



**President Putin declared March 24 a day of national mourning**

President Putin declared March 24 a day of national mourning. Following the terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall, President Putin declared March 24 a day of national mourning. The Russian Embassy will open a virtual condolence book on March 24-26.



**Pakistan, Saudi Arabia to work together, further enhance bilateral cooperation**

Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their resolve to work together and further enhance bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. This was discussed at a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the visiting Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, who called on him at Aiwan-i-Sadr on Saturday. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Revitalization**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the Pakistan Day Parade ceremony, at Shakarparian Parade Ground on Saturday.



Photo: PID

**Pakistan not to compromise its sovereignty, tolerate any destabilizing efforts: President**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday said that Pakistan was a peace-loving and responsible nuclear state but it would neither make any compromise on its sovereignty nor would tolerate any efforts of terrorists or any group aimed at destabilising it. "Pakistan wants relations with all our neighbors. We are a peace-loving country and a responsible nuclear state. However, let me make it clear that we will not compromise on our sovereignty... We will not tolerate any efforts by terrorists or any group to destabilize our country," the president said addressing the Pakistan Day Parade ceremony held here.

President Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin

Salman Al Saud, who previously served as an F-15 pilot in Royal Saudi Air Force, was the guest of honour of the ceremony. In his address, President Zardari said that the Pakistani nation and armed forces were always ready to respond to any aggression at all times. "Today's parade is a reminder of our unity, strength, and pride," said the president who earlier reviewed the parade after arriving at the venue escorted in his chariot by the presidential guards mounted on horses. Pakistan not to compromise its sovereignty, tolerate any destabilizing efforts: President The president congratulated the nation on the Day which commemorated the historic struggle of the Muslims of the subcontinent to achieve a separate homeland under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam

Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He also paid tribute to the martyrs and Ghazis with a resolve to make all-out efforts to protect national security and sovereignty. The president's address encompassed domestic subjects like recent elections, efforts against terrorism, economic challenges, and the establishment of SIFC, and the regional situation including the human rights abuses in Indian Illegally

The president also reiterated Pakistan's continued support for the Palestinian people till the resolution of the issue as per their aspirations. Recounting the country's journey marked with many ups and downs, he said despite numerous challenges, the Pakistani nation achieved distinctions in the fields of defense, agriculture and technology, besides its inter-

nationally recognised contribution to fighting against terrorism. Highlighting the current social, political and economic challenges facing the country, he said following the successful holding of elections and the formation of a democratic government, it was the responsibility of all to seek solutions to all the issues.

President Zardari told the ceremony that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had been formed to attract investment in agriculture, livestock, mining, Information Technology and energy sectors. He also requested all the political parties to set aside their political interests and work unitedly to bring in country's prosperity. The president also thanked the friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE for support-

ing Pakistan in the difficult times. The parade commenced with the national anthem, the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, after a special salute was paid to the national flag. President Asif Zardari reviewed the parade led by Parade Commander Brigadier Shahzad Ali Arshad which followed the fly-past formation of the Pakistan Air Force and the Pakistan Navy. The contingents of the three armed forces and other security forces conducted a march while fighter planes presented aerobicic maneuvers. After the PAF fighters' mesmerising show, Pakistan Army, PAF and Navy paratroopers demonstrated their skills with free-falls. Meanwhile, the PAF's aerobatics display team enthralled spectators with their unmatched aerial maneuvers.

**Pakistan Day being celebrated with traditional zeal**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The nation on Saturday is celebrating Pakistan Day with a renewed pledge to work hard for the progress and stability of Pakistan.

This day is celebrated to commemorate the Lahore Resolution passed on 23 March 1940 and the adoption of the first Constitution of Pakistan on 23 March 1956 making Pakistan the world's first Islamic Republic. Pakistan Resolution was passed/adopted by the then Indian Muslim League, led by Quaid-i-Azam M. A. Jinnah, at the Minar-e-Pakistan Lahore on 23 March 1940, that called for establishing an independent federation, to be named Pakistan, comprising provinces with a Muslim majority located in north-western and north-eastern regions of British-controlled territories in India.

The day dawned with a

31-gun salute in the federal capital and 21-gun salute in provincial capitals.

Special prayers were offered in mosques after Fajr prayers for the prosperity and solidarity of the country. The national flag is hoisted on major government buildings.

The main feature of the day is the grand military parade in Islamabad where contingents of three armed forces and other security forces conducted march past while fighter planes presented aerobicic maneuvers.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud is the guest of honour in today's event while the contingents of China and Azerbaijan will also feature in the parade.

An investiture ceremony will be held at Aiwan-e-Sadar in the afternoon where President Asif Ali Zardari will confer awards and medals to personalities for their outstanding contribution in different fields.

**Gunmen kill more than 80 in concert attack near Moscow**



**Reuters**

MOSCOW: Camouflage-clad gunmen opened fire at concertgoers with automatic weapons on Friday, killing at least 82 people and injuring 145 more in an attack claimed by IS.

In the deadliest attack in Russia since the 2004 Beslan school siege, gunmen sprayed civilians with bullets just before Soviet-era rock group "Picnic" was to perform to a full house at the 6,200-seat the Crocus City Hall just west of Moscow.

Verified video showed people taking their seats in the hall, then rushing for the exits as repeated gunfire

echoed above screams. Other video showed men shooting at groups of people. Some victims lay motionless in pools of blood.

"Suddenly there were bangs behind us - shots. A burst of firing - I do not know what," one witness, who asked not to be identified by name, told Reuters.

"A stampede began. Everyone ran to the escalator," the witness said. "Everyone was screaming; everyone was running."

Russian investigators said the death toll was more than 60. Health officials said about 145 people were wounded, of which about 60 were in critical condition.

**UAE Ambassador Congratulations on Pakistan Resolution Day**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: On this special occasion of Pakistan's Resolution Day, I extend my warmest congratulations to you and the friendly people of Pakistan.

May this day be filled with joy, pride, and a renewed sense of unity among the nation.

As friends and partners, the UAE stands with Pakistan in celebrating its rich history, culture, and achievements. Happy Pakistan Day! UAE-Pakistan Zindabad

**PM, Saudi Defence Minister discuss security, regional issues**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here at the Prime Minister House on Saturday and discussed in detail bilateral matters, regional peace, security and situation in the region. Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir also attended the meeting. They also exchanged views on increasing cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the areas of defence and security.

The Prime Minister congratulated the Defence Minister on receiving Pakistan's highest civil award Nishan-e-Pakistan. He thanked the Saudi Defence Minister for attending the Pakistan Day parade as a special guest. PM Shehbaz expressed best wishes for Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince



Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud. Talking to the Saudi Defence Minister, the Prime Minister said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had close brotherly ties based on commonalities of religion, history and culture, which were further strengthening with the passage of time. Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Saudi Arabia, he said adding Saudi Arabia fully supported Pakistan on every front.

The PM reiterated his earlier invitation and said Pakistan was waiting to welcome the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Mohammed Bin Salman. The Saudi Defence Minister felicitated the Prime Minister on assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him. He thanked Pakistan for inviting him as a special guest for Pakistan Day parade and said he had the opportunity to witness the best capabilities of armed forces of Pakistan during the parade. He said the recent visit of Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir to Saudi Arabia was very important and fruitful to further promote defence relations of the two countries.

**President Xi sends condolences to Russian president over terror attack**



**Spokesman Report**

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping has sent a message of condolence to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday over the serious terrorist attack on a Moscow concert hall. In his message, Xi said he was shocked to learn of the serious terrorist attack, which caused heavy casualties. He expressed deep condolences for the deceased on behalf of the Chinese government and people, and offered sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured.

China opposes all forms of terrorism, strongly

**Overseas Pakistanis celebrates Pakistan Day with great enthusiasm**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: On Pakistan Day this Saturday, Pakistanis living abroad demonstrate their abiding affection for their country and highlight their enduring bond despite being geographically apart.

According to the private

news channel they declare that the name of their cherished nation, Pakistan, resonates with their souls.

Since Pakistan is their ultimate source of pride and respect, they swear undying commitment and unyielding pride for it, regardless of where they are in the world.

**PTI Founding Chairman congratulates nation on Pakistan Day**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: As the nation celebrates Pakistan Day, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founding Chairman Imran Khan congratulates the entire nation and vows that his party is committed to carry forward the vision of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a just society and to make Pakistan a truly

sovereign Islamic welfare state as the nation would not accept slavery. In a special message on the occasion of Pakistan Day, PTI Founding Chairman, who was unjustly incarcerated in Adiala Jail, "Today we commemorate the Resolution for the founding of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent—our beloved homeland Pakistan."

Imran Khan said that March 23 was a day of pledge to achieve and establish an Islamic welfare state.

PTI Chairman-for-life stated that on this auspicious day, the Muslims of the slave India, taking light from Khulama Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi and independence, pledged to achieve an independent state under the visionary leadership of Quaid-i-Azam.

# Muzaffarabad celebrates Pakistan Resolution Day with great enthusiasm

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Like the rest of the country, Pakistan Resolution Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir. In this regard, a solemn flag-hoisting ceremony was organized at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Muzaffarabad, while the police squad of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police also saluted the national flag. Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad Nadeem Ahmad Janjua, Director Information Muhammad Bashir Mirza, Additional Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad Hafiz Muhammad Ali, senior Hurri-



yat leader Mushtaqul Islam along with district police officers, civil society and every class were present in the ceremony. A large number of people from his life participated. Speaking at the event, Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi said that today's day is of special importance in connection with the Pakistan Movement. Today on March 23, 1940, the Muslims of the subcontinent passed the Pakistan Resolution in a historic gathering in Lahore. Later, in the light of this unanimously passed resolution, Pakistan was achieved under the enthusiastic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. God salutes those who sacrificed for the cause of Pakistan and

the idea of two nations. History pays homage to leaders of Pakistan. Pakistan forces are making great sacrifices for the defense of the motherland. The exemplary sacrifices of Pakistan forces will always be remembered within the LOC and Pakistan. We have to work in unison for economic development, prosperity of every individual, only then the fruits of freedom can be achieved in real sense. Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad Nadeem Ahmad Janjua said that Pakistan Day has special importance. On that day, the Muslims of the subcontinent demanded a separate homeland and later after a great struggle, they were able to achieve a determined state of Pakistan.

## Pakistan Day was celebrated with great fervor in Azad Kashmir: 'Long Live Kashmir'

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Like the four provinces of the country, the 84th Pakistan Day was celebrated with great devotion and respect, ideological enthusiasm and a renewed pledge that till the occupied Jammu and Kashmir gains independence from Indian rule, it will not be a part of Pakistan. Our peaceful, democratic, history-making struggle will continue. Pakistan Day will begin with Quran reading and prayer events in mosques and homes after the Fajr prayer. Tributes were paid in words. Meetings, processions and rallies were held all over Azad Kashmir to show respect for Pakistan. Long live the atmosphere of Kashmir. The slogans of Azadi, Pakistan Zinbad, India, Israel Zinbad, Pakistan Army Zinbad echoed. A large rally was organized from Garhi Pin Alamdar Chowk to the Press Club organized by the well-known NGO Pahla Kadam in the capital Muzaffarabad. The leadership was led by Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Central Deputy Secretary Information nominated candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven Shaukat Javed Mir, General Secretary Qazi Tanveer and other officials. The participants were holding banners and placards, flags of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. I gathered. Addressing the gathering of the rally on this occasion, Chief Guest Shaukat Javed said that on the basis of the two-nation theory, the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, did a great favor to the nation by getting a separate state. On 23 March 1940, in continuation of the resolution, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947.

## District administration celebrates Pakistan's Resolution Day in grand style

Atta Mohd Sanghi/ Naveed Ahmed Baloch

RAHIM YAR KHAN: The main event of Pakistan's Resolution Day organized by the district administration was celebrated in grand style, Deputy Commissioner Khuram Parvez along with district officers, civil society, peace committee members and others unfurled the flag at the municipal committee town hall. Police, rescue 1122 teams saluted the green crescent flag Presented Deputy Commissioner Khuram Parvez while addressing the ceremony said that on March 23, 1940, the Muslims of India passed the Pakistan Resolution in Lahore and sealed the dream of Allama Iqbal and the ambitious leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah ensured the achievement of Pakistan. He said that today we have a message to our young generation It has to be said that Pakistan came into existence as a result of the long and hard struggle and sacrifices of our ancestors. We have to celebrate this day as a renewal of our pledge that we will use all our abilities for the country's development, economic stability and peace. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Shahid Malik, MS Sheikh Zayed will be present at the event. Hospital Dr. Imran Bashir, President District Press Club Qaiser Ghafoor Chaudhry, Noor Muhammad Soomro, Chief Officer District Council Chaudhry Muhammad Shafiq, DSP City Asif Rasheed, DMS Sheikh Zayed Hospital Dr. Ilyas Ahmed and others were present. At the end of the ceremony. Member District Peace Committee Riaz Ahmad Noori, national stability, peace and security and the country and the nation Collective prayer for the safety of Pakistan and Pakistani People.



## Shield

TMO Jehangira Shahana Sikandar receiving shield from District Youth Officer Nowshera in 23rd March Ceremony



# Punjab Colleges will provide all support to make the plantation campaign: Osama Bashir

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Afforestation is inevitable to combat climate change: Director Punjab Colleges Osama Bashir said that Punjab Colleges will provide all support to make the plantation campaign successful: DGPHA Asif Rauf Khan said that Pakistan Inauguration of plantation drive in Punjab Colleges Multan, students and teachers The determination of a large number of people to make Multan green, under the supervision of teachers, the target of planting 2000 saplings has been set this year as well, all citizens should actively participate in this campaign. Director Colleges Multan District Multan said on this occasion that all PunjabAc-



tively participate in this campaign on the campus of colleges and prove to be a useful citizen. Ahmed Rauf further said that according to Punjab Government's Vision 2024, this year the

tree planting week will be celebrated in all private and public colleges in a grand manner and with the cooperation of students and faculty, trees will be planted throughout the city. A

campaign will be launched. On this occasion, DG. PHA Asif Rauf appreciated the commitment of the students and teachers and praised the passion and dedication of the college management.

## AJK Cabinet announces new education policy for next school year

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The first education policy in the history of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was released, in the light of the decision of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet, a notification was issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Thus, Azad Jammu and Kashmir is the first administration to have its own education policy in the provinces and administrative units of Pakistan. The region became. According to the details, the Azad government of the state of Jammu and Kashmir began the process of formulating its education policy in consultation with education experts. The education experts prepared a comprehensive policy document in consultation with all stakeholders. In this way, instead of aimless education, adherence to religious and social values on one hand and modern trends like science, technology, entrepreneurship and citizenship on the other hand have been made part of the policy.

## Women University celebrates Pakistan Resolution Day with national zeal

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Women University Multan celebrated Pakistan Resolution Day with national zeal and patriotic Spirit. The day is celebrated to commemorate the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940. The celebrations started with the recitation of Holy Quran and Naat Rasool Pak (SAW). The event was attended by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha, Registrar Prof Dr Mamoon Khan, Director Students Affairs Dr Adeela Saeed and chairpersons. VC Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha said; this day holds a significant place in the history of Pakistan. The day is an occasion to promote patriotism and national unity. Dr. Adeela Saeed shed light on different historical aspects of Pakistan Day, encouraged University students to follow the footsteps of our great ancestors and do their utmost for the growth and well-being of the society. Other speakers highlighted the significance of Pakistan Day, the long struggle of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for Muslims of the subcontinent & great sacrifices for making a separate homeland. Later, special prayers were offered for the stability, prosperity and integrity of the motherland and unity of the Muslim Ummah.



## APHC says Kashmir will be part of Pakistan one day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter on Pakistan Day, today, said that joining Pakistan is a long-held dream of the Kashmiris which will surely come true, one day. APHC-AJK Convener, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar and other leaders in a joint statement in Islamabad congratulated the people and Government of Pakistan on their national day.

The APHC-AJK leaders said that March 23 is of special importance in history because a resolution was passed in Lahore on that day in 1940 paving the way for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. They said the ongoing struggle in occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a continuation of the Pakistan Movement and Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir.

The APHC-AJK leaders including Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Imtiaz Wani, Nisar Mirza, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Syed Yousuf Naseem, Shameem Shawl, Muhammad Hussain Khateeb, Mir Tahir Masood, Advocate Parvez Ahmed, Hassanul Bana, Raja Khadim Hussain, Muhammad Shafi Dar, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Syed Ejaz Rehmani, Sanauallah Dar, Altaf Ahmed Butt, Javed Iqbal Butt, Dawood Yousafzai, Sheikh Abdul Majid, Gulshan Ahmed, Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Zahid Safi, Mushtaq Ahmad Butt, Zahid Ashraf, Adeel Mushtaq Wani, Abdul Majeed Lone, Syed Mushtaq, Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Nazir Ahmed Karnai, Muhammad Ashraf Dar, Raees Ahmed Mir and others issued the joint statement.

Meanwhile, the APHC-AJK also paid tributes to Muhammad Yusuf Baig, father of senior Hurriyat leader Farida Beheji on his 32nd martyrdom anniversary. Baig was martyred by the Indian troops in custody in Srinagar on this day in 1992.

# Divisional and District Administration Multan celebrates 23rd March Pakistan Resolution Day

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the occasion of Pakistan Day organized by the district administration, the central flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Deputy Commissioner's office. In the ceremony, Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan and Deputy Commissioner Captain retired Rizwan Qadir hoisted the flag at exactly 9 am. Sirens were sounded on this occasion. And a minute's silence was also observed. Earlier Police, Rescue and Civil Defense also gave a full salute. Films of martyrs, representatives of civil society and national heroes also participated in the ceremony. Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan while addressing the ceremony said We are



grateful to God that we are free From Hindo, s. March 23 pledge for the development of our beloved country. It is the day of pledge. Maryam Khan said that the solution to the problems faced by the motherland lies in

national unity. Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadeer said that Pakistan Day reminds us of the pledge to work with good faith and honesty. Freedom is great. It is a blessing, the young generation should

remember the sacrifices of the elders. Rizwan Qadir said that Azad Nations keep their culture and ideology alive. Later in the ceremony, the participants chanted slogans and hoisted national flags.

# Nowruz is rooted in love, peace and blessing: says Iranian envoy

Iran Embassy in Islamabad hosts Iftar Dinner to mark International Day of Nowruz

Naveed Ahmad Khan

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted an Iftar Dinner in commemoration of the International Day of Nowruz with the contribution of the Embassy of Tajikistan.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee was the guest of honor. Ambassadors, politicians, journalists and renowned businessmen attended.

H. E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan said "I would like to extend my appreciation for your worthy presence at this event, particularly distinguished generals, dignitaries from the government and the ministry of foreign affairs, ambassadors, university professors and media members". He addressed the guests

He said that "I am very pleased that on this beautiful night of the holy month of Ramadan, the month of mercy and grace of Allah, we are hosting this event to commemorate the International Day of Nowruz, in our brotherly and friendly country of Pakistan, and in the company of your honorable guests".

The Ambassador said Nowruz is the ancient ritual of friendship, compassion and peaceful coexistence. A ritual celebrated by our ancestors in a wider area from beyond the borders of China to the Mediterranean Sea and even beyond. It is a ritual that is so old, but has not become out-dated, but it is even honored more brilliantly and beautifully every year than before. This ancient ritual does not belong only to the countries that are called the Nowruz area, the representatives of which we are hosting tonight, but it belongs to all the people of the planet.

Dr. Reza Amiri said After the advent of Islam, the holy Prophet of Islam stood up against many popular ignorant traditions and removed them, but we are proud that Islam gave approval to Nowruz as a Parsi tradition. The prayer that I read at the beginning of my speech shows the relevance of this natural development to God as the creator. He informed that in 2010, the UN General Assembly designated March 21st as the International Day of Nowruz due to the peace-seeking and love-yearning nature of Nowruz. Nowruz was also registered as the intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2016. One of the symbols of Nowruz is "Haft Seen Table". This table is decorated with the objects that symbolize purity, light, livelihood and blessing. You can see a sample of it in this hall tonight, as well as



a table beautifully decorated by our friendly and brotherly country of Tajikistan. I appreciate Tajikistan for participating in this event. We declare readiness to hold this event next year with more glory and with the participation of more countries in the Nowruz civilization area. Ambassador said Nowruz and Ramadan call humanity to peace and friendship. Modern ignorance, by the deceptive narration of human rights, denies peace and friendship in an all-round way, and it has committed genocide and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip, as a result of which, more than one hundred thousand innocent children, women and men have been martyred or injured, and ruined the buildings and infrastructures. Finally, he congratulated the government and nation of Pakistan on March 23rd on Pakistan Day. At the end of a day of fasting, we pray and ask the Almighty Allah to save the

oppressed people of Palestine from this deep suffering and the devil with the blessings of the holy months of Ramadan and Nowruz, both of which renew material and spiritual life. We pray that the inhumane crimes in this unjustly-occupied land and everywhere on this earth be stopped and humanity be blessed with a time full of peace, hope, love and peaceful coexistence. Amen.

The Ambassador of Tajikistan wished everyone a happy holiday on the occasion of this beautiful spring holiday—International Nowruz. This ancient holiday has been celebrated as the International Navruz Holiday based on the UN General Assembly Resolution since 2010, when it was inscribed to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. He said Navruz is one of the ancient public holidays with a history spanning more than six thousand years. The celebration of Navruz from the earliest times



to the present is considered to be an integral part of the existence and identity of Tajiks, Persians and three hundred million other people living in the Navruz Basin. Navruz is the time of the equinox, and along with the full revival of nature, it grants a person a fresh spirit, mind and inspires for a happy day, abundant life, progress and creativity. International Nowruz holiday—the holiday of nature awakening, new dreams, new hopes, and new aspirations. Navruz unifies people with supreme humane ideology like friendship and cooperation, creativeness and well-being promotion, human love and charity, as well as thankfulness to nature's beauty and richness. On this matter Poet Maulono Jaloluddini Rumi or Balkhi very wisely and beautifully says, In this earth, in this earth, in this pure farm Let's sow nothing but the seeds of kindness and love.

Senator Mushahid said to congratulate the people of Iran and Central Asia on the occasion of international Nowruz day. He said thousands of years ago. It's the moment winter wraps up and spring arrives. Celebrated by more than 300 million people in more than a dozen countries, it's the first day of the Iranian calendar.

He said In 2009, it was added to UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and, in 2010, it was proclaimed as a UN calendar day. Sayed said marking the renewal of nature, it has always been a moment for reconciliation, reunion and family gathering. He said that, while the pandemic has made it difficult for us to hold celebrations and visit our friends and relatives,



we use this platform to send our congratulations to all Iranians and all those who hold this ancestral celebration. Happy Nowruz! Photos by Raja Farid

## Nowruz, a millennia-old tradition

Spokesman Report

Nowruz, which marks the beginning of the Persian New Year and the arrival of the spring, has been celebrated for thousands of years.

It heralds the beginning of the spring and is celebrated across the Persian-speaking countries and communities in Iran, Republic of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and parts of Turkey, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and India.

Iranians prepare for Nowruz for weeks ahead of the event by spring cleaning and buying new clothes, especially for children, and items they need for the New Year.

They celebrate the last Wednesday of the year, known as Charshanbe Suri, with fireworks and bonfires.

On the eve of the New Year, Iranian families get together and eat Sabzi Polo Mahi, or herbed rice with fried fish.

Iranians usually start the New Year with prayers and reciting verses from the holy Qur'an as well as divination by the poems of Hafez.

They set the symbolic Haft Seen table, which includes seven items that start with the sound "s" in Farsi.

Iranians say there is a history behind each element. Serkeh, or vinegar, symbolizes patience and immortality, sumac brings love and compas-



sion, Seeb, or apple represents health and fertility, Senjed, silverberry, simulates love and affection, Sabzeh, green sprouts, symbolizes rebirth, Seer, or garlic, is a symbol of protection in the face of affliction, and Samanu, a sweet paste made from germinated wheat and wheat flour, represents affluence. During the 13-day holidays, Iranians usually journey across the coun-

try or prefer to stay at home and visit their families and relatives nearby.

The holidays culminate in Sizdah Bedar, which is literally translated from Persian to "the 13 day out" which has its roots in triskaidekaphobia, fear of the number 13 as bad luck.

People go outdoors in Sizdah Bedar, or Day of Nature, and camp out to chase away the bad luck and bring in

good vibes instead.

About 300 million people worldwide celebrate Nowruz, with traditions and rituals that slightly vary in each country.

At the initiative of several countries that share the event, including Iran, Afghanistan, India and Turkey, the UN in 2009 listed Nowruz as an international event.



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# Privatization: A Path to Success or another False Start? - I

Since its inception, the new government has displayed a crucial optimism towards the prosperity and growth of the nation, characterized by an unparalleled determination labeled as "Iron determination" (Fouladi Azm) by the Prime Minister. Backed by the strength and support of the establishment, the unelected finance team is poised to make fundamentally critical and highly challenging decisions. These decisions, which even former dictators refrained from due to political ramifications, demonstrate a readiness to tackle obstacles that could deter progress.

The consistent backing from the establishment, which sustained the former coalition government led by Shahbaz Sharif and the interim government led by Anwar Kakar, has primed public sentiment to an extent where the time is now ripe to confront challenges head-on and progress without hesitation. These imminent decisions, projected to yield savings of PKR 6,828 billion per year, are poised to significantly benefit the nation.

The digitalization of FBR is projected to generate over Rs. 3000 billion annually by curbing pilferage and halting the distribution of illicit gains among tax officials. Currently, a predetermined portion of tax evasion, with 50% going to the taxpayer and their lawyer, while the remaining 50% is distributed from the lowest-ranking peon to the regional commissioner. This same ratio is observed within the sales tax and customs departments, from the

bottom to the top echelons of the hierarchy.

The privatization of PIA, even if it doesn't generate a single penny, could result in savings of over Rs. 800 billion in terms of debt and an annual subsidy of Rs. 294.5 billion allocated to sustain the inefficient, unprofessional, and sluggish airline. Likewise, privatization or outsourcing airports could save the national treasury approximately Rs. 21.4 billion annually.

The privatization of state-owned enterprises, despite potentially yielding no revenue from their sale, would result in significant savings for the state. With accumulated losses exceeding 500 billion, divesting these entities would save over Rs. 500 billion annually in subsidies and transfer the entities' Rs. 1100 billion debt burden to the purchaser.

Similarly, privatizing the Distribution Companies (DISCOs) nationwide, even if they generate minimal proceeds from their sale, would yield substantial annual savings for the public. This includes Rs. 500 billion annually in electricity theft prevention and Rs. 639 billion in reduced line losses.

According to the Federal Footprint Consolidated SOE report for the fiscal years 2020-2022, published in December 2023, there are a total of 133 State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), consisting of 88 commercially operated and 45

non-commercial entities. Remarkably, the commercial SOEs are making substantial contributions to the national economy through corporate taxes, dividend payments, and employment generation.

In the financial sector, which includes banks, insurance companies, Non-Banking Financing Companies (NBFCs), and Development Financial Institutions (DFIs), there has been significant growth and transformation since FY2022.

The sector's assets have surged to an impressive Rs. 8.9 trillion, indicating consistent growth over the past four fiscal years. Revenues have also seen a remarkable increase, reaching Rs. 614.648 billion, marking a 31% rise from the previous fiscal year. Additionally, net profits have soared to Rs. 72.569 billion, demonstrating a remarkable 46.5% year-on-year increase.

In the commercial sector, Infrastructure, Transport, and Communication (ITC) emerge as significant players, boasting an asset base of Rs. 7.983 trillion. Led by entities like the National Highway Authority and PIA, this sector experienced a notable 38% revenue growth. However, despite these gains, challenges persist, with PIA grappling with a substantial net loss of Rs. 294.500 billion. Nonetheless, subsectors such as Ports & Shipping and Communication show promise for sectoral recovery and efficiency improve-

ments. The Manufacturing, Mining, & Engineering sector showcased robust growth, with assets soaring by 49% to Rs. 904.515 billion. Notably resilient, this sector posted a significant net profit of Rs. 12.267 billion. Subsectors like Metals & Mining and Printing played pivotal roles in this transformation, contributing substantial profits and demonstrating operational stability. Such progress underscores the sector's potential for sustained growth and profitability.

In the Oil and Gas sector, boasting assets worth Rs. 6.620 trillion, remarkable revenue expansion of 82% was witnessed, fueled by increased energy prices post-COVID. Despite challenges, SOEs in this sector exhibited operational excellence, exemplified by PARCO's outstanding achievement of a 725% increase in net profit. However, the sector faces ongoing struggles in balancing revenue growth with operational efficiency, particularly in the Marketing & Distribution segment, which remains susceptible to market risks due to high leverage and narrow profit margins.

Even in the Power sector, substantial growth has been observed, with assets climbing to Rs. 6.480 trillion and revenue reaching Rs. 3,000 billion in FY2022. However, operational margins remain a concern, particularly for Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOs). Strategies must be devised to enhance revenue collection and mitigate operational inefficiencies to address losses effectively.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Measures urged to recharge depleting water table

More than 70% of domestic water needs are met from groundwater resources in Pakistan but this rich natural source of freshwater is often poorly mapped and managed which is being depleted at alarming rate.

If this water resource was not properly managed, this might led the country to the most water-stressed situation in the region in the coming two decades or so. The water scarcity is caused due to multiple factors including climate change, population explosion, mismanagement, primitive irrigation practices, obsolete water transmission infrastructure and lack of reservoirs.

Hence, water demand and supply relationship is expected to be greatly influenced by the population growth. The shortage of water resources to meet industrial and domestic demands of a rapidly growing population is likely to impact irrigation water supply which would affect the sustainability of agriculture.

The groundwater management is a complex phenomenon which requires multidimensional actions, policies and management strategies. It should be well-integrated with mainstream water management projects and policies.

Assistant Professor Dr Muhammad Arif Watto, University of Agriculture Faisalabad said that the recent climate change trends and soaring population compounded with rising food demands and improved living standards had substantially increased pressure on water resources.

Although groundwater resources have played a key role in agricultural production, unimpeded pumping of groundwater aquifers, however, it has led to the rapid depletion of water table which had many negative environmental and economic consequences.

Talking about ways to conserve groundwater, Muhammad Arif Watto said that groundwater must be monitored in quantity and quality over time to learn about the behavior and condition of aquifers and identify potential negative changes such as over-abstraction, reduced recharge, and pollution.

Early detection of problems can be extremely cost-effective, allowing mitigation measures to be implemented before serious deterioration of the resource occurs. Moreover, the data collection should be made accessible to everyone to raise awareness among the general public regarding its conservation and sustainable use.

The resilient groundwater monitoring model will help determine sustainable groundwater potential, prepare groundwater budgets for sub-basins, canal commands and assess the saline groundwater interface's lateral and vertical movement.

Watto said that Pakistan requires management systems and effective policies which execute groundwater conservation and monitoring. The groundwater policy should be based on legal status and ownership (public or private), as well as factors such as water users, interrelated surface water features, and land uses in aquifer recharge areas.

The Assistant Professor said that implementation of groundwater management tools depends on the legal establishment and institutional structures that confer authority for their use and enforcement. He, however, said that all management is not carried out by the government.

Communities or groundwater consumers may independently opt to maintain well siting and groundwater abstractions.



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

## Significance of Pakistan Day Parade and Myths - IV

Some argue that the Pakistan Day Parade is merely a spectacle for the international community. While it indeed holds diplomatic significance, its primary essence lies in domestic celebration, commemorating Pakistan's history, culture, and identity. It serves as a moment for Pakistanis to unite and contemplate their shared heritage and aspirations. While projecting strength and unity to the world, its core purpose is to strengthen bonds of solidarity among Pakistanis and reaffirm their dedication to their nation's ideals.

Military parades on national occasions serve as poignant demonstrations of a country's vigor, unity, and pride. These displays, steeped in symbolism and tradition, offer insight into a nation's past, culture, and aspirations.

The Victory Day Parade in Russia, for instance, commemorates the Soviet Union's triumph over Nazi Germany in World War II. Held annually in Moscow's Red Square, this parade showcases an impressive array of military hardware, including tanks, missile systems, and aircraft. It also pays homage to war veterans, with soldiers marching while carrying portraits of fallen comrades, honoring their sacrifice and valor. The parade concludes with a procession of the armed forces and a display of military aircraft flying overhead, demonstrating Russia's military capabilities and dedication to safeguarding its territorial integrity.

Bastille Day commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison during the French Revolution, a significant event in France's history. The Bastille Day Parade, held on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, is among Europe's oldest and largest military parades. It features a vibrant procession

of French military units, including the renowned French Foreign Legion and Republican Guard. The parade also includes a flypast by the French Air Force and a presentation of military vehicles, underscoring France's global military influence and commitment to liberty.

China's National Day Parade celebrates the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1st, 1949. Held in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, this parade highlights the country's military prowess and technological advancement. It showcases an extensive array of military equipment, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, fighter jets, and naval vessels. The parade also incorporates cultural performances and synchronized marching displays, demonstrating China's unity and determination to safeguard its territorial sovereignty.

The United States marks its Independence Day on July 4th with nationwide parades, fireworks, and festivities. The largest military parade in the U.S. is held in Washington, D.C., featuring military units from all branches of the armed forces.

The Pakistani Army stands as a formidable institution, celebrated for its steadfast commitment to protecting the nation's sovereignty, advancing its interests, and fostering peace and stability in the region. With a storied history defined by sacrifice, courage, and professionalism, the Pakistani Army has emerged as an emblem of resilience, strength, and national pride.

Since its inception in 1947, the Pakistani Army has played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's trajectory, navigating through numerous challenges and conflicts with unwavering determination and resolve. From conflicts with India to counterterrorism operations within its borders, the Army has consistently showcased its readi-

ness to address any threat to Pakistan's security and unity. A key asset of the Pakistani Army lies in its comprehensive and modernized military capabilities, spanning land, air, and sea forces equipped with cutting-edge weaponry and technology. Backed by well-trained and disciplined personnel, the Army possesses a formidable arsenal serving as a deterrent against aggression and ensuring the nation's defense readiness.

Moreover, the Pakistani Army is deeply ingrained in society, fulfilling a multifaceted role extending beyond conventional military duties. Through extensive outreach initiatives, the Army delivers essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development in remote and underserved regions, enriching the lives of millions and fostering trust and goodwill among civilians. The Army's dedication to upholding democratic principles and the rule of law is evident in its role as a guarantor of national security and stability. Despite facing various challenges, including political unrest and external pressures, the Army remains steadfast in its mission to safeguard the democratic institutions and values enshrined in the constitution, ensuring the people's will prevails.

Furthermore, the Pakistani Army has earned global recognition and respect for its contributions to regional and global peacekeeping endeavors. With a proud history of serving under the United Nations banner, Pakistani peacekeepers have played a vital role in conflict zones worldwide, offering humanitarian aid, facilitating reconciliation, and promoting stability in strife-torn areas.

Readers, on Pakistan Day, observed on March 23rd, are reminded of the significance of our independent nation and its defenders. The day calls for unity and collective efforts towards the betterment of the country, urging us to stand in full moral support of the Pakistani Army, which tirelessly ensures the peace and security of our nation.

## Living beyond moral, ethical values

Muhammad Aftab Zahoor

Standing along a busy road and pondering on messy traffic sparks an immediate reaction to any sensible Pakistani's mind that are we a responsible nation?

With rare manifestations of respect for other's rights, we are most often in a senseless hurry or looking for a short cut creating an imagination not of a sensible nation but a crowd running towards an unknown destination. Teachings of our noble religion, philosophy of Quaid-i-Azam for emerging as a responsible nation and respecting the laws of our land, all seem missing from our lives. Except for a few, especially the elderly people who grew up in a peculiar environment of respecting elders and honoring laws, the rest take pride in trampling down ethical values. Different laws, rules, and regulations formulated for a peaceful and respectful co-existence fell like the most ridiculed entity as seen at roads, banks, hospitals, government offices, and other walks of life, even the Parliament. But still, we are surviving as a resilient nation though plagued by menaces like terrorism, enmities, intolerance, nepotism, lies, short measuring, adulation, and much more evils.

Analyzing ourselves personally as well as in view of international ranking of globally recognized organizations, we continue to suffer deterioration on indexes of nobility, purity, honesty, fairness, truthfulness, righteousness and so on. "In our daily life and dealing with one another, it seems like that we have stopped hating social evils and opted most them as our life style," remarked Allama Abdul Hafeez. "We are gradually detracting from our religious teachings. Instead of making our Holy Prophet a symbol of life for ourselves, we have indulged in variety of sins." "I remember my childhood when our fathers used to have complete control on family affairs and mothers commonly used to help them in maintaining discipline,"

he stated. "But, the situation changed over the time due to obliviousness of our male and female folk to their rights and duties to themselves, their kids and the society." Allama Hafeez, however was confident that still our religion is a panacea to all these evils. "Even today our religious teachings are not a bygone dogma for creating a noble society. But, for this we need good parents, good teachers and good preachers." Seldom sense of responsibility and respect for other's rights, impatience, intolerance, conspiracies, back biting, character assassination and many other social evils permeated to our lives leave the responsible citizens with nothing but a deep regret. "Our professionals have become machines running from pillar to post to earn more and more money and this race leaves them with lesser time for their kids," stated social worker Chaudhry Muhammad Saleem. "When we would compromise discipline for love for our kids, how can we raise responsible nation. Therefore, whether it our own negligence or the influence of exotic cultures, our social fabric is shattering," he added. Saleem said our mothers keep busy on social media and Tik Tok when they had to be with their children and fathers forced to work in shifts or double jobs to earn living. "This non-availability of time for children is a serious issue. But, people cannot help it because they had to spend extra time on money making to fight unbearable price hike," he stated. "This situation also calls upon our rulers and policymakers to devise strategies for addressing these challenges." We are also too free as a nation to indulge in others affairs, taking revenge and hatching conspiracies against our relatives, colleagues, and friends. Work shirking and shying away from responsibilities are other menaces plaguing our society. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility to protect our dying noble norms and political leaders, religious scholars, teachers, and above all parents will have to revisit their social conduct and responsibilities to the nation to save it from complete disaster.

# Putin calls Moscow terrorist attack bloody, barbaric, vows retribution

✉ Xinhua

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday called a terrorist attack here bloody and barbaric, vowing retribution for the perpetrators, organizers and financiers.

Putin made the remarks during a televised address to the nation after a deadly shooting Friday evening at the Crocus City Hall in northwest Moscow claimed the lives of at least 133 people.

Putin said all four perpetrators of the terrorist attack were arrested, adding that all perpetrators, organizers and financiers of this crime would be punished.

"Whoever they are, whoever guides them. I repeat, we will identify and punish everyone who stands behind the terrorists, who prepared this atrocity. This is a strike against Russia, against our people," Putin said.

The Russian president added the terrorist attack was "carefully, cynically planned," and "a prepared mass

## President Asif Ali Zardari condemns terrorist attack in Moscow

President Asif Ali Zardari has condemned the terrorist attack in Moscow and extended his heartfelt condolences to the Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the bereaved families and the people of Russia.

He said that Pakistan fully shared the grief of the families who lost their dear ones in the heinous attack.

murder of civilians."

He also said that the perpetrators tried to hide and moved towards Ukraine, and according to preliminary information, a "window" was prepared for them from the Ukrainian side to cross the border.

Earlier, advisor to the head of the Ukrainian Presidential Office Mikhail



Podolyak and the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry both rejected the notion of Ukraine's involvement in the attack.

Putin added that the main thing now is to prevent those who were behind the terrorist attack from committing new crimes.

He noted that the Federal Security Agency and other law enforcement agencies are working to identify the entire "terrorist support base."

Putin also declared March 24 a day of national mourning in Russia for those killed in the terrorist attack.

# Pakistan Day ceremony held in Pakistan Consulate Jeddah

✉ Noorulhassan Gujjar

JEDDAH: To mark the Pakistan Day event, national flag was raised at the Consulate General premises as the national anthem played in the background and a large number of community members in attendance. Furthermore, special messages from the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan were read to commemorate this significant day.

Mr. Khalid Majid, Consul General of Pakistan in Jeddah, while speaking at the occasion highlighted the significance of this day and spoke about the strong bonds between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, describing it as a brotherly relationship that is deeply rooted in history. Emphasizing on the importance of this day Majid said "this day is a reminder of the sacrifices made by the founding fathers of Pakistan to secure a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. It is a day to reflect on the ideals of unity, faith, and discipline that were espoused by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. The Consul General also expressed his deep admiration for the Pakistani community living in Jeddah and their contribution towards promoting the economic development of Kingdom Saudi Arabia and brotherly relation between the two countries.

A cross section of Pakistani diaspora



and representatives of ethnic media attended the event. 23rd March marks a historic occasion in the history of Pakistan as it was on this day that the Lahore Resolution was passed in 1940. This resolution declared that Muslims in India were a separate nation and

demanding a separate homeland for themselves. This resolution paved the way for creation of Pakistan in 1947.

The event concluded with a collective prayer and supplications for the peace, welfare and prosperity of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah.

## Russia arrests suspected gunmen as concert toll soars to 143

The Kremlin said Saturday that it has arrested 11 people — including four suspected gunmen — in connection with a shooting rampage that killed at least 143 people in a concert hall near Moscow.

Reuters reported that militant group Daesh claimed responsibility for Friday's attack, the deadliest in Russia for 20 years. But there were indications that Russia was pursuing a Ukrainian link, despite a statement from Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak that Kyiv had nothing to do with it.

A statement issued by Kremlin, on Saturday, stated that President Vladimir Putin was apprised by FSB security service chief Alexander Bortnikov that the suspects, among the detained, included "four terrorists". It further mentioned that the service was working to identify their accomplices.

Russia's Investigative Committee said the death toll had leapt to 115 from the attack on Crocus City Hall, located in the outskirts of the Russian capital, in which camouflage-clad gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons at concertgoers near the capital on Friday.

Russian lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein said the attackers had fled in a Renault vehicle that was spotted by police in Bryansk region, about 340 km (210 miles) southwest of Moscow on Friday night and disobeyed instructions to stop.

He said two were arrested after a car chase and two others fled into a forest. From the Kremlin account, it appeared they too were later detained.

Khinshtein said a pistol, a magazine for an assault rifle, and passports from Tajikistan were found in the car. Tajikistan is a mainly Muslim Central Asian state that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

Daesh has claimed responsibility for the attack, the deadliest in Russia since the Beslan school siege in 2004.

The shooting took place on Friday evening at Crocus City Hall, a concert venue just west of Moscow where a Soviet-era rock band was due to perform.

# Flag hoisting ceremony on Pakistan Day

✉ Spokesman Report

DHAKA: A flag hoisting ceremony was held at High Commission for Pakistan, Dhaka this morning to mark the National Day of Pakistan.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Syed Ahmed Maroof hoisted the national flag at the Chancery to the tune of the national anthem.

The occasion held great significance as it marked the historic day in 1940 when the icons of Pakistan Movement under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad



Ali Jinnah passed a resolution in Lahore, calling for a separate homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. The messages from Pres-

ident of Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar were

read out to the audience.

The High Commissioner while felicitating the Pakistanis across the world especially Pakistani diaspora residing in Bangladesh and Bhutan paid rich tribute to the historic struggle for the creation of Pakistan and said that 23rd March is a day of introspection and renewal of our resolve to serve Pakistan and making it a country as dreamt by our founding fathers.

The ceremony was attended by the Pakistani community residing in Bangladesh, local media representatives and staff of the High Commission.

# CBD Punjab celebrates Pakistan Resolution Day with patriotic fervor

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), proudly commemorated Pakistan Resolution Day with unwavering dedication to the nation's progress. Held at the CBD Punjab headquarters, the ceremony was attended by COO CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, directorate heads, senior officials, staff members, and ancillary staff, all united in the spirit of patriotism and national pride.

The event began with a flag hoisting ceremony, symbolizing the steadfast commitment to uphold the principles of unity, faith, and discipline, and to strive for the betterment of the country while keeping the national flag flying high. The national flag soaring high served as a powerful symbol of prosperity and sovereignty.

Addressing the gathering, COO CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, emphasized the importance of commemorating the historic Pakistan Resolution. He stated, "Today, as we honor

the historic Pakistan Resolution, we renew our pledge to uphold the principles of unity, faith, and discipline. It is our responsibility to honor the vision of our forefathers by tirelessly working for the progress and prosperity of our beloved nation."

The celebration of Pakistan Resolution Day at CBD Punjab exemplifies the enduring spirit of patriotism and commitment to national development. It serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our forefathers and inspires us to continue working towards a brighter future for Pakistan.

# 23 March function held at GHS Wana, AC Office Wana

✉ Adam Khan Wazir

WANNA: In Lower South Waziristan too, a grand function was organized at Government High School, Wana to mark March 23 as a renewal of pledge.

In which Government High School Wana Principal Ghulam Hussain Wazir, people from civil society, school students and local journalists participated.

On the other hand, the district administration organized a function at Wana AC office and also organized a walk under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower.

Ghulam Hussain Wazir, Principal of Government High School Wana, while addressing the ceremony held on March 23 said that living



nations never forget the sacrifices of their forefathers.

He said that our forefathers have made an unparalleled history of sacrifices for the achievement of

## Israeli occupation seeks to destroy Shifa Medical Complex for sixth day in a row



✉ News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the continuing heinous massacre committed by the occupation forces in Al-Shifa Medical Complex and the surrounding areas for the sixth day in a row, and is trying to exploit it under false pretenses and pretexts to destroy the entire Al-Shifa Medical Complex, kill hundreds of Palestinian civilians, arrest them, and burn and destroy hundreds of homes in the region, as part of their bloody targeting. All medical facilities in the Strip and putting them out of service as a decisive manifestation of the genocide of civilians and the creation of inhumane climates to displace them, by transforming the entire Gaza Strip and its north in particular into an area unfit for human life, and committing heinous crimes that go beyond being war crimes and crimes against humanity, in light of The continued Israeli arrogance to prevent the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip, which leads daily to an increase in deaths due to famine, thirst, and lack of medicine, especially among children, infants, women, the sick, and the elderly.

The Ministry expresses its deep anger and astonishment at the international community's transformation into a cold forum that produces statements, positions, demands and bets on the occupying state regarding the story of civilians and securing their basic humanitarian needs without being able to translate those positions into binding practical measures worthy of the status of the human being. The international community and states continue to deepen the humanitarian vacuum. Through fruitless discussions and dialogues with the Israeli side, which does not show any response to the call for humanity, and at its best says something that is often misleading and at the same time practices the exact opposite and continues to deepen its extermination of Palestinian civilians, and threatens to expand the war of extermination to include more than 1.5 million Palestinians residing in Rafah and its area. It seems that the victory that Netanyahu is yearning for is the destruction of the entire Gaza Strip and emptying it of its residents, either through mass murder or displacement.

## Israel, despite U.S. pledges, still massacres in Gaza Strip



✉ News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Since Israel signed a written pledge not to use American weapons

In killing Palestinian civilians and increasing humanitarian aid to them, it continues to escalate the mass massacres it commits against civilians in the Gaza Strip, which left hundreds of martyrs, injured and missing, including women and children, as is constantly happening at the Kuwait Square in the hunger and flour massacres, and as is currently happening in murder crimes. The executions of nurses, doctors, the displaced, the besieged, and the civilians inside and around Al-Shifa Hospital, in addition to the mass massacres resulting from the bombing of homes over the heads of their residents after Israel's pledge throughout the Gaza Strip, including all areas of Rafah, are the ugliest forms of mockery and farce of Israeli deception, which we do not expect to be deceived. American administration. Here, the ministry wonders: What is the American administration's position on this pledge in light of Israel's continued massacres against Palestinian civilians, killing them either by brutal bombing or by starvation, thirst, and deprivation of medicines?

The Ministry calls on the international community and all countries to stop all forms of coexistence with the annihilation and forceful displacement of our people, no matter how much they try to cover it with high-level humanitarian positions in form, but they are impractical and do not translate into actions if they are not complicity with the occupation in the fundamental sense. Our people, who have been exposed to the worst forms of genocide for 169 days, are tired of the weak international reactions, and are awaiting a binding UN resolution that forces Israel, by the force of international law, to stop the war of genocide, protect civilians, and secure their basic humanitarian needs.

thers, today we are breathing in the free atmosphere of the independent country of Pakistan. March 23 reminds us of the sacrifices of our national heroes.

By whose sacrifices the independent country of Pakistan came into existence.

The participants say that on the occasion of renewing the pledge on March 23, we paid tribute to our ancestors for their sacrifices and expressed this determination that all of us will not hesitate to make any kind of sacrifice for the survival, development and prosperity of Pakistan and the nation will be united and the evil intentions of anti-national elements will be crushed.

At the end of the ceremony AC Wana Office echoed with slogans of Pakistan Zindabad.





## Called on

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud calls on Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir on Saturday



Photo: ISPR

# Pakistan, Saudi Arabia to work together, further enhance bilateral cooperation

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their resolve to work together and further enhance bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. This was discussed at a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the visiting Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, who called on him at Aiwan-i-Sadr on Saturday.

Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, and the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki,



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the award of Nishan-i-Pakistan on the Minister for Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud in recognition of his services towards strengthening Pak-KSA bilateral cooperation during a special investiture ceremony on Saturday.

were also present during the meeting.

While welcoming the visiting dignitary, the President

said that Pakistan accorded utmost importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia as both countries enjoyed a fraternal bond, marked by shared faith and historical relations. He underscored the need for further increasing bilateral cooperation in various fields. The President deeply thanked KSA for the support provided to Pakistan during challenging times. He lauded the leadership of His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud and the vision of the Crown Prince His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud that would propel Saudi Arabia towards remarkable progress. The Saudi Defence Minister highlighted that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed strong historical, strategic and defence cooperation. He further stated that both countries should work together and

support each other to further deepen bilateral relations. He highlighted that his country believed in regional prosperity and had succeeded in increasing economic integration.

Earlier, the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, conferred the Nishan-i-Pakistan award, during a Special Investiture Ceremony, on His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Minister for Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in recognition of his meritorious services towards further strengthening bilateral cooperation and his contribution towards peace in the region. The President congratulated His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud on the conferment of the award and thanked him for his role in promoting defence ties.

## PTI celebrates Pakistan Day with renewed pledge to further accelerate efforts for Haqeeqi Azadi

## Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) celebrated Pakistan Day with the renewed spirit that they would leave no stone unturned to make Pakistan a truly independent Islamic welfare state, where there would be supremacy of constitution and rule of law.

Speaking at a function organized to celebrate Pakistan Day, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan said that March 23 was the day of renewal of the pledge that the Muslims of subcontinent rendered matchless sacrifice so as to get an independent state where they could live their lives freely, where there would be supremacy of the constitution and rule



of law.

Barrister Gohar said that like Quaid-e-Azam, Imran Khan also believed in true democracy, which could be judged from his decision that he awarded tickets to the party's loyalists and made him the Chairman of his party.

Speaking on the occasion, PTI senior leader and MNA Asad Qaiser said that Allama Iqbal was a source of inspiration for them who awakened the nation, adding that PTI was a beautiful bouquet of unity and harmony in the country. He said that situation at

borders were very concerning especially on Afghanistan side, demanding to immediately activate diplomatic channels so as to normalize the ties with neighboring countries.

On the occasion, PTI senator Walid Iqbal said that he joined PTI because of Imran Khan was an incorruptible and uncompromisable leader.

He said that Quaid-e-Azam was a great advocate of women political participation and Imran Khan accomplished his dream, which showed there practical participation in the February 8, 2024 general elections.

During his speech, PTI leader shed light on the struggle and vision of Quaid-e-Azam. Addressing the event, former Gilgit-Baltistan chief

minister Khalid Khurshid said that it was a great day for him because he could see happiness on the faces of PTI people who were subjected to worst brutalities and barbarism during the past two years.

Speaking on the occasion, Ali Muhammad Khan said that the resolution of Pakistan meant "freedom", but he raised question that whether they deserved to celebrate Pakistan Day as their leaders and women were languishing in jails.

He said that PTI Founding Chairman said absolutely not to the US while the same thing was told by Quaid-e-Azam to the British Viceroy, adding that it was beyond comprehension as to why Imran Khan was in jail.

## In meeting with COAS Munir, Saudi defence minister calls for boosting ties

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud has called for boosting bilateral ties in a meeting with Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, the military's media wing said on Saturday.

"Saudi Arabia-Pakistan have historical and strong brotherly relations. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have always been well-wishers of each other," he was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations.

The Saudi defence minister, who previously served as an F-15 pilot in the Royal Saudi Air Force, was the guest of honour of the Pakistan Day ceremony.

He attended the ceremony with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.

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

The army chief and the defence minister had received Prince Khalid

upon his arrival at the Nur Khan airbase to attend the ceremony. The visiting dignitary later called on COAS Munir and discussed matters of mutual interest, promoting ties between the two countries, and boosting ties in different sectors including defence.

COAS Munir thanked Prince Khalid for visiting Pakistan. The Saudi defence minister also thanked the army chief for inviting him as the guest of honour at the Pakistan Day parade.

The visiting dignitary left for Saudi Arabia after the visit. The army chief saw off the Saudi defence minister at Nur Khan Airbase as his visit to the country came to an end.

Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir sees off Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud at Nur Khan Airbase on March 23, 2024. Photo via ISPR

Pakistan, KSA reiterate resolve to work together

Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their resolve to work together and further enhance bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

## Pakistan Day marked at the Embassy of Pakistan, Tokyo

## Hinza Asif

TOKYO: A simple and graceful flag hoisting ceremony was held today at the Embassy of Pakistan, Tokyo with traditional fervor.

The ceremony commenced with recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem of Pakistan. Ambassador Raza Bashir Tarar hoisted the national flag while the National Anthem was played.

The Ambassador read out the Pakistan Day Messages of the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister, Mr. Mohammad Ishaq Dar. He also paid tribute to the Pakistani community in Japan for its achievements and contributions.

Special Supplements were published in two leading English newspapers of Japan. National Day of Pakistan related gatherings were also arranged in different parts of Japan by community groups.



## Pak Embassy organizes Flag Hoisting Ceremony to mark Pakistan Day

## Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: On the occasion of Pakistan Day, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony was held at the Embassy of Pakistan on Saturday, 23 March, 2024.

The celebrations started with the recitation of Holy Quran, followed by Flag Hoisting in synchronisation with the National Anthem.

The Messages of the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan were read out by Ambassador Anna Baloch, Mr. Omar Hameed, Minister Economic and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to World Customs Organization (WCO), Syed Asad Rizvi.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Anna Baloch recalled the sacrifices and the determination of the Muslims, who aspired to create a



separate homeland. She underlined the need to reaffirm the commitment to work towards making Pakistan a model country in the comity of nations.

Members of the Pakistani community in Belgium and Luxembourg and officials of the Embassy attended the solemn Flag Hoisting Ceremony in large numbers.

## Embassy in Paris celebrates Pakistan Day

## Spokesman Report

PARIS: A flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Embassy of Pakistan Paris on Saturday to commemorate the Pakistan Day. The event was attended by a large number of Pakistani diaspora, members of diplomatic corps, media representatives and officials of the Embassy. Messages of the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were read out.

The Ambassador of Pakistan Asim Ifikhar Ahmad welcomed the guests and thanked them for being part of the ceremony. In his remarks, the Ambassador said that on this day in 1940,

the Muslims put forward their demand for a "separate state", a separate homeland where they could live their lives in accordance with their aspirations. Elaborating further he said that 23 March was a landmark day in the history of Pakistan movement. It is the day of honoring the valiant struggle of our forefathers for a separate homeland – a struggle that was provided with a direction and momentum that began with the historic Lahore Resolution of 1940, later named as the Pakistan Resolution. It was a great demonstration of vision by the Muslims of the sub-continent as this resolution brought them together with extraordinary

courage and zeal to strive for a separate homeland and freedom that was archived in a short span of seven years. While addressing the guests the Ambassador said that it was the under the visionary leadership of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and sacrifices made by his companions that multiple odds were overcome to make Pakistan possible and the dream of Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal became a reality. The Ambassador added that while we celebrate Pakistan Day, we should not forget that the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) are enduring the worst form of repression and



state-sponsored terrorism at the hands of Indian occupation forces, aggravated by the Hindutva agenda and the unilateral actions of August 2019. The key to durable peace in South Asia is the resolution of the dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Reso-

lutions (UNSC). Pakistan, on its part, stands committed to extending all possible support until the realization of right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. The Ambassador also expressed strong support for Palestinian people who are facing injustice, oppression and illegal occupation

for seven decades at the hands of the Israeli Defense Forces. Pakistan remains steadfast in its principled support for the establishment of an independent, viable, and contiguous state of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The Ambassador highlighted the importance of Pakistan-France friendship and said that both countries share the objective development, peace and security. He added that relations between France and Pakistan have a positive momentum and the two sides have been getting closer not only through political consultations but also through economic activities.

A great deal of focus has been placed to enhance cooperation in energy, IT, agriculture and livestock, tourism, and other sectors. He appreciated the Pakistani community living in France for their achievements and contributions towards strengthening Pak-France ties particularly people to people relationships. He lauded the compatriots as Ambassador of Pakistan and an invaluable asset, committed to the ideals of the founding fathers to attain glory for Pakistan by embracing the values of hard work, integrity, and compassion. Later, the guests enjoyed poetry and tableau performance by Pakistani children at the occasion.