



**PM Shehbaz led govt committed to 'charter of economy & reconciliation': Tarar**

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to the "charter of economy and reconciliation" for fully restoring the political and economic stability in the country. (Details on Page 8)



**Ethiopian Envoy discusses aviation sector cooperation with Federal Secretary**

H. E. Jemal Bekir Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was called on Federal Secretary for Aviation H. E. Saif Anjum and discussed the potential areas of future cooperation with Pakistan in Aviation Sector. (Report on Page 6)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Called on**

ISLAMABAD: His Highness General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa calling on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, at Air Headquarters on Thursday.



Photo: ISPR

**Senate election held**

**PPP bags four Senate seats, PMLN and JUIF get one each**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The PPP bagged four seats in the Senate election held on Thursday, while PMLN and JUIF won one seat each, according to the results declared shortly after the voting ended.

ECP held bye-elections for six Senate seats that fell vacant after some of the Senators resigned having won constituencies in the national and provincial assemblies.

National Assembly members voted in the election of one Senate seat while Sindh Assembly members cast their ballots to elect two Senators and Balochistan Assembly members elected three Senators.

MPs from JI and MQMP boycotted the vote. Yousaf Raza Gilani won

the Senate seat from Islamabad effortlessly, after securing 204 votes. His rival, SIC's Ilyas Mahirban, could win 88 votes.

From Sindh, PPP's Aslam Abro and Saifullah Dharejo were elected senators having secured 57 and 58 votes, respectively.

SIC's Nazirullah and Shazia Sohail could get only four votes each.

In Balochistan, PPP's Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo was elected Senator, and so were PMLN's Mir Dostain Khan Domki, and JUIF's Abdul Shakoor. The polling continued from 9 am to 4 pm.

The seats became vacant after the resignations of Yousaf Raza Gilani, Sarfaraz Bugti, Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Nisar Khoro, Jam Mehtab and Prince Ahmad Omar.

**President of Azerbaijan felicitates President Zardari**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev extended President Asif Ali Zardari his heartfelt congratulations on his election as the President of Pakistan. In a message, he said, "Development of friendship and cooperation with fraternal Pakistan, which is based on a solid foundation, holds particular importance to us. The elevated level of mutual understanding between our nations provides a promising foundation for further broadening ties across various sectors."

"I am confident that we will work together to strength-

en and deepen the Azerbaijani-Pakistani strategic partnership and alliance, based



on mutual trust and support, and to successfully continue the positive traditions of our bilateral and multilateral cooperation," he added. President Ilham Aliyev said, "I wish you robust health, happiness, and success in your upcoming responsibilities for the well-being and prosperity of the brotherly people of Pakistan."

**Commander Bahrain National Guard calls on Air Chief**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National Guard, His Highness General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad today. The meeting encompassed a detailed discussion on various significant areas of shared interest aimed at bolstering government-to-government cooperation in the realm of emerging technologies, with a distinct emphasis on drone technology and collaboration with-

in the Cyber and Networking domains.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization drive aimed at augmenting current operational capability in the areas of Cyber, Space, Artificial Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Niche technologies. He also highlighted various ongoing projects of Pakistan Air Force's operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare. Emphasizing the enduring religious and historical ties between the two countries, the Air Chief stressed the deep-rooted

brotherly relations between both nations. Chief of the Air Staff reiterated, "Pakistan highly values its robust diplomatic, economic and defence partnership with Bahrain, marked by a convergence on critical issues related to regional peace, security and stability."

The visiting dignitary praised the exceptional professionalism of PAF personnel and the remarkable progress achieved by Pakistan Air Force under the dynamic leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Acknowledging Pakistan's consistent efforts towards regional stability, he also pledged to contribute towards enhanc-

ing the existing bilateral military cooperation across all levels. Commander Bahrain National Guard also visited PAF Cyber Command where he was briefed about the operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force. Expressing profound interest in the strides made by PAF in the Cyber domain, the visiting dignitary conveyed his intention to dispatch a specialized team to PAF with an objective to assess and address any existing gaps within the emerging technologies architecture of the Bahrain Armed Forces. The Air Chief reassured the Commander Bahrain National Guard of PAF's whole-

hearted cooperation and pledged full support to work collaboratively towards fortifying the technological frameworks of the Bahrain Armed Forces. Both dignitaries also affirmed their commitment to further strengthen collaboration in various domains of training, emerging technologies and mutual engagement in the aviation sector.

The meeting between Chief of the Air Staff and the Commander Bahrain National Guard is a testament to the strong commitment of both nations to further consolidate their existing partnership through continued dialogue and military collaboration.

**Hassan and Hussain Nawaz have their arrest warrants quashed**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz on Thursday surrendered before an Islamabad accountability court, which quashed their permanent arrest warrants in three NAB references, including the Avenfield case.

The court had suspended their warrants in the case after their lawyer argued that they were to return to the country on March 12.

The duo flew to Pakistan on the due date and two days later appeared before the court.



Hassan and Hussain, sons of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, have been in self-imposed exile since being implicated in corruption cases in 2017.

On Thursday, as they arrived at the court premises, they were questioned about their past statement. Hassan Nawaz said he had never claimed that he was not a Pakistani citizen.

**Second Review under the IMF's Stand by Arrangement (SBA)**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: An IMF mission called on Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb in the Ministry of Finance today. The IMF mission is in Pakistan to conduct the second review of the Stand by Arrangement (SBA).

Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the mission and expressed the government's commitment towards working with IMF on the reform agenda for economic growth and stability of Pakistan. IMF mission head Mr. Nathan Porter, congratulated the Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue,



Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb on his appointment. Discussions were held on the overall macro-economic indicators, government's efforts on fiscal consolidation, structural reforms, energy sector viability, and SOE

governance.

Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, thanked IMF for their continued support and hoped for productive meetings during the second review.

**Pakistan's foreign reserves rise \$17m to \$7.91bn**

KARACHI: Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) increased by \$17 million on a weekly basis, reaching a total of \$7.91 billion as of March 8, ARY News reported quoting SBP.

According to the data released by the SBP, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$13.15 billion. Net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$5.24 billion. The central bank did not spec-

ify a reason for the increase in the reserves.

"During the week ended on 08-Mar-2024, SBP's reserves increased by US\$ 17 million to US\$ 7,912.9 million," it said.

Last week, Pakistan's central bank reserves had decreased by \$54 million.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has demanded 'do more' from Pakistan during the first round of talks for the second review of

SBA programme.

In a first meeting with the Finance Ministry officials, the IMF showed concerns over the supply of gas to fertilizer producers at subsidised rates, the sources said.

The international lender demanded to end the provision of gas to the fertilizer producers at a subsidised rate. The delegation also expressed their concerns over increasing prices of commodities in Pakistan

despite stability at the international level.

During the meeting, the IMF delegation was also briefed on circular debts in the energy sector, tariff outlook, cost side reforms, tax administration, tax policy, BISP outlook, and its development by the concerned officials, the sources said.

The IMF delegation also asked Pakistan authorities to tax real estate, manufacturing and retailer sectors.

**PM Shehbaz Sharif dedicated to take country forward on path of progress: Qaiser Sheikh**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Thursday reiterated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's commitment to Pakistan's rapid development and asked the opposition parties to work with the government to provide relief to the common man.

Talking to the PTV news chan-



nel, the minister stressed that our primary focus is to increase prov-

ince revenue, business growth, and economy boost and to build confidence for investors where the opposition's role is very crucial as its "constructive criticism" will guide the government in framing "prudent policies".

He said that it is our collective responsibility to make decisions in parliament in favor of the common people to bring improvement in national institutions.



# European Union can play important role in Kashmir dispute: President AJK

**Bureau Report**

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the European Union can play an important role as a mediator between India and Pakistan on Kashmir issue. He expressed these views while talking to the Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka and Political Consul Rukiye Komurcu who called on him here today.

Speaking on the occasion the AJK president said that the long running dispute posed a serious threat to the peace and security in South Asia. Stressing the need for early settlement of the dispute, Barrister Chaudhry said that the Kashmir conflict can lead to nuclear war between the two nuclear powers Pakistan and India. "Any mishap no matter how small or big it is can be a precursor to a nuclear war between the two nuclear neighbours", the president said. Given the volatile situation in the region, Barrister Chaudhry said that the European Union should appoint its special representative on Kashmir to help resolve the Kashmir issue amicably. ISLAM-ABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood



Chaudhry will formally kick start a statewide public contact campaign from Mirpur on March 16. As part of this campaign, the President is sched-

uled to attend and address an Iftar dinner hosted by civil society in his honor at the Quaid-e-Azam Stadium, Mirpur on Saturday.

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# U. N. Deputy Country Director talks to Azad Kashmir government on SDGs

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Deputy Country Director of UNICEF, Dr. Anusa Kabur met with the Finance Minister and spokesperson of Government of the Azad State of Jammu and Kashmir, Abdul Majid Khan, in Muzaffarabad. Secretary Food Azad Kashmir Sohail Azam, Chief Planning and Monitoring Joshua Kakere, Chief Nutrition, Antina Garma Manas, Donors Coordination Consultant along with Prime Minister Ms. Asma Andrabi, Emergency Specialist Shinaz Talib and others were also present in the meeting.

UNICEF Rolling Work Plan 2023-24 was presented in the meeting. It was taken into consideration while other issues including sustainable development goals, budget, food, health, education and provision of clean drinking water were discussed. Talking to the delegation, Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan said that the sustainable development goals of the future. As a vision, the goal of implementing the SDGs is to overcome



poverty-related issues. In this regard, work is being done gradually on other sectors including food, health, education, clean drinking water and sanitation, gender equality, provision of employment, environmental prob-

lems. This target of 17 goals is a guarantee of peace, happiness and a better future. He said that the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has worked hard on other development projects including SDGs, which would not have

been possible without the support of international partners, on which we fully appreciate the role of UNICEF. He said that the long-term partnership of UNICEF with the government of Azad Kashmir is a happy future.

# Ayesha Ghazi says it is very important to highlight culture in schools

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Principal of Government MC Girls High School Rahimabad Multan, Ayesha Ghazi has said that it is very important to make our young boys and girls aware of our culture and our culture and the level of schools to highlight the awareness of culture in children. But it is very important to have such activities, tableaux and cultural-Sir Gir Mian, these small acts in which students can express their abilities, it creates self-confidence, he expressed these thoughts on the occasion of the inauguration of the cultural show at Government MC Girls High School, Rahimabad. Did they add that these activities are for both students and



teachers? In the cultural show, the students set up different stalls besides green

lassi, doli roti, native food in relation to cultural heritage. Zakia Gul. Teachers and students including Ifat

Sajjad, Maria Khurshid, Shamsa, Musrat Bilqis, Shamsad Begum, Tahira Parveen, Sara. Fully participated.

# AJK Medical College celebrated Cultural Day and Women's Day



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Medical College Muzaffarabad celebrated Cultural Day and Women's Day today. Azad Kashmir Minister for Small Industries, Trade and Travel Authority Professor Taqdees Geelani and IG Police Dr. Sohail Habib Tajik were the chief guest of the event. Speaking at the event, Chief Guest Professor Taqdees Gilani said that women need a strong foundation.

A bill to prevent violence including women empowerment will be brought in the assembly to make a law that will

prove effective in the future. She said that protecting women from violence and empowering women is the basic requirement of social equality and justice.

By empowering women, we can break basic traditions, and challenge gender stereotypes, and ensure that women have equal rights and opportunities in all fields. She said that violence affects women. This is a serious problem that affects women worldwide. IG Police Dr. Sohail Habib Tajik said that women contribute to 66 percent of the world's work and 50 percent of the world's food production, but they

are only They earn 10 percent of the world's income and own only 1 percent of the world's property. Principal Azad Jammu and Kashmir Medical College Prof. Mulazim Hussain Bukhari said that Women's Day is a day dedicated to paying tribute to the achievements and services of women throughout history. It serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight for gender equality and women's rights.

The day provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, acknowledge the challenges that still exist, and inspire further action for a more inclusive and equitable world. He said that

we should all join hands in creating a world where women are valued, respected and given equal opportunities for development. Dr. Uzma Hafeez, HOD Community Medicine, Dr. Rubina Associate Professor Surgery were present at the event. And Dr. Mubasher Shah, Associate Professor Psychiatry, also spoke about the greatness of women. In the end, certificates and shields were also given to the faculty, supporting staff and students for their excellent performance. After the photography, the photographs of the sub-principals were also revealed in the gallery

## Assistant professor Election held in Nishtar Medical University-Tania Haraj wins

**Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim**

MULTAN: According to details, the election was held for the vacant seat of assistant professor for academic council in Nishtar Medical University, in which Dr. Tania Haraj assistant professor of surgery has won. Dr. Tania Haraj got 30 votes while her opponent Dr. Kaleemullah got 23 votes. 53 assistant professors cast their vote in this election held at Registrar Office Nishtar Medical University while the total number of registered votes was 55 thus polling rate was 96.36 percent. The polling process continued without any interruption from 9 am to 1 am and on the peaceful and transparent election, all the faculty members Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Prof. Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani, Registrar Nishtar Medical University Prof. Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Addl. Registrar Dr. Irfan Arshad and Presiding Appreciating the efforts of Officer Dr. Aamir Asad, he has expressed his gratitude.



## Saraiki to protest on March 17: Punjab govt not serious for Making Saraiki Province

**Mustansar Shah Nawaz / Arshad Raza Zaidi**

MULTAN: The coalition government is not serious For Making of Saraiki Province, there will be a demonstration by Saraiki parties on March 17. During Press Conference Sain Zahoor Ahmed Dharija, Chairman of the Sarikistan National Council and Deputy Secretary General of Pakistan Saraiki Party, Malik Javed Channar Advocate. Afzal Ahmed was present on this occasion. He said that Asif Zardari and Nawaz Sharif can come together for power, why not for the province? He said that government resources and government machinery were used in Punjabi Culture Day. Millions of Saraiki Wasib people are wondering why Saraiki Culture Day was not celebrated at the official level. While the largest share in the revenue of Punjab is Saraiki Wasib. He said that Saraiki will hold a protest on March 17, 2024 at 11 a.m. in Awan Chowk, Multan, against the failure to fulfill the promise of the province, the worst inflation in the country and the humiliation of poor women in the name of Ramadan ration. He said that our protest will continue until the province of Saraykistan is formed. He said that Saraiki leader Sharif Khan Lashari, Supreme Court Senior Advocate Malik Naeem Iqbal, Sharafat Abbas Langah Advocate, Irfan Shahzad Advocate, Shoaib Nawaz Khan Baloch, Malik Iqbal Nandla, Akhtar Arvo, Sharif Lashari, Dr. Javed Baloch, Maher Manwar Abbas Maitla, Malik Shaukat Awan, Ashraf Langah, Safdar Khokhar and others will participate. Addressing the press conference, Saraiki leaders further said that Wasib is being exploited step by step, every project is getting to Lahore, a 21-storey IT tower was built in Lahore at a cost of billions of rupees.



## Ramazan bazaar activated at Qila Kuhna Qasim Bagh Stadium

**Mustansar Shah Nawaz / Arshad Raza Zaidi**

MULTAN: On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, the administration of Multan has activated the Ramazan bazaar at the Qila Kuhna Qasim Bagh Stadium.

Special arrangements were made for more than 30 stalls, swings for children, clothing and jewelry for women. Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan along with Deputy Commissioner Rizwan Qadeer visited Ramazan Bazaar. He said that for openness, better parking, more stalls and the convenience of the public, a Ramazan bazaar was set up in the stadium. In the last decade of the fasting month, special stalls of henna and bangles will be set up. Cheap items will be available to citizens in Ramazan bazaars as well. He warned that food prices are being monitored even in the month of fasting and the artificial inflation mafia is being dealt with a heavy hand. Cheap supply from markets continues to save DCMultan Captain R Rizwan Qadeer said that Fair Price Shop is active in Ramazan Bazaar, 25% subsidy was given on 13 food items.



## Officials visit Wana bazar, review & inspection prices of food items

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: On the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Muhammad Nasir Khan, Assistant Commissioner Wana Faisal Ismail visited Wana bazar on thursday to provide full relief to the public and control prices during Ramazan, and food department staff were also present on this occasion.

Assistant Commissioner Wana reviewed the prices of food items in various shops and took legal action against the shopkeepers involved in hazing while also inspecting the warehouses of various bakeries.

On this occasion Assistant Commissioner Wana said while talking to the media where there is no cleanliness, legal action was taken against the owner of the bakery.

Later, Assistant Commissioner Wana Faisal Ismail commended the shopkeepers for displaying the official price list.

However, instructions were also issued to ensure the implementation of the price list.

Assistant Commissioner Wana said that strict legal action will be taken against hoarders and wholesalers.

AC Wana said that no one will be treated unfairly and however, the shopkeepers who sell at double rate and higher price will be brought to justice.

## RPO Dera distributes prizes among cops and officers

**Adam Khan Wazir**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: On thursday in Range Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan various ranks for playing prominent roles in maintaining peace, fighting crime, solving people's problems in field work, suppression of anti-social elements and standard conduct in investigation of cases, cash prizes and certificates of appreciation were distributed among police officers a ceremony was held.

In which Regional Police Officer Dera Nasir Mahmood Satti encouraged the policemen by distributing cash prizes and certificates of appreciation.





Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:57 am
Zohr	12:17 pm
Asr	4:32 pm
Maghrib	6:15 pm
Isha	7:38 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
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

# All Pakistan Private Schools Association hails government move to celebrate Day of Protection of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The central president of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, Malik Abrar Hussain, welcomed the government's announcement to celebrate the "Protection of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) Day" on March 15 and said that the protection of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the basic duty of every Muslim. And the child of the Ummah is

always ready for the sanctity of the Prophet. In private educational institutions also, the Day of Protection of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) will be celebrated with great devotion and respect.

According to the details, the meeting of the executive body of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association was held yesterday at the head office Islamabad.

The meeting was presided



over by Central President Malik Abrar Hussain while Malik Deen Muhammad Awan, Ashraf Haraj, Malik Hafeezur Rehman, Javed Iqbal Raja and Irfan Muzaffarkiani participated in the meeting.

In his statement released to the media on this occasion, Malik Abrar Hussain said that the essence of the greatness of humanity is the glory of the Prophet.

He is a mercy to mankind. The

Prophet's life and understanding of the Qur'an brings humanity in a unique light.

On the basis of the concept of honorable Prophethood, it is possible to spread justice and love in all areas of humanity.

Your moral sayings and actions provide a guiding light for human society. Under the concept of honorable Prophethood, every individual has the responsibility to follow the principles of human-

ity, morality and justice. The great message of Namos Rasool is to always be kind to others while living in the light of moral principles, love and justice.

Central President Malik Abrar Hussain said that today, Friday, March 15, seminars, lectures and events will be organized in the private educational institutions across the country on the topic of Namos Rasat (peace be upon him).

## Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Visitors look at a painting of Quranic Ayat during an Art Exhibition at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) at Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

*A 26% increase in cigarette taxes will generate 17 billion additional revenue*

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) warmly welcomed the appointment of the new Finance Minister and urged him to consider tobacco taxation as a potential avenue for bolstering the economy. Aligning with public health initiatives, SPARC emphasized the importance of increasing taxes on cigarettes to reduce tobacco consumption, thus promoting better health outcomes for the population.

In a recent press release, SPARC shared the concerns of health activists who advocate for higher taxes on cigarettes rather than utilities. This strategic approach not only aligns with public health goals but also addresses the broader economic implications associated with tobacco use. Malik Imran Ahmad, country head for Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), appealed to the newly appointed Finance

## Hashoo Foundation Secures Community Impact Award

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo Foundation, the sustainability arm of Hashoo Group, has won a CSR award in the "Community Impact" category for its pivotal role in empowering communities across Pakistan through multifaceted initiatives encompassing education, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, training, and support for over 35 years. Zulfiqar Malik, General Manager of the Pearl-Continental Hotel Karachi, collected the award at the 13th Annual CSR Awards ceremony organized in Karachi by The Professionals Network.

Established in 2011, the CSR Awards stand as a significant recognition platform under The Professionals Network's stewardship, celebrating the impactful contributions of corporations and NGOs towards Pakistan's socio-economic uplift.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Awards 2024 is the most Prestigious Recognition Awards program for Corporate Social Responsibility registered with the IPO (Intellectual Property Rights Organization) and copyright protected.

Sharing his thoughts on this prestigious accolade, Abdul Waheed, Director of Finance at Hashoo Foundation, expressed, "Our mission has always been to create lasting change within underserved communi-



ties and enable them to live empowered and sustainable lives. We are honoured with this recognition from The Professionals Network, and we will continue expanding our footprint to enlighten as many lives as possible."

Hashoo Foundation serves underprivileged communities through humanitarian and capacity-building approaches across the country, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. The Foundation has been making concerted efforts to drive positive change in Climate Change, Entrepreneur-

ship, Economic Growth, and Social Sector Development by engaging with the public sector, academia, national and international networks, and private sector entities.

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

## Kashf Women Entrepreneurship Awards 2024 Celebrates Exceptional Female Entrepreneurs

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Kashf Women Entrepreneurship Awards 2024, an event organized by the Kashf Foundation to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements of females who have demonstrated exceptional resilience and emerged as successful entrepreneurs, was held at a local hotel.

The Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Leslie Scanlon, emphasized, "Today isn't just about awards; it's about acknowledging the resilience, innovation, and determination of women entrepreneurs driving our economies forward. Each story we hear reflects the extraordinary achievements of women who have dared to dream, overcome challenges, and become agents of change."

Speaking on gender equality Roshaneh Zafar, Founder & Managing Director, Kashf Foundation, commented on the importance of equal pay for



women and highlighted the significant amount of impact it will have on Pakistan's economy. "To bring about the desired change we need to evaluate the role of women in leadership roles, ensure access to healthcare facilities, and appreciate the unconditional support they offer at homes along with their jobs and professional responsibilities."

The winners in 10 diverse categories included: Allah Mafi for Heritage Craft Preservation and Entrepreneurship, Nargis Naseem for Women Livestock Entrepreneurship, Fozia for Persistent Powerhouse Awards, Hira Asghar for Innovative Entrepreneur Award winner, Rukhsana Bibi for Community Catalyst Award, Nighat Sultana for

Kashf School Sarmaya Award, Saba for Young Women Entrepreneur of the Year, Hamdan Bibi for Climate Resilience & Sustainability, Fareeda Sajid for Resilience Architect, and Syeda Naila Hamdani for Champion of Women's Rights.

Fatima Asad Said, Chief Executive Officer, Abacus Consulting & Board Member, Kashf Foundation, Sadia Khan, Naseeb Online Services Pvt. Ltd., Fintech Expert Board & Board Member, Kashf Foundation, Moneeza Hashmi, Creative Media Head, Kashf Foundation & Trustee Faiz Foundation, Ali Hassan Habib, CEO, SAMA Verte, Managing Partner of HIMA Verte and Board Member, Kashf Foundation, Nell Stewart, Executive Director, Afghanistan & Pakistan, Global Affairs Canada, and Alicia Sosa, First Secretary (Development), Mohammed Ali Ahmed, Managing Director & CEO, EFU Life, graced the event with their presence and lauded the winners on their achievements.

## Pakistani scouts face tough time at third Muslim International Scout Jamhoori

PPA



KARACHI: Pakistani scouts interested to join third Muslim International Scouts Jamhoori USA and other international events are facing immense difficulty as for the first time, Pakistan Boy Scouts Association (PBSA) headquarter unjustifiably has imposed processing fee of 130 US dollars for each scout and leader.

According to details, money minting police of PBSA centre is discouraging youngsters to take part actively in scouting in Pakistan and abroad putting more financial burden on lockets of parents. Leaders having ill vision at national headquarter wants to make scouting an elite service while it's a humanitarian movement worldwide and anyone can join without its financial standing.

Pakistan Boy Scouts Association is also collecting 130 US dollars in the name of processing fee in addition to the official registration fee for international events, especially the third Muslim International Scout Jamhoori Houston. It is causing great disappointment among the scouts. The national headquarters is already facing legal action over allegations of financial embezzlement, nepotism and alleged corruption. The national headquarters was also sealed under various charges.

In this regard, Chief Scouts Commissioner Pakistan Sarfraz Qamar Daha was contacted and he showed extreme rudeness and said that he is not answerable to anyone and will not answer the media's questions, after which he ended the call.

When contacted in the United States, the Chief of the Third World Muslim Scouts Jamboree Campori Syed Ehtesham Naqvi clarified that no additional fee was requested by the Boy Scouts of America and they had nothing to do with the additional fee of 130 US dollars.

Secretary Pakistan Boy Scouts Association Sindh Branch Syed Akhtar Mir has also expressed his indifference to the issue of additional fee collection by the National Headquarters. According to sources, due to the stubbornness of the Pakistan Boy Scouts Association, there has been a fear that Pakistani Scouts will be cut off from the world events like in America, Great Britain, Spain, Iceland, Japan, Thailand, Brazil.

## Exhibition 'Sohna Punjab' held in connection with Culture Day

PPA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts organized painting exhibition titled "Sohna Punjab" in connection with Punjab Culture Day 2024. Special guest Shazia Rizwan further said that Punjab's culture, festivals, food, clothes and ancient places have thousands of colors.

We are the trustees of the high thoughts and actions of our forefathers, which is our responsibility to keep alive, this is the day of determination to dedicate our energies for the development, safety and uplifting of the country. No matter which part of Pakistan we belong to, we are Pakistanis, the land of Punjab is the inheritor of great civilizations, but we are proud to present to the world. On the arrival of the Arts Council, the chief guest was also given a "Chumri". Director Muhammad Shakoor said that civilization and culture are the mirror of any nation. Cultural values are a beacon for the bright future of nations. The flowers of peace and security bloom in the society with the promotion of positive cultural values. Assistant Director Muhammad Sulaiman said that the only nations in the world are called alive and advanced which are civilized.

## Home Net Pakistan conducts training session for home-based workers



PNP

KARACHI: Home Net Pakistan, a dedicated organisation for the welfare of home-based workers, successfully conducted a training session at Nursing College Baldia Town for the benefit and well-being of home based workers G&T. The session, focusing on the health and safety of garment and textile workers in supply chain, aimed to raise awareness about health issues and educate workers on protecting themselves from hazardous environments, especially when dealing with various chemicals at home. Mr. Babar Raza, Program Manager of Home Net Pakistan, expressed pride in addressing the significance of this training program. He emphasised the organisation's commitment to empowering home-based workers with necessary knowledge and skills to ensure their safety and projected environments at home. Ms. Mahreen Arif, Provincial Coordinator of Home Net Pakistan, highlighted the organisation's endeavour not only to educate and empower workers within Pakistan but also to promote a safer and more supportive working environment for workers not only with in working environment but also outside of their houses. Such initiatives may play a crucial role for protection of their rights and conducive atmosphere within in community. The event concluded with expressions of gratitude from Mr. Babar Raza-Program Manager and Ms. Mahreen Arif Provincial Coordinator of Home Net Pakistan, respectively, to all the participants.



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# Army Chief Demonstrate Profound Affection for Balochistan - II

**B**alochistan has long been a focal point of development endeavors aimed at addressing socio-economic disparities and unleashing its vast potential. Despite encountering numerous obstacles, the province has made significant progress across various sectors, with concerted efforts in motion to foster sustainable development and enhance the well-being of its populace.

Infrastructure development serves as the cornerstone of Balochistan's advancement, with substantial investments directed towards road networks, energy infrastructure, and connectivity initiatives. The construction of highways like the Makran Coastal Highway and the Western Alignment of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has bolstered intra-provincial and inter-regional connectivity, facilitating trade, commerce, and tourism. Additionally, endeavors such as the Gwadar Port and the Gwadar Free Zone have positioned Balochistan as a crucial hub in regional trade and connectivity, opening up new avenues for economic expansion and investment.

Improving access to electricity through the development of energy infrastructure, including power plants and transmission lines, has addressed a critical need and laid the groundwork for industrial growth and economic diversification. Investments in education and healthcare play pivotal roles in human capital development and socio-economic empowerment in Balochistan. Establishing new educational institutions and upgrading existing ones, alongside efforts to enhance the

quality of education, is broadening access to learning opportunities and equipping the youth with the skills necessary to thrive in today's economy. Similarly, strengthening healthcare infrastructure through the establishment of hospitals, clinics, and medical colleges is enhancing access to medical services and meeting the healthcare needs of the populace. Initiatives like the Sehat Sahulat Program, providing health insurance coverage to vulnerable segments of society, are enhancing healthcare accessibility and affordability, thereby contributing to improved health outcomes in Balochistan.

Supporting livelihoods and alleviating poverty are central tenets of Balochistan's development agenda. Various initiatives, including microfinance programs, skills development training, and agricultural support schemes, are empowering communities and fostering economic resilience. Entrepreneurship promotion projects, especially targeting women and youth, are unlocking new avenues for income generation and economic empowerment. Moreover, social protection programs like the Ehsaas program offer financial aid to marginalized families, assisting them in coping with economic shocks and enhancing their quality of life. Through investment in livelihood support and poverty alleviation initiatives, Balochistan is establishing the framework for inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring that

all individuals are included in its journey towards advancement.

Recognizing the pivotal role of Balochistan's development in the nation's overall prosperity and stability, the Pakistan Army has undertaken a series of welfare initiatives aimed at tackling the province's challenges and unlocking its potential.

Infrastructure serves as the backbone of development, enabling connectivity, trade, and economic progress. The Pakistan Army has actively engaged in infrastructure development endeavors throughout Balochistan, including the construction of roads, bridges, and dams. These undertakings not only enhance access to remote areas but also generate employment opportunities and stimulate economic activity. Initiatives like the construction of the Makran Coastal Highway and the rehabilitation of crucial road networks have notably improved intra-provincial and inter-regional connectivity, fostering trade and investment.

Access to quality healthcare and education is vital for human development and socio-economic advancement. In Balochistan, where healthcare and educational infrastructure are often lacking, the Pakistan Army has intervened to bridge these gaps. Operating a network of medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics, the Army provides free healthcare services to residents in remote and underserved areas. Similar-

ly, it has established schools and colleges, offering quality education to numerous children and youth in Balochistan. These efforts not only enhance health and educational outcomes but also empower communities and contribute to human capital development.

Economic empowerment is essential for uplifting communities and reducing poverty. The Pakistan Army has initiated various livelihood support programs aimed at economically empowering the people of Balochistan. These initiatives encompass vocational training programs, microfinance schemes, and agricultural support projects. By imparting skills training, providing access to credit, and offering technical assistance, the Army enables individuals to establish businesses, generate income, and enhance their standard of living. Moreover, its endeavors in promoting agriculture and livestock development contribute to food security and economic resilience in Balochistan.

Building trust and fostering dialogue with local communities are crucial for sustainable development and peace-building. The Pakistan Army actively engages with Balochistan's communities through diverse outreach programs, including medical camps, educational seminars, and community development projects. By involving local stakeholders in decision-making processes and addressing their needs and concerns, the Army cultivates trust and cooperation, laying the groundwork for enduring peace and prosperity in Balochistan.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## Pakistan ranks 164th with a 'low' human development status 14 March 2024

**U**neven development progress is leaving the poorest behind, exacerbating inequality, and stoking political polarization on a global scale. The result is a dangerous deadlock that must be urgently tackled through collective action, says the 2023-2024 Human Development Report entitled "Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World" released this week by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "The widening human development gap revealed by the report shows that the two-decade trend of steadily reducing inequalities between wealthy and poor nations is now in reverse," said Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP. "This gridlock carries a significant human toll. The failure of collective action to advance our response to climate change, digitalization or poverty and inequality not only hinders human development but also worsens polarization and further erodes trust in people and institutions worldwide." The 2023-2024 Report places Pakistan in the 'low' human development category. In 2022, Pakistan had a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.540 with a global ranking of 161 out of 192 countries. In 2023, the country dropped three places to 164 in the global ranking. "Despite managing well the Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan's HDI and global ranking have suffered due to persistent social, economic and political pressures, including macroeconomic challenges as well as the lingering effect of the 2022 floods," said UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative, Dr. Samuel Rizk. He observed that there is a notable 33 per cent decline in Pakistan's inequality-adjusted HDI, bringing it to 0.360. In the Gender Inequality Index (GI), the country's rank remains the same at 135 out of 166 countries. The E-mail: unic-islamabad@un.org, Web: www.pakistan.un.org Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) score stays unaffected at 0.198, indicating persistent challenges. The Report reveals that following pandemic-caused setbacks for their HDI in 2020, the South Asian region has demonstrated an overall more resilient recovery compared to East Asia and the Pacific, as well as the global average. However, significant disparities remain between 'high' HDI and 'low' HDI countries, indicating ongoing challenges in achieving equitable development. "With a new government in place, and high ambitions for reform, prosperity for Pakistan requires significant mobilization of climate and SDGs financing, along with a fit-for-purpose governance architecture that provides planetary and digital 'global public goods'," said Dr. Rizk. "The role of global public goods is different from humanitarian aid and development assistance, which target certain populations in need. Global public goods, by definition, aim to reach everyone and can improve the prospect of human development of all people and societies as whole." The latest UNDP Human Development Report calls for reevaluating global interdependence and outlines four critical areas for action: prioritizing planetary public goods for climate stability, fostering digital global public goods for fair technology access, implementing innovative financial mechanisms for low-income countries, and adopting new governance approaches to reduce political polarization and combat misinformation.



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

## Power dynamics override morality in the Israeli-Palestine conflict

Dr. Muhammad Shabbir

**I**n the complex world of international relations, power dynamics often take precedence over moral considerations. States leverage their influence, employing economic, military, diplomatic, and information-based strategies to advance their strategic interests, even if it means disregarding ethical values. This realpolitik approach frequently leads to a system where power and interests triumph over morality and legality, prompting profound ethical questions. The tragic example of Gaza underscores how the perception of legality is wielded to justify actions that are morally indefensible.

The Israel-Palestine conflict stands as a stark example of power dynamics overriding moral considerations. Even though numerous United Nations resolutions affirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, their enforcement is hampered by political maneuvering. The United States' veto power in the UN Security Council frequently thwarts resolutions that are unfavorable to Israel, leaving the Palestinian territories under occupation and annexation. The US supports Israel for many reasons including a very strong Jewish lobby in the US, as well as "critical components of leading American high-tech products are invented and designed in Israel, making these American companies more competitive and more profitable globally. Cisco, Intel, Motorola, Applied Materials, and HP are just a few examples."

The recent Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has taken a devastating toll, with the death toll surpassing 19,088 and over 54,450 individuals wounded. The casualties include over 300 healthcare workers, 86 journalists, 35 civil defense personnel, and 135 UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency

for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) staff. Despite these dire circumstances, Israel maintains a perception of legality through powerful alliances and support.

The question is how Israel gets away with the human rights' abuses? The answer is with the support of US, manipulation of laws of war and use of propaganda and technologies. Just consider, since 1945, a total of 36 UNSC draft resolutions related to Israel-Palestine have been vetoed, out of these, 34 were vetoed by the US and two by Russia and China. Another noteworthy factor is Israel's adept manipulation of the laws of war, exploiting ambiguities and exceptions to favour states over non-state actors. This manipulation, coupled with a colonial narrative depicting Palestinians as "human animals" ignorant of the laws of war, constructs a narrative that frames Palestinians as immoral aggressors deserving the violence inflicted upon them.

Israel strategically disseminates these narratives to its domestic and Western audience to justify its actions. It has also run advertisement campaign on X, YouTube, Facebook and other print and digital media platforms against Palestine. The paid content is aimed at adults over 25 in France, Germany, England, USA, and other countries. The content portrayed Hamas as a "vicious terrorist group", similar to the Islamic State, and showed the scale and type of abuse, including gruesome images like that of a lifeless, naked woman in a pickup truck. Another paid video posted to X, with text alternating between "ISIS" and "Hamas", has disturbing imagery that gradually speeds up until the names of the two terrorist organizations blend into one. "The world defeated ISIS. The world will defeat Hamas", the advertisement ends.

The tragic events in Gaza expose a glaring moral bankruptcy of world leaders. The United States, employing its veto power, obstructs ceasefire calls in the UN Security Council and votes

against the humanitarian truce in the General Assembly. Israel openly expresses disdain for the UN through its actions, while the Islamic World, despite sporadic voices by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan against the slaughter, remains silent on multilateral forums such as Arab League and OIC, indicating a troubling indifference in the Arab and Islamic world.

This indifference becomes even more perplexing when examining the response of Western powers. These nations, quick to condemn human rights abuses in Ukraine, Uighurs or globally, adopt double standards when it comes to human rights abuses of Israel against Palestinian people, even children too. The question arises: Are Palestinians viewed as lesser children of God, underserving of the same protection and empathy? Do they not have the same fundamental human rights to live in peace, safety, and with dignity? Why Israel is allowed to get away with slaughtering of women, children, and the elderly by the so called protectors of human rights? How do world leaders reconcile their lofty principles of justice and human rights with their seemingly indifferent response to the suffering of humanity in Gaza?

There is also a puzzling acceptance of Israel's actions despite disproportionate and lethal violence. The acceptance of Israel's actions in Gaza, despite their disproportional and lethal nature, underscores the challenge of navigating a global landscape where powerful states wield their influence to shape perceptions. This strategic manipulation of the narrative showcases the lengths to which states will go to maintain the veneer of legality, even when their actions may be morally questionable. At the same time, it proves when powerful states commit immoral acts, they maintain the perception of legality to justify their actions, at least to their own audience.

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## The Operation Collateral Freedom - II

**D**espite Prime Minister Sharif's public commitment in Islamabad on December 6, 2022, to establish the planned security commission, it has yet to be implemented, rendering the law ineffective. Additionally, RSF calls for the revision of Article 6 to eliminate the contentious reference to "bona fide journalism." These measures are crucial to safeguarding the rights and safety of journalists in Pakistan.

RSF urges the information ministry to cease using advertising revenue as a tool to manipulate the editorial direction of privately-owned media outlets, whose financial stability relies heavily on legal notices and state sector advertising. Additionally, RSF condemns the military's persistent intervention in media affairs to suppress information.

RSF challenges the government to review several laws that encroach upon press and media freedom, including certain clauses of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2023 (PEMRA Amendment Act). These amendments purportedly combat disinformation but risk enabling media censorship. RSF insists on precise definitions for terms like "authentic information" and "disinformation" to prevent license withdrawal or outlet suspension. The Official Secrets Amendment Act (2023) requires revision to prevent its misuse against journalists. Additionally, Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, known as "PECA," is currently utilized to censor social media criticism and must be revised to safeguard online freedom of expression.

In his inaugural address to the newly sworn-in cabinet, the Prime Minister rightly underscored trade and investment as critical areas for uplifting the beleaguered state of the economy.

However, while emphasizing hard work as the primary pathway to achieving economic progress, it's imperative to recognize that the perception of a country's brand value plays a pivotal role in attracting favorable trade and investment.

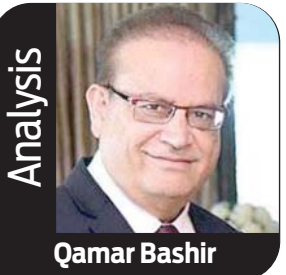
Regrettably, the current brand image of Pakistan languishes at its lowest, trailing behind many regional counterparts and only marginally above war-torn nations. This dismal performance extends across various international indices and rankings, spanning from soft power and economic indicators to rule of law, legislative freedom, democracy, justice, and freedom of press and media.

To effectively stimulate trade and investment, there must be a concerted effort to uplift Pakistan's brand image across all these fronts. This entails upholding the rule of law, adhering steadfastly to democratic principles, ensuring the freedom and independence of vital institutions, and safeguarding the fundamental rights of speech, assembly, and media.

Without tangible improvements in these areas, mere lofty promises, impassioned speeches, or even diligent hard work will fall short in revitalizing the country's economic prospects.

Investors and trade partners seek stability, transparency, and reliability, qualities that can only be fostered through genuine institutional reforms and unwavering commitment to democratic values which include freedom of press and media. Therefore, it's paramount for the government to prioritize these foundational pillars of governance to pave the way for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



## China makes significant progress in protection of privacy rights: expert

Xinhua

GENEVA: China has made significant progress in the protection of privacy rights, Gong Xianghe, an expert from China's Southeast University, said here on Wednesday during the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Gong, on behalf of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, said privacy is a fundamental human right and a key element in the protection of human dignity.

Calling the Personal Information Protection Law enacted in 2021 in China "a milestone," Gong said the law provided a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of personal information and thus helped protect



the people's rights to privacy.

Before that, the Cybersecurity Law

that entered into force in 2017 secured people's rights to privacy by establishing strict rules for personal data protection, he added.

Moreover, the Civil Code that took effect in 2021 dedicated a standalone chapter with eight articles to the rights to privacy, said Gong, adding that the Criminal Law also has provisions that protect citizens' privacy from being violated.

Although the rights to privacy in China is a newly developed legal concept, China has so far enacted a range of laws, said Gong. He added that as China aligns itself with international standards in data protection, these legislations have effectively responded to the domestic demands for privacy protection.

## Israel 'double standards' in dealing with Palestinian civilians' need

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: After 160 days of genocidal war against our people, the international community and all UN institutions have been unable to implement any measure that would protect Palestinian civilians, including translating international and American positions, United Nations resolutions, and the precautionary order of the International Court of Justice, and transforming them into practical steps that guarantee this lofty humanitarian goal. Which highlights a double and serious problem in dealing with this issue. On the one hand, the Israeli government continues to obstruct any UN resolutions in this regard and does not pay any attention to international and American appeals and demands to protect civilians and secure their basic humanitarian needs. Rather, it continues to escalate its perpetration of mass massacres, as is currently happening. In the ongoing brutal bombing, whether against civilians waiting for aid, as happened recent-



ly on the Kuwaiti roundabout, or the bombing that is concentrated in Deir al-Balah, Khan Yunis, and Al-Wusta and gradually expanding in Rafah, or the spread of famine among civilians, especially in the northern Gaza Strip, due to which the number of martyrs is increasing, led by children, without Accountability or punishment from the international community. The other side of this major problem is the weak level of international reactions to the genocide of our people, the sufficiency

of countries betting on Netanyahu's morals, the pillars of his war, and his army without results, and the countries' insistence on directing demands to the Israeli government in formulas that leave ample room for Israel to evade the entitlements of those international positions, and here it confirms The Ministry stated that the continuation of repeated international appeals and betting on the humanity of the occupation have failed, and are nothing more than a formality, ineffective, because

they are not linked to real pressures that force the occupying state to protect civilians and secure their needs as an obligatory obligation on the occupying power and not a favor or moral generosity on the part of Netanyahu, as The Israeli side has no right to turn the principle of protecting civilians and introducing aid into an issue for bargaining and blackmail.

The Ministry views with great seriousness the deficiency in the international position towards Palestinian civilians and considers it to rise to the level of complicity with the interests and plans of the occupation and the course of the genocidal war against our people that Netanyahu decides. In this context, the Ministry confirms that a number of countries continue to talk about Israel's right to defend itself more than 5 months after the war of extermination, and in light of the impossibility of protecting civilians with the continued bombing, this argument has become a cover used by the Israeli side to complete the extermination and displacement of our people. By force.

## Jordan condemns Israeli incursions into Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms all the measures and procedures of the Israeli occupation in Jerusalem in general and in the vicinity of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, in order to prevent and obstruct the arrival of worshippers to the mosque, including installing iron barriers on 3 doors of the mosque, in an attempt to introduce more changes to the historical and legal reality. And the political presence in the Holy Mosque, in a flagrant violation of international



law and the obligations of the occupying power towards places of worship

and the freedom of citizens' access to them, and in a continuing assault on the powers of the Jerusalem Endowments Administration and the affairs of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Endowments, Islamic Affairs and Holy Sanctities, which has exclusive jurisdiction to manage the affairs of the Holy Mosque.

The Ministry calls for urgent international intervention to stop the occupation's encroachment on Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian sanctities and its grave violations of international law and relevant international legitimacy resolutions.

## German envoy calls on Chairman PRCS

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Alfred Grannas praised the advancements made by PRCS under Chairman Laghari's guidance in easing the plight of vulnerable communities and underscored the long-standing partnership between PRCS and the German Red Cross, which has endured for four decades.

Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, expressed his appreciation for Ambassador Grannas's sincere concern for the people of Pakistan and his commitment to addressing humanitarian needs. He emphasized the importance of the Ambassador's visit in broadening avenues of cooperation for the betterment of vulnerable communities.

[Islamabad, 14th March 2024]- The Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, His Excellency Alfred Grannas, reiterated the paramount importance of humanitarian service during his meeting with Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) at the PRCS National Headquarters here



on Thursday. The discussion underscored a shared commitment to advancing humanitarian endeavors in Pakistan through collaborative efforts. Ambassador Grannas commended PRCS's pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of vulnerable communities and emphasized the enduring partnership between PRCS and the German Red Cross, spanning four decades. The meeting delved into vari-

ous topics including bilateral relations and the imperative of enhancing cooperation for the betterment of humanity. Chairman Laghari provided insights into PRCS's initiatives, particularly its endeavors in rehabilitation and reconstruction following recent floods in Pakistan. He highlighted ongoing collaborative projects with the German Red Cross, such as Anticipatory Actions for Humanitarian Disaster

Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Climate Advocacy and Coordination for Resilient Action (CACRA) project for Disaster Risk Management (DRM). Following the meeting, Chairman Laghari lauded Ambassador Grannas for his genuine concern for the people of Pakistan and his dedication to addressing humanitarian needs. He emphasized the significance of the Ambassa-

dor's visit in strengthening ties between Pakistan and Germany and expanding avenues of cooperation for the benefit of vulnerable communities.

Ambassador Grannas commended PRCS's progress under Chairman Laghari's leadership and reaffirmed Germany's support for its humanitarian endeavors. Discussions also revolved around exploring new areas of cooperation and implementing joint programs to fulfill the mandate of the Red Crescent. "PRCS is making admirable strides in relief and disaster preparedness; we stand steadfast alongside the Red Crescent," he emphasized.

Earlier, the German Ambassador received briefings on various sectors during his visit, alongside Secretary General Muhammad Abidullah Khan and other officials.

In the end, Chairman Laghari presented Dr. Alfred Grannas with a commemorative shield and souvenir as tokens of appreciation, symbolizing the shared commitment to humanitarian causes and the enduring partnership between Germany and Pakistan in advancing these efforts.

## The secretary-general Message on the international day to combat Islamophobia



The International Day to Combat Islamophobia occurs at a time when we see a rising tide of anti-Muslim hate and bigotry in many parts of the world.

Institutional discrimination and other barriers are violating the human rights and dignity of Muslims. Divisive rhetoric and misrepresentation are stigmatizing communities. Online hate speech is fueling real-life violence.

Much of this disturbing trend is part of a wider pattern of attacks against religious groups and vulnerable populations, also including Jews, minority Christian communities and others.

We must confront and root out bigotry in all its forms. Leaders must condemn inflammatory discourse and safeguard religious freedom. Digital platforms must moderate hateful content and protect users from harassment. And everyone must unite to combat intolerance, stereotypes and bias. Together, let us commit to promoting mutual respect and understanding, foster social cohesion, and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all.

## Mashreq reinforces presence in Pakistan through key leadership appointments

PPA

KARACHI: Mashreq Pakistan, a part of Mashreq which is the leading financial institution in the MENA region, has today announced key leadership appointments within its executive team. Atif Saeed Dar will assume the position of Chief Financial Officer, Khurram Abid has been designated as Chief Information Officer, and Shahzad Khokhar will fulfill the role of Head of Islamic Banking.



Commenting on these pivotal appointments, Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO, Mashreq Pakistan, said: "Mashreq's presence as an international digital leader and innovation-led bank in Pakistan is steadily gaining momentum. I am delighted to extend a warm welcome Atif, Khurram, and Shahzad as they join Mashreq Pakistan. They have joined us at an opportune time and will play a pivotal role in driving the expansion of Mashreq in the country. The extensive and diverse expertise they bring in the operationally critical areas of finance, transformative technologies and infrastructure, and Shariah finance, is unmatched in the market."

Mashreq Pakistan is actively progressing towards acquiring a restricted license from the State Bank of Pakistan to initiate pilot digital retail banking operations, marking an important step in its journey to becoming a licensed banking entity. The In-Principal-Approval (IPA) received last year is a significant step towards its commitment to bring innovative digital banking solutions in line with the country's vision for a digitally empowered economy.

## Kaspersky reports phishing attacks grow by 40% in 2023

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Over 709 million attempts to access phishing and scam websites in 2023, have been thwarted by Kaspersky's anti-phishing system, marking a 40% increase compared to the previous year's figures. Messaging apps, artificial intelligence platforms, social media services, and cryptocurrency exchanges were among the pathways most frequently exploited by threat actors to scam users.

Kaspersky's annual analysis of the spam and phishing threat landscape revealed a persistent trend for 2022: a marked increase in phishing attacks. This continued to escalate in 2023, surging by over 40%. Besides a significant spike in phishing activity observed in May and June, the number of attacks rose steadily throughout the year. This trend could be linked to the onset of the holiday season, during which scammers commonly propagate travel-related scams, such as counterfeit airline tickets, tours, and enticing hotel deals.

The widespread integration of technologies featuring built-in GPT chats has provided scammers with new avenues to exploit. However, attackers have not forgotten their time-honored tactics. High-profile releases, events, and premieres remained irresistible to phishers and scammers, whose counterfeit websites ensnared those eager to access the next big thing ahead of schedule or at a discounted rate.

Additionally, Kaspersky experts have observed a surge in attacks spread via messaging platforms. Kaspersky solutions thwarted 62,127 attempts to redirect via phishing and scam links on Telegram, a notable 22% increase in such threats from the last year.

"Phishing remains a prevalent threat in today's digital landscape, constantly evolving to deceive unsuspecting users. Vigilance and skepticism are our strongest defenses against falling victim to these malicious schemes. Stay cautious, verify before you click, and protect your digital identity," comments Usman Qureshi, Country Representative for Pakistan at Kaspersky.

To learn more about phishing threat landscape, visit Securelist.com. In order to avoid becoming a victim of phishing-based scams, Kaspersky experts advise that only open emails and click links if you are sure you can trust the sender. Check the spelling of a website's URL if you suspect you are faced with a phishing page. Use a proven security solution such as Kaspersky Premium when surfing the web. These solutions are capable of spotting and blocking spam and phishing campaigns.

## CCP authorizes acquisition of Pakistani Microfinance Bank by Dutch Company

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition of Advans Pakistan Microfinance Bank Limited by a Dutch-based holding company, MNT-Halan Pak B. V. This transaction marks a significant development in the microfinance banking sector of Pakistan.

MNT - Halan Pak B. V. is a holding company incorporated in the Netherlands, with a presence in Pakistan through its subsidiaries, Halan Wallet (Private) Limited and Halan Finance Limited. On the other hand, Advans Pakistan Microfinance Bank Limited is a public limited company operating in the microfinance banking sector of Pakistan.

The acquisition involves the purchase of 100% shareholding of Advans Pakistan Microfinance Bank Limited from Advans S. A SICAR, a Luxembourg-based financial services company. Following a thorough review of the pre-merger application, the CCP determined that there are no overlaps between the merging parties, and the market conditions will remain unchanged post-merger.

The approval of this acquisition is significant for Pakistan's microfinance banking sector, which plays a crucial role in the country's financial inclusion agenda. According to the World Bank, the sector serves 76% of all borrowers from the financial sector and accounts for approximately a third of all outstanding agriculture advances.

Foreign investment in this sector is expected to bring in new technologies, innovative products, and improved services, benefiting both the industry and the consumers.



**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
65,064.26	64,048.44
Day's High	Day's Low
65,205.81	64,079.97
Index Value	Change
6,051,988,465	+1015.82
Percentage	Time
+1.59%	14 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,743.15	-29.02
Percentage	Time
-0.37%	14 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,833.66	-209.66
Percentage	Time
-0.54%	14 Mar, 1:37 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,807.38	+111.41
Percentage	Time
+0.29%	14 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	742.4	750.4
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.84	39.24
Danish Krone	40.92	41.32
Euro	304	307
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.8	917.8
Malaysian Ringgit	59.59	60.19
New Zealand \$	171.89	173.89
Norwegians Krone	26.67	26.97
Omani Riyal	725.18	733.18
Qatari Riyal	76.7	77.4
Saudi Riyal	74	74.75
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	27.27	27.57
Swiss Franc	317.98	320.48
Thai Bhat	7.83	7.98
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	76.5
UK Pound Sterling	356	358.5
US Dollar	278.9	281.6

# Ethiopian Envoy discusses aviation sector cooperation with Federal Secretary

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was called on Federal Secretary for Aviation H. E. Saif Anjum and discussed the potential areas of future cooperation with Pakistan in Aviation Sector.

Both sides had a detailed discussion on the matters of mutual interests including bilateral cooperation for knowledge sharing and technology transfer in the aviation sector.

On the occasion, H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula expressed his gratitude for crucial support extended by the Government of Pakistan in start of the Ethiopian Airlines' operations in Karachi.



The Ambassador briefed the Secretary on the pivotal role being played by the Ethiopian Airlines in effective implementation of the "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policies of Pakistan that were aimed at strengthening government-to-government, people-to-people and business-to-business relations between both Pakistan and African countries.

He also highlighted the growing popularity of the Ethiopian Airlines among the people of Pakistan who have been fully appreciating the services offered by one of the largest airlines of the world.

On the other hand, Federal Secretary for Aviation H. E. Saif Anjum acknowledged the critical role being played by the Ethiopian Airlines in bringing Africa closer to Pakistan and assured the ambassador of his institution support in advancing the bilateral cooperation in the Aviation Sector.

## Women empowerment

FAISALABAD: In a momentous occasion, Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Care International join hands to empower women in Faisalabad. Mrs. Rubina Amjad, President FWCCI, and Mr. Azeem Faisal, Project Head Care International, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Strive Women Project, marking a new chapter in women's empowerment.



Photo: Abdul Majid

## Alibaba.com hosts top seller meetup in Lahore to bolster B2B Entrepreneurs



**PPA**

LAHORE: Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, has successfully held a supplier gathering with the theme "Ace The Race" in Lahore as part of its Top Seller Meetup event series. The series aims to enable local entrepreneurs in the manufacturing and trading sectors to access new business opportunities with offerings available from Alibaba.com, such as the Verified Supplier membership.

The meetup featured a detailed presentation by Muzaffar Hussain, Head of Overseas Marketing of JNM Leather Safety Gloves Industries. A Verified Seller on Alibaba.com, Hussain recounted his rise to success on the platform, offering attendees practical advice and strategies from his personal experience. Hussain spoke of the trust he placed in

Alibaba.com, which has been instrumental in his e-commerce achievements. After joining the platform in 2014, he quickly secured significant orders from overseas markets such as South Korea, which led to a 58% year-on-year revenue increase that year. JNM Leather Safety Gloves Industries has since become a notable name in the leather sector in Sialkot.

Hussain encouraged other businesses to join Alibaba.com as Verified Supplier members and realize their potential for growth in the international market.

Experts from Alibaba.com and Trademnor participated in a panel discussion, highlighting the advantages of becoming a Verified Supplier on Alibaba.com. They stressed how this membership fosters trust with global buyers and provides a competitive advantage.

## IBA X Unity Foods come together to champion higher education

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Unity Foods has signed a MoU with IBA, marking the beginning of an inspiring journey: Unity Foods Scholars program. The signing ceremony was held at Unity Foods head office in Karachi. This visionary initiative is set to transform lives by offering support to a deserving MBA student each year from an underprivileged background and enabling them through their educational journey.

IBA Karachi highly appreciates Unity Foods Limited for their generosity and this partnership. At the ceremony, Malahat Awan, Director of Alumni Affairs, Resource Mobilization



& Corporate Affairs, represented IBA Karachi. Unity Foods was represented by Nageen Rizvi, Head of Corporate Communications & Sustainability, along with Salman Yousuf, Chief Marketing Officer, and Uzma Zaidi, Chief Human Resource Officer. During this event, avenues of collaboration between the two organizations were explored. Discussions flourished around various initiatives, including staff and leadership training, student internships, and on-campus activation activities. These endeavors are poised to forge a powerful synergy, uniting Unity Foods and IBA Karachi in a shared mission of excellence and progress.

## SECP amends the companies further issue of shares regulations, 2020

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has introduced amendments to the Companies (Further Issue of Shares) Regulations, 2020. The amendments have been carried out after thorough consultation with key stakeholders and general public. Through these amendments, the right issuance process has been simplified with single, standardized disclosure and reporting requirements made applicable for all right issues regardless of the issue size. Issuers shall solicit comments from both the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and SECP on the draft offer document,

irrespective of the size of the right issue.

To enable investors to make informed decisions, disclosures in the right issue offer document have been strengthened so investors get access to vital information regarding the issuer, risk factors specific to the issue or the issuer, and impact of such risks on the operations and performance of the company.

The requirement for directors and substantial shareholders to mandatorily undertake that they shall subscribe to the right issue or arrange for subscription of their entitled shares has been streamlined. This requirement was previously applicable for all direc-

tors/substantial shareholders including the directors/substantial shareholders who do not agree to the decision to proceed with the right issue. Now the dissenting directors/substantial shareholders need not submit an undertaking and their portion of the right entitlement can be underwritten along with the portion offered to the general public.

For sponsors and associated companies/associated undertakings, restrictions on sale of shares after the issuance is now made two years and for persons other than sponsors/associates, it is reduced to six months instead of the existing requirements based on shareholding percentage.

# Pak-Iran FTA will be finalized in upcoming visit of President of Iran: Ambassador Moghadam

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on Thursday said that there is a strong possibility that the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will be finalized in the upcoming visit of the President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan, which is likely to increase the mutual trade between the two countries.

From the upcoming visit of the Iranian president to Pakistan, there will be several bilateral economic and trade agreements between the two countries, which will further strengthen the mutual economic and trade relations and promote the bilateral business between the two countries, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam said this in visit to Islamabad Cham-

ber of Commerce and Industry on the invitation of President ICICI, Mr Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri here in Chamber house.

The Iranian ambassador said that the current bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Iran is \$2.5 billion, which has increased by 11 percent in the last 11 months.

The Ambassador said that after the FTA and bilateral agreements between the two governments for the promotion of mutual trade, there is a strong possibility of doubling the mutual trade between Pakistan and Iran to reach \$5 billion in the next few years.

He said that the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is a huge facility for the people of Pakistan on behalf of the government of Iran, which will benefit both the domestic and

industrial sectors of Pakistan.

Iranian Envoy said that Iran is already trading with Turkey, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan in the sector of energy and gas and Pakistan can also adopt the procedure adopted with these countries.

Dr. Reza Amiri said that the banking channel in Pakistan and Iran is a big issue, but Iran has a banking channel with Turkey, Bahrain and Iraq, Pakistan can follow this procedure.

He said that Pakistan and Iran need to have strong air, maritime and sea links, which will strengthen the economic relations between the two countries and Pakistan will also be connected to regional and global trade.

The Ambassador emphasized on the closeness of maritime links between the two countries, espe-

cially Karachi and Gwadar and Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports and said that Gwadar and Chabahar should be declared as sister ports.

He said that this era is the era of economic and trade links and it will take time for Pakistan and Iran to connect with regional and global trade through these ports.

He said that Pakistan-China Trade Corridor and BRI projects also have strong prospects for economic and trade integration between Pakistan and Iran, which both countries need to work on.

He said that the world is currently being connected to each other through various economic and trade corridors and Pakistan and Iran can make their place in the global trade market by connecting to the North-South and East-West trade corridors.



He said that with this both countries can be connected not only to regional trade, especially Central Asia, but also connect to European markets.

He said that Pakistan and Iran can fulfill 70 percent of each other's needs by engaging in mutual trade, just as Iran imports

halal meat, Pakistan can do a lot of work in Iran in this sector.

The Iranian ambassador said that Iran is issuing electronic visas to Pakistan businessmen while making visas easier.

He said that the relations between the business community of Pakistan and Iran, espe-

cially Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Tehran Chamber of Commerce and Industry, should be further improved.

Meanwhile addressing to the forum, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri said that Pakistan and Iran's trade volume exceeds \$2.5 billion annually, with Pakistan selling rice and other products to its neighbor, while people living in the border area of Balochistan save money by buying Iranian food and goods from traders across the border.

He said that as part of a five-year trade cooperation plan for 2023-2028, Pakistan and Iran aim to increase annual trade volume between the two countries to \$5 billion.



# Cycling Delegation Engages with Punjab Sports Minister for Racing Development

Sports Desk

LAHORE: A delegation comprising Idris Haider Khawaja, Secretary of the Punjab Olympic Association, and Moazzam Khan Klair, Chairman of the Punjab Cycling Association, recently met with Punjab Sports Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar to discuss strategies for advancing upcoming cycling races aimed at fostering the sport's growth. During the meeting, Minister Khokhar emphasized Punjab's wealth of cycling talent and pledged to provide the necessary infrastructure and opportunities for identifying and nurturing new players. A comprehensive action plan will be formulated to elevate cycling at the grassroots level and unearth emerging talents. "We are committed to harnessing the abundant talent in Punjab. The development of cycling is a priority, and we aim to organize races at the provincial level to prepare our cyclists for national competitions," stated Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar.



Expressing gratitude for the Minister's vision, Moazzam Khan Klair highlighted the potential for broader sports development under his leadership. Additionally, attendees Shahza-

da Butt and Waqar Ali commended the proposed action plan, foreseeing positive impacts on the sports landscape. The collaborative efforts between the cycling delegation and Minister

Khokhar are anticipated to bring about a renewed focus on cycling development, providing aspiring athletes with opportunities to shine on both regional and national platforms.

# Kylian Mbappe presence at Olympics very difficult: coach Deschamps

Sports Desk

LAHORE: France coach Didier Deschamps has cast doubt on Kylian Mbappe's chances of representing his country at this year's Paris Olympics, saying that it would be "very difficult" to compete at the Games straight after Euro 2024.

"It is very difficult from a psychological and physical viewpoint to take part in two competitions like that one after the other, in the summer, without having any holiday," Deschamps admitted on Thursday.

The France coach confirmed that some members of his squad for the European Championship are likely to also feature in the Olympics squad, which will be named by Thierry Henry.

However, Deschamps said the Euro "remains the priority" and that the identities of those players featuring at the Olympics would need to be known before the continental championship, which starts on June 14.

"We don't want any interference with our preparations, so once we are in our training camp at Clairefontaine, it needs



to be clear who is going and who is not going," Deschamps said.

It is understood that Paris Saint-Germain superstar Kylian Mbappe, the France captain, is very keen to represent his country at the Olympics, along with Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann.

Yet the European Championship in Germany does not finish until July 14,

with the Olympic football tournament beginning on July 24.

That means there would be no time for a break in between, at least if France go deep into the Euro.

Men's football at the Summer Games is for players aged under 23, although three overage players can feature too, paving the way for the 25-year-old

Mbappe and other senior French stars to take part.

However, football's world governing body FIFA does not oblige clubs to release players for the Olympics, which could complicate Mbappe's situation even more.

The forward has already told PSG he plans to leave when his contract expires at the end of this season and Real Madrid is expected to be his next destination.

His new club is unlikely to be thrilled at the prospect of Mbappe going to the Games rather than taking a holiday ahead of the start of the new season — the final of the Olympic tournament is set for August 9.

France legend Henry is currently in charge of the national Under-21 side and will oversee the team at the Olympics.

He accepts that whether Kylian Mbappe features in the squad does not ultimately come down to him.

"I have no certainties. I am at the mercy of a yes or a no from a club," Henry said on Thursday.

"And then if they agree and then change coach in the meantime, who is to say I would still have him?"

# Bangladesh to tour USA for three-match T20I series ahead of T20 World Cup

A Sports

The Bangladesh Men's Cricket Team will tour the United States of America (USA) for a three-match T20I series ahead of this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced Thursday.

Bangladesh's historic tour to the USA meant that the two teams would face each other in the shortest format for the first time.

The BCB sees the three-match series as an opportunity to prepare for the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be co-hosted by the West Indies and the USA.

"For the Bangladesh Team, this tour serves as an ideal platform to acclimatise to the conditions ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024," Nizam Uddin Chowdhury, CEO, Bangladesh Cricket Board, said.



"We recognise the significance of this preparatory phase and are committed to making the most of this invaluable experience."

Bangladesh have thus far played only two T20Is in the USA, both against the West Indies in 2018.

The Asian Tigers will start their T20

World Cup 2024 campaign in the country, taking on Sri Lanka and South Africa in Dallas and New York respectively.

Prior to the historic series against Bangladesh, the USA will host Canada for a five-match T20I series.

All eight matches of the two bilateral series will be played at Prairie View Cricket Complex in Houston, Texas.

"Ahead of the important Men's T20 World Cup, these games will be vital for our team to get their working combinations, build team cohesion, and fine-tune strategies," said Venu Pisike, Chairman of USA Cricket.

Notably, Bangladesh are placed in group D of the T20 World Cup 2024, alongside Sri Lanka, South Africa, Nepal and the Netherlands.

Whereas, the USA are part of Group A which also features India, Pakistan, Canada and Ireland.

## New Zealand men cricket team will arrive on 14 April to play five T-20 matches

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced that New Zealand men's cricket team will tour Pakistan from 14 April to play five T20Is.

The Blackcaps will arrive in the capital city on 14 April and will play three T20Is at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi on 18, 20 and 21 April. Following that, both sides will move to Lahore, where they will play the remaining two T20Is of the series on 25 and 27 April, respectively.

All five matches of the T20I series will begin at 7pm PKT. Ticket prices for the series will be set at affordable rates for the fans to watch their favorite players in action. Tickets will be available at selected TCS outlets and online at pcb.tcs.com.pk. An announcement regarding ticket sales will be made in due course.

The coming tour of the Blackcaps will mark their third visit to Pakistan in the span of 17 months. Previously, they had traveled to Pakistan in December 2022/January 2023 to feature in two Tests and three ODIs — part of ICC Men's Championship. Later that year in April, they traveled to Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi to feature in 10 white-ball matches.

Usman Wahla, Director — International Cricket: "In a testament to the unwavering camaraderie between Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and New Zealand Cricket (NZC), we are delighted to present the schedule for New Zealand men's team tour to Pakistan 2024.

This tour symbolises the deep-rooted ties and mutual respect that define the relationship between our two cricketing nations.

Our avid cricket fans and the people of Pakistan will welcome the New Zealand team again and we hope to have yet another competitive series which is a key part of our buildup to this year's ICC T20 World Cup.

Series schedule  
14 April — New Zealand arrive in Pakistan  
16-17 April — Training/practice  
18 April — 1st T20I, Rawalpindi  
20 April — 2nd T20I, Rawalpindi  
21 April — 3rd T20I, Rawalpindi  
25 April — 4th T20I, Lahore  
27 April — 5th T20I, Lahore



## Sri Lanka's Lahiru Thirimanne hospitalized after car crash



A Sports

ANURADHAPURA: Former Sri Lanka cricketer Lahiru Thirimanne on Thursday, was hospitalized in a local hospital here after being involved in a serious car accident.

According to the details, the car Thirimanne was travelling in, was involved in a head-on collision near the north-central part of the city, on Thursday morning.

The nature of Thirimanne's injury is yet to be determined, but he is currently in stable condition at Anuradhapura Teaching Hospital, where he received medical attention.

Besides him, at least one other person accompanying Lahiru Thirimanne in the car is also receiving treatment at the same hospital.

Details further suggested that Thirimanne was on pilgrimage when the accident occurred. His car crashed into a heavy vehicle travelling in the opposite direction.

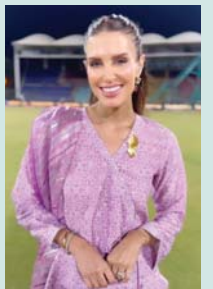
## Erin Holland speaks in Urdu and her fans love it

Australian sports presenter Erin Holland is in Pakistan for the ongoing flagship tournament Pakistan Super League (PSL) and she is making sure that fans keep checking her social media feed for updates about her tour.

In her latest post on Instagram, the iconic sports presenter wished everyone Ramadan Mubarak (Happy Ramadan), but it wasn't an everyday post — she spoke in Urdu this time.

"Ramazan Mubarak to all who are celebrating," she captioned the post, with a video posted along with it.

In the video, she said: "Assalamualaikum! Meri taraf se subko Ramazan Mubarak [Assalamualaikum! I wish everyone a Happy Ramadan]"



# Multan Sultans sink Peshawar Zalmi to reach PSL 9 Final

A Sports

KARACHI: A combined bowling effort, followed by Yasir Khan's blistering half-century powered Multan Sultans to beat Peshawar Zalmi by seven wickets and qualify for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final.

Set to chase a modest 147, the Sultans amassed the total for the loss of just three wickets and nine balls to spare, courtesy of a solid knock by Yasir up the order.

The Sultans had a flying start to the pursuit as Yasir and Mohammad Rizwan notched up a brisk 61-run partnership.

Yasir was the core aggressor of the opening stand while Rizwan was anchoring through until he fell prey to Aamer Jamal in the eighth over.

Rizwan managed just 15 off 21 deliveries and could hit a single

boundary. Yasir then partnered with Usman Khan for a brief 23-run partnership before walking back to the dugout soon after completing his half-century.

He remained the top-scorer for the Sultans with a 37-ball 54 with the help of seven boundaries and a six.

Usman then took charge of the Sultans' pursuit and he carried his bat all the way through with an unbeaten 36 off 28 deliveries to steer them to a comfortable victory.

He received notable support from Ifthikhar Ahmed, who played a quickfire 22-run cameo. His eight-ball featured three boundaries and a six.

For Peshawar Zalmi, Aamer Jamal, Salman Irshad and Mehran Mumtaz could pick up a wicket apiece.

Opting to bat first, Zalmi only managed a subpar total on the board despite Babar Azam's anchoring knock.

Zalmi had a dismal start to their innings as they lost their in-form opener Saim Ayub (1) in the first over with just four runs on the board.

Following the early debacle, Mohammad Haris joined Babar in the middle and put together an anchoring 46-run partnership for the second wicket before falling victim to Mohammad Ali in the sixth over.

Zalmi then sustained another blow to their batting charge when Usama Mir got rid of Haseebullah Khan (3) in the eighth over.

Meanwhile, Babar Azam stood his ground firm and kept the scoreboard ticking until Chris Jordan cleaned him up

with a well-crafted yorker in the 14th over.

He remained the top-scorer for Peshawar Zalmi with 46 off 42 deliveries, laced up with five boundaries.

Following his departure, Tom Kohler-Cadmore (24) and Rovman Powell (12) made notable contributions before Paul Walter and Luke Wood offered late fireworks.

Walter (12) and Wood added an unbeaten 15 for the eighth wicket, lifting Zalmi to go past the 140-run mark.

Wood was the core aggressor of the stand with his brisk 14-run cameo which came off just seven deliveries and featured one boundary and a six.

Usama Mir, the leading wicket-taker of the PSL 9, and Chris Jordan led the bowling attack for Multan Sultans with two wickets



each while David Wiley, Mohammad Ali and Abbas Afridi struck out a batter apiece.



## Protest

NEW DELHI: Students of Jamia Millia Islamia University from different student organizations hold placards against a citizenship law.



Photo: Reuters

## Pakistan slams India's 'controversial' citizenship law

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday registered a strong protest against India's controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was originally passed in 2019 to allow non-Muslim people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan to seek Indian citizenship to protect them

against persecution.

"The regulation and laws are premised on a false assumption that minorities are being persecuted in Muslim countries of the region and to provide India a façade of being a safe haven for them," Pakistan's state-owned Radio Pakistan quoted foreign office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch as saying during her weekly media briefing.

She maintained the rising wave of Hindutva, a 20th century ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of the Hindu way of life in India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government had led to political, economic and social victimization of Muslims and other minorities.

Baloch recalled the international community had

taken notice of these developments only a few days ago, asking New Delhi to take corrective actions to protect human rights and prevent attacks against minorities in the lead-up to India's national elections.

The spokesperson strongly condemned the Indian decision to declare illegal Kashmir National Front in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. With this, a total of nine

Kashmiri political parties have been outlawed in IIOJK.

These oppressive measures reflect a vicious intent by India to stifle dissent and freedom of expression in IIOJK in complete disregard of international laws. She said India should immediately lift curbs on the banned Kashmiri political parties, release all political prisoners and forthwith implement the UNSC resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

## Iran Embassy of Pakistan condemns Zionism, extremist Islamophobia on International Day to Combat Islamophobia

**Spokesman Report**

March 15th is the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan, while condemning all shapes of extremism, religious violence and Islamophobia, emphasizes the need to take coordinated measures at the national, regional and international levels, especially in the Islamic countries, to combat the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Unfortunately, the actions of some terrorist and extremist groups in the name of Islam have damaged the face of Islam and increased the wave of Islamophobia in the world. In the meantime, the biased highlighting and exaggeration



of actions of the extremist and terrorist groups by the Western propaganda apparatus, has aggravated the waves of Islamophobia. Still, they are silent amid genocide and atrocities of the Zionist regime

in Gaza.

Unfortunately, the Zionist and imperialist conspiracy through provocative actions such as sacrilegious desecration of the Holy Quran, disrespecting the Prophet of

Islam, and contempt of the religious values of one and a half billion Muslim people under the pretext of "freedom of expression" has become an ordinary issue. This virulent phenomenon causes the escalation of tension, hatred, Islamophobia and violence against the Muslims. However, it is a threat for the international peace and security and human rights and a threat to the peaceful relations between the nations, peaceful coexistence and conciliatory symbiosis in the planet.

While expressing concern about the acts of violence, extremism and terrorism, especially in the name of religion, it condemns desecration of the religious values and provoking the feelings of the

followers of Islam under the pretext of freedom of expression. It calls on the international community to avoid standing indifferent, and to act and combat sacrilegious acts of the desecration of the Muslim beliefs and values including desecration of the Holy Quran and the sacred places of the Muslims including Al-Aqsa.

While emphasizing the importance of taking coordinated measures to combat all shapes of discrimination, xenophobia and violence against Muslims, it invites all to endeavour and combat Islamophobia, religious violence, terrorism and hate-mongering within the framework of the national and international laws and regulations.

## Faisal Mosque raises itikaf charges

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's iconic Faisal Mosque offers worshippers to sit in itikaf in Ramadan. The mosque's administration has announced the program for itikaf in 2024 with a significant jump in charges.

During itikaf, worshippers seclude themselves in the last 10 days of Ramadan and devote themselves to the worship of Allah.

This year, a total of 300 people will be able to sit in itikaf in Faisal Masjid. Applicants will get slots on 'first come first serve' basis.

The mosque's administration has fixed a deadline of the 10th day of Ramadan for application this year.

Applications can be filed on a form that is available at the Islamic Centre attached to the mosque. The application carries a fee of Rs5,000 that is non-refundable. The fee has to be paid via bank draft and proof has to be submitted along with the application.

The fee has been raised from Rs3,000 last year. However, the charges will not include food for worshippers at a sehri and iftari and people will have to arrange it on their own.

## Pakistan's seafood exports to China up 13% in 2023

**News Desk**

BEIJING: Pakistan's seafood exports to China increased by 13% in 2023 compared to the previous year. The rise is due to the growing demand for seafood products in China, a trend that has been steadily increasing over the past few years, said Ghulam Qadir, Investment and Trade Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing. Qadir noted that Pakistan's seafood exports to China reached \$247.3 million, marking a 13% increase for the January-December period in 2023 year-on-year. In 2022, exports were valued at \$219.3 million, while in 2021, they stood at \$139.29 million, as per data from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC).

This growth can be attributed to various factors, such as improved trade relations between the two countries, participation in the China Fisheries & Seafood Expo held in Qingdao last year by a large group of Pakistani fisheries companies, and the implementation of efficient supply chain management strategies in the Pakistani seafood industry. This positive development has contributed



to the overall economic growth and strengthened the ties between Pakistan and China, the counsellor elaborated. Qadir informed China Economic Net (CEN) that, according to GACC, exports of frozen fish (commodity code 03038990) crossed \$60.63 million in 2023. Fresh/chilled crabs (commodity code 03063399) saw an increase to \$42.59 million, up from \$27.26 million in 2022. Moreover, exports of frozen cuttlefish (commodity code 03074310) reached \$34.93 million

from Pakistan to China in 2023.

He also highlighted that Pakistan organized the International Food and Agriculture Exhibition in Karachi last year, where a significant number of Chinese, particularly from the seafood association, participated to explore the Pakistani market. This event showcased Pakistan's potential as an exporter of quality seafood products and facilitated partnerships that have since boosted Pakistan's seafood exports to China.

## PM Shehbaz led govt committed to 'charter of economy & reconciliation': Tarar

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to the "charter of economy and reconciliation" for fully restoring the political and economic stability in the country. Speaking in a talk show on private media, the minister welcomed the active participation of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the ongoing democratic process including the election of all the constitutional positions including the President and Prime Minister.

To a query, he said the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur held the other day in a pleasant environment and matters of mutual interest came under discussion. The minister also hailed the subsequent joint media talk of the KPK chief minister and Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal as a good initiative for democracy. He also welcomed the coordination between the federation and the province. Tarar said it was Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who had not only passionately advocated for the charter of economy among all the stakeholders but also for the charter of reconciliation. Until or unless there was nothing anti-state, the matters should be resolved through



reconciliation, he remarked.

He also regretted the violations of the law committed by the PTI while recalling the wrong precedents set by the party during its rule. To a query, he said independent elected members were given three days to join a party in the House while the reserved seats were only allocated to the political parties of the House. A party that had not participated in the election was not entitled to the reserved seats, he added. Had the independent candidates joined a party in the House, the situation would have been different, he said while asking whether the Sunni Ittehad Council had released any list of reserved seats before the election. Sunni Unity Council had not secured any seat in the House, nor participated in the election, the minister noted. He said the government was committed to the right of freedom of expression and the national interests as well. There should be a code of conduct for social media platforms, he stressed.

## KP finance deptt releases funds for Ramadan package

**Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department on Thursday released funds for Ramadan package to be distributed among deserving and low-income families. KP Information Advisor Muhammad Ali Saif said here

that as per the instructions of the Chief Minister Rs 10,000 would be given to each deserving family to purchase food for the holy month of Ramadan.

He said that the financial assistance would be given through Bank Al-Falah, for which all the matters have been agreed.

## Khawaja Asif chairs meeting on ministry of aviation

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday chaired a meeting and detailed briefing was given by the secretary aviation on role of aviation ministry, National Aviation Policy 2023, the challenges faced by Pakistan Aviation industry.

The minister was also briefed on the entities working under the ministry including Pakistan Airlines corporation Ltd, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, Pakistan Airport Authority, Bureau of Air Safety Investigation, Air Port Security Forces and Pakistan meteorological department, said a

press release.

While being briefed on PIACL, the minister remarked that the privatization of PIACL would be the priority of this government. He also commended the joint venture for mix use re-development of Roosevelt Hotel.

Khawaja Asif showed his resolve to grow the aviation industry of Pakistan in terms of enhancing its contribution to country's GDP.

International Finance Corporation (IFC) apprised the minister about latest development of outsourcing of three major airports including Islamabad International Airport, Jinnah International Airport Karachi and Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore in first phase.

## Ramazan 2024: Shariah Board announces minimum Fitrana, Fidyah amount

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The minimum Sadaqah Fitrana and Fidyah for fasting this year was set at Rs 300 per person, roughly equivalent to two kilograms of wheat flour.

This was announced by Chairman of the Shariah Board Pakistan Sheikh Al-Hadith Professor Dr Mufti Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Jalali on Thursday. In a statement, he emphasized

the importance of philanthropists and affluent individuals contributing Fitrana and Fidyah in accordance with their financial capacity, with values set at Rs600 for oats, Rs2,400 for dates, and Rs4,400 for raisins.

Similarly, he outlined the Fidyah rates for fasting the entire month of Ramadan, which are Rs9,000 for wheat flour, Rs18,000 for oats, Rs72,000 for dates, and Rs132,000 for raisins.

## Punjab minister announces Sehat Card's restoration

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Salman Rafique on Thursday announced the restoration of Health Card facilities across the province.

Salman Rafique in his media talk announced relaunching of Sehat Card facilities in Punjab soon.

He appreciated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for carrying forward PML-N's launched Sehat Card programme while being in power in Punjab.

Earlier, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, announced the resumption of the Health Card Plus initiative,

providing free medical facilities in the province's hospitals.

Addressing a press conference, Minister Shah highlighted the program's inception in 2015, initially covering four districts and expanding to the entire province by 2020, with an annual expenditure of 18 billion rupees.

The initiative, praised for successful implementation, offers 1800 medical treatments for free in 118 public and private hospitals across various specialties. Minister Shah emphasized the commitment to the Health Card's long-term nature and revealed an additional 5 billion rupees allocated for reopening counters in hospitals.