



**Pakistan not invaded Afghanistan but acted against terrorists' hideouts: FO**

Pakistan on Thursday said that the intelligence-based operation it had carried out on March 18 was not an invasion of Afghanistan but an action against the sanctuaries of terrorists hiding inside Afghanistan and posing threats to Pakistan's security. (Details on Page 8)



**Ethiopian Airlines getting overwhelming response in Pakistan: envoy**

H. E. Jemal Bekir Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, visited the ICCI and had a detailed discussion with its leadership on strengthening cooperation between trade bodies of the two countries. Upon his arrival, the ambassador was accorded warm welcome by the ICCI's President H. E. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari... (Details on Page 5)

**Called on**

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir on Thursday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.



Photo: ISPR

**Forces kill highly-wanted terrorist in Panjgur**

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed a highly-wanted terrorist in an intelligence-based operation in Panjgur on Thursday. According to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations, the terrorist was identified as Chakar Liaquat. ISPR said that the forces had identified a terrorist hideout and successfully engaged them, killing Liaquat and injuring two other terrorists. "Weapon and ammunition were also recovered from the



killed terrorist, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities," ISPR said. The forces also undertook a sanitizing operation to make sure no other terrorists remained in the area. The operation comes days after Pakistan carried out strikes into Afghanistan on terrorist hideouts after a terror attack killed seven soldiers in Waziristan.

**'COAS Asim Munir briefs PM Shehbaz Sharif on Saudi visit'**

**Spokesman Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Thursday called on PM Shehbaz Sharif, ARY News reported, citing sources. During the meeting matters related to the Pakistan Army's operational matters came under discussion. COAS General Asim Munir also briefed the premier about his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, sources said. PM Sharif expressed his satisfaction at the outcome of COAS's Saudi Arabia visit. COAS Gen Asim Munir and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman vowed to strengthen defense cooperation between the two brotherly countries. According to the Pakistan Army media wing, He was talking to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir who called on him during his official visit to the Kingdom. Crown Prince Salman expressed a desire to further strengthen bilateral relations with Pakistan. Mohammad Bin Salman said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will always stand with Pakistan in the future as well, ISPR added. During the visit, the Army Chief also met with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al Ruwaili, Saudi Assistant Minister of Defense Engineer Talal Abdullah Al Otai-bi and other senior military leadership.

**Iranian Embassy categorically condemns terrorist attack in Gwadar**

**PPA**  
ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, categorically condemns the cowardly terrorist attack in Gwadar, leading to the martyrdom of two Pakistani security forces. Thwarting such violent attacks, which are destined to prevent the Sustainable Development of the region, disturb Sustainable Development Objectives and to destroy the infrastructures, by the Pakistan Army is appreciable.

**FM, DG IAEA discuss issues related to nuclear energy**

**Spokesman Report**  
BRUSSELS: Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar Thursday met Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Mariano Grossi, on the sidelines of the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels. The Foreign Minister appreciated IAEA's role in enhancing peaceful uses of nuclear technology and for organizing the First ever Nuclear Energy Summit. He highlighted that as a founder member, Pakistan attached great importance to the Agency's work. The Foreign Minister also highlighted the importance of nuclear energy in combatting climate change and Pakistan's desire to enhance share of nuclear energy in the energy mix. He also underscored the importance of technical cooperation work of the Agency to which Pakistan is also making significant contribution. Foreign Minister Dar stressed that the international financial institutions and banks should support nuclear energy projects in developing countries to enable them to meet their energy needs and achieving zero emissions goals. He urged IAEA to continue its role in sensitizing the world about the importance of nuclear energy as a clean source. The Director General IAEA appreciated Pakistan's collaboration with the agency. He added that in Asia, Pakistan is playing a key role in sharing experience and expertise with developing countries. He agreed that financing of nuclear projects was an issue and that he would soon engage with International Financial Institutions to resolve the issue.



**Mubashir Hassan appointed PIO**



**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Senior Information Officer of Grade 20 Mubashir Hassan was appointed as Executive Director General/Principal Information Officer (BS 21) of the Press Information Department (PID). The appointment was made in accordance with sub-section 10 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973, said a notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Thursday. Mubashir Hassan is a senior officer of Information Group who has held various important positions and also successfully completed National Security and War Course 2024 from National Defense University Islamabad recently.

**Attaullah Tarar for devising mechanism to counter fake news regarding CPEC**

**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday emphasized the need to devise a mechanism at the government-to-government and media-to-media level to counter fake news regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Attaullah Tarar said this during a meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zaidong who called on the minister here. The Chinese Ambassador congratulated Attaullah Tarar on assuming the portfolio of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The CPEC, Pakistan-China strategic relations, ongoing cooperation in the media and film sector, and China-Pakistan Information Corridor were discussed in the meeting. Discussions were held regarding the expansion of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of media and the establishment of the Pakistan-China Information Corridor to prevent fake news about CPEC. Tarar said that China had supported Pakistan at every international forum including Shanghai Cooperation Organization and United Nations. He opined that a close and sustainable partnership between the two countries in the form of CPEC was in the wider interest of the entire region. The CPEC was an important milestone in promoting the economic development of Pakistan, Tarar remarked. In the meeting, the two countries agreed to expand cooperation in the field of film and culture. "Like China, Pakistan is an ancient civilization with a history of seven thousand years," Tarar told the Chinese envoy. He said many spiritual and cultural movements emerged from the Indus Valley of Pakistan that shaped Asian culture. The ancient Gandhara civilization of Pakistan introduced Buddhism to much of East Asia, including China, he stated. He said Pakistan and China also jointly organized a Gandhara Buddhist exhibition at the Palace Museum last year. In the meeting, discussions were also held regarding the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda between Pakistan and China. Tarar said that Romina Khurshid Alam was in close contact with China regarding the SDGs project. The MoU between Pakistan's official news agency Associated Press of Pakistan and China Media Group (CMG) for the third Belt and Road Forum was also discussed in the meeting. The minister said that a film production agreement was also under process between the governments of the two countries. The minister said that the MoU between APP and Xinhua News Agency was in progress. Cooperation for the joint production of a travel documentary between CGTN and PTV was also discussed by the minister and the Chinese Ambassador. CM Murad approves Rs5.5bn to launch Smart Safe City project  
**Bureau Report**  
KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved Rs5.5 billion agreement between the Sindh Police Department and NRTC to launch the first phase of the Smart Safe City project in Karachi's red zone. The approval of the agreement was made in a meeting held at CM House and was attended by Home Minister Zia Lanjar, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, IG Police Riffat Mukhtar, MD NRTC Brigadier Asim Ishaque, DG Sindh Safe Cities Authority asif Aijaz Shaikh, and others. The CM was told that under the Smart Safe City project, 1300 CCTV cameras would be installed at 300 sites in Red Zone & Airport Corridor with FR and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability within eight hours solar back.



**IHC orders arrangements for PTI founder's online meeting with lawyers**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday issued the written judgment on a plea seeking meetings between PTI founder Imran Khan and his legal team. The court in its verdict ordered the Adiala jail superintendent to arrange online meetings between the former prime minister and his lawyers till the resolution of the security issues. IHC's Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan issued the judgment in which the court sought a report from the Adiala jail superintendent tomorrow (Friday) regarding the arrangement following court orders. In the judgment, the court said that the PTI founder's lawyer had said that they were restricted from meeting their client due to security issues. The IHC ordered the jail authorities to make arrangements to facilitate Imran Khan's online meetings with his legal team. They were directed to ensure the required internet speed for smooth huddles of the former prime minister. On Adiala jail's superintendent's contention that the jail rules did not allow online meetings, the court said that the rules were drafted in 1978 and there was no such facility in that period. The Punjab home department on March 12 banned meetings with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in Adiala Jail, citing security threats. The ban was slapped for two weeks the sources within the Punjab home department said while media coverage is also prohibited in front of Adiala Jail's gate no-5. The security officer stated that media coverage is not allowed and directed that the media teams would stay away for 2km far from Adiala jail.

**Major reshuffle in bureaucracy after PM's approval**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
ISLAMABAD: In another major reshuffling in the bureaucracy, the Establishment Division notified several secretaries after the approval of Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif. According to the details, a 22-grade officer Aizaz Aslam has been appointed as the Secretary of Climate Change. A Grade 21 officer Ali Tahir, who was serving as Special Secretary in the Establishment Division, has now been appointed as Additional Secretary Incharge of Science and Technology. Secretary of Science and Technology Ali Raza Bhutta has been directed to report to the Establishment Division. Separate notifications have been issued by the Establishment Division in this regard. Earlier on March 17, the federal government appointed Rashid Mahmood Langrial as the Secretary Power Division. As per the details, Rashid Mahmood Langrial, a BS-21 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, was serving as Additional Secretary Industries and Production Division. Rashid Mahmood Langrial had served in the same post in the past as well but was transferred and appointed as Additional Secretary (Incharge) Industries and Production Division in December 2023 by the then caretaker government.

**Board meeting**

# Medicine mafia making fake medicines will not be tolerated in any case: Muhammad Salimullah

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Secretaries of 11 Districts within the limits of Drug Court Multan addressed the quality control board meeting.

Under the chairmanship of Chairman Drug Court Multan Muhammad Salimullah, a meeting of Secretaries Quality Control Board of 11 districts within the limits of Drug Court Multan was held.

Chairman Drug Court Multan briefed all secretaries regarding the cases of Drug Quality Control Boards and directed to take necessary steps for prosecution.

Chairman Drug Court Multan

Muhammad Salim ullah said that the secretaries of the quality board should make a routine of monthly meetings so that the cases can be effectively filed in the court on time. He further said that the purpose of the meeting is to improve the efficiency of the drug inspectors as well as to remove all ambiguities associated with better filing and prosecution of cases.

In the meeting, Law Officer Ansir Malik said that the presence of drug inspectors should be made mandatory to submit the cases so that the shortfall in the cases can be removed in a timely manner.

Chairman Drug Court Multan Muhammad Salim ullah also issued



instructions to conduct sampling of drugs purchased through local purchase available in all government hospitals and secretaries to drug inspectors of all major teaching hospitals to conduct sampling of locally purchased drugs from attached medical stores. Instructed to do.

Chairman Drug Court Multan Muhammad Salim ullah warned that the mafia making fake medicines will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

In the meeting, the members of Drug Court Muhammad Javed Iqbal and Dr. Muhammad Nabil Saleem. Prosecution Officer Shafiqur Rehman also attended.

**Iftar**

FAISALABAD: People breaking their fast at an Iftari arranged by philanthropists at Ghanta Ghar Chowk in the City.



Photo: Online

## World Forestry Day celebrated in Rahim Yar Khan

**Atta Mohd Sanghi / Naveed Ahmed Baloch**

RAHIM YAR KHAN: On the occasion of World Forestry Day, a ceremony was organized by the Forestry Department, 10,000 saplings were planted in Abbasia Forests Tehsil Liaquatpur. Deputy Commissioner Khurram Parvaiz planted saplings along with students of public and private educational institutions. On the direction of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government is celebrating World Forestry Day as "Plant for Pakistan".

Deputy Commissioner Khurram Pervez while addressing the event organized on the occasion of World Forestry Day said that forests and wildlife are the beauty of this earth and their protection is the first duty of all of us. Forests are essential for both human life and the survival of wildlife, for the protection of which our



young generation will have to move forward. Addressing the ceremony held at Abbasia Forests Tehsil Liaquatpur, the Deputy Commissioner said that deforestation is on a global scale.

Former MPA Chaudhry Masood Ahmed said that the Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is working on the mission of making the province green. He said that forests are very important for the development of cities and

forests in the city. Presence of prosperity, beauty of the city and increase in health and well-being of the inhabitants. He said that on the occasion of the World Day of Forests, it is our duty to raise awareness among the people about the importance of forests and plant more trees. He said that the young generation is now responsible. It has to be ensured that they will not only plant the plants but also ensure their protection and cultivation. Divisional Forest Officer

Raja Javed Iqbal said that Pakistan is among the 10 countries in the world that are most affected by climate change. Lack of awareness about the utility. He said that the Forest Department this season 5 lakh saplings will be planted across the district in Bihar tree planting campaign. Assistant Commissioner Liaquatpur Shakib Sarwar along with tehsil officers and students of educational institutions participated in the ceremony and planted saplings.

## Naseer Vohra visited Director Public Relations Digital Studio

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Central President Cloth Board and Union Group Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra visited Divisional Information Office. Director Information Khurshid Jilani welcomed him. Naseer Yousuf Vohra visited Director Public Relations Digital Studio. Naseer Yousuf Vohra said that the importance of information office to highlight government policies through print, electronic and social media is not hidden from anyone and the establishment of digital studio in highlighting innovation. It will prove to be important. The team work of the largest virtual office of the district is exemplary. Director Information informed Naseer Yousuf Vohra about the working procedure of the department in detail.



**World Forestry Day**

## National responsibility to plant trees to protect the better environment: Marium Khan



**Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim**

MULTAN: On the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, trees were planted in Multan Arts Council on the occasion of World Forestry Day. Accordingly, Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan planted a sapling in Multan Arts Council and while speaking, she said that it is our national responsibility to plant trees to protect the environment. We should plant trees around us so that future generations can grow up in a better environment. Every person has to plant his own share to reduce environmental pollution. Commissioner Multan further said that trees are the guardians of our breath and the guarantors of survival. In view of global environmental problems, it is our national and religious duty to adopt plantation. On this occasion, Multan Arts Council Director Dr Riaz Hamdani also planted a sapling on the occasion of World Forestry Day. Deputy Director Public Relations Iram Salimi, Assistant Directors Multan Arts Council Zahid Iqbal, Aleem Shahzad and staff were also with him.

## TUF celebrates World Plantation Day



**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad University launched a plantation drive "Plant for Pakistan" on March 21 to strengthen environmental sustainability efforts and on the occasion of World Plantation Day. Students, faculty members and staff participated enthusiastically in this event, who highlighted TUF's commitment to environmental protection and community involvement.

TUF's Environmental Society also organized an awareness walk on the occasion. Later, with enthusiasm and determination, the students and staff planted different types of saplings in the campus and also prayed for the prosperity and development of the country of Pakistan.

# Hyderabad's cultural heritage at risk: Corruption threatens ancient landmarks

**Spokesman Report**

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad is the second-largest city in the Sindh province and has the honor of being the former capital of Sindh in the past. The city holds significant national and cultural heritage sites or ancient relics, such as the Pakka Qila (Solid Fort), Kacha Qila (Mud Fort), or the smaller forts, among which lies the tomb of the founder of Hyderabad city, Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro. These ancient sites, particularly in Hyderabad, are rapidly deteriorating due to negligence and corruption, leading towards rapid decay. While the major sites like Pakka Qila and Kacha Qila have been fully under control, their walls are crumbling rapidly, indicating a dire situation where in a few years, these forts' mention might

DISLOCATION OF MARBLE PLATE OF MAIN GATE OF PUKKA FORT, HYDERABAD



the indication of this tower in the fort, but it has been learned that Director Antiquities Abdul Fattah Sheikh has also stopped this work.

The office of the Director of the Department of Antiquities is also in Hyderabad, but some officers of the Sindh government are so affluent that they prefer to sit only in the Karachi office and do not even consider coming to the Hyderabad office. If they do not come to the Hyderabad office, how can the people of Hyderabad reach them? The political, social, and cultural organizations of Hyderabad have demanded an immediate and serious notice from the Sindh government regarding the worst corruption in the preservation of Hyderabad's cultural and historical heritage and the Department of Antiquities in Hyderabad.

only be found in books.

The preservation section of Pakka Qila in Hyderabad, which is still under the authority of the Department of Antiquities, has been turned into garbage dumps. Both historical towers have been completely sealed off with garbage after spending billions of rupees on their renovations once, only to be washed away in a single rain. Similarly, the Sindh government and other international organizations have repeatedly

allocated funds to preserve these historical sites, but instead of securing these sites, the funds have been repeatedly squandered due to corruption.

The part of Pakka Qila with the royal gate, the mausoleum of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro, and a small piece with the protective wall of Pakka Qila is still left with the Department of Antiquities. However, drug addicts have occupied this protective section completely. It is not far

when this part of Pakka Qila will also be seized and demolished. The royal gate of Pakka Qila, which was heavily damaged during the renovation due to the worst negligence of the officers and contractors of the Department of Antiquities in 2021, was reconstructed four years later, but the historical inscriptions on the gate's arch were not placed deliberately. When various organizations and the media highlighted this issue, the work

to demolish the reconstructed gate began again, and then the historical inscriptions were placed on the gate. After that, for the third time, this royal gate is being demolished after reconstruction, and it is being said that the historical inscriptions were not placed at the correct place due to a mistake.

Now the question arises, are these developmental funds received by the Department of Antiquities national treasures,

or ill-gotten money repeatedly wasted, even corrupted? The condition of the third small fort of Hyderabad is also the same, where the constructions made with billions of rupees were washed away in a single rain, and there too, the tower coming from Pakka Qila was sealed off with garbage, and no effort was made to clarify its indication, which is equivalent to erasing national and cultural heritage. A few days ago, work was started to clarify



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# Donald Lu Extends US's full support to Shahbaz... - I

During his testimony before a subcommittee of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Donald Lu (20th March, 2024) tacitly and implicitly endorsed the legitimacy of the current government, which assumed power amidst allegations of significant election rigging. Throughout his extensive testimony, he largely echoed the narratives put forth by the outgoing coalition government, interim government, and the newly sworn-in government of Shahbaz Sharif on various contentious issues. In doing so, he underscored the United States' commitment to supporting the newly installed government of Shahbaz Sharif in Pakistan, even when certain policy decisions may seem contrary to US interests.

During the hearing, Mr. Lu emphasized Pakistan's significance as an important country with abundant opportunities for US companies and multinationals to thrive. He refrained from using leverage through the IMF or trade with Pakistan to impose major policy decisions, instead suggesting that the US supported the IMF's positive review of Pakistan's program. This support has paved the way for the release of the last tranche of over one billion US dollars, expected to be disbursed to the State Bank of Pakistan soon. Furthermore, there are expectations that the US will assist Pakistan in negotiating a new agreement with the IMF once the current Stand-By Agree-

ment expires next month.

Moreover, the testimony highlighted several contentious decisions made by Pakistan, notably its pursuit of completing the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, carrying out surgical strikes within Afghanistan, expelling illegal Afghan aliens, and refusing to repatriate Shakeel Afridi, who assisted the CIA in locating Osama Bin Laden. Despite these concerns, the US remains predominantly focused on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Pakistan's deepening reliance on China. Particularly worrisome is the escalating debt associated with CPEC projects, the mounting circular debt owed to Chinese companies for electricity, and Pakistan's steadfast commitment to proceeding with the completion of the Pakistan-Iran pipeline.

Donald Lu also implicitly expressed support for the role of the Pakistani armed forces, acknowledging their involvement in civilian matters and their participation in the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). He commended the Pakistani armed forces for their significant contributions, highlighting their status as the sixth-largest armed forces globally and their extensive training alongside US generals over several decades. Lu underscored

the pivotal role of the Pakistan Army in advancing US objectives, including assistance against the USSR, efforts in Afghanistan, and the eradication of global terrorist threats like Al-Qaeda, particularly in safeguarding US interests worldwide.

In his eloquent and impactful speech, Lu effectively cautioned against undermining the Pakistani army and disregarding their concerns regarding Pakistan's Afghanistan policy, surgical strikes within Iran and Afghanistan, and the military-supported campaign to address illegal immigration within the country.

Donald Lu's testimony highlighted the US acceptance of the contentious election results in Pakistan, acknowledging the orderly conduct of the elections while expressing concern over incidents of pre- and post-election violence and disruptions to communication networks. Although allegations of widespread rigging during the vote counting process were acknowledged, the US opted not to exert pressure on the Pakistani government or state authorities to address these claims.

Furthermore, Lu's testimony echoed the narrative put forth by the PML(N) and PPP regarding the Election Commission of Pakistan's role in adjudicating

allegations of election rigging and ensuring justice for affected parties. However, the US refrained from endorsing specific actions to remedy these concerns, such as restoring access to blocked social media websites, including X, or ensuring freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and press freedom within Pakistan.

In response to a congressman's assertive questioning about allegations of widespread rigging and the imprisonment of PTI leadership and supporters, Donald Lu maintained a composed demeanor and emphasized the US stance of non-interference in the internal judicial processes of other countries. He reiterated that both governments would proceed according to established diplomatic protocols and practices, indicating that the US Ambassador may or not meet with the imprisoned PTI Chairman.

Regarding allegations of US involvement in regime change and the Cipher scandal, Lu denied any direct involvement and dismissed the Cipher allegations as baseless. He contradicted statements made by Pakistan's former DG-IS-PR, asserting that the Cipher was not a reality. While acknowledging the presence of service chiefs at the National Security Council meeting, he refrained from characterizing it as a conspiracy to overthrow the government, instead labeling it as blatant interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Pakistan urges justice for Palestinians

Highlighting the world's pressing challenges of conflict and war, poverty, inequality, religious intolerance, and climate change, Pakistan called for justice for Palestinians suffering in war-ravaged Gaza. Speaking at a special ceremony held at the UN headquarters in New York to celebrate the International Day of Nowruz, Ambassador Munir Akram said Nowruz isn't just about celebration; it's a time for reflection.

"On this occasion, let's also pause to remember our brothers and sisters in Palestine, enduring ongoing tragedy and strife, as we strive for peace and justice for all, the Pakistani envoy added. The event was sponsored by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Referring to the essence of Nowruz as a symbol of nature's renewal and the resilience of the human spirit, he emphasized its importance as a moment for forgiveness, fresh beginnings, and embracing one another. Quoting the renowned Pakistani poet, Nasir Kazmi, Ambassador Akram his words captured the spirit of Nowruz, describing it as a festival of hope, joy, and blessings. He underscored the universal language of Nowruz, shared by diverse communities across Asia and Europe, uniting them through art, music, literature, and customs. In this regard, Ambassador Akram also quoted the Pakistan Prime Minister's message, extending greetings to those observing Nowruz.

The Prime Minister, in his message, highlighted Nowruz as an opportunity to promote cultural synergies, unity, and inclusivity, thanking the Nowruz observing communities for their contributions towards building a better Pakistan. Reflecting on Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, Ambassador Akram emphasized the deep-rooted connection between Nowruz and the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. He noted the significance of Nowruz, known as "Baharan" in Pakistan, particularly in regions like Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, where communities come together to celebrate.

Ambassador Akram stressed Pakistan's commitment to fostering peace, solidarity, and reconciliation through the celebration of Nowruz. By cherishing Nowruz as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Pakistan reaffirmed its dedication to promoting values that transcend differences and foster harmony within and beyond its borders. Ambassador Akram concluded with an excerpt from the poem "Nowruz" by renowned Pakistani poet, Parveen Shakir, encapsulating the anticipation and hope associated with the arrival of spring.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awzat)

## Significance of Pakistan Day Parade and Myths - II

Furthermore, a strong military fosters national unity and cohesion, instilling a sense of pride, patriotism, and solidarity among citizens. Through rigorous training and discipline, the military cultivates values of leadership, teamwork, and resilience, molding individuals into accountable and contributive members of society. Additionally, the armed forces act as a melting pot of diversity, uniting individuals from various backgrounds and regions under a common commitment to national service. In times of hardship, the bonds and camaraderie fostered within the military transcend differences of ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status, uniting citizens in a shared resolve to safeguard the nation's honor and integrity.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

On the international stage, a robust military enhances a nation's prestige and influence, projecting strength and credibility in diplomatic negotiations and strategic partnerships. A well-prepared and equipped military sends a clear message to the global community of a nation's determination to protect its interests and uphold its obligations, fostering trust and cooperation among allies and partners. Furthermore, the military serves as a platform for military-to-military exchanges and collaboration, facilitating dialogue and confidence-building measures to mitigate tensions and promote regional stability.

As the vanguard of its duties, the Pakistan Army stands as the foremost guardian of the nation's territorial integrity, ensuring the security of borders against external threats and aggression. With a history marked by regional conflicts and geopolitical challenges, the Army's steadfast vigilance and readiness act as a deterrent against any forces seeking to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty. Through advanced training, cutting-edge weaponry, and strategic planning, the Army remains prepared to confront any adversities that may arise.

Moreover, the Pakistan Army plays a pivotal role in preserving internal stability and peace within the country. From counterterrorism operations to disaster relief endeavors, the Army takes the lead in combating internal threats and providing aid to those in need. Whether responding to natural calamities like earthquakes and floods or combating insurgent elements aiming to destabilize the nation, the Army's swift and decisive actions demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of all citizens.

Beyond its core responsibilities in defense and security, the Pakistan Army is deeply embedded in the societal fabric, serving as a symbol of national solidarity, pride, and resilience. Through extensive outreach initiatives, the Army actively engages with local communities, deliver-

ing vital services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development in remote and underserved areas. Furthermore, the Army's involvement in nation-building initiatives and social welfare programs underscores its dedication to improving the lives of ordinary Pakistanis and advancing inclusivity and equality across all sectors of society. Beyond its domestic contributions, the Pakistan Army plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's foreign policy and strategic partnerships on the global stage. With a proud history of engaging in peacekeeping missions and international collaborations, the Army has garnered widespread recognition and admiration for its professionalism, integrity, and commitment to promoting global peace and stability. As a responsible member of the international community, Pakistan actively engages in multilateral forums and initiatives aimed at addressing global challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and climate change, with the Pakistan Army playing a crucial role in supporting these endeavors.

Among the myriad events and festivities marking Pakistan Day on March 23rd each year, the Pakistan Day Parade stands out as a spectacular showcase of the nation's military strength, cultural heritage, and unity.

Held in the capital city of Islamabad, the Pakistan Day Parade is a visual extravaganza that pays homage to the resilience and sacrifices of the Pakistani people in their pursuit of independence and sovereignty. At its core, the parade features an impressive display of military prowess, with contingents

## Dillydallying & Shillyshallying Must Stop Now

S. U. Choudhry

Truth does prevail in the end. Whatever mish-mash & criminal devilry is committed does come to fore and has to end. Enough damage to the State standing of Pakistan has been caused. "Enough is Enough". Political devastation must cease.

The US Congress Session, 20th March, in its 'grand finale verdict' about the "Cypher-Conspiracy" to oust an ex-PM, as alleged by the ECP-disqualified Party, has termed it as a complete falsehood and dismissed it as null & void. It is a slap on that Party's defunct leadership. But, worse still, it caused a big dent on Pakistan's image because of the Machiavellian role played by the premeditated 'plan' hatched by that so-called "cult-mesmerizer" and hell-bent, social-media-exploiting 'wizard'. Apart from so many criminal offences, the hapless cricket-turned politician - with total immaturity personified - committed the topmost, heinous 'cypher' crime, well-nigh a treachery, which makes him guilty under the Law for capital punishment.

It is inconceivable how the State, Establishment & concerned Governments of the time remained apathetic to all kinds of the 'Opposition' derelictions despite rulings of Higher Court and in NAB cases. Over the past ten years - particularly since IKN's constitutional overthrow in April 2022 - the State & Govt. were like sitting ducks. People simply watched in awe & horror how they proved to be impotent mostly procrastin-

ating and even often shillyshallying. The worst scenario in this respect came about after the 9th May 2023 Party-workers' jihadi-style militant rowdiness and the military establishment declaring stern action to court-martial the guilty lot. Alas, time passed with "to do or not to do" paradox and other than periodic cudgeling and some semblance of arrests & convictions, there was No serious action on convictions. And the 'youthia' at the behest of headline deranged Party workers kept getting boosted and emboldened causing so many law & order situations and massive fake social media outbursts. Common people got disillusioned with all kinds of political antics leading to uncertainties and economic instability, especially since the 8th March General Elections in which the disbanded symbol-less Party created yet another stunt of unlawful inclusion of their 'Independents' in a non-registered, religious entity.

Suggested here that she may reconsider introducing Chinese convertible electro-pedal green bicycles, free of fossil fuel, and control of carbon-emission, and costing much less, for children, youth & seniors, in cycling outdoors to keep happy & healthy. Expectedly, as desired by the people & workers, Nawaz Sharif will soon become the Life-long Chairman of the Party and get fully involved in politics, development sector and major projects & novel programs.

All said, now is the time - especially after the US Congress' 'truth' submission - to ban PTI and disqualify & jail that mindless & unpatriotic IKN for good who deceitfully caused so much damage to the country and so much of shame to its people.

Dillydallying or shilly-shallying on this action will no more be acceptable to the Nation.

As PM Mian Shehbaz Sharif moves speedily, the Parliament may have to act now to pass a resolution about the fate of IKN-PTI.

Further, frugality being PM's priority, stringent 'Austerity Measures' as adopted for strict compliance, will need to be supported and adapted by all & sundry also. And, surely, the policy decision for a new Five-year Economic Plan, already announced, will take the country out of morass of extravagance into an expected era of progress & prosperity.

Here, it is suggested that - for the creation of a 'State bank/capital of Inflation Subsidies' to help the middle class and the lower middle class - a well-conceived 'Public Endowment Fund' be established with injection of maximal monetary contributions by business tycoons, rich landlords & philanthropists, and the heavy weights in the Corporate Sector, with the President & PM taking the lead, that would include attractive tax-remission packages. In conclusion, let's say, it is time dillydallying & shillyshallying mindset be wrapped up.

And, let's shun polarization to unite and let's shed despise to move forward.

Let's be friendly, let's bear no malice - like our Chinese comrades profess and as Mian Shehbaz Sharif propounds - to hope not despair and bring about prosperity, peace & harmony in our beloved country.

-The author is a former UN Peace-keeping Officer, Founding CPCD Chairman, and a Peace, Climate-Change & Human Rights

**Strengthening cooperation**

# Ethiopian Airlines getting overwhelming response in Pakistan: envoy

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Thursday visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and had a detailed discussion with its leadership on strengthening cooperation between trade bodies of the two countries.

Upon his arrival at the ICCI, the ambassador was accorded warm welcome by the Islamabad Chamber's President H. E. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other office bearers of the chamber.

Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including the need-

ful initiatives for fostering business and trade connections between the two countries.

On the occasion, the Ambassador highlighted the critical role played by Ethiopia in "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policy by starting the Ethiopian Airlines operations in Karachi.

"The Ethiopian Airlines in Pakistan is getting an overwhelming response and now we are working towards expansion of its operations to Islamabad and Lahore as well," the Ambassador noted.

He said steps were being taken to boost people-to-people and business-to-business relation between the two countries.

"In the last one and half years, we have taken over 75-member busi-

ness delegation to Ethiopia and facilitated arrival of 50-member trade delegation from Ethiopia in Pakistan," he said, adding the mainstay of the Ethiopian Embassy's endeavours was economic diplomacy that would ultimately connect the people of two countries at grassroots level.

He also announced to take another trade delegation to Ethiopia this year in May.

Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari lauded the Ambassador's role in bringing the people of two nations close and called for the joint efforts to further strengthen the trade ties between the two countries.

He assured the Ambassador of all-out support in mobilizing another trade delegation to Ethiopia this year.



**Pak-U. S. Relations**

# ISSI hosts roundtable discussion with Ambassador Donald Blome

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a Round Table discussion with H. E. Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, on "Pakistan-U. S. Relations in the Context of Regional and Global Developments. Other participants included former Ambassadors and diplomats, heads of think tanks, academics, practitioners, and area experts.

In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood recalled the past patterns of the relationship and dilated on its current dynamics. He noted that the Pakistan-U. S. relationship has been largely influenced by external circumstances, encompassing regional and global developments. The thrust of bilateral cooperation has now shifted from security to a wider range of areas, reflecting changing priorities. While counter-terrorism remains important, the greater focus now



includes trade, investment, energy, IT, environment, education, culture, and people-to-people exchanges.

Ambassador Blome in his remarks highlighted the importance of establishing robust ties to strengthen the relationship even further. He emphasized that economic development is the cornerstone of Pakistan-U. S. relations with a renewed focus on ground-

work to bolster ties and collaborate effectively towards fostering enhanced peace, security and strategic stability in South Asia; conflict in Europe and the Middle East; developments in Asia-Pacific; and maritime security.

In the end, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the Board of Governors, ISSI presented the Institute's memento to the Keynote Speaker followed by a group photo.

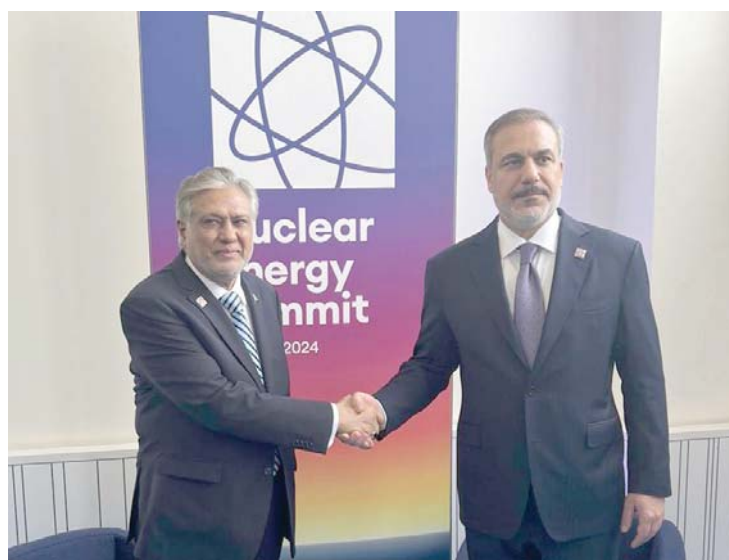
# Foreign Minister meets his Turkish counterpart on the sidelines of Nuclear Energy Summit 2024

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: On the Margins of Nuclear Energy Summit, the Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar met his Turkish counterpart Foreign Minister Fidan Hakan.

Turkish Foreign Minister conveyed felicitations on behalf of the President of Türkiye to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on successful elections.

The two Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the upwards trajectory of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Türkiye. They expressed their resolve to increase the bilateral trade to US \$ 5 billion mark as per vision of the leadership of two countries. They also agreed to further enhance defence and strategic cooperation as well as cooperation in civil aviation to further increase flight connections.



Foreign Minister Dar reiterated Pakistan's readiness to share experi-

ence and expertise in nuclear energy and applications.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar appreciated Turkish Foreign Minister for Türkiye's principled stance on Jammu and Kashmir and its unflinching support for the oppressed people of Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The two Ministers also discussed humanitarian crisis in Gaza and reaffirmed unflinching support to the people of Palestine.

The Turkish Foreign Minister highlighted that the two countries have immense potential given their strategic and geographic locations and underlined the importance of synchronising their actions and policies for cooperation at global and regional level.

Foreign Minister Dar extended invitation to visit Pakistan to his Turkish counterpart which he gladly accepted.

# CareTech Foundation UK launches Pakistan Special Education Initiative

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: A UK-based organization has launched the Pakistan Special Education Initiative (PSEI) to support children with disabilities in accessing quality mainstream education and achieving important life milestones.

PSEI, native to the UK's Education, Health, and Care Plan, aims to develop a screening system, provide resources for teachers to support students with special needs better, establish quality standards and training for school staff, and design a tailored Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) curriculum.

Founded and funded by the Care-Tech Foundation, PSEI addresses the significant challenge in Pakistan, where an estimated 1 in 4 people face mental health or disability-related issues.



With 60% of Pakistanis under 35, there's a growing need for mental health and SEND support

in schools.

Currently, many schools lack the expertise to properly support students with disabilities appropriately, leading to limited admissions and insufficient support. Partnering with CareTech Holdings Ltd., a leading social care provider in the UK and Middle East, PSEI has initially engaged five Pakistani schools to collaborate with five UK schools, facilitating knowledge exchange and access to specialist training resources.

CEO Jonathan Freeman, MBE, emphasizes the Initiative's transformative potential and calls for local support to ensure its success. With an initial focus on five schools, PSEI plans to scale its efforts annually, involving specialist partners and engaging the Federal Government of Pakistan to adopt its educational framework.

## An Interactive Ambassador Diplomacy between Iran and Pakistan

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: IR. Pakistan Ambassador to Iran, H. E. Muhammad Mudassir Tipu writes on X "I joined the festive celebrations of Nowruz by visiting the imposing Azadi Square in Tehran. The spirit of the Iranian people was full of hope and joy marking this iconic occasion at the Square. The beautiful spring with shining sunlight made the experience worth remembering.



IR. Iran ambassador to Pakistan, H. E. Reza Amiri Moghadam, writes in response: "That's great to see my dear brother H. E. Muhammad Mudassir Tipu attired in the gorgeous national Pakistani garment On the occasion of Nowruz At the Azadi Square In Tehran. Wishing you and your colleagues at the embassy of I. R. Pakistan a very blessed and joyous spring in Tehran.

## World Oral Health Day awareness Seminar, Walk held in DHQ Hospital



**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: Hospital Administration in celebration of World Oral Health Day, an awareness seminar and walk were organized at the District Headquarters Hospital in Wana, South Waziristan.

The event aimed to educate participants about the significance of oral health care and promote awareness regarding the spread of infections during dental procedures.

The event commenced with Assistant Commissioner Wana, Faisal Ismail, serving as the chief guest, emphasizing the importance of World Oral Health Day in his address. He highlighted the critical role of oral health in overall well-being and encouraged participants to prioritize dental hygiene practices.

Dr. Asif Kamal, a dental surgeon, delivered a comprehensive presentation on oral health care, shedding light on preventive measures and proper dental hygiene techniques. Additionally, Dr. Inayat Ullah, the Infection Control Officer, briefed the audience on the spread of infections during dental procedures, emphasizing the importance of stringent infection control protocols.

Dr. Hamid Mahmood, the Medical Superintendent and Health Manager of DHQ Hospital Wana, presented the annual performance report of 2023, highlighting achievements and areas for improvement in healthcare services.

Rahmat Ullah, President of Wana Welfare Association, also addressed the seminar, emphasizing the role of community involvement in promoting oral health awareness and encouraging proactive healthcare practices.

## RCCI Massive tree plantation at Potohar Triangle: Vision Green Punjab Initiative 2024-27

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has launched a large-scale plantation and clean-up campaign to build a green belt around Potohar Triangle, Soan Bridge and along the banks of Nallah Lai. The title of the drive is Plant for Pakistan.



RCCI President and Chairman RWMC Saqib Rafiq along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Amir Khattak, Director AIC, Brigadier Ejaz Qamar Kiani, and Chief Conservator Forests Department Sh. Saqib Mahmood, Vice President Faisal Shahzad and EC Members launched the drive by planting trees at the green belt and banks of Nallah Lai.

Earlier, President and Chairman RWMC Saqib Rafiq visited Missa Keswal near Gujarkhan and participated in the plantation drive. Deputy Commissioner Gujarkhan, Mian Murad Hussain, representatives from the Forest Department, Forest officer Muhammad Waqas Butt, Education Department and notables were also present on the occasion.

Under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, Green Punjab Initiative 2024-27, RCCI in collaboration with the Forest Department, and Schools has started a large-scale plantation campaign in Rawalpindi. The plantation and cleanliness drive aimed to build green belt around this area to increase the scenery of the city. President Chamber and Chairman RWMC Saqib Rafiq, giving details, said that the project will not only beautify the city but will add to the environment of the vicinity.





## Apex Committee meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs special session of the Apex Committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council on Thursday.



Photo: Online

## Special Apex Committee briefed about SIFC

## Spokesman report

ISLAMABAD: The Special Apex Committee was Thursday briefed about the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) initiative and major contributions made by it towards the investments, privatization and overall micro-economic stabilisation of the country.

Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) convened the Special Apex Committee Meeting here.

It was chaired by Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif and attended by former Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar Ul Haq Kakar, Chief of the Army Staff, members of outgoing and incoming Federal Cabinet and Provincial Chief Ministers besides, high level government officials. The meeting was conducted with a singular focus of briefing the Cabinet in the presence of the Caretaker Cabinet, marking a historic moment of seamless transition.

The Committee admired the leadership of Prime Minis-

ter Shehbaz Sharif for envisioning and launching the SIFC in June 2023, which has now moved from its formative phase and evolved progressively under the Caretaker Government. The committee underscored the need of continuing a consensual approach under SIFC to navigate the myriad of challenges being faced by the country. The Committee also vowed to ensure continuation of policies and take tough decisions in the larger interest of the country by setting correct economic priorities.

The former Caretaker Prime Minister congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Cabinet and Chief Ministers on assuming their responsibilities and wished good luck for dealing with economic challenges and transforming Pakistan as one of the top economies of the world.

The Chief of Army Staff reassured the fullest support of Pakistan Armed Forces to backstop the economic initiatives of the Government and ensured the provision of safe, secure and conducive environ-

ment to nurture country's true economic potential.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that SIFC is the way forward under the challenging times and an iron resolve is needed to serve the country like never before. He urged the Federal Cabinet to join hands, keep political differences aside, and work as a cohesive team to keep the momentum of economic stability. He also thanked the caretaker government for continuation of larger national economic agenda in a befitting manner.

## China strongly condemns terrorist attack at GPA complex



## Spokesman Report

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Thursday strongly condemned the terrorist attack targeting the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Complex and reiterated the Chinese government's

firm support for Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and defend national security and stability. We strongly condemn the terrorist attack and mourn for the Pakistani personnel killed in the attack, Lin Jian said during his regular briefing held here.

He said China is against all forms of terrorism and firmly supports national developments and social stability in Pakistan.

"We firmly support Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and defend national security and stability", he added. As per media reports, a terrorist group attacked the complex of Gwadar Port Authority Complex and the activity ended after all the terrorists were shot to death.

## Swat's Hadiqa Bashir wins Global Citizen award for women's rights work

## Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: A young woman from Swat has made brought a major to honour to Pakistan by winning the Global Citizen Youth Leader award. Saidu Sharif's Hadiqa Bashir, who is only 22 years old, is the first Pakistani to win the award.

Bashir is an activist working for the education and rights of women in the Swat region and has founded the 'Girls United for Human Rights'. She has also focused on fighting the practice of underage marriages of girls in the area.

"Hadiqa champions gender equality in tribal regions, emphasising education's transformative power for young girls," Global Citizen said.

"Through a dynamic blend of leadership and advocacy, she continues to make significant contributions to social justice and sustainable development in Pakistan, embodying the spirit of positive change," it added in its profile of Bashir.



The activist has already received the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Award, Asian Girls Ambassador Award and has also been a finalist for the Commonwealth Award.

Bashir hails from the same area as Malala Yousafzai, who became a Nobel laureate and global celebrity for her work for women's education.

This year, Global Citizen is honouring 32 young innovators and advocates working to address the issues perpetuating extreme poverty from across the Asia-Pacific region.

The winners of the award will be given funding to solve social issues in their community and to expand their ongoing efforts.

## Pakistan not invaded Afghanistan but acted against terrorists' hideouts: FO

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday said that the intelligence-based operation it had carried out on March 18 was not an invasion of Afghanistan but an action against the sanctuaries of terrorists hiding inside Afghanistan and posing threats to Pakistan's security. "Pakistan has not invaded Afghanistan. We have no designs against Afghanistan... The operation was not against the people, institutions, or military of Afghanistan. The target was the terrorists belonging to Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, which along with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, is

responsible for multiple terrorist attacks inside Pakistan," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing.

She said Pakistan respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and wanted friendly relations with the neighboring country. Both countries should work towards removing the issues hindling the strengthening of the bilateral ties, she remarked. She told the media that Pakistan had repeatedly conveyed its serious concerns to the Interim Afghan Government over the presence of terror outfits including TTP inside Afghanistan which have consistently

used Afghan territory to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory.

She said the Afghan side was repeatedly urged to take concrete action to ensure that the Afghan soil was not used as a staging ground for terrorism against Pakistan. She said following the March 16 terrorist attack in North Waziristan, Pakistan had communicated with the Afghan side and also issued a demarche, conveying serious concerns about the involvement of Gul Bahadur Group in the attack.

The spokesperson informed the media that Pakistan had shared concrete pieces of evidence with Afghan side

on the presence of terrorist hideouts which was also confirmed by international observers as well as the United Nations. Besides, Pakistan also conveyed the involvement of India in sponsoring and funding terrorist groups in Afghanistan to carry out terrorism in Pakistan, she added.

Responding to the media queries regarding the statement of US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu at the US Congressional hearing, the spokesperson said it was an internal matter of the US where the Congressmen and the Administration were involved.

She said Pakistan valued

its relations with the US and believed in constructive engagement and expressed the hope that the US Congress would also continue playing a role in strengthening the ties. She observed that some statements made at the hearing regarding Pakistan showed a misunderstanding of the issues. Coming to the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, Spokesperson Baloch said Pakistan was starting work on the project within its territory, considering its significance for meeting its energy needs. She said Pakistan was also engaged with the US on the matter and had conveyed the cruciality of the project for Pakistan.

## CM appeals to the citizens to become part of the Plantation campaign "Plant for Pakistan"

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz on the eve of the International Day of Forests has appealed to the people to become part of the campaign "Plant for Pakistan". CM in her special message on the occasion of the International Day of Forests emphasized that the earth is like a mother which provides us life, food and livelihood adding that plant a tree and look after it as well. CM stated, "Plant a tree so that humans can breathe freely, the environment can be purged from the toxic air and the land of Punjab should be further beautified and become green. Plant a tree and do away with the hazards of smog. Allah Almighty will also be pleased and life will smile and rejoice as well." Maryam Nawaz said, "Free saplings are being distributed during the plantation campaign and the students should lead "Plant for Pakistan" campaign. For the first time the plantation record and numbers will be identified through the latest QR code and the usage of GIS technology. We will oversee and ensure that trees should be seen planted on the earth and not in papers during the plantation campaign.

## PM, Interior Minister discuss matters related to security, PCB



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday held meeting with Federal Minister for Interior, Anti-Narcotics and Chairperson Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to ministries of Interior, Anti-Narcotics, national security and Pakistan Cricket Board.

The minister informed the prime minister about the task given to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for stopping theft of electricity in the country. He also briefed the prime minister about the proposed reforms and restructuring plan of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and National Counter Terrorism Authority.

The PM said strict action should be taken against the power thieves and no leniency should be shown to them.

They also discussed the overall political situation in the country.

## Minister Dr. Al-Maliki: Palestine's resolutions are unanimously approved by UNESCO

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Dr. Riyadh Al-Maliki approved by the Executive Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at its 219th session held today in Paris, two resolutions related to the State of Palestine, unanimously: occupied Palestine, and cultural and educational institutions. He pointed out that the adoption of these resolutions is important to preserve the rights of the Palestinian people.

Minister Malki stressed the importance of preserving schools, educational facilities, historical and religious monuments, and preserving Palestinian sanctities. And to continue working to strengthen educational and cultural institutions, by providing services and developing skills and competencies in education and in the technical and vocational field. And work to enhance the safety of journalists in the Gaza Strip, and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in addition to rejecting excavations, works and projects in the occupied city of Jerusalem, especially in and around the Old City. And the process of constructing roads for the colonists. And the destruction of schools, including Abu Nuwar School and Tana School, and its plans to destroy Khan Al-Ahmar School.

## FIA busts gang involved in visa scam

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday busted a gang involved in defrauding people in the name of foreign jobs.

A spokesperson for the FIA said that the Anti Human Trafficking Circle conducted the raid in F-7 sector of Islamabad and arrested four including a woman gang member, who had deprived citizens of billions in a visa scam.

The suspects also included Malik Bilal, Umair Kazmi, and Saddam Hussain along with the woman gang member.

The suspects, who had scammed people out of billions, had been nominated in multiple first information reports across the country.

The gang was facing charges in the FIA, centre and all of the four provinces of Pakistan in cases registered in the last two years.

The FIA spokesperson said that the suspects have also received money from the citizens via bank channels.

The group used to trap people on social media by promising to get them a visa and secure foreign employment and had established an illicit agency to receive money from the citizens.

## Shia Ismaili Muslims Celebrate Nowruz Festival across Sindh

## Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Shia Ismaili Muslims across Sindh are celebrating the festival of Nowruz with traditional fervor today. Different events were scheduled to be held in Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad and Badin after Iftar to mark the centuries old festival. The historic festival traces its roots some 3000 year back that marks first day of Persian new year and celebrated as the national festival of Persia.

President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif extended felicitations and best wishes on the eve of Iranian new year.

Noted historian Dr Muhammad Ali Manjhi while talking to this correspondent shared historical significance of Nowruz in Sindh. He said that Persian language as well as culture left its impact on Sindh language and culture during the 17th and 18th century and during that period Nowruz was also celebrated in some areas of Sindh. "Some historians believe that Nowruz had also been celebrated during the regime of Alexander the great in Persia"; he noted adding that Nowruz had been

celebrated in Karachi, Fateh Shah locality near Thatta and Ameer Peer during the 18th and 19th century. He further mentioned that their is a strong evidence in the history that during the Somro and Turkhan rule the festival attained special status in Sindh. An Iranian King Jalaluddin Malikshah started Celebrating this festival on 21st March



since then it has been celebrated on this date. This festival is celebrated in different parts of the world mainly Central Asian countries. The forte of Nowruz is that it is celebrated in a traditional fervor in different parts of the world that doubles the importance of this festival.

Like other countries of the world, the festival is celebrated in Pakistan as well particularly in the northern part of the country. Jashn\_E\_Nowruz is celebrated every year across Gilgit Baltistan. The ancient festival gives the message of peace, unity, progress and change.