



**US considers Pakistan important partner, says envoy Donald Blome**

The United States considered Pakistan an important partner and hoped to work with the government to build stronger ties between the two countries, US Ambassador Donald Blome said on Friday. He said during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. (Details on Page 8)



**Transport and population is essential to address environmental issues: CM**

"Data of all industrial units should be collected to formulate smog mitigation strategies," said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, while chairing a meeting on urban unit. Madam Chief Minister directed to focus on physical and social planning, implementation and monitoring in Punjab. She said, "It is important to update healthcare, industry and labor data for better service delivery." (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Called on**

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif call on Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, in GHQ.



Photo: ISPR

**PM, cabinet members visit GHQ**

**Army will resolutely support govt in addressing security challenges: COAS Munir**

**Spokesman Report**

RAWALPINDI: The Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif, accompanied by key members of the Cabinet, visited the General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi today. The PM was received by Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, and was presented guard of honour.

Floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada was laid by the Prime Minister, to pay tribute to the martyrs.

During the visit, Prime Minister and Cabinet members engaged in discussions with military leadership on matters of national security, regional stability and military preparedness. They were briefed on the current security environment,

threat spectrum, response to the security threats and ongoing counter terrorism operations.

PM and Cabinet members appreciated the professionalism, operational readiness, and sacrifices of Pakistan Army in war against terrorism and commended the dedication of the Pakistan Army in safeguarding the nation's territorial integrity and ensuring peace and

stability. The PM assured that the Government shall provide all the resources required for ensuring operational readiness of the Armed Forces. He said that Pakistan is destined to rise and the role of the Armed Forces in ensuring peaceful rise of Pakistan cannot be over-emphasized.

COAS thanked the PM for the visit and reposing confidence in the Army. COAS affirmed that

Pakistan Army will continue to measure up to the nation's expectations and will resolutely support the Government in addressing the security challenges facing Pakistan.

The visit concluded with civilian and military leadership reiterating their commitment to upholding national interests and working together for a prosperous and secure Pakistan.

**President Zardari's gratitude shows Pak-China ties now at high level: Wang Wenbin**

**Spokesman Report**

BELJING: President Asif Ali Zardari's positive statement is commendable and his gratitude to Chinese President Xi Jinping also shows that the relations between Pakistan and China are now at a high level, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Friday. In his letter, President Zardari thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for extending warm congratulations on his re-election as the President of Pakistan.

President Zardari also expressed his commitment to working closely with the Chinese President to deepen practical cooperation, strengthen the all-weather partnership, and foster a shared community for the benefit of the two countries. "We commend President Zardari's positive statement," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question raised by APP. The spokesperson said that after President Zardari's election, President Xi Jinping expressed congratulations pointing out that the two countries are good neighbors, friends, partners and brothers. "The iron-clad friendship is a historical choice and the treasures for the two peoples," he added. Wang Wenbin said that President Zardari's gratitude also shows

that the countries' relations are now at a high level. "We are ready to work with Pakistan to carry forward our traditional friendship and build a China Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era," he added. While replying to President Xi's letter, President Zardari expressed his commitment to working closely with the Chinese President to deepen practical cooperation, strengthen the all-weather partnership, and foster a shared community for the benefit of the two countries. In his congratulatory message to President Zardari on his election as President of Pakistan, Xi expressed his readiness to work with President Zardari to carry forward the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan, advance practical cooperation in various fields, push for greater development of China-Pakistan all weather cooperative partnership, accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, so as to better benefit the two peoples.



**PM kicks off spring plantation drive**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday launched the countrywide spring plantation drive by planting a sapling here. Emphasizing the government's commitment, he announced to double the number of saplings planted in 2024 compared to the previous year's achievement of 240 million.

Speaking on the occasion, he highlighted the urgency to expand Pakistan's forest cover, currently at a mere 5% of the total area, to mitigate climate risks. Quoting the Global

Climate Risk Index, he underscored Pakistan's ranking as the 5th most vulnerable country to climate-related hazards, he stressed the necessity for immediate action.

"From 1999 to 2018, the country had to face the loss of 10,000 precious lives besides billions of dollars of financial loss; therefore it is crucial to create awareness about the climate change risks at all levels including educational institutions," the prime minister remarked. PM kicks off spring plantation drive, vows to save country from climate change risks.

**FM says Pakistan committed to combat Islamophobia**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar Friday said Pakistan reaffirmed commitment to combat Islamophobia as it surged across the world, fueled by discriminatory laws and populist policies manifest in hijab bans, desecration of the Holy Quran, vilification of religious personalities and destruction of Holy Sites. In a statement, he said, "On this International Day to Combat Islamophobia, we join the international community in raising our voice against all acts of Islamophobia. Pakistan will continue to work closely with the international community in promoting dialogue, harmony and mutual understanding"

**PTI Core Committee briefed on Khan's cases**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Core Committee was given detailed briefing by the party legal team pertaining to the current status of cases of PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan and vehemently denounced his detention in the fabricated, politically-motivated and fake cases, demanding that order should be issued for his instant release from the unlawful imprisonment.

PTI Core Committee, in its meeting here on Thursday, discussed various issues especially the inordinate delay of appeals in cases against PTI Chairman-for-life, safety and security of his spouse Bushra Bibi and the unconstitutional recounts of votes in various constituencies in Punjab threadbare.

During the meeting, the PTI legal team gave a comprehensive overview to the core committee regarding the

cases of Imran Khan. The forum strongly condemned the unlawful and unconstitutional incarceration of the PTI Founding Chairman in fake and frivolous cases.

They made it clear that the state's intentions to subject Imran Khan to political vendetta had been fully evident from the unfair speedy trial in fabricated cases like Toshakhana and Cipher, wherein he was handed down sentences in hasty manner.

PTI Core Committee expressed its annoyance over the unnecessary and unjustifiable tactics to delay the appeals against these black decisions of the courts.

The participants demanded that all the cases against Imran Khan should be proceeded in accordance with the constitution and law and orders should be issued for the release of the PTI Founding Chairman by ending all these false and fabricated cases forthwith.

PTI Core Committee voiced seri-

ous concerns regarding the threats to the health and life of former First Lady Ms. Bushra Bibi.

They strongly denounced the detention of Bushra Bibi in Bani Gala sub jail against her will by endangering her life. The forum called for providing fool-proof security to the former first lady and immediate redressal of threats to her health and life.

Moreover, the forum termed the recounting of votes in various constituencies of Punjab as unconstitutional, adding that after February 8, the constitutional seats of PTI were being stolen under the pretext of unconstitutional vote recounts and were being gifted to PML-N unlawfully.

PTI Core Committee reiterated its demand that all these constituencies should also be audited in the light of the actual Form 45 and all PTI's stolen seats should be returned to the party in accordance with the constitution and law.

**No IAEA official visiting Pakistan: Foreign Office**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office Spokesperson Friday said no official from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was currently visiting Pakistan, nor any policy talks planned in the near future with IAEA. In response to media queries regarding visit of IAEA delegation to Pakistan, the Spokesperson in a statement said, "Any stories regarding the visit of a high-level IAEA delegation to Pakistan are fake news."

Director General IAEA visited Pakistan in February 2023. This Ministry had issued briefings to the media on the occasion, she added.

**Handful miscreants bent on sabotaging Pakistan-IMF deal: Tarar**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar said on Friday said a handful of miscreants associated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was bent upon sabotaging Pakistan's deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that was crucial for economic stability. "In a bid to disrupt Pakistan's ongoing talks with IMF, some miscreants protested in front of IMF and World Bank offices in United States and indulged in



sloganeering against Pakistan Army," he said while addressing a news conference here.

Continued on Page 8

**PM calls for united front against Islamophobia**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the International Day to Combat Islamophobia served to raise global awareness about the unfounded phobia against Islam and its adherents as well as the need to present a united front to stamp

out this contemporary menace. In a message, on the international day, he said, "Pakistan joins the international community in observing the International Day to Combat Islamophobia."

He said, "This important day comes at a time of alarming surge worldwide in Islamophobia, fuelled by discriminatory laws,

populist politics, and xenophobic narratives." "From ban on public wearing of hijabs to willful desecration of the Holy Quran, and from vilification of revered religious personalities to destruction of holy sites, this dangerous form of religious hatred is infringing upon the basic human rights, dignity and identity of over 1.5

billion Muslims." "Regrettably, Islamophobic ideologies and policies are being endorsed, promoted and normalized by public office holders, state representatives, academia, and sections of media in many parts of the world, including in our neighbourhood," he said adding, "Online unregulated platforms

continue to amplify disinformation against Islam, resulting in real-time acts of discrimination, stigmatization, and violence." He said the world can ill afford to allow such dangerous growth of hatred, prejudice and bigotry based on religious beliefs, dividing and diminishing us as humanity.

# Punjab College again wins Sports Champion Trophy of Multan Board for 22nd year

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Punjab College retained the honor by winning the Sports Champion Trophy of the Education Board for the 22nd year.

DPI Colleges South Punjab Professor Dr Farid Sharif, Chairman Education Board Hafiz Muhammad Qasim, Secretary Education Board Khuram Shahzad Qureshi have said that we need healthy minds for the development of Pakistan which is possible due to sports. If you want to do it, you have to participate in sports like Punjab colleges. It is no less than a blessing for the students of Multan and South Punjab that along with education, it is the most advanced in the field of sports.

This is the reason why the champion trophy of the 22nd education board for male and female students and the champion trophy of the second board has once again been won by Punjab College.

A healthy mind requires a healthy body which is what Punjab Group of Colleges is giving to its female students in the form of sports. He expressed these views yesterday while addressing the ceremony of awarding champion trophies of boys and girls of Multan



Board Intermediate.

He further said that we can create a healthy nation only by organizing sports. He told the students that at least one hour should be taken out for sports every day. Congratulations for winning the 22nd consecutive Champions Trophy. On this occasion, Director Admin Professor

Osama Bashir Qureshi said that the mission of Punjab Group of Colleges is to produce eminent players in sports as well as in education, in which we are quite successful. That is why we are receiving the 22nd Education Board Champion Trophy.

In sports, Punjab Colleges won 13 first, 2 second, and 1 third positions

out of 17 boys games.

stood at the top and was entitled to the overall champion trophy. The girls won the champion trophy with 3 first, 3 second and 1 third positions in total 7 games. A large number of students and teachers participated in the ceremony. At the end, champions trophies and other Trophies were awarded.

## Bahawalpur Museum celebrates colorful culture of Cholistan on Punjab Culture Day

**Ch Nabeel Shakir**

BAHAWALPUR: The culture of Punjab is characterized by peace, sweetness, unity and mutual respect. These cultural elements promote tolerance and tolerance in the society. This land of five rivers is rich in beautiful and fascinating culture, each color is beautiful and distinguished from the other. Due to its diverse culture, the culture of Punjab is loved all over the world—these views were expressed by Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani on the occasion of Punjab Culture Day. He completed his office affairs and the staff also according to this day. The regional culture gallery of the museum highlights the cultural colors of the region through cultural objects and traditional costumes. The director of the museum said that the culture of this region including Bahawalpur is ancient and alive. Keeping our cultural values and traditions alive is a sign of vitality—Mohammad Zubair Rabbani said. Cholistan has valuable culture of the world. Which is an honor for Pakistan and Saraiki Wasib. He further said that cultural festivals show the identity and uniqueness of each region—Punjab is the center of multifaceted cultures, one of which is the colorful culture of Cholistan. and in recent times at Gunveriwala area of Cholistan. Access to Hakra civilization during the excavation will pave more ways to know the civilization here. He said that the purpose of celebrating Punjab Cultural Day is to spread the message of love, brotherhood and unity, which will promote inter-provincial and inter-cultural harmony. Zubair Rabbani said that the museum has always ensured the organization of programs that help in the promotion of national and regional culture, language, literature and arts.



## Gillani wasted public money by contesting the election: Barrister Malik Tamoor

**Arshad Raza Zaidi/ Mustansar Shah Nawaz**

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf NA-148 Candidate Barrister Malik Tamoor Altaf Maheec said that Yousuf Raza Gillani, when he was going to become a senator again, why did he contest the National Assembly election, it is a waste of Pakistani people's money, which the people would have paid in the form of taxes. After spending millions of crores by the Election Commission. Yousuf Raza Gillani from Senator to Member of National Assembly and then from National Assembly to Senator again. What is this if not a waste of people's money. The fact is that according to Form 45 from NA 148, Yousuf Raza Gillani should have been defeated by thousands of votes, that is Form 45. Be it mine, Ahmed Hussain Dehar's or Yousuf Raza Gillani the ongoing case related to the recount in the Election Commission, the victory must be ours and Yousuf Raza Gillani himself knows that he has been defeated by fraud. Which is against the freedom of opinion of the people.



## Muslim Conference chief in Jeddah to attend Rabita Alam-e-Islami conference



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD/JEDDAH: Ex-Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of Muslim Conference and prominent member of Rabita Alam-e-Islami Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has reached Jeddah from Islamabad to participate in the conference of Rabita-e-Islami being held in Makkah Makarama. On arrival at Jeddah Airport, the representatives of Rabita Alam-e-Islami and the workers of the Muslim Conference gave him a grand welcome. President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan will participate in the two-day international conference organized by the Islamic World Association in Makkah on March 17-18 after performing Umrah. Meetings with activists and the Kashmiri community and participating in seminars organized regarding the Kashmir issue.

## Waseem Afzal Waraich visits Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, recites Fatiha

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Waseem Afzal Waraich Director Welfare and Media along with his staff visited Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Tando Muhammad Khan where he played his role in resolving the applications filed by the petitioners in Mirpur Khas before the Federal Ombudsman. On this occasion, Aslam Qureshi and Faisal Shahzada of OGDCL briefed them in detail about the problems of workers of OGDCL, which were resolved by Wasim Ahmed Waraich. Waseem Afzal Waraich (Director Welfare and Media) and Rana Arif Hameed condoled the death of the daughter of Aslam Qureshi, a hardworking worker of OGDCL, by going to his residence Tando Muhammad Khan and reciting Fatiha.

On this occasion Waseem Afzal Waraich Director Welfare and Media while talking to the local media said that we are committed to solving the problems of OGDCL workers, during my visit I was treated with respect by OGDCL workers. I am grateful to the family of Aslam Qureshi, a hardworking worker of OGDCL, for the way they warmly welcomed me and presented me with the gifts, keeping the hospitable tradition of Sindh, I will never forget this love.

## Vice Chancellor of Faisalabad University to be awarded Hilal Imtiaz for services in education

**Abdul Majid**



FAISALABAD: The President of Pakistan has approved the national award of Hilal Imtiaz to Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor of Agricultural University, Faisalabad, in recognition of his valuable services to Pakistan in the field of education. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan will be honored with Hilal Imtiaz in the President's House in Islamabad. Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan has a long and comprehensive service in education, research and administration. In recognition of his services in education, agriculture and research, the government awarded him the Star Distinction in 2012 as well. Similarly, in consideration of his efforts, he was also awarded the French Civil Award. Recently he has also been elected as a member of Higher Education Commission (HEC). Under the leadership of Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, the University of Agriculture is not only considered one of the world's top universities in the field of agriculture, but has also emerged as a center for research, agriculture and academic activities.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Director General Special Communication Organization (SCO) Major General Umar Ahmad Shah called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday.



Photo: PID

# All the Artifacts from Gunveerwala to be displayed in Bahawalpur Museum

**Ch Nabeel Shakir**

BAHAWALPUR: All the art efacts found at the site of Gunveerwala will be displayed in the main galleries of the Bahawalpur Museum and all measures are being implemented. These views were expressed by Chairman Board of Governors Bahawalpur Museum and Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtesham Anwar on the occasion of reviewing the galleries of Bahawalpur Museum today.

Director Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani briefed Dr. Ehtesham Anwar on the occasion about the proposed display of the artefacts found in the main halls of the museum and Gunveriwala. Commissioner Bahawalpur Division said that after



the excavation of the Hakra civilization, the importance of the Bahawalpur region has decreased. He said that the display of these antiquities in Bahawalpur Museum will provide easy access to domestic and foreign tourists, researchers and visitors for research on them. Muhammad Zubair Rabbani said that due to the personal interest of Commissioner Bahawalpur, the remains of the city of about seven thousand years old have been discovered in Gunveriwala, Cholistan. The remains of these mounds are spread over an area of 80 hectares. He also paid tribute to Dr. Ehtesham Anwar for his commitment to history and his attachment to the state of Bahawalpur and the steps taken for the improvement of the museum.

# Faisalabad is the third largest city of Pakistan

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: It does not have any public transport, leaving Faisalabad only with the help of Ching Chi, where the metro runs till southern Punjab. Bullet train ran in Lahore in Faisalabad in 20 years, no ride has been available for over one crore citizens here.

Its cricket ground has been closed for more than 14 years, while the return of international cricket and the eighth year of PSL, not a single match is being held here, but the match has also been moved to Quetta, from Faisalabad. Some went to the small city of Multan, but what revenge is being taken from the citizens of Faisalabad, isn't entertainment necessary for them?

Its international hockey arena has now become a car showroom, the astro-turf there has been rendered useless.

When our international hockey team was destroyed, along with it, the Faisalabad field also fell into the hands of the car mafia.

There used to be a Canal Park here, which is now dilapidated and has not been restored. Jinnah Park is the only one left because it has Serena Hotel and Chenab Club next to it because influential people keep coming and going there.

No new school or valuable educational institution could be built here, Arfa Karim belonged to Faisalabad but the tower named after him was built in Lahore, Technology Park was built in Lahore. The people of Faisalabad have a thought. Being kept away under an alleged conspiracy.

Millions of people in Faisalabad and its suburbs do not even have a High Court bench. Thousands of people have to visit Lahore daily because of



the grandfathering of the Lahore High Court Bar.

If you want to go abroad, there are medical laboratories in Lahore, Gujranwala and many other cities, not in Faisalabad. For HEC, Foreign Office and Visa Protector also one has to go to Lahore why not Faisalabad. Aren't these facilities necessary for a city with more than one million inhabitants?

We have seen that in the last 15 years, the entire budget of Punjab was invested in Lahore and its infrastructure was made the best, but the infrastructure of Faisalabad was destroyed, but it does not crawl on the head of any commissioner or politician. Why?

No government is doing anything for the people of Faisalabad and the sad thing is that neither any politician of Faisalabad does anything nor the people are aware. They make fun of every serious issue.

If you want the development of Faisalabad, then the people should also be aware and raise their voices and urge the politicians of their constituency to spend the budget of Faisalabad only on Faisalabad and not to take everything to Lahore.



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr ..... 4:59 am  
Zohr ..... 12:17 pm  
Asr ..... 4:35 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:16 pm  
Isha ..... 7:39 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH ..... 561111  
MH ..... 561116  
MH ..... 561116  
Cantt Hospital ..... 9270907-11  
DHQ ..... 5556311-4  
RGH ..... 9290301-7

Saudi Arabia launches Ramadan Iftar programme in Pakistan



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Embassy has launched the "Programme of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for Iftar" in Pakistan for the holy month of Ramadan by arranging the first Iftar program at Faisal Masjid.

The program was launched at the King Faisal Mosque in Islamabad that was attended by Saudi embassy officials and directors of Saudi offices, President of International Islamic University, H. E., Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, other university Officials and thousands of faithful of twin cities.

After this first Iftar at Islamabad, the embassy will continue this program on a daily basis across the country. The initiative by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs of KSA sees similar events organized by its attachés in various nations during Ramadan.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, represented by the religious attaché through the Kingdom's Embassy arranges the iftar program every year and it has become a tradition laid by the brethren country.

The citizens of the twin cities lauded the exquisite arrangements of iftar at Faisal Masjid and thanked the Saudi government for showing love, care and brotherhood for the people of Pakistan. Later, officials of the Saudi Embassy, IIUI and the guests offered maghrib prayer at the Faisal Masjid.

# Women financial independence key to unlock nation true potential: Mushaal

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick stressed the need for the increased women engagement in social and digital arenas because their financial independence was a pivotal pillar to unlock the true potential of the nation.

Speaking at a seminar held in connection with International Women Day titled "Breaking Barriers: Roles, Challenges, and Opportunities for Women Empowerment in the Digital Age" as a chief guest, Mushaal said that women's empowerment and human rights encompassed a wide range of interconnected areas, each contributing to the overall goal of achieving gender equality and ensuring the rights and dignity of all individuals.

"On this International Women's Day, let us vow to support and empower

women in all areas of life. Together, we can build a world where gender equality is not just a goal, but a reality. Let us seize this opportunity to create a better, more inclusive world for future generations," she added.

She made it clear that no nation in the world could make progress without empowering their women and they needed to admit the bitter reality and worked tirelessly for realizing the dream to give due constitutional, legal and Islamic rights to them.

Mushaal, who is a wife of senior incarcerated hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, revealed that despite a limited timeframe and mandate of the caretaker government, she as SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment had given a robust "100-day Plan" aimed at enhancing the overall human rights landscape and promoting women's empowerment in Pakistan.

Speaking about hardship of Kashmiri



women, she lamented that in conflict zones like Kashmir, sexual violence, including rape, had been used as a tool of psychological warfare to instill fear, humiliate communities, and exert control over the population.

"Rape not only harms individual victims but also has far-reaching consequences for families, communities, and the overall social fabric of Kashmiri society," Mushaal added. Similarly, hurriyat leader highlight-

ed unimaginable difficulties being faced by women of Palestine and urged the world to take notice of the barbarism and state terrorism unleashed by Indian and Israeli forces on Kashmiri and Palestinian women. Vice Chancellor, FJWU Dr Uzaira Rafique also expressed her view regarding the strength of women in breaking societal barriers and achieving various milestones.

Sabien Hussein Mullik General Secretary Peace and Cultural Organization also shed light on the women empowerment and woman rights abuses in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

She questioned the world's silence over the Indian worst war crimes in the occupied valley and the use of women rap as a war tool to defuse the flames of Kashmir freedom movement.

Prof Zafar Iqbal Sindhu also highlighted the imperative of women's empowerment in the digital era.

## Air University Career Fair 2024

ISLAMABAD: Air Marshal Javaid Ahmad, HI(M) (Retd), Vice Chancellor, Air University, Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman, Capital office, FPCCI and others posing a group photo on the occasion of "Air University Career Fair 2024".



Photo: Raja Farid

## Teachers across Sindh in solidarity with Sindh Agriculture University faculty on 'Black Day'

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: In response to the 'Black Day' call issued by the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (FAPUSA) Sindh Chapter, solemnly observed a "Black Day" at different Universities across the Sindh province including, University of Karachi, Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), Layari University, Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Jamshoro, Sindh University Jamshoro, The University of Larkano, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Nawabshah, Government College University, Hyderabad, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University of Technology and Skill Development



Khairpur and others. They stand in solidarity with the faculty members of Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam, expressing grievance concern over the recent events.

During the commemoration, they emphasized the paramount importance of maintaining integrity and fairness in all academic pursuits. The association strongly criticizes the apparent lack of seriousness

from the Vice-Chancellor of Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam in addressing the issues faced by faculty members.

These Teachers Associations strongly demands the immediate fulfillment of several long-awaited demands of the Sindh Agriculture University Teachers Association (SAUTA) without any further delay.

Immediate convening of the selection board for the 2021,

Fresh advertisement of teaching vacancies for eligible faculty members, Payment of differentials owed to faculty members, settlement of remuneration bills dating back to 2018, payment of telephone allowances for the past 12 months, Settlement of orderly allowance differences spanning 20 months, Payment of leave encasements accrued over the past 5 years.

They also demanded immediate action regarding faculty members associated with Khairpur College of Agriculture Engineering, Khairpur, and Sub-Campus Umerkot. The association demands: Immediate Regularization of Faculty Members, Permission for Conducting Higher Studies, Strengthening of Infrastructures, and Appointment on Vacant Positions.

## Punjabi Mehfil-e-Mushaira held at PAC



PNP

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts organized a Punjab Mehfil-e-mushaira in connection with Punjab Culture Day. The mushaira was presided over by prominent poet Anjum Salimi, while Nasir Ali Nasir performed the duties of host. Director Arts Council Muhammad Shakur participated in the program as a special guest. Director Arts Council Muhammad Shakur said that the roots of Punjab's culture are rooted in history. Punjabis living all over the world have a unique identity everywhere. The province of Punjab is a mirror of the best culture. Highlighting cultural values is actually a practical demonstration of love for one's culture. By organizing the Punjab Lok Mela, the cultural heritage of Punjab will be promoted where the audience will see the colors of Punjabi culture. I hope that this culture will prove to be an important step of the Punjab government in bringing to light the cultural heritage of province among the people. More than two dozen poets received applause after listening to their speech. The participants appreciated the decision taken by the Punjab government on the cultural day and urged to take more steps for the promotion of Punjabi language. A large number of people belonging to the literary circles participated in the mushaira.

## Alizey Khan awarded the Diana Legacy Award by Prince William

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Alizey Khan, founder Ruhil Foundation is the first Pakistani woman to have been awarded the Diana Legacy Award. She received the award from Prince William at a ceremony held in London on 14 March 2024. Alizey Khan, 26 has been recognised with the highest accolade a young person can achieve for social action or humanitarian efforts. The legacy awards take place every two years and celebrates the achievements of 20 young leaders from across the world The Legacy Award marks The Diana Award's 25th Anniversary—a charity set up in memory of Diana, the late Princess of Wales and her belief in the power of young people to change the world. The Award has the support of both her sons, HRH The Prince of Wales and Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex. The 20 Legacy Award recipients have been chosen by a prestigious independent judging panel, chaired by Baroness Doreen Lawrence, who had the difficult task of selecting just 20 from a pool of exceptional individuals, already recognised for their impact on society with The Diana Award in 2022 or 2023.



## AIOU organizes seminar on Tahafuz e Namooos e Risalat



PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Seerat-un-Nabi chair at the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized a one-day seminar on Tahafuz e Namooos e Risalat. The seminar was presided over by Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi, and the keynote speaker was Secretary, Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr. Ikram ul Haq Yasin. The event was hosted by Prof. Dr. Ghulam Shamsur Rahman, the Head of Seerat-ul-Nabi Chair.

Dr. Ikram ul Haq emphasized in his speech on Tahafuz e Namooos e Risalat that every Muslim has a religious obligation to believe in the finality of Prophethood. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi and Dr. Ghulam Shamsur Rahman also expressed their unwavering commitment to Tahafuz e Namooos e Risalat. This seminar was organized as part of the ongoing Golden Jubilee celebrations of AIOU. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has given special instructions to include Islamic events for the promotion of Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah.

## AKU launches 3.3 MW solar photovoltaic installation

PPA

KARACHI: As part of AKDN's commitment to net zero by 2030, the Aga Khan University (AKU) is installing the largest solar photovoltaic (PV) project. To commence the project, a signing ceremony was held with Exide Pakistan Limited, who will be executing the project at AKU's Stadium Road Campus in Karachi, Pakistan.

Renewable energy is one of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to clean energy systems. Solar irradiation is very high in Pakistan which makes solar PV ideal for energy generation in the country. In 2022, AKU installed 550 kilowatt solar PV on three of its

campus roofs, resulting in highly positive environmental impact. In the project launching today, 3.3 megawatt of solar PV will be installed across the remaining roofs as well as three large parking areas of the campus, providing the much-needed shade to the cars parked below. The installation of the new panels will happen in phases, with completion aimed by April 2025.

AKU President, Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin expressed "This is a major step forward in implementing our decarbonization plan which we set for ourselves in 2022. This project demonstrates AKDN's and AKU's ongoing and strong commitment to environment, sustainability and responding to climate change



through renewable energy.'

"The partnership between AKU and Exide Pakistan Limited to provide clean and free electricity is commendable. Not only does it benefit AKU, but it also sets a shining example for other hospitals and universities to follow in promoting renewable energy and combating climate change," said Mr Altaf Hashwani, Director Exide Pakistan Limited. "Through dedication and collaboration, initiatives like this can have a profound impact on sustainability efforts across various industries. Here's to the successful implementation of the project and to the ongoing enhancements that will make AKU a role model in carbon-

free healthcare."

The solar project will reduce the burden on the K-Electric power grid and improve local air quality. Solar PV not only provides carbon-free electricity but also significantly lowers the cost of electricity, provides independence from fossil fuels, and reduces noise and air pollution.

The project is expected to save 1900 tonnes of CO2e every year, or the equivalent emissions produced by burning 800,000 litres of petrol in a car. This endeavour underscores AKU's commitment to environmental stewardship and positions it as a leader in climate action, not only within Pakistan but also on a global scale.

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

## US voices concern over India's citizenship law

**V**oicing concern over India's controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the United States has said it is monitoring the implementation of this law. "Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law for all communities are fundamental democratic principles," State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller said in response to a question from a Pakistani channel reporter at his daily news briefing on Thursday.

"So we are concerned about the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on March 11. We are closely monitoring this act – how this act will be implemented," he added. The US remarks came at the back of a strong statement by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, saying the new citizenship law in India was 'fundamentally discriminatory' in nature. The amendment to the Citizenship Act gives priority to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians resident in India before 2014, but excludes Muslims, including minority sects. "Although India's broader naturalization laws remain in place, these amendments will have a discriminatory effect on people's access to nationality", Jeremy Laurence, a spokesperson with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), said on Friday. India's Parliament passed the controversial law on Wednesday, which has sparked protests and clashes in several locations. Speaking to journalists in Geneva, Laurence said it appears to undermine India's commitment to equality before the law, as enshrined in its Constitution. He added that last December, India joined the international community in endorsing the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, which commits countries to ensure that all measures governing migration are based in human rights. "All migrants, regardless of their migration status, are entitled to respect, protection and fulfilment of their human rights," he said. Furthermore, while protecting persecuted groups is welcome, the UN human rights office, OHCHR said this should happen through a "robust" asylum system based on equality and non-discrimination, and which applies to all people regardless of race, religion, national origin or other status. "We understand the new law will be reviewed by the Supreme Court of India and hope it will consider carefully the compatibility of the law with India's international human rights obligations", Laurence said. Meanwhile, international media outlets are reporting that two people were killed and many others injured, in demonstrations held in northern India on Thursday to protest the new measure. OHCHR has urged the authorities to respect the right to peaceful assembly, while all sides should refrain from resorting to violence. On the other hand, Amnesty International said the operationalization of the CAA is a "blow to the Indian constitutional values of equality and religious non-discrimination and inconsistent and incompatible with India's international human rights obligations". "The Citizenship Amendment Act is a bigoted law that legitimizes discrimination on the basis of religion and should never have been enacted in the first place. Its operationalization is a poor reflection on the Indian authorities as they fail to listen to a multitude of voices critical of the CAA – from people across the country, civil society, international human rights organizations and the United Nations," said Aakar Patel, chair of the board at Amnesty International India. Four years after the contentious Citizenship was enacted, the Hindu-nationalist Narendra Modi government on Monday, March 11, notified necessary rules for the law to be implemented. Without rules being framed, the Act could not be implemented.

# Army Chief Demonstrate Profound Affection for Balochistan - III

**R**ecognizing Balochistan's pivotal role in national prosperity and security, the Pakistan Army has spearheaded several key projects in the province across various sectors, including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and livelihood support, all aimed at fostering sustainable development and socio-economic empowerment. As previously mentioned, one of the most significant infrastructure projects in Balochistan led by the Pakistan Army is the Makran Coastal Highway. Extending over a span of 650 kilometers along the coastline, this highway has revolutionized transportation and connectivity in the region, uniting remote coastal areas with major urban centers and ports. Beyond facilitating trade and commerce, the highway stimulates tourism and improves access to vital services for communities along its path.

The Pakistan Army oversees numerous Combined Military Hospitals (CMHs) in Balochistan, delivering high-quality healthcare services to military personnel, their families, and civilians. Offering a comprehensive array of medical facilities, including specialized treatments, surgeries, and diagnostics, these hospitals play a pivotal role in enhancing healthcare accessibility and outcomes, particularly in remote and underserved regions where healthcare access is limited.

Education serves as a cornerstone of development, and the Pakistan Army has established a network of schools and colleges in Balochistan to provide

top-notch education to children and young adults. Army Public Schools and Colleges boast modern amenities, qualified educators, and an enriching learning environment that fosters character development and skill acquisition, preparing students for success in the contemporary world.

Recognizing the importance of skill development for economic empowerment, the Pakistan Army has instituted vocational training centers across Balochistan. These centers offer training programs in various trades, including carpentry, welding, plumbing, and computer skills. By equipping individuals with marketable skills, these centers empower them to pursue gainful employment opportunities or embark on entrepreneurial endeavors, thus mitigating unemployment and poverty in the region.

Access to clean water is paramount for human health and well-being, prompting the Pakistan Army to initiate several water supply and dam projects in Balochistan to combat water scarcity. These projects encompass the construction of dams, reservoirs, and water supply schemes designed to bolster water storage capacity, enhance irrigation infrastructure, and provide clean drinking water to communities throughout the province. By ensuring access to dependable water sources, these initiatives bolster agricultural

productivity, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development in Balochistan.

The Pakistan Army remains steadfast in its commitment to the development and security of Balochistan, with the Army Chief taking a keen interest in the province's affairs. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, NI (M), recently visited Awaran district of Balochistan, where he received briefings

on the security situation and ongoing efforts by the Pakistan Army to foster socio-economic development and harness the agricultural potential of the province. Interacting with local elders, farmers, and families of fallen soldiers, COAS assured them of the Army's unwavering support for their security and well-being while paying homage to the sacrifices made by the fallen. During discussions with community leaders and farmers in Awaran, COAS underscored the significance of agriculture and reiterated the Army's commitment to the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI). The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) outlined plans to provide farmers with comprehensive agricultural support, including easy access to agricultural loans, seeds, fertilizers, solar tube wells, and guidance from agriculture experts. These measures aim to empower farmers to cultivate their lands and contribute to the progress and develop-

ment of Pakistan. Subsequently, COAS inaugurated Cadet College Awaran and engaged with faculty members and students. He commended the establishment of yet another Cadet College in Balochistan, emphasizing the significance for the local community. COAS reaffirmed Pakistan Army's commitment to ongoing development and relief efforts in Balochistan, in collaboration with relevant civil departments, emphasizing that the success of Balochistan is intertwined with the success of Pakistan. He expressed pride in the resilience of the people of Balochistan and pledged continued support from the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies for peace and prosperity in the region.

The Army Chief's tour and statements vividly demonstrate his deep affinity for Balochistan. Pakistan, a country renowned for its diversity, comprises four provinces, each with its distinct cultural heritage, languages, and traditions. They are bound together by the common identity of being part of the Pakistani nation.

Since Pakistan's inception, the principle of provincial equality has been enshrined in its founding documents, including the Constitution. This principle reflects the vision of the country's founding fathers, who aimed to establish a nation where all citizens are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their regional backgrounds. It forms the bedrock of Pakistan's federal structure, ensuring representation and voice for each province in national affairs.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



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

## Matching Shahbaz Speed with Chinese Speed - I

**S**hahbaz Sharif, celebrated for his administrative prowess, confronts the formidable task of guiding the nation towards political stability and economic resilience. To achieve this, he must enact bold reforms, including the elimination of subsidies and the privatization of underperforming State-Owned Enterprises like PIA. Moreover, vital institutions such as the Federal Board of Revenue must undergo modernization to combat the pervasive corruption that plagues the system.

Furthermore, urgent measures are needed to tackle issues like electricity theft and to broaden the tax base, encompassing sectors such as agriculture, retail, and real estate. Encouraging provinces to bolster their revenue streams and elevating the tax to GDP ratio from its current 9 to 10% to a sustainable 18% are imperative for long-term fiscal stability.

These transformative reforms hold immense promise, potentially injecting Rs. 5,800 trillion into the national coffers. This enhanced liquidity will serve as a magnet for both foreign and domestic investors, fostering a climate of confidence in the business community. Ultimately, this revitalization will spur economic growth, job creation, and an increase in per capita income, thus easing the burden of escalating commodity and utility prices on the populace.

Shahbaz Sharif can achieve these results by adopting a singular focus to match China's efficiency in implementing CPEC-1 and CPEC-2. China's method of executing projects starts with centralized planning and decision-making, facilitated by its political system. The government establishes long-term development goals and priorities, often through visionary initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Made in China 2025. This top-down approach ensures alignment with national objectives

and promotes consensus-building within the ruling Communist Party, providing a solid foundation for ambitious projects.

China utilizes state-led investment and coordination mechanisms to mobilize resources effectively. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) are pivotal in infrastructure development, benefiting from government financing and regulatory support. Additionally, China promotes public-private partnerships (PPPs) to leverage the strengths of both sectors, encouraging innovation, risk-sharing, and efficiency gains essential for successful projects, especially in infrastructure and technology sectors.

China's success in project implementation is rooted in its focus on capacity building, technological advancement, and robust governance. Investments in human capital development, research, and skills training ensure the availability of skilled labor needed for intricate projects. Adaptive governance and flexible policy responses allow authorities to navigate challenges and adjust strategies during implementation. Moreover, effective project management, oversight, and accountability mechanisms ensure timely completion and high-quality outcomes, reinforcing China's reputation for efficient execution of high-value projects.

Despite China's renowned efficiency and dedication, delays have persisted in the implementation of projects under CPEC-1, initially valued at \$65 billion and slated for completion by 2025. Currently, only \$25 billion of the total investment has materialized, leaving approximately \$40 billion worth of projects still in the pipeline.

The delay in CPEC projects are not due to Chinese lack of commitment but primarily stemming from Pakistan's volatile political and security landscape. Security threats,

including terrorism and regional instability, have disrupted construction activities and discouraged investors, resulting in delays and increased costs. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, regulatory hurdles, and governance issues within Pakistan's administrative framework have further impeded project implementation. Inefficient decision-making processes, corruption allegations, and a lack of transparency in procurement and contracting have eroded investor confidence and contributed to the sluggish pace of project execution.

Additional factors contributing to the delay in CPEC project completion encompass Pakistan's economic downturns, fiscal constraints, and geopolitical tensions, compounded by external pressures such as regional rivalries and strategic interests. Sovereignty concerns, territorial disputes, and geopolitical alignments also pose challenges. Ecological impacts and community resettlement issues further complicate CPEC projects, necessitating careful consideration and mitigation strategies.

Shahbaz Sharif's demonstrated administrative prowess positions him to secure the remaining \$40 billion investment in CPEC-1 and effectively operationalize the five growth corridors of CPEC-2: the Growth Corridor, Open Corridor, Livelihood Corridor, Innovation Corridor, and Green Corridor. Successful implementation of these initiatives could potentially lift the country out of its current economic challenges within the next five years. However, achieving this ambitious goal hinges on overcoming numerous ifs and buts.

If Shahbaz Sharif can achieve political stability and consensus among the provinces regarding the distribution of CPEC-1 and CPEC-2 projects, it could set a strong

foundation for success. Maintaining a positive relationship with the establishment and enhancing bureaucratic competency are crucial steps in ensuring efficient project management. Additionally, surviving the political landscape over the next five years is essential for continuity and progress. Streamlining bureaucratic processes, addressing security concerns, and providing policy clarity will boost investor confidence and project continuity. Timely securing funding, developing necessary infrastructure, and addressing local stakeholder concerns are pivotal in overcoming obstacles to project implementation. Resolving legal disputes and regulatory inconsistencies will further facilitate smooth project execution. Success in these endeavors will be key to unlocking the full potential of CPEC and driving economic growth in Pakistan.

Assuming Shahbaz Sharif successfully materializes the remaining \$40 billion investment in CPEC-1 and fully operationalizes CPEC-2 projects over the next five years, Pakistan's economic, financial, and developmental landscape will undergo a transformative change.

Completion of CPEC-1 and CPEC-2 will result in the construction of new roads, ports, railways, and energy projects, enhancing connectivity both within Pakistan and with China. This improved infrastructure will boost trade, transportation, and economic activity, paving the way for increased investment and development opportunities.

The establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) along the CPEC route has the potential to attract domestic and foreign industries, leading to industrial growth, technology transfer, and skills development. This diversification of Pakistan's industrial base will contribute to increased productivity and economic resilience.

*To be continued*

## 'Dreams Seen with Open Eyes: A Pathway to Manifestation'

**'D**reams seen with open eyes come true." This powerful statement reminds us of the potential and power that lies within our dreams. When we have a clear vision of what we desire, when we can see it in our minds with our eyes wide open, we set ourselves on a path towards turning those dreams into reality.

Dreams seen with open eyes are not just idle fantasies or wishful thinking. They are the seeds of inspiration that ignite our passions and fuel our ambitions. When we can vividly imagine our dreams, we are more likely to take action, make plans, and work towards achieving them. It's like having a roadmap to success, guiding us every step of the way.

But it's not just about visualizing our dreams; it's also about believing in them. When we truly believe in the possibility of our dreams coming true, we become more motivated, resilient, and determined. We are willing to put in the effort, overcome obstacles, and persevere through challenges because we know that our dreams are worth it.

Dreams seen with open eyes also require us to take responsibility for our own happiness and success. We can't just passively wait for our dreams to magically manifest. We must actively pursue them, make choices aligned with our aspirations, and seize opportunities when they arise.

So, my friend, keep your eyes wide open to the dreams that dance in your heart. Embrace them, believe in them, and take inspired action. With dedication, perseverance, and a little bit of magic, those dreams can indeed come true. Here's to a future filled with the realization of your wildest dreams!

*Writer: Fakia Fatima Sipra (Layyah)*

# ISSI hosts Roundtable on the 'Importance of Global Solidarity to Combat Islamophobia'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), hosted a Roundtable Discussion titled, "Importance of Global Solidarity to Combat Islamophobia", bringing to the fore a global dialogue aimed at addressing the prejudices, intolerance, violence and injustices faced by Muslims worldwide. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman of the Council of the Islamic Ideology (CII), was chief guest; Ambassadors of Iran and Türkiye and noted academic and senior Foreign Office official joined as panellists.

In her introductory remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP thanked the esteemed panellists and other participants and emphasized the importance of combating Islamophobia in contemporary times, which is marred by multiple global conflicts and issues.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohai Mahmood, in his welcoming remarks, highlighted the journey since the March 2019 Christchurch terrorist attacks in New Zealand, highlighting the pivotal

moments and global actions, including Pakistan's leading role in the OIC and the UN General Assembly, culminating in the designation of March 15 as the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia.'

A special video message by the Honourable Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) His Excellency Husein Ibrahim Taha for the occasion was shared. The Secretary General emphasized the urgent need to combat and address the widespread prejudice and discrimination against Muslims globally and the importance of fostering a culture of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding across different faiths and communities.

Dr. Muhammad Israr Madani from the Islamic Research Council of Religious Affairs, provided a scholarly exposition on the multifaceted nature of Islamophobia, tracing its historical roots and present-day manifestations.

Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), delved into the political and legal dimensions of Islamophobia, advocating for a balanced approach between freedom of expression and respect for religious

sentiments.

H. E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, enriched the discussion by contextualizing Islamophobia within the broader historical and geopolitical narratives. His critique of Islamophobia as a tool for political manipulation and his call for unity among Muslim nations underscored the importance of solidarity and collective identity in overcoming adversities.

H. E. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, pointed to the alarming rise of Islamophobia globally, especially in the Western and certain non-Western countries including India. His discourse on the political misuse of Islamophobia and the urgent need for international accountability and cooperation offered a compelling call to action for both Muslim and non-Muslim countries to address this pressing issue.

Chief Guest Dr. Qibla Ayaz delivered an illuminating address, providing deep historical insight into Islamophobia, identifying its roots and evolution over the centuries. Dr. Ayaz recommended fostering deeper understanding of Western cultures, promoting inter-faith dialogues, and the strategic use of



media and academia to combat Islamophobia highlighting a path toward mutual respect and understanding.

In the end, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG ISSI of the discussion with ISSI mementos, which was followed by a group photograph presented the honourable participants

## Saudi media personality Sameera Aziz awarded honorary doctorate in Mass Media

PPA

JADDAH: Sameera Aziz, a distinguished media personality and businesswoman from Saudi Arabia, has been honored with an honorary Doctorate in Mass Media (Honoris Causa) by St. Mother Theresa University for Digital Educational Excellence, Sustainability Development, and World Peace (SMTU), Australia.

"Sameera Aziz's impactful journey in the media spans over a quarter-century, a time when the field was predominantly male-dominated, and its pursuit was considered a societal taboo in Saudi Arabia," stated SMTU.

The university emphasizes that conferring an Honorary Doctorate in Mass Media (Honoris Causa) upon Sameera Aziz is a testament to her remarkable contributions to the industry.

Armed with a Master's degree in International Relations and postgraduate studies in Investigative Journal-



ism, Mass Communication, and Film-making, Sameera has held senior roles, including International Editor, at esteemed media companies such as The Saudi Research & Marketing Group's Urdu News and Okaz's Saudi Gazette. Her collaborations with global news

platforms have expanded her network and influence within the industry.

Sameera is renowned for her work on the radio, hosting "Marhaba with Sameera Aziz" on the UK-based Asian Radio Live. As an authorized media personality to date and committed to

promoting intercultural dialogue while dispelling misconceptions about Saudi Arabia, she serves as the chairperson of the Sameera Aziz Group of Companies, leading innovative ventures and fostering meaningful global connections.

Beyond her entrepreneurial pursuits, Sameera has made significant literary contributions, marking a historic milestone as the author of the first-ever Urdu novel in Saudi Arabia. Recognized as a poet and speaker, she has received numerous awards, including "The Gr8 Woman Award of the Middle East 2016".

As a staunch advocate of Saudi Vision 2030, Sameera underscores the significance of diversifying the nation's economy and embracing progressive avenues for growth. Her unwavering commitment remains focused on bridging the gap between Saudi Arabia and the international community.

Meanwhile, the well-wishers of Dr Sameera Aziz celebrated the accomplishment of her doctorate in Bangalore for being an inspiration.

## Israeli occupation forces' blatant violation of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the occupation forces' action to prevent thousands of worshippers from the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem from reaching the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray there on the first Friday of the month of Ramadan, as they transformed all the barriers surrounding Jerusalem into military barracks and deployed hundreds of iron barriers inside the Holy City and its town. To achieve this purpose, it requested citizens to obtain prior permits to pray in Al-Aqsa, and did not adhere to what was previously practiced regarding the ages of men and women who were allowed in previous years to enter Jerusalem and pray in Al-Aqsa.

The Ministry confirms that Netanyahu deceived the world when he hid and concealed his true position in preventing freedom of worship behind the phrase (no change to previous years), and adopted the conditions and restrictions of the extremist fascist Minister Ben Gvir and left him the freedom to implement those restrictions on the ground, in a blatant challenge to the feelings of Muslims in the holy month. And in a continuing campaign to mislead global public opinion and countries. The Ministry calls for urgent international and American intervention to stop all these racist colonial restrictions as they are considered a fuse to detonate the situation in the West Bank and create more unjustified tensions, especially since the Israeli government still allows extremist settlers to storm Al-Aqsa on a daily basis.

## The terrorist colonialist militias defy int'l and US sanctions and escalate their crimes to blow up the situation in the West Bank

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns the escalating attacks and crimes of the colonialist militias and their terrorist elements in many locations in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which were characterized by a more violent nature and the widespread use of bullets and shooting at citizens and their livestock, as happened in Kafri Nima, west of Ramallah, and their intention to burn many Palestinian vehicles and cutting down hundreds of perennial trees, as well as blocking roads and preventing worshippers from arriving to pray in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, all under the protection and supervision of the Israeli occupation forces, in a distribution and integration of roles, with the aim of deepening the crimes of creeping annexation of the West Bank and confiscating more Palestinian land, in a way that prevents the establishment and embodiment of the state. The Palestinian Authority enters the conflict arena into a cycle of violence and chaos that never ends and is difficult to control. The Ministry notes that the more a country imposes sanctions, even partial ones, on the colonialists, the more the militias and those who support them escalate their crimes against our people, their land, their property, and their sanctities.

In this regard, the Ministry welcomes the US administration's decision to impose additional sanctions on the two terrorist bases of the colonialists and three of their elements, and demands that colonial terrorist organizations be placed on terrorist lists, and that sanctions be imposed on the entire racist colonial system and those who protect and support it, and first and foremost the imposition of sanctions on Ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir and their followers.

## FBR signs agreement with Karandaaz Pakistan for digitization of tax system

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to transform Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) into a Digital Tax Administration, FBR has entered into an agreement with Karandaaz Pakistan for the Digitalization of Tax System. FBR has put considerable focus towards automation of its processes and digitalizing of the economy. These initiatives reduce the cost of compliance of taxpayers, document the economy, expand the tax base and lead FBR on a sustainable path to revenue growth.

At the signing ceremony, Mr. Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Chairman FBR, stated that FBR has put considerable focus towards automa-



tion of its processes and digitalizing the economy including the supply chain digitalization. Multiple endeavours have

been undertaken to address the challenge of the undocumented economy and expanding the tax base.

Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Minister for Finance and Revenue who chaired a meeting with FBR and

Karandaaz earlier in the day on the subject emphasized the importance of facilitation of business and people-centric approach in the design of these digital solutions.

Mr Waqas ul Hasan, CEO Karandaaz Pakistan stated that the initiative is in line with Karandaaz Pakistan's sponsor Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Digital Public Infrastructure workstream and will help in building a robust ecosystem for Pakistan Digital Stack. The agreement was signed on March 15th, 2024. On behalf of FBR, Mr. Ardsheer Salim Tariq, Member (Reforms and Modernization) and on behalf of Karandaaz Pakistan, the agreement was signed by Mr. Sharjeel Murtaza, Director Digital Services.

## British Council launches Women in STEM Scholarships for 2024-25

PPA

ISLAMABAD: British Council, the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations, in partnership with UK universities, has announced the launch of British Council Scholarships for Women in STEM programme. This prestigious scholarship is designed for female STEM graduates wanting to pursue their Masters' in the UK.

The presence of women in STEM fields is essential for promoting diversity, ensuring a range of perspectives, and driving innovation. Their presence not only addresses gender disparities but also enriches the workforce with unique skills, ultimately advancing scientific and technological progress for the benefit of society.

25 scholarships are reserved for women STEM scholars from Pakistan and other South Asian countries. These are across five UK higher education institutions - Queen Mary University of London, Anglia Ruskin University, Greenwich University, The University of Southampton and Coventry University. The scholarships will empower the beneficiaries to advance their careers in STEM and facilitate their ability to drive research and innovation in their home country by immersing them in the expertise of the UK's esteemed STEM fields. The UK is currently ranked third in the world for citable research, with 55.2% of all UK publications the product of international research collaborations.

The scholarship will cover tuition fees, stipend, travel costs, visa, health coverage fees,

and English language support. The scholars can pursue courses like Data Science, Computer Science, Pharmaceutical Science, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Engineering Management, Civil Engineering Management, Intelligent Healthcare, Actuarial Science, among others.

Maaryia Rehman, Deputy Director British Council Pakistan said, "Almost half of the world's population is female and represents half the potential brain power of researchers and innovators. The global challenges facing the world can only be addressed through science and research and we cannot solve these problems with one hand tied behind our backs, with only one half of the population working towards the solutions. Gender equity is not just

a nice idea, it is essential for the progress of mankind. Through programmes like the Women in STEM Scholarships, we aim to provide the financial assistance needed for women to pursue their education and unleash their full potential in STEM fields, thereby driving transformative change and contributing to the sustainable development goals in a more meaningful way."

Since 2020, the programme has awarded over 300 scholarships. In the 2023-24 global cohorts, 92 scholars were enrolled in their selected courses. So far, 45 Pakistani women have been awarded the scholarships and pursued their one-year postgraduate studies in the UK. Through these scholarships, British Council maintains its commitment to creating opportunities for women to succeed in a



globalised world and gain global credentials in STEM fields. The scholarship aims to inspire young women to remain in STEM fields by supporting their progression towards leadership roles and fostering networking opportunities with peers both in their region and in the UK. The scholarship also welcomes applications from women with dependents, offering additional

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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
64,816.46	65,064.26
Day's High	Day's Low
65,353.66	64,759.60
Index Value	Change
5,712,839,741	-247.80
Percentage	Time
-0.38%	15 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,727.42	-15.73
Percentage	Time
-0.20%	15 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,693.40	-212.26
Percentage	Time
-0.55%	15 Mar, 2:14 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,707.64	-99.74
Percentage	Time
-0.26%	15 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	741.89	749.89
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.78	39.18
Danish Krone	40.92	41.32
Euro	303	306
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 \$	171.07	173.07
Norwegians Krone	26.67	26.97
Omani Riyal	724.62	732.62
Qatari Riyal	76.7	77.4
Saudi Riyal	74.05	74.5
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	27.27	27.57
Swiss Franc	315.8	318.3
Thai Bhat	7.79	7.94
U.A.E Dirham	75.8	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	356	359
US Dollar	278.8	281.5

# New IMF package is on its way: Mian Zahid Hussain

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the country's economic conditions are improving.

The improved situation infuses confidence in the local and foreign investors, while the central bank is also considering some reduction in the interest rate.

Mian Zahid Hussain said the business community wants the Central Bank to slash interest rates by at least four percent.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that during the current year, the overall economic conditions are better than last year.

However, it is the new government's responsibility to improve further the conditions, and

they will continue to receive the unconditional support of the business community.

The business leader said there is yet to be an immediate solution to Pakistan's economic problems. A long battle will have to be fought for this, which will be a test of the new government and the finance minister, and success will be the only option.

Mian Zahid Hussain said promoting investment is needed instead of relying more on loans. He said there is an urgent need to reduce the burden of taxes on the public and the industrial sector and that the tax base needs to be increased.

He said that to increase the tax revenue, it has become necessary to levy tax on wholesale, retail, property, and agricultural income. At the same time, the FBR's system should be modernized to increase its effectiveness and transparency.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the salaries are currently being paid by taking loans, and



this situation can only continue for a short time, so there is a need to reduce the expenses. Transparency in the salary and pension system, elimination of ghost employees, sale

of loss-making public companies, and elimination of losses in the electricity and gas sector have become necessary.

He said the government had completed all the targets for receiving the IMF's last tranche of the current standby program. The review negotiations are ongoing, which will have a positive result in case of a success.

Pakistan will receive 1.1 billion dollars from the IMF, which will pave the way for a new long-term package.

The IMF has asked for a solid plan to eliminate power losses, privatize failed government institutions, increase the tax base, and innovate the FBR.

If Pakistan agrees to correct the problems, all long-standing economic issues will be solved, and the economy will be revived.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that PTI should return to the national mainstream and play a positive role, including supporting the IMF program and GSP Plus.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by H. E. Dr. Riina Kionka Ambassador of the European Union (EU) & discussed matters of mutual interest, economic & financial relations between the EU & Pakistan.



## Islamabad to be turned model city in collaboration with business community: Anjum Aqeel

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Anjum Aqeel Khan has said that upgradation of all the commercial centres is need of the hour and assured that for the development of the federal capital they will work in coordination with Islamabad Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He said this while addressing the oath taking ceremony of newly elected office bearers of the Traders Association of F/8 Markaz. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari attended the ceremony as the Guest of Honour. The ceremony was largely attended by traders' community including Ajmal Baloch, President All Pakistan Traders Association, Sardar Tariq Mahmood newly elected President Traders Welfare Association and Secretary General Mahmood Khan.

In his address Anjum Aqeel Khan said that in his success business community has played key role for which he is grateful to it. He reiterated to pay back to the business community by addressing their vital issues concerning markets and federal capital development.

He went on to say during his previous tenure the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif completed a number of mega projects in Islamabad and now the initiation of a number of similar projects are under



consideration which will play key role in the beautification of the capital city.

Anjum Aqeel added that under the dynamic leadership of Ahsan Bakhtawari, the ICCI is playing a significant role for the solution of community's problems and for the ease of the business for which he deserves appreciation.

Addressing the ceremony Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that F/8 Markaz is the most important business hub of the capital and after the shifting of the District Courts, it should now be fully operationalized and

that ICCI will wholeheartedly play its due role in this regard.

He expressed the hope that the newly elected leadership of Islamabad will formulate policies for the upgradation of the capital city in consultation with all the stakeholders and the Federal government will provide full financial support in the completion of mega projects in the capital city.

On his part, newly elected President of Traders Welfare Association Sardar Tahir Mahmood demanded the restoration of the F/8 Markaz on fast track basis.

## Fly Jinnah announces increased frequency between Lahore and Sharjah

**PPA**

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's leading low-cost carrier, announced today the expansion of its services between Lahore and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Fly Jinnah will increase the frequency of its nonstop flights between both cities from daily to double daily flights starting April 8, 2024.

This increase in service between both cities comes in less than a month since the carrier announced the launch of the new route. By doubling the number of flights between Lahore and Sharjah, Fly Jinnah provides seamless connectivity to its customer base looking for value and convenience.

Fly Jinnah's spokesperson commented: "This increase in frequency comes

in response to the existing demand in the market for our value-driven product and reflects our commitment to always providing our customers with exceptional travel experiences. The additional flights between Lahore and Sharjah offers further convenience to our customers while strengthening trade and tourism ties between both cities."

Fly Jinnah remains steadfast in its commitment to offering convenient and affordable service to its passengers. With its modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft, the airline currently connects five major cities in Pakistan, namely Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta, in addition to the newly launched international destination to Sharjah in the UAE from both Islamabad and Lahore.

## Naeem Qureshi appointed as Convener of FPCCI Central Standing Committee on SDGs

**PPA**

KARACHI: Naeem Qureshi, the President of the National Forum for Environment and Health, has been appointed as the new Convener of the CSR Central Standing Committee of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the year 2024-25.

FPCCI President, Atif Ikram Sheikh, appointed Qureshi as the Central Standing Committee convener keeping in view his years-long services to promote greenery in urban areas, prevent deforestation, greater use of renewable energy sources, reduce harmful industrial emissions and urban waste, and building mass transit systems in cities to reduce vehicular emissions and congestions on roads.

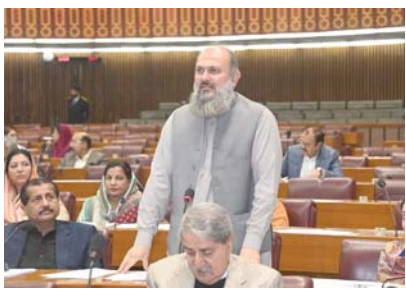
The Central Standing



Committee in question will comprise a minimum of nine members to be selected by the convener based on their experience in promoting the cause of SDGs in the country. The committee will meet at least once quarterly to discuss and finalise the agenda of SDGs for businesses and industries in Pakistan.

In his statement on the occasion, Qureshi expressed gratitude to the FPCCI President, United Business Group Chairman Zubair Tufail, and National Business Group Chairman Mian Zahid Hussain, for reposing full trust in him by appointing him as convener of one of the important standing committees of the FPCCI.

## Temporary ban on banana and onion exports during Ramadan: Jam Kamal Khan



**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: In the National Assembly, on Friday, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan addressed concerns regarding the ban on the export of bananas and onions, clarifying that the restriction is specifically for the duration of Ramadan and is temporary.

The decision to impose the ban was made at the cabinet level following the submission of a summary by the Ministry of National Food Security, and an price escalations predicted by sensitive price index and export association.

This move came in response to a calling attention notice raised by Syed Naveed Qamar and other legislators regarding the impact of the ban on agricultural exports.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan assured the assembly that the ban would remain in effect until the 15th of the following month, highlighting the government's sensitivity to the concerns raised by agriculturists.

The temporary ban on the export of bananas and onions during Ramadan aims to ensure an adequate domestic supply of these essential commodities during the holy month, which would ease common people and does not create a false shortage perception.

The government's decision reflects its commitment to balancing the needs of local consumers with the interests of agricultural producers.

While the ban presents a short-term restriction on export opportunities for farmers, it underscores the government's proactive approach to managing food security during religious observances.

## Zong 4G and JS Zindigi Partner Up to Facilitate Users with Banking-as-a-Service Integration in My Zong App

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading mobile network operator, and JS Zindigi, a leading digital financial services provider, announced a lucrative partnership to offer Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) within the My Zong App (MZA). The signing ceremony took place on March 13th, 2024, at Zong 4G headquarters, signed by CFO Zong 4G Mr. Huang Zhidong and CEO JS Zindigi Mr. Numan Azhar.

JS Zindigi is a digital financial services provider in Pakistan, offering a comprehensive suite of mobile wallet solutions and digital banking services. Based on a dedicated team empowered by the latest technology, upholding the highest ethical standards seeking to create value for their stakeholders and a responsible contribution to society.



This collaboration brings greater financial convenience to Zong 4G's broad user base. My Zong App users can now open JS Zindigi wallet accounts directly within the app, enabling them to avail a range of JS Zindigi's digital financial services. This integration will allow users to effortlessly top-up their mobile accounts, settle post-paid bills and to purchase Zong 4G data bundles.

"We are excited to partner with JS Zindigi to integrate their BaaS solutions within

the MZA," said CFO Mr. Huang Zhidong. And Mr. Numan Azhar, CEO of JS Zindigi expressed "This partnership allows us to leverage Zong 4G's extensive network and reach to empower millions of Pakistanis with convenient and secure financial solutions."

"This partnership aligns perfectly with our vision of offering a comprehensive digital ecosystem to our users," remarked Mr. Ammar Ahmad, Head of Marketing at Zong 4G.

Mr. Wang Xiaokang, DD Marketing-Digital, Mr. Faisal Khalid Bashir, DD Marketing-VAS, Mr. Samir Nawaz, Manager-Digital, and Mr. Adil Ashraf Malik, Product Manager-Digital, who were all witnesses to the contract signing ceremony, also echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the user-centric approach behind the partnership.

## Engro Fertilizers engages dealers for urea price enforcement

**PPA**

KARACHI: In a bid to support the Government's efforts to ensure urea availability at official prices, Engro Fertilizers has urged its dealers to comply with company guidelines on pricing and strictly ensure product availability to the farmers.

To enforce guidelines of selling Urea at MRP, Engro Fertilizers hosted dealer conferences in Lahore, Multan and Hyderabad. Addressing the event participants, Engro Fertilizers VP Marketing Atif Muhammad Ali comment-

ed that "Engro Fertilizers has always adhered to highest standard of integrity and holds the same expectations from its dealers. To support the prosperity of farmers, Engro dealers must ensure urea availability at official prices. Further, Engro Fertilizers has not increased the selling price of imported urea to facilitate the Government in providing support to farmers."

At the conference, the dealers were also updated on the recent gas price hike and the disparity of gas prices that exists among different fertilizer players.

# United crush Gladiators to set up PSL 9 Eliminator 2 clash with Zalmi

**A Sports**

KARACHI: A combined bowling and batting performance powered Islamabad United to humble Quetta Gladiators in the Eliminator 1 of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here at National Bank Stadium on Friday.

The 39-run victory marked the end of Quetta Gladiators' PSL 9 campaign while Islamabad United progressed to the Eliminator 2 where they will lock horns with Peshawar Zalmi.

Chasing 175, the Gladiators had a disastrous start to the pursuit as they lost half of their side inside the batting powerplay with just 16 runs on the board. Akeal Hosein then offered some counterpunching with a blazing cameo and knitted a crucial 52-run partnership with Omaid Bin Yousuf.

Hosein had a frustrating end to his sensational cameo as he got run out after a terrible mix-up with Yousuf in the 11th over.

He remained a notable contributor for the Gladiators with 31 off 18 deliveries, laced with two boundaries and three sixes.

Yousuf was then involved in another

notable partnership when he added 41 runs for the eighth wicket with Mohammad Amir, who scored a brisk 23 off 14.

He finally perished in the 18th over after scoring a fighting half-century. His 50-run knock came off 37 deliveries and included four boundaries and a six.

Imad Wasim led the bowling attack for the United with 3/12 in his four overs, followed by Naseem Shah, who bagged two while Obed McCoy, Hunain Shah and Faheem Ashraf made one scalp each.

Shadab Khan's decision to bat first, bore fruits for the United as the two-time champions got off to a flying start to their innings.

Their new opening pair of Martin Guptill and Alex Hales put together a 51-run partnership which lasted in the sixth over.

Guptill dominated the opening stand while Hales was finding it hard to score freely before he fell victim to Akeal Hosein after a 20-ball 23 which featured three boundaries including two sixes.

Salman Ali Agha then joined Guptill in the middle and added an important 51 runs for the second wicket before fall-

ing victim to Saud Shakeel in the 12th over.

He smashed two boundaries and a six on his way to a 21-ball 31.

Skipper Shadab Khan (23) and Azam Khan (18) then partnered briefly with Guptill and made modest contributions with brisk cameos in the middle overs.

Azam's dismissal sparked a lower-middle order collapse as Quetta Gladiators' bowling unit regrouped and forced a comeback with regular strikes including United's batting mainstay Guptill.

Martin Guptill remained the top-scorer for the United with a 47-ball 56 which included five boundaries and a six.

Consequently, the two-time champions lost six wickets in the span of just 15 deliveries before Naseem Shah smashed Mohammad Amir for a six on the final delivery of the innings.

Mohammad Amir and Akeal Hosein bagged two wickets each for the Gladiators while Mohammad Wasim Jr, Saud Shakeel and Abrar Ahmed struck out a batter apiece.

It is worth mentioning here that the winner of the Eliminator 1 will take on



Peshawar Zalmi in the Eliminator 2 on Saturday in a bid to make their way to the PSL 9 final.

## Karachi U16 claim National U16 Championship with 28-run win over Lahore U16

**Tahir Amin Malik**

KARACHI: U16 bagged a 28-run victory in the final of the National U16 One-Day Tournament against Lahore U16 at the LCCA Cricket Ground in Lahore on Saturday.

Karachi U16 were awarded the winner's prize money of PKR 500,000 along with the trophy while the runners-up Lahore U16 managed PKR 250,000 and the runners-up trophy as well.

Earlier in the day, Karachi U16 won the toss and elected to bat first. Lahore's Mohammad Usman struck early on to remove Karachi's opening batter, Talal Mehmood (5, 5b, 1x4). Huzaifa Ahsan and Aun Abbas joined forces to stitch a solid second-wicket partnership of 113 runs to put Karachi in control.

Aun (79, 132b, 9x4s, 1x6) and Huzaifa (56, 79b, 6x4s) contributed with vital half-centuries. Karachi lost their third wicket with 194 runs on the board. Mohammad Azan (43, 47b, 3x4s, 2x6s), batting at four, and Ali Sher (20 not out, 15b, 1x4, 1x6), batting at seven, helped Karachi get to a competitive total with their contributions.

With wickets falling at regular inter-



vals Karachi managed to score 232 for eight in the allotted 50 overs. For Lahore, Husnain Abbas Dar and Saifullah bagged two wickets each while Usman, Taj Muhammad and Shafiqullah returned with one wicket each.

In reply, Lahore found themselves in trouble as their top four batters were dismissed for paltry scores. Shafiqullah and Ali Khokhar fell for ducks

while Khizar Butt and Aaliyan Salman returned with 24 and two runs, respectively.

The trouble deepened when Lahore were reduced to 79-7. Muhammad Azam, batting at eight, and Taj Muhammad, batting at nine knitted a 101-run eight-wicket partnership before Taj fell for 49 off 81 balls. Karachi bowlers wrapped Lahore's innings at 204 in 48.4

overs as Lahore fell 28 runs short of the target.

For Karachi, Asad Umar picked up a five-wicket haul while Niqab Shafiq returned with three wickets.

Zaryab Shah and Huzaifa bagged one wicket each.

**Scores in brief:**

Karachi U16 beat Lahore U16 by 28 runs

Karachi U16 232-8, 50 overs (Aun Abbas 79, Huzaifa Ahsan 56; Saifullah 2-36, Husnain Abbas Dar 2-49)

Lahore U16 204 all out, 48.4 overs (Muhammad Azam 77, Taj Muhammad 49; Asad Umar 5-43, Niqab Shafiq 3-42)

Player of the match - Asad Umar (Karachi U16)

Player of the tournament - Usman Khan (376 runs, nine wickets, FATA U16)

Best batter of the tournament - Mohammad Rohan Khan (339 runs, Hyderabad U16)

Best bowler of the tournament - Taj Muhammad (22 wickets, Lahore U16)

Best wicket-keeper of the tournament - Mohammad Azam (163 runs, 13 dismissals, Lahore U16)

Best fielder of the tournament - Sudaish Ahmed (Six catches, Abbottabad U16)

## IMHA Ramadan Intra Academy Five A Side Girls and Boys Hockey League begins

Asma Ali Shah, Quratul Ain and Naem Haider inaugurated the tournament

KARACHI: Olympian Islahuddin and Dr Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy has started the IMHA Ramadan intra academy girls and boys five a side hockey league.

Asma Ali Shah, Quratul Ain and Naem Haider inaugurated as chief guest on this occasion Mrs. Sameer Hussain, Team Mentor Olympian Syed Sameer Hussain, Olympian Kashif Jawad, Rashid Yaqoob, Syed Alay Hasan, Wasif Raza and Talha Ghorri, Syed Sagheer Hussain and others were also present. On this occasion, the parents of the captains of the teams participating in the event were given guest of honor.

In the first girls match played on the opening day, IMHA Lions beat IMHA Eagles by four goals to three. On behalf of the winning team, Muqaddas Rafiq scored two goals while Humaira and



Jawaria scored one. Umaima scored all three goals on behalf of the loser team.

In the second match, IMHA Wolves Beat IMHA Bulls by 3-1 goals, Sundus Siddiqui of the winning team scored a hat-trick while Masawwara scored the only goal of the rival team. In the third match, IMHA Hawks and IMHA Tigers tied 3-3, Mubashira and Anna Fatima scored hat-tricks

In the first match of boys, the Tournament between IMHA Lions and Eagles was tied with 2-2 goals. Ali Abbas and Yasin scored goals on behalf of Lions, while Rohan scored both goals for Eagles. In the second match, IMHA Bulls win over IMHA Wolves by 5-1 goals. Syed Ahmed and Wajid scored two goals and Salman scored one goal for the winning team. Siddiq Khan scored the only goal of the loser team. In the third match, IMHA Tigers defeated IMHA Hawks by six goals to two. Esa Khan of the

## Rockball Championship from March 22



**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Rockball Federation (PRF) would hold the 7th Abdul Razzaq Arain Rockball Championship at Mini Sports Complex, Nazimabad, Karachi, from March 22.

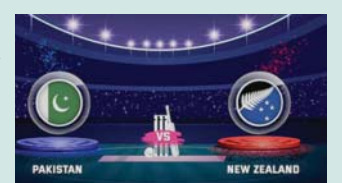
According to Secretary General PRF Uma Laila Kulsom all preparations were ongoing vigorously for the championship. "Teams from all over Sindh are participating in the championship. The managers' meeting of teams will be held on March 19, in which draw of the championship will be revealed. The rules of the championship will also be informed in the meeting," she said.

She said the championship would continue till March 23 and prizes will be distributed among winning players at the end of the mega event.

## Pak to host NZ, SA for tri-series in January 2025

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Pakistan will host New Zealand and South Africa Men's cricket teams for ODI tri-series in January-February 2025, prior to the ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Pakistan in February next year.



According to PCB spokesperson Raza Kitchlew, an understanding was reached among Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, Chairperson Cricket South Africa (CSA) Lawson Naidoo and Director New Zealand Cricket (NZC) Roger Twose during a meeting on the sidelines of the International Cricket Council (ICC) meet-up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Friday.

Pakistan will host the 9th edition of the ICC Men's ODI Champions Trophy in February 2025 which will be participated by top eight cricket playing nations in the ICC ODI rankings.

The tri-series will be the first to be played on Pakistan soil in almost two decades and will provide the finest prologue to the marquee ICC extravaganza. It will also be the first ICC event in over three decades in the country.

New Zealand and South Africa Men's cricket teams will reach Pakistan by the end of January 2025 for the tri-series.

The Chairman PCB Naqvi invited the cricket chiefs of NZC Roger Twose and CSA Lawson Naidoo to visit Pakistan.

However, the PCB also succeeded in inclusion of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 on the agenda-list of the current ICC Meeting in Dubai.

## Nissanka hits ton as Sri Lanka ease past Bangladesh in second ODI

**A Sports**

CHITTAGONG: Pathum Nissanka's sensational century, paired up with Charith Asalanka's 91 propelled Sri Lanka to a comfortable three-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the second ODI of the three-match series here on Friday.

Put into bat first, Bangladesh registered a formidable total of 286/7 on the board, courtesy of Soumya Sarkar and Towhid Hridoy's half-centuries.

The home side had a contrasting start to their innings as they lost wicketkeeper batter Litton Das (0) on just the third delivery. But skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto soon settled things down by stitching an anchoring 75-run partnership with Sarkar before perishing in the 13th over.

Shanto scored a brisk 40 off

39 deliveries with the help of six boundaries.

Sarkar was then joined by Hridoy in the middle and the pair combined to add 55 runs for the third wicket before the former finally departed in the 22nd over.

Soumya Sarkar remained a notable run-getter for Bangladesh with a 66-ball 68 which featured a dozen boundaries including a six.

Hridoy took charge of Bangladesh's batting charge and carried his bat all the way through to steer the hosts to a commendable total.

He top-scored for Bangladesh with an unbeaten 96 off 102 deliveries, laced up with three boundaries and five sixes.

Wanindu Hasaranga led the bowling figures for Sri Lanka with 4/45 in his 10 overs, followed by Dilshan Madushan-

ka, who bagged two.

Set to chase 287, Sri Lanka comfortably chased down the total for the loss of seven wickets and 17 balls to spare.

The touring side, however, got off to a dismal start to the pursuit as they lost three wickets with just 41 runs on the board in 6.1 overs.

Following the early debacle, Charith Asalanka joined Pathum Nissanka in the middle and launched an astounding recovery.

The pair added 185 runs for the fourth wicket with Nissanka amassing his century in the process.

Bangladesh then attempted to force a late comeback as both set batters walked back in successive overs, bringing Sri Lanka down to 235/5 in 38 overs.

Nissanka remained the top-scorer for Sri Lanka with 114 off 113 deliveries, peppered with

13 boundaries and three sixes while Asalanka narrowly missed his well-deserved hundred, scoring 91 off 93 deliveries with the help of six boundaries and four sixes.

But Wanindu Hasaranga played a crucial cameo at the backend and put Sri Lanka in touching distance.

He scored 25 off 16 deliveries, hitting one boundary and two sixes.

Later, Dunith Wellalage displayed nerves of steel and steered Sri Lanka to victory with an unbeaten 16.

Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam bagged two wickets each for Bangladesh while Tajjul Islam, Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Tanzim Hasan Sakib struck out a batter apiece.

The three-wicket victory meant Sri Lanka levelled the



three-match series against Bangladesh. The two sides will square off in the final ODI on Monday.

## Showering flowers on the grave

LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari showering flowers on the grave of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto on Friday.



Photo: APP

## President Asif Ali Zardari visits ancestral graveyard of the Bhutto family

Mehtab Channa

LARKANA: President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, visited the mausoleum of martyrs of the Bhutto family at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto, along with Chief Minister of Sindh, Sayed Murad Ali Shah, on Friday.

The President visited the shrine of the assassinated Chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, demo-

cratic leader Begum Nusrat Bhutto and also laid floral wreaths, offered "Fateha" and prayer for their "Isal-i-Sawab".

He also visited the grave of Late Shireen Amir Begum, the first wife of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and laid floral wreaths at her grave.

Later, he also visited the graves of Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shaheed Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto and offered fateha.

## JUI-F challenges CM Bugti's constitutional status

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) challenged the constitutional status of Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bagti.

In a legal notice, Hafeez Advocate of JUIF contended that Sarfaraz Bagti had been the caretaker setup's Home Minister for six months.

"Caretaker cabinet members are not allowed to participate in the upcoming elections according to the constitution," the JUI-F leader argued.

Hafeez Advocate maintained that Sarfaraz Bugti's election campaign and subsequent victory from the Balochistan Assembly seat are unlawful.

"Sarfaraz Bugti is holding chief minister Balochistan office unconstitutionally," the the JUI-F leader added.

Earlier on March 2, Sarfaraz Bugti took oath as Chief Minister



Balochistan after being elected unopposed.

The joint candidate of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Sarfaraz Bugti bagged 41 votes in Balochistan in the CM election whereas other parties did not take part in the CM election.

In December 2023, then Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti resigned from the post to take part in the general elections in 2024. He later joined the PPP and contested the election from PB-10 Dera Bugti.

## US considers Pakistan important partner, says envoy Donald Blome

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United States considered Pakistan an important partner and hoped to work with the government to build stronger ties between the two countries, US Ambassador Donald Blome said on Friday.

He said during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad and congratulated the latter on his re-election, according to a statement.

The PM expressed satisfaction with the present state of bilateral relations. He stressed the need for maintaining the positive momentum by "regular convening



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on March 15, 2024. PID

of existing dialogue mechanisms, focused on trade, investment, energy, health, defence, education, agriculture and climate change."

PM Shehbaz said that his government would focus on macro-economic reforms to stabilise the economy and attract foreign investment.

In this regard, he also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council that has been established to fast-track foreign investments in priority sectors in Pakistan.

A number of issues of bilateral and regional significance were also discussed during the meeting, including the situation in Gaza and the Red Sea, developments in Afghanistan, as well as the case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, which was "raised forcefully by the Prime Minister."

A separate statement from Acting US Mission Spokesperson Thomas Montgomery stated that Blome has expressed support for Paki-

stan's democracy and the key role of an independent press.

The statement also cited that the two met to discuss a broad range of bilateral issues, including partnering with Pakistan on regional security, US support for continued economic reforms with and through the International Monetary Fund, trade and investment, education, climate change and private sector-led economic growth.

US Ambassador to Pakistan Blome and PM Shehbaz also discussed how both countries can work together to accelerate projects addressing climate change under the US-Pakistan Green Alliance framework.

## Wild poliovirus case reported from Chaman

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A child has been paralyzed by wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Chaman district of Balochistan.

According to the Regional Reference Lab for Polio Eradication based at the National Institute of Health, WPV1 was isolated from the stool samples of a 52-months-old child from Chaman.

The child had onset of paralysis on February 29 and the isolated virus belongs to the imported YB3A cluster, which has been detected in 10 positive samples reported from Chaman since October 2023.

This is the second polio case reported from Pakistan in 2024 and first case from Chaman in almost four years.

The first case of 2024 was reported from Dera Bugti on March 14.

Poliovirus is in communities and continues to remain a persistent threat to children across the country since it has been detected in 56 environmental samples of more than 25 districts so far this year and in more than 100 sewage samples last year.

The virus particularly attacks children who are malnourished and have weak immunity because of being under-vaccinated or not vac-



inated for polio and other childhood diseases.

These children are unable to fight off a polio infection and the virus can paralyze them for life. The Pakistan Polio Programme urged parents and caregivers, religious leaders, teachers, community elders and all sections of society to play their role in countering this terrible disease and ensure that all children under five years of age around them are vaccinated multiple times against polio.

The Polio Programme has conducted two nationwide polio vaccination drives since the beginning of 2024 to vaccinate more than 45 million children and boost their immunity.

As a case response, a polio drive will begin in all districts of virus detection from March 25 to vaccinate more than 6 million children.

## PPP announces candidates for Senate elections

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on Friday announced its candidates for Senate elections to be held on April 2.

The Sindh's ruling party has fielded its candidates on all vacant Senate seats from Sindh province. PPP has finalised the names of Sarmad Ali and Barrister Zameer Ghumro on the Technocrat seats.

Ainee Mari and Rubina Qaimkhani will contest Senate elections on women's reserved seats, while Ponjo Mall Bhel will be PPP's candidate on the minority seat. Similarly, Sarfaraz Rajjar, Ashraf Jatoi, Masoor Ahsan, Nadeem Bhutto, Dost Ali Jaiser and Kazim Shah will be PPP candidates in the general seats of the Senate.

The Senate elections would be held on April 2 to fill the vacant seats.

Here's the complete list of PPP candidates for Senate polls:

### General Seats

1. Kazim Shah

2. Ashraf Jatoi  
3. Masroor Ahsan  
4. Nadeem Bhutto  
5. Sarfaraz Rajjar  
6. Dost Ali Jassar

### Technocrats

1. Barrister Zameer Ghumro  
2. Sarmad Ali

### Women

1. Quratul Ain Marri  
2. Rubina Qaimkhani  
Non-Muslims  
Poonjo Bheel

### Balochistan

1. Aimal Wali Khan (Joint of PPP & ANP Candidate)  
2. Jan Mohammad Buledi (Joint PPP & NP Candidate)  
3. Mir Changaz Khan Jamali  
4. Sardar Umer Gorgajj

### Technocrat

1. Bilal Mandokhel

### Women

1. Ms. Ishrat Brohi  
2. Kiran Baloch  
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa  
1. Rubina Khalid

### Punjab

1. Faiza Ahmed Malik  
Islamabad  
Rana Mehmoodul Hassan

## Handful

Continued from Page 8

The protesters belonging to the PTI were urging the IMF to give funds to Pakistan only if their jailed leader was released, he said, regretting that "activists of an anti-national party" continued to hold sit-in and protest outside the IMF office. "This is a fashionable crowd and these are the enemies of Pakistan who are left with no love for the country," the minister said while paying tributes to the overseas Pakistanis who were sending their hard-earned money to the country by doing white and blue collar jobs abroad. He said these people were protesting to stop funding to the people of Pakistan were wearing costly branded shoes and carrying branded bags. They only wanted to sabotage the IMF deal because their dream was to make Pakistan default but Inshallah, Pakistan would make progress and the growth rate would increase soon.

## Transport and population is essential to address environmental issues: CM Maryam

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "Data of all industrial units should be collected to formulate smog mitigation strategies," said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, while chairing a meeting on urban unit.

Madam Chief Minister directed to focus on physical and social planning, Implementation and monitoring in Punjab. She said, "It is important to update healthcare, industry and labor data for better service delivery."

Madam Chief Minister highlighted, "Mapping of industrial zones is essential because it would promote small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the province." She added, "We need to know in which sector our growth happened



and where growth is needed." It was agreed in the meeting that Punjab can become a growth engine if the data of industries is well organised.

Madam Chief Minister said, "Continuous updating of infrastructure survey is need of the hour." She added, "Regional Economic Corridor in Punjab should be comprehensive and based on data-driven authentic planning. She also highlighted

that that the project of sorting garbage and bringing it to use should be implemented in all big cities of the province.

The Chief Minister said, "Socio-economic data of the entire population should be prepared by mapping the eligible people residing in different areas." She added, "It should be known how many indigenous Punjabis are there in 12 and a half crore total population of Punjab and what is the number of people coming from outside."

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Former Senator Pervaiz Rashid, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretary Finance, CEO Urban Unit, Dr. Basit, Dr. Arooj and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

## Ishaq Dar submits nomination papers for Islamabad technocrat seat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The nomination papers of former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar were submitted on Friday to contest the technocrat seat reserved for Islamabad. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and Hanif Abbasi, both central leaders of the PML-N and Members of the National Assembly, submitted nomination papers for former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar as proposers.

It is pertinent to mention here that Senate elections on 48 vacant seats will be held on April 2 in the National Assembly, Senate, and the four provincial assemblies. Nomination papers for Senate elections can be submitted by March 16.

According to the schedule, polling will be held on the second of next month from 9 am to 4 pm. The candidates can file their nomination papers with the returning officers from tomorrow till Saturday.

Whereas the 19th of this month has been fixed for the scrutiny of nomination papers. A revised list of the candidates will be issued on the 26th of this month whilst the candidates can withdraw their nomination papers by the 27th of this month. In the federal capital, members of the National Assembly will elect members of the Senate against one general seat and one seat for technocrats including Ulema.

## Senate elections: Deadline for filing nomination papers ends today

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Nomination papers for Senate elections on forty-eight vacant seats can be filed till today.

According to Election Commission of Pakistan, polling will be held on 2nd of next month.

The 19th of this month has been fixed for scrutiny of nomination papers.

Revised list of the candidates will be issued on 26th of this month whilst candidates can withdraw their nomination papers by 27th of this month.

It is pertinent to mention here that 52 seats in the upper house of parliament will fall vacant after the expiration of the 6-year term of the incumbent Senators on Tuesday.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) appointed polling officers for the Senate elections 2024 set to be held on April 2.

According to the sources, the ECP appointed seven polling officers each for the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly. The ECP appointed 6 polling officers each for the provincial assemblies of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The election watchdog also appointed four polling for the Balochistan Assembly.