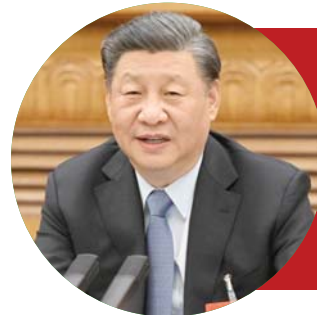




US asks Taliban to stop terrorist attacks against Pakistan from Afghan soil

The United States has called on the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks against Pakistan are not launched from Afghan soil. Asked to comment on Pakistan's "intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations" inside the border regions of Afghanistan, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said ... (Details on Page 5)



Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed developing new quality

First put forward by Xi in 2023 during inspection in China's north-east Heilongjiang province, the concept was highlighted at a key meeting on economic work last December, and became the subject of a group study session of the CPC leadership earlier this year. In this year's top legislature meeting, the concept dominated policy discussions in many areas, and was placed as the top priority of the government's work ... (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Briefing session

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM-relief-NDMA

PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a report regarding quick and transparent provision of relief to the people affected by recent torrential rains across the country.

He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to accomplish a joint survey report in collaboration with the provinces, besides enhancement of cooperation with the provinces to face the future calamities.

The PM also sought an implementation report over his directive in the previous tenure regarding technical improvement of NDMA, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was given a detailed briefing by the NDMA about the relief and rehabilitation activities in wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

Continued on Page 8

Sons of Nawaz Sharif acquitted in three Panama Papers references

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad on Tuesday acquitted former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's sons, Hassan and Hussain, in three corruption references related to the Panama Papers: Flagship, Avenfield Property and Al-Azizia Steel Mills.

Accountability court judge Nasir Javed Rana announced the reserved verdict of the corruption references filed by the National Accountability Bureau after hear-



Sons of Nawaz were declared proclaimed offenders in 2018 after they failed to join the investigation in the three references.

Earlier this month, the two through their counsel decided to surrender before the court to face the trial proceedings and sought suspension of the warrants issued against them. They returned to Pakistan last week after an accountability court suspended their warrants till March 14.

The court reopened the references against them after suspending their perpetual arrest warrants and granting them bail against surety bonds of Rs50,

000 each. Qazi Mischah appeared as the counsel for Hussain and Hassan while their pleader Rana Mohammad Irfan was also present.

At the hearing, the defence lawyer argued that the Islamabad High Court had already acquitted former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and her daughter Maryam Nawaz in the same reference. The running of trial against his clients would be "wastage of court time," he said.

Commerce Minister chairs meeting on Tariff Reforms

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan chaired a meeting today at the Ministry of Commerce. The meeting was also attended by the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Khuram Agha and key officials from the Ministry.

The Minister was briefed on the tariff reforms and tariff rationalisation undertaken by the Ministry since the formation of the Tariff Policy Board (TPB) and explored the role of tariffs in boosting exports by ensuring the availability of raw material at competitive prices. He was also briefed on working of the TPB.

PTI founder to be released before Eid, says his lawyer

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's counsel Barrister Salman Safdar on Tuesday claimed that the deposed prime minister will be out of prison before 25th of Ramadan.

Speaking to journalists after appearing before the court in cipher and Toshakhana case, Barrister Safdar said that the former prime minister and former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's name were not mentioned in the complaint under which the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) took action.

The FIA had begun the probe in the cipher case a week before a complaint was registered, he said, while questioning the initiation of the inquiry against the top two PTI leaders.

Imran Khan's legal aide said that irregularities are arising in the FIA



the contents of the cipher to fulfill "nefarious purposes".

The court in its verdict said the prosecution had enough evidence to prove the charges against the former prime minister and ex-foreign minister.

It is pertinent to mention that PTI founder Imran Khan on February 23 filed pleas against convictions in the cypher and Toshakhana case in Islamabad High Court.

The PTI founder had been alleging US involvement in throwing him out of power in 2022 on the basis of a cipher.

Khan was charged under the Official Secrets Act after he claimed that a conspiracy was behind his ouster.

In his speech on March 27, last year, he displayed a "threat letter," a diplomatic code, which was used to depose his government a few days later through a vote of no confidence.

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Shahid Khaqan hints at launching his new political party soon

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has hinted at launching a new political party soon.

"We are holding consultations and groundwork in progress for a new political party," he was talking to media while arriving for a NAB hearing. "The country needed a new political party," he said.

Abbasi, a former PML-N stalwart, requested to the president and prime minister to save the country and abolish the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

"I don't want withdrawal of cases against me but decision on all these cases," he said.

PM felicitates Islamabad United over PSL 9 win; says cricket unites whole nation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated the Islamabad United team for winning the 9th Pakistan Super League, saying that the cricket was a unifying factor for the whole nation.

In the last ball thriller, Islamabad United defeated Multan Sultans by two wickets in the PSL final at National Bank Stadium, Karachi on Monday, becoming the first team to have won the title for the third time as the team already championed the PLS in 2016 and 2018 as well.

"Both teams played a fabulous game. This is the victory of whole nation, not any single team. The cricket game unites the whole nation," the prime minister said in a statement.

He also lauded the Pakistan Cricket Board, security forces, administration, all the organisers and the spectators for ensuring the success of the PSL 9.

The whole PLS Series presented the great contests as well as the sportsman spirit, he said and particularly thanked the international players who had participated in the tournament.

"The PSL did not only provide recreation to the cricket lovers but also played a key role in exploring the sports talent at the grassroots level. It also helped revive the international cricket in Pakistan," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked.

He also reiterated that the incumbent government was determined to take all-out measures for promotion of cricket and other sports in the country.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi urges new laws for online speech

City Desk

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Tuesday the country needed better laws to regulate internet free speech, as disruption of social media platform X stretched into its fifth week.

Islamabad has declined to clearly say whether it is behind nationwide restrictions to the platform, formerly known as Twitter, which have left it rarely accessible since February 17.

Pakistan's polls earlier that month were marred by allegations of rigging, and the outages began after a senior government official made a public admission of vote tampering.

"We need to make better laws," Interior Minister

Mohsin Naqvi said when asked whether his ministry was responsible for the X shutdown.

"Expression is fine, but making false allegations against people is wrong - it's happening and needs to be fixed."

"We must reassess our own laws and look into what is being misused," he told reporters in remarks broadcast on state TV.

X, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok were key planks in the election campaigning of jailed ex-prime minister and popular opposition leader Imran Khan.

The former cricket star was barred from running and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was subject to a sweeping crackdown of arrests and censorship ahead of February 8 polls.

US Ambassador's meets Minister for Finance & Revenue

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan, Mr. Donald Blome, paid a courtesy visit to Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division today, to discuss important matters related to bilateral cooperation and mutual interests between Pakistan

and the United States.

Ambassador of the US, Mr. Donald Blome, extended felicitations to Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb upon his appointment as Minister for Finance and Revenue and conveyed confidence towards further strengthening of economic ties between the two countries.

Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb

warmly welcomed Mr. Donald Blome and underscored the significance of Pakistan-US bilateral relations, highlighting their importance at political, economic, and security levels.

Minister Aurangzeb shared that the new government is fully prepared to tackle the economic challenges and is determined to bring about macroeconomic



stability in the country. He reiterated the government's commitment to completing the ongoing IMF program and continuing the economic reform process initiated under the Extended Fund Facil-

ity (EFF) 2019 and Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) 2023, with a focus on achieving fiscal and debt sustainability, social protection, and rebuilding foreign exchange reserves.

Punjab CM visits Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed's House in Tala Gang

PPA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif visits Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed's house in Tala Gang, Tuman to offer condolences and show solidarity with the parents and family members of the martyr.

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid homage to the martyrs who achieved the exalted status of martyrdom while fulfilling their duty of defending the homeland with courage and bravery. She said, "The whole nation salutes the courageous, patient and faithful parents and families of the martyrs." She added, "Salutes to those mothers whose lions have shed their precious blood to protect nation's headscarf." Madam Chief Minister said, "The



conversation of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed's father has renewed the courage and faith of the entire nation." She added, "The great sacrifices of the martyrs are a testimony to the love of martyrdom and the spirit of devotion to the motherland." The Chief Minister said, "The nation

is with its brave armed forces till the end of the last terrorist." She vowed to eliminate terrorists with national determination. She remarked, "Those who test our patience will not find a place to hide, God willing."

Talking to the martyr's parents and family, Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Every son of the nation is Captain Ahmed Badar. The whole nation will take revenge of every drop of blood of its martyrs." She said, "The misunderstanding of those who think peace is our weakness will soon be removed."

Madam Chief Minister said, "The entire nation will ensure the honor and respect of its martyrs and their heirs. Their great sacrifices will not go in vain, the nation will always remember these great sacrifices."



Kalim Umpire: Mian Muhammed Khalid, cutting the Ribbon of Jamia Masjid Al-Haj Mian Muhammed Nasir at C Block Central Park Housing society Mian Muhammed Nasir and Mian Muhammed Haris M. Waqas, Nasir Majeed, Umar Majeed, Col Shahid Alam and Umar Hameed were also present on this occasion.

Door to Door Anti Polio Campaign Start on 25 March in Multan District

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadir has said that the Punjab government is determined to make the province polio-free. 02 polio cases have come positive in the Balochistan cities, which is alarming, but of the polio virus. Regarding, all the samples taken from the sewerage of Multan are clear. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting in connection with anti-polio campaign. CEO Health Dr. Faisal Qaisrani and officials of the health department participated in the meeting. Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadir said that more than 10 lakh young children will be administered polio drops during the door-to-door campaign. More than 35 hundred mobile teams will administer polio drops in the field while every hospital, dispensary, bus stand, wagon stand and Camps will be established at the railway station. Make sure to drink the drops to protect against, otherwise strict action will be taken.



Sui Gas Department Multan has started a Crackdown against Gas Thieves

Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Sui Gas Task Force Multan has started a crackdown against gas thieves under the direction of Regional Manager Syed Hussain Zafar. K was stealing gas by bypassing the main line against which FAN FIR was registered in the concerned police station. In this way Qasim Qureshi and Muhammad Safdar were stealing direct gas from our main line in Gujjar Nagar Badla Sunat. In this way, 4 gas connections have been disconnected for commercial use of household meters. In this regard, Regional Manager Syed Hussain Zafar has given the task of taking action against gas thieves to Senior Associate Engineer Yaqoob Khan of the task force. This crackdown against theft will continue.



Commissioner of Multan Division assesses progress on MNA Engineering University



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner of Multan Division, Mariam Khan, visited the construction site of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Engineering University in Laar Near Multan and was briefed on the progress. She stated that the construction of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Engineering University on a 210-acre site would cost Rs. 1 billion. In the first phase, construction of the administration block, academic block, cafeteria, and mosque is underway. In the second phase, girls' hostels, boys' hostels, academic hostels, and other blocks will be constructed. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is particularly focused on the timely completion of developmental projects. Director Development Rubina Kausar and Executive Building Hyder Ali were present during the inspection.

Sardar Attique says India a murderer of Kashmiri people at World Islamic Conference



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MAKKAH MAKARAMA/MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that India is a terrorist country and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a murderer of humanity by oppressing the Kashmiri people in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The international community, especially the OIC and the United Nations, will have to take practical measures against the atrocities of the Indian forces. He said that India is involved in war crimes and the Indian Prime Minister and his armed forces should be prosecuted in the International Court of Justice. They are adamant that the international community should stop the serious violations of human rights by the Indian army in Occupied Kashmir and implement the UN resolutions which was pledged by India on International Forum.

President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan, during his participation in the closing session of the World Islamic Conference under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, in Makkah met various leaders including Reverend Imam Kaaba Sheikh Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Hameed, Imam Kaaba Sheikh Abdullah Awad Al-Gandani, Imam Kaaba Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sadis, Imam Kaaba Bandar bin Abdul Aziz Balila, Dr. Shooq Allam Mufti Misr and other great people of the Ummah. All participants of the conference met with Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan. Listened to the position with deep interest and assured him for all helpful measures regarding Kashmir issue.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain receiving shield from President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Best cleaning system & model civic services will be provided in Punjab: CM Maryam

PPA

LAHORE: "A sustainable system of cleaning every street, neighborhood and road will be implemented in Punjab," said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif while chairing a meeting on solid waste management in the province. She directed the authorities concerned to present a model mechanism of solid waste management at the earliest. Madam Chief Minister added, "Apart from the new sanitation system, up to 125,000 new jobs will also be created."

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif rejected the proposal to impose sanitation

tax on farmers. However, she agreed to the proposal to outsource sanitation system in the province. She also sought a detailed plan for the construction of 23 proposed landfill sites in the province, and directed to review the installation of waste segregation plant in every division.

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "I will visit villages myself to review their sanitation system." She added, "In the villages, the local community will be engaged in monitoring the performance of the cleanliness drive, and to get the streets and neighborhoods cleaned." A proposal to form

local community committees to ensure the provision of sanitation facilities to the people, along with a proposal to set up Waste Management Companies in Sahiwal and Sargodha were given a go-ahead in the meeting. Madam Chief Minister said, "We will bring a sustainable and effective sanitation system in Punjab."

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif highlighted, "Cleanliness will not only improve the environment but would also reduce diseases and pollution." She added, "During my visit to Lahore, many streets were difficult to pass through due to accu-

mulated mud and dirt."

Former Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Provincial Minister Local Government and Community Development Zeeshan Rafiq, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, Secretary Transport, Finance, Local Government and Community Development, Special Secretary Local Government, Commissioner Lahore, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, Chief Executive Officer Lahore Solid Waste Management Company, Expert Dr. Kamran, Solid Waste Management Expert Ahsan Beila and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

Shaukat Mir demands urgent action against Israeli massacre

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Central Deputy Secretary Information nominated candidate Assembly Constituency 7 Shaukat Javed Mir has called the national and senate against the unjustified massacre of peaceful people by Indian and Israeli forces in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Calling a joint session to convene an emergency meeting of the Security Council, speeding up the diplomatic struggle is essential for the protection of human lives. Cases should be filed against

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Netanyahu in the international courts of justice and war crimes. Hindu Muslim The policies of the fundamentalist rulers who provoke riots are the biggest suicide attacks for world peace. The martyrdom of the Babri Masjid and the killing of countless human lives in the Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujarat, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his military leadership, while Israeli Prime Minister Netan-

yahu They have violated the Geneva Convention and flouted international laws by slaughtering innocent people. He expressed these views in his strong reaction to the bloodshed in the worst atrocities of the Israeli and Indian forces. Shaukat Javed Mir said. That the mediation of neutral countries and the holding of an intra-Kashmir conference are indispensable for a lasting and just solution of the Kashmir issue. Just service, bilateral trade and exchange of delegations have all proved to be a futile exercise and a waste of time because the people of both sides are equally benefited. Shaukat Javed Mir said that the issue of self-determination of one and a half million Kashmiris has become a nuclear flash point among the unsolved problems on the agenda of the United Nations. The whole world will have to come to a policy against terrorism, extremism, lawlessness, double standards will prove to be a precursor to terrible disasters.



Vehari Police hand over stolen goods worth Rs.228m to their owners

Malik Saleem Shahid

VEHARI: District Police Officer Vehari Muhammad Essa Khan Addressing to the Press conference He said Vehari Police Stolen goods worth Rs. 228 million have been handed over to their owners. I and for the establishment of law and order and the rule of law.

The police are playing their role and the people are sleeping peacefully. This is the reason why Vehari police has achieved important achievements against the criminal elements by working hard day and night. Addressing a crowded press conference during the distribution of stolen goods.

On this occasion, Member of National Assembly Sajid Mehdi, Member of Provincial Assembly



Malik Nowshir Langriyal and dignitaries from the city participated. 80 lakhs worth of recovery which was ensured.

In the case of looted trolley including cotton worth Rs 2 crore 75 lakhs, 176 motorcycles worth Rs 1 crore 53 lakhs, cars worth Rs 12 lakhs, 301 cases of extortion were traced to Rs 1 crore 99 lakhs, 57 cases of vehicle snatching were traced. 169 cases of theft of cattle,

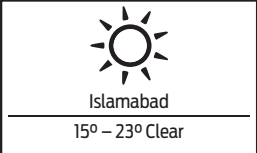
buffaloes, goats worth 32 lakh 91 thousand rupees. 1 crore 15 lakh 25 thousand 600 rupees by tracing, 723 cases of other theft by tracing 12 crore 34 lakh rupees, 56 tolas of gold jewelry worth 1 crore 40 lakh rupees are recovered. Stolen goods worth lakhs of rupees were recovered from Wahari.

The police, with tireless work day and night, killed 16 blind people and traced 7 cases of robbery/robbery

murder and arrested the unknown suspects, while 21 were arrested. 1396 drug dealers were arrested and 701 kilos of hashish, 8 kilos of opium and 38 thousand liters of alcohol were recovered from their possession during the campaign to make Vehari district free from drugs.

12 Kalashnikovs, 61 guns, 27 rifles, 521 pistols, 13 revolvers, 09 carbines. Thousands of bullets were recovered.

District Police Officer Wahari Mohammad Isa Khan along with SP Investigation Wahari Farooq Ahmed and other honored guests handed over the recovery to the plaintiffs while also distributing prizes to police officers and personnel who showed good performance.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:48 am
Zohr	12:15 pm
Asr	4:36 pm
Maghrib	6:20 pm
Isha	7:43 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883

Dr. Asim Hussain to support student's education

PPA

KARACHI: Asim Hussain, a former Federal Minister for Petroleum and a senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party, has made the announcement that he will cover all of the educational costs for two pupils.

Within the context of a discussion with the pupils Ayan and Anabiya, Hussain came to this conclusion.

In addition, renowned social worker Faizan Rawat was present at the event.

A statement made by Dr. Asim Hussain said that the Dr. Ziauddin Hospital Trust will be responsible for covering the children's educational costs.

Furthermore, Aayan and Anabiya will be granted free admission at Ziauddin School during their time there.

They will also receive free uniforms and books as part of their package.

Both students have been unable to attend school following the pandemic; however, they will now begin their education. At this time, it has been declared that both children would receive free education until matriculation.

According to Asim Hussain, millions



of pupils are not attending school for various reasons, including but not limited to poverty, the distance to school, the quality and relevancy, etc.

Even though they have the fundamental right to an education and the opportunity for a better future, many youngsters,

particularly females, cannot join a school.

The government and non-governmental organisations should complement each other's efforts by establishing meaningful links, purposeful collaborations, and a common goal for reaching every child nationwide.

Carelessness

ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists are crossing the railway track near Margalla Railway Station, it can lead to any dangerous accident in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

SAP appoints Saquib Ahmad as MD for Bahrain in addition to Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan

PNP

ISLAMABAD: SAP has appointed Saquib Ahmad as the Managing Director for Bahrain, in addition to his current role of leading operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. With close to 25 years' experience in the regional IT and Telecommunications industry, Ahmad will focus on supporting the digital transformation and AI capabilities of companies in the geography he oversees.

"The countries that Saquib Ahmad will cover represent an important growth market for

SAP, particularly in digital transformation, and we expect to see them benefit from the enormous potential of Business AI," said Ahmed AlFaifi, Senior Vice President of SAP Middle East and Africa – North, to whom Ahmad will report directly. "I am confident that with his in-depth knowledge of the region, strong IT background and proven leadership skills, Saquib is the ideal person to guide public and private sector adoption of new technologies



in a way that will deliver the quickest and most valuable benefits."

Prior to his promotion, Ahmad had been the Managing Director for SAP Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq, since 2017, 2019, and March 2023 respectively. During this time, he significantly expanded SAP's footprint in the three countries, exceeding growth targets and hiring local talent to enable the digital transformation of customers in both the public and private sectors. Prior to

joining SAP, Ahmad held senior positions in Pakistan and the Middle East at several large technology companies, including Siemens, Nokia, Comptel and Oracle.

Commenting on his appointment, Ahmad said, "I am looking forward to expanding my remit and to grow SAP's footprint in Bahrain, Iraq and Afghanistan, helping enterprises here to digitally transform and future-proof their operations. My focus will include extending our partner ecosystem and helping to equip young people with the skills needed in a digital economy."

Zong 4G celebrates Ramadan with free Islamic ringback tones and content!

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In the spirit of Ramadan, Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications provider, is delighted to announce a special promotion, offering free Islamic Ringback Tones (RBTs) and downloadable content for the entire holy month. This gesture serves to enrich the spiritual experience of our valued customers and welcome new users to the Zong family.

Throughout Ramadan, Zong 4G users can set the tone for the holy month with a complimentary Islamic Ringback Tone. Users can explore a wide array of tones and choose the one that resonates with them

Zong 4G is also offering access to a library of downloadable Islamic content through the Ring Back Tone service. Helping users enrich their Ramadan experience with recordings of Quran recitations, lectures, and nasheeds. (All Islamic content is free of cost for the month of Ramadan).

All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association elects new office bearers

Maryam Siddiq

ISLAMABAD: Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain, General Secretary Muhammad Ashraf Haraj, Raja Ilyas Kayani Provincial President Punjab, Irfan Muzaffar Kayani Divisional President Rawalpindi elected.

Rana Sohail Senior Vice President, Javed Iqbal Vice President, Asrar Shah Information Secretary, Dr. Rukhsana Coordinator Women Wing, Mrs. Sadia and Mrs. Fanwak Mirza Assistant Speakers

The private of organization of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association at the central, provincial, divisional and district levels has been completed. Formal notification of the appointment of newly elected officials is ongoing while the central president Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain congratulated all the officials for the development of the private education sector and reiterated

his commitment to continue his efforts for improvement and promotion.

According to the press release issued by the Central Secretariat, the organization of the All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, a nationwide organization of private educational institutions, at the central, provincial, divisional and district levels. At the central level, Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain President, Muhammad Ashraf Haraj Secretary General, Zulfikar Ali Siddiqui Joint Secretary, Qasim Abbas Finance Secretary. Similarly, Irfan Muzaffar Kayani Divisional President Rawalpindi Division, Muhammad Ibrahim General Secretary and Malik Javed Executive Member, Raja Ilyas Kayani Provincial President of Punjab, Sajid Ilyas Chaudhary have been appointed General Secretary of Punjab. At Rawal-



pindi District level Malik Hafeezur Rahman President, Chaudhary Arshad Latif Senior Vice President, Zahid Hussain Chaudhary Vice President, Iftikhar Mahmood Chaudhary General Secretary, Engineer Aamir Ali Raza Joint Secretary, Mohammad Azim Kayani Information Secretary, while Anbrin Safdar Coordinator Women Wing and Shaheen Kanwal Deputy Coordinator have been appointed. According to the statement, Rana Sohail Ahmed Central Senior Vice President, Javed Iqbal Raja Central Vice President, Asrar Shah Bukhari Information Secretary, Dr. Rukhsana Coordinator Women. Wing while Mrs. Sadia and Mrs. Fanwak Mirza have been appointed as assistants while Syed Abid Shah, Antak Hussain have been included in the central executive members. Malik

Deen Muhammad Awan has been made the central executive advisor. Provincial presidents, general secretaries, divisional general secretary, district general secretary, three presidents of Islamabad, Rawalpindi president Malik Hafeezur Rehman and general secretary Iftikhar Mahmood Chaudhary will also be members of the central executive council. Besides, Haji Abdul Rahm Khan will be the senior vice president of Punjab. Responsibility has been delegated. According to the statement, regular notifications for the above appointments have been issued. While the organizational structure will be completed soon across the country, Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain asked the academicians and those who are willing to provide services for the private education sector across the country to get in touch so that the educational future of the country is secured.

Spotify celebrates a decade of bringing K-Pop to the world



PNP

KARACHI: Spotify celebrated the anniversary of its global K-Pop flagship playlist, K-Pop ON!, dedicated to giving listeners a platform to discover and tune in to the best from the genre. To commemorate this milestone, the world's most popular audio streaming platform launched a special series of Spotify Singles as part of "My first K-POP Crush campaign", headlined by ENHYPEN, SHOWNU X HYUNGWON (of MONSTA X), and STAYC

ENHYPEN, the burgeoning powerhouse of K-pop, kickstarted the series with their rendition of BTS's "I NEED U". Their unique take on the beloved track, produced exclusively for Spotify, was the first of three Spotify-exclusive covers by this stellar line-up of K-Pop artists, each paying homage to the sunbaes (senior artists) who ignited their passion for the genre.

"This Spotify K-Pop ON! Single means so much to us. In addition to bringing ENGENEs (our fans) a new track, this was our chance to tell the stories of our beginnings with K-Pop through a song loved by the members," said ENHYPEN. "We've always appreciated Spotify's support for our music, so it's an honor to be a part of its K-Pop ON! Anniversary celebrations. We hope listeners enjoy our rendition of 'I NEED U', and we can't wait to hear their First K-Pop Crush stories too!"

Following suit, SHOWNU X HYUNGWON of MONSTA X delivered a heartfelt tribute to the legendary 2PM with their cover of "I Hate You". Infusing UK garage rhythms and R&B-inspired arrangements, the duo's rendition reflected their admiration for the iconic track and its profound influence on their musical journey.

Infinix announces new Note 40 Series to help power the future of mobility

PPA

LAHORE: Infinix, a trendy tech brand crafted for young consumers, is thrilled to announce the latest addition to its product lineup: the NOTE 40 Series. This remarkable series comprises the NOTE 40, NOTE 40 Pro, NOTE 40 Pro 5G, and the most advanced model, the NOTE 40 Pro+ 5G. By setting a new benchmark for fast charging, Infinix showcases its All-Round HyperSpeed Lab to unveil these groundbreaking products at the F1 Sepang International Circuit in Malaysia, igniting the exhilaration that emerges when speed and technology converge.

The NOTE 40 Series represents a significant advancement in Infinix's All-Round FastCharge 2.0 technology, introducing innovations such as 100W Multi-Speed FastCharge, Wireless MagCharge, and a self-developed chip that supports multi-function charging modes. Additionally, the series features a vibrant and responsive 3D curved 120Hz AMOLED display and a robust 108MP super-zoom camera system with OIS support. Infinix has also incorporated AI enhancements like Active Halo AI lighting and partnered with Sound by JBL, ensuring an unparalleled level of performance and efficiency.

"The Infinix NOTE 40 Series represents a significant advancement in charging technology, transforming the power experience. With our proprietary Cheetah X1 chip at its core, All-Round FastCharge has entered a new era, offering features like multi-speed charging and extreme temperature charging. We've also introduced the innovative MagCharge accessory kit, providing a seamless charging ecosystem for users. These advancements unlock the full potential of the NOTE 40 Series, enabling users to stay powered up all day, in any scenario, and in any weather," WeiQi Nie, Product Director at Infinix.

Atif Raza orders urgent resolution of public issues in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza has said that government departments should solve public issues on a priority basis. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting regarding the resolution of public issues at DC Office Attock. Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Waqas Aslam Marth, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Attock Adnan Anjum Raja, Assistant Commissioner Attock Shaughta Jabin, CEO Education Sajda Mukhtar, DSP Traffic Malik Tahir Abbas, DFO Ashfaq Bashir Bhatta, Chief Officer Attock Municipality Aftab Ahmed Khan, Chief Officer District Council Attock Sajid Ali Khan, District Sports Officer Naveed Abbas, Livestock and Social Welfare Department officers were also present in the meeting. DC attock directed all the concerned officers to resolve the public issues on an urgent basis. He issued important orders regarding the immediate elimination of encroachments from across the district, the issues of parking of Chung Chi rickshaws, the establishment of a suitable place for urban rickshaws, the issues of livestock and the cleaning campaign and directed the relevant officers to resolve all these issues within a specified period. Rao Atif Raza ordered DFO Ashfaq Bashir Bhatta to launch a full plantation campaign from March 21 and plant trees in the District Council Stadium. DC Attock instructed the District Sports Officer to prepare a track for cycling along with walking and jogging tracks in the District Council Stadium Attock. A period has been fixed for the officers concerned for the targets so that progress can be made on the public welfare projects.

Two proclaimed offenders held

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Police in two different strikes arrested two proclaimed offenders wanted in different crimes during successful raids at their hideouts in Attock on Tuesday, police sources said. According to the police spokesman, Pindigheb Police arrested a proclaimed offender (PO) wanted in attempt murder case. Police sources said Dilawar Habib shot and injured Muhammad Aftab and his cousin Afzal Sultan over old dispute and fled away. Later he was declared PO by the local court. On Tuesday police traced at his hideout and arrested him. While Jand Police arrested a proclaimed offender Syed Asad Abbas wanted in cheque dishonor case. Separately, Jand police arrested four persons for stealing jewelry and valuables from a house in Jalwal village. Police sources said that Muhammad Yousef along with his other three accomplices broke in to house of Muhammad Afzal when we out with his family and fled with looted booty. Police traced the suspects through human intelligence who during interrogation confessed the crime.

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Xi Jinping's Vision for China's Future

This week, 'Two Sessions-2024' in China unfolded against a backdrop of heightened party control and consolidated authority. With the passage of a revised law granting the Communist Party greater influence over the State Council, effectively merging party and state powers, the sessions underscored a significant shift towards centralized leadership. While General Secretary Xi Jinping did not personally address the meetings, his pervasive influence was unmistakable.

In a noteworthy display of Xi's dominance, Premier Li Qiang, China's second-ranking leader, referenced Xi's name a staggering 16 times in the government work report—a frequency surpassing any previous year since Xi assumed office over a decade ago. Li's explicit acknowledgment attributed China's accomplishments in 2023 to Xi's leadership and the guiding principles of "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," solidifying Xi's ideological imprint on governance.

The ramifications of these developments are profound, reverberating both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the reinforced grip of the Communist Party over governmental affairs signals a consolidation of power unseen in recent years. This heightened centralization aligns with Xi's broader agenda of promoting party loyalty and reinforcing ideological cohesion within the political apparatus.

On the global stage, China's shifting power dynamics attract close observation as the country's economic and geopolitical clout steadily grows. This expansion of influence prompts a reassessment of China's role in international affairs. The growing alignment between the Communist Party and state institutions has the potential to redefine China's interactions with the global community, impacting

decisions related to trade, diplomacy, and overall international relations strategy.

China's economic ascent, coupled with its assertive foreign policy, has positioned it as a significant player in global trade and investment networks. As the convergence between party and state authority deepens, the international community anticipates adjustments in China's approach to trade agreements, investment partnerships, and economic diplomacy. These shifts may influence trade dynamics, market regulations, and the distribution of economic benefits on a global scale.

Moreover, China's diplomatic outreach and engagement with other nations are subject to scrutiny amid evolving power dynamics. The consolidation of party leadership within state institutions could lead to a more cohesive and assertive foreign policy stance. This may manifest in China's approach to regional disputes, multilateral negotiations, and global governance structures. The international community closely monitors China's diplomatic initiatives for indications of strategic priorities and potential areas of cooperation or contention. Additionally, the evolving alignment of party and state authority in China could have implications for broader international relations frameworks. China's growing influence may prompt adjustments in global governance mechanisms, international norms, and the distribution of power within existing institutions. As China asserts itself as a major global player, its engagement with multilateral forums and global initiatives may reflect its evolving domestic political dynamics.

Ultimately, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the ensuing policy directives bear significant implications for China's trajectory, both domestically and on the global stage. The continued dominance

of Xi Jinping's ideological framework underscores a deliberate strategy aimed at consolidating power, shaping national identity, and asserting China's position as a formidable player in the international arena. China strides forward along its economic journey. It finds itself at a juncture, surrounded by a rapidly shifting global landscape. Within this context, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the subsequent policy decisions wield profound influence, not only within the borders of the Middle Kingdom but also resonating across international markets and geopolitical arenas.

Central to China's vision is a steadfast commitment to innovation, self-reliance, and the pursuit of high-quality growth. These pillars not only serve as guiding principles for domestic policy but also serve to define China's evolving role on the world stage. Innovation stands as the cornerstone of China's economic strategy, propelling the nation towards the forefront of technological advancement and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and creativity. By nurturing an ecosystem conducive to innovation, China aims not only to bolster its domestic industries but also to assert its position as a global leader in cutting-edge technologies.

Equally integral to China's economic narrative is the notion of self-reliance. As the world witnesses an era of heightened geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties, China seeks to fortify its resilience by reducing reliance on external sources and fostering indigenous capabilities across various sectors. This pursuit of self-sufficiency is not merely an economic strategy but also carries profound implications for China's geopolitical standing, positioning the nation as a formidable force capable of charting its own course

amidst global turbulence.

China solidifies its position as a global economic powerhouse, its policies and actions carry significant implications for international trade, investment flows, and geopolitical alignments. The continued emphasis on innovation and self-reliance may reshape global supply chains, with repercussions felt by businesses and consumers around the world. Moreover, China's commitment to high-quality growth may set new standards for sustainable development, influencing global norms and policies in areas such as climate change and corporate governance.

The recent Two Sessions in China have provided key insights into the direction of the China's economic and political strategy. President Xi Jinping's vision for China's future economic trajectory was a focal point of the meetings, emphasizing the importance of innovation, self-reliance, and high-quality growth.

Looking ahead, attention is now focused on the upcoming Third Plenum of the Party's Central Committee, where significant economic reforms may be unveiled. Xi Jinping's statements suggest that these reforms may align with his current economic strategy, focusing on achieving "high-quality development." China navigates its economic path amidst changing global dynamics, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the subsequent policy decisions will have far-reaching implications for both domestic and international stakeholders. The continued emphasis on innovation, self-reliance, and high-quality growth will shape China's economic trajectory and its role on the world stage in the years to come.

(The author is a foreign affairs analyst, media advisor, political commentator based in Peshawar, and serves as the Secretary General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter of the Pakistan China Friendship Association. He can be contacted via email at syed.gilani@gmail.com.)



Analysis

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

China upgraded CPEC

China on Tuesday commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's positive remarks on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and said that it was ready to work with Pakistan to building a growth corridor, a livelihood-enhancing corridor, an innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor to create an upgraded version of the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to deliver greater benefits to the two people.

China commends Prime Minister, Shahbaz Sharif's positive remarks and stands ready to work with Pakistan to build an upgraded version of CPEC, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP.

The prime minister, talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidon in Islamabad last week, stressed that Pakistan was keen to move to the next phase of CPEC, including operationalization of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate Chinese investment in Pakistan.

In an interview with Xinhua, China's state-run news agency, the prime minister said, Pakistan was now ready to move toward the second phase of CPEC to promote technological development and agriculture through the corridor.

While commending PM Shehbaz Sharif's positive remarks, the spokesperson said that the CPEC is an important flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"A batch of early harvests of cooperation have been achieved in areas of transportation, infrastructure, energy and industry," he added.

Lin Jian pointed out that last year, the two sides held a grand celebration event to mark the 10th anniversary of the launch of CPEC and added, Leaders of the two countries reached a new important common understanding on high quality developments of CPEC.

He said that China stands ready to work with Pakistan to follow the guidance of important common understandings reached by the leaders of two countries, build a growth corridor, a livelihood enhancing corridor, an innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor continue to deepen cooperation in various areas, foster new growth and build an upgraded version of CPEC to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples.

Launched in 2013, the CPEC, a flagship project of the China-sponsored Belt and Road Initiative, is a corridor linking the Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region, which highlights energy, transport and industrial cooperation.

The CPEC has brought Pakistan direct investment totaling over 25 billion US dollars over the past decade. The corridor also created many jobs opportunities in Pakistan.



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

Assessing Pakistan's Deteriorating Human Development in 2024

Pakistan has seen a concerning decline in its human development ranking in recent years, raising alarms about the well-being of its population and the need for urgent reforms. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) measures a country's progress in health, education, and income, providing valuable insights into the overall quality of life of its citizens.

The 2023/24 Human Development Report examines the troubling gridlock caused by uneven development, increasing inequality, and growing political division that we need to address immediately. Pakistan ranks 164th on a list of 193 countries on the UN Human Development Index, according to the report released on Wednesday 13 March 2024.

This shows a slight decline from the previous index, when Pakistan was ranked 161st, three rungs above its current ranking. The report also noted that Pakistan's HDI rank remained fixed at the 161st place globally from 2019 to 2021. The indicators are used to create a health index, an education index and an income index, each with a value between 0 and 1. Sri Lanka, ranked 78th, is the top in South Asia with 0.780 points, followed by Bangladesh at 129th with 0.670 points, while India is 134th with 0.644 points. Nepal is at 146th, and Afghanistan is at the bottom in the region at 182nd with 0.462 points, although it's slightly above the 10 lowest.

Education Ranking by Country 2023 Pakistan ranks 133rd out of 195 countries, indicating significant shortcomings in its education system compared to many other nations.

Despite efforts to improve access to education, quality remains a major concern, particularly in rural areas where schools are under-resourced and teachers are inadequately trained. The lack of educational opportunities limits the workforce's potential and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, contributing to the overall decline in human development indicators.

Healthcare in Pakistan also presents significant challenges, with issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to essential services, and a lack of skilled healthcare professionals affecting the population's well-being.

In February 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) ranked Pakistan 124th out of the 169 countries included in the survey. Maternal and child mortality rates remain high, and preventable diseases continue to burden communities, highlighting the need for comprehensive healthcare reforms and increased investment in public health initiatives.

Social inequalities, including gender disparities and discrimination against marginalized groups, further compound Pakistan's human development challenges. The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Pakistan has been ranked 142 out of 146 countries — with a 57.5 per cent gender parity the highest since 2006. Women and minorities face barriers to equal opportunities and basic rights, hindering their socio-economic advancement and contributing to overall societal inequalities. Addressing these deep-rooted issues is essential for fostering inclusive growth and improving the well-being of all Pakistanis.

To reverse the decline in its human development ranking, Pakistan must prioritize

comprehensive reforms across various sectors. Strengthening the economy through sustainable growth strategies, job creation, and social protection initiatives can help alleviate poverty and improve living standards for vulnerable populations. Investing in education, particularly in marginalized communities, and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning environments can empower individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Improving healthcare services, infrastructure, and access to essential medicines is crucial for enhancing the population's health outcomes and reducing preventable illnesses and mortality rates. Prioritizing maternal and child health, disease prevention, and healthcare provision in underserved areas can significantly impact the overall well-being of Pakistan's citizens.

Addressing social inequalities and promoting social inclusion through targeted policies and programs are also essential for fostering a more equitable society. Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status, can help build a more cohesive and resilient nation where everyone can contribute to and benefit from development efforts.

In short, Pakistan's decline in human development ranking is a wake-up call that underscores the need for concerted efforts to address the country's socio-economic challenges and improve the well-being of its citizens. By prioritizing investments in education, healthcare, social welfare, and inclusive development strategies, Pakistan can create a more prosperous and equitable society where every individual has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and dignified life. Time is of the essence, and bold actions are required to steer Pakistan back on track towards sustainable human development and shared prosperity for all.



Analysis

M. Ameer Hamza

Ramazan: The month of patience, compassion for all - I

Fakhar e Alam

Ramazan, the 9th holy month of Islamic calendar teaches Muslims to practice self-discipline, sacrifice and empathy by helping the underprivileged besides encouraging actions of generosity and compulsory charity for socioeconomic empowerment of poor people.

Famous for countless blessings, Ramazan is the holy month in which Muslims from across the world show exceptional endurance, patience and empathy besides seeking forgiveness and mercy keeping them modest and disciplined in life. From dawn to dusk, Ramazan's 30-day fasts abstain Muslims from all kinds of sinful actions, negative behaviors, and smoking. It teaches immense virtues and tolerance besides helping the needy, vulnerable and oppressed segments of society. "In Islam, patience means to endure or persevere in the face of any difficulty or hardship for Allah only. It requires us to tolerate any trial realizing that whatever we are going through is according to Allah's divine will, and He is the One to take us out from all difficult circumstances and challenging situations," said Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi, Chief Khateeab of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while talking to APP. He said Allah Almighty has repeated the word, 'Sabr' (patience) almost 75 times in the Holy Quran which indicates its significance for humanity. The Holy Qur'an says, "O you who believe! seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Saabireen (the patient ones). As devoted servants of Allah Almighty, we have an obligation to be grateful

when we earn Allah's bounties. Similarly, we should deal with all calamities and difficult situations with forbearance, self-control and humbleness," he added. "The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had also laid great emphasis on mercy, kindness and sympathies with the needy and poor people besides persons with different abilities during Ramazan and declared that the rewards of enduring patience in hard times are manifold in this world and in the hereafter. KP Chief Khateeab said, "Never a believer is stricken with a discomfort, illness, grief or mental worry but Allah Almighty will expiate his sins on the account of immense patience and compassion during Ramazan." He said a believer, who socializes with people and tolerates their mistakes with sympathy and gentleness would have greater rewards than the other believers, who do not do so. In another Hadith on the reward of Laylatul Qadar (the Night of Power) and according to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), every Muslim who prays on Laylatul Qadar with faith and sincerity, all his/her past sins would be forgiven." Eminent psychiatrist, Prof. Dr. Khalid Mufti who also served as Principal of Khyber Medical College Peshawar said that research studies had shown that Ramazan has immense medical and psychological benefits for a 'Roazadar' (fasting persons) including tolerance, compassion and empathy which last for the rest of the year.

To be continued

Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed developing new quality

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: First put forward by Xi in 2023 during inspection in China's north-east Heilongjiang province, the concept was highlighted at a key meeting on economic work last December, and became the subject of a group study session of the CPC leadership earlier this year. In this year's top legislature meeting, the concept dominated policy discussions in many areas, and was placed as the top priority of the government's work in 2024 in the government work report. Here are the key implications of the concept, and how China plans to implement as the country pursues high-quality development:

Q: What does it mean?
A: With innovation playing the leading role, new quality productive forces mean advanced productivity that is freed from the traditional economic growth mode and productivity development paths, features high-tech, high efficiency and high quality, and

comes in line with the new development philosophy.

Q: What are the drivers, basic connotation and core hallmark?

A: Drivers: revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and deep industrial transformation and upgrading

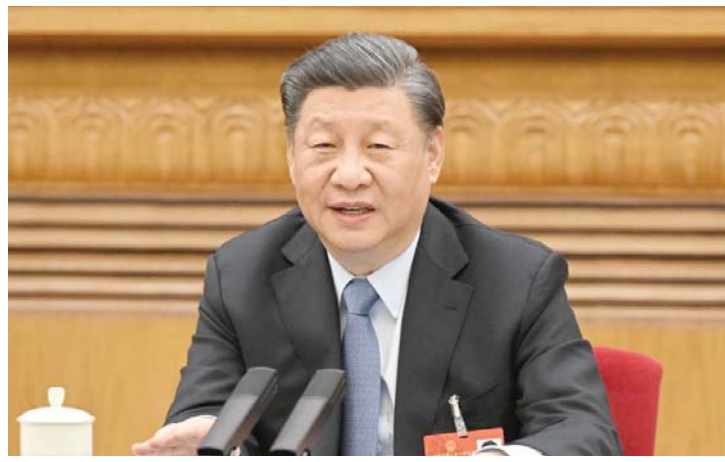
Basic connotation: the improvement of workers, means of labor, subjects of labor and their optimal combinations

Core hallmark: a substantial increase in total factor productivity

Marked by innovation, and with high quality as the key, new quality productive forces are advanced productivity in essence.

Q: Why it matters?

A: Promoting high-quality development has become the consensus and conscious action of the whole Party and society in the new era. There are still many factors restricting high-quality development, which must be guided by a new productivity theory.



Q: How to accelerate the development of new quality productive forces?

A: 1) To continue to well leverage innovation to speed up the development of new quality productive forces

1.1) Sci-tech innovation can generate new industries, new models and new growth drivers, which are the core

elements of the development of new quality productive forces

1.2) Strengthen sci-tech innovation, especially original and disruptive innovation

1.3) Sci-tech innovations should be applied to specific industries and industrial chains in a timely manner

1.4) Expedite the green transformation of growth models and contribute to carbon peaking and carbon neutrality

2) To further deepen reform in an all-round way and form a new type of relations of production appropriate to the development of new quality productive forces

2.1) Deepen reforms of the economic system and the science and technology management system, work hard to remove bottlenecks that hinder the development of new quality productive forces

2.2) Further deepen reform in an all-round way and form a new type of relations of production appropriate to the development of new quality productive forces

3) To smooth the virtuous cycle of education, science and technology as well as talent in accordance with the requirement of developing new quality productive forces, and improve the mechanism of talent training, introduction, use and flow

President Xi Jinping called for focusing on high-quality development as the top priority, urging efforts to step up innovation, foster emerging industries, adopt forward-thinking plans for developing future-oriented industries and improve the modernized industrial system.

Developing new quality productive forces does not mean neglecting or abandoning traditional industries, Xi said. It is necessary to prevent a headlong rush into projects and the formation of industry bubbles, and avoid adopting just a single model of development, he noted.

Localities should take into account their own resource endowment, industrial foundation and scientific research conditions in promoting the development of new industries, models and growth drivers in a selective manner, and use new technologies to transform and upgrade traditional sectors into high-end, intelligent and green industries, he said.

US asks Taliban to stop terrorist attacks against Pakistan from Afghan soil

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The United States has called on the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks against Pakistan are not launched from Afghan soil. Asked to comment on Pakistan's "intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations" inside the border regions of Afghanistan, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said that the US "deeply" regrets the loss of life and "injustices" sustained during an attack in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Seven Pakistani troops were killed in the terrorist attack at a security post in North Waziristan's Mir Ali area on Saturday.

"We urge the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil and we urge Pakistan to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counter-terrorism



efforts," Patel told his daily news briefing on Monday. "And we urge both sides to address any differences. We remain committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States and our partners and allies," he added. Last month, the U. N. Analytical Support and

Sanctions Monitoring Team said in a report that al-Qaida operatives were increasingly assisting TTP militants to launch cross-border attacks. And some ruling Taliban members joined TTP, the report noted. "Besides supplying weapons and equipment, Taliban rank and file, al-Qaida core.... assisted TTP forces

in cross-border attacks... Some Taliban members also joined TTP, perceiving a religious obligation to provide support," the U. N. report said. Asif Durrani, Pakistan's special representative to Afghanistan, told a seminar in Islamabad last week that up to 6,000 TTP fighters are sheltering in the neighboring country.

Pakistan envoy advocates for strategic alignment, financial compliance at UNESCO

Spokesman Report

PARIS: Ambassador of Pakistan to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad emphasising the alignment of the UN agency's strategic direction with its objectives said the frameworks needed to be in place to ensure compliance in observance of financial regulations. The ambassador, presenting Pakistan's perspective at 219 UNESCO Executive Board here, he underlined the importance of effective budget monitoring and controls, and mobilization of resources to address huge gaps in the achievement of SDGs, according to a Pakistan embassy's press release received on Tuesday.

Education remains a top priority for Pakistan, he said and lauded UNESCO's collaboration



with Pakistan to empower women by improving their access to digital skills and resources, which reflected a shared vision for gender equality and digital inclusion. He called for UNESCO's role in creating conditions for people to access their own cultural expressions and those of others by enhancing cooperation and ensuring accessibility of cultural goods and services beyond borders. Pakistan envoy advocates

for strategic alignment, financial compliance at UNESCO Further, he reiterated support for priority attached to Africa, gender equality and the SIDS Operational Strategy. The envoy stressed upon the importance of better internal coordination and improved strategic approach for effective representation of UNESCO priorities in global forums. Ambassador Iftikhar expressed strong

support for Palestinian people emphasizing that seven decades of injustice, oppression, state terrorism and illegal occupation was the root cause of the problem.

He added that indifference, bias and double standards underlying the manner in which UNESCO has so far responded to situation in Gaza has cast serious doubts on its credibility, which could also affect legitimacy of its actions in other situations. The ambassador drew attention of all members and said that in order to fulfil our mission of building peace in the minds of men and women, we must shun partisan approach and work to strengthen intellectual and moral solidarity and enhance cooperation and understanding to constructively bridge the knowledge and action gap that often hinders progress.

Israel's bombing in Rafah 'barbaric': Ministry of Foreign Affairs

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the brutal and bloody bombing committed by the occupation forces against our people, which has been escalating insanely since yesterday, and focused at dawn today by targeting homes above the heads of their residents in Rafah, leaving dozens martyred, wounded, and missing under the rubble.

The Ministry considers the escalation of this bloody bombing in Rafah a serious beginning to expand the occupation's crimes there,



despite the presence of more than a million displaced people in the region, without giving any consideration to their lives, and in official Israeli disregard for

international and American demands to protect them and secure their full humanitarian needs.

The Ministry believes that the expansion of geno-

cide crimes to include Rafah coincides with the beginning of the tour of US Secretary of State Blinken, who confirmed in his recent statements the absence of any serious Israeli plan to protect civilians in Rafah and demanded that Israel do so. The Ministry confirms that Israel began to destroy Rafah on a daily and systematic basis through repeated attacks on homes, bombing them, and causing dozens of martyrs and wounded. Israel began its aggression against the city of Rafah and did not wait for permission from anyone, nor did it announce it to avoid international reactions.

Palestine welcomes the European Union's decision

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomes the European Union's decision adopted by the Union's foreign ministers to impose sanctions on the colonizers who commit attacks against Palestinian citizens, and considers it a step in the right direction towards the necessity of imposing deterrent sanctions on the racist colonial occupation system, and the status of terrorist organizations and militias of the colonizers and the Israeli officials who stand behind them and support them.

The likes of Smotrich, Ben Gvir, and others are on terrorist lists. It also calls on



all countries to impose sanctions on the colonialists, prosecute those who hold their nationalities, and exert real pressure on the Israeli government to stop settlement, dismantle hotbeds of

Jewish terrorism operating in the occupied West Bank, dry up their sources of funding, lift the lid on them, and arrest and prosecute those who commit Crimes against the Palestinians, their land,

property, homes, and sanctities, and they continue to tamper and sabotage the West Bank in order to blow it up and throw it into a spiral of violence that is difficult to control.

In the same context, the Ministry strongly condemns the statements of the fascist ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir regarding the call and incitement to deepen settlement in response to the European Union's decision, as well as Ben Gvir's boast that he distributed 100,000 weapons, which means intensifying the possibilities of starting fires in the West Bank and committing more murders against citizens. Palestinians at the hands of extremist extremists among his followers.

UAE businessman appeals to Army chief to end 'Masjid-e-Sakina Sultan' occupation

PPA

KARACHI: H. E. Suhail Muhammad Al-Zarooni, a prominent UAE businessman and Chairman of Al-Zarooni Group, has appealed to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir regarding the occupation of "Masjid-e-Sakina Sultan" in the Defense Phase 8 area of Karachi, named in honor of his late mother Sakina Sultan. Mr. Zarooni urged the COAS to assist in reclaiming the mosque and to bolster the Pakistan-UAE friendship to reassure Emirati businessmen.

In a letter addressed to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, Suhail Muhammad Al-Zarooni highlighted the construction of "Masjid-e-Sakina Sultan" in Karachi's Defense Phase 8 in 2006, dedicated to his mother. He emphasized that funds from the UAE are regularly allocated for the mosque's upkeep, with strict prohibition on accepting external donations. However, during his last year visit following his mother's passing, he discovered the mosque was occupied.

"It came to his attention that the occupying group has been soliciting donations under a fake NGO bearing his mother's name,

exacerbating the situation."

The Emirati businessman expressed frustration over the lack of progress from the Defense Housing Authority (DHA) and other relevant institutions regarding the possession of a mosque. Despite sending letters to various authorities, including the Chief of Army Staff, Corps Commander Sindh, DG Pakistan Rangers Sindh, IG Sindh, Chief Minister, and Governor Sindh, only consolations have been received. However, he acknowledged the efforts of the FIA in assisting him.

He questioned why the Defense Housing Authority has

been delaying the return of the mosque's possession for a year, said that the committee formed, led by Imran Qureshi, who occupied the mosque. He urged the Land Grabbers to acquire land from DHA and build their own mosque if they are interested in earning rewards, but to relinquish possession of the mosque to him.

Mr. Al-Zarooni underscored the significant philanthropic contributions of the UAE Royal Family throughout Pakistan, including the construction of over 1000 mosques. However, he voiced concerns that the occupa-

tion of "Masjid-e-Sakina Sultan" could deter future welfare initiatives by Emirati businessmen in Pakistan.

Expressing disappointment with the current state of affairs, Suhail Al-Zarooni reiterated his plea to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir for intervention to regain control of "Masjid-e-Sakina Sultan" and ensure its management is transferred back to him. This, he emphasized, is vital for the continued service of Emirati businessmen towards the people of Pakistan and the advancement of welfare projects in the region.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
65,502.59	64,890.50
Day's High	Day's Low
65,624.72	64,940.17
Index Value	Change
12,438,714,326	+612.09
Percentage	Time
+0.94%	19 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,738.30	+15.75
Percentage	Time
+0.20%	19 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,110.76	+320.33
Percentage	Time
+0.83%	19 Mar, 4:06 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
40,003.60	+263.16
Percentage	Time
+0.66%	19 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	741.64	749.64
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.74	39.14
Danish Krone	40.69	41.09
Euro	301.45	304.45
Hong Kong Dollar	35.63	35.98
Indian Rupee	3.36	3.47
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	906.92	915.92
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	59.85
New Zealand \$	169.5	171.5
Norwegians Krone	26.19	26.49
Omani Riyal	724.36	732.36
Qatari Riyal	76.57	77.27
Saudi Riyal	73.9	74.6
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	26.89	27.19
Swiss Franc	314.63	317.13
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	75.65	76.4
UK Pound Sterling	352.9	356.4
US Dollar	278.6	281.2

SECP Strengthens Corporate Governance with Focus on Sustainability and Diversity

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is proposing amendments to the Listed Companies (Code of Corporate Governance) Regulations, 2019 to elevate the Board's responsibility towards environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations and gender equality and diversity & inclusion (DE&I).

The proposed amendments, in line with international best practices, emphasize the Board's role in ensuring that listed companies operate with a comprehensive understanding of ESG considerations. Boards will be responsible for setting the company's sustainability strategy, priorities, and targets. This will include aligning with the upcoming ESG Disclosure Guidelines to create long-term value for the company and its stakeholders.

The amendments also envisage a more active role for the Board in fostering DE&I within the company including promoting gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and the participation of women on boards, in management, and across the workforce. Further, to ensure proper oversight on ESG matters, the amendments propose that Boards be responsible for regular review and monitoring of the company's progress towards its sustainability and DE&I goals.

The amendments will allow boards to establish a dedicated sustainability committee with at least one female director or they will be able to assign sustainability and ESG related matters to an existing committee. This committee will oversee sustainability efforts, DE&I practices, ESG compliance, and report on integrating sustainability for long-term company value.

By embracing these amendments, Boards can position their companies for success in a world increasingly focused on sustainability and DE&I. These actions not only benefit society and the environment but also contribute to long-term financial stability and provide a competitive edge.

Youth who lack opportunities will keep risking their lives

Tariq Kharrak

ISLAMABAD: Brigadier (R) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Tuesday that unemployed youth from poor nations are joining the Russia-Ukraine war in large numbers.

Human smugglers are promising youth good jobs in Europe and then delivering them to the armies of both warring nations, he said. Aslam Khan said in a statement issued here today that this tendency can't be stopped as the unemployed youth of poor nations will continue to become part of this war for money, irrespective of their political affiliations.

He said youth should be prevented from becoming the fuel for the war. The family members are not even informed in the event of the death of a person in a foreign land. Human traffickers transport youth to

Russia on the promise of a good future in Europe. The youths are told they are being sent to Europe via Russia, where they will get a huge salary.

On reaching Russia, they are handed over to the army after snatching their passports. They are sent to barracks and given brief training, after which they are sent to the front line. Similarly, many young people are being handed over to the Ukrainian army. Young people from the same country fight and die on both sides to feed their families.

Aslam Khan said that apart from human trafficking, both countries are attracting the youth of poor countries in various ways, including citizenship after one year of military service. Retired people with military backgrounds also have a heavy salary in the army. He informed me that fifteen thousand people from only one country in the SAARC



region had joined the Russian army. In comparison, at one time, more than twen-

ty thousand people from dozens of countries joined the Ukrainian military many of whom died.

He disclosed that the former soldiers of the National Army Commando Corps who were abandoned when the Taliban took over the country are being drawn into this conflict.

Most of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces were left behind despite having spent about \$90 billion on their training, except for a small number who were evacuated.

Twenty to thirty thousand volunteer commandos remained in the war-torn nation. Since these men are currently "jobless and hopeless" and waiting to be resettled, recruiters will find them to be an easy target.

He said that until the economic conditions improve, nothing can stop the youth from becoming the fuel of this war.

Meeting

KARACHI: Second Meeting of FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Energy held at FPCCI Head Office convened by Malik Khuda Buksh the Convener of the Committee.



Photo: Spokesman

Sri Lankan envoy keen to enhance bilateral trade upto \$800 million with Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Ravindra Chandrasiri Wijegunaratne has said that he is keen to enhance the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka up to \$800 million, for which the potential in various sectors in both countries has to be exploited.

At present, the bilateral trade potential between the two countries is \$1 billion, which is achievable, but he is committed to take the bilateral trade to the target of \$800 million during his tenure.

The High Commissioner said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and United Business Group, FPCCI Secretary General, Zafar Bakhtawari and Executive Member of ICCI, Amir Hamza were also included in the delegation.

The envoy said that the bilateral trade between the two countries was \$400 million last year, which was less than that of \$510 million in year 2018. He added that Pakistan and Sri Lanka signed a Free Trade Agreement in 2005, which was Pakistan's first FTA with any country.

He said that there are multiple cooperation opportunities between the two countries especially in agriculture, industry, tourism and religious tourism.

The envoy further said that geo-strategically Pakistan is of utmost importance especially its land link with Central Asia



and that its economic integration is also very useful for Sri Lanka. He expressed the hope that strengthening of economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will take the bilateral trade between the two countries to a higher level once again.

The High Commissioner said that at one time Pakistan used to import 70 percent of Tea from Sri Lanka, which has now reduced to 2 percent, which needs to be increased.

The envoy went on to say that Pakistan's Basmati Rice and Citrus are very popular in Sri Lanka so Pakistan's trade in this field can be increased.

He said that Pakistan has many opportunities in religious tourism for Sri Lankans,

there are Buddha relics from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Taxila. He said that 5 flights are coming to Karachi and Lahore every week from Sri Lanka, which can have a good impact on tourism and trade.

He further said that a ceremony will be held at the beginning of the new year of Sri Lanka in coming April 24, and a Sri Lankan restaurant will be opened in any major city including Islamabad and Lahore.

On this occasion, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Sri Lanka was signed in 2005, but its true potential has not been exploited.

ACCA celebrates the power of neurodiversity in the workplace

PPA

LAHORE: Results from a major survey of the accountancy profession suggest that employers' focus on aspects of diversity must be more balanced. 41% of all respondents expressed concerns that their organisation focuses more on certain aspects of diversity than others, rising to 46% for Gen Z respondents. This finding is particularly relevant in a business environment where other markers of diversity such as neurodiversity in the workplace are slowly starting to gain relevant attention.

To explore the critical issue of neurodiversity in accountancy, ACCA is hosting a global webinar on 21 March hearing from leading

experts to explore the power of neurodiverse talent why it matters for today's profession.

Jamie Lyon, head of skills, sectors and technology at ACCA, said: "To be competitive and innovative for the future, it's really important that organisations have access to a real diversity of talent in their workforces. One key marker of diversity that demands greater focus in the months and years ahead is neurodiversity, and recognition of the unique skills and capabilities that neuro-divergent talent can bring to the organisation.

Over the coming months ACCA will be exploring this key issue and championing this really important agenda across the accountancy profession".

YADEA Pakistan and Bank Alfalah Unveil Partnership for Eco-Friendly Transportation Solutions



PPA

LAHORE: Yadea Pakistan, a global leader in electric bikes and Bank Alfalah have joined hands in a special partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate its customers with bike financing opportunities.

This collaboration is set to make it easier for people to buy Yadea electric bikes and enjoy exclusive benefits. Alongside Muhammad Salman MD Yadea Pakistan, GM Consumer Finance at Bank Alfalah Mr. Muhammad Qasim were present in the ceremony.

Yadea Pakistan and Bank Alfalah will now offer financing options for all Yadea bike models, allowing customers to spread their payments over

a period of up to 36 months. What's even better is that for the first 6 months, customers won't have to pay any extra money on the amount they borrowed. This 0% Markup offer is designed to provide a helping hand to buyers, making it more affordable to own a Yadea bike.

Speaking at the Occasion, Muhammad Salman-Managing Director Yadea Pakistan said, "Today marks a significant milestone in our journey towards making sustainable mobility accessible to all. Our collaboration with Bank Alfalah underscores our commitment to providing innovative solutions that not only revolutionize transportation but also empower individuals to embrace a greener, more efficient future."

KOICA and CCP Renews Collaboration to Enhance Competition Law Enforcement

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) have agreed to resume their collaboration efforts. KOICA has expressed its commitment to providing full support to CCP in capacity building, enhancing enforcement capabilities, and conducting joint research initiatives.

Mr. Je Ho Yeon, the Country Director of KOICA Pakistan Office, met with Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chairman of CCP, to discuss bilateral cooperation and capacity building.

KOICA has committed to facilitating an MOU between the Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) and CCP for information sharing, joint

research, and advocacy programs, particularly focusing on Korean companies operating in Pakistan's private sector. This collaboration is expected to enhance CCP's bid-rigging system and its ability to address competition issues in the digital economy.

One of the key points of discussion was KOICA's interest in reinstating a fellowship program for CCP officers in Korea. In the past, KOICA's fellowship program enabled 30 CCP officers to participate in a three-year training program in Korea. The program covered various aspects of competition law and included training sessions conducted by competition experts and senior KFTC officials.

The renewed cooperation is expected to further deepen the



officers' expertise and broaden their perspective, enabling them to effectively address emerging challenges in

competition law and policy. It will also facilitate the exchange of best practices between Korea and Pakistan,

ultimately strengthening the enforcement framework and promoting fair competition in both countries.

PM meets javelin athlete Arshad Nadeem; praises his achievements

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday praised Pakistan's ace javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem for achieving a historic feat of winning a silver medal in the World Athletics Championship 2023.

During a meeting with Arshad Nadeem, the world famed javelin throwing athlete, the prime minister praised his efforts to clinch the silver medal despite scant resources. His achievement made the nation proud, he added. The prime minister announced an award worth Rs2.5 million for Arshad Nadeem.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Romeena Khurshid Alam MNA and Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, a member of Punjab Assembly.

The prime minister said that there was immense talent in the country in sports which required to be groomed.

He also underlined the need of focusing on promotion of sports in the rural



areas. Arshad Nadeem apprised the prime minister of his sports career and achievements.

He said that he started his career

during 2012 and participated in the Youth festival afterwards, he participated in different world events in various categories and represented Pakistan.

He termed his meeting with the prime minister as very constructive and highlighted various measures to promote sports in the country.

International Kyokushin karate Belt awarding ceremony took place

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The distinguished guests for the programs were Bibi Wadari senior politician (PML-N) Member Provincial Assembly Punjab received a warm welcome upon his arrival. Alizay Gulshan Black Belt welcome her presented a bouquet of flowers.

During the event, senior boys and girls karate kaz demonstrated their proficiency in the art Kumite, kata and self defence techniques were highly appreciated by the chief Guest. Bibi Wadari sahiba admire the services of Shihan Atta Hussain Butt Black Belt 5th Dan Japan. International karate master instructor/Referee IKO-MATSUSHIMA Japan for his tireless efforts to promote Kyokushin karate in male/Female school colleges and universities through out Pakistan. Chief Guest distributed



International Black Belts/certificates trophies and karate watches to Sensei Saima Batool Black Belt 3rd Dan Japan (first woman ever in Pakistan got this level of degree) Sanpai Adeel Ashfaq Black Belt 2nd Dan Japan, sensei Ali Baig Black Belt 2nd Dan Japan. Sensei Mazher Ellahi awarded Referee certificate from IKO-MATSUSHIMA JAPAN. Sanpai Ali Adnan awarded International Judge IKO-MATSUSHIMA Japan. In her

speech chief guest encouraged the players with inspiring words, she announced to help in promotion of Martial Arts and even introduce it and make it in the knowledge of chief minister Punjab Muhterma Marium Nawaz she promised that one day you will perform before her too. She also announced cash cheque for karatekaz.

She said I am surprised to see girls karate kaz demonstrated their proficiency ability as well as male of all age.

Other Guests are Sana Ullah Ansari General Secretary Lahore Division Kyokushin karate organisation, Asif Rehman Accounts officer AG off, Faisal Abbas President PKKF, Sensei Amjad Prince 5th Dan, Sanpai Ali Sabir Hussain Butt, Sanpai zoela Fatima, Sanpai Aaila Zahra, Sanpai Alizay, Sanpai Ali Raza, Sanpai Shahbaz, Sanpai Jawad, Sanpai Dilshan Danish, Ghulam Rasool Watto, Muhammad Ali Butt (politician), etc.

Emma Raducanu pulls out of Miami Open with back injury

Sports Desk

Britain's Emma Raducanu has withdrawn from the Miami Open with a lower back injury, tournament organisers said on Tuesday, the latest setback for the 21-year-old.

Raducanu spent eight months out with wrist and ankle problems last year but returned to action in January and had an encouraging performance at Indian Wells last week where she reached the third round.

"I have been experiencing lower back pain and at this stage of my return to competition I don't want to risk anything happening," said Raducanu.

"I really tried my best to be ready and I'm sad to be pulling out of Miami as it's a cool tournament but wish the event all the best."

The 2021 US Open winner, a wildcard entry at Miami, was scheduled to play China's Wang Xiyu in the first round on Tuesday.

Raducanu had surgeries on her ankle and both wrists during last year.

She was beaten in the Indian Wells third round by world number two Aryna Sabalenka.

Wang will now face Slovakian qualifier Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

Jubilee Life Insurance presents the 'Wicketkeeper of the Tournament' Award after HBL PSL Season 9 Final

Sports desk

ISLAMABAD: Javed Ahmed, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jubilee Life Insurance presented the Wicketkeeper of the Tournament Award to Azam Khan after the HBL PSL 2024 final match between Islamabad United and Multan Sultans.

Throughout the tournament, Jubilee Life Insurance, the Official Insurance Partner for the HBL PSL Season 9 awarded the "Safe Hands of the Match" Awards for the most catches taken during the match. During the presentation ceremony of the final, the organization presented the "Wicketkeeper of the Tournament" Award for the most exceptional performance behind the stumps.



In Karachi, during PSL 9, Islamabad United triumphantly raised the trophy amidst a whirl of ticker tape and the brilliance of fireworks. Shadab Khan, leading his team, proudly hoisted the PSL trophy,

marking Islamabad's historic third championship win. This achievement came after a remarkable five-match winning streak to conclude PSL 9. Having restricted Multan to a modest 159-9, the match continued

until the final ball which Hunain Shah hit across the boundary for a four. Imad Wasim's five wickets, a first in a PSL final, was decisive for Islamabad with the ball. That and Martin Guppill's strike rate for his half-century made the two performances that enabled Islamabad United to lift the trophy after a five-match winning streak in the HBL PSL Season 9.

The final showdown between Islamabad United and Multan Sultans had been a spectacle to behold. Islamabad United emerged victorious, lifting the coveted trophy for the third time in PSL history. Under the leadership of captain Shadab Khan, Islamabad's triumph was a testament to their resilience and skill, culminating in a five-match winning streak that culminated in glory.

NA Speaker & Deputy Speaker felicitate Islamabad United for winning the finale of PSL Season-9

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Honorable Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah felicitated Islamabad United for winning the finale of PSL Season-9 after exciting play.

While appreciating the successful organisation of PSL Season-9 in Pakistan, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed that revival of sports in Pakistan is essential for positive outlook of country. He also applauded the sportsmanship of Islamabad United for winning the finale match after an exciting play. Further, he added, "Sports are pivotal for promoting healthy trends in Society especially among youth."

In his congratulatory message, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah commended the performance of Islamabad United in finale match of PSL Season-9. He also added, "As winning in sports is interlinked with focusing on performance so winning in life is also attached with focusing on performance."

Wanindu Hasaranga's return to Test cricket hindered

A Sports

DUBAI: Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga's return to Test cricket has been hit by a roadblock as the all-rounder was slapped by the International Cricket Council (ICC) with a two-match ban.

Consequently, Hasaranga will miss the two-match Test series against Bangladesh, scheduled to commence on March 22.

Hasaranga was found guilty of breaching 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" during the third ODI of the recently-concluded series against Bangladesh.

The incident occurred in the 37th over of Bangladesh's innings when Wanindu Hasaranga snatched his cap from one of the umpires and ridiculed the umpiring in the match.

He received a 50 per cent fine and accumulated three demerit points for his offence. This brought his total demerit points to eight in a 24-month period.

The all-rounder was already on five demerit points after receiving three demerit points in the third T20I against Afghanistan in Dambulla last month. Following this, he was suspended for two T20Is against Bangladesh.

Now, with the addition of the latest demerit points, he has breached the threshold of eight demerit points, which, pursuant to article 7.6 of the Code, have been converted into four suspension points.

The four suspension points equate to a ban from two Tests or four ODIs or T20Is, whatever comes first – Hasaranga will therefore miss the two ICC World Test Championship Tests against Bangladesh.

Remember, the star all-rounder on Tuesday, came out of Test retirement and was subsequently named in the Sri Lanka squad for the Test series against Bangladesh.

Wanindu Hasaranga announced to hang up his boots from Test cricket last year after representing Sri Lanka in four Tests.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi 'hopeful' to host Champions Trophy in Pakistan

A Sports

KARACHI: Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi expressed his hope and reiterated the board's commitment to host the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan.

Naqvi, while addressing the media at the National Bank Stadium on Monday night, following the conclusion of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9, gave an overview of his participation in the ICC Board Meeting, the core agenda of which was the Champions Trophy 2025.

"We are committed towards hosting the ICC Champions Trophy at home. I am really hopeful that it will take place in Pakistan."

"Champions Trophy was on the agenda of the ICC meeting I attended recently, and I reinstated our board's commitment towards hosting the event."

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi further revealed that the major stadiums of the country will undergo upgradation before the global event.

"Our three main venues – Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi – will be upgraded before the Champions Trophy. We will upgrade other venues later as well, once these three are done. Our stadiums will be state-of-the-art once they have been renovated."

He further confirmed to have met his Indian counterpart, Board for Cricket Control in India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah on the sidelines of the ICC Board Meeting and revealed that the conversation was "very fruitful".

"I met with Jay Shah, Secretary BCCI, and the conversation we had was very fruitful. I will not be going into details as it is a sensitive matter, but I want to reassure everyone that PCB is committed towards holding the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, and will leave no stone unturned to achieve that."

When asked about a decision being made regarding the coaching staff, Chairman PCB replied, "We are currently working on it. We are trying to finalise the coaching staff at our earliest."

Shadab Khan named captain of Team of PSL 9

A Sports

LAHORE: Shadab Khan of Islamabad United was appointed as the captain of the HBL PSL 9 Team of the tournament.

The panel was led by Usman Wahla (Director - International Cricket), comprising independent members, Danny Morrison, Mark Butcher, Tariq Saeed and Urooj Mumtaz.

During the selection process, the independent panel considered various aspects of T20 cricket, including consistency, impact on the team, overall performance, and best possible team combination.

25-year-old Shadab, led United to the third title in HBL PSL, was also named player of the tournament for his all-round performance, which included 305 runs and 14 wickets from

12 matches.

Along with Shadab, two Islamabad United players – Imad Wasim and Naseem Shah also made it to the team of HBL PSL 9.

Imad, played a vital role in United's winning campaign in HBL PSL 9, as his five for 23 in four overs and unbeaten 19 off 17 balls in Monday's final led his side to a two-wicket win over Multan Sultans at the jam-packed National Bank Stadium.

21-year-old Naseem Shah, who returned from shoulder injury after six months was another vital cog in United's success. The right-arm pacer bagged 15 wickets at an economy rate of 7.56.

Multan Sultans' who played their fourth HBL PSL final (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) on

Monday night, had five players making it to the playing XI, which included three foreign players – Usman Khan (430 runs, 2x100s, 2x50, strike-rate 164.12), Chris Jordan (six wickets, 8.42 eco.) and David Willey (15 wickets, 7.46 eco.).

The two local players from the Sultans' side are leg-spinner Usama Mir, who topped the bowling charts with a record 24 wickets from 12 matches, with six for 40 being his best figures, and Ifthikhar Ahmed, who scored 259 runs with a strike rate of 193.28.

Multan Sultans' captain Muhammad Rizwan is named as the 12th man of the side. The team also includes Karachi Kings emerging category player Muhammad Irfan Khan, who scored 171 runs at a strike rate of 140.16 and also bagged eight catches.

Peshawar Zalmi's opening pair of Babar Azam and Saim Ayub also made it to the HBL PSL 9 Team.

Right-handed Babar topped the batting charts with 569 runs from 11 matches at an average of 56.9 and a strike rate of 142.6. He also struck one century and five half-centuries during the course of the tournament.

22-year-old Saim scored 345 runs from 11 matches at a strike rate of 157.53. Zalmi player also bagged eight wickets and was named the all-rounder of the tournament for his heroics with the bat and ball.

Team of PSL 9: Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Usman Khan*, Shadab Khan, Ifthikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Chris Jordan*, David Willey*, Usama Mir, Naseem Shah, Muhammad Rizwan.



Awesome View

ISLAMABAD: Helicopter hovering over Pakistan Monument during rehearsal of Pakistan Day parade in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pak-Kuwait

PM for efforts to implement Pak-Kuwait \$10b agreements signed last year

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for concerted efforts from both sides to ensure the early implementation of seven agreements worth US\$ 10 billion signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in November last year.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi who called on him here.

The prime minister noted with satisfaction that both countries had signed seven

agreements for cooperation in diverse areas including food security, technology, hydel power, mining and minerals, water supply and mangrove rehabilitation, a PM Office press release said.

In this context, he emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which provided a robust and efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its historic and deep-rooted ties with Kuwait.

He thanked the Kuwaiti leadership, including Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al



Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, for the warm wishes and felicitations on his re-election.

The PM expressed the desire to work closely with them to further strengthen the bilat-

eral relationship with a focus on trade and investment. He also extended an invitation to Amir of Kuwait to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. The Kuwaiti ambassa-

dor thanked Pakistan for its support to Kuwait in difficult times.

He thanked former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his strong public support to Kuwait's independence and sovereignty during the 1990-91 crisis. He also expressed gratitude for Pakistan's support to Kuwait during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ambassador reaffirmed Kuwait's strong commitment to build closer ties with Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated Ambassador Almutairi's contribution in fostering stronger ties between Pakistan and Kuwait.

Chines Ambassador meets Minister for Finance & Revenue



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China H. E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong called on Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss key matters pertaining to economic cooperation and bilateral relations between Pakistan and China, at Finance Division, today.

Ambassador of China H. E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong extended felicitations to Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb upon his appointment as Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue and expressed confidence towards further strengthening of economic ties between the two countries.

Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed gratitude towards the Chinese leadership for their invaluable support to Pakistan in various sectors, particularly highlighting the

roll-over of SAFE deposits and the refinancing of commercial loans, which have significantly contributed to Pakistan's economic stability. He further emphasized the paramount importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan's growth strategy and overall economic recovery.

Both sides agreed to advance their collaboration in various sectors, including industrial zones, agriculture, mineral and mining, as well as renewable energy. It was discussed that next phase of CPEC would focus on monetisation of gains made during the first phase.

Concluding the meeting, both sides reiterated the desire to collaborate closely to further deepen and enhance the economic relationship between the two countries, reflecting the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that exist between Pakistan and China.

Pakistan's historic lunar mission with China's Chang'e 6

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Space Technology (IST) faculty and students with collaboration of Pakistan National Space Agency SUPARCO, Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) and China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University has successfully designed and developed Lunar CubeSat named ICUBE-Qamar.

ICUBE-Qamar orbiter carries two optical cameras to image lunar surface. Following successful qualification and testing, ICUBE-Qamar has now been integrated with Chang'e 6 mission. Chang'e 6 is 6th in series of China's lunar exploration mission.

The ICUBE-Qamar launch is scheduled for the second quarter of 2024, marking a significant step in Pakistan's space exploration.

Int'l community must take steps to achieve immediate cease fire in Gaza: spokesperson

Spokesman Report

BELJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Tuesday said that relevant members of the international community need to take substantive measures and make a great effort to achieve an immediate cease-fire to avoid more casualties in Gaza.

It has been over five months since the Gaza conflict broke out. The humanitarian situation on the ground has become

extremely dire. The struggling "Dar Al-Shifa Hospital" is an epitome of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Lin Jian said during his regular briefing.

He said that currently, the top priority is to achieve an immediate cease-fire, do everything possible to protect civilians, avoid more casualties and ease the humanitarian crisis.

Relevant members of the international community need to take substantive measures

and make a great effort to this end, he added. As per media reports, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, now in its 164th day, has killed over 31.7 thousand people and wounded 73.7 thousand others in Palestine.

Yesterday, Israel launched a military operation at Dar Al-Shifa hospital, the largest medical facility in Gaza, with Palestinian journalists arrested by Israeli forces during their raid.

Responding to a ques-

tion about appointment of Mohammad Mustafa as the new Prime Minister of Palestine, the spokesperson said, China congratulates Mohammad Mustafa on taking office as the new Prime Minister of Palestine.

Lin Jian said, any arrangement concerning the future and destiny of Palestine must follow the principle of the Palestinians governing Palestine and fully reflect the Palestinians aspiration.

We support the Palestinian authority in enhancing its authority and effectively controlling all of Palestine's territory, and support all political factions in Palestine in achieving internal reconciliation through consultation and dialogue, he added.

He said, China stands ready to work with all parties to de-escalate the current tensions and bring the Palestinian question back to the right track of the two-State solution.

KSrelief provides 2,625 food baskets in Pakistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) distributed 2,625 food baskets to the most vulnerable and displaced communities in the Balochistan and Punjab provinces.

The assistant programme benefiting 18,375 individuals, as part of the food security support project in Pakistan, SPA reported.

The aid comes as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's relief efforts through KSrelief to enhance food security in Pakistan amid the humanitarian crisis.

Pakistan needs \$4.8 billion before July, says SBP governor

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad said on Tuesday that Pakistan has only paid \$13.5 billion of the \$24.3 billion it owed this year and will need massive rollovers and inflows to meet its targets.

Speaking to analysts at the SBP, Ahmad said Pakistan owes a total of \$20.4 billion in debt repayments and \$3.9 billion in interest payments in the ongoing fiscal year.

Out of these, \$10.9 billion in debt and \$2.6 billion in interest payments have already been completed he said.

He added that Pakistan will need to arrange \$4.8 billion before this fiscal year ends to meet its repayment targets.

This will include \$3.5

billion for debt servicing and \$1.3 billion for interest payments.

However, the SBP governor also said around \$2 billion worth of debt is expected to be rolled over in the next two weeks. The government has plans for a further \$4 billion to be rolled over.

Pakistan's economy has faced massive current account deficits in recent years leading to dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The country has tried to plug the gap by taking loans from 'friendly countries' as well as bailout packages from the International Monetary Fund.

However, this has led to mounting debts that have put the government in a cycle of borrowing just to pay back its loans.

Pakistan remained one of world's three smoggiest countries in 2023

Reuters

SINGAPORE: Pakistan remained one of the world's three smoggiest countries in 2023, as Bangladesh and India replaced Chad and Iran, with particulate matter about 15 times the level recommended by the World Health Organization, data published on Tuesday showed.

Average concentrations of PM2.5 - small airborne particles that damage the lungs - reached 79.9 micrograms per cubic metre in Bangladesh in 2023, and 73.7 micrograms in Pakistan.

The WHO recommends no more than 5 micrograms.

"Because of the climate conditions and the geography (in South Asia), you get this streak of PM2.5 concentrations that just skyrocket because the pollution has nowhere to go," said Christi Chester Schroeder, air quality

science manager at IQAir, a Swiss air-monitoring organisation.

"On top of that are factors such as agricultural practices, industry and population density," she added. "Unfortunately, it really does look like it will get worse before it gets better."

In 2022, Bangladesh was ranked as having the fifth-worst air quality, and India was eighth. About 20% of premature deaths in Bangladesh are attributed to air pollution, and related healthcare costs amount to 4%-5% of the country's GDP, said Md Firoz Khan, an air pollution expert at Dhaka's North South University.

Indian pollution also increased last year, with PM2.5 levels about 11 times higher than the WHO standard. India's New Delhi was the worst-performing capital city, at 92.7 micrograms.

Pakistan denounces fresh round of curbs on Kashmiri political parties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday denounced the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and four factions of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League as "unlawful associations". It also denounced the decision to extend the ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd. Yasin Malik faction) for five more years, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

India's ongoing campaign to crush dissent in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) contravened the international human rights and humanitarian law as well as democratic norms, the spokesperson further said.

"The Government of India is urged to lift the curbs on the banned Kashmiri parties; release all the political prisoners, including Yasin Malik; and implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," it was reiterated.

With the fresh notifications, a total of 14 Kashmiri political parties have become outlawed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The affiliates of these parties are also facing persecution. Most notably, a death penalty has been sought for Yasin Malik, who was awarded life sentence in 2022.

Warrant issued for dozen PTI leaders, including KP CM Gandapur

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court has issued warrants for 12 PTI leaders, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in cases related to May 9 events as the party chairman describes such cases as "fake".

While hearing the case on Tuesday, ATC judge Malik Ijaz ordered officials to present two suspects before it on April 2.

Shahbaz Gill, Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema, Murad Saeed, Shabbir Awan, Shireen Mazari, and Shibli Faraz are also among a dozen leaders.

One of the cases against the above mentioned leaders is registered at the City Police Station. Warrants were issued on the application of SHO Aftab Ahmed.

In reaction to the development, PTI Chairman Gohar Khan said that the party holds the right to challenge the decision and described all such cases as "fake".

He was of the view that the federal government had "lost its senses" and resorted to retaliatory action and alleged that the incumbent rulers had seized power by stealing the people's mandate.

PM directs for...

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among government's top priority to support them.

The meeting was further informed about the weather forecast during April to June and July to September in the current season and the preparedness of NMDA.

The prime minister was also apprised of the relief assistance sent to the affectees of Gaza by the NMDA.

From October to this day, a total of 320 tons relief goods had been sent.

been distributed in Quetta and Dalbadin, it was further informed.

The PM directed that the relief process should be completed immediately, besides ensuring transparency in its distribution. With earlier completion of joint survey, the aid should be provided to the affected people only, he stressed, adding that affected people from the recent rains could not be left in despair and it was