



Pakistan to discuss Extended Fund Facility with IMF next month: finance minister

Pakistan will discuss an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington next month, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Friday, as the country looks to alleviate a full-scale economic crisis.



March 23, 1940 marks milestone in history of Pakistan: President AJK

President A.J.K. Barrister Sultan Mehmoood Chaudhry has said that March 23, 1940 marks an important milestone in the history of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir. "On this historic day the Muslims of the subcontinent decided to unitedly demand a separate homeland for themselves where they can live their lives according to the Islamic values and traditions, peace, dignity and honour", he said in his message... (Details on Page 2)

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Mr. Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: OAH

PM, Saudi Fund delegation discuss development projects

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD, during its visit to Pakistan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Friday and discussed its ongoing projects in Pakistan. The Prime Minister welcomed the delegation and appreciated the long-standing

friendship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and the efforts of SFD for providing financing to Pakistan in the fields of Health, Energy, infrastructure and Education as well the recent floods. The CEO, SFD thanked the Prime Minister and Government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as the conferment of the National Civil Award, Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam.

The Prime Minister also appreciated the signing of Financial

Agreements, early today, between SFD and the Government of Pakistan worth US\$ 107 million for construction of Hydropower stations in AJK, which would not only provide clean energy but would also help eradicate the menace of deforestation, besides providing job opportunities to the local population. The CEO, SFD shared updates with the Prime Minister about the ongoing projects including Mohmand

Multi-purpose Hydropower Project, Golan Gol Hydropower Project, Malakand Regional Development Project, and other projects funded through Saudi grants. The Prime Minister, while appreciating the support of the SFD, highlighted the need to expedite the processing of the new projects, shared with SFD, in the field of green energy and infrastructure, which once implemented, would go a long way in the economic revival of the country, besides serving the needs of the local communities. The CEO, SFD assured early processing of the shared projects and also reiterated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Royal Family, would extend all possible assistance and continued support to Pakistan. The Prime Minister thanked the CEO and members of the delegation and conveyed his best wishes to all the members of the Royal Family, especially the Khadim-e-Harman Sharifain.

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84th Anniversary of Pakistan Day: 'Proud to be part of history': CJCS

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) and Services Chiefs, congratulate the nation on 84th anniversary of "Pakistan Day."

This promising day is reminiscent of great efforts of the Muslims of sub-continent when they determined our destiny in line with vision of our great leaders for a separate homeland for Muslims.

This historic day also reminds us of the greatest sacrifices and contributions of our forefathers which they made in the struggle for crea-

tion of Pakistan.

Today, plight of Muslims in India in general and IIOJK in particular, who are facing worst form of brutalities at the hands of the fascist regime, remind us of the importance and value of the Independence where we cherish and respect our freedom every day, Alhamdulillah.

On this day, Armed Forces of Pakistan renew their resolve to defend the motherland and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all times and at any cost; and uphold the national flag INSHAALLAH.

Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad, Pakistan Paindabad.

Dr Musadik, US Ambassador discuss investment opportunities



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik and Ambassador of the United States, Donald Blome Friday discussed technology transfer, investment opportunities, capacity-building initiatives in the energy sector, and regional projects. During the meeting with Dr Malik, the ambassador extended his congratulations on assuming the office and expressed high hopes for the transformation of the energy sector.

The minister appreciated Ambassador Blome for always extending his support and reaffirmed that togeth-

er, both countries can achieve shared energy goals. Ways and means to promote a sustainable carbon-friendly footprint, renewables, and green hydrogen were also discussed, said a news release. The minister highlighted Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger ties with the United States. He apprised the ambassador regarding Pakistan's vast potential in the energy sector, particularly in the minerals sector. Ambassador Blome informed the minister that a high-level economic dialogue is scheduled to be held in April in Washington, where energy-related matters, including minerals, would take centre stage.

Tarar condemns cowardly attack on security forces convoy in DI Khan

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Friday strongly condemned the suicide attack on the convoy of security forces in Dera Ismail Khan. The minister for information expressed his heartfelt condolences on the martyrdom of the personnel of the Pakistan Army Subedar Yasir Shakeel and Sepoy Tahir Nawaz.

"Terrorists are enemies of peace and stability of the country," Tarar said, adding that the cowardly acts of terrorism cannot dampen the spirits of the nation. The minister said any attempt to harm national security will be dealt with iron hands. The entire nation stood with the security forces in the war against terrorism, the minister remarked. He saluted the brave sons who sacrificed their lives for the safety of the country and nation.

Russia, China veto US Security Council bid on Gaza 'ceasefire'



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Smoke billows in Gaza, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, as seen from southern Israel, March 21, 2024.

Ambassadors of China and Algeria vote against the US-led draft resolution at the Security Council on a ceasefire in Gaza on Friday. Russia also opposed the resolution.

Russia and China on Friday vetoed a US-led draft resolution at the Security Council on a ceasefire in Gaza, with Moscow accusing

Washington of a "hypocritical spectacle" that does not pressure Israel.

The United States, Israel's main ally which has vetoed previous ceasefire calls, put forward the resolution which for the first time would have supported "the imperative of an immediate and sustained ceasefire" and condemned the October 7 attack by Hamas.

Russia and China exercised their vetoes, Algeria also voted against and Guyana abstained. The other 11 Security Council members voted in favor, including permanent members France and Britain.

SC reverses order for removal of Shaukat Siddiqui as IHC justice

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday restored Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui as a justice of the Islamabad High Court, albeit technically, reversing an earlier judgement of the court.

A five-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminuddin, Justice Jamal Mandokhel, Justice Hasan Rizvi and Justice Irfan Sadat had completed the hearing on petitions filed by Shaukat Siddiqui on January 23, 2024.

On Friday, the apex court released its 23-page judgement ruling in favour of Shaukat Siddiqui.

FM, UK ministers discuss bilateral ties

Spokesman Report

LONDON: Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar held separate meetings with the UK Minister of State for South Asia and Commonwealth, Lord Tariq Ahmad, and with the Minister of State for Development, Andrew Mitchell at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office in London on Friday. Pakistan-UK relations, regional and global security, Pakistan's role at the UN and other multilateral forums



as well as Pakistan's economic and development vision came under discussion.

PTI to hold rally against alleged rigging in elections on March 30

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has announced its decision to hold a rally against alleged rigging in general elections on March 30, followed by a "big public rally" in Karachi on April 21.

"The Core Committee also approved holding a ceremony in Islamabad tomorrow (March 23) afternoon regarding Pakistan Day," it said in a statement.

It merits here to mention that the former ruling party approached the Islamabad High Court earlier this week to seek permission for a public gathering in the federal capital later this month after no response from the district administration despite multiple attempts.

According to the official hand-out, the party would hold a "special press conference" in Islamabad on March 25 on the country's econ-

omy, the new economic package from the International Monetary Fund and its impact on the people.

Pictures and a video from the party showed party Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan, Secretary General Omar Ayub, spokesperson Raouf Hasan, former Gilgit Baltistan chief minister Khalid Khurshid, and other members. Some of the members joined the meeting via video link.

Members also presented a

detailed briefing on the court proceedings against former prime minister Imran Khan and the possibility of his acquittal.

The party described that the acquittal of the party's founder in several cases would be a "breath of fresh air" and stressed the need for early decisions on merit on appeals against Imran Khan's sentences from the judiciary.

It confirmed the gathering of Punjab Assembly members at the

residence of senior central leader Sardar Latif Khan Khosa in preparation for the Senate elections on Saturday (tomorrow).

The committee also reviewed the content of the statement made by US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu before the Congressional Committee on Tuesday.

It described the statement of Pakistan's former ambassador to the US Asad Majeed as "important" Lu's testimony.

Public Beware of Fraud/Cheating Through Impersonating As Senior NAB Authorities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: NAB has received reports that some fraudsters have been found involved in blackmailing, using pressure tactics, etc. on different government organizations/officials and individuals by imper-

sonating themselves as senior NAB authorities by phone calls, WhatsApp messages & calls or other means in order to obtain undue favours and extorting money from them. Some of them have been arrested and action has been initiated against others.

March 23, 1940 marks milestone in history of Pakistan: President AJK

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that March 23, 1940 marks an important milestone in the history of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir. "On this historic day the Muslims of the subcontinent decided to unitedly demand a separate homeland for themselves where they can live their lives according to the Islamic values and traditions, peace, dignity and



honour", the AJK President said in his message released on the eve of Pakistan day. March 23rd, he said, marked a crucial milestone in the quest for

independence from both Hindu and British rule.

Highlighting the pivotal role played by Pakistan's ancestors in laying the foundation of the nation on this historic day, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said, "On this auspicious day we pay tribute to the supreme sacrifices and struggle of the founders of Pakistan movement and reiterate our commitment to remain stick to their ideals and ideology".

Congratulating the people of Pakistan, the AJK president said, "While

celebrating the historic day, let us be united in faith and resolve, let us reinforce our commitment and rededicate ourselves to make Pakistan strong and prosperous."

He said that a strong and stable Pakistan was the guarantor of the Kashmir's freedom. Kashmiris, he said, consider Pakistan as a holy land. Despite facing the brunt of Indian brutality, the Kashmiri youths express their commitment to Pakistan by raising slogans of Pakistan Zindabad in the Indian occupied territory.

Solidarity

MULTAN: All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Workers Union is taking out a rally under the leadership of Zonal Chairman Rashid Yameen to express solidarity with Pakistan Army.



Kashmir is the aorta of Pakistan and Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir: Sardar Attique



Bureau Report

MADINAH MUNORA/MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that March 23 is the name of a historical day of determination of the Muslims of the subcontinent when the Muslims of the subcontinent gathered in the Iqbal Park of Lahore under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. What was the demand for a separate homeland? On the occasion of Pakistan Day on

23rd March, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that Kashmir is the aorta of Pakistan and Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir. The brave people of Kashmir are offering sacrifices in the demand of meeting with Pakistan.

President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan attended a dinner hosted by well-known businessmen Syed Sajid Geelani and Syed Khalid Geelani in Madinah. A large number of Kashmiris overseas were present. President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad

Khan was met by Raja Saqib Majeed, Raja Tahir Iqbal, Abdul Hafeez Awan, Waqar Ahmed Awan, Muhammad Anees Awan, Muhammad Safir Awan, Muhammad Naeem Awan and others in Madinah.

President Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, while addressing the dinner, said that he expressed deep sorrow and regret over the massacre of the oppressed Kashmiri people by the Indian army in Occupied Kashmir. He said that the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people will not go in vain and their blood will surely bring color

and success will be the destiny of the Kashmiri people. Not only the peace of the region, but also the peace of the world is related to the freedom of Kashmir. Why do not the global powers who raise the slogan of truth and justice for the freedom of humanity in the world, see the atrocities being inflicted on the innocent and innocent Kashmiris. He said that the freedom of Kashmir is no longer just a dream but will soon become a reality and appear on the map of the world. The sacrifices of the Kashmiri people for the freedom of Kashmir will not go in vain.

MCB to plant trees to help keep Pakistan green and green



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Member Cantonment Board Multan Said In order to eliminate environmental pollution from our beloved Pakistan and create a healthy Pakistan, it is necessary for every Pakistani to plant trees and play a positive role to make the environment green and green. Starting with reference planting Did he also say that the world day of forests is celebrated on March 21 every year, including in Pakistan. The day was started in 2013 to raise awareness about the importance of forests to clean the planet from environmental pollution. This year the day is being celebrated under the theme "Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption". Every thing in our daily life is directly or indirectly related to forests.

Kashmiris have been at forefront of Pakistan movement: PMAJK

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq said that the historic resolution adopted on March 23, 1940 at Lahore changed the course of the region's history.



"Despite the fiercest opposition, the dream, envisioned by our forefathers, was finally realized in the form of an independent Pakistan under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah", the AJK premier said in his message released on the eve of Pakistan day.

He said that 23 March bears a special significance for the Muslims of the subcontinent as on this day they laid the foundation for the creation of a separate homeland for themselves.

Lauding the historic struggle of the Muslims of the subcontinent that culminated in the shape of Pakistan, he said, Kashmiri leadership has also been at the forefront of the Pakistan movement.

He said that the historic gathering at Lahore was also attended by the representatives of the Kashmiri people.

He said that the ongoing movement in Occupied Kashmir was actually an extension of the Pakistan movement, which has been kept alive by Kashmiris with their blood.

Termining Kashmiris as Pakistani by choice, he said, "Pakistan is a true sympathizer and a center of hope for the Kashmiri Muslims".

He said that Kashmiris not only took part in the Pakistan movement but also aligned their fate with Pakistan much before its creation.

Family Planning Week celebrated in Vehari



Malik Saleem Shahid

VEHARI: Additional Deputy Commissioner General Abdul Jabbar, while addressing the seminar, said that the rapidly growing population in Pakistan is a matter of concern. Family planning week was celebrated in full style under the direction of the country can develop economically and socially only through the balance of population and resources. Happy family Pakistan is our destination to achieve our destination. There should be a balance between population and resources. CEO Health Dr. Siddiq Ahmed said that parents and people belonging to all schools of thought should spread more awareness to control population. District Population Officer Ghafran Saqib Chopra said that GovtOn the direction of Punjab, a systematic awareness campaign for the success of the population welfare program and implementation in a wide manner is going on. Welfare centers and family health clinics of the population welfare department are there to provide guidance. Objective Population and resource balance in the population to raise awareness about. Deputy District Population Officer Muhammad Waqas said that the series of awareness in schools, colleges, universities and government institutions regarding family planning is continuing by the Department of Population Welfare to provide people with contraceptives and Medicines for common diseases are being provided free of cost in the seminar. At the end Additional Deputy Commissioner General Abdul Jabbar led the awareness walk

University of Agriculture to establish crematorium in front of Qaim Sain Darbar

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif, Spokesperson of Agriculture University Faisalabad, has said that Agriculture University has established a crematorium on three kanal land of the university in front of Qaim Sain Darbar for public interest and its administrative matters are being consulted by local people. However, some miscreants are trying to take over the 19 kanal land of the Agricultural University adjacent to the funeral home by pulling down the wall of the funeral home under the guise of religion. The Supreme Court judgment is in favor of the university and the land has been handed over in the past on the orders of the Supreme Court. He said that the funeral home located in front of the Qaim Sain Darbar is considered sacred by the administration of the University of Agriculture and this funeral home will always remain. He said that currently more than 33 thousand students are studying in the University of Agriculture, while 600 teachers are taking all possible measures to improve their moral and God-given abilities along with professional education. He said that agricultural universities are striving for education and research as well as the welfare of the people. He said that the University of Agriculture is one of the best agricultural universities in the world and it has a special place in terms of food security, agricultural development and solving farmers' problems. He has requested the public to support the truth and not to take the law into their hands instead of being a tool of evil elements.

President & PM fulfill the promise of Saraiki Bank and Saraiki Province: Dharija

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif should fulfill the promise of Saraiki Bank and take steps for the People's Party and (N) League of Saraiki province. March, long march and foot march options will be used. These views were expressed by the Chairman of the Syracusetan Democratic Party Rana Faraz Noon and the Chairman of the Syracusetan National Council Zahoor Dharija while addressing a press conference at the Syracusetan House Dault Gate Multan. Saraiki leaders Khawaja Shoaib-ul-Hasan, Rana Nauman Noon and Malik Ijaz Khand were also present on this occasion. He said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has canceled her visit to Multan for the third time. The rulers are afraid that people will demand a province when she goes to Multan, said that Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz during the election rallies, they have been speaking in Saraiki love and in Saraiki, now it is time for them to take big decisions to end the deprivations of Saraiki people and to establish the province of Saraikistan. He said that the people of Wasib are not asking for a separate country but a province which is the guarantor of the balance and stability of the federation. He said that the Multan Civil Secretariat has been made a joke, the Additional Secretaries have no authority, everything is done from the Lahore Secretariat, the people of Wasib now have to go around Lahore, Multan and Bahawalpur for Wasib.



Khairpur Nursing College excel in contest to address malnutrition

Qayoom Sarohi

KHAIRPUR MIRS: Students Societies Center at Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur in collaboration with Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) and Khairpur Nursing College, successfully organized a Declination Contest focused on addressing malnutrition issues in Sindh.

The event, held at the Students Societies Center, saw enthusiastic participation from students who engaged in discussions and speeches regarding the critical issue of malnutrition. Dr. Deedar Ali Wassan, Assistant District Health Officer, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, commending the students for their efforts in raising awareness about malnutrition. He applauded the collaborative efforts of the Inchange Students societies center Dr. Ali Raza Lashari and whole team of SPO, emphasizing the importance of involving students in such initiatives.



Abdul Kareem Abro, Meal Officer Dr. Rano Mall, Project Coordinator

at SPO, elucidated the mission and vision of the organization, expressing commitment to continue such initiatives in partnership with educational institutions like SALU and Khairpur Nursing College. The contest results were as 1st Position: Areeba and M Umar (Shah Abdul

Latif University, Khairpur) 2nd Position Maryam and Iqra (College of Nursing) 3rd Place Afsana and Eman (College of Nursing) 4th Place Adeeb ul Hassan and Amna (Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur) Shazia Solangi from SALU, Irshad Somro from SPO, and Ghulam Fatima Somro from Collage of Nursing served as the judges for the event. Ghulam Raza Siyal, District Manager at SPO, extended gratitude to all guests, students, and collaborative partners for their contributions. The event also witnessed the participation of notable individuals such as Prof. Dr. Inyat Ali Bhatti, Prof. Dr. Santosh Kumar, Dr. Ramzan Kolachi, Dr. Mohammad Naeem, Saira Chandio, Mr. Rashid Ali Arbani, Sadia Larik, Aisha Somro, Rehmat Ali Wasan, Darban Ali, and Mommol Somro, Aftab Latif, along side a large number of students from Both institutions SALU and Khairpur Nursing College.

Pakistan Day 23rd March is a day of hope and struggle



Ahsan Ansari

Every year on March 23, Pakistan Day is celebrated with enthusiasm and fervour by millions of Pakistanis living around the world. This day is started with a gun salute in the federation and all the provinces. Special prayers are organized in mosques and places of worship for the security and prosperity of the country.

The day conveys Pakistan's sense of historical significance and national pride, commemorating a pivotal moment in the journey towards the establishment of Pakistan—the Lahore Resolution of 1940. This important struggle organized under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah laid the foundation for the establishment of a separate homeland for Muslims in India.

The Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution, was an expression of years of political struggle and the aspirations of millions of Muslims in the subcontinent. That day, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a strong leader of the All India Muslim League (AIML), addressed party members in Lahore advocating the formation of a separate federation comprising Muslim-majority areas. Emphasizing the fundamental difference in cultural and religious identity between Hindus and Muslims, a collective consciousness was awakened in the Muslim community under his energetic leadership.

March 23, 1940 is a testament to the unwavering determination and courage of the Muslim population in achieving their right to self-determination and political independence. It was a beacon of hope amid India's turbulent political landscape, a vision of a future where Muslims could run their affairs according to their beliefs

and values. The importance of this historic day is more than mere commemoration. This day commemorates the sacrifices and struggles of the forefathers of the nation.

The Lahore Resolution paved the way for the eventual achievement of an independent Pakistan on 14 August 1947. It is celebrated as the cornerstone of the nation's identity, reflecting the spirit of unity, faith and discipline and defining the Pakistani ethos. Every year, Pakistanis from all over the world come together to celebrate Pakistan Day with unprecedented fervour. On this day, various events are organized by the government and civil society organizations to pay homage to the memory of those leaders and workers who dedicated and sacrificed their lives for the establishment of Pakistan.

The parade is organized by the Pakistan Armed Forces, Army, Navy and Air Force, which shows the country's military strength and unity. Additionally, educational institutions, media outlets, and community organizations host seminars, cultural shows, and exhibitions to reflect the significance of the Lahore Resolution and its lasting impact on Pakistan's history and identity. As Pakistan continues its journey towards development, it is important to remember these ideals and principles on March 23, 1940.

The Lahore Resolution serves as a guiding light, inspiring future generations to uphold the values of democracy, equality and justice envisioned by the nation's founders. In commemoration of the Lahore Resolution, Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to the ideals of independence, sovereignty and self-determination. It is a day to pay tribute to the sacrifices of the past, celebrate the achievements of the present and envision a future guided by the principles of unity, faith and discipline, which are the foundation of the Pakistani nation.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah along with his loyal companions started a tireless journey towards achieving a separate homeland for the majority of Muslims living in the subcontinent under the flag of Pakistan. Their tireless efforts, driven by years of political maneuvering, negotiation, and advocacy, were driven by an unwavering commitment to the principles of justice, equality, and self-determination. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the great figure behind the creation of Pakistan, was supported by a cadre of eminent personalities who played an important role in the freedom struggle.

Some of the notable names are Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the renowned poet, philosopher, and politician, laid the intellectual foundations of the



concept of a separate Muslim state in his famous Allahabad Address in 1930. His insightful poetry and philosophical insights contributed to the creation of Tehreek Pakistan for millions of people. Nawab Liaquat Ali Khan known as Quaid-e-Azam's right-hand man, Liaquat Ali Khan was a close associate and confidant of Jinnah. He was instrumental in organizing the All India Muslim League and served as the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, working tirelessly for the country's stability and development.

A prominent Muslim leader, journalist, and activist, Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar was a staunch supporter of Muslim rights and played a prominent role in the Khilafat Movement and the Pakistan Movement. His tireless efforts helped mobilize Muslim support for the cause of independence. Quaid-e-Azam's sister, Fatima Jinnah was a strong personality in her own right. She actively participated in the Pakistan Movement, supporting the creation of Pakistan with her brother and later advocating for women's rights and social welfare issues. Sir Aga Khan Swaim as the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslim community and a prominent political figure, Sir Aga Khan Swaim played an important role in the Pakistan Movement. His influence and support played an important role in gaining international recognition and support for the creation of Pakistan.

Chaudhry Khaliq-ul-Zaman, a prominent Muslim League leader, was instrumental in organizing Muslim League activities in Punjab and played a key role in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which laid the foundation for Pakistan. A close associate of Quaid-i-Azam, Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar was a prominent Muslim League leader and served as a key strategist and organizer during the Pakistan Movement. He played an important role in mobilizing support for the cause of independence, especially in the Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). These are some of the many prominent names who stood shoulder to shoulder with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Their collective efforts and sacrifices brought the

dream of an independent Muslim state to fruition in the subcontinent. Jinnah's visionary leadership and steadfast determination served as the driving force behind the Pakistan Movement.

With unparalleled eloquence, he articulated the aspirations of the Muslim community and tirelessly championed their cause on both national and international platforms. By Jinnah's side stood a group of people who dedicated their lives to the cause of Pakistan. From influential politicians to grassroots activists, everyone played an important role in mobilizing support, raising awareness and motivating the masses to realize the dream of Pakistan. Their efforts were not without challenges and sacrifices. They faced opposition from various quarters, encountered obstacles at every turn, and faced innumerable trials and tribulations.

Yet, his unwavering faith in the righteousness of his cause carried him forward undaunted by difficulties.

Through their collective efforts, Quaid-e-Azam and his associates laid the foundations of a nation based on the principles of democracy, personal and religious freedom. His legacy inspires generations of Pakistanis to uphold the values of tolerance, inclusion and unity in diversity. Pakistan celebrates Lahore Resolution Day every year; it pays tribute to the foresight and perseverance of its founding fathers and reaffirms its commitment to building a prosperous and inclusive society for all its citizens. The sacrifices made by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his colleagues serve as a reminder of the enduring power of determination, courage and unity in times of adversity.



Pakistan Day, A Journey of Sacrifice and Triumph

“SM Foods extends its heartfelt gratitude to the brave heroes who sacrificed so much to secure Pakistan's sovereignty”

Pakistan Day, observed on March 23rd each year, stands as a testament to the resilience and determination of the Pakistani people in their quest for independence. This historic day commemorates the Lahore Resolution of 1940, a pivotal event that laid the groundwork for the creation of Pakistan. As we reflect on the significance of Pakistan Day, it is imperative to delve into the events surrounding the Lahore Resolution and pay homage to the visionaries who paved the way for our nation's birth.

As we honor the heroes of our nation's struggle for independence, SM Foods extends its heartfelt gratitude to the brave men and women who sacrificed so much to secure Pakistan's sovereignty. Inspired by their spirit of sacrifice and determination, SM Foods remains committed to upholding the values of excellence and innovation, mirroring the unwavering resolve that defines Pakistan's journey towards prosperity. Just as March 23rd marks a historic milestone in our nation's history, SM Foods recognizes the importance of commemorating this day by honoring the past while embracing the promise of a brighter future for Pakistan and its people.

The Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution, was passed on March 23, 1940, during the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held at Minto Park in Lahore. This land-



Mian Salahuddin
GM Sales Marketing SM Foods

mark resolution called for the establishment of independent states in regions where Muslims were in the majority, safeguarding their rights and enabling them to live in accordance with their distinct cultural, religious, and social identity.

At the heart of the Lahore Resolution was the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who articulated the aspirations of the Muslim community for self-determination and autonomy. Jinnah's impassioned plea for a separate homeland for Muslims resonated deeply with millions across British India, galvanizing support for the Pakistan Movement and setting the stage for a historic transformation.

The Pakistan Movement, characterized by a fervent desire for self-determination, saw the participation of visionary leaders such as Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Liaquat Ali Khan. Their

steadfast commitment and impassioned advocacy galvanized the masses, igniting a flame of hope and unity amidst the turbulent political landscape of colonial India.

The road to independence was fraught with challenges, marked by political upheaval, communal tensions, and acts of violence. However, the unwavering resolve of the Muslim League and the invincible spirit of the people propelled the movement forward, ultimately leading to the partition of British India in 1947 and the emergence of Pakistan as a sovereign nation.

As we commemorate Pakistan Day in 2024, it is necessary for us to reflect on the values and principles that define our national identity. It is a day to honor the sacrifices of our ancestors and to renew our commitment to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and inclusivity.

In celebrating Pakistan Day, let us draw inspiration from the resilience and determination of our forefathers. Let us pledge to uphold the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the founding fathers by working towards a society where justice, equality, and opportunity prevail for all.

As we look towards the future, let us do so with optimism and resolve, knowing that the spirit of Pakistan Day embodies the enduring hope for a better tomorrow. Together, let us strive to build a nation that stands as a beacon of progress, unity, and prosperity for generations to come.

85th Pakistan Day to mark achievement of Muslims' quest for separate homeland

Tooba Khan

The 85th Pakistan Day is the day to celebrate the country's identity as a separate nation and homeland to the Muslims of the Sub-continent by showcasing its strength and potential to the world that it had emerged victorious as a resilient nation after the creation of the motherland in 1947.

Nearly eight decades ago, the Muslims of the subcontinent had set a goal to get a separate homeland where they could lead their lives in accordance to Islamic injunctions and cultural traditions.

The Muslims, under the flag of All India Muslim League (AIML) founded on December 30, 1906 in Dhaka, got united by giving new impetus to the independence movement. It witnessed further momentum after Quaid-i-Azam spearheaded independence movement after formally joining AIML in 1913.

Realizing the fact, the great Quaid and Muslim leaders united millions of Muslims at Iqbal Park, Lahore (formerly Minto Park and now Minar-e-Pakistan), and passed a unanimous resolution on March 23, 1940 for a separate Muslim homeland.

In his two-hour presidential address to the session participants, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah narrated the events that took place in the past and concluded that Hindus and

Muslims belonged to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literary heritage.

With an unflinching resolve and great sacrifices rendered by the Muslims of the sub-continent under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the country came into being on August 14, 1947 and appeared on the world map as a sovereign state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, became the first Governor General



of Pakistan with Liaquat Ali Khan becoming the first Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Every year, the nation celebrates March 23 as Pakistan Day with a renewed pledge to make country the strongest by all means, especially on economic and defense fronts so that no one could even think of casting an evil eye on the motherland.

Therefore, recalling Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's saying, as he rightly said, "There is no precedent to the pain we have been inflicted in the history rather we have to sacrifice more for the country." Pakistan's

first Constitution came into being on March 23, 1956, marking the country's successful transition to Islamic Republic.

Cultural organizations including the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Pakistan Academy of Letters, National Book Foundation, National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) were all set to hold various events and activities in connection with Pakistan Day.

Former Executive Director of Lok Virsa and Folklorist Uxi Mufti while highlighting significance of Pakistan's cultural heritage in the country's identity said that the demand for Pakistan was made on the ideology of Islam. "This future pathway includes preserving languages, traditions, habits, poems, and songs, all of which contribute to the diverse tapestry of Pakistani culture".

Advocate Qaiser Haroon Gill said that it was on this day in 1940 that Muslims of the sub-continent passed the Pakistan Resolution and made the demand for a separate homeland where they could freely lead their lives in accordance with Islamic ideals.

He paid rich tribute to the founding father of the nation whose struggles and sacrifices led to the creation of Pakistan. The country had faced many challenges at the time of independence but despite these challenges, the country made tremendous achievements in every field of life through continuous hard work, he added.

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

Moreover, there are indications that Pakistan may witness increased investment from private US companies across various sectors. This potential influx of investment signals a deepening cooperation between the US and Pakistan, particularly in the installation of alternative energy generation methods. Such collaboration serves two primary objectives: first, to reduce Pakistan's dependence on China and offer viable alternatives to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); and second, to provide alternative energy solutions that may prompt Pakistan to reconsider its decision to proceed with the long-pending Iran-Pakistan pipeline.

I bear witness to the historic signing and commencement ceremony of the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, where President Zardari, on the final day of his first presidential tenure, journeyed to the Iranian border. There, amidst the welding of two massive pipes symbolizing a pivotal moment of cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, President Zardari addressed the gathering. He highlighted the persistent opposition from the United States to the gas pipeline, despite Pakistan's invitation for collaboration in addressing its energy challenges. In the absence of any viable alternative proposed by the US, President Zardari emphasized the para-

mount importance of prioritizing the nation's interests. Thus, he took the decision to proceed with signing the agreement, recognizing its immense potential to alleviate Pakistan's energy woes and provide cost-effective gas to households and industries.

However, subsequent governments, notably the PML(N) administration from 2013 to 2018 and Imran Khan's government from 2018 to 2022, succumbed to pressure from the United States and were unable to advance this critical project. It wasn't until the tenure of the new government led by Shahbaz Sharif, bolstered by support from the armed forces leadership, that the decision was made to push forward with the construction of the Pakistani segment of the pipeline.

The Iran-Pakistan pipeline, also referred to as the IP Gas Pipeline or the Peace Pipeline, is poised to transmit 750 million cubic meters of natural gas from Iran's South Pars Gas field to Pakistan. This significant infrastructure project promises to provide Pakistan with a stable and reliable energy source, effectively alleviating the strain on the country's energy grid. Given Paki-

stan's chronic energy shortages, characterized by frequent power outages that hinder economic growth and development, the pipeline's implementation holds immense potential for addressing these longstanding challenges.

Furthermore, access to Iranian natural gas is poised to play a pivotal role in satisfying Pakistan's escalating energy demands, particularly within vital sectors such as power generation, industrial manufacturing, and residential heating. This infusion of energy resources has the potential to catalyze economic growth, attract foreign investment, and elevate the overall standard of living for Pakistan's populace.

However, the effectiveness of the US in offering viable alternatives to address Pakistan's chronic energy shortages, including shortages of natural gas and electricity, remains uncertain. The extent to which the US is willing to implement its plans, if any, and its success in providing equal or superior alternatives to the Iranian pipeline, are yet to be determined. It remains to be seen how quickly and efficiently the US can deploy alternative solutions to meet Pakistan's energy needs and whether these alternatives can

offer comparable or improved benefits compared to the Iranian pipeline.

Donald Lu's testimony before the Congress sub-committee marked a significant milestone in Pak-US relations. The US approach towards Pakistan appeared positive, pragmatic, and supportive, albeit with underlying concerns regarding projects like CPEC and the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, as well as the repatriation of Afghan aliens. However, the tone conveyed during the testimony was not coercive; instead, it hinted at a willingness to offer Pakistan better and more effective alternative solutions to these issues, without explicitly forcing Pakistan to abandon its pursuits.

This testimony served as a promising development for the government of Shahbaz Sharif, signaling US endorsement of armed forces support for the government's developmental endeavors. Conversely, it also implied a clear message to the PTI and its chairman that they should not rely on US support in pursuit of their objectives. It now falls upon the government of Pakistan to capitalize on this newfound positive stance of the US and leverage it to advance national interests effectively.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Chinese university launches training course for Pakistani employees

North Eastern China's Liaoning Petrochemical College held the launching ceremony of a training program for Pakistani employees of Shandong Zhongyang Group to study in China.

Yu Zhongdang, the college president, expressed his gratitude to the Department of Education of Liaoning Province, the Embassy of Pakistan in China, Shandong Zhongyang Group, and Tang International Education Group for their long-term support and assistance to the college.

He also extended a warm welcome to all Pakistani students who participated in the training, Chinese media reported.

He pointed out that the college's technical skills training for foreign employees of Chinese-funded enterprises and its full support for the construction of Shandong Zhongyang Group's Nigerian Petrochemical Industrial Park project are important measures for the college to deeply implement the spirit of the Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Modern Vocational Education System Construction.

It is a common practice at the college to implement Liaoning's three-year action for new breakthroughs in all-round revitalization and promote cooperation between vocational colleges and enterprises to expand overseas operations.

The college will fully utilize the advantages of talents and practical training software and hardware. It will assign experienced teachers based on the safety production requirements of enterprises, engage front-line experts from businesses, and appropriately schedule training courses, said Yu.

Based on the natural gas methanol production process, the college will leverage its advantages in the petroleum and chemical industry to serve Chinese-funded enterprises.

It aims to establish a vocational education model focused on international expansion through deep integration of school-enterprise collaboration.

The project aims to tell the story of China's vocational education, disseminate the latest ideas in China's vocational education, and train a group of BRI builders who comprehend the Chinese language, are familiar with Chinese culture, and possess excellent skills.



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

Significance of Pakistan Day Parade and Myths - III

At its core, the parade features an impressive display of military prowess, with contingents from the Pakistan Army, Navy, and Air Force marching in flawless synchronization, demonstrating their discipline, expertise, and commitment to safeguarding the nation's borders. A highlight of the Pakistan Day Parade is the aerial display by the Pakistan Air Force, featuring a dazzling array of fighter jets, helicopters, and aerial acrobatics. Against the backdrop of the Margalla Hills, spectators are treated to breathtaking maneuvers and precision flying that showcase the Air Force's capabilities and preparedness to counter any threats to Pakistan's airspace.

In addition to its military aspect, the Pakistan Day Parade celebrates the nation's rich cultural heritage and diversity. Colorful floats representing various provinces of Pakistan showcase traditional music, dance, attire, and cuisine, offering a glimpse into the vibrant mosaic of Pakistani culture. From the bustling streets of Karachi to the majestic valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, the parade reflects the unity in diversity that defines the Pakistani identity. Moreover, the Pakistan Day Parade serves as an occasion to honor the heroes and martyrs who have sacrificed their lives in defense of the nation. Through solemn tributes and wreath-laying ceremonies, the parade honors the courageous men and

women of the armed forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their nation. Their bravery and valor serve as an inspiration for future generations, emphasizing the importance of upholding the principles of freedom, justice, and equality. Besides its symbolic significance, the Pakistan Day Parade also carries strategic weight by showcasing Pakistan's dedication to regional peace and stability. As one of the largest military parades in the region, it sends a clear message to the global community that Pakistan stands firm and unified against any challenges or threats to its sovereignty. Furthermore, the parade offers a platform for military-to-military exchanges and cooperation with allied nations, fostering goodwill and bolstering diplomatic relations.

However, amid the anticipation and excitement, various myths and misconceptions often surround the Pakistan Day Parade, obscuring its true significance and impact. Let's dispel some of these misconceptions and shed light on the truth behind this iconic event.

Some argue that the Pakistan Day Parade glorifies war and militarism. While it indeed showcases the country's military capabilities, the parade is not a celebration of war or militarism. Instead, it serves as a solemn occasion to honor the sacrifices of the armed forces and reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to peace and security. The parade acts as a deterrent against aggression while also promoting unity, diversity,

and national pride.

There's also a misconception that the Pakistan Day Parade is an extravagant display of power. While it's undoubtedly a grand spectacle, the parade serves multiple purposes beyond showcasing military prowess. It offers an opportunity to celebrate Pakistan's cultural richness, featuring colorful floats representing different provinces and regions of the country. Additionally, the parade facilitates military-to-military exchanges and cooperation with friendly nations, fostering goodwill and strengthening diplomatic ties.

Some perceive the Pakistan Day Parade as a wasteful expenditure of resources, which is a misguided assumption. The Pakistan Day Parade is a meticulously planned and executed event that serves strategic, diplomatic, and symbolic purposes. It offers an avenue for the armed forces to showcase their capabilities and preparedness, essential for deterrence and national defense. Furthermore, the parade bolsters national morale, nurturing patriotism, and fostering a sense of pride and unity among Pakistanis.

Contrary to misconception, the Pakistan Day Parade isn't solely for the military. While the armed forces play a prominent role, it's a national event involving participation from various sectors of society. Civilian organizations, educational institutions, and cultural groups also partake, highlighting Pakistan's diversity and unity. Moreover, the parade is open to the public, enabling citizens from all walks of life to engage in the celebrations and honor their nation's achievements.

To be continued

PMNH finally on way to expansion

Shumaila Noreen

The country's only natural history museum - Pakistan Museum for Natural History (PMNH) with its collection of around 1.6 million specimens is finally on way to expansion after experiencing a painful sluggish response of authorities during respective regimes.

Since, its establishment in 1976, this project generally remained a picture of neglect with its incomplete structure, when year 2023 proved as fortuitous for PMNH with the government allocating funds for construction of its remaining blocks. The delayed construction of six blocks of this important outfit was a big hurdle in enhancing display of huge collection of unique specimens and expanding its galleries to attract maximum visitors. But after years, the previous coalition government led by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif finally allocated funds for this project and ensured that same are also released on time. "The construction work of the museum has been started after receiving initial funds out of total Rs. 500 million allocated for this year. This money would be spent on construction of these blocks," stated Dr. Khalid Mehmood, who is heading this project in PMNH. He informed that the contractors have been hired by the Public Works Department during October last year and work has been started.

"Construction of six blocks would be completed during three years time and it would help address the issue of space shortage for displaying more specimen," Dr Khalid said.

Although the science and technology sector in Pakistan witnessed a boom during last few years with its departments diligently focusing on research and innovation, but the Pakistan Museum for Natural History (PMNH) could not get due share of funds to complete construction of its lingering six blocks. The museum comprising only two blocks and delay in their completion since its establishment in 1976 had compelled the PMNH administration to display maximum specimens of natural resources in small rooms and corridors. Besides providing research facilities to faculties and students, PMNH regularly organizes trainings, workshops, seminars, symposia and other educational interactive activities related to natural history, environment and biodiversity of Pakistan. PMNH has also formed many national and international liaisons with the other research institutes in the country and abroad. "The museum executed a number of research projects of nation-

al importance including 'cooperative development of an innovative auto-ID platform for beetles from China and Pakistan' with the cost of Rs. five million," informed DG PMNH, Dr. Saima Tanveer. 'Hazards of wildlife aircrafts strike and their prevention' and 'Biosystematics of Insect Fauna of Khunjerab National Park, Gilgit Baltistan' are our two important projects being executed at the cost of Rs. 4.3 million and Rs. 4.5 million respectively,' she informed. The Director General also mentioned to projects like development of outdoor volcano display, integration of QR code technology to enable visitors to scan code of the exhibit through their android phone and get all linked information, development of teachers training and STEM Resource Lab and a training program for school kids to teach them about conservation of nature. "Despite financial constraints, PMNH generated Rs.6398.755 million revenue during year 2021-22 through visitors of its galleries," she said. "In all 86,587 visitors including 102,085 students and 658 foreigners visited the facility during this period." Dr Saima also informed that PMNH has four principal divisions namely Botanical Sciences Division, Earth Sciences Division, Zoological Sciences Division and Public Services Division.

First three scientific divisions are engaged in collection, identification and research activities pertaining to plants, animals, fossils and mineral resources of Pakistan, while fourth one is responsible for mass education and popularization of natural history through various displays, exhibits and dioramas. Researchers of PMNH carry out extensive field works from the Coast of Arabian Sea to the Alpine Regions, roam through barren areas for collection of Flora and Fauna, Rocks, Fossils and minerals not only for research work but for education also as one of the main objectives of the museum. Students of schools, colleges and universities all over Pakistan visit PMNH as a part of their educational tours while scientific and technical staff of PMNH facilitate and assist them in their research work by dispensing information, technical assistance and specimens. PMNH is an attached department of Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology with a designated assignment of collection, preservation and identification of flora fauna, rock, fossils, gems, minerals, etc. with a two-fold objective of exhibiting these to teach general public and visitors about biodiversity and natural history and conducting research through field study by scientists for identification and cataloging. The expansion of this facility, after completion of the remaining blocks, will definitely increase the number of visitors and help generate more revenues..

UAE Ambassador calls on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Honourable Speaker National of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan and United Arab Emirates(UAE) enjoy cordial ties based upon shared religious and cultural values. He said that parliament to parliament contacts are vital for regional prosperity and economic development. He added, "UAE has always supported Pakistan in difficult times and Pakistan values high its tie with UAE." He expressed these views during his meeting with Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Alzaabi who called on him in Parliament House.

While talking about significance of enhanced bilateral ties between both countries, he emphasized the need to revive Parliamentary Friendship group. He also extended invitation to Speaker Parliament of UAE to visit Parliament of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has vast opportunities of investment and trade. He added, "Pakistan is bestowed with skilled labour force which can play significant role in the development of UAE". He also appreciated the support



and facilities provided by UAE government to Pakistani diaspora in UAE. He said that Pakistani diaspora in UAE have substantive role to bring both Nations closer.

Ambassador of the United Arab

Emirates Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Alzaabi extended warm felicitation to Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on his successful election as Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan. He expressed his hope that Parliament to Parliament

contacts between UAE and Pakistan would further improve ties between both nations. He also said that UAE is committed to facilitate Pakistani workers in UAE and values the services offered by Pakistani diaspora in UAE.

Ambassador of Germany meets the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, H. E. Mr. Alfred Grannas, called on Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, to discuss matters of mutual interest and to further strengthen the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Germany.

Minister for Finance & Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, acknowledged the long-standing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Germany. He appreciated the support provided by the German Government for various projects in Pakistan.

The Minister also apprised the German Ambassador about the conclusion of the second review of IMF under the Standby Arrangement (SBA) and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to implement prudent fiscal policies and structural reforms in various sectors to enhance economic resilience and attract investments.

Ambassador Alfred Grannas appreciated Pakistan's commitment to economic reforms and expressed Germany's continued support for Pakistan's development initiatives. Ambassador Grannas also highlighted the importance of mutual cooperation in various sectors and reiterated Germany's commitment to further strengthen the economic ties with Pakistan.

Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb underscored the significance of bilateral trade between the two nations, recognizing Germany as the most important trading partner for Pakistan in the European Union (EU). He stressed the need to further enhance bilateral trade.

In conclusion, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepen bilateral cooperation and foster stronger economic ties between Pakistan and Germany.

Experts laud effectiveness of Chinese democracy, governance

Xinhua

BEIJING: Experts at an international forum on democracy have said that Chinese democracy and governance, characterized by being responsive to people's voices, have proved effective.

On Wednesday, more than 200 guests from home and abroad, including representatives of government departments and international organizations, experts and scholars, discussed topics related to democracy and global governance, both in person or virtually, during the third "International Forum on Democracy: The Shared Human Values" in Beijing.

Stephen Perry, president emeritus of Britain's 48 Group Club, said he believed that China is on its way to a good form of democracy, saying China has a sound system of hearing the people and responding to them.

"Chinese leaders do an enormous amount of research into what the people think, feel, experience and want," he said.

The democracy of hearing the people is probably simpler in China than it is in the West, he added.

Wang Shaoguang, professor emeritus with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, pointed out how Chinese



officials go into the masses to learn about their requests.

"In China, officials are required to go to the frontlines, visit the villages and local communities. They share their tables and work, and even live with the people," he said.

Wang summarized this method as sticking to the line of the masses, describing it as a huge advantage of Chinese democracy.

The attendees agreed that in China, the people's expectations are heard by the authorities, but more importantly,

they can be realized.

"The greatest advantage of Chinese democracy and governance is that there are no empty promises," said Alexander Lomanov, head of the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

"What is written in government work plans will be implemented," he said, adding that every work plan is adjusted to the needs of the Chinese people.

According to a report published during the forum, nearly 10,000 people surveyed in 2023 in 23 countries, covering Asia, Europe, America, Africa and Oceania, agree strongly with the rich connotations of China's whole-process people's democracy and consider it a benchmark for human political systems.

Of those interviewed, 91.4 percent believe that whole-process people's democracy enables the people to voice their needs freely, and that democracy should focus on solving people's practical problems.

Forum attendees also underlined the importance of respecting the diversity of democratic practice and advocated the spirit of mutual learning.

"Chinese democracy and governance do work, and there's a lot about it we can learn from. We should be studying China, not trying to lecture China," Perry said.

The event was hosted by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council Information Office and co-organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China Media Group and China International Communications Group.

(Sun Ruoqi contributed to the story)

Women's voices should not be silenced

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Women in media have to struggle with more issues than others. They have to tackle pressures from family and in the workplace, but they have to break through societal boundaries to make their place.



Women in media working in Afghanistan are facing an additional layer of pressure in the form of guidelines ordered by the Taliban. Media reports Taliban have warned of a ban on 'female media appearance without dress code compliance'.

The Afghanistan Journalists Centre (AFJC) issued a statement in which it said the Taliban have warned if the rules are not followed it may lead to a ban on women working in the media.

The Afghan women's story needs to be told, which is why the women in the media need to keep working despite the severe pressure. Local media reports that "The Afghanistan Journalist Support Organization disclosed that out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, there are no female journalists in 19. The organization has estimated the current number of female media employees or journalists active in the media sector."

The Women's Media Forum, Pakistan (WMFP) stands in solidarity with its colleagues in Afghanistan. WMFP is a network of women in media across Pakistan. It was developed two years ago under the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) gender work in Pakistan. This network helps to amplify the voices and issues of women in media and acts as a bridge between the unions and press clubs to highlight women in media and begin a conversation with and within unions, press clubs, and media organisations.

The WMFP feels more restrictions on women in the Afghan media could affect the work being done and may lead to the silencing of women's voices from inside the country.

WMFP believes Afghan women should be allowed to speak and tell their stories. They have been an integral part of Afghan society, and it will be unfortunate to see these brave voices especially women journalists silenced.

Shooting, explosions leave three dead in Moscow



A deadly shooting erupted Friday in Moscow's Crocus City Hall killed at least three people and left many injured, Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Authorities reported that over 50 ambulances have been sent to the scene of Crocus City Hall to provide assistance to the victims. "Unknown shooters opened fire in the Crocus City Hall. Evacuation is currently underway," TASS news agency also reported citing an emergency agencies' representative.

It reported that the shooters used automatic weapons. The Moscow Department of Transport, the Myakino metro station near Crocus City Hall is operating as normal for passengers entering and exiting, RIA reported, adding that all forces and resources were sent to the scene of the incident.

"An operational headquarters has been created. Information about the victims and other details are being clarified," Russian media stated. "People in camouflage, at least three, burst into the ground floor of Crocus City Hall and opened fire from automatic weapons. There are definitely wounded."

Opposing West-monopolized democracy, int'l experts call for diversity of political opinion

Xinhua

BEIJING: Western countries should inwardly reflect on their malfunctioning democracy instead of weaponizing democracy against others, experts said at an international forum on democracy here Wednesday.

Fretting about the monopolization of democratic values by the West, especially the United States, participants at the third International Forum on Democracy: The Shared Human Values called for cross-border dialogue and respect for political diversity.

Ailing Western Democracy

"The glorious season in which the democratic principle was 'one head, one vote' has gone, and the new principle is 'one dollar, one vote,'" said Massimo D'Alema, former prime minister of Italy.

He warned that modern media control enables overpowering money to manipulate political opinion.

D'Alema was one of many speakers who expressed concerns about money politics. Anthony Carty, an Irish professor of international law, told Xinhua that widespread "financial plutocrats" across Europe and North America have corrupted media and politics to serve their interests, leading to distrust between the public and the political sector.

Inequality poses another major threat to Western democracy. Citing a survey from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Georgios Katrougkalis, former Greek foreign minister, said that today majorities in all Western countries believe that their governments are not acting to promote the general interest but to "promote the interests of the wealthy and the powerful."

However, despite the "ubiquitous,



pathetic scenes" of illicit drug abuse, street vagabonds and looting of shops in U. S. cities, "the bipartisan legislators on the Capitol Hill seem to remain unperturbed," said Ong Tee Keat, former deputy speaker of the lower house of the Malaysian Parliament.

D'Alema said Western countries should rebuild democracy with public policies that can relieve inequality and social injustice and limit the power of money.

For his part, former Peruvian Foreign Affairs Minister Cesar Landa underlined the risk of social networks to Western democracy, as social networking platforms can be used "to manipulate voters, sometimes in an emotional and irrational way."

"Given the manipulation of personal data in the last U. S. election campaign, there is serious concern in the world that the elections could be won not by the candidates with the best policy proposals, but by those who use and control technology," he said.

West-Monopolized Democracy

Despite their deteriorating systems, some countries continue to wave democracy as a flag against other countries, trying to build a "new Berlin Wall," said D'Alema.

Electoral democracy is widely touted as a West creation and has ever since been made "the one-size-fits-all benchmark" for democratic rule worldwide, which is a "fallacy," said Ong.

"The cohesive transplant of electoral democracy, either through military intervention or brutal regime change, as was initiated by Washington in the developing world, has only added more failed states and ensuing humanitarian disasters to the lists," he said.

"Everywhere they've applied this system, it led to chaos," British economist John Ross told Xinhua, noting that U. S. attempts to impose so-called democracy in Iraq and Libya have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and a destabilized Middle East.

"You cannot impose a system from the outside for a very good reason because the main factor in any country is always domestic," said Ross, also a former director of economic and business policy for the mayor of London.

The underlying intention of the United States, Ong said, is to use democracy as a weapon "against geopolitical challenges, or potential adversaries in the global power play."

Western countries underwent a long "peculiar historical process" in democ-

cracy, which is precisely why the West should see that its model "cannot be exported and imposed in other parts of the world, as the experiences in Afghanistan or Iraq or in the Middle East have shown again in recent years," said D'Alema.

Harmonizing Differences Through Dialogue

With diverse levels of modernization and development, trajectories of nation-building, and history of nationhood across the developing world, the practice of democracy varies, which, nevertheless, has "consistently been the blind spot" of the developed West, said Ong.

For instance, China has "a better system for hearing the people and a better system for responding to them," said Stephen Perry, president emeritus of Britain's 48 Group Club.

"Chinese democracy and governance works. We should be studying in China, not trying to lecture China," he said.

Participation and governance matter most regardless of form in the practice of democracy, said Ong.

Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, president of the Africa Policy Institute, said the international community is calling for a more multipolar world given the "glaring democracy deficit."

For democratic global governance, an equal multipolar world requires "equal rights, equal opportunities and equal rules for every nation" and countries that "are not grouped according to their strength," he said.

Essam Sharaf, former prime minister of Egypt, called for mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilizations to tackle global challenges.

"We can break cultural barriers by harmonizing differences," Sharaf said. "Different colors and shapes ended up with one beautiful painting."

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
65,151.82	65,417.40
Day's High	Day's Low
65,534.02	65,056.65
Index Value	Change
4,141,076,140	-265.58
Percentage	Time
-0.41%	22 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,930.92	+48.37
Percentage	Time
+0.61%	22 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,600.80	-180.57
Percentage	Time
-0.45%	22 Mar, 1:08 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
40,888.43	+72.77
Percentage	Time
+0.18%	22 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	740.92	748.92
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.74	39.14
Danish Krone	40.58	40.98
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 \$	168.56	170.56
Norwegians Krone	26.19	26.49
Omani Riyal	724.36	732.36
Qatari Riyal	76.57	77.27
Saudi Riyal	73.8	74.5
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	26.89	27.19
Swiss Franc	313.78	316.28
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.3
UK Pound Sterling	353.5	357
US Dollar	278.2	280.95

Message

March 23 reminds us of our past: Ch. Zulfiqar Ali Anjum

MULTAN: March 23 is a significant day in our national history, reminding us of our past. Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, a renowned industrialist and Chairman of the Board of Investment Group and S. M. Food and Volka Food International, said that March 23 is such a pivotal day in our national history that reminds us of our past, invites us to reflect on our current circumstances, and sets the motion for building a prosperous future. Pakistan emerged as a result of political and constitutional struggles, and its future is inherent in adhering to its spirit. He said that this day takes us back to 1940 when the Muslims of the Subcontinent agreed to the establishment of a separate homeland, which they could call their own under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said that Allama Iqbal's dream of freedom manifested itself in the form of the demand of the Muslims and the agreement for a separate homeland. The seven years of historic struggle by the Muslims of the Subcontinent under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam transformed Iqbal's dream into reality.



Emirates wins 'Best Inflight Entertainment Award'

News Desk

DUBAI: This week Emirates was crowned the global winner of the 'Best Inflight Entertainment Award' in Airline Ratings 2024 Airline Excellence Awards, announced online.

Emirates scooped the top award for inflight entertainment from an extensive finalist list of global airlines, due to its whopping 6,500 channels of high quality and acclaimed content, the world's largest entertainment library in the sky – making it a clear winner for the Best Inflight Entertainment award.

Pakistan, UK vow to strengthen bilateral relations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and United Kingdom (UK) here on Friday expressed mutual commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation between both the countries for mutual benefit. British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, called on Minister for Finance & Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss matters of bilateral significance and strengthening the longstanding relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

On the occasion, the minister acknowledged the enduring relations between Pakistan and the UK, said a press statement issued by finance ministry. He also apprised the High Commissioner about the conclusion of the second International Monetary Fund (IMF) review under the Standby Arrangement (SBA) and reiterated the government's commitment to implement prudent fiscal policies and structural reforms in various sectors such as FBR, privatization, and private sector facilitation.



The British High Commissioner, Ms. Jane Marriott, commended Pakistan's commitment to economic reforms and expressed the UK's continued support for Pakistan's development goals.

She emphasized the importance of further enhancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in areas of mutual interest, and reiterated the UK's commitment to strengthen the partnership between the two nations.

Agreement

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Walid Abdelwahab, Director IsDB Regional Hub Turkiye and Dr. Kazim Niaz Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs signing the agreement on Friday.



Photo: PID

Ambassador vows to expand Pak-Czech diverse cooperation including trade, tourism

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan in Czech Republic Ayesha Ali on Thursday expressed her commitment to enhancing bilateral relations with the landlocked Central European country, focusing on political, trade, economic, cultural, and people-to-people interactions. The ambassador, in an interview with 'Czech & Slovak Leaders' magazine, said the strong economic and trade relationship between the two countries continued to grow.

"Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world, with a large middle class. Pakistan also has one of the best foreign direct investment regimes in the world, and offers opportunities for investment in all possible sectors, including automotive, machines & tools, mining, agriculture, and IT & energy," she said. She said as these are also strong performing sectors of the Czech economy, the collaboration



possibilities are immense. "We welcome Czech investment, and want to expand our bilateral trade ties beyond the traditional and into new areas for mutual benefit." She told the interviewer that the platform of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) of Pakistan was very important, and

that the embassy had been sensitizing the Czech counterparts regarding opportunities offered by the SIFC. She said Pakistan has had a longstanding cooperative partnership with the Czech Republic, which has expanded over the decades to all segments of the bilateral relationship, including political, trade, economic, cultural, and people to people interaction. "It is a country with a rich history, and dynamic people and economy. I look forward to building on the strong relationship between our two countries in all these areas," the ambassador added. She emphasized Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and potential as a tourist destination, aiming to attract Czech tourists, especially those interested in adventure sports and mountaineering. To a question, Ambassador Ayesha recounted her diplomatic experience having served in key capitals such as Tokyo, Washington, D. C., and New Delhi before her current assignment in Prague.

CEO Jazz advocates for policy reforms to ensure industry viability

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer of Jazz and Chairman of the Telecom Operators Association of Pakistan (ToAP) Aamir Ibrahim on Friday held a significant meeting with the Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

During the discussion, Aamir presented a comprehensive overview of the telecom sector's vital contributions to bolstering Pakistan's digital infrastructure.

Highlighting a substantial investment of \$5.7 billion over the past five years, the sector has significantly contributed Rs. 1.27 trillion to the national exchequer, while fueling broadband penetration from 32% in 2019 to 54.9% in 2024.

Aamir also highlighted the pivotal role of the mobile industry in fostering economic growth, promoting digital inclusion, and catalyzing the prosperity of other sectors.

He called for the urgent need to address some key challenges facing Pakistan's telecom sector to help realize Pakistan's potential for attracting international investments and accelerating the integration of future technologies.

"These challenges included the lowest global average revenue per user (ARPU), a



high taxation environment, soaring spectrum prices tied to the U. S. dollar, and currency depreciation. Such factors not only deter investment but also impede consistent improvement in service quality, posing a threat to Pakistan's potential for attracting international investments and integrating future technologies" he added.

He was of the view that these factors adversely impact investment appetite,

posing a threat to ensuring consistent improvement in service quality.

The industry, he said, must be viable in a business sense to meaningfully attract and support the Digital Pakistan ambitions of the GoP.

To address these lingering obstacles, Aamir called for the urgent need for policy interventions that the industry has been advocating for over the past few years.

PRGMEA wants TEXPO 2024 in Lahore to make it successful

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) has raised the voice against the violation of procedure by TDAP to conduct TEXPO 2024, as the Authority has shifted this year's event to Karachi. As per schedule this year's event was to be held in Lahore because previous TEXPO 2023 was held in Karachi.

The PRGMEA Chairman (NZ) Ahmad Hanif has asked the authority to bring this mega event to the Punjab provincial capital, which is the major garment industrial hub, as the previous TEXPO exhibition of 2023 held in Karachi had witnessed a successful participation from Punjab, facilitating our esteemed members in engaging with potential buyers and showcasing their products to a global audience.

In a letter, written simultaneously to TDAP Chief Executive Zubair Motiwala and Commerce Secretary Capt (r) Khurram Agha, PRGMEA North Zone chairman Ahmad Hanif requested the government to organize this year's TEXPO 2024 in Lahore because of its significance to attract the international buyers.

The regional chairman also appreciated the role of TDAP in boosting industrial activi-

ties in the region and hoped that the Authority would be in touch to increase cooperation in this regard. He said that PRGMEA north zone attaches great importance to its partnership with the TDAP as one of the largest government entity to collaborate and support the garment exporters in the country.

Ahmad Hanif observed that TEXPO Pakistan served as a significant platform for the value-added textile sector, attracting a large number of genuine and major buyers and delegations from key markets such as the USA, Europe, and China. "We believe that participating in TEXPO 2024 presents a valuable opportunity for our members to connect with the world buyers through both B2B and B2C interactions.

However, considering the importance of regional inclusivity and fair representation, we kindly request TDAP to consider organizing the 5th TEXPO 2024 in Lahore as per the rotation schedule.

He maintained that Lahore, being a major textile hub, offers an ideal setting for hosting such a prestigious event. Moreover, holding TEXPO in this city of textile hub will ensure broader participation from both the manufacturers as well as the exporters across the country, promoting inclusivity and equitable opportunities for all stakeholders.

Govt forms committee for PIA privatization, airports outsourcing

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday formed a committee to expedite the process of outsourcing the country's major airports and privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

According to the notification, the newly formed committee will act under the chairmanship of Federal Minister of Defense and Aviation Khawaja Asif Ahmad.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister of Privatization Aleem Khan are also part of the committee.

Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Secretary Privatization and Secretary Aviation are also members of the committee while the

Aviation Division will provide secretarial support to the Committee, the notification added.

The committee will review outsourcing of the management of major airports of the country and will also monitor matters related to privatization of PIA.

It is pertinent to mention here that the government has already initiated the process to delegate the operations and management of Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore airports – with the aim of generating foreign exchange to support the economy.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced that the government is committed to completing the privatization process of PIA by June.

OPPO Unveils Reno11 Series in Pakistan; Pre-Orders Open

PPA

PAKISTAN: OPPO, the global leader in smart devices, proudly launches its high-end series the OPPO Reno11 Series 5G with pre-orders for the OPPO Reno11 F 5G starting March 20th, 2024. The Reno 11 Series Grand Launch Event, held in Lahore, showcased the culmination of innovation with the participation of OPPO Pakistan's esteemed brand ambassador, Fawad Khan, alongside

key technology influencers, media representatives, and OPPO executives, marking the highly anticipated arrival of the Reno11 Series 5G.

The event was a captivating showcase of innovation under the theme "RENOvator is Back," as Fawad Khan unveiled the latest addition to the OPPO family. Guests were treated to an immersive experience, exploring the device's stunning features and witnessing firsthand its exceptional capabilities.

Pakistan Day celebrations held in Neelum Valley

Sports Desk

NEELUM VALLEY: Pakistan Day celebrations were organized in Neelum Valley. Various sports competitions were held. Organizing competitions in volleyball, track and field, badminton, table tennis and 100 meters race. Prizes are also distributed to the best performing athletes in sports competitions. Weapons exhibition was also held for school children. An iftar dinner was also organized for the elders of the area under the auspices of Pak Army.

On the occasion of Pakistan Day on 23rd March, huge events were organized in Neelum Valley in which people from different walks of life including school children, youth and teachers participated. In this regard, various sports competitions were organized in the Neelum valley in which children participated with great enthusiasm. Prizes were also distributed for outstanding performance in sports. Pakistan Day celebra-



tions were also held in Nussiri, Kattan and Jura. In this regard, an exhibition of Pakistan Army's war weapons was also organized in Kattan and informa-

tion was provided to the students. On this occasion, Kashmiri and local songs were also played.

The youth also hoisted the flags of

Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. In connection with the Pakistan Day, an Iftar dinner was also organized for the elders of the area at Jura.

Minister of Sports Punjab meets delegates from Pakistan Federation Baseball at plantation ceremony

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: As part of the ongoing plantation campaign spearheaded by the Government of Punjab, Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar participated in a tree planting ceremony held at the Sports Board Punjab. The event, graced by the presence of DG Sports Punjab Pervaiz Iqbal, served as a platform for fostering collaboration between sports and environmental initiatives. Following the tree plantation, Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar engaged in discussions with delegates from the Pakistan Federation Baseball, led by General Secretary Syed Fakhar Ali Shah and Executive Director Moazzam Khan Klair. The dialogue centered on advancing the state of baseball in Punjab and enhancing opportunities



for players at both provincial and national levels.

Expressing his commitment to the development of baseball in Punjab, Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar pledged

unwavering support to General Secretary Syed Fakhar Ali Shah. He affirmed the government's dedication to establishing professional baseball facilities across Punjab, aimed at

facilitating the growth and promotion of the sport. In a gesture of appreciation, Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, accompanied by Moazzam Khan Klair and Shahzada Butt, present-

ed a commemorative souvenir to Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar. The presentation ceremony, attended by Director General of Sports Board Punjab, Pervaiz Iqbal, underscored the collaborative efforts between the government and sports organizations in fostering a conducive environment for athletic development.

Moazzam Khan Klair conveyed heartfelt gratitude to Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar for his steadfast commitment to advancing sports promotion and player welfare initiatives across Punjab. The meeting between Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar and the delegates from the Pakistan Federation Baseball marks a significant step towards elevating the status of baseball and fostering a culture of sports excellence in Punjab.

PCB delegation visits Iqbal Stadium as upgradation on the cards

A Sports

LAHORE: A Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) delegation featuring COO Salman Naseer and Chief Selector Wahab Riaz visited Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium on Friday.

According to the details, the delegation made a visit to the Iqbal Stadium as per the instruction of the newly-appointed PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi.

The delegation was instructed by the PCB head to analyze the condition of the stadium and the facilities there which may pave the way for its upgradation.

For the unversed, Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium has not hosted a single international, domestic or franchise league match since the return of international cricket to Pakistan.

The Stadium last hosted an international match in 2008.

Earlier this week, PCB Chairman Naqvi was presented with the plan to upgrade three major stadiums.

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The development came after Naqvi previously announced that the major



stadiums of the country would undergo upgradation before the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

"Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi called on the NESPAK (National Engineering Services of Pakistan) officials in a follow-up meeting on the upgradation of the three major venues in Pakistan," the PCB said in a press release.

"COO PCB, Salman Naseer, Director Infrastructure PCB Nasir Hameed and GM NESPAK were also in attendance during this meeting.

"The initial designs for the immediate upgradation of Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, National Bank Stadium, Karachi and Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi were presented to the Chairman PCB in the

form of a presentation.

"The chairman instructed the officials about his plans regarding the enhancement of the view for the fans from every seat in the stadium while he also emphasized the importance of renovation of the hospitality boxes at all three venues.

"With the upgradation plan to be finalised soon, the Chairman instructed the NESPAK officials to start the work on stadiums immediately keeping in mind a tight window of time before hosting the ICC Champions Trophy 2025."

Mohsin Naqvi, while addressing the media at the National Bank Stadium on Monday night, following the conclusion of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9, acknowledged the need to upgrade three major stadiums, followed by the upgradation of other venues.

"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," said Chairman PCB.

IMHA Ramadan Intra Academy Five A Side Hockey Tournament Concluded

Sports Desk

KARACHI: IMHA Ramadan Intra Academy Girls and Boys Five A Side Hockey Tournament held at Olympian Islahuddin and Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy concluded. In the boys' final, IMHA Bulls beat IMHA Lions by 2-1 goals. Syed Ahmad Ali and Irfan Khan scored from winning team's one each goals, Olympian Sameer scored the only goal for the losing team. In the girls' final, IMHA Wolves defeated IMHA Tigers by 3-2. On behalf of the winning team, Skipper Sundus Siddiqui scored two goals while Ariba scored one goal from Tigers, Amna Fatima and Larib scored one each goals. In the girls' competitions, Amna Fatima was declared the top scorer with 16 goals, Sundus Siddiqui was declared the best player, Horiya was declared the best goalkeeper, Shireen Emerging and Musfra was declared the best warrior. In boys, Essa Khan was the top scorer with 15 goals, Ali Abbas was the best player, Junaid was the best goalkeeper, Saced Shah was the emerging player and Bilawal Abbas was the best warrior.

The chief guests were Member Provincial Assembly MQM Pakistan Adil Askari, CEO of Nacem Towels Nacem Haider, representative of Netsed Saeed Umar and Pedital's Sohaib and Miss Ayesha distributed the prizes. Speaking on this occasion, Academy Head Coach and Chairman Organizing Committee Olympian Syed Sameer Hussain said that the management committee deserves congratulations for the successful organization of the tournament, especially Syed Alay Hasan, Syed Sagheer Hussain, Saeeda Khanum, Asad Zaheer and Naveed Ahsan, whose hard work day and night made this tournament successful, Sameer Hussain said that under the patronage of the spirited Olympian Islahuddin of the academy, tournaments are organized every year in the month of Ramadan with the aim of providing sports opportunities to the players. We have to do and develop talent from our academy in the past, many players have made it to the Pakistan junior and senior teams and camps. Our women's players have also represented the Pakistan Board. The tournament will start in which former Olympians, internationals and national players will participate. In the end, Sameer Hussain presented souvenirs to the Chief guests, Adil Askari and Nacem Haider.

ICC Women's T20 fixtures announced

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The fixtures for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2024 would be held in Abu Dhabi, UAE from April 25 to May 7.

A total of 10 teams would be battling for two Women's T20 World Cup spots to be held in Bangladesh later this year, said a press release. Ten teams, divided into two groups of five each, would compete in the Qualifier in two Abu Dhabi venues from April 25. The two table-toppers from the two groups would feature in the semi-finals on May 5 with the winners booking their tickets to Bangladesh and joining the hosts, Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and West Indies in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in September and October.

Scotland, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America (USA) feature in Group A, while Ireland, Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Vanuatu and Zimbabwe make up Group B. The event features eight teams from the five ICC Global Development Regions, as well as Ireland and Sri Lanka, who did not find a place in the top six of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2023 in South Africa and therefore missed out on automatic qualification for this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup. The Qualifier would be staged at Zayed Cricket Stadium and Tolerance Oval, both form part of the Abu Dhabi Cricket and Sports Hub. Mohan Oval, also located in the same vicinity, will host two warm-up matches on April 21 and 23. On the opening day, Sri Lanka will take on Thailand, while Scotland will play Uganda at Tolerance Oval. At Zayed Cricket Stadium, Ireland will face UAE and Zimbabwe will take on Vanuatu. The final will take place on May 7 at Zayed Cricket Stadium. Four matches would be played on each of the group stage match days - two each at Tolerance Oval and Zayed Cricket Stadium.

I never refused to play one down: Mohammad Rizwan

A Sports

Pakistan's wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan has denied reports that he refused to move to the one-down position during the T20I series against New Zealand in January.

"During an interview with a local news outlet, Rizwan expressed his willingness to adapt to any role for the national team. He is ready to bat at any number, and even ready to relinquish his duties as a wicketkeeper.

"I never refused to play one down. When I was asked, I said I am absolutely available," said Rizwan.

"I even said that if I am needed for bowling, I am ready for that too, I can even leave my wicket-keeping," he further added.

The top-order batter also pointed out that he has batted at almost all the batting positions, which reflects his flexibility to bat at any number.



Japan-North Korea World Cup Qualifier called off over 'unforeseen circumstances'

Sports Desk

North Korea's home World Cup Qualifier against Japan was called off on Friday, the Asian Football Confederation said, hours after announcing it would be moved to a neutral venue.

"The fixture between DPR Korea and Japan, scheduled to be played on March 26, will not take place as scheduled due to unforeseen circumstances," the AFC said in a statement.

It said the decision was taken after talks with the world football governing body FIFA and came a day after North Korea said it would not be able to stage the game in the capital Pyongyang.

North Korean officials did not say why.

The AFC said the matter would now be referred to "the relevant committees" in FIFA with further updates expected.

It did not confirm if the fixture would be played at a future time or place.

Earlier Friday, AFC general secretary Windsor John told AFP the game would proceed, but at a neutral venue.

The match in Pyongyang would have been the first game in North Korea for Japan's men's team since 2011 and a rare international football match in isolated North Korea.

Japan and North Korea's women's playoff for the Paris Olympics was switched from Pyongyang to neutral ground in Saudi Arabia last month.

Japanese news agency Kyodo reported on Thursday that North Korea didn't want to host the match over fears of bacterial infections in Japan.

North Korean officials the same day told their Japanese counterparts that they could not play host, without saying

why. "They asked us during half-time if we can organise (it) in Japan," Japan football association chief Kozo Tashima said after the teams met in a first qualifier in Tokyo, which the hosts won 1-0.

"I told them it was so sudden and that I cannot give them an immediate yes," Japanese media quoted Tashima as saying.

"I told them it will take us at least two or three days (to answer). I told them it's difficult," he said.

Earlier this week Japan's foreign ministry warned football fans not to attempt to travel to the country for the match.

"As you know, North Korea takes a hostile view of Japan and travel is not recommended for the general public," it said on X, formerly Twitter.

Fourteen government officials had

been set to accompany the Japan team for the match as well as a small number of media outlets, broadcaster NHK reported.

Relations have long been dogged by issues including compensation for Japan's brutal occupation of the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945 and more recently by Pyongyang's firing of missiles over Japanese territory.

The abduction by North Korean agents of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s - forced to train spies in Japanese language and customs - has also long been a major point of contention.

Despite being isolated and poor, North Korea qualified for the 2010 World Cup.

But they were knocked out at the group stage following three defeats, including a 7-0 thumping by Cristiano



Ronaldo's Portugal.

They also qualified in 1966 when they

famously beat Italy 1-0 and made it to the quarter-finals.

Agreement

ISLAMABAD: H.E Sultan Abdul Rahman Al Murshif, SFD CEO and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary Minister of Economic Affairs, signing the agreement on Friday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan, SFD sign \$107m hydropower agreements

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Kazim Niaz and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) here Friday signed loan agreements US\$ 66.00 million for Shounter Hydropower Project (48 MW) and US\$ 41.00 million Jagran IV Hydropower Project (22 MW). Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema witnessed the signing ceremony, according to press statement issued

by Economic Affairs Division.

These endeavours aim at harnessing the indigenously available hydropower potential and generating 70 MW hydropower, which will be transmitted to the national grid.

Moreover, it will help in eradicating the menace of deforestation by providing electricity as an alternative to the energy needs of the local communities, who hitherto are entirely dependent on forest wood; and create economic opportunities for socioeconomic uplift of the people of

Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It is pertinent to mention that a delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD is currently visiting Pakistan.

The delegation called on Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema, the statement said adding The CEO, SFD, thanked him and government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as the conferment of award.

Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina prays for Palestine at Faisal Masjid



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The esteemed Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Husein ef Kavazovic offered Friday prayer at the Faisal Masjid.

At the Faisal Masjid, the Grand Mufti was received by Incharge Protocol & Public Relations of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) Mr. Nasir Farid who extended a warm welcome to him. He also conveyed heartfelt congratulations by the President IIUI, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi for his forthcoming receipt of the Sitare e Quaid e Azam Award on March 23rd, conferred by the President of Pakistan. Dr. Husein ef Kavazovic thanked IIUI President for the warm wishes and felicitations.

The Friday prayer at Faisal Masjid was also attended by the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Emin Cohodarevic, officials of International Islamic University, Diplomats of various Muslim countries, prominent religious and political figures, and thousands of faithful from twin cities.

President approves remission for prisoners on Pakistan Day, Eidul Fitr

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday approved remission for the prisoners on the occasion of Pakistan Day annually observed on March 23 and Eid ul Fitr.

The president granted a remission of 90 days each, for both occasions in sentences exercising his powers under Article 45 of the Constitution and Rule 15-A of the Rules of Business.

However, the remission would not be applicable on the prisoners involved in murder, espionage and anti-state activities.

Besides, the prisoners involved in rape, theft, robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and financial crimes, would



also be ineligible for the remission.

The reduction in sentences would be applicable on the male prisoners of over 65 years age and female prisoners of over 60 years age, who had completed one-third of the sentence.

The juvenile prisoners, who had completed one third of their sentence would also be entitled for the remission.

Pakistan calls for collective efforts to tackle terrorism after Kandahar attack

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In this picture, taken on April 15, 2023, a security personnel stands guard outside the Pakistan's Foreign Ministry building in Islamabad. Radio Pakistan

Pakistan's Foreign Office has called for collective efforts to tackle terrorism after the suicide bombing in Afghanistan's Kandahar city that killed at least three people and wounded 12 others.

"Terrorism is a shared concern that both countries need to address through collective efforts," the FO said in a statement on Monday and strongly condemned the attack.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, and while multiple explosions have been reported around the country since the start of the holy month of Ramadan on March 11, few have been confirmed by Taliban officials.

Afghanistan's capital is Kabul but Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada lives in Kandahar city, for decades the stronghold of the Taliban movement.

Neighbouring Pakistan has seen an increase in terrorist attacks in the recent past, blaming Afghanistan for allowing its land to be used as a "launch pad" for terrorist activities.

CPEC flagship project cornerstone of cooperative development: Acting CG Guangzhou

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is a cornerstone of cooperative development and shared success that promises a brighter future for both China and Pakistan and at the region at large, said Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, Sardar Muhammad.


He made these remarks while addressing the Pakistani community at Iftar cum dinner organized by Consulate General in Guangzhou, China in celebration of Pakistan Resolution Day, which is commemorated annually on the 23rd of March.


The event was attended by a distinguished gathering that included a large

number of businessmen, members of academia, researchers, and students, highlighting the rich diversity and collaborative spirit of the Pakistani community in China.

While shedding light on the significance of Pakistan Resolution Day and expressing appreciation for the strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and China, he said, this day is not just a reminder of our historical journey towards independence but a reaffirmation of the values and aspirations that continue to define us as a nation.


The event served as a platform to celebrate the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, underscored by the mutual interests and shared goals that have knitted the two nations closely together over the years.





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