



President for enhanced trade and investment ties with US

President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need to enhance trade and investment relations with the USA, besides exploring collaborative opportunities in diverse sectors. He said that American enterprises should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange as well as bring innovative business ideas to the country's economy. (Details on Page 8)



Assassination attempt on Marwan Barghout

An Israeli assassination attempt on Marwan Barghout inside Majido prison has come to light. Special units brutally attacked him in solitary, causing severe injuries. This grave act demands immediate attention. Eyewitness accounts from freed detainees reveal the extent of Marwan's suffering - beaten until his eyes bled, isolated without access to his lawyer since October. This inhuman treatment of a political detainee is a blatant violation of international laws. The urgency to act is now.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Warm welcome

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, Mr Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday.



Photo: PID

President for further boosting of bilateral ties with UAE in diverse fields

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday emphasised the need for further boosting of bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the areas of trade, economy, aviation, renewable energy, climate change and human resource development for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. The president expressed these views while talking to Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to the ambassador, the president urged the need to increase collaboration in the aviation industry to facilitate the Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, including the initiation of commercial flights of Airbus

A380s. He said that Emirati businesses should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange to infuse innovative ideas and more capital in the Pakistan's economy.

Talking about Sindh, the president apprised that Pakistan had started investing in mangrove forests and was trading carbon credits in the international market. He suggested that Pakistan and the UAE should mutually benefit from this opportunity.

He said that projects had been undertaken for the lining of canals to overcome seepage and boost agricultural production. He maintained that Pakistan and the UAE needed to collaborate in the agricultural sector by sharing new technologies as food security was a growing concern for the region due to climate change.

During the meeting, the ambassador highlighted that

Continued on Page 8

FO confirms Pakistan conducted anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan carried out intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations in the border regions inside Afghanistan on Monday morning, the Foreign Office said.

"The prime target of today's operation was the terrorists belonging to Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, which along with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is responsible for multiple terrorist attacks inside Pakistan, resulting in deaths of hundreds of civilians and law enforcement officials," it said in a statement.

Seven Pakistani soldiers were martyred when terrorists attacked a security post in



North Waziristan's Mir Ali area on March 16.

Earlier in the day, there were reports that Pakistan bombed banned terrorist organisation's hideouts in Paktika and Khost.

A report from Tolo News quoted Afghanistan's interim Foreign Minister Zabihullah Mujahid as saying that some of the border regions were out of their control.

Over the past two years, the statement added that Paki-

stan has repeatedly conveyed its concerns to the interim Afghan government over the presence of terror outfits including banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan inside Afghanistan.

"These terrorists pose a grave threat to Pakistan's security and have consistently used Afghan territory to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory."

The FO stated that Pakistan accorded prime importance to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, adding that the country has always prioritised dialogue and cooperation to confront the terrorist threat.

"We have repeatedly urged the Afghan authorities to take concrete and effective action to

ensure that the Afghan soil is not used as a staging ground for terrorism against Pakistan. We have also called on them to deny safe havens to TTP and to hand over its leadership to Pakistan."

The Foreign Office reiterated that Pakistan has great respect for the people of Afghanistan, however, certain elements among "those in power" in Afghanistan were patronising TTP and using them as a proxy against Pakistan.

Such an approach against a brotherly country, which stood with the people of Afghanistan through thick and thin, manifested shortsightedness, it said.

"It ignores the support extended by Pakistan to the people of Afghanistan over the last several

decades. We urge these elements in power to rethink the policy of siding with Khwarji terrorists shedding the blood of innocent Pakistanis and to make a clear choice to stand with the people of Pakistan."

According to the FO, terrorist groups like outlawed TTP were a collective threat to regional peace and security.

"We fully realize the challenge Afghan authorities face in combating the threat posed by TTP. Pakistan would therefore continue to work towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism and to prevent any terrorist organization from sabotaging bilateral relations with Afghanistan."

Campaigns against martyrs deplorable: Musadik

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Petroleum and Energy Dr. Musadik Malik said on Monday that the propaganda against the institutions, campaign against martyrs and the events of May 9 are tantamount to push the country towards anarchy.

Talking to a private news channel, Musadik said that cipher conspiracy and events



of 9th May were the centered around maligning the state institutions.

He said the it has been a cynical attempt to push the country into an economic quagmire, he added

Nawaz tells PML-N leaders not to test people's patience amid expected tariff increase

Bureau Report

LAHORE: PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has wondered how long people's patience would be tested amid the expected increase in the electricity and gas charges under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout package.

The expensive electricity rate issue of small farmers should be resolved, he said while addressing the party's meeting in Lahore.

He wondered how much the rates of gas and electrici-

ty would further be increased in Pakistan on the IMF's demand.

At the meeting, the party decided to provide solar panels to farmers for running tube wells and sought a detailed plan from the leaders.

Nawaz was of the view that the government's funds should be invested in such a project.

Maryam Nawaz, who also presided over the meeting, also sought a plan for the subway train project she decided to have metro bus projects in three cities of Punjab.

Security forces kill eight terrorists including Mir Ali attack perpetrator in N Waziristan

Adam Khan

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: At least eight terrorists including a perpetrator of Mir Ali attack were killed during a security forces' operation in the North Waziristan district between the night of March 17 and 18, the Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement.

"During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, eight terrorists including HVT Terrorist commander Sehra @Janan went straight to hell. He was involved in orchestrating the terrorist attack on Security Forces' Post in Mir Ali on 16 March and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies," it added.

A Pakistan Army lieutenant colonel and a captain were among seven martyred after a group of terrorists attacked a security forces' post in Mir Ali.

According to the ISPR, sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

"The Security Forces of Pakistan remain determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," it added.

Some border regions 'out of our control', Afghan FM says

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Zabihullah Mujahid has pushed back on Pakistani officials' statements about the presence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in his country but admitted that some border regions might be out of the Emirata's control.

"We reject the presence of any ... foreign groups in Afghanistan and they are not allowed to operate on Afghan soil. In this regard, we have made our utmost effort," Mujahid was quoted by Tolo News as saying.

Mujahid's statement comes amid reports that TTP hideouts had been being bombed by Pakistan in Paktika and Khost. While no official statement has been made by either the Pakistan and Afghanistan sides, speculation is rife that houses of major TTP commanders have been targeted.

Mujahid said that Pakistan and Afghanistan shared a long border and not all places were under the Taliban government's control.

"One thing we must accept is that Afghanistan shares a very long border area with Pakistan, and there are places with rugged terrain including mountains and forests, and places that might be out of our control," Mujahid said.

The statement comes a day after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that TTP was attacking Pakistan through its sanctuaries in Afghanistan. Asif added that Pakistan was 'aware' of TTP's hiding places in Afghanistan.

Speaking after the terror attack in Waziristan that killed seven soldiers, Asif said that terrorism will have to be uprooted and the government was determined to succeed.

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

Second phase of illegal Afghan refugees' deportation to begin after Eid: sources

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The home ministry has decided to begin the second phase of illegal Afghan immigrants' repatriation operation after Eidul Fitr, sources said on Monday.

The ministry has issued directives to Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan governments regarding the decision.

The decision was taken during a video link meeting presided over by the federal home secretary where provincial secretaries of all four provinces along with high-ranking officials were also present.

The federal government will share the lists of all Afghan citizen cardholders with the police and law enforcement agencies of all provinces.

Sources in the home ministry said that phase three of the repatriation drive will see the deportation of all Proof of Registration Card holders.

The meeting was told that as many as 500,000 illegal foreign nationals have been deported since the crackdown against such individuals.

Ex-spymaster Faiz Hameed's brother arrested in bribery case: sources

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Najaf Hameed, brother of ex-spymaster Faiz Hameed, was arrested after a Rawalpindi court rejected his bail plea in a bribery case on Monday, sources said.

The anti-graft officials took Hameed into custody and left for Chakwal following the court orders.

It is pertinent to mention that Hameed had secured a protective bail from the court after he was booked in a bribery case.

The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) in April 2023, initiated an inquiry against Najaf Hameed for out of turn promotion and assets beyond means.

The anti-graft body wrote a letter to regional wrote a letter to deputy commissioner Rawalpindi and DC Chakwal requesting provision of record of land owned by Najaf Hameed.

On February 13, he was suspended from the post of Naib Tehsildar in Chakwal over alleged misconduct.

PTI seeks permission for rally in Islamabad on eve of Pakistan Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has sought permission for a rally in Islamabad on the eve of Pakistan Day, March 23, or March 30.

PTI's regional president Amir Masood Mughal submitted the application to the district magistrate on Monday. The former ruling party wants to hold the rally in one of these three places: D-Chowk, F-9 Park or Parade Ground.

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

A contingent of the Chinese People's Liberation Army would take part in the Pakistan Day parade, according to Chinese Defense Spokesperson Chinese Defense Spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang.

AJK PM says has completely eradicated corruption, mafias from state

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that his government has completely eradicated corruption and mafias from Azad Kashmir. "Timber mafia, cigarette mafia and food mafia are now a thing of the past", the PM Haq said this during his interview to a TV channel. He said that the governance system was now back on track. He said that good governance was directly linked to enforcement of law and accountability. He said that equal application of law to all was key to a sustainable development and progress. He said that implementation of law and accountability has to start with top-level and trickle down throughout the rest of the society. PM Haq said that being prime minister of the state he had presented himself for accountability. "When I took the oath, the governance structure of the state was in shambles", he said, adding that the state was at the brink of disaster due to poor governance and corruption. He said that the key appointments that including the appointment of the Chairman Accountability Bureau, and



chairman Public Service Commission were made on merit. He said that several initiatives were taken to improve education and the health care system. He said that the government's austerity drive has been instrumental in reducing expenditure.

He said that illegal use of government vehicles has been completely banned.

"About 400 surplus vehicles were auctioned", he said, adding that no one is allowed to use government vehicle except for official work. Prime Minister

Haq said that he also tries not to use the government vehicle after two o'clock. Referring to his government's austerity drive, he said this was for the first time that the budget for Prime Minister's Secretariat would be reduced by 51% by June 30. He said that since 1985 supplementary grants were released to meet the expenditures of the PM Secretariat. He said that a special social protection program would be launched in Azad Kashmir soon under which widows, divorcees, homeless, orphans and dis-

abled persons would get financial assistance. The Prime Minister Haq praised the Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's vision and approach, which he said, had led to the redressal of the issues faced by the AJK government." Efforts were made to discuss all the problems of Azad Kashmir, which no one used to talk about in the past", he said the issue of Kashmir Council was also resolved and property worth billions was handed over to the AJK government. He said that an endowment fund worth ten billion rupees would be established under which neglected and poor sections of the society would get relief monthly on a regular basis. He said that the main focus of his government was on the socioeconomic development of the state. He said that roads infrastructure was being improved and new roads were being constructed all across the state. He said that tourism in Azad Kashmir was linked to the improvement of roads. He said that 25 crore rupees were being provided to each constituency. He said that reforms were also introduced in health and other sectors to improve overall performance of departments.

Punjab Govt should leave tik tok and pay attention to the real problems of the people:
Dr Rubina Akhtar

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Political leader Dr Rubina Akhtar has said that during her visit to Kot Lakhpat Jail, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz became saddened by remembering her father Mian Nawaz Sharif's days spent in jail. It is sad to say that his government was also political by PDM Left no stone unturned to target women for political revenge, Dr. Rubina added that I am a doctor and serve humanity day and night and was not involved in May 9 or undemocratic activities. Security Forces arrested Me. first from the hospital as political revenge I was checking the patients and the second time I was arrested after breaking the door of My house in the late night. Preparing to bring more storm of inflation in the country under the guise of agreement with IMF The further increase in the prices of electricity and gas Bill is a matter of great concern, people's legs are shaking just thinking about it. Leave Tik Tok and pay attention to the real problems of the people, so that inflation can be controlled, Dr. Rubina. Akhtar expressed deep regret and condemnation over the martyrdom of army officers and jawans in the terrorist incident in Waziristan.



Annual Flower Show Held in Bahawalpur. Feral House Won the First Position



Ch Nabeel Shakir

BAHAWALPUR: The annual flower show was held at Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur under which various boarding houses, departments and houses of the school were decorated. The competition was divided into six categories. According to the decision of the judges, Feral House won the first position, Kamal Pasha second position and Abbas House and Alamgir House North got the third position while the encouragement prize went to Salahuddin House and Alamgir South House. Prof. Mohammad Nauman in category "C". Farooqui's bungalow number 35 won the first position. Bungalow No. 40 of Mrs. Iram Munir and Bungalow No. 54 of Prof. Khalid Mehmood bagged the second and third position respectively. Tariq Umar Khan's House No. B-1 in category "D" was awarded the first prize. In Category "E" which consists of various departments, the IT Center got the first prize. School Hospital and School Library got the second and third prizes respectively while Progressive High School was given encouragement prize. In category "F" Ismatullah (Riding Instructor) Quarter No. F-5 got the first prize while Security Supervisor Muhammad Sharif got the second prize.

Commissioner Multan Division orders robust campaign against profiteers during Ramadan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division, Maryam Khan, has ordered a robust campaign against hoarders and profiteers, while directing Price Control Magistrates to ensure full implementation of Ramadan Ordinance. She stated that the directives to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against hoarding and profiteering, especially by the vendors and hoarders issued by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, are in effect. Offenders engaged in hoarding and profiteering during Ramadan will be prepared for imprisonment, and hotels and restaurants violating Ramadan Ordinance will be sealed and penalized. District officials will conduct daily checks at markets to ensure compliance with government rates. The trader community should refrain from illicit profiteering during Ramadan. During the briefing, it was told that the administrative authorities of the division fined 215 shopkeepers for Rs. 562,000, registered 4 FIRs, arrested 44 individuals, and imposed fines on multiple offenders, along with issuing final warnings.

Deputy Commissioner issues instructions for cheap prices in Sasta Ramzan Bazaar

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: On the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza visited the Sasta Ramzan market took a detailed review and issued instructions that the people should sell food and drink at cheap prices according to the standard and rate list so that the people can buy food and drink at cheap prices in this blessed month of Ramadan. On this occasion he was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Shaghfata Jabeen, Chief Officer Municipal Sardar Aftab Ahmad Khan, AD Marketing Officer Muhammad Zia satti, Field Assistant Agriculture Sajid Siddiqui, Naveed Iqbal, Assistant Director Zafar Iqbal, Secretary Muhammad Salim was also present, Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza while talking to the media said that the government of Punjab has provided 25% discount on 13 food items in the Sasta Ramadan Bazaar so that the poor people can benefit from it. To be able to benefit, the supply of potatoes, onions and tomatoes was definitely done so that there is more supply and the public does not face any kind of problem, in Attock compared to other cities. Fruits and vegetables and other items are being supplied at a very low rate, he said that the supply is being provided to the people on a daily basis through which the people will get cheap and quality food and drink as per the rates of the Punjab government. People can get relief in cheap market.

One killed, other injured as driver fell in to nap

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A man has lost his life and his companion received critical injuries as the driver of the fatal car fell in to short nap on Hakla-DI Khan motorway near Pindigheb in the early hours of Monday. According to police and rescue sources, Ameer Sohail along with his relative Shamsheer Alam was going from Dera Ismail Khan to Islamabad in his car when reached near service area in the limits of Pindigheb Police station, he fell in to short nap resultantly the fell skied off the road and fell in to a ditch. The both were taken to tehsil headquarters hospital Pindigheb where Ameer succumbed to injuries. Police registered a case and launched further investigation.

Fateha

KARACHI: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi laid floral wreath and offered fateha at the Mousoleum of Quaid-e-Azam on Monday.



Photo: PID

Punjab Govt has Announced a Special Ramadan Relief package In Lodhran

Mustansar Shah Nawaz/ Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan, Maryam Khan, has assigned the task of further improving arrangements for the month of fasting to all departments. Presiding over a review meeting on arrangements, Commissioner Maryam Khan stated that the Punjab government has announced a special Ramadan relief package.

In Lodhran district, the Nigeheban Ramadan package is completed, while 70% distribution is achieved in Vehari district and Khanewal simultaneously, whereas Multan district reaches its

target up to 50 percent Under Nigeheban Ramadan package, 924934 individuals will receive free ration bags, with over more than 600,000 bags distributed so far. The distribution of rations is being carried out transparently according to registered individuals and rdata provided under the Benazir Income Support Program and Nadra via PITB. The Nigeheban Ramadan package will be completed by March 21. Commissioner Maryam Khan urged the concerned department to facilitate citizens during the month of fasting with duty, Allah's pleasure, and the intention of reward. Implementation of the Ehtram e Ramadan



Ordinance should be ensured in all circumstances. Municipal Corporation should ensure all street lights are

functional to facilitate citizens during pre-dawn and sunset meals and to curb street crime. Efforts should be made to ensure proper drainage of sewerage water and provision of clean water. Price control magistrates should display government rates prominently in open markets and crack down on profiteers and hoarders. Special attention should be paid to cleanliness and orderliness during the sacred month of fasting. MEPCO should ensure uninterrupted electricity supply for Sehri, Iftar, and Taraweesh prayers. Trader associations should provide relief to the public under the guise of human compassion.

Gunveriwala is the Third Historical Largest City Discovered in Cholistan

Chaudhry Nabeel Shakir

BAHAWALPUR: According to The Bahawalpur Museum information Officer Miss Nadia Nureen Said Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani visited the excavations in the 5 thousand year old city of Gunveriwala buried in the Cholistan desert.

He said that the two major cities of Indus civilization, Harappa And it is the third largest city after Moin Jodaro which these two big ones And in the midst of developed cities and situated about 60 kilometers south of Fort Derawar, which after excavation will add another ancient city of thousands of years.

The director of the museum said that the mention of another city will soon be



common in our history and geography curriculum, which is a welcome thing. He said that this initiative of the Punjab government will increase tourism as well as foreign exchange. On this occasion, the team working under the leadership of Professor Dr. Rafiq Mughal, prominent archaeologists and former directors Dr. Afzal Khan and Saleem

ul Haq and chemists. Waqas Ahmed, Shah Bano and others were also present there.

He said that the excavation work will be completed by next month and till now the scientific method of cleaning and report writing of the artifacts found here is going on. He said that this mound belongs to the Mature Harapan period.

While giving a briefing to the director of the museum and officers on this occasion, the guide said that the former director general of archeology Muhammad Rafiq Mughal traced the mounds of Gunveriwala in 1973 and he also identified the presence of mud brick walls at the same place. However, due to lack of resources and other reasons. But the excavation could not be done here, but Dr. Rafiq Mughal found some pottery, dogs, copper seals and some sculptures from here which are found in the Indus Valley Civilization.

The distance of this site is 340 km from Mohenjodaro and 260 km from Harappa. There are about 500 places of historical importance in Cholistan, the most important of which is Gunveriwala.

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Indian Elections and so-called Secularism - II

The Modi government's plans to overhaul India's education curriculum are also significant. Textbooks influenced by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) under Modi's leadership are reshaping Indian history and science. Schools affiliated with BJP ideology are altering the curriculum at the government's direction. Critics, including historians and scientists, have accused the Modi government of modifying school curricula to align with its Hindutva agenda. The Bharatiya Janata Party and its supporters intend to utilize education to shape the minds of millions of young Indians, many of whom will vote for the first time in upcoming Indian elections expected between March and May.

In these schools influenced by the Modi government, only curricula promoting Hindutva ideology are being taught to children, distorting the portrayal of historical heroes not associated with the Hindu religion. The aim of the RSS in operating such a vast network of schools across the country is to indoctrinate the younger generation with its Hindutva ideology. These schools propagate ideas against Muslims, Christians, and portray a narrative of Hindu supremacy, a practice that has been ongoing since the BJP first came to power between 1999 and 2004. The BJP initiated a similar curriculum overhaul during its initial governance, and now, under Modi's leadership, Indian history and science are being reshaped in school curricula to further these ideological aims.

It has been 17 years since the tragic incident involving the Samjhauta Express, yet the victims are still awaiting

justice. On February 18, 2007, miscreants set fire to the Samjhauta Express, which was traveling between Delhi and Lahore, at Panipat. The tragedy resulted in the loss of lives of 68 individuals, including 43 Pakistanis, 10 Indian citizens, and 15 unidentified persons, while 10 Pakistanis and 2 others were injured. The incident also claimed the lives of Indian nationals. Following the event, the arrest of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activist Kamal Chouhan led to suspicions of an Indian conspiracy. Subsequently, during the investigation, RSS leader Swami Aseemanand and his associates were implicated in the Samjhauta Express tragedy before a judicial magistrate. Additionally, a serving military officer from the Indian Intelligence Corps, Lt. Col. Purohit, was arrested in connection with the incident. Colonel Purohit confessed during the investigation to instigating armed conflict between Pakistan and India as part of the Samjhauta Express tragedy. The organization behind the incident, Abhinav Bharat, founded in 2006 by retired Indian Army Major Ramesh Upadhyay and Lt. Col. Prasad Shrikant Purohit, was identified as the mastermind.

India has employed anti-Pakistan media campaigns and false flag operations on numerous occasions, using them as election tactics to incite sentiments among the Hindu majority. However, like the Samjhauta Express incident, each of the Modi government's tactics has eventually been exposed. A special court of India's National Investigation Agency

(NIA) acquitted the four accused, including mastermind Swami Asim Anand, in the Samjhauta Express bomb blast case. It is noteworthy that the victims of the Samjhauta Express have been seeking justice for 17 years, yet the Indian judicial system has been viewed with skepticism.

Prior to the general elections in India, the Modi government faced a surge in popularity of opposition parties. The bank accounts of India's main opposition party, Congress, were frozen by the Modi government, with the Congress party claiming that four of its accounts were affected. In response, Congress spokesperson Ajay Maken stated that the government's actions aimed to undermine the party before the elections, freezing the accounts of the main opposition party ahead

of national elections tantamount to a challenge to democracy. Maken further expressed concerns that the Modi government seeks to move towards a one-party system and announced that Congress would appeal the decision in court and organize public protests, emphasizing that the freezing of accounts has disrupted the party's economic operations.

In a recent instance of extremism against Muslims in India, the authorities refused to permit a flight to land at Mumbai airport despite the urgent medical needs of a Bangladeshi Muslim passenger. According to aviation sources, Saudi Airlines Flight SV 805, en route from Dhaka to Riyadh, encountered a medical emergency involving a Bangladeshi national while in Indian airspace.

Consequently, the pilot attempted to divert the plane for a humanitarian landing at Mumbai airport and sought permission from the Mumbai Air Traffic Control (ATC).

Although the aircraft was already in the landing approach to Mumbai, the ATC in Mumbai requested nationality and other details of the affected passenger. However, Mumbai airport authorities declined to offload the Bangladeshi Muslim passenger, prompting the pilot to cancel the landing and request permission from the Karachi ATC. The Karachi ATC granted permission for a humanitarian landing, and the Saudi plane landed in Karachi at 7:28 am, where the passenger received medical assistance from the civil aviation medical team. The condition of the 44-year-old passenger, Abu Tahir, suffering from high blood pressure, was reported to be critical, with continuous vomiting due to the condition.

Such incidents are perceived as attempts to suppress minorities and opponents of the BJP to garner sympathies and votes from the Hindu majority.

Readers, India is often touted as the largest democracy globally. However, in recent years, criticism of India has escalated, partly due to incidents involving minorities during the Modi government's tenure, and also due to shrinking space for dissenting voices and critical media in the country. If this trend continues, India's democracy may be recognized primarily for its large population, rather than its adherence to democratic principles. These questionable election tactics have exposed India's true face to the world, which contradicts its professed image as a secular state.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Gadani Beach emerges as unique tourist destination

In a surprising turn of events, Gadani Beach, nestled along the Arabian Sea in the Hub district of Balochistan, has transformed from a remote industrial site to a burgeoning tourist hot spot.

With its breathtaking coastline spanning over ten kilometers, Gadani Beach offers a picturesque retreat for travelers seeking both natural splendor and industrial intrigue.

Renowned for its crystalline waters, Gadani Beach boasts a marine ecosystem teeming with diverse aquatic life, enticing snorkelers and divers from far and wide.

Visitors are enchanted by the tranquility of the shoreline, often indulging in horseback and camel rides along the sandy expanse, or embarking on adventurous hikes amidst the surrounding mountains.

Adding to its allure, Gadani Beach harbors a trove of archaeological treasures, showcasing ancient ruins and artifacts that offer a glimpse into the region's storied past.

History buffs find themselves captivated by the remnants of civilizations long gone, enriching their cultural experience amidst the scenic vistas.

Yet, perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Gadani Beach lies in its juxtaposition of natural beauty with industrial prowess.

Home to one of the world's largest ship-breaking yards, the Gadani ship-breaking industry stands as a testament to human ingenuity amid the coastal splendor.

Providing vital employment opportunities for the local populace, this industrial giant serves as a cornerstone of the region's economy, fostering growth and prosperity in an otherwise remote locale.

"The transformation of Gadani Beach into a multifaceted tourist destination is nothing short of remarkable," remarked a local tour guide, echoing the sentiments of many who have witnessed the area's evolution. "It's a harmonious blend of nature's bounty and mankind's innovation, offering something truly unique for every visitor."

As tourists flock to Gadani Beach to bask in its natural wonders and marvel at its industrial marvels, the once-hidden gem of Balochistan emerges as a beacon of exploration and discovery, beckoning travelers to explore its shores and unravel its secrets.



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

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

Gender Disparities:

Gender disparities exacerbate the challenges faced by youth in Pakistan, particularly concerning access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. Women and girls, in particular, confront systemic barriers that hinder their participation in the workforce and perpetuate gender-based discrimination. Addressing gender inequalities and promoting women's empowerment is not only a matter of social justice but also an imperative for unlocking the untapped potential of half the population and fostering inclusive economic growth.

Impact on Crime Rates:

The nexus between youth deterioration, unemployment, and inflation becomes glaringly evident when examining its correlation with crime rates in Pakistan. As economic opportunities dwindle and financial pressures mount, many young individuals find themselves ensnared in a vicious cycle of poverty and desperation, which often culminates in resorting to criminal activities as a means of survival. The absence of viable employment prospects pushes disillusioned youth towards illicit means of earning livelihoods, perpetuating a cycle of lawlessness and societal unrest.

Facts and Figures:

A study conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) revealed that approximately 60% of Pakistan's prison population comprises individuals under the age of 30, highlighting the disproportionate representation of youth in the criminal justice system.

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) estimated that youth

unemployment costs the country billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and social welfare expenditures

Addressing the Crisis:

To mitigate the adverse impact of youth deterioration on Pakistan's socio-economic fabric, concerted efforts are imperative at both the policy and grassroots levels. Government interventions should focus on implementing robust employment generation programs, enhancing vocational training opportunities, and fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation. Moreover, targeted measures to curb inflation, such as prudent fiscal and monetary policies, are essential to alleviate the financial burdens faced by the youth.

Harnessing the transformative potential of technology and innovation is indispensable for empowering youth and catalyzing economic development in Pakistan. Digital literacy initiatives, coupled with investment in digital infrastructure, can expand access to information and online learning platforms, equipping young people with the skills needed to thrive in the digital economy. Furthermore, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship can unlock new avenues for job creation and economic diversification, enabling young Pakistanis to unleash their creativity and drive positive change.

Empowering young people as agents of change requires proactive engagement and meaningful participation in decision-making processes at the community, national, and global levels. Civil society organizations, youth-led initiatives, and grassroots movements play a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of young Pakistanis and advocating for

policies that address their needs and aspirations. By fostering a culture of civic engagement and volunteerism, Pakistan can harness the energy and enthusiasm of its youth to drive sustainable development and social progress.

Addressing the root causes of youth deterioration in Pakistan demands a concerted effort encompassing domestic policy reforms, international cooperation, and partnerships with multilateral organizations and donor agencies. By leveraging technical expertise, financial resources, and best practices from the global community, Pakistan can enhance its capacity to tackle unemployment, inflation, and related socio-economic challenges effectively. Moreover, fostering regional cooperation and economic integration can create opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship across borders, fostering peace and stability in the region.

Furthermore, investments in education and skill development initiatives can empower young people with the tools and competencies necessary to compete in the job market and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. Additionally, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as civil society organizations, is essential to formulate holistic solutions that address the multifaceted challenges confronting the youth.

In conclusion: mitigating the adverse impact of youth deterioration in Pakistan requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses the underlying structural constraints while harnessing the potential of young people as catalysts for positive change. By investing in education, skills development, gender equality, technology, and inclusive governance, Pakistan can unlock the transformative power of its youth and pave the way for a more prosperous and resilient future.

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

Secondly, civil society organizations and pressure groups are employing various advocacy tactics to lobby lawmakers and influence public opinion. They organize rallies, forums, and public events to educate the public about the implications of the ban on democratic values and individual rights. These groups are engaging in direct lobbying efforts, meeting with legislators, submitting written testimonies, and conducting media outreach to convey their concerns and advocate for alternative policy solutions.

Lastly, political leaders who are engaged to capitalize the movement against banning Tiktok are making legislative maneuvers and coalition-building to oppose the ban within the halls of Congress and the Senate. They are challenging the proposed legislation through parliamentary procedures, such as filibustering, amendments, and procedural delays.

Additionally, political leaders are using their platforms to publicly denounce the ban, framing it as a threat to constitutional freedoms and democratic principles and are mobilizing their constituents and leveraging their institutional power to sway public opinion and pressure lawmakers to reconsider or reject the proposed ban. Under pressure for many months, ByteDance has already made some gestures, such as a billion-dollar investment to have American user data stored by a third party in the US. But the suspicions of Beijing-led opinion manipulation during this election year, also raised during the vote, need to be substantiated. Yet the House hastily passed the bill, without any tangible evidence being presented to the elected representatives.

The vote on the bill has created some unexpected

alliances, bringing together left-wing Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, libertarian Republican Senator Rand Paul, and former President Donald Trump. Ocasio-Cortez and Paul, motivated by substantive arguments, joined forces against the bill, while Trump, who had previously criticized Tik Tok, changed his stance, arguing that targeting the app could benefit other social media platforms he views as hostile to him.

China swiftly responded to what it perceived as aggressive interventionism, expressing disappointment with the decision and accusing the US of going against principles of fair competition and international trade rules. While China refrained from directly criticizing internet censorship, it made clear its stance on the matter.

The popularity of the Chinese platform has undoubtedly raised concerns among legislators, especially regarding content control and its potential impact on young users. ByteDance, the parent company of Tik Tok, has attempted to address some of these concerns by investing in storing American user data domestically. However, suspicions of Beijing-led manipulation, particularly during an election year, persist without concrete evidence, leading to swift passage of the bill in the House.

Despite passing the House, the bill still faces a hurdle in the Senate, where representatives have signaled their intent to defend principles like freedom of expression enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution. Thus, the outcome remains uncertain, with the Senate yet to weigh in on the matter.

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



Analysis

Mustansar Shah Nawaz

Pakistan Embassy Beijing holds National Day Reception

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan Embassy, Beijing hosted a reception today to commemorate the 84th National Day of Pakistan, in which several senior Chinese officials, resident Ambassadors, diplomats, Pakistani community members, representatives of Chinese state owned and private enterprises, intelligentsia and leading media persons participated. Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China graced the reception as the Chief Guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, paid rich tribute to the Nation's Founding Fathers, especially Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah for his vision and for pursuing democratic struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Underscoring the significant strides the country has made over the decades across multiple fields, the Ambassador highlighted the resilience and ability of Pakistan to bounce back stronger in



the face of challenges. He also recalled the groundbreaking diplomatic initiatives undertaken by Pakistan at the international stage for the promotion of peace, harmony and development. The Ambassador lauded the contribution of Pakistan community in the promotion of China Pakistan

ties, while calling for further expansion of business and people to people exchanges between the two countries. On Pakistan-China relations, the Ambassador noted the iron-clad partnership that has been nurtured by successive generations. Both countries were connected not only by land,

mountains and rivers but also by a heart corridor founded on the sentiments of trust, mutual respect, solidarity and support. Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of China lauded the unremitting efforts by successive Pakistani governments and its people in furthering the country's prosperity, upholding sovereignty, and defending national dignity. He stressed the salience of continued China-Pakistan cooperation for addressing shared risks and challenges, to defend the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries and to promote international fairness and justice. The Vice Foreign Minister also conveyed China's good wishes for the new government in Pakistan and reaffirmed China's commitment to work with Pakistan to accelerate the building of even closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future in the New Era. A troupe of Chinese and Pakistani children also performed at the reception, symbolizing the enduring bonds of friendship between the two countries

Xi congratulates Putin on re-election as Russian president



Xinhua

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday congratulated Vladimir Putin on his reelection as Russian president.

In recent years, the Russian people have united as one, overcome challenges, and made steady progress towards national development and revitalization, Xi said, adding that the reelection of Putin as Russian president fully reflects the Russian people's support for him.

Russia will surely make greater achievement in national development and construction under Putin's leadership, Xi said.

Noting that China attaches great importance to the development of China-Russia relations, Xi said China stands ready to maintain close communication with Russia to promote the sustained, sound, stable and in-depth development of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era to benefit the two nations and their people.

PM felicitates President Putin on his re-election

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on his re-election.

On his X account the prime minister further posted that he looked forward to working with him to further strengthen Pakistan-Russian relations.



Persian New Year:—customs and observances for Nowruz (نوروز)

Spokesman Report

Nowruz or in Persian language نوروز is the Persian New Year celebrated in the ancient Persian civilization field in various countries worldwide, a part of which is Iran. Nowruz has been celebrated by diverse communities for over 3,000 years in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin, the Balkans, and South Asia. It is a festival based on the Persian Solar Hijri calendar, on the spring equinox around 21 March on the Gregorian calendar. Nowruz marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere i.e. the moment at which the Sun crosses the celestial equator. In Iran, it is the day of the new year in the Solar Hijri calendar.

The United Nations officially recognized the "International Day of Nowruz" with the adoption of Resolution 64/253 by the United Nations General Assembly in February 2010.

Traditional customs of Nowruz include fire and water, ritual dances, gift exchanges, reciting poetry, symbolic objects and so on; these customs differ between the diverse peoples and countries that celebrate Nowruz.

Some basic customs which are observed in Nowruz include:
 - House cleaning and shopping;
 - Decorating the houses with flowers especially hyacinth and tulips;
 - Visiting family and friends;
 - Food preparation;
 - Decorating Haft-Siin table.
 the Haft-Siin or in Persian language: هفت سین is the seven things beginning with the letter S س includes:

- Sabze (Persian: سبزه) – greens like wheat, barley, mung bean, or lentil sprouts grown in a dish.
- Samanu (Persian: سمنو) – sweet pudding made from wheat germ.
- Persian olive (Persian: سنجید, senjed)
- Vinegar (Persian: سرکه, serke)
- Apple (Persian: سیب, sib)
- Garlic (Persian: سیر, sir)
- Sumac (Persian: سماق, somāq)

The Haft-Siin table may also include a mirror, candles, painted eggs, a bowl of water, goldfish, coins, hyacinth, and traditional confectioneries. The Holy Book of Quran and Hafez Divan is also included for the Muslims.

As a human common heritage, Nowruz is an ancient common link between the components of a larger civilization field a part of which is Iran and the other countries that celebrate Nowruz. Nowruz is an element of identity reminding individuals of the civilisation about their links and commonalities that they shared during the centuries.



Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan represents Kashmir at Rabita Alam-e-Islami

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MAKKAH MUKARRAMAH: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan met with many high-ranking Saudi and international Muslim figures on the occasion of participating in the two-day international conference held under the framework of the Conference of Islamic World in Saudi Arabia.

In the opening session of the conference, he also met the Secretary General of the World Islamic Association Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Eisa and briefed him regarding the Kashmir issue. It is pertinently mentioned that Rabita Alam-e-Islami is a forum of well-known Muslim personalities and non-governmental organizations from around the world, who are trying to solve the problems and welfare of Muslims from many countries.

Late Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, from Azad Kashmir, was honored to represent the Kashmiri people in Rabi-



ta-Alam-e-Islami until his last breath has been obtained.

The activities of the Islamic World Association continue under the patronage of the Custodian of the King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Prince Muhammad bin Sulaiman. After Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan represents Kashmiris in this

important forum of Muslim Ummah. Rabita Alam-e-Islami Alam Islami is the most effective platform of Muslims after OIC. During the discussion World leaders President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that the situation in Occupied Kashmir has taken a very serious turn.

India is using illegal tactics to change

the ratio of the population of Kashmiri Muslims and erase the Islamic identity of Kashmir, which threatens instability in the region.

At the same time, we have to pay attention to the seriousness of the Kashmir issue because every way to peace and stability in the subcontinent passes through Kashmir he added.

PHHSA welcomes PM's multiple measures for agriculture, seed sectors

PPA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hi-tec Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) has hailed the multiple measures announced by prime minister Shehbaz to boost the country's ailing agriculture economy and underdeveloped seed sector in his inaugural speech on the floor of the national assembly after assuming charge of his office on March 3.

Speaking at a joint press conference along with LCCI President Kashif Anwar at the LCCI on Monday, PHHSA Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said that the pronouncements made by the premier underscored his government's deep commitment with the agriculture and seed sector. "Agriculture is the main pillar of Pakistan's economy, and the seed sector is the backbone of the agriculture economy. We, therefore, strongly appreciate the premier's plans to import the world's best quality, high-yield seed to enhance the farm output, as well as his commitment to take action against seed mafia responsible for wheat hoarding, cotton ginners selling banola as seed, and others who violate rules, regulations and code of ethics."



LCCI President Kashif Anwar also appreciated the government resolve the economic challenges through sectoral reforms and support. He said that increase in yield is dire need of the hour. He said that focus on agriculture will not only help end poverty from the country but it would help us earn much needed foreign exchange.

The PHHSA welcomed the government initiative to set up a dedicated, autonomous body — National Seed Development & Regulatory Authority (NSDRA) — and the appointment of a professional like Dr Asif Ali Khan (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz), who has a successful record in research and management as its chairman. Applauding the vision of Special Investment Facilitation Council

(SIFC) and its Green Pakistan Initiative for bringing barren land of Cholistan under cultivation, the chairman stressed the need to bring the area under cultivation as well as increase per acre crop output through the use of high-yielding quality seed as very rightly addressed by the Prime Minister in his maiden speech.

Shahzad Ali Malik, who has pioneered hybrid seed technology in Pakistan with the support of the top Chinese scientists, pointed out that transfer of hybrid technology, development of seed varieties through extensive local R&D had helped boost the country's rice exports by 600 percent from just \$462 million to \$3 billion in 20 years. "We are optimistic to cross \$5bn by 2027 due to surplus

production of rice," he added.

He also drew the attention of the authorities towards the fact that out of five major field crops cotton, wheat, rice, maize and sugarcane, only two crops — rice and maize — are producing surplus for exports due to adoption and localization of hybrid technology. "By replicating the hybrid rice success story, we can achieve import substitution of approximately \$10bn in cotton, wheat, edible oil, pulses etc. as well as have surplus production for export.

He however regretted that in spite of its enormous contributions towards agriculture, exports and poverty alleviation in many areas of Sindh and South Punjab through hybrid technology transfer, the PHHSA has been denied representation on NSDRA. "Since the PHHSA was registered and granted licence in 2023 and Seed Amendment Ordinance 2024 published in 2024, hence the Board of Governors taken from previous National Seed Council notification of March 19, 2013 and the PHHSA name was overlooked in the board of governors. We strongly demand inclusion of PHHSA representation," he concluded.

Washington's exploiting claims of 'national security' threatens global prosperity

Xinhua

BEIJING: Probing Chinese electric vehicles (EVs), replacing China-made cranes at U. S. ports, slamming China's 5G devices... U. S. politicians view anything impeding U. S. hegemony as a potential threat to U. S. national security.

Time and again, U. S. politicians have used protectionism as a national security concern. The story is an old one by now. Sadly, they fail to realize that such maneuvers only exacerbate global divisions, pushing the world further into fragmentation and confrontation.

Washington's fervent witch-

hunt against China's tech companies, ostensibly under the banner of national security, lacks both evidence and technical justification. It is a baseless pretext employed to hinder China's technological progress.

The suppression of Huawei, China's top provider of 5G equipment, is a clear example of this. Washington has sanctioned Huawei under the pretense of national security and pressured other countries to block 5G devices from China.

However, there has never been a single cybersecurity incident involving Huawei products or a tapping or surveillance operation. A 2019 report by the

German daily Der Tagesspiegel said that after years of review, the British government, Germany's Federal Office for Information Security and the European Commission failed to find any backdoor in Huawei.

Furthermore, the so-called security breaches of China-made cranes at U. S. ports are trumped evidence to suppress leading Chinese manufacturers. The Baltimore port purchased four cranes from Chinese manufacturer ZPMC and hasn't found any issues while assembling and testing them. The Wall Street Journal reported, citing William Doyle, executive director of the Maryland Port Administration.

Echoing Doyle, Cary Davis, general counsel of the American Association of Port Authorities, said there have been no known security breaches from China-made cranes. "I like a good spy movie, but you need a smoking gun to make it a blockbuster, and there's no smoke in this story," he said.

Protectionist claims made under the pretext of national security do not fool the world. In fact, self-serving acts based on groundless accusations have sparked an international outcry. A recent proposal by German politicians to restrict Huawei has triggered strong opposition from telecommunication opera-

tors. Industry insiders estimated that excluding Huawei equipment from Germany's existing communication network would result in billions of euros in additional costs and set back the development of German mobile communication technology for several years.

The European Commission's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese EVs has also prompted dissatisfaction among many car manufacturers and consumers.

In fact, Chinese EVs have experienced significant growth in the European Union because of global companies in the Chinese market. A large portion of China's EV exports come from

foreign-funded enterprises. The anti-subsidy probe will not only deprive European consumers of cheaper and better options but also affect the future development of these foreign companies.

U. S. politicians often rely on far-fetched claims to justify their protectionist tactics, sometimes resorting to ridicule.

"Imagine a world with 3 million Chinese vehicles on the roads of America, and Beijing can turn them off at the same time," U. S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo recently claimed in a video clip that went viral online.

Following this illogical

reasoning, should the rest of the world dread the possibility of Washington arbitrarily disabling iconic U. S. products like iPhones or Teslas? Should other nations adopt such protectionist stances, restricting technological exchange beyond their borders and jeopardizing today's global digital technology products and trade?

Protectionist measures disguised as national security concerns harm economic growth and technological advancement. Isolationism and protectionism do not foster prosperity; instead, progress can be achieved only through openness and cooperation.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
64,890.50	64,816.46
Day's High	Day's Low
65,148.36	64,811.92
Index Value	Change
4,467,304,584	+74.04
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	18 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,722.55	-4.87
Percentage	Time
-0.063%	18 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,855.37	+140.60
Percentage	Time
+0.36%	18 Mar, 1:10 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,740.44	+1,032.80
Percentage	Time
+2.67%	18 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	741.22	749.22
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.73	39.13
Danish Krone	40.69	41.09
Euro	303	306
Hong Kong Dollar	35.63	35.98
Indian Rupee	3.36	3.47
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.77	912.77
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	59.85
New Zealand \$	169.5	171.5
Norwegians Krone	26.27	26.57
Omani Riyal	723.7	731.7
Qatari Riyal	76.57	77.27
Saudi Riyal	73.95	74.4
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	26.89	27.19
Swiss Franc	315.26	317.76
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	75.7	76.45
UK Pound Sterling	356	359
US Dollar	278.7	281.3

Systems Limited
wins Best
Core Banking
implementation
award by IBS
Intelligence

PPA

KARACHI: Systems Limited, a Global SI and premier technology company, has won the prestigious "Best Core Banking Implementation" award from IBS Intelligence for modernizing the Core Banking operations of Samba Bank Limited.

The IBS Intelligence Global FinTech Innovation Awards are known for honoring banks and technology partners showcasing excellence in implementation and innovations using emerging technologies within the banking and financial sector. The fifth edition of these awards received more than 250 nominations from 49 countries.

Ahmad Tariq Azam President & CEO, Samba Bank Limited "Achieving this prestigious award reflects our enduring partnership with Samba Bank Limited, spanning multiple transformative initiatives over the years in various countries. Our success in the global market is a testament to our unwavering commitment to delivering excellence, with our clients at the center of everything we do. This award is not only a recognition of our achievements but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to empowering our clients to thrive in a fast-evolving financial landscape."

Ammara Masood Global industries GM BFS, Systems Limited "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the teams at Samba Bank and Systems Limited for their well-deserved win in the category of 'Best Core Banking Project Implementation'. Systems' transformation for Samba Bank seamlessly aligned with the bank's vision for innovation and customer-centric banking services, modernizing a resilient core banking platform with cutting-edge digital capabilities. What truly caught our judges' attention was the seamless implementation thanks to Systems Limited's use of Pakistan Model Bank, which helped in introducing pre-configured, localized functionalities and industry best practices for the bank."

Nikhil Gokhale, Director-Research & Digital Properties at IBS Intelligence

Aurangzeb can resolve problems if allowed to work: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that masses and businesses are excited about the appointment of Aurangzeb to the position of Finance Minister.

Muhammad Aurangzeb has no political baggage; therefore, it is hoped that he will make economic decisions on merit and not allow politics to guide the economy, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the respected and experienced finance minister can resolve problems confronting the economy if allowed to work independently.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said Muhammad Aurangzeb is a professional and non-political

person ready to deliver as expected.

He added that with his appointment as the Minister of Finance, the public and the business community have become hopeful for improvement in the situation.

Business people and industrialists believe important economic decisions will now be made on merit rather than factional politics.

He hoped that PIA and other sick public institutions would be privatized, electricity and gas sector losses would be eliminated and business costs would be reduced.

The business leader said that the people had seen Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Shaukat Tareen, Ishaq Dar, Asad Umar, and Muftah Ismail as finance ministers, now the people and the business community are awaiting the moves of the finance minister who is not a slave of political groups.

The new finance minister is respected in financial circles and can make tough deci-



Mian Zahid Hussain said that the new finance minister must also decide on the NFC award as the provinces' share is very high. The federation is left with nothing for essential expenses and has to take loans.

He said that the provinces have not been able to increase the tax in the last ten years because they are getting more funds than they need, so they are not serious about improving the revenue.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the decisions of the new finance minister will only be acceptable to some politicians, business mafia, and non-tax paying sectors, and they will try to create problems for them.

The authorities are responsible for protecting the finance minister from political pressure and fully supporting his initiatives because if he fails, the country will become a breeding ground for more problems, he warned.

Iftar

ISLAMABAD: Dean of Diplomatic Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov, Dr. Tariq Fazal Ch (MNA), Anjum Aqil Khan (MNA), Farah Naz Akbar (MNA), Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and other are present at Iftar dinner hosted by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICCI which was attended by Wearies Ambassadors and Representatives of Media, Police and Trade.



Expensive electricity, gas, industry has reached the brink of destruction, Mian Akram Farid

PPA

If the government did not pay attention, most of the steel industry would have closed down, and millions of dependents would have become unemployed; partners.

(Islamabad) Chairman Central M. Akram Farid of employers' organization Employers Federation of Pakistan during an emergency meeting with the manufacturers said that the country's industry has reached the brink of destruction due to the increase in electricity and gas prices.

Not only the country's economy has been affected, but unemployment has increased a lot.

He said that due to expensive electricity and gas, where the cost of production has increased so much that it is not possible to run the industry, he added that he said that the



iron and steel industry whose path is material electricity is also It was done with so much expensive electricity. If the government did not pay attention, most of the steel industry would have closed down, and millions of people related to it would have become unemployed and the hearths of thousands of families would have gone cold, he stressed on the government. In the dire

situation, take emergency measures, the government of Pakistan should formulate a policy according to the ground realities and the government will have to look at its factors so that the Pakistani industry can come out of the crisis.

Due to the decrease in Pakistan's textile exports, about 7 million workers will be out of jobs.

Granted, the iron ore industry has been hit the hardest due to the fall in power prices, more than half of the steel industry has closed down, and the remaining ones will soon close down due to the increase in production costs urged the government to reduce the interest rate and fix the dollar rate and try to overcome the problem of falling value of the rupee so that the industry can operate, that the economic and business environment is at a turning point.

It has reached a point where the business community justifies the demand to impose an economic emergency to end the economic uncertainty. Businesses cannot run profitably under such harsh and unfavorable conditions, he suggested that the FBR should focus on reducing high tax rates in the upcoming budget to broaden the tax base and increase overall tax revenue. It will help to improve.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund Receives Prestigious International Energy Workforce Award 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a proud moment for the nation, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has been honoured with the esteemed International Energy Workforce Award 2024 by the Energy Institute (EI) of the United Kingdom. This accolade underscores PPAF's exceptional dedication to building a skilled workforce and combatting climate change through its Renewable Energy Programme in remote regions of Pakistan.

The Renewable Energy Programme of PPAF, distinguished among entries from 29 countries, has showcased a steadfast commitment to fostering a diverse and skilled workforce for sustainable development. CEO of PPAF, Nadir Gul Barech, expressed his gratitude, emphasizing that this recognition is a testament to the collective efforts of

their team and communities towards a sustainable and equitable energy future in Pakistan.

Highlighting the impact of the Renewable Energy Programme, Barech disclosed that over 3800 projects with a cumulative capacity of 13.8 MW have been implemented, benefiting more than 300,000 individuals. These initiatives have significantly enhanced the quality of life for beneficiary communities, fostering economic activity while reducing environmental impact.

Barech reiterated PPAF's commitment to complementing the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in poverty reduction initiatives across the country. He further elaborated on PPAF's workforce, emphasizing their collaboration with over 135 civil society organizations for community-led development interventions.

SECP issues advertisements & call Centre management guidelines for digital lenders

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued guidelines to NBFCs involved in digital lending to ensure best practices in advertisements and call centre management. The guidelines were designed to prioritize borrower protection and to prevent deceptive marketing and unethical call centre practices.

Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) licensed by the SECP are extensively promote their loans products through various social media platforms. Digital lending NBFCs are dependent on call centre infrastructure, whether owned or outsourced, to conduct verification, manage recovery

collection and provide customer services. Consequently, call centers have become an integral aspect of their business operations.

The SECP recognizes the need for responsible and ethical marketing practices and call centre operations. Responsible and ethical behavior necessitates that NBFCs use transparency and honesty in their advertising, and that they make these standards a requirement for their call centres. The guidelines will aid NBFCs in adopting best practices in advertising and call centre management while ensuring borrower safeguards.

All NBFCs, involved in digital lending must adhere to these guidelines for marketing through various channels.

Bank of Khyber and Institute of Cost & Management Accountants Partner for Internship Opportunities

PPA

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) and the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA) have partnered through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). BoK will provide ICMA students, affiliates, and members with valuable internship opportunities within various BoK departments.

The MoU was signed by Irfan Saleem Awan, MD/CEO (A) & CFO of BoK, and Shehzad Ahmed Malik, President of ICMA.

The signing ceremony was attended by distinguished representatives from both organizations,

including Muhammad Asif, Group Head HRDG, Moin Rana, Group Head Operations, Ihsan Ullah Ihsan, Group Head RAMG, Ali Khan Arbab, Group Head IBG (A), and Mudassar Iqbal, Chief Internal Auditor amongst others.

These internships will equip participants with practical experience and professional skills in a real-world banking environment.

ICMA affiliates, particularly those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), will gain practical exposure working with a leading financial institution in the province.

Additionally, BoK employees can benefit from discounted fees



on various ICMA courses and seminars, enhancing their financial management expertise and professional knowledge. This will ultimately empower them to better serve the Bank.

Islamabad United win PSL 9 after last ball thriller against Multan Sultans

KARACHI: Imad Wasim's all-round exploits steered Islamabad United to their third Pakistan Super League title with a thrilling victory over Multan Sultans in the blockbuster PSL 9 final here at National Bank Stadium on Monday. Set to chase 160 for their third PSL title, Islamabad United had a flying start to the pursuit as their new opening pair of Colin Munro and Martin Gupthill scored 20 off the first two overs. But the duo failed to continue the flying start as Munro fell victim to Khushdil Shah on the first delivery of the fourth over. He made 17 off 13 with the help of four boundaries. The United then lost two more wickets in quick succession as Salman Ali Agha (10) and Shadab Khan (4) perished after scoring cheaply. But Gupthill remained firm and kept the scoreboard ticking in a crucial fourth-wicket partnership with Azam Khan before a mix-up drew curtains on his tremendous knock. He remained the top-scorer for the United with a 32-ball 50, peppered with four boundaries and three sixes. Azam then partnered with Imad

Wasim for a brief 19-run partnership, which lasted in the 16th over, courtesy of a brilliant DRS by Mohammad Rizwan off Usama Mir. He smashed four boundaries and a six on his way to a 22-ball 30. The United then sustained another massive blow to their pursuit as in-form Haider Ali and Faheem Ashraf walked back in consecutive overs, bringing the equation down to 129/7. The two-time champions then needed 31 off 17 deliveries with Imad and Naseem Shah at the crease. The duo batted sensibly and brought the United in touching distance before Mohammad Ali dismissed Naseem Shah with a bumper on the penultimate delivery. Islamabad United needed one run off the final delivery with Hunain Shah on the strike. The No.10 batter sensibly guided the ball towards the third-man region to steer his team over the line. For the Sultans, Iftikhar Ahmed and Khushdil Shah bagged two wickets each while Usama Mir, Mohammad Ali and David Willey struck out a batter apiece. Opting to bat first, the Sultans managed to register a subpar total on

the board in the PSL 9 final despite Usman Khan's anchoring half-century and Iftikhar Ahmed's late onslaught. The Sultans got off to a dismal start to their innings as their young opener Yasir Khan (6) fell victim to Imad Wasim in the second over. Promoted to bat at No.3, vice-captain David Willey (6) had a brief stay at the crease as he too, fell victim to Imad after hitting the latter for a six. Following the slump, Usman Khan then joined his skipper Mohammad Rizwan in the middle and the duo launched recovery. The pair added 53 runs for the third wicket before Rizwan fell victim to his United counterpart Shadab Khan in the 10th over after scoring a run-a-ball 26. Usman then took reigns of the Sultans' batting expedition and put together brief partnerships with Johnson Charles and Khushdil Shah before perishing in the 16th over. He remained the top-scorer for the Sultans with a gutsy 57 off 40 deliveries, laced up with seven boundaries and a six. His dismissal sparked a lower middle-order collapse, triggered by



Imad Wasim's sensational last over, who returned with tremendous bowling figures of 5/22 in his four overs. Consequently, the Sultans had been reduced to 127/9 in 17 overs before

Iftikhar Ahmed launched a counter-attack. The right-handed batter smashed three boundaries and as many sixes on his way to a blistering 32-run cameo

which came off just 20 deliveries. Besides Imad, skipper Shadab chipped in for the United with the ball in the PSL 9 final, picking up three wickets for 32 runs in his quota of four overs.

Khokhar chairs high profile meeting to discuss planning of mega projects

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar presided over a high profile meeting at Punjab Stadium. The important meeting was convened to discuss planning of mega sports projects for the development of sports culture across the province. Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial and Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal gave an in-depth briefing regarding mega sports projects, sports calendar, endowment fund and targets of the department in the meeting. Project Director PMU Qaiser Raza, Additional Secretary Farhan Farooq and other officials were also present in the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the Punjab Sports Department is going to build 300 sports grounds across the province. "Our target is to build 20 new E-Libraries in different parts of the province. We will build new sports complexes in 18 tehsils of Punjab. A total of 113 out of the 322 sports infrastructures will be overhauled." Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth



Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the Chief Minister Internship Program will be started in Punjab. "The establishment of the first Sports City is also being evaluated in Lahore. Besides this we are going to inaugurate seven sports projects in the near future. 16 development sports schemes will be completed within the next three months," he added. Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar informed that the Contact Body Sports Center and National Hockey Stadium will be inaugurated soon.

"Shahkot Gymnasium and Hockey Stadium in Faisalabad will also be inaugurated". Taking a big step, Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Faisal Ayub Khokhar informed that a Department of Maintenance and Repair is being established soon to protect the sports infrastructure. "The process of the Sports Endowment Fund was reviewed thoroughly. Under Sports Endowment Fund, every possible help will be extended to deserving players from across the province".

He said that more effective reforms will be introduced to improve the Kabaddi game. "We will spend money on the development of coaches and int'l coaches will be brought for the development of sports". He said that there will be full focus on the welfare of the athletes including Olympian Arshad Nadeem. "We are taking effective measures to improve Punjab's sports in accordance with modern requirements," he added.

Youth Affairs Dept to launch a helpline for athletes: minister

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Youth Affairs Department will launch a helpline to resolve players' problems. Punjab Youth Affairs Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar in a statement on Sunday said that the WhatsApp number and Social Media Complaint Cell is being launched to resolve sports related complaints from across the province. "Director Sports Punjab has been appointed as Focal Person of Complaint Cell". Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that all the sports circles of the province should contact directly to solve their problems. "Sports circles can also lodge complaints regarding lack of sports facilities," the minister said. He said that he wanted to provide the best environment for the development of talented athletes from across the province. "True sports culture is being promoted in Punjab under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz". Khokhar said that there is immense sports talent in our country and all the officers of the sports department need to be active in the field for the betterment of sports and players.

Balbirmie fined for breaching ICC Code of Conduct

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ireland player Andrew Balbirmie has been fined 25 per cent of his match fee for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the second T20I against Afghanistan in Sharjah on Sunday. Balbirmie was found to have breached Article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "showing dissent at an Umpire's decision during an International Match". In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Balbirmie's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period, said a press release. The incident occurred in the 16th over of Ireland's innings, when Balbirmie showed dissent on being adjudged leg before wicket by pointing to his gloves and telling the umpire that the ball had touched the gloves before hitting his pads. Balbirmie admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Boon of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Bismillah Jan Shinwari and Izatullah Safi, third umpire Ahmed Shah Pakteen and fourth umpire Ahmed Shah Durrani levelled the charges.



Mushfiqur Rahim mocks Angelo Mathews with timed-out celebration

A Sports

CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh wicket-keeper Mushfiqur Rahim on Monday, mocked Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews by mimicking his famous timed-out dismissal, which occurred at the ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023. The incident took place when the hosts Bangladesh were celebrating their 2-1 ODI series victory over arch-rivals Sri Lanka. As the Bangladesh squad gathered to pose with the trophy, Rahim walked out with a helmet. Mushfiqur Rahim was enacting as if there was something wrong with the helmet to mock Angelo Mathews for his famous timed-out dismissal during the ODI World Cup 2023. Remember, the Sri Lankan team celebrated their T20I series victory over Bang-



ladesh by simultaneously pointing and tapping on the watch in a bid to take a dig at the Tigers.

It is worth mentioning here that Angelo Mathews became the first player to suffer a timed-out dismissal in the history of

international cricket. Mathews came down to bat in the 25th over of Sri Lanka's innings after the fall of Sadeera Samarawickrama's wicket. The former captain took more than two minutes to take strike after having issues with his helmet due to a broken strap. Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan appealed for a "timed out" dismissal, which was upheld by the on-field umpires Marais Erasmus and Richard Illingworth. The ICC World Cup 2023 playing conditions pertaining to "timed out" dismissals reads thus: 40.1.1 After the fall of a wicket or the retirement of a batter, the incoming batter must, unless Time has been called, be ready to receive the ball, or for the other batter to be ready to receive the next ball within 2 minutes of the dismissal or retirement. If this requirement is not met, the incoming batter will be out, Timed out.

World No. 1 Swiatek sweeps past Sakkari for second Indian Wells title

Sports Desk

LAHORE: World number one Iga Swiatek powered past Greece's Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-0 on Sunday to claim her second Indian Wells WTA title two years after she beat Sakkari for her first. The rematch of the 2022 championship showdown produced an almost identical outcome, as four-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek dominated the second set to seize her 19th career title and her second of 2024. Sakkari, ranked ninth in the world, battled gamely through the opening set, erasing a break and saving two break points in the final game before Swiatek

delivered a blistering forehand winner to pocket the set after 44 minutes. It would take just 24 more minutes for the Polish star to wrap things up. She broke Sakkari at love for a 2-0 lead and rolled to the finish. Iga Swiatek continued her strong comeback from a disappointing third-round exit at the Australian Open in January. Since then, she has won the title at Doha and reached the semi-finals at Dubai. On Sunday, she became the 10th woman to win the Indian Wells title twice — no one has yet managed to lift the trophy three times. "It's just amazing to be standing here again," Swiatek told



the Stadium Court crowd after winning her eighth WTA 1000 level title. Swiatek's run included a grudge match victory over Linda Noskova — the Czech teen who

stunned her in the third round at the Australian Open in January. Swiatek, who lost just 21 games and didn't drop a set in the course of the tournament, seized the initiative early, break-

ing Sakkari for a 3-0 lead. Sakkari, whose two career titles include last September's 1000-level event in Guadalajara, broke back in the fifth game and leveled the set with a love hold for 4-4. But serving to stay in the set, she quickly found herself down 0-40 and once Iga Swiatek had the set in hand she was away, winning the last eight games of the match. "Credit to Iga," said Sakkari, who came through a testing, rain-disrupted semi-final against US Open champion Coco Gauff to book her rematch with Swiatek. Although she has won three of six meetings with Swiatek, she hasn't beaten her since 2021.

National Women Power lifting C'ship in May

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Power-lifting Federation will be holding the National Women Powerlifting Championship here at the Jahangir Khan Squash Complex in the last week of May. Secretary General Pakistan Powerlifting Federation Rashid Malik said all preparations for the championship have begun and ten teams from across the country were participating in the championship. Teams include Pakistan Army, Police, Wapda, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as foreign players, he told APP.

Pak footballers training camp kicks off

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The training camp of the national football team in preparations for the forthcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier Round 2 matches against Jordan, kicked off here at Jinnah Stadium Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday. Foreign players also joined the team. The Jordanian team would land in Islamabad on Tuesday. The home match between Pakistan and Jordan was scheduled for March 21 in Islamabad while the squad would then head to Jordan for an away game on March 26. Pakistan Squad includes-Goalkeepers: Yousef Butt (D), Saqib Hanif, Abdul Basit and Hassan Ali; Defenders: Easah Suliman (D), Abdullah Iqbal (D), Mamoon Mula, Haseeb Khan, Mohammad Saddam, Mohammad Sohai, 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: Fared Ullah, Waleed Khan, Imran Kayani (D) and Adeel Younis.

PM, UAE ambassador discuss ties

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, Mr Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM, UAE ambassador discuss ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (U. A. E.) to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday and discussed matters of mutual interest. The Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on his re-election and conveyed best wishes of U. A. E. President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and hoped that the strong fraternal ties between the two countries would be strengthened further in the years ahead.

The Prime Minister thanked the U. A. E. leadership for their warm messages of greetings and conveyed his best wishes for President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Recalling the historic ties between Pakistan and the U. A. E., the Prime Minister said Pakistan attached great importance to its brotherly relations with U. A. E. The two countries had always supported each other and there was a strong desire on both sides to elevate the relationship to a higher level, the PM added. The Prime Minister further said that Pakistan wanted to translate the tremendous political goodwill into a stronger economic partnership. Noting the exciting trans-

formation of the U. A. E. into a hub for commerce, tourism, and investment, the Prime Minister said Pakistan wanted to partner with the U. A. E. He highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as an efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into priority sectors including agriculture, minerals & mining, I. T., renewable energy and industry. On the multilateral side, the Prime Minister congratulated the U. A. E. for successfully hosting COP 28 meeting on climate change last year as well as its efforts to bring peace in Gaza while serving as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. He also appreciated the U. A. E. for hosting nearly 1.8 million Pakistanis who were a bridge between the two countries. The Ambassador reaffirmed the U. A. E. leadership's commitment to Pakistan and said that U. A. E. looked forward to work with the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to build stronger ties. The Ambassador extended an invitation to the Prime Minister on behalf of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to visit the U. A. E. at the earliest convenience. While accepting the invitation, the Prime Minister also reiterated an invitation to the President of U. A. E. to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience and said the people of Pakistan were waiting to accord him a very warm welcome.

PM visits residences of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed, Lt. col Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed

Spokesman Report

TALAGANG: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed to offer his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family. Expressing sympathies with the bereaved family, the prime minister said he was very impressed by their patience and determination.

Earlier, the prime minister also visited the residence of Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed in Rawalpindi and offered his heartfelt con-



lence to the family.

PM visits residences of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed, Lt. col Syed Kashif

Ali Shaheed He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant eternal peace to the martyrs and patience to the bereaved

families to bear the loss with courage.

He said the brave jawans and officers of Pakistan Army

had sacrificed their lives to safeguard their motherland. He said the entire nation including himself pay tributes to them. "The families of martyrs are a matter of pride for the entire nation", he remarked. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces till complete eradication of the menace of terrorism. Defence minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Information Minister Attaulah Tarar also accompanied the prime minister.

Israeli government responsible for Palestinian lives in Al-Shifa-Ministry of Foreign Affairs

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Israeli government bears full responsibility for the lives of medical staff and displaced people in Al-Shifa and its environs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates holds the Israeli government fully and directly responsible for the lives of medical staff, ambulance crews, patients, and displaced persons present in the Shifa Medical Complex and its surroundings, including the displaced persons in the besieged shelter schools, as well as the lives of those who are arrested among them.

The Ministry believes that Israel is intent on destroying any remaining health infrastructure in the Gaza Strip to completely render it out of any service, and stresses that Palestinian civilians are still victims of the occupation army's indifference to their lives, including children, women, the sick, and the elderly, and also victims



of the international failure to impose any measure that would protect them. And securing their basic needs, despite the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations and the precautionary order of the International Court of Justice, which proves once again that the priority in the international and American efforts made must be focused on protecting civilians in all forms and bringing aid to them in a sustainable manner, which is impossible to achieve without stopping. Instant fire.

SC expresses dissatisfaction on CDA's reply over tree cutting in F-9 Park

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday issued written order regarding hearing of a suo-motu case against cutting of trees in F-9 Park, Islamabad.

The top court expressed concern over cutting of other trees along with paper mulberry and maintained its stay order till next date.

The court also decided to seek assistance from two former inspector generals of forest department Mehmood Nasir and Ghulam Qadir and served notices.

The court said that Capital Development Authority (CDA) stated that only the trees causing pollen allergy were removed after cutting. It said that as per the commission's report constituted by this court and photograph, other trees have also been cut down in F-9 Park area.



The court said that civic body stated that it had given the contract to a private person for tree cutting. It also noted that the contract was given despite the CDA holding its own 4500 gardener employees.

The court was told that the civic body has no machinery and tools required for the purpose of tree cutting. It said that the answer of the CDA was unsatisfactory and questioned that why not the contract was given only for the cutting of paper mulberry trees. The court heard the case on March 4, regarding the matter.

IHC summons CDA chairman, others in contempt of court case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad and the Chairman of Capital Development Authority (CDA), Captain (retired) Anwar-ul-Haq, in a contempt of court case.

The Chief Commissioner and Chairman CDA were summoned for not implementing the court's order regarding the transfer of plots to citizens.

Justice Babar Sattar heard the contempt of court application of a citizen on Monday.

The court remarked that transferring public properties according to the law was the responsibility of the civic body.

PTI supports Amnesty Int'l's demand for immediate restoration of social media

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson said that PTI fully endorsed Amnesty International's demand for immediate restoration of social media platform X (formerly Twitter), saying that Pakistan had been made a laughing stock in the international community due to the unjustified blockage on social media and the chain of oppression against own citizens.

PTI Spokesperson said that the fake government's unjustified closure of the Internet, especially social media websites on daily basis in order to conceal facts regarding the mandate theft in the general elections provided opportunities to the world to ridicule Pakistan.

He stated that the constitution of the country was virtually suspended during the past 23 months and basic constitutional rights were being openly trampled upon under the feet.

PTI Spokesperson said: "It is shame-



ful that X has remained blocked in the country for over one month now. We fully endorse 28 civil society organisations' demand for immediate removal of ban on the social media platform

allowing free flow of information as should be the case in a democratic country."

He went on to say that the murder of freedom of expression and press had been the topmost priority of the usurped and anti-constitutional group.

PTI Spokesperson stated that all kinds of coercive and brutal tactics ranging from enforced disappearances to blackmailing their families had been used to target the impartial journalists and social media workers.

He lamented that despite all state oppression, efforts were afoot to strangle the freedom of expression and press to suppress the critical sane voices in order to establish unconstitutional control over the media.

President for enhanced trade and investment ties with US



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need to enhance trade and investment relations with the USA, besides exploring collaborative opportunities in diverse sectors.

He said that American enterprises should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange as well as bring innovative business ideas to the country's economy.

The president made these remarks while talking to Ambassador of the United States of America (USA) to Pakistan Donald Blome who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that Pakistan had enjoyed a long-standing and broad-based relationship with the USA spanning over seven decades, which needed to be further strengthened.

He said that the top priority of Pakistan was to put its economy on the right track and overcome economic and security challenges. He highlighted that climate change was a global issue, and Pakistan was among the countries most vulnerable to its adverse impacts. He said that Pakistan wanted to improve its agricultural sector by adopting modern irrigation techniques to conserve water and reduce reliance on flood irrigation.

Ambassador Donald Blome said that Pakistan and the USA could enhance bilateral collaboration in the fields of trade & investment, climate change, renewable energy, agriculture and security.

He informed that the USA had completed the Sindh Basic Education Programme to build climate-resilient schools to strengthen Pakistan's education sector.

He also congratulated the president on assuming the office for a second time.

FM, UAE ambassador review ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday.

Congratulating the FM on his assumption in office, the Ambassador

conveyed warm wishes of the UAE leadership. Foreign Minister Dar appreciated the congratulatory call from the UAE Foreign Minister and reiterated his desire to work closely with the UAE leadership during his term in office. Discussions on matters related to enhancing bilateral cooperation were also held.

President for further ...

Continued from Page 1
The UAE was committed to Pakistan's development and would continue to stand with Pakistan.

He stressed upon the need to transform the existing bilateral relationship into a strategic partnership between Pakistan and the UAE. He also called for focusing on economic diplomacy, adding that big companies from the UAE were keen to invest in aviation, agriculture, renewable energy (solar), education and healthcare in Pakistan. He informed that the UAE had recently hosted COP-28 and pledged \$100 million for the "loss & damage" fund to help vulnerable countries deal with the adverse effects of climate change. He said that Pakistan could benefit from this fund to mitigate the impacts of climate

change. The ambassador congratulated President Asif Ali Zardari on becoming the President for the second term and extended best wishes on behalf of the leadership and people of the UAE. He further reaffirmed their strong commitment to further reinforce the bond of friendship between the two countries.

He also extended an invitation to the president to visit the UAE, which the president accepted. The president thanked the UAE's leadership for warm greetings and messages of felicitation and said that the UAE was very close to his heart. He appreciated the warmth and affection of UAE's leadership towards Pakistan and highlighted the need to further strengthen the fraternal ties between the two countries.