCS Area Office, Peshawar
- TCS Gulberg Office, Lahore

Shan Masood not satisfied with his performance in HBL PSL 9 season

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The captain of Karachi Kings Shan Masood on Tuesday expressed his satisfaction over his team's performance in the ongoing HBL PSL 9.



During a press conference after a thrilling match against Peshawar Zalmi, Masood stated that Karachi Kings played good cricket throughout the tournament.

"I am satisfied with the performance of Karachi Kings in this season. We lost two close games, which we could have won if we avoided small mistakes. But this is part of the game," said the left-handed batter.

"Our team was hit with an unfortunate situation with 13 of our players falling ill in the middle of the tournament. It dented our plans as we had to make changes to our combination.

"Meanwhile, we also had to rely on other results, but they did not go in our favour."

Talking about his own performance, Shan Masood expressed disappointment over his batting performance.

"I admit that I could not perform at my best this season. I have given performances in previous seasons of HBL PSL and wanted to replicate them in this season, but unfortunately, it did not happen," he remarked.

Football team training camp underway



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Football team has commenced its training camp in preparation for the highly anticipated FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Jordan. Under the supervision of head coach Stephen Constantine, the team was diligently honing their skills and tactics for the upcoming encounter.

Goalkeeping coaches Rogerio Ramos and Nauman Ibrahim have been dedicating their efforts to the goalkeepers, while fitness coach Claudio Altieri is ensuring peak performance in preparation for the crucial match. The training camp, currently underway in Lahore would span over the next few days before moving to Islamabad, where the team will continue their preparations. Scheduled for March 2, the home encounter would take place here at Jinnah Stadium, followed by an away fixture in Jordan on March.

Pakistan squad (Probables)-Goal-Keepers: Salman Ul Haq, Saqib Hanif, Hassan Ali and Abdul Basit; Defenders: Mamoon Moosa Khan, Muhammad Sohail, Junaid Shah, Umar Hayat Haseeb Khan, M. Saddam, Muhammad Hamza Munir, Kamil Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Adeel; Midfielders: Alamgir Ghazi, Rajab Ali, Ali Uzair, Mo'in Ahmad, Zaid Umer, M Zahid Shah and Ali Zafar; Forwards: Shayek Dost, Fareed Ullah, Muhammad Waleed Khan, Muhammad Waheed, Muhammad Adeel Younas and Yasir Arafat.

PSL 9 observes Golden Ribbon Day for childhood cancer awareness

A Sports

KARACHI: As per the initiative of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 will observe 'Golden Ribbon Day' on Tuesday for the childhood cancer awareness campaign.

As a result, the match between Quetta Gladiators and Multan Sultans scheduled on 12 March at the Pindi Cricket Stadium here will be marked by Golden Ribbon Day creating awareness regarding childhood cancer.

The teams will wear golden ribbons and golden caps while the commentators will also put on golden ribbons meanwhile messages regarding childhood cancer awareness will be displayed on the big screen and also announced during the commentary.

The PCB also invited four cancer patients on this occasion to attend the Gold Ribbon Day in Karachi and they were presented with signed shirts from both the teams.

Furthermore, the players of both Quetta Gladiators and Multan Sultans also interacted with the young cancer warriors and posed with them for pictures.

"Today we are celebrating Cancer's youngest warriors and survivors by wearing golden ribbons," wrote PSL on X, formerly Twitter. "[Quetta Gladiators] and [Multan Sultans] players interacted with the little superstars," the statement added.

Fateha

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fateha at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

President Zardari pays visit to Mazar-e-Quaid

Dastagir Bhatti

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari, Tuesday, paid a visit to mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay respect to the Father of the Nation after assuming office of the president of Pakistan. It was Asif Ali Zardari's first visit to Karachi after assuming charge of the office of the president of Pakistan for the second time.

President Zardari laid a floral wreath at the grave of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and

offered Fateha. He also penned down comments in the book of visitors. Asif Ali Zardari, at the occasion, was received by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Provincial president PPP Sindh Nisar Ahmed Khuhro and other senior officers of Sindh government. Earlier, on his arrival at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a smartly turned out contingent of cadets from the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul presented guard of honour to the President Asif Ali Zardari.

Jam Kamal Khan assumes Office as Federal Minister for Commerce

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jam Kamal Khan officially on Tuesday assumed his duties as the Federal Minister for Commerce, marking a new chapter in his political career. He was received by Federal Secretary for Commerce, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Khurram Agha at the Ministry, said a press release issued here.

The Minister brings a wealth of experience to his new role. During his inaugural briefing, the Ministry's scope and objectives were outlined. Minister Khan emphasized focus on growth, investment and the need to fully facilitate both local and foreign investors, believing that Pakistan can achieve significant strides through an inclusive approach. He expressed his commitment, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, to overcoming the country's economic challenges. Emphasizing his dedication to enhancing trade volume, the Minister identified key sectors like mining, livestock, and textiles as areas for modernization. He highlighted the importance of aligning with global standards and adopting modern practices. The Minister further emphasized the need to move beyond conventional trade



approaches and embrace proactive measures to improve Pakistan's position in the global market. The Minister noted a communication received from Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the former Minister for Commerce. Both agreed on the importance of establishing a closer relationship between the business community and the Ministry of Commerce. Jam Kamal Khan hails from NA-257 Lasbela and served as Chief Minister, Balochistan. His political journey began with two terms as District Nazim of Lasbela, followed by his election to the National Assembly in 2013. He notably served as Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Resources under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Mr. Khan's leadership qualities were evident when he was elected as the first president of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) in 2018.

PM Shehbaz calls for cementing Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has underlined the need for enhancing bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Turkiye in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, defence, connectivity and culture.

He was talking to Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, who paid a courtesy call on him in Islamabad today.

He emphasized that both the countries enjoyed exemplary bilateral relations which are based on shared history, religion and culture and are unshakable. The Prime Minister said both countries need to work together to achieve the



annual target of five billion dollars in bilateral trade.

On core issues, the Prime Minister said Pakistan deeply appreciates Turkiye's firm and consistent support for the

oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's support to Turkiye on the issue of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The Turkiye's Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on his re-election and conveyed best wishes from the leadership of Turkiye and emphasized the importance of

strengthening the fraternal ties between both countries.

The Prime Minister deeply appreciated the congratulatory telephone call and message of felicitations from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan immediately after his re-election.

In this regard, he congratulated Turkiye on the successful flight of KAAAN 5th generation fighter aircraft.

The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to President Erdogan to visit Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said the people of Pakistan look forward to the visit which would provide a useful opportunity for both the sides to carry out extensive consultations during the 7th session of High Level Strategic Coordination Council.

India's homemade fighter jet crashes in Rajasthan

Reuters

NEW DELHI: Tejas, a domestically made fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force, crashed on Tuesday in the western state of Rajasthan, the first such incident since the jet was inducted nearly eight years ago. The pilot ejected safely, the air force said in a statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been pushing for local manufacturing as India seeks to shed its reputation as one of the world's biggest importers of defence equipment.

The light combat jet, called Tejas, meaning flame or brilliance in Sanskrit, was inducted into the force in 2016 after a long wait in India's efforts to modernise its largely Soviet-era fleet.

Tuesday's crash breaks the jet's safety record since its first test flight more than two decades ago, an air force officer told Reuters.

Modi set out big ambitions last year to more than triple the value of annual defence exports to \$5 billion by 2025 from 2023 levels and his government has been making diplomatic efforts to export the Tejas. The Indian government in 2021 gave a \$6 billion contract to state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for 83 Tejas jets.

Navy recovers bodies of remaining missing fishermen

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy (PN) and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) have recovered the bodies of the remaining four missing fishermen from the boat which sank last week, said a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

At least 14 fishermen were reported missing on Wednesday after the ill-fated boat overturned near Thatta. The boat, named Al-Asad, had a crew of around 45 fishermen, out of which 31 were rescued after the incident. On March 5, a search and rescue operation was commenced by PN and PMSA. Despite challenging conditions, such as dense marine traffic, choppy seas, and the passage of time, the rescue team was able to recover the bodies of 10 fishermen who had been missing.

In a joint operation by the Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, the remaining bodies of the fishermen were recovered. The statement said that Pakistan Navy and PMSA initiated the rescue operation using helicopters, maritime vessels, and fast boats. All the bodies of the missing fishermen have been recovered from the sea and handed over to the relevant authorities, it added.

IIUI rector & president felicitate Muslims on commencement of Ramadan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), Rector Dr. Dr. Samina Malik and President, IIUI, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotai and have wished to the Muslims in Pakistan and around the world a blessed and peaceful Ramadan.

In a joint felicitation message, both IIUI Rector and President have urged the Muslim youth to disseminate Islam's message of peace adding that fasting is all about patience, virtue and peace.

They said the Holy month of Ramadan is an opportunity to get rid of societal issues and mal practices as it makes the minds, souls and actions as limpid as water. IIUI leadership hoped that Muslims across the world would be able to make Allah almighty happy and get his blessings by practicing the true spirit of the great month.

The message added that poor, ill and helpless people must not be left alone in this month of blessings and they should be given top priority.

Mushaal inaugurates Iftar table at PIMS hospital



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hurriyat leader Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Tuesday inaugurated the Maari Petroleum and CDRS Iftar table at PIMS hospital and around the world a blessed and peaceful Ramadan.

Mushaal Mullick, wife of detained Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, broke the fast with families of the patients,

said a press release. Talking to media, she appreciated the administration of Maari Dastarkhan for advancing this good act in such an organized manner. Mashaal felicitating the Muslims of the whole world, especially the oppressed people of Kashmir and Palestine on Ramadan, said, "The world of Islam remember your oppressed brothers and sisters in these blessed days." She said the message of Ramadan is to include the deprived class in joy and serve them with dignity.

Naval Chief calls on Prime Minister



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here. The Naval Chief congratulated the Prime Minister on assumption of the office, according to a PM Office press release.

In the meeting, they discussed the professional matters related to the Pakistan Navy.

Govt imposes ban on Imran Khan's meetings, media coverage

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab's interior ministry has banned all meetings with prisoners in Adiala Jail, including Imran Khan, following the threat of a terrorist attack.

The decision was made after intelligence agencies told the government that Adiala Jail could be attacked by terrorists.

After the orders, media coverage in front of Adiala Jail's gate no. 5 has also been banned.

The jail is currently housing many high-profile prisoners including former Prime Minister Imran Khan and former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

The jail administration had set aside Tuesday and Thursday as meeting days for Imran Khan. Party leaders, lawyers and family members have all regularly met him in jail.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and Fawad Chaudhry are also imprisoned in the same jail.

The development comes less than a week after police claimed that a major terrorist plan involving Adiala Jail had been foiled.

Police claimed that three terrorists had been apprehended and moved to a 'safe' location. The terrorists reportedly had weapons as well as maps of the jail with them.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's nominated opposition leader Omar Ayub Khan had also recently claimed that he had been denied permission by the jail authorities to meet Khan despite court orders.

The PTI leader had held the jails' superintendent responsible for the permission being denied and also announced that the party would move a resolution in the

assembly regarding the matter.

Imran Khan was arrested on August 5 from his Lahore residence, minutes after an Islamabad court declared him guilty of corrupt practices in the Toshakhana case. Originally incarcerated in Atoock Jail, he was moved to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi on September 26.

Since his imprisonment, Khan has not been seen in public and has not even been brought to court hearings.

Instead, judges and lawyers have travelled to court for the trial. The government maintains that the jail trial was made due to security concerns.

Days before the general election this year, Khan was sentenced to jail for 10 years in the cipher case, seven years in the illegal nikkah case and 14 years in the Toshakhana reference.

Disqualification case against Gandapur is premeditated, says PTI's Marwat

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The disqualification case against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister was premeditated as it was not filed before the general elections, PTI lawmaker Sher Afzal Marwat has claimed.

"Gandapur is not acceptable to them and when he was nominated [as the KP CM], even then former prime minister Imran Khan was pressurised," he said in an interview with Shaukat Piracha on his show Rubaroo aired on Aaj News on Tuesday.

He was speaking about a petition filed in the Election Commission of Pakistan, seeking disqualification of the KP CM for acquiring a piece of land in Dera Ismail Khan.

The country's top electoral authority has fixed the case for hearing and asked Gandapur to appear before the district election commissioner on March 26.

The petitioner is JUI-F leader Muhammad Kafeel who contested elections as a member provincial assembly on February 8.

Marwat claimed that he had background knowledge related to the case, citing it as linked to the developments shared by party MPA Asif Khan, the son of Dost Muhammad Khan.

"Asif Khan learned that some people were searching for him and maybe he would be abducted concerning the same land for which Gandapur's disqualification is sought. They perhaps tried to turn him as an approver and force him to become a witness in the case against Gandapur," Marwat said and claimed that he had conveyed such a message to the KP CM.

According to the PTI MNA, such a technique did not prove to be successful and the "people wanting to kidnap Asif Khan" approached their "favourite forum", the ECP.