



India vote to start on April 19, Modi says confident of win

India will elect a new parliament in seven phases between April 19 and early June, the country's election authority said on Saturday, in what amounts to the world's largest election with nearly one billion eligible to vote. The election pits two-term strongman Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his regional allies against a bickering alliance of two dozen opposition parties... (Details on Page 8)



Senate elections: Ex-interim PM Kakar submits nomination papers

Former caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar was among the candidates who submitted nomination papers for the April 2 Senate elections as the deadline to file them ended on Saturday at 6:00pm. Polls will be held through secret balloting. He submitted his nomination papers for the vacant Senate seats from Balochistan, Associated Press of Pakistan reported. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

New Era

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia on April 30, 2022.



Photo: File

PM Shehbaz receives congratulatory phone call from Saudi crown prince

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday received a congratulatory telephone call from Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The crown prince congratulated the prime minister on his re-election, a PM Office press release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked the Saudi crown prince for the telephone call as well

as the warm message of greetings he had sent immediately after he had assumed office. The prime minister also conveyed his sincerest wishes and prayers for the health and well-being of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz. He said the people of Pakistan had great love and respect for the Saudi king as well as the crown prince. He also wished a blessed month of Ramazan to the Saudi leadership as well as the people and prayed that this holy month would bring

peace and prosperity to Muslims all over the world. The prime minister said Pakistan was proud of its historic, deep-rooted and fraternal ties with Saudi Arabia and the two countries had always stood together through thick and thin. He lauded Saudi Arabia for its unwavering commitment and support to Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated his invitation to the crown prince to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience and said that the people of Pakistan were waiting to accord

him a very warm welcome. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman thanked the prime minister for his kind sentiments and said that both countries enjoyed close brotherly relations and reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's support to Pakistan. PM Shehbaz receives congratulatory phone call from Saudi crown prince Reciprocating his sentiments, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on his X account expressed his gratitude to Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Moham-

med bin Salman Al Saud for a telephone call on his re-election. "Conveyed my sincerest wishes & prayers for the health and well-being of the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz," the prime minister posted. He further said that he looked forward to working closely with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to transform the deep rooted, historic fraternal Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties into a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Army Lt. Colonel, Captain among seven martyred in North Waziristan attack

Adam Khan

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: A Pakistan Army lieutenant colonel and a captain were among seven martyred after a group of terrorists attacked a security forces' post in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan district in the wee hours on Saturday, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

"As our troops foiled an initial attempt of intrusion, the terrorists rammed an explosive laden vehicle into the post, followed by multiple suicide bombing attacks, which led to collapse of portion of a building, resulting into Shahadat of five brave sons of the soil, it added.

Havildar Sabir (resident of district Khyber), Naik Khurshid (resident of district Lakki Marwat), Sepoy Nasir (resident of district Peshawar), Sepoy Raja (resident of district Kohat) and Sepoy Sajjad (resident of district Abbotabad) were



Lt. Col. Kashif Ali Shehri, Capt. Ahmed Badar Shehri

martyred in the initial attack. The security forces conducted a clearance operation led by Lieutenant Colonel Kashif and killed all six terrorists, according to the ISPR.

However, Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali, 39, a resident of Karachi; and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar, 23, a resident of district Tala-gang were martyred during the exchange of fire.

Meanwhile, sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists present in the area.

"Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

FM Dar, Muttaqi agree to foster fraternal ties between both countries



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Afghanistan's Interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Saturday agreed to continue working together in building on fraternal bilateral rela-

tions. "Expanding cooperation in connectivity, trade, security, counter terrorism and people to people contacts is a top priority for Pakistan," the foreign minister posted on X, after he received a congratulatory call from Afghan minister.

Mir Ali attack martyrs' funeral prayers held at Bannu Cantt

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The funeral of the seven martyred soldiers who embraced martyrdom while gallantly thwarting the terrorists' attack on the military post including two officers were held at Bannu Cantt on Saturday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the funeral prayers of martyrs including Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali (resident of Karachi), Captain Muhammad Ahmad Badar (resident of Tala-gang), Havildar Sabir (resident of Khyber), Naik Khurshid (resident of Lakki Marwat), Sepoy Nasir (resident of Peshawar), Sepoy Raja (resident of Kohat), and Sepoy Sajjad (resident of Abbotabad) were offered in Bannu Cantt.

The martyrs will be buried in their native areas with full military honours.

Former CJP's defamation suit against PTI founder dismissed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A lower court in Islamabad has dismissed a Rs20 billion defamation lawsuit filed by retired chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan nearly a decade ago.

The former chief justice sent a defamation notice worth 20 billion rupees to PTI founder Imran Khan in July 2014 for accusing him of poll rigging in the 2013 general election.

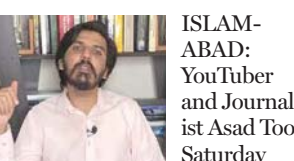
Lawyers of Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry said legal proceedings would be initiated against the PTI chief if he failed to apologise for the allegations he had leveled earlier against the

former chief justice. Later, Iftikhar Chaudhry filed the lawsuit against Imran Khan in the court of district and sessions judge in January 2015. In the notice, Chaudhry said Imran had defamed him as well as the judiciary by accusing him of rigging practices in the general elections. "Imran has again started repeating indecent words against the judiciary, DROs and ROs, etc and alleged their involvement in the so-called rigging." The former CJ said Imran's speeches/press conferences were calculated with "the underlying mischief of harassing me and my family members and you have succeeded in damaging my reputation and image." "Allegations about my

conduct and that of some of the ROs are clearly based on some ulterior motives and political gimmickry," the notice further stated. After prolonged proceedings, the court dismissed the lawsuit against Imran Khan, declaring the defamation notice as time-barred. In its verdict, the court ruled that the defamation claim had exceeded the six-month period required by law for such statements, resulting in the dismissal of former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's claim. The court noted that the defamation claim was filed six months and 24 days after January 20, 2015. According to relevant laws, the claim should have been filed within six months.

Asad Toor released from Adiala Jail after court approves bail

City Desk



ISLAM-ABAD: YouTuber and Journalist Asad Toor Saturday released from prison after being granted bail by special court in a case related to running a malicious campaign against the judiciary.

Special judge central judge Humayon Dilawar approved the bail plea and directed Toor to submit surety bonds worth Rs 5,000.

His arrest came a month after Pakistan formed a joint investigation team (JIT) to probe a "malicious" social media campaign against the country's judges.

On February 24, Toor was summoned by the FIAs cyber-crime wing.

Bilawal condemns terrorist attack in North Waziristan

City Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari expressed his sorrow over martyrdom of Lieutenant Colonel Kashif and soldiers in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he said nurseries of terrorism must be destroyed by implementing the National Action Plan in letter and spirit. The killers of officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army were the enemies of the nation



and must not be pardoned.

Bilawal extended heartfelt condolences to the families of Lt. Col. Kashif/Shahed and other martyrs. The nation will never forget its brave sons. These enemies must be punished to give justice to the departed souls, the PPP chairman added.

Pakistan welcomes adoption of UNGA resolution on Islamophobia

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Saturday welcomed the adoption of the resolution titled "Measures to Combat Islamophobia," by the UN General Assembly with an overwhelming majority. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the resolution was presented by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as a follow-up of the General Assembly Resolu-

tion 76/254, which designated 15th of March as the International Day to combat Islamophobia.

The General Assembly has condemned the incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence against Muslims as manifested in the increasing number of incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran, attacks on mosques, sites and shrines and other acts of religious intolerance, negative stereotyping, hatred and violence against Muslims.

Pakistan likely to sign staff-level agreement with IMF next week

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is likely to sign the staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) next week, citing sources.

The signing of staff level agreement with the IMF will clear the

way for Pakistan to receive the last tranche of \$1.1 billion under the SBA Agreement, the sources said.

They further said that during the talks with the IMF, Pakistan's officials assured the international lender of jacking up the electricity tariff from July 1, while monthly, quarterly and yearly fuel adjust-

ments will be slapped on consumers for cost recovery.

The IMF delegation stressed upon Pakistani officials to continue to protect people registered in BISP programme. Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund also demanded to keep strict monetary policy and market

exchange rate.

The IMF delegation is currently in Pakistan for the second review under the SBA loan programme.

Earlier, the Pakistan government rejected the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand for a National Finance Commis-

sion (NFC) Award revisit, said sources.

Citing the shortage of federal funds, the IMF had asked Islamabad to revisit the NFC Award with the provinces during the second review talks under the \$3 billion loan programme under SBA.

UN delegation briefed on Azad Kashmir's development plan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The UNICEF delegation headed by Dr. Anusa Kabur, Deputy Country Director of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, was briefed by the Department of Local Government and Rural Development and the Department of Physical Planning and Housing.

Government of Azad Kashmir. In Directorate General Local Government and Rural Development, Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Shahid Mohiuddin Qadri

and Secretary Physical Planning and Housing Sardar Javed Ayub briefed the delegation.

Director General Local Government and Rural Development Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Donors Coordination Consultant along with Prime Minister Ms. Asma Andrabi, Focal Person P&D Yasir Gilani, Senior Officers of Department of Local Government and Rural Development Babar Minhas, Raja Zulqarnain and others were also present.

Water Babar Minhas briefed the delegation about the work plan for

WASH, while Raja Zulqarnain briefed the delegation about civil registration and vital statistics, while Yasir Gilani briefed the delegation about the ongoing projects of public health. Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Country Director Dr. Anusa Kabur assured of his full cooperation and said that he will provide full cooperation with the government of Azad Kashmir in health and nutrition including water and sanitation.

Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Shahid Mohiuddin Qadri said that he appreciates the

exemplary cooperation of UNICEF with the government of Azad Kashmir and is trying to achieve the goals with more effort and dedication in the future.

Thank you. Secretary Physical Planning and Housing, Sardar Javed Ayub, said that UNICEF's exemplary role in providing clean water and sanitation is commendable, almost 80% of diseases are caused due to lack of clean water. All resources should be utilized for water supply. Secretary Local Government Vidhi Praghi also presented a souvenir to the head of the delegation.

Jalaluddin Romi Foundation, Nishtar administration sign MOU to provide free medicines to diabetic patients



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Jalaluddin Romi Foundation and Nishtar administration have signed a (MOU) memorandum of understanding to provide free medicines and insulin to the growing number of diabetic patients in South Punjab. Saved their lives by ensuring free delivery. In this regard, a ceremony was held yesterday at Nishtar Medical University, in which Romi Foundation Chairman Khawaja Jalaluddin Romi, Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani and Principal Nishtar Medical College Dr. Rashid Qamar Rao signed a memorandum of understanding. The name of the center is Khawaja Iqbal A diabetes center has been set up. The establishment of this center will promote the educational activities related to diabetes in Nishtar Medical University and free insulin and diabetes medicines will be provided to the deserving people. Under this project, it has been decided between Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi Foundation and Nishtar Hospital administration that Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi Foundation and Nishtar Hospital Administration will form a committee in this regard which will regularly register these patients and provide them with free medicines. To supply medicines and insulin to the patients. To be sure, it should be noted that due to black sale of sugar medicines and insulin in the market, diabetic patients are facing serious problems and Rs 600 insulin is being sold in black for Rs 1800 due to which sugar Lives of patients were at stake and for this noble cause Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi Foundation, considering the plight of poor patients, has decided to take this initiative to provide medicines to the increasing number of diabetic patients in South Punjab and to provide medicines to poor diabetic patients. By making sure their lives can be saved. This center will be run with the support of Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani, Principal Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Rashid Qamar Rao, Professor Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and Dr. Salahuddin Mahmood Rand.

Human tragedy in Gaza will not go in vain: Syed Nazar Abbas Shah

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Muslim Conference Finance Board Chairman Syed Nazar Abbas Shah has said that human tragedy has been born in Gaza due to Israeli atrocities, dead bodies are scattered everywhere, children and women are screaming and Israel is constantly attacking Gaza from its allies. It's coming fact That sacrifices of the Kashmiris of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the Muslims of Palestine will not go in vain. The criminal silence of the United Nations and the helplessness of the OIC are momentous. He expressed these views while talking to journalists here yesterday. He said that this The current situation is that hospitals are being bombed, small children are forced to eat grass, the heartbreaking scenes of Gaza have brought out the cries of humanity. He said that similarly Narendra Modi cannot keep crores of Kashmiris enslaved by the power of guns, India on Kashmir. No country in the world is ready to accept the forced military occupation of India, the leadership of India is violating its own commitment to the international community and the international community should take note. He said that dealing with the challenges of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. Global peace and lasting security are essential. The world seems divided between those who support oppressive regimes and those who advocate the rights of the oppressed. Keeping He said that humanity is being buried alive under the burden of oppression in these regions. He expressed solidarity and cooperation among the people of India's illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine in their unwavering commitment to unarmed resistance.

PPP MPA lashes out at former DC Thatta

Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

THATTA: The PPP MPA Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi has accused former district Commissioner Thatta of selling land illegally. Addressing a press conference at a local press club He displayed documents claiming that the land stretching up-to 40 kilometers in the Kohistani area of district Thatta has been illegally and fraudulently transferred to land grabbing mafia by the former district Commissioner who took charge during the regime of caretaker government. "The law authorizes an assistant Commissioner to allot land but here district Commissioner has allotted land to the land grabber, that is an abuse of power by the DC"; he mentioned adding that the former DC restored 17 judicial orders that were rejected by the commission formed during the previous PPP government. The restoration of orders aimed at facilitating the land grabbers; MPA alleged. Local land owners, he said, had been deceived by the corrupt bureaucracy of the district. He urged Chief Minister Sindh for holding fair and transparent inquiry into the matter and called for regularizing 800 villages through a resolution in the provincial assembly.

Inauguration

Mian Muhammed Khalid, cutting the ribbon Jamia Masjid Al-Haj Mian Muhammed Nasir at C Block Central Park Housing society Mian Muhammed Nasir and Mian Muhammed Haris also present.



Saraiki parties to protest in Multan on Wasib's neglect of land: Dharija

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: On inflation, unemployment and not fulfilling the promise of Saraiki province, a protest demonstration will be held by Saraiki parties (today, March 17 at 11 am) in Awan Chowk, Multan, and Saraiki leaders will address the protestors on the loss of rights caused by Wasib.. The Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Council, Zahoor Dharija, the Deputy Secretary General of the Pakistan Saraiki Party, Malik Javed Chanar, Advocate, and the leader of the Sri Lanka National Alliance, Sharif Khan Lashari, while talking to the people of Awan Chowk in connection with the contact campaign, said that Wasib's step Exploitation is happening at the step, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has tried to sprinkle salt on the wound of Wasib's deprivation by deciding to create new industrial zones in Upper Punjab, industrial zones should be created in Wasib, Phase 2 of Multan Metro should be completed instead of Lahore Metro Phase 2. He said that he said that our destination is the province of Saraykistan, we will not remain silent until the province



is formed. Meanwhile, Saraiki leader Zahoor Dharija, Malik Javed Chand advocate strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the security forces check post in North Waziristan, he said that the homeland of two army officers and five soldiers who were martyred in the terrorist attack. Salute to love. Saraiki leaders said that they condole with the bereaved families of the death of three children due to the collapse of the roof of the house in Lahore. We

demand that financial assistance be given to the bereaved families. Don't forget the families of the accident, also help their heirs financially. He said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was supposed to come to Multan to condole with the families of the cylinder accident, the people of Multan were left waiting but she did not come. He said that Wasib's problems are so great that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz should have come to Multan on the

second day after assuming the post of Prime Minister, but she did not come till today. He said that until the province becomes a civil secretariat, instead of pretending and making it a joke, it should be activated by giving it full powers, separate development funds, jobs should be provided for Wasib and the Chief Minister should spend three days a week in Multan and three days in Lahore. Sit down so that the problems of Wasib can also be solved.

Speakers call for global intervention over Kashmir to ensure peace

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The speakers at a seminar on Saturday urged the international community to intervene in the Kashmir crisis to ensure Kashmiris' right to self-determination for bringing peace and tranquility in the region.

The event titled "From Amritsar Treaty to Abrogation: Kashmir's Journey for Self-Determination and Peace" which witnessed the participation of prominent scholars, youth activists and locals including women, was organised by Jammu Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization (JKPJO).

The seminar, held in two sessions, shed light on the harrowing history and ongoing struggles of the Kashmiri people, highlighting the inhumane repercussions of the Treaty of Amritsar, signed on March 16, 1846 between the British East India Company, and Ranjit Singh, head of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab.

The speakers highlighted how this infamous agreement, orchestrated by colonial powers and regional

actors, perpetuated decades of slavery, exploitation and marginalization under authoritarian Dogra rule.

Prominent Kashmiri leader, peace activist and Chairman of JKPJO, Tanveer -ul- Islam emphasized the importance of comprehending this historical backdrop in framing the narrative of Kashmir's self-determination struggle.

Tanveer emphasized that the Treaty of Amritsar holds significance for scholars, researchers, and social scientists. It not only established Jammu and Kashmir as a unified state but also introduced a peculiar system where the people of Kashmir became subjects under a ruler's authority.

Transitioning into the second session, a notable gathering of civil society members, including luminaries such as Professor Shahid Hussain Mir, Prof. Sajid Hussain, senior journalist Khizar Hayat Abbasi, and Muhammad Yaseen Khan, attended the event. They severely condemned the atrocities endured by Kashmiris, spanning from the oppressive Dogra rule to the

recent revocation of Articles 370 and 35A by India.

Professor Shahid Hussain Mir eloquently delineated the centuries-long struggle of Kashmiris, highlighting the systemic discrimination and oppression faced under various rulers. He poignantly recounted harrowing events such as the killings of silk factory workers in 1924 and the massacre outside Srinagar Central Jail in 1931, shedding light on the deep scars etched into Kashmir's collective psyche.

In his concluding remarks, Chairman of JKPJO, Tanveer ul Islam delved into the aftermath of partition in 1947 and the subsequent human rights abuses perpetrated against Kashmiris. He fervently appealed to the international community, particularly nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to proactively facilitate dialogue and advocate for the fundamental rights of Kashmiris.

The seminar culminated with a



resounding call to action for the international community to stand in solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri people and work towards a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict. Participants expressed optimism that through collective efforts, the aspirations of the

Kashmiri people for self-determination and peace would finally be realized.

The event underscored the urgent need for sustained attention to the Kashmir issue and emphasized the indispensable role of global solidarity in securing justice and freedom for

the people of Kashmir. As the echoes of suffering persist in Kashmir, the seminar served as a poignant reminder of the imperative for concerted action to alleviate the plight of Kashmiris and pave the way for a future defined by dignity, equality, and freedom.



Islamabad

15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:54 am
Zohr	12:16 pm
Asr	4:33 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 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7

Etihad Workers Union calls for action in wake of Israeli incursions

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Etihad Workers Union Municipal Corporation meeting President All Pakistan Local Government Employees Federation Punjab Chaudhry Shahbaz Ahmed Chatta General Secretary Ramzan Danish, Chairman Chaudhry Shehzad, Quadrant Atif Gondal and Etihad Workers Union General Secretary Rana Usman Manj, Chairman Atta Hussain Asad, Senior Vice President Abdul Waheed, Vice President Khizr Hayat, Additional General Secretary Rana Majid, Finance Secretary Muhammad Yunus Butt, Information Secretary Muhammad Faisal Rahi, Office Secretary Aamir Sultan and others. The holy month has once again given us the spring month of good deeds. Chaudhry Shehzad Ahmad Chatta said that the Palestinians should be remembered in the month of Ramadan, this will be the third Ramadan that the people of Palestine are going to spend in the shadow of the destruction of the houses of fire and blood. They are already in a state of fasting before the month of Ramadan. They are living without the necessities of life in the bitter cold with the dead bodies of their loved ones and the wreckage of their homes and equipment. They are asking for our prayers and our help. Raise up. He said that the holy and blessed month of Ramadan, which is the month of the revelation of the Qur'an, the month of blessings and blessings, is going to cast a shadow on us in the month of Ramadan. Shields In this month please the Lord of the worlds by doing as many good deeds and acts of worship as possible.

Mushaal: India's JKLF ban unconstitutional for five more years

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick vehemently denounced the Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian regime's unconstitutional act of declaring Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) unlawful association for next 5 more years.

Mushaal, who is a wife of JKLF chief Yasin Malik, strongly condemned Indian ministry of home affairs' act of extending ban on a peaceful political party like JKLF for five more years, which was immoral, undemocratic and illegal.

She stated that the extension of the ban on the most vibrant and peaceful political force like JKLF aimed at chok-



ing people's most popular voice in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK); however, Mushaal vowed that people of the occupied valley would foil all such nefarious plots of supremacists Indian government.

The hurriyat leader recalled that the Hindutva regime kept JKLF Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik in unlawful incarceration by implicating him in bogus, farcical and politically-motivated

cases but the notorious authorities could not diminish the love for him in the hearts of Kashmiri people.

She went on to say that Indian fascist government such coercive measures would not work to subdue freedom loving people of the scenic valley rather it would further ignite the freedom struggle.

Mushaal stated that the occupation authorities converted the IIOJK into to larger torture cell in the world and unleashed a reign of terror for the last over 70 years to suppress the dissenting voices; however, they miserably failed in their nefarious designs.

The hurriyat leader said that the Indian government could not dampen the courage of freedom fighters and they would continue their struggle until they break the shackles of Indian slavery.

Shortcut

ISLAMABAD: Traffic crossing soil barrier on Margallah Avenue, mega project starts at E-11 and culminates at GT Road in Sangjani, the completion of D-12 to E-11 portion was due in the last month.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Poetry Book Launching Ceremony 'Chan Chan Karti Chaaon'

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Studio 426 in collaboration with Coopera Art Gallery, the oldest professional Gallery of the country, organised the 5th Adabi Baithak and the launching of a poetry book "Chan Chan Karti Chhaon" by "Iram Asim" at the Coopera Art Gallery.

Dr Ajaz Anwar was the chief guest, whereas Dr Amjad Tufail, Prof. Sanaullah Hallaj, Dr Rafia Tahir, Shafique Khan, Yasmeen Bukhari, Dr Sohail Hashmi, Arif Butt, Dr Amna Tarar, Ayesha Qamar and Prof Mahmona Akhtar were the guest speakers. The prominent personalities like Muhammad Javed, Ghulam Mustafa, Javed Iqbal, Prof. Ghulam Mohyuddin, Prof. Shiekh Saeed, Prof. Ismat Ullah Cheema, Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal Mian, Dr. Kamran, Ali Azmat, M. Iqbal, Tauseef Shehzad and Awais Meer were present on the occasion. Comparing was done by



Asim Amjad (Renowned Painter and Art Therapist). This programme was unique as it was blended with literary and musical tones. A mesmerizing performance of singing by Dr. Sohail Hashmi and Arif butt enriched the event and pleased the audience.

The chief guest, while launching the poetry book, praised the contribution of Iram Asim.

While guest speakers addressed at length and highlighted the creative thoughts of the poetess.

Poetess Iram Asim spoke

and thanked the speakers and other guests for encouraging her with their presence and praiseworthy words.

The emerging artists and health professionals like Safa Mustafa, Samra Cheema, Shazia Saulat, Sidra Naeem, Mrs. Saiba, Nadia Naeem and Fatima Husnain were also present there.

Educationists from workers welfare Board like Mrs. Shafiqat Irfan, Mrs. Irfana javed, Azhar ul haq, Mrs. Shagufta Usmani, Mrs. Qudsia, Mrs. Nazli zahid, Mrs. Samina Javed, Mrs. Tahira Rashid and Mr. G. R. Anjum were Present there.

The Poetess's family members and very close friends also participated in that event, especially her very lovely sister Sobia Khalid and Sarwat Shahid.

A large number of people from all walks of life and students from different universities were present.

Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement laments India's continued suppression of Kashmiri rights

PNP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM) Altaf Ahmed Bhat addresses the recent actions taken by the Modi-led Indian government in further stifling the voice of Kashmiris yearning for their fundamental rights.

In a statement issued here in Islamabad today, Chairman Bhat lamented that the continued suppression of Kashmiris' just struggle for freedom by banning pro-freedom parties in occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a blatant violation of human rights and democratic principles. The recent outlawing of two more organizations, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League, along with the extension of the ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front for another five years, is an egregious assault on the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

He further added that It is evident that the Indian government, under the guise of national security, is resorting to draconian measures to silence dissent and crush legitimate demands for self-determination. The banning of these organizations, which have been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of Kashmiris, is a clear attempt to suppress the will of the people.

The statement made by the Indian Home Minister, justifying these actions by accusing these organizations of engaging in "pro-freedom activities" is a gross misrepresentation of the ground realities. The right to freedom of expression and association is enshrined in international law, and any attempts to curtail these rights must be vehemently opposed.

Despite the relentless campaign of repression unleashed by the Indian government, it is imperative to emphasize that the will of the Kashmiri people for freedom and self-determination cannot be suppressed. The Indian government's strategy of killing, torturing, and banning political and pro-freedom parties has failed to silence the voice of freedom in Kashmir. Bhat added.

Chairman JKSM Altaf Ahmed Bhat called upon the international community and relevant human rights organizations to condemn these blatant violations of human rights in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. It is high time for the international community to exert pressure on India to halt its human rights violations, release all Hurriyat leaders, demilitarize the region, and initiate the process of plebiscite as per the UN resolutions.

MNA vows to retrieve journalists their Press Club

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The member national assembly from Attock Sheikh Aftab Ahmed vowed to bring back the journalist community their press club building back which has been under illegal occupation of the district administration since long besides assuring the journalist fraternity of resolution of all their issues. He made this assurance to a delegation of the journalist community led by Patron in Chief Attock Press club registered at his residence on Friday. Mr Naqvi has informed the step-motherly attitude of the district administration towards the journalist community of the Attock as the press club was registered in 1993 under the societies registration act 1860. He said that the district council through a resolution has allotted the building to press club in 1986 and the same has been illegally occupied by district administration since 2012 without any amended resolution by the district council as well as written order. He added that furniture and fixtures which were utilized by the journalists' community are rusting to dust due to apathy and indifferent attitude of the officials concerned. On this occasion, Mr Ahmed assured the delegation to play his pivotal role in addressing the grievances of the journalist community and made all out efforts to retrieve the press club building from the district administration and handed it over to the journalist community in an honorable manner without further delay. On this occasion, Sheikh Aftab also hailed the positive and effective role of the Attock press club for the democratic process. He also assured that the journalists community of Attock district would be provided with the best possible protection against unwarranted actions under the PECA ordinance and other related laws.

He was of the view that the PML-N government believes in freedom of the press and would leave no stone unturned to provide a conducive environment to the journalist community so that they performed their professional responsibilities without any fear and hindrance. Sheikh Aftab said that "our Government strongly believes in upholding freedom of the press and is taking all necessary steps to provide a safe working environment to local journalists working in districts to facilitate them in the performance of their professional obligations". He said he would continue his interactions with journalists and media persons.

Chaudhry Latif Akbar strongly protested India's implementation of black laws



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Speaker, Legislative Assembly, senior parliamentarian and prominent Kashmiri leader Chaudhry Latif Akbar strongly protested India's implementation of black laws based on anti-Muslim, anti-Muslim, religious hatred, and urged influential countries including the United Nations, OIC, and European Union to immediately strongly demanded to play a role and said that earlier Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi amended the special status and citizenship law of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019 and deleted Article 370 and Section 35A. If India does not give up its expansionist ambitions and the policies of a united India, then the eruption of the volcanic lava of religious fanaticism between the two nuclear countries will increase the fears of the destruction of world peace and the clash between civilizations, Speaker Law expressed these views. Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Member of the Assembly, while expressing his concern on India's implementation of the 11-year condition for granting citizenship to Muslims and making it mandatory to bring the domicile of the great-grandfather, said that both India and Israel are occupying countries.

There are those who want to spoil the peace of the world by promoting terrorism, so the world should make itself aware of its existence against these terrible tricks and cruel measures.

Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that the People's Party has shown an exemplary performance to develop the relations of humanity in every era and the leader of the people was martyred. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, daughter of the East, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, martyred, kept humanity as a priority in every forum of the world and played the role of vanguard against terrorism and lawlessness. The implementation of the report on the murder of the well-known Kashmiri journalist Shujaat Bukhari, including serious violations of rights, is inevitable.

Speakers call for global intervention over Kashmir to ensure peace

PNP

MUZAFFARABAD: The speakers at a seminar on Saturday urged the international community to intervene in the Kashmir crisis to ensure Kashmiris' right to self-determination for bringing peace and tranquility in the region.

The event titled "From Amritsar Treaty to Abrogation: Kashmir's Journey for Self-Determination and Peace" which witnessed the participation of prominent scholars, youth activists and locals including women, was organised by Jammu Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization (JKPJO).

The seminar, held in two sessions, shed light on the harrowing history and ongoing struggles of the Kashmiri people, highlighting the inhumane repercussions of the Treaty of Amritsar, signed on March 16, 1846 between the



British East India Company, and Ranjit Singh, head of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab.

The speakers highlighted how this infamous agreement, orchestrated by colonial powers and regional actors, perpetuated decades of slavery, exploitation and marginalization under authoritarian Dogra rule.

Prominent Kashmiri leader, peace activist and Chairman of JKPJO,

Tanveer -ul- Islam emphasized the importance of comprehending this historical backdrop in framing the narrative of Kashmir's self-determination struggle.

Tanveer emphasized that the Treaty of Amritsar holds significance for scholars, researchers, and social scientists. It not only established Jammu and Kashmir as a unified state but also introduced a peculiar system where

the people of Kashmir became subjects under a ruler's authority.

Transitioning into the second session, a notable gathering of civil society members, including luminaries such as Professor Shahid Hussain Mir, Prof. Sajid Hussain, senior journalist Khizar Hayat Abbasi, and Muhammad Yaseen Khan, attended the event.

In his concluding remarks, Chairman of JKPJO, Tanveer ul Islam delved into the aftermath of partition in 1947 and the subsequent human rights abuses perpetrated against Kashmiris. He fervently appealed to the international community, particularly nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to proactively facilitate dialogue and advocate for the fundamental rights of Kashmiris.

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: **spokesmanislambad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Army Chief Demonstrate Profound Affection for Balochistan - IV

Pakistan's provinces boast diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, contributing to the country's vibrant identity. Embracing this diversity fosters inclusivity and strengthens national unity, as Pakistanis celebrate their differences while cherishing their shared identity. The principle of provincial equality is evident in Pakistan's political system, where each province is represented in the federal government and provincial assemblies. Through proportional representation, all provinces participate in national decision-making, ensuring that policies are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all provinces, promoting balanced development and equitable resource distribution. Ensuring provincial equality is crucial for fostering balanced economic development and minimizing regional disparities within Pakistan. Through investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other vital services across all provinces, the government establishes a conducive environment for economic advancement and prosperity.

Programs such as the National Finance Commission Award and the establishment of Special Economic Zones aim to foster inclusive growth and create opportunities for all provinces to flourish. Provincial equality also cultivates social cohesion and national unity, as citizens from diverse regions of Pakistan come together to celebrate their shared heritage and aspirations. By encouraging inter-provincial dialogue, cultural exchange, and mutual respect, Pakistan builds bridges of understanding and solidarity that transcend geographical boundaries. This unity amid diversity strengthens the social fabric, instilling a sense of belonging and pride in being part of the Pakistani nation. Balochistan has played a significant role in shaping Pakistan's political and military landscape. Despite its relatively low population density, Balochistan has produced several notable figures who have reached the highest levels of

power in the country.

Some prominent examples include General Mirza Aslam Beg, a native of Quetta, Balochistan, who served as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) from 1988 to 1991. During his tenure, General Beg oversaw significant developments in Pakistan's military and strategic affairs, contributing to the strengthening of the nation's defense capabilities and regional stability.

Another notable figure is General Muhammad Musa Khan, also from Quetta, Balochistan, who served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army from 1958 to 1966. His leadership coincided with a period of considerable political and military turbulence in Pakistan, including the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.

Sardar Attaullah Mengal, a prominent Baloch nationalist leader, held the position of Chief Minister of Balochistan and briefly served as the Prime Minister

of Pakistan in 1972. During his time as Prime Minister, he focused on addressing the grievances of the Baloch people and advocating for regional autonomy.

Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, born in the Dera Murad Jamali district of Balochistan, served as the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 2002 to 2004. As the first and only Prime Minister from Balochistan thus far, Jamali's tenure was marked by efforts to promote national reconciliation and economic development.

These examples illustrate that the Baloch people possess equal rights and opportunities, akin to citizens of other provinces in Pakistan.

Readers, Pakistan, its people, and the Pakistan Army hold a deep affection for Balochistan and recognize its significance for the nation. The recent visit by Army Chief General Asim Munir underscores the sentiment of love and appreciation for this vital province of Pakistan. The initiatives aimed at enhancing security and promoting development in Balochistan are warmly received and appreciated by the people of Pakistan.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Nexus between conflict and climate crisis' critical

While highlighting the nexus between conflict and climate crisis, the speakers during an interactive dialogue held on the sidelines of the 55th session of the UNHCR have said that a holistic approach on the part of global community was required to tackle both issues simultaneously.

The interactive dialogue, which was arranged by International Action for Peace and Sustainable Development in collaboration with Kashmir Institute of International Relations, World Muslim Congress, International Muslim Women Union and YCP, was attended and addressed by international law experts, journalists and rights activists from different parts of the world.

The speakers said that the dangerous nexus between conflicts and climate crisis has become an increasingly pressing concern for the world. They pointed that the effects of climate change were more visible in regions with heavy troops' concentration.

Referring to the presence of over 900,000 troops in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the speakers said that the huge presence of military and their activities in the region not only exacerbate the environmental degradation but also impede efforts aimed at addressing the pressing environmental issues.

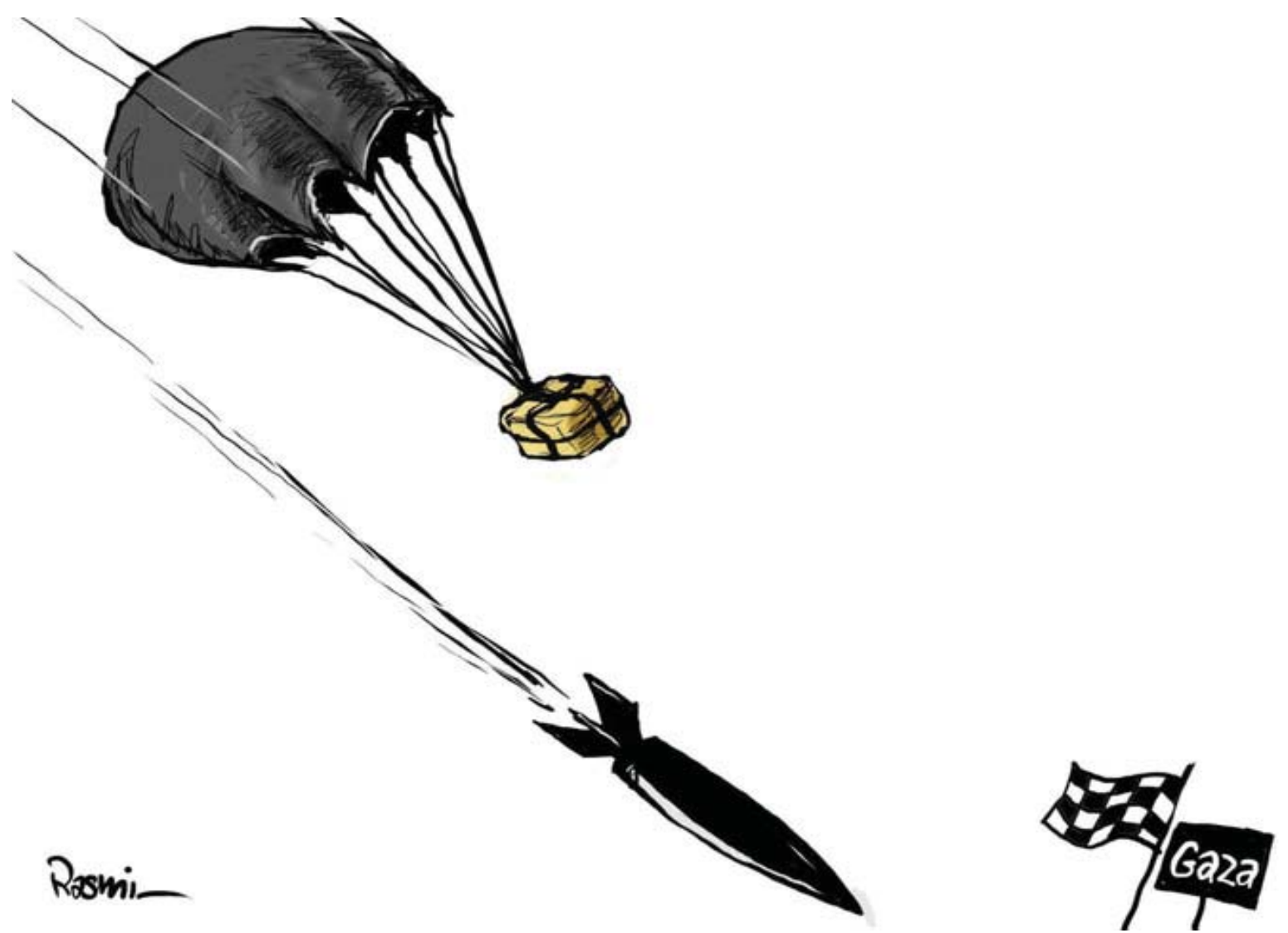
They said that deployment of troops and military activities have not only adversely affected the lives of the Kashmiri people but it has also been the cause and consequence of habitat loss, deforestation, pollution in the restive region.

The expansion of military facilities, they said, has played a significant role in contributing to ecological problems. "Use of heavy weapons, explosive materials and mines in ecologically sensitive areas by the Indian forces has been the main cause of deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution", they said, adding all these factors together disrupt the balance of ecosystems and affecting local weather patterns.

Termining the continued conflict as the biggest threat to the biological diversity in the region, the speakers said that it was high time that the international community should realize the dangers of the conflict and its devastating impacts on the region's climate as well as on its people and play its much needed role to address these issues simultaneously.

They said that issues such as melting of glaciers, shrinking water bodies and reducing groundwater level, water scarcity in the region underscore the urgency to tackle these issues on urgent basis.

The speakers while calling for an effective mechanism and strategy to address these issue said that climate crisis and conflict present an existential threat to the people living in conflict hit regions like Kashmir.



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

Imran Khan's oration delivered at the United Nations assembly juxtaposed with Putin's discourse directed towards Western youth - II

While Russia maintained its territorial integrity within proximate borders, it sought to safeguard its populace residing just beyond its immediate boundaries. Without delving into causative factors, I pose the question: Would centralizing global governance not undermine its fundamental structures? In a conversation with Tucker Cornelson, the topic of the dollar's depreciation was broached. Despite America's imposition of restrictions on dollar trading to elicit prompt outcomes, the anticipated effects fail to materialize, resulting instead in a depreciation of the currency.

The extant policy appears flawed; however, is it within your purview to effectuate its modification? Presuming an affirmative response, the youthful demographic possesses substantial potential. I abstain from delving into the intricacies of domestic political matters within the United States presently. Nevertheless, the younger generation undeniably harbors the capacity to contribute significantly to the cultivation of interstate relations. The modality for such influence lies in simplicity.

Certainly, one can articulate their stance within the confines delineated by the legal framework and constitutional provisions of their respective nation or nations. This avenue



represents the sole method to effectuate policy alterations within the elite echelons. It is imperative to underscore that I am not advocating any departure from the established constitutional and legal norms of any given jurisdiction. Nevertheless, individuals possess the inherent right to vocalize their viewpoints in a democratic milieu. Thus, unequivocally, the answer is affirmative.

Putin's discourse stems from apprehensions regarding the concerted efforts of the US and Europe to embroil Russia in a global conflict, catalyzed by recent events such as Poland's integration into NATO, coupled with promises of increased military support to Ukraine by leaders like Macron and Biden.

This cascade of events is perceived as a calculated maneuver to escalate tensions and engender an environment conducive to armed confrontation. Concurrently, there is a proliferation of armed personnel encircling residences in Pakistan and Russia, ostensibly to preempt potential aggression from incarcerated peace advocates. This phenomenon underscores the instinctual response of all organisms to safeguard themselves when confronted with perceived threats.

The widespread popularity of leaders such as Putin and Imran Khan, who espouse principles of liberty and equity, is evident in the extensive viewership of events like Putin's interview with Tucker, which has garnered approximately 21 million views on Twitter alone. However, amidst such acclaim, skeptics may question the veracity of these leaders' commitments to their proclaimed ideals.

Matching Shahbaz Speed with Chinese Speed - II

Furthermore, the completion of energy projects such as power plants and renewable energy installations will address Pakistan's energy deficit and enhance energy security, laying a strong foundation for sustained economic growth.

Improved infrastructure and connectivity facilitated by CPEC will facilitate trade not only between Pakistan and China but also with other countries in the region. This increased trade volume will drive exports, reduce trade costs, and stimulate overall economic growth, ultimately leading to a more prosperous and developed Pakistan.

Shahbaz Sharif's efforts to achieve balanced regional development and attract further foreign investment can be significantly enhanced by prioritizing political stability in Pakistan. Political stability serves as the cornerstone for ensuring continuity in policies and government priorities, creating an environment conducive to long-term planning and execution of infrastructure projects like CPEC.

By establishing political stability, Sharif can bolster investor confidence, both domestic and foreign, in the predictability and security of the operating environment. This confidence is crucial for attracting investment in large-scale projects like CPEC, as investors seek assurances that their investments will be protected and secure.

Moreover, a stable political environment streamlines decision-making processes within the government, minimizing bureaucratic delays



and bottlenecks in project implementation. Timely approvals, permits, and clearances are essential for keeping CPEC projects on track and ensuring their successful execution.

Furthermore, political stability is essential for maintaining positive relations with China and other international partners involved in CPEC.

Consistent diplomatic engagement and cooperation are necessary for resolving issues, negotiating agreements, and securing additional investment for CPEC projects.

In essence, political stability provides the foundation for effective governance, investor confidence, and security, all of which are critical for the successful and timely completion of CPEC projects. Without political stability, the risk of delays, disruptions, and project failures increases, potentially undermining the transformative potential of CPEC for Pakistan's economy and development.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

President hosts iftar reception for Ultyq Qurultay III session participants

The President congratulated the attendees on the holy month of Ramadan and expressed gratitude for their active participation in the work of the National Kurultay today. He also noted that the current meeting, which coincided with the Orazha holiday, is of special importance, Kazinform News Agency reports citing the Akorda press service.

"All Muslims look forward to the month of Ramadan impatiently. With its onset they perform prayers and make their most cherished wishes. People are morally improved and spiritually purified. They help those in need and perform other righteous deeds that benefit every person and every family. All this contributes to strengthening the unity of our people," says the Head of State.

Islam calls on people to be kind, honest, educated and hardworking – President at iftar reception in Atyrau



Islam calls on people to be kind, honest, educated and hardworking – President at iftar reception in Atyrau. Photo: Akorda

Photo credit: Akorda
Kassym-Jomart Tokayev emphasized that Islam is an integral part of the national culture and calls on people to be kind, honest, educated and hardworking.

"These noble qualities are manifested in the traditions of our people," he said and reminded of the importance of forming a new quality of the nation.

"Every citizen of our country must truly embody the qualities of "Adal Azamat" – a responsible citizen. We should instill the right values in the younger generation," the President said.

In order to transform into a progressive country, the citizens' behavior, actions, thoughts and intentions must comply with these principles, he emphasized.

Those taking the floor at the iftar were composer Ilya Zhakanov, co-chairman of the Vainakh Association of Chechens and Ingush of Kazakhstan Akhmet Muradov, and Chairman of the Management Committee of the Astana Public Service Hub Alikhan Baimenov.

New office of Pakistan Center for Cultural, Communication Studies inaugurated at Tsinghua University



News Desk

BEIJING: On the occasion of the 16th anniversary of the opening of the Pakistan Center for Cultural and Communication Studies at Tsinghua University, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi and Dean of the School of Journalism at Tsinghua University, Zhou Qingan inaugurated the new office of the Pakistan Center for Cultural and Communication Studies. Before the unveiling ceremony, Ambassador Hashmi met with Peng Gang, Vice President of Tsinghua University, where he commended the high education standards of the University appreciating its top rankings in Asia and the world.

New office of Pakistan Center for Cultural, Communication Studies inaugurated at Tsinghua University The Ambassador also thanked the Vice President of Tsinghua University's consistent contribution to China-Pakistan ties as a seat of learning for Pakistani students and as a partner in cultural and research endeavors with counterpart institutes in Pakistan. Later, the Ambassador visited the School of Journalism of Tsinghua University and inaugurated the new office of Pakistan Culture and Communication Studies. The Ambassador exchanged views on various possible initiatives to strengthen cooperation between the School of Journalism and the Pakistan Embassy to bolster China Pakistan ties in the fields of media and culture. New office of Pakistan Center for Cultural, Communication Studies inaugurated at Tsinghua University The School of Journalism of Tsinghua University and the Pakistan Center for Culture and Communication Studies together with the Quaid-i- Azam university, Beijing Foreign Studies University and Communication University of China will jointly organize a three-week "China-Pakistan Cultural Corridor Caravan Class" this summer. This caravan class will cross the Karakoram and Hindu Kush Mountains, researching, teaching and writing along the route of ancient Chinese monks in the mountains of northern Pakistan and the route of Gao Xianzhi's expedition across Hindukush. Ten professors from China and Pakistan will give lectures to students from both countries.

Efforts to combat Islamophobia anchored in int'l human rights: Amb Bilal

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Office at Geneva Bilal Ahmad has emphasized that efforts to combat Islamophobia were anchored in foundational principles of international human rights. Addressing a special event on international day to combat Islamophobia, he underscored the need to reinvigorate the political consensus and take concrete action re HRC resolution 16/18.

The event was co-organized by OIC Observer Mission and United Nations Geneva, a post on X said on Saturday. He said that HRC resolution 53/1 signified that a large majority of humanity condemned desecration of the Holy Quran to stigmatize Muslim communities. Unchecked religious hatred could quickly become social malaise and political crisis, he further cautioned.

Israel's relentless bombing of Gaza leaves behind 23 million tonnes of debris: UN

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: The Israeli war against Gaza has left a staggering almost 23 millions tonnes of rubble and unexploded weapons scattered across the besieged enclave, according to UN humanitarian officials. In a fresh alert about the disastrous humanitarian emergency still unfolding in the enclave, the UN agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, said on Friday that it will "take years" before the Strip is made safe again.

The lives of more than two million Gazans have been devastated by daily Israeli bombardment, since 7 October, the UN agency noted in a post on X, formerly Twitter. As the largest relief agency in Gaza, UNRWA continues to provide lifesaving supplies and services to more than 1.5 million displaced people in the south of the enclave. The agency runs shelters for more than one million people, providing them with humanitarian relief and primary healthcare.

Lifesaving humanitarian work has continued amid intense Israeli bombardment and ground operations. In its latest update on the emergency, the UN aid coordination office, OCHA, reported ongoing violence "across much of the Gaza Strip, particularly in the Hamad area of Khan Younis, the hostilities are causing further civilian casualties, displacement and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure." OCHA noted that mine action partners are now carrying out



"assessments of explosive threats" and educating Gazans about the dangers. "Larger-scale assessments are urgently required, but response efforts have been hampered by restrictions on the import of humanitarian mine action supplies and authorization requirements for the deployment of specialized personnel." The news came as Australia became the latest country to announce that it intended to resume funding UNRWA, which saw international donor support evaporate, amid Israeli allegations that some of the agency's staff had participated in the 7 October war. A high-level UN investigation continues into the claims, which UNRWA is also complementing with its own inquiry. Shortly after the allegations were made public, nine UNRWA staff were dismissed. Meanwhile, efforts to secure a new maritime aid route from Cyprus to Gaza continued on Friday as the NGO ship Open Arms moved closer to the Gaza coastline.

The vessel, which open-source satellites showed moored off the coast of Gaza City in the north of the enclave on Friday morning, left Larnaca in southern Cyprus on Tuesday with 200 tonnes of relief supplies. These are to be delivered ashore once a jetty is built south of Gaza City, according to reports. The initiative involves UN-partner World Central Kitchen and the search-and-rescue charity Open Arms, reportedly in coordination with the Israeli authorities and international partners. One in three children under two in the Northern Gaza Strip suffer from acute malnutrition – double the rate of 15.6 per cent in

January, UN Children's Fund UNICEF said on Friday. Malnutrition among children is spreading fast and reaching devastating and unprecedented levels. At least 23 children in Northern Gaza Strip have reportedly died from malnutrition and dehydration in recent weeks, adding to the mounting toll of children killed in the Strip in this current conflict – about 13,450 reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Nutrition screenings conducted by UNICEF and partners in the north in February found that 4.5 per cent of the children in shelters and health centers suffer from severe wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition.

"The speed at which this catastrophic child malnutrition crisis in Gaza has unfolded is shocking, especially when desperately needed assistance has been at the ready just a few miles away," said Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director. "We have repeatedly attempted to deliver additional aid and we have repeatedly called for the access challenges we have faced for months to be addressed. Instead, the situation for children is getting worse by each passing day. Our efforts in providing life-saving aid are being hampered by unnecessary restrictions, and those are costing children their lives." Screenings conducted for the first time in Khan Younis, in the middle area of the Gaza Strip, found 28 per cent of children under two have acute malnutrition, more than 10 per cent of which have severe wasting.

Eurasian ski resorts strengthen ties

News Desk

TASHKENT: The Festival of Mountain Resorts of Eurasia started in the Rosa Khutor mountain resort in Sochi. The festival was organized by the Eurasian Alliance of Mountain Resorts (EAMR).

About 150 guests from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia and Uzbekistan take part in the festival.

The opening of the festival took place with a discussion session dedicated to the topic "Sustainable development of tourism in specially protected areas (SPNA)."

Representatives of both government agencies and private business of the Russian Federation took part in the discussion.

In the context of the discussion, it was noted that most resorts, including ski resorts, are located in protected areas.

Governments and the private sector



are working together to create a tourism infrastructure that promotes outdoor recreation for citizens.

The development of tourism in such areas not only contributes to the generation of funds that are used to protect nature.

Chairman of the Committee on Tourism and Development of Tourist Infrastructure of the State Duma of the

Russian Federation Sangadji Tarbaev noted that it is important to allow tourism to develop without damage to the environment and nature.

The discussion participants noted that when creating this infrastructure, it is necessary to introduce green technologies and take measures to effectively protect the environment.

The importance of developing educa-

tion and environmental culture of the population was also noted. Unfortunately, there are still cases where tourists litter in nature or cause damage to the environment.

In the second part of the discussion, representatives of resorts in Uzbekistan, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan discussed measures taken at resorts to protect nature.

General Director of the Rosa Khutor resort Alexander Belokobylsky noted that the festival combines a variety of communication formats, which allows creating the right atmosphere for professional and friendly dialogue. "In this way, we contribute to strengthening interstate, economic and cultural ties between our countries," he added.

General Director of the Amirsoy mountain resort Saidvali Saidkhodjaev spoke about the measures taken in Uzbekistan to protect the environment. He also noted: "Such meetings will not replace any of the methods of contact. We have brought a large team of rescuers and instructors who will share their experience and take a closer look at the methods and technologies of their colleagues from other countries that are members of the Alliance."

It is noted that regulating the number of visitors is an important aspect for protecting the environment.

To do this, resorts use various tools to manage the influx of visitors, including pricing.

On 14 March, the official opening of the festival took place on the Alley of Flags of the Mountain Olympic Village.

Then, instructors from Eurasian mountain resort teams demonstrated their skiing skills on demonstration slopes on the "Men's Olympic Descent" track (1600 m).

At the demonstration slopes, Uzbekistan was represented by instructors and rescuers from the Amirsoy ski resort.

Elvina Turjanova, head of the Amirsoy marketing department, noted that the Amirsoy delegation consists of 11 people. She emphasized that Amirsoy at the festival represents the possibilities of ski holidays in Uzbekistan.

She noted that the Amirsoy team of instructors and rescuers represented Uzbekistan by performing a signature ski descent to the national music 'Yor Yor'.

In the afternoon, festival participants discussed the joint development of mountain tourism in Eurasia.

The leaders of Eurasian mountain resorts discussed ways of cooperation and problems of interaction, including joint promotion of mountain tourism and the introduction of joint ski passes.

The creation of the EAMR, in their

opinion, helps to increase the influx of tourists to the organization's mountain resorts.

The participants also discussed plans for further development of cooperation.

On this day, festival participants also took part in interactive lectures by the Corporate University of the Eurasian Alliance of Mountain Resorts on various topics, including "The Concept of Global Security: Marketing and Services", "Experience Marketing" and "Competency Development".

Later in the evening, a national culinary festival of Eurasian countries took place, where ski resorts in Uzbekistan, Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan presented a variety of national dishes.

The Amirsoy delegation prepared festive Uzbek pilaf.

On 15 March, instructors from mountain resorts held master classes on skiing.

The Eurasian Alliance of Mountain Resorts (EAMR) was created in June 2023. The mountain resorts Rosa Khutor (Russia), Shymbulak (Kazakhstan) and Amirsoy (Uzbekistan) became the founders of the alliance.

The goal of the EAMR is to provide a platform for the strategic development of tourism in the Eurasian space, professional communication, promotion of best practices and brands of mountain resorts.

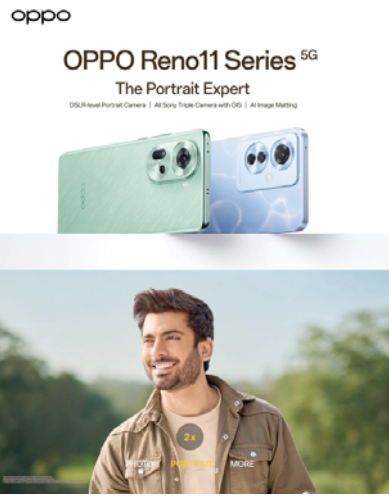
In November 2023, the Shahdag resort (Azerbaijan) joined the EAMR.

The main goals of the alliance are to promote all-season mountain tourism and popularize an active lifestyle, exchange necessary information and best practices, improve the professional qualifications of mountain workers, and develop common approaches to safety standards.

The headquarters of the alliance is located in Almaty (Kazakhstan).



OPPO Unveils Reno11 Series with Fawad Khan



PPA

LAHORE: OPPO, the leading global smart device brand renowned for its innovation and premium offerings, is thrilled to announce the return of the RENO-ator with the highly anticipated OPPO Reno11 series. After a three-year hiatus, the RENO-ator makes a triumphant comeback, promising a new era of innovation and excellence in the smartphone industry.

At the heart of this exciting relaunch is the partnership with the illustrious actor and icon, Fawad Khan, who returns as the face of innovation for OPPO. Fawad, who captivated audiences in the brand's previous campaigns, now lends his charisma and talent once again to the OPPO family. His return symbolizes a reunion of two icons in the pursuit of pushing boundaries and setting new standards of extraordinary achievement.

The OPPO Reno series has always been synonymous with premium craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology. With the Reno11 series, OPPO raises the bar even higher, delivering a blend of sophistication, innovation, and performance that caters to the discerning tastes of consumers.

The launch of the OPPO Reno11 series heralds a new chapter in OPPO's legacy of innovation and excellence. As the RENO-ator returns, anticipation reaches unprecedented levels, setting the stage for a monumental unveiling that will redefine the smartphone landscape.

Stay tuned for the grand reveal of the OPPO Reno11 series, where innovation meets extraordinary, and the RENO-ator reigns supreme.

PHMA pledges to work with govt to lift export growth



PPA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA) leadership has vowed that value-added textile industry would work closely with the new government with a view to enhance the exports and revive the growth momentum.

The PHMA zonal chairman Farrukh Iqbal asked the government to back the value-added apparel sector for its potential to harvest benefits of GSP Plus, providing mass employment to the jobless population of the country, as the exports to the EU countries have now starting to drop which is a matter of serious concern.

However, Farrukh Iqbal hailed the government's recent move to release Rs65 billion for payment of all verified pending refunds of exporters till previous month of 2024. This is a welcome move by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and we appreciate him along with his team, including Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, as this move will definitely boost the confidence of exporters and encourage the export sector. He also expressed the hope that the same spirit will be followed for payment of remaining refunds of sales tax deferred, DDT/DTL, TUF and markup subsidy with a view to enhance exports.

As the energy prices have been escalated to a record high, the PHMA leader maintained that constant hikes in gas and power rates would further stoke inflation, amidst high markup, making the Pakistani value-added textile products uncompetitive in the international market.

He cautioned the government saying the move of increasing energy tariffs was unwise and would sabotage hard efforts of exporters to enhance Pakistan's exports in previous years. He asked the new government to ensure a level-playing field by offering regionally competitive energy tariffs and continuing the Duty Draw-back of Local Taxes and Levies scheme, as committed in the new five-year textile and apparel policy. He stressed that energy rates for industries should be brought at par or below the tariff prevailing in the competing regional countries.

Government must start decerebrations with business leaders regarding next budget: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has called upon the Government to immediately initiate deliberations with the business leaders in connection with the forthcoming budget to make it a business friendly.

business friendly.

In a statement, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that owing to the existing high inflation rate, trade deficit is on the rise and the hardships of the business community have multiplied. Hence the situation demands that the Government should start deliberations with the business leaders, incorporate

their suggestions in the budget document to ease their problems which in turn will definitely benefit the masses.

He expressed the hope that the sitting government as per its election manifesto will pay heed to the issue on priority basis and formulate long term policies in the best interest of the business community and ultimately the common man.



The President ICCI added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is a visionary leader and is well aware of the difficulties of the entrepreneurs as well as the masses, so he will surely direct his economic team to start consultations with the business leaders to achieve this cherished goal.

Fresh juice

ISLAMABAD: A roadside vendor sells sugarcane juice to customers in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Salt manufacturers support new govt, seek ban lift and tax reduction

PPA

KARACHI: The Salt Manufacturers Association Pakistan (SMAP) extends a warm welcome to the newly elected government, expressing optimism for positive changes and advancements in various sectors, particularly addressing longstanding issues surrounding salt trade.

Qasim Yaqoob Paracha, Chairman of SMAP, noted that the salt trade, a vital aspect of Pakistan's economy, has faced numerous challenges over the years, impeding its smooth operation and impacting various stakeholders involved in the industry. One significant challenge has been the ban on trade with India, resulting in decreased revenue for salt manufac-



turers in Pakistan, disrupted trade routes, and decreased overall profitability in the

salt trade sector.

Additionally, high taxes on salt materials imported from abroad have further strained salt manufacturers financially, significantly increasing production costs and hindering competitiveness in the global market.

According to Mr. Paracha, "The challenges faced by the salt trade industry are multifaceted and require immediate attention and concerted efforts from both the government and industry stakeholders. By lifting the ban on trade with India and reducing taxes on imported salt materials, the government can play a pivotal role in revitalizing the salt trade sector, fostering economic growth, and creating job opportunities for our people."

Align interest rate with the regional economies and reduce input costs: Saqib Rafiq

PPA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has stressed upon Government to align the interest rate with the regional economies and reduce input costs to create a more competitive and conducive environment for domestic industries to grow and flourish.

Saqib Rafiq, President RCCI in a local TV interview said that the rising interest rates, soaring inflation, and massive currency devaluation has eroded the purchasing power resulting in making the industries

less competitive. It is very unfortunate that the Pakistan has the highest interest rate in the region at 22%, compared to Malaysia's at 3%, China's at 3.45%, India's at 6.5% and Bangladesh's at 6%. The manufacturing output of large industries shrank 15% year-on-year in June 2023 owing to the high cost of doing business. In addition, the 12-month period of FY2023 also shows an overall decline of 10.26%, he added.

RCCI President further commented that the high interest rates has discouraged the industries including Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from making

investments in new equipment, technology, or expansion projects. High interest has always has negative consequences for trade, commerce, industrial output, industrial expansion, and socioeconomic development, he added. "It would be hard to compete with countries in the region such as India, Bangladesh and China in the presence of high interest rates," he added.

He urged the government to take the stakeholders on board and chalk out strategies to devise long-term policies for lowering interest rate, cost of doing business and inflation.

NTDC acquires 2553 acres land for construction of 600MW Solar Power Project in Muzaffargarh

PPA

LAHORE: National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has successfully acquired and taken possession of 2553 acres, 06 Canals and 09 Marla land for construction of 600 MW Solar Power Project in Tehsil Chowk Sarwar Shaheed of District Muzaffargarh.

NTDC Land Acquisition Collector announced award of the said land under Section-11 of the Land Acquisition Act 1894, today, i.e. March 16, 2024 in the presence of Director General (Land) NTDC, Chief Engineer Project Delivery (North) NTDC Lahore and others at the proposed site of the solar power project.

The 600 MW solar power project will help to lessen reliance on expensive fuel-based power generation as per the

decision of the Government of Pakistan (GoP). NTDC is also in the process of acquiring land for two other solar power projects in district Layyah (1200 MW) and district Jhang (600 MW). The addition of 2400 MW solar power in the system by constructing these projects will help to meet the energy demand and increase the share of solar energy in the thermal-dominant energy mix.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan appreciated the efforts of Engr. Sohail Mumtaz Bajwa, Director General (Land) NTDC, Engr. Anees Ahmad, Chief Engineer Project Delivery (North) NTDC Lahore, Chief Law Officer NTDC Ms Maria Rafique and other NTDC officers for their continuous efforts to complete the land acquisition process.

FRIA says govt must focus on improving human capital as long-term goal

PPA

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam has said that with a view to deal with fiscal challenges the government should work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where the government should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector.

In a statement issued here today, the FRIA SVC said as a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors by extending facilities and providing all the requisite supports. He said that ever-increasing



cost of production in the country is the real threat to the industry, as frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar are posing further threat to the economy.

He observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses, many of which have closed their operations, while the remaining are struggling for survival.

In the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security.

Punjab Food Minister And Minister Information addressed joint press conference in DGRP

PPA

LAHORE: Provincial Information Minister Uzma Bukhari and Food Minister Bilal Yasin held a joint press conference at DGPR Head Office regarding Nigehban Relief package and price control mechanism during Ramadan. Addressing the press conference, Provincial Information Minister Uzma Bukhari said that the Punjab government is making every possible effort to provide relief to the people. It is our government's

mission to take care of the poor and keep the essential prices low. It was a challenge for our government to control inflation during Ramadan. She said that ration is being provided to 6.5 Million people at their doorsteps through Nigehban package without queuing and waiting. This is the first time in history that no major complaints have come out in such a huge program. For the first time in the history of Punjab, Nigehban Ramadan Package and Model Bazaar are running side by side. Magistrates

have been given proper training to control the prices, their monitoring is also being done through dashboards. The people of Punjab are accepting that the prices of food items have come down. Uzma Bukhari added that CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz says that she has come to reduce the prices of all things including potatoes, tomatoes and onions. There has been a Prime Minister in our country who used to say that I have not come to reduce the prices of things. Our government is going beyond the

set target and the work of delivering ration to people at their doorsteps will be completed by 10 Ramadan. Our effort is to keep the administrative costs to a minimum. CM Punjab has announced a new survey, which will compile data by next Ramadan.

Addressing the press conference, Food Minister Bilal Yasin said that a historic and transparent relief package is being given to the public with a huge amount of 30 billion. Food hampers are being given to 6.5 Million people at their doorstep

under the Nigehban relief package. More than 50% of the target has been achieved in Punjab. Better management and increased supply have significantly reduced the prices of onions, tomatoes and potatoes. He said that devils are imprisoned in Ramadan, yet some evil elements are trying to create artificial inflation. In the last 4 days, Price Control Magistrates conducted 3 lakh inspections, whereas, 29148 violations were found. 794 FIRs were registered and 2221 people were detained.

Haider, Imad take Islamabad United to PSL 9 final as Peshawar Zalmi falter

KARACHI: An unbeaten 98-run partnership between Haider Ali and Imad Wasim scripted a hard-fought victory for Islamabad United over Peshawar Zalmi in the Eliminator 2 of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here on Saturday.

Put into bat first, Zalmi got off to a solid start to their innings as their in-form opening pair of Babar Azam and Saim once again laid the platform for a formidable total.

Saim dominated the opening stand while Babar anchored through with a cautious knock until falling victim to Naseem Shah with 72 runs on the board.

He went hard at a length delivery by Naseem but could not get a hold of the cross-batted strike and Shadab Khan took a sensational catch.

Babar scored a scratchy 25 off 22 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and a six.

Saim was then joined by Haris in the middle and the pair made sure to carry on the momentum with their 59-run partnership until the former finally perished in the 15th over.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel

Saim Ayub remained the top-scorer for Peshawar Zalmi with a 44-ball 73 with the help of six boundaries and four sixes.

Haris followed his footsteps in the next over as he coped with a soft dismissal



against Naseem. He smashed three boundaries and two sixes on his way to a 25-ball 40.

Later, Tom Kohler-Cadmore and Aamer Jamal's brisk cameos lifted

Zalmi's total past the 180-run mark.

Naseem Shah led the bowling attack for the United with 3/30 in his four overs while Shadab and Obed McCoy picked one each.

It is worth mentioning here that the winner of Eliminator 2 will take on 2021 champions Multan Sultans in the PSL 9 final, scheduled to take place on Monday at the same venue.

Iga Swiatek sweeps past Marta Kostyuk into Indian Wells final

Sports Desk

LAHORE: World number one Iga Swiatek overpowered Marta Kostyuk 6-2, 6-1 on Friday to reach the final at the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek, who won the 2022 Indian Wells title, needed just 69 minutes to get past 32nd-ranked Ukrainian Kostyuk and will face either US Open champion Coco Gauff or Maria Sakkari of Greece in Sunday's final.

Ninth-ranked Sakkari, who fell to Swiatek in the 2022 Indian Wells final, had taken the first set 6-4 from third-ranked Gauff when rain temporarily put their match on hold.

Swiatek and Kostyuk avoided the desert showers, but played in overcast, chilly conditions that did nothing to slow the red-hot Swiatek.

"I think it was the cleanest match I played here," said Swiatek, who hit 14 winners with just six unforced errors and didn't face a break point. "I didn't



really have any moment today in the match where I didn't feel confident.

"I have all the positive vibes." Although she has reached the final without dropping a set, Iga Swiatek had insisted after prior victories that

she had a few things in her game to sort out.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel
It looked as if she had done just that as she put Kostyuk on the run early,

piling on the pressure with her precision and power.

The Ukrainian, playing in her first 1000 level semi-final, held serve to open the match, but Swiatek won the next five games and pocketed the opening set in half an hour.

Kostyuk, who finished with 17 winners and 23 unforced errors, could find no way to right the ship.

She fell behind 3-0 in the second set and required treatment on her left foot apparently after jamming it during a point.

Swiatek was unfazed by the medical timeout, holding for a 4-0 lead and polishing off the victory with a service return winner for her fifth break of Kostyuk's serve.

Iga Swiatek, 22, has come back strong from her disappointing third-round exit at the Australian Open.

She won the title in Doha and reached the semi-finals in Dubai, and her 19 match wins are the most of any WTA player this year.

Multan Sultans' coach Alex Hartley observes fasting in Ramadan

A Sports

KARACHI: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Multan Sultans' spin bowling coach Alex Hartley revealed that she is fasting in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan.

Hartley stated that all the players in the team are fasting so she wanted to understand how they feel and also to experience it first-hand.

"It is Ramadan and the lads are fasting. So I thought I really want to understand how they're feeling when they get to the game. I think it is only fair that the players are doing it, so I should join them [in fasting]," Hartley told BBC 5 Live Sport.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel

Hartley then highlighted the challenges she is facing while fasting and also



termed the practice "very hard".

"We have just broken our fast now

after we fasted all day. I have had some dates and some salad. We can eat till 4 am and then we don't eat again till 6:40 pm the next day. It is hard, so hard," shared Hartley.

"I go to bed at 4 am and sleep during the day, as our games start at 9 pm in the night," she concluded.

It is worth mentioning here that Alex Hartley played a pivotal role in Multan Sultans' success in the ongoing edition of the marquee league.

The 2021 champions became the first team to qualify for the playoffs before humbling Peshawar Zalmi in the Qualifier to reach their fourth-consecutive PSL final.

The Sultans will now take either Zalmi or Islamabad United in the blockbuster final on Monday at the iconic National Bank Stadium.

Cricket Australia sees surge in South Asian representation

MELBOURNE: A significant rise in South Asian representation was witnessed in Cricket Australia (CA) as "Singh" surpassed "Smith" as the most registered surname.

According to the statistics shared by the cricketing body, Singh was the most registered surname with 4262 entries while 2364 Smiths were registered.

Further indicating the growth, South Asian surnames such as Khan, Patel, Sharma and Kumar are among the Top 16 out of 494 registered players' surnames on CA's players registration portal "Play HQ".

The development comes at a time when the CA is actively pursuing strategies to integrate diverse communities into their cricket structure.

Australian Cricket's Multicultural Action Plan, launched in December by Usman Khawaja and Lisa Sthalekar, is a significant element of their commitment to fostering inclusivity within the sport.

James Quarmby, CA's Head of Participation said: "The continuing growth of registrations from multicultural communities is a testament to the progress being made toward our goal of being a Sport for All.

"We want people from multicultural communities to play a major role in all parts of the game at community and elite level, whether that is as players, coaches, officials, administrators or fans.

"With Pakistan coming for a white ball series and India's men's and women's teams both in Australia next summer,



we hope the surge in registrations from multicultural communities will be reflected in even bigger attendances at those matches."

Abrar Ahmed and Saud Shakeel fined for code of conduct breaches: PCB official



Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Quetta Gladiators' Abrar Ahmed and Saud Shakeel have both been fined five per cent of their match fees for Level 1 breaches of HBL PSL's code of conduct during their side's HBL PSL 9 fixture against Islamabad United at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi on Friday night.

Abrar was found to have violated Article 2.4 of the HBL PSL Code of Conduct, which reads as: "Disobeying an umpire's instruction during the match.

The incident occurred in the 19th over of Islamabad United's batting, when, while fielding, Abrar rolled the ball all along the ground despite being instructed by the umpires not to do so.

In a separate incident, in the same match, Saud was found to have violated Article 2.5 of the HBL PSL Code of Conduct, which reads as: "Using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during a match".

After dismissing United's batter Salman Ali Agha in the 12th over, Saud went close to Salman and made remarks which could have provoked the batter.

Both players pleaded guilty to the charges and accepted the sanctions proposed by match referee Mohammad Javed.

The charges were imposed by on-field umpires Ahsan Raza and Chris Gaffaney.

Two tennis events held

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Karachi Tennis Association organized Two Tennis events for intellectually impaired male and females in Union Club Essy Tennis Championship held at Union Club Karachi.

Ishrat Zehra was the Coordinator of these events.

Final Results:
Intellectually impaired Males Singles Final Winner.. Shakir
Runners up Zakir
Intellectually Impaired Females Singles Winner.. Saadia
Jasmine Shareef runners up.

Mr. Shafiq Ahmed, Director Finance Essy Pharmaceutical Pvt Ltd was the chief guest distributed trophies to winners and runners up. Ahmed Ali Rajpoot, and many sports personalities were present.

Real Madrid file complaint after latest racist insults towards Vinicius Jr



Spanish club Real Madrid announced Friday that it had filed a complaint regarding the racist insults made against Vinicius Jr before Atletico Madrid and Barcelona's midweek Champions League matches.

"Real Madrid C. F. has filed a complaint with the Official State Prosecutor over hate and discrimination offences pertaining to the racist and hateful abuse aimed at our player Vinicius Junior," said the club in an official announcement.

"Real Madrid condemns these violent attacks of racism, discrimination and hate... which have sadly been a recurrent and ongoing concern for some time."

The complaint comes in the wake of videos on social media showing racist chants aimed at Vinicius Jr by Atletico Madrid fans outside the Metropolitan Stadium before Wednesday's Champions League match against Inter Milan.

On Thursday, the 23-year-old called on the Champions League and European football's governing body UEFA to take action against the supporters.

"It's a sad reality that happens even during matches where I am not present," Vinicius added in the message posted on X.

Real Madrid allege that similar abuse could also be heard "in the areas surrounding the Montjuic Olympic Stadium" ahead of Barcelona's home Champions League tie with Napoli on Tuesday.

The club said that it had requested security footage from the two locations be assessed in order to identify the perpetrators.

Vinicius Jr has faced racial abuse since he joined Real in 2018, with the latest incident coming shortly after a different video appeared to show a fan making racist insults towards Vinicius during a match against Valencia on March 3.

Ronaldo's 50th goal for Al Nassr clinches team 2nd place in Saudi Pro League

Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo, in a face-off with the star-studded Al Ahli on Friday, scored his 50th goal for his team, ending their four-match winless run with 1-0 on the score-sheet. Goal reported.

Ronaldo's historic goal that cemented Al Nassr the second place in the Saudi Pro League, also known as Roshn Saudi League (RSL), could have been made earlier in the 42nd minute of the match when the Ballon d'Or winner scored from an acute angle.

However, the video assistant referee (VAR) intervened and deemed him to be offside by a whisker during the build-up.

Friday's match witnessed abundant star power from Europe, including former Liverpool star Roberto Firmino, Frank Kessie and Riyad Mahrez competing from Al Ahli against Al Nassr led by their Portuguese talisman.

Both teams continued to hold their fire, adopting a cautious-first approach in the first half. However, they were fired up in the second half with Ronaldo scoring his 50th goal for his team in the final 10 minutes.

Preparation Pakistan Day

ISLAMABAD: A view of Faizabad Bridge decorated with Pakistani flags and Panaflex ahead of March 23, Pakistan Day in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Senate elections

Ex-interim PM Kakar submits nomination papers as deadline ends

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar was among the candidates who submitted nomination papers for the April 2 Senate elections as the deadline to file them ended on Saturday at 6:00pm. Polls will be held through secret balloting.

He submitted his nomination papers for the vacant Senate seats from Balochistan, Associated Press of Pakistan reported. "On behalf of former PM Kakar, Senator Danesh Kumar submitted the nomination papers," an Election Commission of Pakistan spokesman said.

The Senate consists of 100 members. Election to fill seats allocated to each province is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the

single transferable vote.

The upper house of Parliament is not subject to dissolution but the term of its members is six years, says the website. Half of the Senate members retire after every three years and new ones are elected to replace them.

Punjab

As many as 28 candidates, including seventeen who filed for general seats, submitted nomination papers for 12 Senate seats.

Talal Chaudhry, Mohsin Naqvi, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ijaz Minhas, Waleed Iqbal, Waseem Shehzad, Ahad Cheema, Pervaiz Rasheed, and Hamid Khan were among those candidates who filed their papers for general seats.

Sanam Javed, Faiza Ahmed, Anushey Rehman, and two others submitted their papers for women's seats while Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mustafa

Ramday, and another candidate filed their papers for technocrats seats.

Sindh

As many as 33 candidates, including members from PPP, MQM-P, and SIC, submitted their papers for 12 Senate seats.

Twenty filed papers for general seats, five each for women and technocrats seats, and three filed for minorities' seats.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

A total of 25 candidates have submitted papers for seven general seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to the ECP.

At least 10 submitted their nomination papers for two seats of technocrat while seven filed for two seats for women.

Irfan Saleem, Muhammad Talha Mehmood, Dilawar Khan, Faisal Javed, Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Azhar Qazi Mashwani, Niaz Ahmed, Waqas Orkazai, Fazal Hanan,

Asif Iqbal, Azam Khan Swati, Murad Saeed, Faizur Rehman, Khurram Zeeshan, Attaul Haq, Masoodur Rehman, and Shafiq Ayaz have their submitted papers for general seats.

Qazi Mohammad Anwar, Waqar Ahmad Qazi, Dr Hammad Mehmood Cheema, Khalid Masood, Fazal Hanan, Dilawar Khan, Qaizar Khan, Noorul Haque Qadri and Syed Irshad Hussain have submitted their papers for the technocrat seats. Azam Khan Swati has also submitted his papers for the technocrat seat.

Asif Rafiq, Mehmood Khan, Noorul Haque Qadri, Muhammad Naseem, Sajjad Hussain, Taj Muhammad Afridi, Ahmed Mustafa, and Fida Muhammad have submitted their papers for general seats.

Mehwish Ali Khan, Ayesha Bano, Rubina Naz, Rubina Khalid, Shazia, Syeda Tahira

Bukhari and Hamida Shahid filed their papers for two women's seats.

Balochistan

A total of 36 candidates, including Anwaarul Haq Kakar, from Balochistan submitted their nomination papers for the Senate seats.

Other candidates include Amil Wali Khan, former caretaker provincial minister Amanullah Kunderani, former senator Kahda Babar, former senator Naseebullah Bazai, JUI provincial leader Maulana Abdul Wasi, PPP's Sardar Umar Gurgej, National Party Central Leader Jan Buledi, Changez Jamali, and MPA Raheela Durrani.

The Senate elections on 12 seats each of Punjab and Sindh; 11 each of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 2; and two Senate seats from Islamabad would be held on April 2.

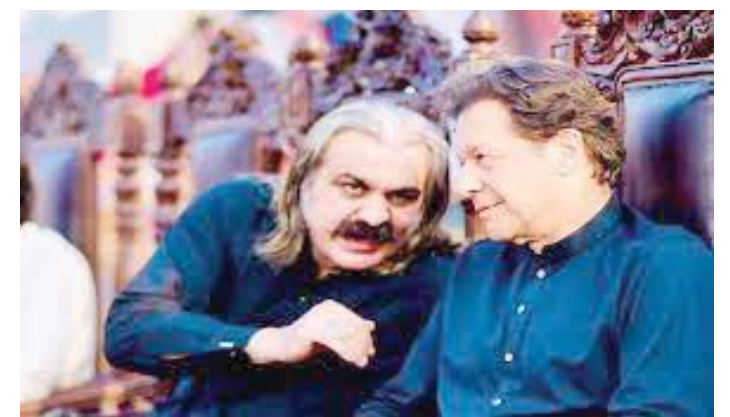
FM reaffirms resolve to bolster ties with Turkey

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar Saturday reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve and commitment to closely work together with the leadership of Turkey to further solidify bilateral relations. In a post on X, he said, "I am pleased to receive a congratulatory call from my brother Hakan Fidani, FM of Turkey. Recalling close & fraternal ties between our two great nations, we reaffirmed our resolve & commitment to closely work together to further solidify our bilateral relations."



CM Gandapur meets PTI founder at Adiala Jail



Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Saturday held a meeting with PTI founder Imran Khan at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Saturday.

According to sources, the meeting between Gandapur and the former prime minister lasted for 30 minutes, during which the duo discussed the country's current political situation.

The meeting took place in the jail's conference room, they say, adding that Gandapur arrived at the jail without any official protocol.

Earlier in the day, Ali Amin Gandapur moved the court to meet

former prime minister Imran Khan in Adiala Jail.

The plea filed by Chief Minister Gandapur, urged the court to allow him to meet the PTI Founder for consultation on legal and political matters.

The plea urged the court to direct the concerned authorities to ensure the privacy of the meeting.

Last Wednesday, Gandapur in a meeting requested Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to facilitate a meeting with the PTI founder.

Gandapur said that the prime minister assured him of arranging the meeting with the PTI founder, even in the heightened security environment of Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

Chinese troops to join Pakistan Day parade



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A contingent of the Chinese People's Liberation Army would take part in the Pakistan Day parade, Chinese Defense Spokesperson Chinese Defense Spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang at a regular press briefing on Friday.

"At the invitation of the Pakistani military, the Guard of Honor of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will send a contingent to Pakistan in mid-to-late March to participate in the Pakistan Day Parade," he said at a regular press briefing on Friday.

Pakistan Day commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, when the All-India Muslim League demanded a separate nation for the Muslims of the British Indian Empire.

In 2017, the PLA's Honour Guards participated in the parade on the invitation from the then Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

The PLA Honor Guards, formed in 1952, take part in every significant national event and welcome ceremony for foreign leaders in China. They have also performed at parades in Mexico, Italy and Venezuela.

Boat accidents report: FIA plans to 'rescue' senior officials

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has prepared a strategy to rescue its senior officials after Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi sought reports in connection with the Greece and Libya shipwreck tragedies, ARY News reported on Saturday, citing sources.

Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has sought a detailed report on the tragic boat accident near Greece and several other incidents in Libya. He directed the FIA Director General to submit a



detailed report of all the actions taken so far in this regard.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has emphasised that the elements involved in heinous business of human trafficking do not deserve any concession.

He further said that The Greece boat tragedy was a very sad incident in which number of families lost their loved ones. He reiterated that the real culprits of Greece boat accident must be brought to justice. The minister stressed that the elements involved in the business of illegal human trafficking must be sent to jail.

Sources told ARY News that the investigation authority laid the blame on junior officers for 'ignoring' the inquiry report. Meanwhile, at least 87 junior officers of federal investigation agency

have been blacklisted.

Furthermore, a ban has been imposed on deployment of blacklist officers at immigration check posts and anti-human trafficking cell.

The blacklisted officers, which included inspectors, sub-inspectors and others, belong from Gujranwala, Multan, Islamabad, Kohat, Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad.

Sources claimed that FIA senior officials were held responsible in the Libya inquiry report – which was prepared by BPS-21 officer Ahsan Sadiq.

India vote to start on April 19, Modi says confident of win

Special Report

India will elect a new parliament in seven phases between April 19 and early June, the country's election authority said on Saturday, in what amounts to the world's largest election with nearly one billion eligible to vote.

The election pits two-term strongman Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his regional allies against a bickering alliance of two dozen opposition parties, with surveys suggesting a comfortable win for Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party (BJP).

A victory would make Modi, 73, only the second prime minister after Jawaharlal Nehru, India's independence hero and its first prime minister, to win a third straight term.

"We address you at a precious moment, when we as a nation are set to reiterate our pledge to electoral democracy, when Indians will together express their will once again," Rajiv Kumar, the head of the independent Election

Commission of India, told reporters. The last of the seven phases of voting will be held on June 1 and votes counted on June 4, he said.

Modi said the "biggest festival of democracy" had started and his party would campaign on its track record of "good governance and public service".

"I have full confidence that we will get the full affection and blessings" of more than 960 million voters for the third consecutive time, he said in a series of posts on X.

Modi and his party have been in campaign mode for months. The prime minister has been flying around the country almost daily, inaugurating new projects, taking part in religious events and addressing public and private meetings.

In his speeches, Modi has been showcasing India's economic growth, with India becoming the fastest-growing major economy in the world at present, as well as investment in infrastructure and welfare programmes for the poor.



Opposition alliance struggling

A main talking point has also been his party's agenda for Hindu reawakening, including the inauguration of a grand temple to Lord Ram on the site of a destroyed mosque.

Modi has set a target of 370 seats for BJP and 400-plus for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) it heads in the 543-member lower house of parliament, up from the 303 the BJP won and more than the 350 the NDA won in 2019.

The 2019 performance was the best ever for the party which was formed in 1980.

Modi will be challenged by an alliance of some two-dozen opposition parties led by the main opposition Congress party called INDIA or the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance.

The alliance formed last year has, however, been struggling to stay united and share seats amicably.

Congress, which has ruled India for 54 of its 76 years since independence from Britain, has sunk to record lows after Modi swept to power and is struggling to revive support.

The party is highlighting unemployment, rural distress, what it says is crony capitalism, the need for more affirmative action for the so-called backward castes and the need to end religious polarisation and hate in its pitch to defeat Modi.

"This will perhaps be the last chance to save democracy and our constitution from dictatorship," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge posted on X. "We the people of India will together fight against hatred, loot, unemployment, price rise and atrocities."