



Pak-Iran bilateral trade can be increased up to \$5b: Iranian envoy

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam has said that due to strong economic and trade integration between Pakistan and Iran, bilateral trade can be increased up to \$ 5 billion a year in the coming few years. There is a strong possibility of doubling the bilateral trade between the two countries through air, rail and maritime integration, which will prove to be a catalyst in regional and global trade as well, he said. (Details on Page 5)



Banned TTP didn't want to face law for APS attack, says envoy

One of the three reasons peace talks with the outlawed terrorist organisation Tehreek-i-Taliban failed in the past was the latter's unwillingness to face law for the crimes, including the attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, it committed, Pakistan's Special Representative to Afghanistan Asif Durrani said. The other two reasons were that the banned group was neither ready to surrender, nor swore allegiance... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Funeral prayers

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, COAS Gen Asim Munir and CJSC Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza attend the funeral prayers of the two army officers martyred in the North Waziristan attack.



Photo: ISPR

President Zardari, COAS attend the prayers

Funeral prayers of Lt Col Kashif Ali, Capt Badar held in Chaklala Garrison

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The funeral prayers of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar were offered at Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi on Sunday. The two officers were among the seven soldiers martyred in a terrorist attack in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan district a day earlier.

President Asif Ali Zardari, foreign minister, interior minister, chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff, senior serving military and civil officers, relatives of the martyred and locals attended the funeral, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations.

"Pakistan Army has consistently upheld the ideals of Faith, Unity and Discipline. Guided by these enduring principles, Pakistan Army has always endeavoured to set higher benchmarks of professionalism and loyalty in its unrelenting fight against terrorism," President Zardari said.

A day earlier, security forces foiled an initial attempt of intrusion by the terrorists who then rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the Army post, followed by multiple suicide bombing attacks resulting in the martyrdom of five soldiers.

President Zardari said that the sacrifice stood as another testament to the unflinching resolve of soldiers who never hesitated to offer sacrifice for the defence of the motherland. "The whole nation stands in solidarity with our Armed Forces."

The bodies of martyred were taken to their native home towns where they will be laid to rest with full military honour. Soon after the initial attack on the security forces' post in Mir Ali area, Pakistan Army conducted a clearance operation led by Lieutenant Colonel Kashif and killed all six terrorists.

However, Lieutenant Colonel Ali, 39, and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar, 23, were martyred during the exchange of fire.

PM-Student

Country's future links with well-educated youth: PM Shehbaz

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the country's future hinged upon well-educated and skilled youth of the country and for the provision of quality education, the federal government would facilitate the high achievers with scholarship schemes to get education in the well reputed global educational institutes.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Ikramullah, a student from Balochistan province, who is now studying in the 9th class at Lawrence College Murree.

Under the prime minister's direction, the student from 2022 flood affected area of Qila Saiful-



lah was provided with a facility to get education at the country's prominent educational institute.

The prime minister recalled that he met the desperate student in the Khasnoob camp in Qila

Saifullah when floods had caused destruction in Balochistan province during 2022.

He said that he had assured the student of the provision of quality education, adding that it pleased

him a lot that the student was now studying in Lawrence College.

The student thanked the prime minister for giving him an opportunity to meet him.

Congratulating the prime minister, he said that he prayed for Shehbaz Sharif for his kind gesture.

The student also expressed his resolve to achieve the goal and serve the country in the future.

The prime minister advised him to serve the nation and country by working hard and concentrating on his studies.

He assured that all his educational expenditures would be borne by the government as the students were the future and hope of the country.

The prime minister said that when he had visited the flood

affected area, the student was in a protest mood but now he was showing a discernible change.

He mentioned that in Punjab province, they had sent the high achievers to get education at the best European and Scandinavian countries who later returned completely transformed and full of confidence.

The prime minister also welcomed the principal and housemaster of Lawrence College and gave away gifts to the student including a pen and tablet, expressing the hope that it would help him in pursuance of his studies.

Ikramullah also presented a set of books to the prime minister.

The prime minister personally saw off the student from the Prime Minister's House.

PM Shehbaz grants one-year extension to PAF chief: sources

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday granted a one-year extension to Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, sources said.

PM Shehbaz has sent the summary to President Asif Ali Zardari for the extension in CAS Sidhu's tenure in the office, they added.

CAS Sindh was set to retire tomorrow (Monday) after the



completion of this three-year tenure in the top post.

PM, Saad Rafiq discuss political situation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday held a meeting with leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khawaja Saad Rafique.

Khawaja Saad congratulated the prime minister on assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him.

During the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation in the country and matters of mutual interest.

Pakistan army remains strong threat despite economic issues: General Anil

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indian Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan said on Saturday that despite Pakistan's economic troubles, the country's army still remains very capable and is still a threat to India.

Speaking at the India Today Conclave 2024 in response to a question about Pakistan's defence in light of the problems facing its economy, General Chauhan said "full marks" should be given to the adversary.

"Pakistan may be in economic kind of turmoil and may be politically also slightly unstable, now they



have a proper government. But militarily there has been no denting in its capabilities actually," he said.

He went on to say that with its capabilities intact, Pakistan remains a threat to India.

"They retained their capabilities...

so, Pakistan remains a threat, you can't say that Pakistan armed forces will not remain a threat. Yes, there may be a challenge for them to fight a long war because of the current economic problems which they have. But they remain a threat for us," General Chauhan added.

The Indian general also added that India had two hostile neighbors who claim to have a friendship higher than Himalayas, in referring to China and Pakistan.

He also added that both of India's enemies are nuclear capable.

However, he called China a more immediate challenge compared to Pakistan.

Punjab Assembly to meet for mini-budget on Monday

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government would present a mini-budget for the next three months in the provincial assembly session on Monday.

According to the details, Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan will preside over the Punjab Assembly session.

Provincial Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shujaar Rehman will present the budget applicable from April to June 2024.

Pakistan 'assures' IMF of expediting privatisation programme

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan has assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of expediting the privatisation program, citing sources.

According to sources within

the finance ministry, the privatisation of Pakistan International Airline (PIA) is proceeding as per the plan and efforts are underway to complete the process soon.

Sources said that the federal government has also prepared a plan to privatise the power-sharing

companies. The other loss-making state-owned enterprises including First Women Bank, state life insurance, Pakistan Engineering Company are also on the list.

Sources revealed yesterday that Pakistan is likely to sign the

staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) next week.

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 adjustments will be slapped on consumers for cost recovery.

PTI activists involved in heinous campaign on social media: Tarar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar on Sunday strongly condemning heinous social media campaign against martyrs of North Waziristan terrorist attack and said that the anti-Pakistan elements backed by a political party would be brought to book.

"A political party having track record of social media campaigns against national institutions, had launched a heinous campaign against the martyrs of North Waziristan terrorist attack," the minister said while addressing a press conference here.

The minister said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was running a defamation campaign against the martyrs which was highly condemnable.

He said for the patriotic people of Pakistan, the country was above every thing and its solidarity and integrity should be above politics as every thing else was secondary.

"Sacrifices rendered by the martyrs are the guarantee of our safety and survival," Tarar maintained.

He said that there was no harm in political criticism but insulting and ridiculing the martyrs was not acceptable.



Urging the people to use social media in a responsible manner, he announced that accounts insulting martyrs would be identified and strict legal action will be taken against the culprits.

Castigating the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership he said those who used to shout slogans of American conspiracy for topping PTI regime in 2022 were sitting on the footpaths of that country and raising slogans against Pakistan.

Referring to Waziristan incident he said besides others, a 23-year-old Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badr, the only brother of five sisters was also martyred. He said one could imagine the feelings of his family when the body of the Shaheed was brought to his house.

"Our Armed Forces, police, security agencies and people have made great sacrifices in the war against terrorism," the minister said adding it was because of their sacrifices that this country was safe and the nation stood with the families of the martyred.

AJK president calls for concerted efforts to foil India's nefarious designs in Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that concerted efforts were required to foil India's nefarious designs in the region. While addressing Iftar dinner hosted in his honour by the people of Mirpur, the president said that the public liaison drive that has been formally launched from Mirpur was aimed at exposing the atrocities being committed by the Indian occupation forces against Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir and to highlight the Kashmir cause at the international level and freedom. He said that Modi was trying to use Kashmir as a trump card to ensure his party win in the upcoming general elections. Referring to the deteriorating situation in Occupied Kashmir, he said that under the given



circumstances, it was the responsibility of every Kashmiri to play his or her full role to make the Kashmir's ongoing freedom movement a success.

The president said that he has no disagreement with anyone. "Earlier, I had united all the political leadership of the state on one platform on the cause of Kashmir", he said, adding that he wished that all the political parties should join their hands and

work together to advance the Kashmir issue. He said that after abrogation of article 370 by the Modi government, the role and responsibilities of the Kashmiri on this side of line control have increased manifold. He said that there has been an immense increase in the incidents of bloodshed and violence in restive region. Modi's fascist government, he said, has applied all means of oppression and brutality to suppress the freedom-spirit of the Kashmiri people. "But despite using its repressive state apparatus India has miserably failed to crush the Kashmiris' passion and their urge for freedom of their motherland", he said.

He said that overseas Kashmiris should also play their due role to promote the Kashmir cause at the international level and expose India's ugly face before the world. Barrister

Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry further said that all the problems of Mirpur will be solved on priority basis. "The issue of Rathoa Haryam Bridge will be resolved soon", he said, adding that efforts were afoot to improve road infrastructure in the lake view city. In order to curb the growing unemployment, he said that employment opportunities would be provided to educated youth on the basis of merit. Earlier, the people of Mirpur accorded a warm welcomed to the president on his arrival to the Jinnah Stadium. The Iftar dinner was also attended and addressed by Minister for Housing and Physical Planning Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Minister for Energy and Water Resources Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Member Legislative Assembly Sabiha Siddique and Director General MDHA Chaudhry Muhammad Mansha and several others.

At least 160,000 Bags Have Been Distributed in Nigheban Ramadan package: DC Multan



Mustansar Shah Nawaz / Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: Chairman Chief Minister Monitoring Committee Salman Naeem and Deputy Commissioner Capt Retd Rizwan Qadeer visited Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh Ramzan Bazaar. On this occasion MPA Salman Naeem and Deputy Commissioner checked the prices and quality of food items. Rizwan Qadir on supply of flour and sugar Also gave a briefing

Chairman Chief Minister Punjab Monitoring Committee Salman Naeem said that the Chief Minister of Punjab has given a unique Ramadan package across the province, while there is no example in the past of providing ration to more than 3 lakh 37 thousand poor people. Salman Naeem said that the district administration has On public demand, the supply of cheap flour has been started On this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that historic subsidy is being given on more than 13 items at the Fair Price Shop. More than 160,000 bags have been distributed in Nigheban Ramadan package. District Supplying cheap flour and sugar in Ramadan Bazaar is a priority by the administration. A large number of citizens have come to Ramadan Bazaar to buy cheap food items and people have also expressed their satisfaction with the facilities in Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh Stadium Multan Ramadan Bazaar. Rizwan Qadir added. Record subsidy on 13 food items at Fair Price Shop. Later Deputy Commissioner and MPA Salman Naeem met the citizens and inquired about the problems

Need attention

KARACHI: A view a accumulated water on road in Garden Headquarters area of provincial capital.



Photo: Online

DC Bahawalpur Surprise Visit at Fruit and Vegetable Market



Ch Nabeel Shakir

BAHAWALPUR: Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa paid a surprise visit to Vegetable and Fruit Market Bahawalpur early in the morning. He monitored the auction of fruits and vegetables in the Vegetable and Fruit Market. To be sold as per the rates fixed by and the price lists also prominent places should be displayed so that the customers do not face any problem while shopping. He said that the availability of vegetables and fruits in abundance should be ensured. He told the traders present on the spot that overcharging in the sale of vegetables and fruits will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He directed the officers of the market committee to take legal action against the violators of the fixed prices. On this occasion, the secretary of the market committee Maher Ladab Hussain, deputy director of livestock Muhammad Mujahid Abbas and the staff of the market committee were present.

Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference chief strongly condemns North Waziristan attack

Abdul Majeed Tahir



JEDDAH: Former premier AJK and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan strongly condemned the suicide attack on the check post by terrorists in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan and paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army. Presenting the high standards, he prayed for patience for bereaved family. He condemned the incident as a cowardly act and expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of the officers and men of the security forces. He said that the soldiers of the security forces crushed the evil intentions of the terrorists. The entire nation is proud of the martyred soldiers who sacrificed their lives for noble goals.

Overseas Kashmiris 'pioneer' for Kashmir cause: PM

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Minister for Communications Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq called on prime minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq here today. The delegation was comprised of Counsellor Sandoval Council UK Khayyam Naseem Kayani and former President Bar Association Dadyal Nadeem Kayani Advocate, whereas Hamad Nadeem Kayani Advocate and Nauman Nadeem Kayani were also present on this occasion. While congratulating Mr.



Kayani on being elected as a councillor, Prime Minister Haq said, "Kashmiris living abroad are a source of pride for us". He said that besides contributing in the development of Azad Kashmir by sending remittances back home, the expatriate community was also playing their full role in British poli-

tics. He said that the overseas Kashmiris have also played a vital role in highlighting the Kashmir issue in Britain and other parts of the world. The prime minister said that promoting Kashmir cause both at national and international level was the first and foremost priority of his government. He said that all

available resources would be utilized to strengthen the ongoing freedom struggle in the occupied Kashmir. The participants of the delegation, on the occasion, appreciated the Prime Minister's efforts in highlighting the Kashmir issue and his initiatives to ensure good governance in the liberated territory.

Naseer Vohra pay tribute to martyred in North Waziristan

Abdul Majid



Central President Cloth Board Alliance Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra while condemning the terrorist attack in North Waziristan said that the entire nation pays tribute to the martyred and injured youths. We are proud of seven young men, including Lt. Col. and Captain, who laid down their lives at Mir Ali Check Post, but we wonder where the terrorists and extremists come from. They come and do such heinous acts by following the National Action Plan to destroy the hideouts of terrorists and their facilitators.

Pakistan Saraiki National Council Protest and Demonstration for Making the Saraikistan Province

Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Announce the action plan of the Sariki province. The first bill in the assembly should be from Saraiki province. If there is no progress for the establishment of Saraykistan province by Eid, they will call for protest. These views were expressed by Saraiki leaders while addressing a protest in Awan Chowk, Multan. The protestors blocked the road, show Solidarity to the Saraiki Province, fulfill the promise of the province, Making Saraikistan National Moment Protesters Shout Slogans. Province Bahawalpur, not Multan, the province is only Saraikistan, Takhte Lahore, Na Takhte Pashore, Doheen Chor Doheen Chor, Unapproved Unapproved Southern Punjab Province Unapproved, Teri Shan Meri Shan Saraikistan Saraikistan, Ghan ke Rahso Ghan Ke Rahso Saraiki Province Ghan Ke Rehso and



Wasib Give education, health, employment to the people, stop inflation and slavery of IMF, shame, show modesty, stop humiliating women in the name of flour, dead wind on electricity, gas bills were raised. From the protest demonstration, Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Council Zahoor Dharija, President of Pakistan Saraiki Party Malik Allah Nawaz Venus, Deputy Secretary General of Pakistan Saraiki Party Malik Javed Chanar Advocate, Senior Lawyer

Malik Naeem Iqbal Advocate, Leader of Saraikistan Qaumi Ittihad Sharif Khan Lashari, Saraikistan Democratic PartyK Malik Iqbal Nandla, Shoaib Nawaz Khan Baloch, Roshan Zameer Mahota, Anwar Mahota Advocate, Sharafat Abbas Advocate and others spoke.

Saraiki leaders said that they neither ask for a superior province nor will they accept an inferior one. Just like the other provinces, the establishment of the province of Saraykistan should

be implemented with the identification of Wasib and complete boundaries. He said that the Saraiki nation has its own homeland and we are demanding our usurped right in terms of history, culture and geography.

The action plan of the province should be given before Eid, otherwise they will start protest movement after Eid and sit in front of Punjab Assembly and National Assembly. In the protest, Abdul Razaq Rajput, Asif Nawaz Rajput, Maher Manwar Abbas Maitla, Malik Mushtaq Klasra, Rubina Bukhari, Afzal Ansari, Ayaz Mahmood Dharija, Afzal Ahmed, Baba Mumtaz Dharija, Aamir Awan, Ayesha Ansari, Malik Safdar Khokhar, Ramzan Khan Lashari, Safdar Khan Lashari, Malik Akhtar Carlo, Malik Safdar Klasra, Dr. Javed Baloch, Malik Zeeshan Klasra, Malik Yakub Vance, Malik Faheem Arain, Shoaib Vance and others were present.

All Pakistan Textile Mills Association demands urgent action for Faisalabad's economic recovery

Abdul Majid

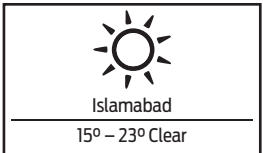
FAISALABAD: Chairman All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APPTMA) Hafiz Sheikh Muhammad Asghar Qadri has stressed the need to implement the government's economic policies and said that Faisalabad is a business and industrial hub, so the government will start the economic recovery from this city. He said that there is a need for basic reforms by making local government institutions active and increasing their role in national development. He said that the problems of Faisalabad are becoming very complicated with the passage of time. Roads are dilapidated, street lights and other civic amenities are lacking, parks are falling into disrepair, encroachment is rampant in front of educational institutions, while due to lack of local transport, laborers and daily wage earners are forced to pay heavy rent. While the rapidly increasing incidents are a cause for concern due to which the problems of the common citizen including the business community have increased. He said that all political parties have to work together. He said that few people control the resources.



PIA fined after air hostess reaches Canada without passport

PPA

KARACHI: The Pakistan International Airline (PIA) was slapped with a heavy fine after its air hostess reached Canada without a passport. Sources told that the air hostess was assigned to duty on flight PK-781 from Islamabad to Toronto when the unprecedented incident unfolded. The air hostess traveled from Islamabad to Toronto relying solely on PIA General Declaration documents, avoiding the standard passport requirement. Following the breach, the national carrier was slapped with a hefty fine for allowing flight attendants to arrive in Canada without proper documentation. In a statement, the PIA spokesperson confirmed that the carrier has been fined \$250 for the incident, underscoring the seriousness of the violation. However, it denied reports suggesting that the air hostess intended to seek political asylum upon landing in Canada.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:52 am
Zohr	12:16 pm
Asr	4:34 pm
Maghrib	6:17 pm
Isha	7:40 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
Cannt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Nationwide Franchise of Islamabad Career College restored



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Nationwide connectivity has been restored and intensified for the Nationwide Franchise of Islamabad Career College. Director General Career Group of Institutions Professor Muhammad Amir informed the details of the ICC franchise documents and agreement in meetings and discussions with the dignitaries interested in the establishment of ICC in Faisalabad, Okara, Lahore and Islamabad. He said that they are making concrete plans to expand the scope of Islamabad Career College in the country. Monitoring of ICC branches across the country will be under the auspices of a central system. The administration will set up an effective system of training for teachers and students.

Jamaat-e-Islami demands end of Dako raj in unpaved areas

Special correspondent

SADIQABAD: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq has said that the people are not safe in both unpaved and unpaved places. They want the end of those who do it. The government should take practical steps to end Dako raj, expressing condolences to the families of the martyrs of the army in Mir Ali, the campaign of insulting the martyrs on social media is condemnable and shameful, he expressed these views in Sadiqabad Tehsil of Rahim Yar Khan. Jamaat-e-Islami and Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan martyred Worker Ahsan Farooq's funeral prayer and talking to the media. On this occasion, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Sadiqabad Mian Riaz Qadeer Siddiqui and former candidate National Assembly Constituency NA-174 Qari Saeed Ahmed were also present.

Amir Jamaat said that dacoits regularly upload their videos and messages on social media, the whole area has been made hostage, daily incidents happen in

Sindh and Punjab. I will appeal to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Army Chief, Inspector General of Police Punjab and the Punjab government that the names of those who have kidnapped are listed in the FIR, their homes and whereabouts are known, you have a ship, there are helicopters, tanks, cannons, rockets, everything is there, I say to the government of Pakistan that if you consider yourself responsible, then take practical steps to end this daco raj. In the past few days, the caretaker government has spent billions of rupees and created a drama, that we conducted an operation and the dakoraj ended, but after the operation, they have more power. have re-emerged with, these people are active all over Sindh, active in Punjab, incidents happen every day, so I warn the government that if these robbers are not arrested, the murderers are not punished and the cruel, oppressive and savage beasts that are present in the forests of Kacha are not wiped out. So will give a big call of protest



Sirajul Haque said that Ahsan Farooq and Shehzad were kidnapped on March 5. From March 5 to last day, the families of the two abductees were in constant contact with the government and local

political leaders. But she went to the robbers while sitting in the Koran, but these two young men Martyred by robbers with great brutality, they were taken in a boat to Markar river, when the sisters put

their dupatta at the feet of the robbers, they said that we have killed them, now look for their bodies in the water. Among them, the body of Ahsan Farooq was found, but the other one is still not found.

Iftar

ISLAMABAD: Residents of Islamabad breaking their fast at Faisal Mosque in the Federal Capital.

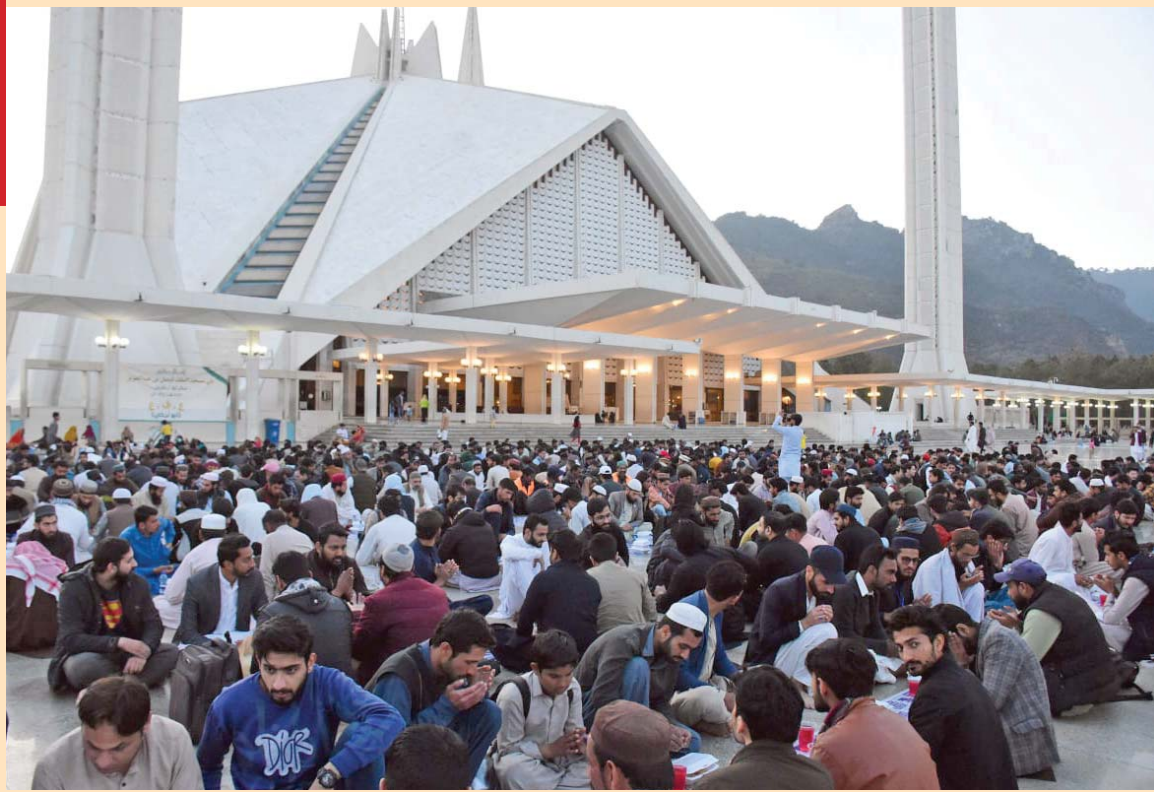


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PTI was wrong to think ex-spymaster supported it, says Sher Afzal Marwat

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: In an interview with Mubasher Lucman, he alleged that the former Inter-Services Intelligence director general distracted the PTI leaders when the party was in power by pretending to be "one of them."

In the past, rivals of Imran Khan's party have accused him of getting the support of Gen (ret'd) Faiz when he was in power. The-then opposition leaders described the PTI as "Faizib" about how they won Senate elections and ran the government.

But the ex-spymaster has denied allegations related to the ouster of Khan from power and his involvement in the constitution of the Islamabad High Court benches.

Marwat's statement was made about the alleged indecent videos of former PTI leaders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, claiming that the party found that videos were purportedly made when Gen (ret'd) Faiz was the ISI chief.

The conversation started when the PTI MNA said that Khan did not think Pervez Khattai, Mahmood Khan, Asad Umar, and Fawad Chaudhry would quit the party. "Maybe Khan Sb will never forgive these people. If they had remained steadfast [in their determination to be with party], our party would not have been dismantled."

But Lucman countered, saying they would have refused as purported videos of some of the leaders leaked and some were proven



corrupt. "They were supposed to leave within a second."

Marwat agreed with the host's argument and said it was true. "I confirm that there were evidence and videos of most leaders who left us. They were blackmailed and they gave in to the pressure."

He went on to claim that some of them prioritised joining another party to save their family relations. "Interesting-

ly, all these videos were made when the PTI was in power and Faiz Sahab was involved in it."

When the host tried to confirm whether he meant "General Faiz Hameed", he replied in affirmative.

In response to a query, the PTI lawmaker stated that former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar was not a PTI leader and there would not be any leader who would want him to be a leader. "He [Buzdar] was a 'fill in the blanks'."

Marwat, known for his outspoken demeanour, cited that former president Arif Alvi had lost Khan's trust and claimed that Sadiq Sanjrani's tenure as acting president was not favourable for the PTI.

Land dispute between North Waziristan & Orakzai, two tribes agreed to a ceasefire

Adam Khan Wazir



WANA: Successful Jirga of AC Mir Ali Subdivision & Upper Orakzai with the Misri Khel (North Waziristan) & Biland Khel (Orakzai) in the presence of neutral mediators at Tauda China CP on Yesterday.

Two days ago an incident injured in a conflict at disputed area near Tauda China CP Shewa, as per the direction of District Administration North Waziristan & Upper Orakzai, The Assistant Commissioner Mir Ali Subdivision Dr. Sadiq Ali and AC Upper Orakzai Imtiaz Ali Shah along with Tehsildar Shewa Mr. Kashif and DSP & SHOs of concerned districts held Jirga with the elders of Misri Khel and Biland Khel at Tauda China regarding Maintenance of Peace time (03 Months), ceasefire and No Construction at the disputed area.

After due deliberation, The new construction done yesterday was demolished via mediators with consent of both the tribes as a goodwill gesture for peace and incident occurred yesterday.

Any Kind of Violation of this peace agreement shall be reported to concerned district administration and police and strict action shall be dealt as per law against the culprits.

Next Jirga with both the tribes in consultation with the District Administration of both North Waziristan & Upper Orakzai has been scheduled to be held on 30th April, 2024.

Pictorial evidence of the Jirga and written agreement duly signed by the elders of both the tribes and countersigned by AC Mir Ali Subdivision Dr. Sadiq Ali & Upper Orakzai Mr. Imtiaz Ali Shah, attached for ready reference.

Saudi Arabia gifts tons of luxury dates to Pakistan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, through the religious attaché of the Saudi Embassy in Pakistan, launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Gift Program to distribute luxury dates in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

The event took place at the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad in the presence of the Saudi Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki and the religious attaché in Pakistan, Yahya Sufiani, Saudi Press Agency reported.

"These gifts symbolize the bonds of brotherhood and goodwill between the people of Saudi Arabia, its government, and its wise leadership, and the people of Pakistan," the Saudi ambassador said.

Dates are a core component of every iftar meal in Pakistan in keeping with traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Roof of a room collapsed in Wana area, raghzai, 6 people died, 10 injured

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: At that time, the roof of the room collapsed in raghzai area of birmal Tehsil of District South Waziristan Lower.

When the family was sitting in the living room after finishing Iftar, This incident took place in the house of a person named Afsar Khan in Raghzai area, 20 km away from Wana, the headquarter of Lower Waziristan district.

Eyewitnesses say that people pulled people out from under the rubble with their help and however, later the rescue operation team and the police reached the spot.

But before that, the people buried under the roof of the room were sent to Sheikhia Fatima Hospital Sholam and District Headquarter Hospital Wana in private vehicles.

Afsar Khan, the head of the family, died on the spot, while five others died on the way.

The deceased includes the head of the family Afsar Khan, Din Shifa, Ajwa bibi, Sultan, Naseema bibi and Halima bibi.

Among the injured are Noor Ayaz, Ahmed Ali, Abdullah, Asma bibi, Nakhmeena bibi, Shana bibi, Aqal Meena bibi, Rehmeta bibi, Tariq Khan and Amirullah.

PIDE's Bold Vision for Commercial Partnerships and Enhanced Revenue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a pioneering move, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), a Premier National Think Tank, has made public its investigative report titled "GORs Everywhere: University Land For Public Housing." Authored by Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), M. Jehangir Khan, and Iram Nadeem, this study embarks on a critical analysis of the conventional utilization of university lands, predominantly allocated for housing within educational institutions' premises. It advances a transformative outlook proposing the alloca-



tion of these tracts for commercial endeavours through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), aiming at amplifying universities' revenue streams whilst augmenting local economies and societal well-being. According to the Press

Release issued from the PIDE, Islamabad office, the report states that Universities globally have evolved from their traditional roles to become contemporary, business-oriented centres of education and research, enjoying greater

autonomy and financial independence. This shift comes as higher education faces the dual challenges of growth and sustainability, prompted by the scarcity of tax dollars and diminishing societal support. In response, institutions are increasingly adopting entrepreneurial approaches, including self-promotion, forging partnerships, and embracing technological innovations, to thrive in the knowledge economy and align themselves as competitive entities in both domestic and international arenas.

In Pakistan, universities confront similar financial challenges and debates over resource allocation, particularly concerning the construction of housing colonies on campus lands. Such practices are criticized for squandering valuable assets that could be more strategically utilized to enhance the institutions' financial viability and fulfil their educational missions more effectively. PIDE's call to action targets a broad audience, including policymakers, educational institutions, and the private sector, urging them to deliberate on the study's findings and recommendations. By embracing these innovative land-use strategies, Pakistani universities stand on the brink of achieving financial independence, reducing their reliance on government funding, and significantly contributing to the country's economic growth and social development.

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Indian Elections and so-called Secularism - I

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a prominent political entity in India, has come under scrutiny for its alleged involvement in incidents perceived as discriminatory or antagonistic towards minority communities. These occurrences have ignited discussions regarding the party's commitment to secularism, religious tolerance, and inclusive governance. Despite the BJP frequently asserting its dedication to the well-being of all citizens, irrespective of their religious or cultural affiliations, its detractors point to several contentious events as indicative of a different reality.

One significant example is the 2002 Gujarat riots, which transpired during the tenure of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, later to become India's Prime Minister. The riots, predominantly targeting Muslims, resulted in widespread violence, loss of lives, and mass displacement. The state government, led by the BJP, faced accusations of failing to prevent the violence and of being complicit in the assaults on minority communities. These riots continue to cast a shadow over Modi's political legacy and raise doubts about the BJP's professed commitment to minority rights.

Another contentious event is the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots in Uttar Pradesh, where clashes between Hindu and Muslim communities led to numerous fatalities and the displacement of thousands. The BJP's purported role in exacerbating communal tensions preceding the riots has been intensely scrutinized,

with critics alleging the party's utilization of divisive rhetoric and identity politics to polarize voters along religious lines for electoral advantage. Political adversaries of the BJP have questioned its dedication to promoting communal harmony and religious coexistence.

In recent years, cow vigilantism has emerged as a focal point for communal tensions in India. Vigilante groups, claiming to safeguard cows, revered in Hinduism, have been implicated in numerous attacks on individuals, primarily Muslims and Dalits, suspected of slaughtering or consuming beef. Despite the BJP condemning vigilantism, its ideological alignment with cow protection has emboldened such groups and fostered an environment of impunity. The inefficiency of law enforcement agencies in curtailing cow vigilantism has heightened apprehensions regarding the safety and rights of minority communities.

Moreover, the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019 sparked nationwide protests and controversy due to its perceived discriminatory nature. The CAA offers an expedited pathway to Indian citizenship for undocumented migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, while excluding Muslims from its scope. This legislation contravenes the secular principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution

and discriminates against Muslim immigrants, undermining India's commitment to religious pluralism and equal treatment under the law. Its implementation has raised apprehensions about the marginalization and exclusion of Muslim communities.

The inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya stands as a pivotal moment in India's socio-political landscape, symbolizing the resolution of a protracted legal and ideological dispute over the site believed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram. While celebrated by many as a testament to religious fulfillment and national unity, the timing of the inauguration, amidst ongoing political developments and preceding crucial state elections, has sparked discussions regarding its underlying motivations and electoral ramifications.

The BJP is actively involved in several initiatives aimed at appealing to the Hindu majority voters. The Ram Temple has long been a focal point of Hindu nationalist aspirations, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological allies advocating for its construction as a symbol of Hindu pride and identity. The Supreme Court's historic verdict in November 2019, which granted the disputed site to Hindu litigants for the temple's construction, was celebrated as a victory by supporters of the temple movement, including the BJP. However, the timing of the inauguration

ceremony on August 5, 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and ahead of elections in Bihar and other states, has led to speculation regarding its political motivations.

The BJP's decision to prioritize the inauguration of the Ram Temple during the pandemic and electoral campaigns is seen as a calculated political move aimed at mobilizing its Hindu nationalist base and consolidating support before crucial elections. By aligning itself with a deeply revered religious cause, the party aims to appeal to voters' religious sentiments and rally support, thereby bolstering its electoral prospects. Additionally, the symbolism of the temple inauguration, fulfilling a longstanding promise, reinforces the BJP's narrative as a champion of Hindu interests and aspirations, further solidifying its appeal among its core supporters.

Moreover, the timing of the temple inauguration is viewed within the context of the BJP's broader political agenda, which includes promoting a robust form of Hindu nationalism and asserting its dominance in India's political arena. The temple inauguration serves as a powerful symbol of the BJP's ideological agenda, which prioritizes Hindu identity and cultural nationalism while marginalizing minority communities and dissenting voices. By highlighting the temple inauguration as a pivotal milestone in its governance agenda, the BJP aims to project an image of resolute leadership and ideological consistency, setting itself apart from its political adversaries.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Israel prepares return to ceasefire talks; UN says Gaza hunger crisis worsens

The main U. N. aid agency operating in Gaza said on Saturday that acute malnutrition was accelerating in the north of the Palestinian enclave as Israel prepared to send a delegation to Qatar for new ceasefire talks on a hostage deal with Hamas.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said one in three children under the age of two in northern Gaza is now acutely malnourished, putting more pressure on Israel over the looming famine.

On Friday, Israel said it would send a delegation to Qatar for more talks with mediators after its enemy Hamas presented a new proposal for a ceasefire with an exchange of hostages and prisoners.

The delegation will be led by the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, David Barnea, a source familiar with the talks said, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeking to convene his security cabinet to discuss the proposal before the talks start. Netanyahu's office has said the latest Hamas offer was still based on "unrealistic demands."

Efforts failed to secure a temporary ceasefire before Islam's holy month of Ramadan started a week ago, and Israel said on Friday it planned a new offensive against an Hamas stronghold in Rafah, the last relatively safe city in Gaza after five months of war.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, starting a visit to the region, voiced concern about an assault on Rafah, saying there was a danger it would result "in many terrible civilian casualties".

On Friday, Netanyahu's office said he had approved an attack plan on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are sheltering, and that the civilian population would be evacuated. It gave no time frame and there was no sign of imminent preparations on the ground.

The Hamas offer, reviewed by Reuters, foresees dozens of Israeli hostages freed in return for hundreds of Palestinians in Israeli jails during a weeks-long ceasefire that would let more aid into Gaza. Hamas also called for talks in a later stage on ending the war, but Israel has said it is only willing to negotiate a temporary truce.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told Al Jazeera the group's proposal is so realistic that "no one can object to it" and claimed mediators had reacted positively.

He said it consists of two stages, with a complete "cessation of aggression" at the start of the second one - something Israel has rejected, vowing to resume its goal of destroying Hamas once any truce expires.

Families of Israeli hostages and their supporters again gathered in Tel Aviv, urging a deal for their release.

At the same time, anti-government protesters, estimated by Israeli media at a few thousand, called for new elections and blocked streets in Tel Aviv.



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

How Can the US Justify Ban on Tik-Tok? - I

The seemingly invincible global leader, champion of democracy and media freedom, and a beacon of technological innovation, the USA finds itself facing an unexpected threat not from rival armed forces or cutting-edge inventions, but from an unlikely source: Tik Tok. This seemingly harmless app, devoid of political, religious, or violent content, has captured the hearts of users across all age groups. With its short, light-hearted videos, Tik Tok has become a source of joy, excitement, and healthy competition for millions worldwide.

The recent vote in the US House of Representatives targeting the Chinese social media platform Tik Tok on March 13 is not only disconcerting but also disheartening and, quite frankly, concerning. It's particularly perplexing coming from a country that prides itself on being the torchbearer of democracy and constantly lectures the world on the importance of press and media freedom. This sudden shift in stance, where a purely apolitical and harmless social media application like Tik Tok is deemed a threat to national security, political integrity, and cultural values, stands in stark contrast to the unabated support for US-based social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

On the contrary, the United States has expressed deep concern over recent reports of internet slowdown in Pakistan, highlighting the indispensable role of a free and open internet in fostering economic growth, facilitating education, and enabling effective communication.

It has urged Pakistan to intensify efforts in investing in infrastructure to meet the escalating demands of the digital age and unequivocally

condemned any cyberattacks aimed at disrupting internet access.

Furthermore, the US has called upon governments worldwide to refrain from actions that impede internet freedom, emphasizing its pivotal role in safeguarding democracy. It has underscored the adverse impact of such disruptions on business and education, emphasizing the urgent need for swift action to restore normalcy.

While the USA has been advocating for freedom and openness in media and technology worldwide, it has taken a contradictory stance at home by moving to ban Tik Tok across the entire country.

This decision comes amidst claims that the harmless and relatively insignificant application poses a threat to US national security, undermining its values and even its military prowess. The move, led by both elected Republicans and

Democrats, reflects a significant departure from the country's image as a bastion of free enterprise. The legislative body's decision to pressure ByteDance, Tik Tok's parent company, into selling the app within 180 days or face removal from Apple and Google's app stores has raised concerns and garnered attention internationally.

By banning a social media website, the US is limiting individuals' ability to exercise their freedom of speech and expression on that platform. This action suppresses diverse viewpoints, stifles open discourse, and restricts access to information, all of which are fundamental to a healthy democracy.

This vote comes into direct confrontation with the first amendment passed by the US on December 15, 1791, as part of the Bill of Rights. During the American Revolution (1775-1783), the revolutionaries were motivated by princi-

ples of liberty, democracy, and individual rights. After the establishment of the United States as a sovereign nation, there was a growing concern among the Founding Fathers about the potential for abuse of governmental power and infringement upon individual liberties.

Accordingly, the First Amendment was drafted to address these concerns and to enshrine fundamental freedoms essential to a democratic society. It protects the freedom of speech, including the right to express opinions, ideas, and beliefs without censorship or government interference. This provision is fundamental to a democratic society, allowing for open discourse and the exchange of diverse viewpoints.

The First Amendment safeguards freedom of the press, ensuring that the media can operate independently and report on matters of public interest without fear of government reprisal. A free press plays a crucial role in holding the government accountable and informing the public.

While the bill passed by the congress but pending approval by the US Senate, the US social media activists, civil society organizations, pressure groups, and political parties are advocating in favor of tiktok and are engaging in coordinated efforts to oppose the ban.

Firstly, social media activists are leveraging their online platforms to raise awareness about the potential negative implications of the ban. They are mobilizing their followers to participate in online campaigns, petitions, and digital protests aimed at voicing their opposition to the proposed legislation.

These activists are utilizing the very social media platforms targeted by the ban to amplify their message, highlighting the importance of freedom of expression and the role of social media in facilitating public discourse and activism.

To be continued

Youth Deterioration in Pakistan: Unemployment, Inflation, and the Surge in Crime Rates I

In the socio-economic landscape of Pakistan, the youth population constitutes a significant segment, embodying the nation's potential for progress and prosperity. However, the unfortunate reality is that this demographic cohort is facing a myriad of challenges, primarily stemming from rampant unemployment and escalating inflation. These twin evils have cast a shadow over the prospects of the youth, leading to a deterioration in their well-being and contributing to a surge in crime rates across the country.

Unemployment, a Persistent Plague:

Pakistan has been grappling with the scourge of unemployment for decades, with the youth bearing the brunt of this crisis. According to data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 29 stood at a staggering 10.8% in 2020, representing a substantial portion of the total unemployed population. Moreover, the situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which further constrained job opportunities and exacerbated the plight of the youth.

Inflationary Pressures Amplify Economic Hardships:

Simultaneously, the relentless rise in inflation has added to the woes of the youth in Pakistan. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a key measure of inflation, has been on an upward trajectory in recent years, eroding the purchasing power of individuals, especially those belonging to low-

income households. The cost of essential commodities, including food, housing, and transportation, has soared, making it increasingly challenging for young people to make ends meet and achieve financial stability.

Social Ramifications:

Beyond its economic toll, youth deterioration engendered by unemployment and inflation has profound social ramifications, undermining the fabric of communities and eroding social cohesion. As young people grapple with diminished prospects and heightened stressors, including financial insecurity and social exclusion, the risk of mental health disorders and substance abuse escalates. Moreover, disenfranchised youth are more susceptible to radicalization and extremist ideologies, posing a threat to national security and stability.

Education and Skills Mismatch:

A critical dimension of the unemployment crisis among youth in Pakistan is the persistent mismatch between the skills possessed by young individuals and the demands of the labor market. Despite an expanding pool of educated youth, many find themselves ill-equipped to meet the evolving needs of industries and sectors, leading to underemployment or outright joblessness. Bridging this gap requires a paradigm shift in education and training frameworks, with a renewed emphasis on technical and vocational education, as well as tailored skill development programs aligned with market demands.

To be continued



Analysis

Mustansar Shah Nawaz

Pak-Iran bilateral trade can be increased up to \$5b: Iranian envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam has said that due to strong economic and trade integration between Pakistan and Iran, bilateral trade can be increased up to \$5 billion a year in the coming few years.

There is a strong possibility of doubling the bilateral trade between the two countries through air, rail and maritime integration, which will prove to be a catalyst in regional and global trade as well, he said while addressing the business community in Islamabad.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan and Iran were geo-strategically very important countries located at the junction of

Middle East, South Asia and Central Asia. Therefore, the land and sea integration of both countries is of great importance in the world of Geo-economy, said a press release issued, he said.

The Iranian envoy said that in order to further improve transit trade between Pakistan and Iran, 12 border trade markets had been opened, in which 6 border markets had been completed and others are in progress, which would usher in a new era of economic integration in both countries.

He said that Gwadar and Chabahar were very important in maritime trade ties, so both countries should declare both ports as coastal sister ports so that mutual economic devel-

opment can be achieved jointly. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam said that both countries were members of major forums like Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ECO and D-8 in which it was very easy to work on common economic goals.

He said that both China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and BRI mega projects were extremely important for Pakistan and Iran, which can stabilize the economic relations between the two countries.

The Iranian envoy said that the two mega projects were not only in the interest of both countries and bilateral cooperation is of utmost importance, which can bring prosperity to the region.

He said that in the same way



North, South and Corridor and East, West were also very important in regional and global trade, which increases the possibility of connecting the global supply chain of both countries.

Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam said that the current volume of bilateral trade between the two countries was \$2.5 billion, which had been continuously increasing since last year, in which there was a potential of \$5 billion.

The Iranian Ambassador said that currently, Pakistan had a lot of trade potential in Iran in agriculture and industry and halal products, especially meat, which

Iran was already importing from different countries.

He said that tourism, agriculture and trade were extremely important in Pakistan and Iran, especially in religious tourism, there is a lot of potential in both countries and the government in Iran was providing ample facilities in this regard.

The Iranian Ambassador said, Pakistan and Iran have huge opportunities for cooperation in the knowledge economy, and there is a lot of potential in both countries, especially in science and technology.

He said despite of the international sanctions, Iran has made great progress in the field of science and technology, in which full cooperation with Pakistan can be increased. In

order to increase mutual cooperation between the business communities of Pakistan and Iran, both sides should participate in industrial exhibitions like the Trade and industrial exhibition being held in the city of Tehran in the coming April 2024, he expressed.

The business community from Pakistan, especially the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, should participate in the exhibition and increase mutual cooperation with the business community of Iran, he added.

The envoy said that about 120 businessmen have completed their registration in the trade and industrial exhibition in Tehran, which is expected to increase in the coming days.

Israeli PM Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah and its area in full defiance of int'l law

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once again affirmed his intention to expand the war of genocide and invade Rafah and its area, without mentioning a single word about any practical plan to protect more than 1.5 million Palestinians there, stressing that all international pressures will not prevent him from entering Rafah in a blatant challenge to the international community in general and to the American administration in particular with regard to international appeals and demands to protect civilians and secure their basic humanitarian needs.

While Netanyahu spoke about two paths of aggression against our people in the Gaza Strip, political and military, he did not speak a single political sentence. Rather, he arrogantly focused on the bloody military dimension to achieve the goals of his alleged war, which became clear throughout the 163 days



of the war that it was focused on Palestinian civilians and their killing. He pushed them to emigrate after turning the entire Gaza Strip into an uninhabitable area in the comprehensive sense of the word, as the world witnessed how Israel deliberately targeted civilians and created a real humanitarian catastrophe among their ranks with a culture and mentality of revenge and racism more than it focused on achieving the declared goals of the alleged war

through political means.

It seems that the Israeli government and its decision-making centers have been completely blind and no longer have anything to say politically and have chosen to complete the extermination of our people and displace them from their homeland under the pretext of (stopping the war means defeating Israel), which means Netanyahu's insistence on inflicting (defeat) on Palestinian civilians. And continuing the pressure on them to displace them after the entire Gaza Strip was destroyed, resulting daily in more martyrs, injured, wounded and missing people due to bombing, mass massacres, famine, the policy of thirst, deprivation of medicines and obstruction of the entry of aid into the Strip.

The Ministry affirms that Netanyahu's speech must increase the world's determination and boldness to stop war in all its forms, in victory for international law, the credibility of the United Nations, and human humanity.

Australia cancels temporary stay visas issued to Gaza refugees

News Desk

The authorities in Australia canceled at least 2,000 visas previously issued to Gazans who were trying to escape the war zone, Visa Guide reported on Sunday.

The Australian government has told the Palestinians that they never intended a genuine temporary stay in Australia, according to cancellation letters sent to some of the refugees.

The major U-turn by the Australian government has triggered an outcry as it continues to issue similar visas to Israeli citizens.

The Australian government issued 2,273 temporary visas (subclass 600) to Palestinians and 2,415 visitor visas were issued to individuals with Israeli citizenship between October 7, 2023 and February 6, 2024.

The temporary stay visa bars holders from working, education, or receiving health care in Australia.

The subclass 600 visas were issued to allow refugees to come to Australia with their families.

Advocates are pressing the federal Government for clarification regarding the cancellation of multiple visas for individuals trying to leave Gaza.

According to SBS News, a Palestinian woman received a visa cancellation notice as she was preparing to board a flight to Australia while in other cases, visas were cancelled en route to Australia.

Kuwait announces three-month amnesty for violators of residency laws



News Desk

KUWAIT: Kuwait has announced major relief measures for expatriates who have violated the country's residency law, GulfNews reported.

The country's authorities announced a three-month amnesty during which expatriates, who violated the residency laws, will be allowed to rectify their status or depart Kuwait without facing fines.

The amnesty will take effect on March 17 and will end on June 17. A maximum fine cap at 600 Kuwaiti dinar has been set for expatriates to regularise residency.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al Sabah announced the initiative.

The relief measures are likely to benefit over 120,000 expatriates who are in violation of Kuwait's residency law.

According to the amnesty, expatriates living in violation of the law will be allowed to settle any outstanding fines and regularise their residency status following the country's regulations.

They will also be allowed to leave the country via designated ports without penalties, having the option to re-enter Kuwait under new guidelines.

Meanwhile, individuals facing administrative or legal challenges were advised to contact the Directorate General of Residency Affairs to explore possible solutions within the legal framework.

Amnesty International wants govt clarification over X blockade

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: Amnesty International has urged the government to unblock X, formerly Twitter, in Pakistan and issue clarification and legal basis for the recent blocking of the platform.

"The suppression of digital platforms, especially when initiated without transparency, often lacks adherence to due legal process and thus, undermines Pakistan's international law commitments," the joint statement said, which was signed by 28 civil society organisations including Amnesty International.

The rights organisations expressed concern over the increasing instances of internet shutdowns and social media platform blocking.

"These actions not only infringe upon the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and access to information but also set a troubling precedent of throttling genuine political discourse including plurality of voices in the country," the statement added.

Terming the X outage an arbitrary action, they said that the prolonged and unannounced disruption of X since February 17, was a sobering illustration of growing digital censorship in the country.

Such actions not only silence diverse political voices, but also create an environment which contributes to the spread of misinformation.

The joint statement blasted the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) over its "complete silence", saying that the authority failed to furnish any reasons for its actions and exceeded its mandate to block an entire internet platform.

The organisations expressed dismay over the reports of throttling of virtual private networks (VPNs) amid continuous outage of X.

They urged the government to repeal Section 37 of PECA that enables censorship and allegedly violates Article 19 and Article 19-A.

Thai CG attends Iftar dinner

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Consul General of the Royal Thailand in Karachi Narut Soontarodon attended in an Iftar dinner hosted by Thai Airways in honour of top travel agents here at a local hotel.

Talking to media, Thai Consul General wished Pakistani Nation and the Muslims around the globe on commencement of their holy month of Ramadan.

Narut Soontarodon said Pakistani Nation has a rich Islamic values and it was his first experience to celebrate Ramazan in Pakistan and feel happy having Iftar with them.

The CG said there were 5% Muslim population living in Thailand and they have all rights to perform their religious activities.

Thai Airways Marketing manager Rashid Siddiqui said that Thai Airways International Public Company Limited has started its operations in Pakistan in April 1976 and has operated from Karachi.

At present we are operating 5 flights each from Karachi and Lahore and 4 flights from Islamabad, he said and added that Pakistan market is very important for business community,



leisure and meetings, incentives, seminars and exhibitions and other corporate activities. Thailand is most favourite destination for Pakistani travelers. In 2023, Bangkok was declared top visited destination in the World.

He said from April 2024 Thai Airways will increase one more flight from Lahore and total 6 flights in a week. We have plan to have 7 each flights from Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, he added.

Iftar Dinner was attended by Panutat Yodkhaew, Visa Consular, Arif Suleman, President Pak-Thai Friendship Association, Mobin Ansari, Asim Suleman and prominent personalities from Aviation Industries.

Pakistan embassy in Riyadh joins Green Initiative

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: The Pakistan embassy in Riyadh recently organized a plantation drive in Thadiq National Park, 120 kilometres northwest of the capital. Embassy officers and staff, as well as their families, planted more than 100 saplings to contribute to the Kingdom's efforts in protecting its environment. Pakistan embassy in Riyadh joins Green Initiative

The campaign, led by Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq, was organized in collaboration with the Kingdom's National Center for Vegetation Cover Development. Students from the Pakistan International School Riyadh and Pakistan International School English Section Riyadh also took part in the plantation drive.



Saudi Arabia has taken major strides in adopting environmentally friendly measures through its Middle East Green Initiative, a regional effort to mitigate the impact of climate change in the region, and the Saudi Green Initiative, which aims to reduce emissions and

increase afforestation.

Pakistan embassy in Riyadh joins Green Initiative

The embassy said that its endeavor not only underscored Pakistan's "unwavering commitment" to environmental preservation but also testified to Pakistan's solidarity with the Saudi and Middle East green initiatives, spearheaded by the Kingdom.

"Pakistan, recognizing the imperative of collective action in addressing environmental challenges, stands in solidarity with its Saudi counterparts in championing sustainable practices and fostering green technologies," the embassy added.

The embassy's plantation drive serves as a testament to this shared ethos, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and collaboration that unite the two nations.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

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

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

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

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

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	741.89	749.89
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.78	39.18
Danish Krone	40.92	41.32
Euro	303	306
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.8	917.8
Malaysian Ringgit	59.59	60.19
New Zealand \$	171.07	173.07
Norwegians Krone	26.67	26.97
Omani Riyal	724.62	732.62
Qatari Riyal	76.7	77.4
Saudi Riyal	74.05	74.5
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	27.27	27.57
Swiss Franc	315.8	318.3
Thai Bhat	7.79	7.94
U.A.E Dirham	75.8	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	356	359
US Dollar	278.8	281.5

Demand for dollars in the market should be balanced

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the demand for dollars in the market should remain balanced.

He said that a balanced exchange rate increases confidence in the market, which is very important.

He added that maintaining the dollar's value is necessary to maintain the current balance between imports and exports.

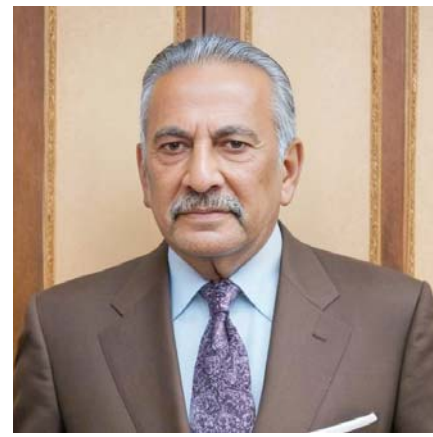
Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that a change in the value of the dollar affects the import and export sector, which disturbs the business environment.

The business leader noted that the exporters

get worried when the dollar becomes expensive. When the dollar becomes cheap, the imports start to increase, which causes the deficits to rise. Both these situations affect the business environment.

He said that the dollar's depreciation will increase the trade and current account deficit, which has been controlled with incredible difficulty. The seven-month current account deficit has been reduced to one billion dollars, and the federal government has to pay 24 billion dollars in debt servicing in the current fiscal year, so no risk can be taken.

He said that exporters are currently facing problems. They have to use the most expensive electricity in the region. Gas has become more costly by 300%, the interest rate for them is up to 25%, and fuel is also expensive.



The government had proposed to make elec-

tricity cheaper for the export sector, which the IMF rejected. In the current situation, finding another way to relieve the exporters has become necessary.

He said the government will likely sign the staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund next week, which will clear the way for Pakistan to receive the last tranche of \$1.1 billion under the SBA Agreement.

The government has assured the international lender of jacking up the electricity tariff from July 1, while monthly, quarterly, and yearly fuel adjustments will be slapped on consumers for cost recovery.

The IMF delegation stressed to continue to protect people registered in the BISP program and demanded to keep strict monetary policy and market exchange rate.

Iftar snacks

RAWALPINDI: People buying Iftar snacks from a shop on Murree Road in the city.



Photo: Online

Cutting interest rates will devalue rupee and raise inflation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Sunday that the business community's demand to reduce the interest rate is unjustified, as it will weaken the rupee and trigger inflation.

He said that increasing the interest rate cut would allow the government to start unnecessary expenditures that are not required at this point.

Murtaza Mughal said in a statement issued here today that electricity and gas prices have troubled the entire country. People are going bankrupt while factories are closing down.

Many factories are running at half their production capacity; therefore, the demand to reduce the electricity and gas tariff is justified, but getting approval from the IMF will be impossible.

He said that increasing the tax net, bringing the non-tax-paying sectors into the tax net, and amending the NFC award have become necessary to save the country.

Restructuring of local and foreign debt has also become necessary. Still, caution is needed in this regard so that it does not hurt the market, he cautioned.

Murtaza Mughal said the federal government is considering handing over



the electricity distribution companies to the provinces. How will the provinces run these companies when the federal government cannot run them?

It would be better to sell these companies because the private sector would run them efficiently. He noted that bill-paying consumers have to bear the burden of loss-making discos, which is tantamount to encouraging corruption and power theft.

The people of the same area should also bear the burden of losses caused by electricity theft, and not the people of other areas should be punished for the crime they never committed, he said.

Dr. Mughal said climate change has become routine; therefore, the entire process must be reset to address the issue.

Regrettably, throughout the past two or three election cycles, successive governments have paid little more than lip service to climate change and developed a coherent policy to mitigate its harmful effects.

The fact that provincial disaster management agencies are constantly behind the times despite having a full year and substantial funding to prepare for yearly rains is equally unacceptable.

When the civil machinery fails to clear roads and remove floodwater, as it does every time, the military is compelled to intervene and demonstrate the proper procedure.

We need an appropriate long-term and long-term plan, as Pakistan is among the top nations facing the most direct effects of climate change and global warming.

He said we need an appropriate short-term response mechanism for the annual rain overflow, adding that politicians must set aside their competing agendas and act in the nation's and its citizens' interests.

Everything that is occurring around us is completely expected. Unfortunately, none of it has gotten any attention because our political leaders have been too preoccupied with lust for power.

BMP asks govt to work on fast track plan to address expansive energy issue

PAA

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has asked the government to work on a fast track plan to address expansive energy issue and priority should be given to the value-added industry in this regard.

The FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that Pakistan's core issue is the high cost of doing business, which the government needed to bring down to bring the local as well as the export industry at par with global competitors.

The BMP Chairman urged for increasing ease of doing business, lowering cost of production, paying early refunds to solve liquidity

crunch, relaxing import policy for industrial raw material, and equalizing the energy tariff across the country.

He said Pakistan was at 147 out of 190 countries on the global ranking of doing business mainly due to bureaucratic hurdles. He said vari-

ous provincial departments, including EOBI, Social Security, Women Welfare, Environment, Women Welfare, Environment Department etc. were playing a negative role and treating the manufacturers and exporters like criminals.

The FPCCI former president called for giving a boost to the export sector by adopting diversified marketing techniques and extending practical support to the industry, and asked the exporters to prepare themselves for meeting the global challenges so that exports could be enhanced by fully exploiting new opportunities.

He also stressed the need for adopting new technology so that Pakistan's exports may be able to cope with the emerging challenges in international arena.

He urged the government to undertake thorough research and also brief the SMEs of the details of such challenges. He hoped that the government would help boost country's exports, while all the macro and micro issues of the trade and commerce should also be addressed.

'Non-filers to pay additional taxes on sale, purchase of plots'

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Non-filers are set to face additional taxes on sale and purchase of plots as the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of incorporating real estate sector into the tax framework.

In order to document the real estate sector, it has been proposed to use banking channel instead of cash transactions. Sources added that all records, including cutting and purchasing, of plots in housing societies will be registered.

A coordination report on taxation of the real estate sector in the Centre and provinces will be submitted to glob-

al lender. Moreover, data of property agents and sale and purchase of plots will be registered in Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), sources added.

Sources claimed that measures would be taken in the upcoming budget to end undocumented transactions in the real estate sector. Furthermore, proposals to levy tax on transactions of files in the property sector will be prepared.

Sources added that seven per cent withholding tax for non-filers and four per cent gain tax was currently imposed on sale and purchase of plots. Meanwhile, tax evasion was being carried out on sale and purchase of files due to lack of a mechanism.

LCCI Elections: Various markets, industrial bodies support PIAF



PNP

LAHORE: The various and traders and industrial associations, especially the paper market and Shah Alam Market, Young Traders Association, Beden Road and other markets, delegation visited the PIAF office to show their solidarity with the PIAF in the upcoming Lahore Chambers elections. The delegation from Paper Market Ganpat Road was led by APMA former chairman Khamis Saeed Butt while the delegation from Young Traders Association of Shah Alam Market was led by Shehzad Aslam

and the delegation from Baden Road was led by Tahir Hafeez.

On this occasion, the PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, Pattern-in-chief PIAF and Vice President of SAARC Chamber Mian Anjum Nisar, Senior Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian, Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President Lahore Chamber Zafar Mahmood Chaudhary and others welcomed the all delegations.

Addressing the delegations, Mian Anjum Nisar and PIAF Chairman Fahimur

Rehman Saigol said that PIAF is the largest representative party of the business community in the city and in the upcoming Lahore Chamber's elections, it would beat all expectations and achieve exemplary success.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol observed that in view of achieving economic growth through consistency in policies, the government will have to take solid measures to strengthen the trade and industry, especially the SMEs, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with the small businesses.

Modern designs, trends crucial for furniture industry: Mian Kashif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Modern designing and new trends in the furniture industry are essential for gaining a competitive edge, driving sales and profitability, enhancing brand image, embracing sustainability, leveraging technology, and expanding into international markets.



Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq stated this while talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs and furniture manufacturers led by Ms Nida Ejaz here on Sunday. He added that modern designing and new trends play a crucial role in the furniture industry. By embracing these trends, he said, the furniture manufacturers can thrive in a dynamic and evolving industry. "Modern furniture designs often incorporate technological advancements to provide enhanced functionality and convenience. Integration of features like smart furniture, wireless charging, and IT connectivity can make furniture more appealing to tech-savvy buyers," he observed. The PFC chief was of the view that keeping up with new design trends allows manufacturers to leverage technological innovations and offer products that align with the digital age.

He said latest design trends often emphasize sustainable and eco-friendly materials and manufacturing processes. With growing environmental awareness, customers are increasingly seeking furniture that is produced responsibly. By incorporating eco-friendly practices into their designs, furniture manufacturers can attract environmentally conscious consumers and contribute to a greener future, he added. Mian Kashif said that by staying updated with the latest design trends, furniture manufacturers can create products that resonate with buyers choice, leading to an increased sales and customer satisfaction. Furniture is a global industry, and design trends vary across different regions and cultures. By staying updated on international design trends, furniture manufacturers can expand their market reach and cater to diverse customer preferences worldwide.

Islamabad United qualifies for HBL PSL 9 final after defeating Zalmi

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Islamabad United qualified for the final of HBL PSL for the first time since 2018, on the back of a record seventh-wicket partnership between Imad Wasim and Haider Ali, as they beat Peshawar Zalmi by five wickets on Saturday night, at National Bank Stadium, Karachi in Eliminator Two. The final will be played on March 18 at the same venue.

Zalmi failed to defend their total of 185-5 as United batters overcame the early hiccup of being 50-4, and secured the berth in the HBL PSL 9 final, completing the target with an over to spare.

Islamabad United's pursuit of the 186-run target met with adversity as Saim, fresh off his batting heroics, struck twice with the new ball; Alex Hales chipped one straight to Mehran Mumtaz at cover while Salman Ali Agha was bamboozled with a fullish carrom ball that rattled his stumps. In the fourth over, Mehran knocked off Shadab Khan's off-stump to leave United 23-3.

Martin Guptill, having lost three

partners in the first four overs, teed off in the fifth as he hit Saim for 22 runs on the back of four boundaries and a six. Khurram Shahzad landed another blow for Zalmi on the last ball of the sixth over as he dismissed Guptill for 34 off 21 balls, laced with five boundaries and a solitary six, leaving United in dire straits at 50-4. Azam Khan and Imad Wasim got together to put up a 41-run fifth-wicket partnership injecting stability to United's innings. Luke Wood destroyed Azam's (22, 17b, 1x4, 1x6) stumps in the 11th over to leave United reeling with 95 required in nine overs. Haider Ali joined Imad in the middle and the duo took it upon themselves to stage the rescue act. Haider got going with two boundaries against Aamir in the 13th over, while he bludgeoned Arif Yaqoob for a six in 15th over. Aamir's 18th over, yielding 23, became the nail in the coffin for Zalmi as Imad hit a first-ball four followed by Haider hitting two towering sixes and a four. Haider smashed Wood for his fifth six in the 19th over while Imad hit the winning runs. Imad (59 not out, 40b, 9x4s) and Haider (52 not out, 29b, 2x4s, 5x6s)

added an unbeaten 98 for the seventh wicket, the highest in HBL PSL history, to take their side to the final. For Zalmi, Saim bagged two wickets while Wood, Mumtaz and Khurram picked up on each.

Earlier, Peshawar Zalmi made the most of the opportunity to bat first as Shadab opted to field after winning the toss. Babar Azam and Saim stitched a fiery 72-run opening partnership after Saim he muscled Naseem Shah for a maximum in the first over. In the following over, Obed McCoy found himself on the receiving end as the belligerent southpaw pummeled him for a six over fine leg and then followed it with two boundaries through cover and fine leg, respectively. Salman was employed to bowl the fourth over and gave away 13 runs. Then, Saim welcomed Faheem Ashraf in the sixth over with three boundaries capping off the powerplay with 59 on the board. Saim and Babar duo also became just the third opening pair, and the quickest, to score 1000 or more runs in HBL PSL history. Naseem returned to bowl the eighth over and dismissed Babar (25, 22b,



2x4s, 1x6) as skipper Shadab plucked a spectacular catch at mid-off. Babar also breached the 550-run mark in HBL PSL 9 for the second time in the history of the tournament, a feat that has only been achieved by Mohammad Rizwan twice, and Fakhar Zaman once. Mohammad Haris joined Saim in the middle and the pair contributed with a 59-run second-wicket partner-

ship. In the 10th over, Saim brought up his second HBL PSL 9 half-century in style with a maximum over long-off, taking 27 balls to do so. With Zalmi poised for a huge total after having notched 130-1 in 14 overs, Shadab brought his team back into the game with the vital scalp of Saim in the 15th over. Saim returned for 73 off 44, comprising six boundaries and four

maximums. In the following over, Naseem dismissed Haris who returned a crucial 40 off 25, on the back of three fours and two sixes.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore ransacked 17 runs off the 17th over while Rovman Powell fell for a paltry two off seven in the following over. Kohler-Cadmore's (18, 9b, 2x4s, 1x6) cameo was ended in the penultimate over by Naseem. Aamir (17 not out, 9b, 1x4, 1x6) stitched a handy unbeaten 25-run sixth-wicket partnership with Hussain Talat (8 not out, 4b, 1x4), playing his first HBL PSL 9 game, to help Zalmi post 185-5 in the allotted 20 overs.

Naseem registered a three-wicket haul while McCoy and Shadab bagged one wicket each.

Scores in brief: Islamabad United beat Peshawar Zalmi by five wickets

(Saim Ayub 73, Mohammad Haris 40, Babar Azam 25; Naseem Shah 3-30)

Islamabad United 189-5, 19 overs (Imad Wasim 59 not out, Haider Ali 52 not out, Martin Guptill 34; Saim Ayub 2-34)

Player of the match - Imad Wasim (Islamabad United).

Islamabad United, Multan Sultans set to battle for PSL 9 title

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Karachi's National Bank Stadium is set to host the HBL PSL 9 final on March 18th, wherein table-toppers Multan Sultans will meet Islamabad United to battle it out for the grand Orion Trophy.

The first ball is expected to be bowled at 9pm, while the toss will take place at 8:30pm.

Sultans, who qualified for the final after beating Peshawar Zalmi in the Qualifier, will be playing their fourth consecutive final. They were crowned champions in the 2021 edition and finished as runners-up in the subsequent two editions wherein Lahore Qalandars clinched two back-to-back titles.

After finishing third on the table, United beat Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi in the two eliminators to earn the coveted berth in the final. This will be two-time champions United's first final since 2018 - when they last won the HBL PSL title.

In the lead-up to the playoffs, Multan Sultans secured 14 points after winning seven out of their ten games. United finished with five wins, whereas their home game against Lahore Qalandars was washed out. As a result, United had 11 points, equalling with the fourth-placed Quetta Gladiators.

Multan's Mohammad Rizwan and Usman Khan are the second and third highest run-getters of the tournament



thus far, only behind Peshawar Zalmi's Babar Azam who ended HBL PSL 9 with 569 runs in 11 innings, including five half-centuries and one century.

Rizwan has accumulated 382 runs in as many innings, with four half-centuries. Usman, having appeared in only six games, has made 373 runs on the back of two centuries and a half-century.

Colin Munro, with 309 runs from nine games with three fifties, is the highest run-getter for Islamabad United. Islamabad's skipper Shadab Khan has also starred with the bat and ball alike this season; in 11 games, he has produced 301 runs, including three half-centuries, and taken 11 wickets.

Leader of the Sultans' spin attack,

Usama Mir, is the current leading wicket-taker of the tournament, holding the Inverex Fazal Mahmood Cap. He has 23 scalps in 11 games, including one six-wicket haul. His current tally of 23 is the best by any spinner in one edition of HBL PSL and is only two wickets behind Hasan Ali's record of 25 wickets, the most by any bowler in one edition, which has not been bested since 2019.

Sultans' right-arm pacer Mohammad Ali, playing his maiden HBL PSL tournament, has 18 wickets in 11 games, the most by any pacer in the tournament thus far.

Naseem Shah, who made his move to Islamabad United ahead of HBL PSL 9, has the most wickets for his team thus far. Assuming his role as the leader of Islama-

bad's bowling attack, the right-arm seamer has grabbed 15 wickets in 10 games.

Shadab Khan: "I'm proud of my team for standing tall in crucial situations and getting through to the final of HBL PSL after a long hiatus of five years. This is what we intended while assembling the squad and all the players have responded very well throughout the group stage as well as the playoffs. Islamabad winning the trophy for the third time will be a great achievement and I'm looking forward to whatever challenge Multan Sultans will pose in the final. Hopefully, our batters and bowlers will step up in a spirited manner as they have done throughout the season and will make us champions."

Mohammad Rizwan: "I am very proud of the way my team has played in this tournament. Our boys have displayed the true warrior spirit throughout the tournament. Whenever we found ourselves behind the opposition, our players stepped up through their bold and fearless approach.

"We have a solid team that has all the bases covered. Our locals, foreigners and emerging players have shone and produced some extraordinary performances. What further helps us is the fact that our team has gelled really well in the last few weeks.

"For tomorrow, we need to stick to our process. I am sure if our execution is perfect, the people of Multan and south Punjab will get a favourable result. InshaAllah!"

Peshawar Zalmi's dreams of reaching final for fifth time crushes

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: In the second eliminator of the 9th edition of the HBL-Pakistan Super League, Islamabad United crushed Peshawar Zalmi's dream of reaching the final for the fifth time thanks to an unbeaten partnership of 98 runs by Imad Wasim and Haider Ali.

In another sensational match of PSL, Islamabad qualified for the final of the event for the third time by claiming victory. Peshawar Zalmi was defeated by 5 wickets in Ely Monitor 2. Peshawar Zalmi's dream of playing the final for the fifth time in Karachi's National Bank Arena could not be fulfilled.

After a one-sided match in the first qualifier of (PSL), they defeated Peshawar Zalmi by 79 runs and reached the final. And so, under the leadership of Rizwan, the franchise won the honor of reaching the final for the fourth time in a row.

This is a new record as from the beginning of HBL-PSL-9th, Peshawar Zalmi's bowling looked weak and this bowling on wickets favorable for batting. The average remained the same. The bowling of Multan Sultans was the best in this HBL-Pakistan Super League's 9th edition.

The second place was the bowling of Islamabad United. Even in this match against Peshawar Zalmi, at one point Peshawar Zalmi was in a good position and it seemed that will cross the mark of 200, but due to Islamabad's best bowling, it was limited to 185 runs, which was not a difficult target on Karachi's good pitch.

On this occasion, Imad Wasim played a match-winning innings of 59 runs off 40 balls while Haider Ali scored a brilliant 52 runs off 29 balls. An unbeaten partnership of 98 runs and won the match by five wickets to reach the final for the third time.

Islamabad had a disappointing start and the first three wickets fell for 21 runs



with Alex Hales one, Agha Salman five and Shadab Khan bowled out on no score and returned to the pavilion. Martin Guptill scored 34 runs and Azam Khan got out with 22 runs. After that, Imad Wasim and Haider Ali played an unbeaten aggressive innings and played an important role in the team's victory. Saim Ayub got two wickets for 34 runs.

Earlier, Peshawar Zalmi, batting first, scored 185 runs for the loss of 5 wickets in the stipulated overs and set Islamabad United a target of 186 runs to win. Saim Ayub played a brilliant innings of 73 runs, 6 in his innings. Fours and four sixes were included. The team of Peshawar Zalmi made three changes Hussain Talat, Arif Yaqoob and Khurram Shahzad were given a chance in the match.

Peshawar Zalmi scored his fifty runs in 5.2 overs without any loss and the whole ground was echoing with Babar's voice. Naseem Shah dismissed Babar Azam wherein Shadab took a brilliant catch and brought the team back into the match.

Naseem Shah's spell proved decisive as he did not allow the 200 mark to be crossed and then, in favorable batting conditions, Peshawar fell well short of a tight total. Mohammad Haris, who was

constantly unsuccessful, put up some resistance and played an innings of 40 runs. Apart from them, Babar Azam scored 25 runs, Tom Kohler Cadmore scored 18 runs and Romain Powell scored 2 runs. Naseem Shah dismissed three players for Islamabad.

PSL 9's Haneef Muhammad cap has fallen to Babar Azam. He has scored 569 runs in 11 matches. The best innings was 111 runs. He scored five half-centuries and one century during this time. He is the closest batsman to Babar Azam. In international matches, his opening partner Mohammad Rizwan has scored 381 runs.

Mohammad Rizwan has scored four half-centuries. Multan Sultans' Mohammad Usman is third in this list who has scored 373 runs, which includes two centuries. His best innings was 106 runs. The fourth number is Dosan of Lahore Qalandar who scored 364 runs thanks to one century and three half-centuries. The best innings was 104 runs. The fifth number is Saim Ayub of Peshawar Zalmi who scored two half-centuries in eleven matches. He scored 345 runs with the help of half-centuries. In terms of sixes, Saem Ayub is on top this season with 21 scalps. In bowling, Usama Mir of Multan

Sultans, who dismissed 23 players, Mohammad Ali of Multan Sultans, who is in second place by taking 18 wickets.

On the third place is Abrar Ahmed of Quetta Gladiators who has dismissed sixteen players. In fourth place is Aqeel Hussain of Quetta who has taken 15 wickets. In fifth place is Naseem Shah of Islamabad. Shah also dismissed fifteen players with his fast balls.

The final of HBL-PSL 9 edition will be played between Multan Sultans and Islamabad United today at the National Stadium Karachi. The most popular team of Pakistan Super League, Peshawar Zalmi, defeated Quetta by 76 runs and reached the play-off stage for the 9th time. That is a unique record. In the last 8 seasons, Peshawar Zalmi reached the final four times. Apart from them, Multan Sultans also reached the final and equaled Peshawar Zalmi's record of four times. Islamabad, Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators three times. They have reached the final three times. Islamabad and Lahore Qalandars have won the Pakistan Super League title twice. Peshawar Zalmi, Quetta, Multan Sultans and Karachi Kings have reached this final once.

PFF names squad for FIFA World Cup Qualifiers

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) on Sunday named the final squad for the forthcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier Round 2 matches against Jordan, scheduled to be held here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex on March 21. The squad would then head to Jordan for an away game on March 26. The week-long camp scheduled for Lahore has now been relocated to Islamabad.

Pakistan Squad includes- Goalkeepers: Yousuf Butt (D), Saqib Hanif, Abdul Basit and Hassan Ali; Defenders: Easah Suliman (D), Abdullah Iqbal (D), Mamoon Musa, Haseeb Khan, Mohammad Saddam, Mohammad Sohail, Omer Rao, Mohammad Fazal (D) and Mohammad Adeel; Midfielders: Rahis Nabi (D), Harun Hamid (D), Alamgir Ghazi, Rajab Ali, Ali Uzair, Shayek Dost and Abdul Samad (D); Forwards: Fareed Ullah, Waleed Khan, Imran Kayani (D) and Adeel Younis

The Diaspora (D) players will join the squad on Monday.

'I want to know how players feel': Multan Sultans' coach Alex Hartley fasts during PSL 9



As Pakistan Super League season nine (PSL 9) nears its end with Multan Sultans and Islamabad United set to face each other in the final, it has come to light that Sultans' spin bowling coach Alex Hartley is also fasting like other members of the team during the holy month of Ramadan.

I want to know how players feel: Multan Sultans coach Alex Hartley fasts during PSL 9

Speaking to BBC 5 Live Sport, Hartley — a former English cricketer — confirmed that she is fasting as she wanted to understand what it's like for the rest of the team members and how they feel as they step into the field after fasting throughout the day.

"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 said.

Multan Sultans' coach Alex Hartley fasting during Ramadan. Furthermore, she shed light on the challenges she is facing in her daily routine due to fasting admitting that it is "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 4am and then we don't eat again till 6:40pm the next day. It is hard, so hard," she explained.

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

It is pertinent to know that Sultans became the first team to qualify for the final of the ninth edition of PSL after beating Babar Azam's Peshawar Zalmi in the Qualifier on March 14.

Mohammad Rizwan's men successfully chased down the 147-run target without much difficulty and qualified for their fourth consecutive final.

They will now take on the winner of the second eliminator which will be played between Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United in Karachi on Saturday.

Capability

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jets demonstrating different skills during rehearsal ahead of the Pakistan Day parade on 23rd March in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

CM Maryam announces three months remission in the punishment of prisoners

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has announced three months remission in the punishment of prisoners and release of 155 prisoners across the province. CM while addressing the iftar dinner ceremony organised in the Kot Lakhpat Jail stated that 155 prisoners are being released after paying a diyat amount of rupees 15 crore with the collaboration of philanthropists. A video call facility will be provided in all the jails of Punjab very soon. CM stated that she herself remembered the time spent during her period of imprisonment while coming to the Central Jail today. "I was imprisoned in the Death Cell Chakhi and faced a difficult time. My father was also imprisoned in the same Jail but was denied permission for meeting him. I used to meet my father once a week only.

Once I received a hand written



letter of my father which stated that he after being arrested is being taken to the NAB. Someone in the jail told me that your father is feeling unwell and is being taken to the hospital. It was a time of great difficulty." CM stated that she used to query as what wrong-

ful act she has committed for which she is kept in the jail and then used to sit on the praying mat. I used to wait for the appeal when I came to know that the Judge went on three weeks leave. I couldn't talk with my cancer patient mother in the Adiala Jail.

CM further directed to adopt a respectable and dignified practice for arranging a meeting of the prisoners with their family members. We want to bring reforms in the jails so as to make every prisoner a useful citizen of the society. We would let the prisoners to stand on their feet by imparting them various skills in the jails. 04 doctors will perform their duties in the Central Jail Hospital and an operation theatre is also available. I am pleased that the prisoners can keep their fast and spend Eid at home after the payment of their diyat.

It is prayed that improvements come about in the justice system so that no innocent can be put to unjust imprisonment. Former Senator Pervez Rasheed, Provincial Minister for Information & Culture Azma Bokhari, Chief Secretary, Secretary Home, Special Secretary Home, IG Prisons and other concerned officials also accompanied.

Banned TTP didn't want to face law for APS attack, says envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: One of the three reasons peace talks with the outlawed terrorist organisation Tehreek-i-Taliban failed in the past was the latter's unwillingness to face law for the crimes, including the attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, it committed, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan Asif Durrani said.

The other two reasons were that the banned group was neither ready to surrender, nor



swore allegiance to the Constitution of Pakistan, he said while speaking at a programme hosted by an Islamabad-based

Pakistan's interests and policy options' was another event in a series of discussions organised by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies.

In talks with the interim Afghan government, Durrani said that Pakistan had told them that they needed to make the banned outfit surrender, disarm the group, and detain its leadership.

The banned group had 5,000 to 6,000 militants in its cadres taking shelter in Afghanistan, he claimed and added that Pakistan has

"evidence that the TTP is getting money from India through Afghan proxies."

Afghanistan should be given an opportunity to make its own decisions, PTI-backed MNA Ali Muhammad Khan said at the event. He added that the country could help its neighbour in peace-building.

Former chief minister of Balochistan Abdul Malik Baloch spoke about parliamentary supremacy, saying that the solution of all economic, political and foreign policy problems only lied with Parliament.

'Stop the fire in Gaza': say Hollywood stars

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: 380 Hollywood stars wore a pin bearing "Stop the fire in Gaza" in a historic scene that we have never seen before in the capital of the film industry against this brutal attack.

But the most powerful event is the speech of the Jewish director Jonathan Glazer in the victory speech for his film about the events of the Holocaust in the terrible Auschwitz camp, where he said that our Judaism and the tragedy of the Holocaust were seized from a brutal regime and are being exploited in a massacre against humanity in Gaza, and I disavow that.

A historic and unprecedented shift in winning the hearts and minds of one of the biggest strongholds in shaping global public opinion

Dead chicken meat being used in Shawarma

Monitoring Desk

LAHORE: In a shocking development, it was revealed that dead chicken meat is being used in food items, particularly in Shawarma in Lahore.

Speaking in ARY News Programme Sham-e-Ramzan, Punjab Food Authority Director General Muhammad Asim Javed said that 80 Kilograms of expired meat had been seized from a market in Lahore during the operations in the last two days.

"Today (Sunday), 2500 Kg of expired meat has also been seized in a joint operation by the Punjab Food Authority and Food Department from a famous meat market located near Mughulpura," Muhammad Asim Javed said.

The director general of



the Punjab Food Authority described it as a serious problem in Lahore and stated that both dead animal meat and the one that reached its full expiration date have been confiscated.

He claimed that during the first Ramadan, the Punjab Food Authority found and confiscated 1,000 kg of beef

taken from dead animals.

Muhammad Asim Javed said that the Punjab Food Authority carried out 1800 raids over the previous two months, seizing about 20,000 kg of expired or dead chicken meat.

The Punjab Food Authority Director General further stated that in the previous two

and a half months, 70,000 kg of expired or dead animals' meat had been seized.

He said that meat safety teams comprising veterinary doctors and food safety officers conduct operations and surveys in the markets regularly to ensure the provision of hygienic meat to the citizens.

Elements behind campaign against martyrs to face stern action: Attaullah Tarar

City Desk

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday the government was fully aware of the challenges facing the country and steps were required to tackle economic problems.

Addressing a press conference here at the PML-N Secretariat, he said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had shared his agenda aimed at stabilizing the country's economy.

He said the Premier had taken up all matters seriously, including reducing government expenses, privatisation of certain state-owned entities. "Restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue and tax reforms are major initiatives the government is undertaking to increase the tax net. All these measures are being taken to reduce the burden on poor people and to bring elites in the tax net," he maintained.

He said that international economic journals like Bloomberg had termed the appointment of the Finance Minister a good step, adding that international journals had acknowledged that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had a potential to overcome economic challenges through reforms.

He said: "Political stability leads to economic stability and sincere efforts are being made in this regard."

He strongly condemned the terror-



ist attack in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, in which seven soldiers, including two officers, were martyred.

He said that Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar was also martyred, who was the only brother of five sisters.

Attaullah Tarar paid tribute to all martyrs of Mir Ali including Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar and strongly condemned the malicious campaign launched by social media accounts associated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"The PTI is involved in disrespecting martyrs," he said, citing some examples such as May 9, when state institutions came under attack, martyrs' memorials were vandalised, and the Lasbela helicopter crash was ridiculed.

The Federal Minister for Information said that the smear campaign against

Martyrs was not acceptable and it had not only hurt the sentiments of families of martyrs but also the entire nation.

Saudi Arabia refuses to issue permit for Umrah repetition in Ramazan

AFP

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah on Sunday announced that the pilgrims will not be issued permits to perform more than one Umrah, Gulf News reported.

The authorities said that the move was aimed at easing congestion in the Grand Mosque in Makkah during Ramazan.

The holy month usually marks the peak season of Umrah at Makkah where thousands of Muslim worshippers flock for the lesser pilgrimage.

Urging the pilgrims to make do with one Umrah in Ramazan, the ministry called for giving others the chance to perform Umrah.

The Saudi government has introduced the measure in the Nusuk, a Saudi government's online Umrah and Hajj platform.

A message would appear reading: "The permit issuance fails. To give everyone the chance to perform Umrah, the lesser pilgrimage can't be repeated in Ramadan," if a pilgrim tries to obtain a permit for a second Umrah.

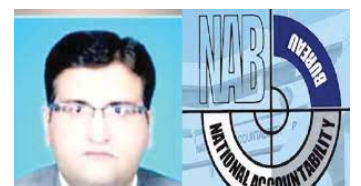
NAB's deputy director arrested on corruption charges

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) arrested its Deputy Director for allegedly facilitating the accused persons nominated in embezzlement cases in exchange for money.

According to the details, the NAB Karachi and Islamabad chapters in a joint action arrested its Deputy Director Imran Shaikh on the charges of taking bribes from the accused arrested on charges of corruption and embezzlement.

The corruption watchdog has obtained a one-day transit remand of Deputy Director Imran Shaikh who will be shifted to Islamabad on Monday.



Earlier on February 16, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested 15 suspects including seven officers of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Passport Immigration in a case pertaining to the issuance of fake Pakistani passports to Afghan nationals.

According to details, three Assistant Director Passport Immigration, and four NADRA officers have been arrested by the FIA.

Power division gets new secretary

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has appointed Rashid Mahmood Langrial as the Secretary Power Division.

As per the details, Rashid Mahmood Langrial, a BS-21 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, was serving as Additional Secretary Industries and Production Division.

A notification has been issued by the Establishment Division, appointing Rashid Mahmood Langrial as the Secretary Power Division.

Rashid Mahmood Langrial had served in the same post in the past as well but was transferred and appointed as Additional Secretary (Incharge) Industries and Production Division in December 2023 by the then caretaker government.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assigned the portfolio of



Power in place of Railways to Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari.

According to a notification of the Cabinet Division issued today, Petroleum Minister Musadik Masood Malik has been relieved of the additional portfolio of Power.