



CM Maryam calls for strict action against kite-flying ban violators

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz expressed severe concerns over the concerns on frequent casualties resulting from kite flying, despite the imposition of a ban across the province. Chairing a meeting about Law and Order, the chief minister said that registering a case is not enough, the violators should be punished. (Details on Page 2)



Heavy destruction, forced marches in ongoing Israeli raid around Gaza hospital

Palestinians who fled during an ongoing Israeli raid in and around the Gaza Strip's main hospital described days of heavy fighting, mass arrests, forced marches past dead bodies and flattened buildings in interviews Sunday. The Israeli military says it has killed over 170 militants and detained some 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began last Monday, portraying it as a heavy blow to Hamas and other... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Speccail meeting

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Mines and Minerals of Balochistan with speccail context to Reko Dik Project on Sunday.



Photo: PID

PM directs for foolproof security of Reko Diq project personnel, logistics

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Sunday directed that security should be ensured for those working on the Reko Diq mining project and for the logistics and transport from Reko Diq to the Gwadar seaport. He was chairing an important meeting regarding the Reko Diq mining project. A delegation of Barrick Gold company led by its Chief Executive Officer Mark Bristow took part in the meeting through video link. The PM said consultations should be held with all stakeholders regarding the project at the official level and all the obstacles should be removed. He said planning should be initiated for improvement in the communication infrastructure especially railway lines for utilising the minerals of Balochistan, adding work for the upgradation of the road network to link Reko Diq project with Gwadar port by road, should be completed at the earliest. Wherever new roads were being constructed, the pace of construction should be increased, he remarked. The PM said a strategy should be formed for the feasibility of a rail and road network from Reko Diq to Gwadar port. He said the railway line project from Reko Diq to Gwadar would make access to the port short and easy and as compared to Bin Qasim port the distance would be less. The new railway line would be beneficial for the mineral-rich district of Chaghi and the mining industry would expand, he added. He sought a detailed briefing next week on the Reko Diq road and rail connectivity project. He also instructed that all hurdles should be removed at the official level for early completion of the environment and social impact assessment regarding the Reko Diq project. During the meeting, it was told that the feasibility of the Reko Diq project would be completed by December 2024. Every month, 6000 containers would be transported from the Reko Diq project to the port. The concentrate pipeline of the project would be the second-longest slurry pipeline in the world. The mining company would construct the link road from Reko Diq to the national highway 40. It was further told that the 103-kilometer Nokandi to Mashkhel road, which would connect Reko Diq to the Gwadar port, was 58 percent complete. Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Muhammad Jehanzeb and high-level officials attended the meeting.

Pakistan mulling over resuming trade with India, says Ishaq Dar

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar hinted at Pakistan mulling over trade relations with India, ARY News reported on Sunday. He was talking to media in London after his participation in the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels. Ishaq Dar, a former finance minister of Pakistan, remarked that the trade with India via Dubai and Singapore has been much expensive. Trade relations with India were suspended since India's contro-

versial move to revoke the special autonomous status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. He said Pakistan's business class was eager for restoration of direct trade with India. "We will take a decision after consultations with all stakeholders," he added. He said the government would implement a five-year road map to put Pakistan on the road of economic progress and bring down inflation to lessen economic difficulties of the common man. He said the 16-month govern-



ment of Shehbaz Sharif saved Pakistan from economic collapse after the bad policies of the previ-

ous government which devastated economy of the country. He said Pakistan had vision for nuclear energy since 1960s and despite the scrutiny of the world it continued to harness the benefits of nuclear energy. "Now the world is saying that nuclear and hydro energy are the safest and best for taking on the challenge of climate change." He said the previous governments of PML-N completed various nuclear projects and 3800 megawatts of electricity were added to the national grid. While representing Pakistan at the recent nuclear energy summit

in Brussels, the foreign minister said he called for aggressive financing from the international financial institutions and multilateral institutions. To a question about Congressional hearings in the United States about matters related to Pakistan, he urged that Pakistanis should leave behind politics when they were outside the country and get united. To a question about elections, Ishaq Dar said, "We have comprehensive constitutional and legal cover for elections", adding different parties got the mandate of the people and it should be accepted."

Sajal Ali gets Pakistan civil award for a Zee5 series



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Actress Sajal Ali received Tamgh-e-Imtiaz for a Zee5 series, Dhoop Ki Deewar, where she advocated for Pakistan-India peace amid ongoing tension in the region. The Mom actress received the highest civilian honour on Saturday on account of Pakistan's Resolution Day at the Governor House Punjab, in Lahore. Tamgh-e-Imtiaz was awarded to Sajal Ali by the head of state to acknowledge her services in the field of acting. In 2021 Sajal also won the Filmfare award for Outstanding Performance.

US Rep Tim Burchett calls for using economic might for Imran Khan's release

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: United States Representative Tim Burchett during the Congressional hearing on March 20, 2024. Screenshot via YouTube/ House Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans. United States Representative Tim Burchett has called for using the superpower's economic might for the release of incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan. "Former leader of Pakistan who was a friend of America and the Pakistani military has taken him out and imprisoned him and now I am trying to find what the hell is going on over there," he said in a video post on his social media platform X on Sunday. He made the video after attending a Foreign Affairs Committee meeting where another US representative Brad Sherman raised some questions. "I am sure our State Department will write a strong letter and do absolutely nothing," Burchett said. "What we need is not military involvement but at some point, if these folks are going to be detriment to us we need to use our economic might. That's what a world power should do. We don't need to be sending troops over ships or anything like that, but anyway, so let's see what happens."



In U-turn, PM Shehbaz hands over ECC to Aurangzeb

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to hand over the chairmanship of the Economic Coordination Committee to Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, reversing an earlier decision. A notification issued on Saturday said that the ECC will now be headed by the finance minister with ministers for economic affairs, planning, commerce, power and petroleum as members. Shehbaz had earlier announced the composition of seven major committees, announcing that he would chair the ECC himself. The move had been criticised as a measure to clip the powers of the new finance minister, who has traditionally headed the committee. Aurangzeb had also been deprived of the chairmanship of the privatisation committee, which has been handed over to foreign finance and current foreign minister Ishaq Dar.

Gullu Butt, infamous baton-wielding man, passes away in Lahore



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Gullu Butt, the infamous baton-wielding man caught vandalising property during violence in Model Town in 2014, passed away in Lahore on Sunday, his family said. He was suffering from a prolonged illness for the past four to five months, according to media reports. Shahid Aziz aka Gullu Butt was accused of rowdiness, obstructing public servants in the discharge of official duties, and smashing private vehicles with a club outside Minhajul Quran Secretariat in Model Town on June 17, 2014, when a heavy police contingent was engaged with protesting workers of Dr Tahirul Qadri. Police personnel had not stopped Butt from his illegal activities but rather acted as a silent spectator and facilitated him.

Govt. facilitated masses with Rs 12.5b Ramazan subsidy: Ahsan Iqbal

Bureau Report

NAROWAL: Federal Minister for Planning Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday said the government had given Rs 12.5 billion subsidy to general public during the month of Ramazan, with ample stock of edibles items available at Utility Stores. Talking to media during his visit to a Utility Store in Narowal, he said flour, ghee, sugar and other items were available at cheaper prices to facilitate the consumers. Iqbal said Pakistan was facing economic challenges and bearing the brunt of heavy loans. This is a vicious cycle of loans which consumes a big chunk of revenue collected from taxes, he added. He regretted that the government of Imran Khan during his four-year tenure incurred immense damage to the country. The heavy price for his incompetence is now being paid by the entire nation in form of financial constraints and inflation, he added.



Pakistan, Afghanistan make progress towards normalising ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Commerce Secretary Khurram Agha would undertake a two-day visit to Afghanistan from Monday (tomorrow) to discuss trade related matters, the Foreign Office spokesperson said on Sunday. "Pakistan is committed to promoting trade and people-to-people ties with Afghanistan," FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement. Agha's visit to the neighbouring country is made for the same purpose, the statement added. Meanwhile, the interim Afghan government said that acting head of Afghan embassy in Pakistan Mawlawi Sardar Ahmed Shakib called on Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttuqi to discuss the recent developments in the relations between the two countries.



'Heroes shouldn't be afraid to say the right thing,' Imran Riaz hits back at Afridi

While social media consumers continue to clamour that statements against Imran Khan are either fake or outdated, journalist Imran Riaz Khan as hit back at the cricketer for not being able to take criticism. In a new vlog published to his

YouTube channel, Khan repeated that Afridi is known for hitting the wrong shot at the wrong time. While acknowledging Afridi's hero status, the journalist said that people who are celebrated by the nation should not say something that hurts public sentiments. "If someone is considered a hero, they should have courage and not be afraid to say the right thing," Imran Riaz said. "If you don't do this, you will bear what will happen to you," he added. The controversy began when a

graphic on social media claimed that Afridi had called for an example to be made out of people involved in May 9. Another video of Afridi, originally from 2022, was then reposted on social media where he said that 'institutions' should

be allowed to give NROs. Imran Riaz Khan, who is known for his strongly-worded takes, joined the crowd criticising Afridi, adding that the cricketer had never spoken up for Imran Khan and always seemed to chime in to support Shehbaz Sharif.

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CM Maryam calls for strict action against kite-flying ban violators

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz expressed severe concerns over the concerns on frequent casualties resulting from kite flying, despite the imposition of a ban across the province.

Chairing a meeting about Law and Order, the chief minister said that registering a case is not enough, the violators should be punished.

"I was heartbroken after watching the video of the child who died from the string of the kite," she said. CM Maryam Nawaz said actions are needed on an urgent basis to implement the law. She also ordered to run a campaign for the eradication of kite flying across the province.

CM Maryam Nawaz directed to take stern action against those found involved in violating the kite-flying ban. She directed the chief secretary, district administration, and police to ensure



the implementation of the said orders.

The chief minister also asked law enforcement to take decisive action to lower the number of rape cases in the province, expressing grave concerns

over the incident.

"Rape accused should be given an exemplary punishment," CM Maryam Nawaz added.

She also directed the concerned

department to control domestic violence cases against children and women.

Read More: CM Maryam seeks 'comprehensive' plan for industrial development

Earlier on Friday, Maryam Nawaz approved the establishment of the Punjab Economic Corridor Development Authority

Presiding over a meeting, the chief minister directed to completion of the mapping of industrial areas as per international standards and requirements.

The participants of the meeting were briefed about small, medium, and large industries at the division level in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi.

Speaking on the occasion, Maryam Nawaz said that along with the development of industrial corridors, transport and road sectors are also essential.

Marium Nawaz will visit Multan soon: Hamza Shahbaz

Khalid Chaudary

MULTAN: Former Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz has said that stability of the country's economy is the first priority, measures will be taken to end inflation, unemployment and terrorism. Maryam Nawaz Sharif will visit Multan soon. Sultana Shaheen is an asset of the party. Ideological workers who suffered severe hardships for the sake of the party Hamza Shehbaz expressed these thoughts in a meeting with former Member of Provincial Assembly Sultana Shaheen in Model Town. They have done nothing but negative politics but PML-N is the only democratic people. And there is a political party which has taken serious notice for the development and prosperity of the people by establishing mega projects on a priority basis for the development and prosperity of the country and the nation. It is the first effort to end unemployment and terrorism.



Women's University Multan sign MoU with Punjab Council of Arts Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Punjab Council of the Arts Multan and The Women University Multan in collaboration to promote education, culture and fine arts in South Punjab, promote research activities, training the new generation and direct literary exchange with the students of The Women University Multan. Interaction will be promoted. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Punjab Council of the Arts Multan and The Women University Multan. According to this agreement, not only regional culture and civilization will be promoted, but university students will be provided with opportunities to learn on research basis by participating in various conferences, seminars and lectures. Assistant Vice-Chancellor The Women's University Multan Prof. Dr. Kulsom Paracha, Director Punjab Council of the Arts Multan Dr. Riaz Hamdani, Registrar/Chairman of English Department Prof. Dr. Maimona Khan, Chairperson of Urdu Department Dr. Ezra Liaquat, Director of Oric Dr. Kanwal Rahman, Teacher in-charge of Fine Arts Department Miss Sonia Nasir, Assistant Director Punjab Council of the Arts Multan Zahid Iqbal and presidents and directors of other departments of the university participated.



Dua for peace and justice

ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Rabi, Mushaal Hussein Mullick and others after the Iftar dinner. On this occasion, prayers were also offered for peace and justice for the oppressed Palestinians and Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir.



Photo: Raja Farid

PPP Multan celebrates birthday Mother of Democracy Mrs Nusrat Bhutto: Khawaja Rizwan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan People's Party Multan City organized a function regarding the birth anniversary of Mother Democracy Begum Nusrat Bhutto at People's City Secretariat. Vice President Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Host City Country President-Naseem Labar, General Secretary City AD Khan Baloch, Former MPA Usman Bhatti, PLF South Punjab President Sheikh Ghiyasul Haq Advocate, Mir Ahmed Kamran Magsi, Chaudhry Yasin, Khawaja Imran, Raisuddin Qureshi, Sajid Khan Baloch, Abdul Rauf Lodhi, Haji Amin Sajid, Farhan Zaidi, Nawaz Khan Sotrak, Raja Paras, Malik Ifthikhar Ali, Tariq Mehmood Khokhar, Imran Javed Samra and others said in a joint statement that Begum Nusrat Bhutto, the mother of democracy, always taught the lesson of tolerance, patience and raising the



voice of truth. give Begum Nusrat Bhutto to taught us to raise the voice of truth in the most difficult situations, not to hesitate to make the biggest sacrifice for a great cause, and to continue moving

towards the destination with patience and courage. Pakistan People's Party gave the most victims. Begum Nusrat Bhutto Shaheed did not He not only served prisons but also endured the

violence of dictators. There is no example of the way he was tortured on the streets of Lahore. In the same way, his brave daughter Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed also suffered the hardships of imprisonment. Endured and took their small children with them to many cities of the country in one day.

The rounds of the courts have also been cut. Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto are role models not only for the women of Pakistan but for women all over the world. This is the reason that today the women of Pakistan are highly motivated, talented, hardworking and intelligent. The ceremony was held under the chairmanship of Malik Naseem Labar and on this occasion the birthday cake of Begum Nusrat Bhutto was also cut. Muhammad Akram, Hamad Khan Babar, Maher Akram Sial, Abdul Jabbar and a large number of party officials Workers attended

PPP Azad Kashmir's Yasin in Jeddah to mark Pakistan Day

Abdul Majeed Tahir

JEDDAH/MUZAFFARABAD: President Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir and Senior Parliamentarian Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin spent the busiest day in Jeddah after performing Umrah. On the occasion, former advisor to the government, Inayatullah Arif, President of PFUJ, Hafiz Afzal Butt, Allama Saeedur Rehman Abbasi, Fate sha Chaudhry, also participated in the cake cutting ceremony regarding Pakistan Day decorated with the national flag and sang the song Jeevee Pakistan. and Waqas Inayat were also present on this occasion, President of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that Pakistan People's Party overseas Pakistani and Kashmiri community has great respect and is playing an active role in the development of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. They are playing an important role by repatriating valuable foreign exchange and playing a backbone role in the country's economy.



He said that if there is a country, there is also politics. He would give every sacrifice for Pakistan. Later, speaking at the Pakistan Day ceremony organized by Jeddah Journalists' Community, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that Pakistan People's Party believes in freedom of press and the journalists abroad should show the soft image of Pakistan to the world.

He said that we have strengthened journalistic organizations in Azad Kashmir, founded the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Press Foundation, which today is providing excellent services to journalists and is more active. He said that measures will also be taken for the welfare of journalists who are engaged in journalistic services abroad.

Torkham border crossing reopened for pedestrians after brief closure

KHYBER: The Torkham border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan was reopened for pedestrian traffic after four hours long closure in the wake of a clash between Frontier Corps (FC) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), security sources said on Sunday.

Earlier, the sources told Geo News that the NADRA point at the Torkham border crossing was closed after the clash over some disagreement regarding immigration affairs, leaving several people going to Afghanistan via the border stuck in the middle.

However, the crossing was reopened after brief suspension of traffic. Government sources said that the disagreement between FC and FIA took place over the crowd management at the border; however, higher ups of both the agencies resolved the matter swiftly.

Sardar Attique demands int'l action on Kashmir and Palestine

Abdul Majeed Tahir

JEDDAH / MUZAFFARABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President, former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the international community has to stopped the ongoing atrocities in Kashmir and Palestine. Be the voice of the Interfaith Harmony Conference is a good initiative of the Saudi government for the Muslim Ummah. Regarding overseas, our governments should communicate with the Pakistani community of any party, it should not be on the basis of parties.

Having got a Pakistani passport, he should be considered as a member of the Pakistani



community, if this community of ours stays in touch with the Pakistani embassies, they can play an immense role in the construction and development of their country. At the end of the World Islamic Conference, Syed Saeed Shah, a well-known businessman and social personality based in Jeddah, addressed the iftar dinner in his honor. While the

chief guest of the ceremony was the former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, a large number of leading personalities of the Kashmiri community, Turkish Ambassador, Additional Secretary General of the OIC Mos Villa, well-known Arab businessmen Hasan Al Samdani, Hussain Ahmed Al Samdani attended the dinner. Muhammad Bin Yah, Muhammad Al-Samdani Nasir Al-Samdani, Former Assembly Candidate Raja Ifthikhar Ahmed, Sardar Ashfaq Khan President of Muslim Conference Saudi Arabia, Kamran Baig General Secretary Muslim Conference, Sardar Waqas Inaitullah Chairman Jammu Kashmir Community, Raja Tahir Iqbal

Former Assembly Candidate, Abdul Taif Abbasi, Chaudhry Khurshid Mutial, Ex-Chairman JKCO, Engineer Muhammad Arif Mughal, Sardar Mehtab Sarwar, Chaudhry Fanwak Hussain President PPP, Chaudhry Azhar Waraich participated, congratulated Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan on his Umrah..

Meanwhile, President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, also attended the dinner given at the shrine of Hazrat Pir Mehboob Elahi Sajjada Nashin Wadi Aziz Sharif Chinyut in Madinah. The chief organizer of the Muslim conference, Raja Saqib Majeed, and other workers were also present.

Khalid Masood Khan Receives Pride of Performance Award

Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Scholars and literary circles have expressed their happiness on receiving the Pride Of Performance Award (Presidential Medal) for Good Performance to Khalid Masood Khan, the internationally renowned comic poet columnist and general secretary of Multan Tea House, from Multan, calling it an honor for South Punjab.

It has been given to various academic literary and social organizations. And among those who congratulated on this high national honor, Dr. Muhammad Amin, Professor, Dr. Mukhtar Zafar, editor of literary journal, Adab Latif, Mazhar Saleem Majuka, Patron of Kitab Dostaan, Syed



Taseer Naqvi, General Secretary, Nasir Bashir, President of Ahl Qalam Pakistan, Dr. Farhat Abbas Former Director Public Relations Zakullah Anjum Mulghani Famous columnist Mohammad

Azhar Saleem Majoqa Famous poet Mustahsan Khayal Former Vice Chancellor Women University Dr. Asmat Naz Dr. Shafiq A. Saf Qamar Raza Shahzad Professor Naseem Shahid Raziuddin Razi Shakir Hussain Shakir Nawazish Ali Nadeem Asrar Chaudhry Dr. Zulfikar Ali Rana Nasir Mahmood Sheikh Qaiser Abbas Saber Dr. Rashid Hussain Arshad Bukhari, Dr. Muhammad Akmal Madani, Aamir Shehzad Siddiqui, Shahid Mahmood Ansari, Masroor Hussain Siddiqui, Tariq Naeem Lodhran, Chairman of Adabi Sangat, Imran Ali Awan, Rana Waris Ali, Sohail Abidi, Noor Ul Amin Khakwani, Khawaja Habib Rafiq Qureshi, columnist Mukhtar Soomro Malik, Rabnawaz Muhammad Mukhtar Ali and others are included.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings
Fajr 4:42 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 4:38 pm
Maghrib 6:23 pm
Isha 7:46 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan

World Tuberculosis Day observed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the globe, World Tuberculosis (TB) Day was also observed in Pakistan on Sunday to create awareness about the deadly disease.

According to health experts, TB is caused by bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) and it most often affects the lungs. TB is spread through the air when people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit. A person needs to inhale only a few germs to become infected.

Every year, 10 million people fall ill with tuberculosis (TB). Despite being a preventable and curable disease, 1.5 million people die from TB each year – making it the world's top infectious killer.

TB is the leading cause of death of people with HIV and also a major contributor to antimicrobial resistance. Most of the people who fall ill with TB live in low- and middle-income countries, but TB is present all over the world.

About a quarter of the global population is estimated to have been infected with TB bacteria, but most people will not go on to develop TB disease and some will clear the infection. Those who are infected but not yet ill with the disease cannot transmit it.

People infected with TB bacteria have a 5-10% lifetime risk of falling ill with TB. Those with compromised immune systems, such as people living with HIV, malnutrition or diabetes, or people who use tobacco, have a higher risk of falling ill.

Mushahid Hussain congratulates artist Misbah Uddin Qazi on receiving Tamgha-E-Imtiaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan-China Institute Mushahid Hussain Sayed has congratulated renowned artist Misbah Uddin Qazi on conferment of civil award Tamgha-e-Imtiaz in recognition of remarkable contributions in the field of Visual Arts. Mushahid Hussain, who was federal minister for information & culture in the 1990s, recalled old golden days when Mr. Qazi was serving the PNCA under the administrative control of his ministry.

"I am glad that Government of Pakistan has finally recognized your outstanding contributions to showcase the



natural beauty in the form of paintings and landscapes," he said, emphasizing that visual artists are precious asset of nation who used to play pivotal role in promotion of soft image of the country as well as preserving rich culture, identity and heritage of the country. Artist Qazi lauded that the Culture Ministry, under the then Minister Mushahid

Hussain, had achieved many distinctions at national and international levels.

Qazi is a fine arts graduate from Punjab University, Lahore, who in order to learn from excellence in fine arts went to the University of Perugia, Italy on government scholarship.

He is also one of the founding officials of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) from where he retired as Director Visual Arts in 2006 after 33 years of service. Even after the retirement, he is actively promoting and highlighting the positive image of Pakistan through his paintings of various beautiful places across the country.

Palm Sunday

ISLAMABAD: Christian devotees attend a Palm Sunday Ceremony at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan to celebrate World TB Day with 'Sprint to End TB'

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Dopasi Foundation, in collaboration with the Common Management Unit for AIDS, TB, and Malaria, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, proudly announced its partnership with Pakistan's premier running group, "Islamabad Run with Us," for the successful hosting of the "Sprint to End TB" event. The event, which took place on March 24, 2024, the World TB Day, echoing the global call to end tuberculosis and aligning with commitments made during the UN High-Level Meeting 2023 on TB and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

The "Sprint to End TB" event kicked off from the iconic Chand Tara Chowk, traversing the picturesque Shakar Pari-



an Road, and culminated at the esteemed Gun and Country Club. This carefully selected route symbolized our collective journey towards a TB-free future, emphasizing the importance of community engagement and solidarity in combating this deadly disease.

The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Secretary Health Dr. Iftikhar

Shalwani, National Coordinator Dr. Razia Fatima, CEO of Dopasi Ms. Kinz ul Eman, Senior Advisor Stop TB Partnership Sr. Syed Karam Shah, PD PTP KPK Dr. Moosa Khan, and Director of MoNHSR&C Dr. Maryam Sarfaraz, among others. Their presence underscored the significance of the event and demonstrated a united commitment to ending TB.

At the occasion appreciating the efforts of all the participants the Secretary Mr. Iftikhar Shalwani said: "TB awareness is not just a matter of public health; it's a testament to our collective responsibility towards the most vulnerable in our society. By raising awareness and mobilizing resources, we can and we will end TB and build a healthier, more resilient future for all."

IEEE COMSOC Tech Meet-up 2024



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The IEEE COMSOC Tech Meet-up, held at the prestigious venue of the Park Lane Hotel in Gulberg, Lahore, commenced the recitation of the Holy Quran by Dr. Sajid Mahmood. Mr. Kashif Bashir, the Chair of the IEEE COMSOC Lahore Chapter, warmly welcomed the attendees. In his opening remarks, Mr. Bashir highlighted the remarkable achievements of the COMSOC Lahore chapter over the past year and put forth a compelling call to action for the establishment of COMSOC student chapters across various universities such as UET Lahore, UMT, IUB, TUF, UOL, and UCP.

The event featured a series of enlightening talks by esteemed speakers. Chair of the Conference Committee, Prof. Dr. Syed Waqar ul Qounain, stated that the IEEE Lahore section sponsored 8 conferences last year, with two renowned ones being INMIC and ICOSST. Meanwhile, Muhammad Hamza Ihtisham, Chair of the IEEE Young Professionals Lahore Section, shared insights into the plans for newly funded YP events slated for post-Eid, highlighting the continuous efforts to engage and empower young professionals. Dr. Waqar Mahmood, Chair of the IEEE Computer Society Lahore Chapter, delivered the closing remarks with a message of encouragement for faculty members to actively volunteer for IEEE.

An MOU was signed for IEEE ComSoc's sponsorship of the UMT-named conference, ICIC. The event was graced by the presence of several esteemed attendees from different universities and tech industries, including Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani Khan, Shahid Zulfiqar, Tahir Malik, Dr. Atif Alvi, Babar Hameed, Dr. Usman Hayat, Dr. Sajid Mahmood, Atif Bashir, Dr. Sadia, Ms. Humera Kauser, Dr. Asma Basharat, Ms. Anum Tariq, and Khawaja Farrukh Arshad.

Interfaith Iftar Dinner: A symbol of unity amidst conclusion of Lent season; says IRCRA president



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) is set to host its annual Interfaith Iftar Dinner on Friday, March 29, at the prestigious Islamabad Club.

IRCRA President Muhammad Israr Madani, in an exclusive talk with media said this event would serve as a beacon of religious harmony, fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse communities.

He emphasized the significance of this event in promoting religious tolerance and bridging differences through dialogue. He reiterated that such initiatives are integral to creating an environment of mutual respect and understanding among people of different faiths. Highlighting the international dimension of the event, Israr noted that the Interfaith Iftar Dinner would attract participation from diplomatic communities, showcasing Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace and tolerance on the global stage.

The presence of diplomatic representatives would underscore the country's efforts to portray a positive image and strengthen its ties with the international community, he added.

7 years old boy molested in Hassanabdul

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A seven years old boy was molested by a man on the pretext of giving him food stuff in village Jallo in the limits of Hassanabdul Police station on Sunday. Ashraf Hussain reported to Police that Muhammad Aryan- a man of the same area took his nephew to his house on the pretext of giving him some food items where he assaulted him. On his return to his house, he revealed to his ordeal to his uncle who took him to police station. After medical examination which has confirmed the assault, Police registered a case against the nominated accused and launched haunt to arrest him.

Three killed, two injured in different incidents

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Three persons among them a couple was killed while a teenage girl was crushed to death and her father and younger sister was injured in two different incidents in various parts of Attock district on Sunday, police and hospital sources said.

In a first incident, a couple was shot dead over honor in Kareema village in the limits of Bhattar police station of Fatehjang. Police while quoting the family of the deceased has said that 45 years old Yousaf Khan- who belongs to Kohistan district of KP contracted third marriage with 18 years old Nadia Bibi some one month ago against the will of family. On Saturday night, when the couple went to sleep, masked men entered in to their house located in a farm house and showered bullets over them resultantly both received multiple bullet injuries and died on the spot. The assassins managed to escape from the scene successfully. In the second incident, a girl was crushed to death while her younger sister and father was injured as a speedy truck knocked their motorcycle on Shahbaz pur road in the limits of Pindigheb Police station on Sunday. Police sources said that Abdul Rauf was going along with his two daughter on his motorcycle when a speedy truck rammed over them resultantly one of the girl died on the spot while her younger sister and father was injured. The injured and dead were shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Pindigheb. Respective Police registered two separate cases and launched further investigation.

Grand Mufti of Bosnia And Herzegovina Calls on Rector IIUI

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The esteemed Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Husein of Kavazovic called on Professor Dr. Samina Malik, Rector, International Islamic University, Islamabad at her office in the new campus of the university.

During the meeting issues pertaining to expanding bilateral educational ties between IIUI and Bosnia and Herzegovinian universities especially in the fields of Islamic studies, training of Aima, Jurisprudence and law were discussed.

The grand Mufti appreciating the role of IIUI in serving the Muslim world said that there are a number of



learned scholars, bureaucrats, Aima and researchers in Bosnia who have benefited from the IIUI. He said the university has close objectives akin to the Islamic studies faculties of the

Bosnia and Herzegovinian universities. He also expressed appreciation for the deep bonds of friendship between the peoples of Bosnia and Pakistan. The grand Mufti was accompanied by the

Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Emin Cohodarevic.

During the meeting, The IIUI Rector extended a warm welcome to the Grand Mufti, expressing heartfelt congratulations on his forthcoming receipt of the Sitare e Quaid e Azam Award on March 23rd, conferred by the President of Pakistan. She appraised him about the services, role, vision and future goals of university as well as briefed about the faculties of the universities in addition to the presence of international teachers and students.

On the occasion, the Grand Mufti presented a rare manuscript of the Holy Quran, while the IIUI Rector presented a university souvenir to the esteemed Grand Mufti.

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Ramifications of Terrorist Attack in Russia on Pakistan

The devastating attack on a music concert in Moscow, Russia, resulting in the tragic loss of over 133 lives, sent shockwaves reverberating across the globe. This heinous act has deeply wounded the collective spirit of the Russian nation and stirred anguish among people worldwide. The brazen assault on innocent concertgoers, unprecedented in Moscow, strikes at the heart of a city known for its robust security measures, fortified by Russia's formidable security apparatus and renowned intelligence agency, the KGB.

This time, it appears that the attackers managed to breach the legendary security of Moscow, the capital city of one of the world's most powerful nations. This breach may have occurred due to various factors, including intelligence failures, potential inside collusion, or complacency within the security apparatus. Alternatively, the perpetrators might have been exceptionally well-prepared, possessing high levels of skill, resources, and connections both inside and outside the country. These factors likely facilitated their undetected entry into Russia, circumventing border security measures. Once inside, they could have arranged transportation, acquired funds, weapons, and even concert tickets with ease. This enabled them to carry out their heinous act, indiscriminately firing upon concertgoers, resulting in the tragic loss of over 133 lives, and later setting fire to the venue.

To counter any potential Russian attempts to retaliate against those it accuses of masterminding the attack, the US, Ukraine, and Western countries have started mulling on ways and means to defuse Russian anger and putting all

safety and defense mechanism in place to minimize the impact of imminent Russian attempt to take revenge of the attack from perceived masterminds, abettors and facilitators.

They are fiercely engaged in diplomatic dialogue with Russia to de-escalate tensions and prevent further escalation of the situation involving direct negotiations, diplomatic channels through international organizations such as the United Nations, and diplomatic initiatives led by neutral parties.

They are mulling over ways and means to maintaining a strong military presence in the region to deter potential Russian aggression and respond effectively to any hostile actions involving deploying additional troops, conducting military exercises, and enhancing defense capabilities to ensure readiness to defend against any threats, besides, intensifying intelligence-sharing mechanisms among allied countries to gather information on Russian intentions and activities involving sharing intelligence on potential threats, monitoring Russian military movements, and coordinating efforts to counter any hostile actions.

Moreover, to deter Russia from taking retaliatory actions, they are lining up targeted economic sanctions against Russia if it escalates tensions or takes aggressive actions against Ukraine or other countries. This could involve imposing sanctions on key Russian individuals, entities, and sectors, as well as restricting trade and financial transactions to exert economic pressure on Russia.

Strengthen cyber defense capabilities to protect against potential Russian cyber-attacks targeting critical infrastructure, government institutions, and private sector entities may also be on the cards. This could involve enhancing cybersecurity measures, investing in advanced technologies, and conducting cybersecurity exercises to prepare for potential threats.

If the security situation escalates, and Russia decides to retaliate on a large scale deploying kinetic means, and to use oil, wheat, and gas as weapons and disrupt maritime trade, it would pose a significant global repercussions, extending to countries like Pakistan, which has a historical legacy in the Afghan conflict against the USSR.

In the event of maritime trade route disruptions, Pakistan would confront economic challenges, including higher prices for essential commodities, decreased exports, and overall economic instability. Additionally, as a nation heavily reliant on imports for its energy needs, Pakistan could face shortages and increased prices of oil and gas, precipitating energy crises and economic strain.

An escalation in commodity and oil prices would profoundly impact Pakistan's economy, primarily through inflationary pressures and widening trade deficits. As a nation heavily reliant on imported commodities and oil, Pakistan would face increased production costs, leading to higher prices for goods and services, ultimately affecting consumers' purchasing power. Moreover, the country's trade deficit could further expand as the prices

of imported commodities rise, straining its balance of payments and potentially depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Additionally, Pakistan's energy sector, which heavily depends on imported oil and gas, would bear the brunt of escalating oil prices. Higher energy production costs would translate into increased electricity prices and transportation expenses, posing challenges to industrial productivity and economic growth. The government, meanwhile, may face heightened fiscal pressures to maintain subsidies on essential commodities, potentially straining public finances and diverting resources from other development priorities.

Furthermore, the escalation in commodity and oil prices could exert pressure on Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, affecting the country's ability to meet external debt obligations and finance imports.

To counteract these potential ramifications, Pakistan would need to engage in diplomatic efforts, collaborating with regional and international partners to mitigate the impact of maritime trade disruptions and ensure the security and stability of trade routes. Pakistan would also need to implement effective economic management strategies, policy interventions, and efforts to diversify its energy sources and reduce reliance on imported commodities. Such measures are crucial to navigating the economic impacts of rising global commodity prices and ensuring the stability and resilience of Pakistan's economy in the face of external shocks.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Modern farming practices to ensure food security

Pakistan can harness its agricultural potential to ensure food security, economic prosperity, and sustainable development by promoting horizontal and vertical expansion through the adoption of high-quality seeds and modern farming practices.

Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik stated this while talking to a delegation of agricultural experts led by Prof Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed Head of Plant Breeding and Genetics Punjab University here on Sunday.

Malik said that to enhance agricultural productivity, it is imperative to pursue a dual strategy focusing on both horizontal and vertical growth. Horizontal growth entails expanding the cultivation area, particularly in Cholistan's barren lands, which hold untapped potential. By reclaiming and efficiently utilizing such land, Pakistan can significantly increase its agricultural output.

He said, vertical growth was also equally crucial for enhancing per-acre yield through the adoption of high-yielding quality seeds and modern agricultural practices. "Utilizing advanced seed technology and agricultural techniques can substantially boost productivity without the need for additional land resources. This approach aligns with sustainable farming practices while addressing the growing demand for food security in the country," he remarked.

The PHHSA Chairman said recent initiative by the Prime Minister to crackdown on the mafia selling sub-standard seeds is commendable and indicative of a proactive stance towards improving agricultural standards. The establishment of National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority reflects a step towards promoting quality seed usage and ensuring the availability of superior agricultural inputs to farmers across the country.

He said PHHSA's recognition of the government's efforts in boosting the agricultural economy highlights the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in achieving agricultural development goals.

Advocating for representation as a stakeholder in the National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority, he added, the PHHSA aims to contribute its expertise towards shaping policies and regulations that foster innovation and quality assurance in the seed industry.

Incorporating stakeholders' perspectives and expertise, especially from reputable associations like PHHSA, can facilitate the formulation of comprehensive strategies to address the challenges hindering agricultural productivity, he argued.

He stressed the need for collaboration among public sector, industry players, and agricultural stakeholders is essential for implementing holistic approaches that promote sustainable growth and resilience in Pakistan's agriculture sector.



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

Pak Army's notable role in Sports and fostering a healthier society-I

In a world pulsating with the rhythms of contemporary life, maintaining physical fitness emerges as a beacon of vitality, resilience, and overall well-being. Beyond mere exercise routines, physical fitness encompasses a wide range of activities and habits that nurture the body, mind, and spirit. Its importance resonates throughout various aspects of life, from individual health and longevity to societal productivity and harmony.

At its essence, physical fitness represents the harmony between movement and nourishment, sculpting the body into a temple of strength, endurance, and flexibility. Regular exercise not only fortifies muscles and bones but also enhances cardiovascular health, boosts immune function, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Whether through cardiovascular workouts, strength training, yoga, or recreational sports, engaging in physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, neurotransmitters that promote feelings of happiness and well-being, thus fostering mental clarity and emotional resilience.

Moreover, physical fitness extends beyond the individual to influence the fabric of society, impacting productivity, creativity, and social cohesion. Active, healthy individuals are more likely to excel in academic and professional pursuits, as regular exercise improves cognitive function, concentration, and memory retention. Through promoting teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, sports and recreational activities instill valuable life skills that translate into leadership, cooperation, and conflict resolution - crucial qualities for fostering a harmonious society.

Furthermore, physical fitness serves as a pathway to personal empowerment and self-discovery, transcending barriers of age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Regardless of one's starting point, embarking on a journey towards physical well-being fosters a sense of agency, purpose, and self-confidence. Setting and achieving fitness goals - whether completing a marathon, mastering a yoga pose, or simply enhancing flexibility - cultivates a growth mindset and resilience in the face of challenges, empowering individuals to realize their full potential and embrace life with enthusiasm.

In today's digital age, where sedentary lifestyles and screen-centric habits prevail, prioritizing physical fitness has become increasingly urgent. Integrating regular exercise into daily routines - whether through brisk walks, cycling or gardening - not only counteracts the adverse effects of prolonged sitting but also nurtures a deeper connection with the natural world. Reconnecting with nature's rhythms, breathing in fresh air, and soaking in sunlight revitalize the body, mind, and spirit, infusing life

with vitality and imbuing existence with significance.

As we navigate the complexities of modern life, we need to heed the call to embrace physical fitness as a sacred commitment to ourselves and to each other. It is important to honor the magnificent vessel that is our body, nurturing it with movement, nourishment, and rest. It is essential to celebrate the limitless potential residing within each of us, embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-improvement, fueled by the passion and promise of possibility. By doing so, we not only enrich our own lives but also enrich the collective well-being of humanity, fostering a world where vitality, resilience, and joy flourish for all. Sports have remained an integral aspect of human civilization for centuries, transcending borders, cultures, and languages. Beyond mere entertainment and competition, sports play a crucial role in shaping individuals, nurturing social bonds, and advancing physical and mental wellness.

Engagement in sports offers numerous benefits, prominently promoting physical fitness and overall health. Regular participation in sporting activities aids in building endurance, strength, and agility, leading to enhanced cardiovascular health, improved motor skills, and heightened coordination. Additionally, sports promote an active lifestyle, mitigating the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other lifestyle-related ailments. Through sports, individuals cultivate healthy routines, establishing a robust foundation for lifelong well-being.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

'World Poetry Day'

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

Every year March 21 is celebrated as World Poetry Day, the purpose of celebrating this day is to highlight the importance and usefulness of poetry in human life. The celebration was announced in 1999. Poetry is very important in human life. Because poetry is the interpreter of human feelings and emotions, generally when we talk about literature, we mean written or book literature which is either written in prose or in the form of poems. Poetry and Human relationship is very deep and based on ancient connections. It is quite difficult to estimate the authenticity of poetry. So far no one has been able to say anything about poetry with certainty and no one has presented any argument by which we can estimate the authenticity of poetry. Can put However, according to the experts, in 100 years before Christ, the princess of an ancient state of Iran, the land of color and mystery, An Hiduana resorted to a special harmony and rhythm of words to express her feelings, which was later called the first poetry in known history. With us, feelings of tragedy and jealousy take the form of movement and take the form of stanzas. In order to break the deep silence inside, which comes out after breaking the lips of song, it takes the form of poetry. According to the Greek philosopher Plato, poetry is actually a kind of verbal painting. A painter creates a picture with brush and paint and a poet paints a picture of emotions and inner feelings in appropriate words. Like the flow of the river, the sound of the forest, the smell of the greenery of the garden, the intensity of the sun, the cold pain and sadness of the winter, the picture comes before the eyes. Poetry is the name of emotions and feelings. Emotion and feeling are actually motivated by Khawas Khamsa. It is the gift of Allah that man takes all the work from his own since. The poet says a poem only after being inspired by something. The basic unit of poetry is verse. By the way, the Imams of literature have described the meaning and meaning of poetry in many ways. It would be impossible for us to include in this article, but we can say U according to the topic. The term poetry refers to the appropriate speech that is said on purpose. This word is a symbol of appropriate emotions and feelings. And indicates knowledge of an event. It may also happen that you have seen an accident and it has affected your heart and it is automatically expressed in the form of

words from inside you. Known from The depiction of facts in appropriate words is called poetry. Here, it would be important to say that poetry is not just the name of a combination of words or just linking two stanzas together does not make a complete poem. The most important element of poetry is to use imagination to reflect reality and to present happiness in an effective manner. Poetry is the name of reflection of one's feelings and emotions and observations and experiences for any human being. He is always busy observing something or the other, things created by nature, or in his inventions and creations. The aesthetic element will be established in Qadr poetry. Style and manner of expression in poetry gives rise to aesthetics and lofty imagination establishes the element of objectivity. Every human being thinks from his own point of view, but the observation of sensitive people is very deep. Some people express it in the form of writing, that is, in the form of prose, which are classified as essays, novels, fictions and stories, and some people express it in different arts, such as sculpture, sculpture, painting, etc. They express their thoughts through the art of painting and some people express their thoughts through poetry. Poetry is the interpreter of situations and events and reflects the society and environment in which the poet lives, not only the art of poetry is the originator of poetry, but the emotions that compel the poet to write poetry are poetry, the best poetry is the best ideas, reflects, the poem which is a reflection of situations and events is a perfect poem, the poem should have such a meaning that whoever reads it will understand that it is reflecting his thoughts. The art of speaking is not the guarantee of good poetry, poetry is done in many languages, each language has its own rules, but the word poetry is only reserved for Urdu language. Kar takes it as a creation and wants to convey his thought to other people in the same way as he thinks, thus the creator gets satisfaction. Behind every language there is a society, its customs, traditions, religion, lifestyle, scenes, events, occasions and all cultural elements, the language of the members of the society, which has diversity from class to class. Yes, the phenomena of language itself is a huge topic. How will the classes of language be determined and what is the relationship between literature and public language, how will the talk of genres of speech go? What is communication, how will folk poetry and folklore be seen. Summary If we go into detail about poetry, literature and its history and its relations, however much we write in detail, it will be less than the importance and usefulness of poetry and literature.

Shared Visions: Azerbaijan and Pakistan's Bilateral Dynamics

Azerbaijan and Pakistan eagerly anticipate strengthening their bond through enhanced cooperation in trade, commerce, and defense.

The relationship between Azerbaijan and Pakistan is on the brink of a new chapter, poised to soar to unprecedented heights as both nations eagerly seek to deepen their bond through enhanced cooperation across various sectors. As Pakistan commemorates its national day, Azerbaijan extends heartfelt congratulations and warm wishes to the Prime Minister and the resilient people of Pakistan. This momentous occasion serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring friendship between the two nations, underscored by mutual respect and a shared aspiration for success.



Notably, this year's Pakistan Day Parade, held on March 23rd, saw enthusiastic participation from military delegations representing Azerbaijan and China, further solidifying the bond between these nations. Major Mehran Craizo from the Azerbaijan Army expressed heartfelt sentiments, stating, "Pakistan is our brother country, and we always feel honored to be part of this special occasion." He went on to highlight the high morale among the troops following a successful rehearsal the day before.



Analysis

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

The convergence of celebrations and military camaraderie underscores the deep-rooted ties between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, setting the stage for a future marked by strengthened cooperation and shared achievements. As both nations look ahead, there is a palpable sense of optimism and determination to embark on a journey of mutual growth and prosperity.

Azerbaijan and Pakistan are prepared to fortify their bond further, with Azerbaijan expressing gratitude for Pakistan's steadfast support, particularly in safeguarding its borders. With enthusiasm, both countries anticipate enhanced cooperation in trade, commerce, and defense to foster each other's advancement and prosperity. Moreover, the prospect of future meetings between leaders from both nations ignites optimism, while Azerbaijan extends its wishes for peace and happiness to all the people of Pakistan.

The commitment to strengthening bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan is echoed in their shared vision for mutual growth and prosperity. A recent meeting between Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar of Pakistan and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Bayramov Jeyhun marked a significant milestone, emphasizing the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Both ministers pledged to

bolster collaborative efforts, recognizing the pivotal role of nuclear energy in addressing environmental concerns and combating climate change.

The enduring friendship and shared interests between Azerbaijan and Pakistan have laid the groundwork for a robust and cooperative relationship across various sectors. In the defense arena, both nations have engaged in military exchanges, joint training exercises, and cooperation on defense equipment sales, acknowledging the importance of modernizing their armed forces to meet evolving security challenges. Additionally, Azerbaijan's abundant energy resources complement Pakistan's expertise, paving the way for joint ventures and investment projects to spur economic growth.

Cultural exchange and educational partnerships have played a vital role in nurturing relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. Collaborative efforts in education have provided Azerbaijani and Pakistani students with scholarships, research partnerships, and academic exchanges, enriching the educational landscape in both coun-



tries. Moreover, initiatives promoting cultural understanding through events and exhibitions have further strengthened ties between the two nations.

Looking ahead, Azerbaijan and Pakistan are poised to deepen their partnership through high-level visits, academic collaboration, and people-to-people interactions. Both nations express a shared interest in addressing regional issues such as counterterrorism and energy security. By leveraging their collective strengths, Azerbaijan and Pakistan aim to promote regional stability and development, contributing to peace and prosperity in the South Asian and Caspian regions.

To further strengthen bilateral relations, strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts can be undertaken to deepen cooperation and foster mutual growth. These include exploring additional

areas for collaboration such as technology, education, healthcare, and tourism, facilitating joint economic initiatives and investment projects, promoting cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts, strengthening collaboration in science and technology, and enhancing defense and security cooperation.

Furthermore, both countries should coordinate efforts to support regional initiatives aimed at promoting peace, stability, and development. Facilitating regular Track II dialogues and exchanges between think tanks, academia, and civil society organizations can provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing bilateral relations.

Additionally, launching public diplomacy campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations among the public can

foster a sense of solidarity and partnership among the people.

So far, Azerbaijan and Pakistan have identified common areas of interest and are collaborating to address key regional issues such as security, economic development, and regional stability. Through their collaborative approach, they are paving the way for greater progress and advancements in their partnership, well-positioned to achieve remarkable success together. Their shared commitment to cooperation and mutual understanding sets the stage for a bright future marked by shared successes and prosperity for both nations.

(The writer, a foreign affairs analyst, political commentator, and media advisor, can be reached via email at syeed.gilani@gmail.com.)

Tanveer urges world community to intervene for bringing peace in Kashmir

PPA

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman Jammu Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization (JKPO), Tanveer-ul-Islam, has called for immediate international intervention to address the escalating humanitarian catastrophe in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking as a keynote speaker during a webinar titled "Voices for Kashmir: Seeking Truth, Justice, and Dignity," organized by the Jammu Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization, Tanveer-ul-Islam urged the world community to intervene for bringing peace in Kashmir.

He emphasized that Kashmiri Muslims have faced systemic human rights transgressions, including arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances for decades.

Mr. Tanveer-ul-Islam vehemently condemned



draconian measures such as arbitrary detentions and violent repression, along with the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution affecting the special autonomous status of the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Tracing the history of the Kashmir conflict, he highlighted that the denial of Kashmiris' right to decide their future with free will gave birth to this dispute since the partition of British

India in 1947.

Tanveer emphasized the need for the international community and civil society of influential nations to be informed about the atrocious human rights violations in Indian-Occupied Kashmir. He called upon the international community to take resolute action to redress the ongoing crisis and safeguard the fundamental rights of Kashmiri Muslims, asserting that finding a just solu-

tion to the Kashmir conflict is not only a moral obligation of world nations but also indispensable for regional stability.

President of the Pak Kashmir Solidarity Council, Mr. Syed Arif Bahar, underscored the imperative of untangling the intricacies surrounding Kashmir, prioritizing the voices and narratives of Kashmiri masses in any discourse.

Professor Shahid Hassan Mir highlighted the pressing need for international intervention in confronting human rights abuses in Kashmir, advocating for global accountability and solidarity. Muhammad Tahir Tabasum, President of the Institute of Peace and Development, voiced apprehension regarding the political situation in Kashmir and the travails of political detainees, calling for their immediate release.

He affirmed, "The plight of political detainees in Kashmir serves as a poignant

reminder of the ongoing human rights debacle. The release of political detainees is not only an issue of justice but also a pivotal stride towards reinstating peace and stability in the region."

Other distinguished participants of the webinar underscored the significance of inclusivity in the peace process, advocating for the empowerment of Kashmiri stakeholders and redressing underlying grievances of the Kashmiri population. They implored the international community to demonstrate solidarity with the oppressed people of Indian-Occupied Kashmir, championing their rights, justice, and dignity.

Moreover, the participants of the seminar adopted a resolution appealing to the international community for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conundrum based on the right of self-determination in the broader interest of peace and development in the region.

High Commission hosts Pakistan Day Reception in Dhaka

Spokesman Report

DHAKA: The High Commission hosted a grand reception in celebration of Pakistan Day, commemorating the historic occasion with grace and fervor. The event held in local hotel and attended by over 350

Major General (R) Abdus Salam MP, Minister for Planning, emphasized the significant potential for enhancing relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh in trade, commerce, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts in their speeches. The Planning Minister of Bangladesh



guests brought together dignitaries, diplomats, members of political parties, corporate executives, representatives of media, academia and think tanks and prominent members of Pakistani diaspora in Bangladesh.

Minister for Planning, Major General (R) Abdus Salam MP, a senior member of the cabinet, represented the Bangladeshi government as the Chief Guest. Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Mr. Masud Bin Momen also attended the reception.

Guests were treated to an evening of cultural splendor, featuring Pakistan's breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, architectural splendor and a delectable array of Pakistani cuisine.

Pakistan High Commissioner Syed Ahmed Maroof and the Chief Guest,

extended congratulations to the High Commission and the people of Pakistan on Pakistan's National Day and conveyed felicitations to the newly elected government of Pakistan.

The High Commissioner expressed his gratitude to the Chief Guest, Foreign Secretary, government officials, members of media and Pakistani diaspora for gracing the event with their presence.

Palestine & Kashmir: Similar Struggles of Occupations: Dr. Imtiaz Khan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Since 1990 Indian forces have unleashed a reign of terror against the freedom loving people of Kashmir who are demanding the implementation of more than 16 substantive United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The acts of savagery by the Indian occupation army are increasing every day and till date, over 100,000 civilians, including youth ranging from 15-30 years of age have been murdered. Kashmiri women were victims of gang rape and over ten thousand missing persons have been recorded by impartial and international NGOs. Mass graves were discovered by Indian intellectuals and human rights activists in Kashmir, but the search was abandoned as the people involved in unearthing them were arrested or deported by Indian authorities.

India has used pellet guns on young Kashmiri children as young as 9 years of age and hundreds of them have been blinded due to the wounds. Since August 5, 2019, the Hindu fundamentalist government headed by Narinder Modi abrogated article 370 and 35A of the constitution, that facilitates

non-Kashmiris to acquire jobs and to buy the property in occupied land. Since then, hundreds of thousands of RSS militant Hindus have been transported to Kashmir and provided with residential rights.

Under the pretext of visiting holy sites thousands of Hindus are being transported to Kashmir every day. Huge swaths of land is being confiscated from the locals (under the guise of security issues) to build settlements for the Hindu outsiders. The game plan is to change the demographics and deprive the Muslim population of their livelihood, property, and honor. Youth are especially targeted and during army search operations they are arrested and eliminated in the army camps. Their infolk considers themselves fortunate if they are able to acquire their corpses. India is encouraged to escalate the atrocities in Kashmir due to the criminal silence of international community. The hapless people of Kashmir are beseeching the freedom loving people to raise their voice at the important corridors of power, be it Washington, London, Brussels, Paris, Tokyo or else.

Kashmir's tragedy is akin to the tragedy of the Palestin-



ians, looking for a way to realize their rights and freedoms being crushed by hyper militarized states. On October 12, 2023, as Israeli airstrikes were pummeling Gaza, Israel's ambassador to India, Naor Gilon, told Asian News International that he had received such an outpouring of support from people in India that he could fill another Israeli army just with Indian volunteers. "Everyone is telling me, 'I want to volunteer, I want to fight for Israel,'" he said. Hindu nationalists openly and loudly celebrate what Israel is doing to Palestinians. The fundamentalist BJP activists have been quoted as stating "Israel is giving us lessons in ethnic cleansing because this is precisely what we are going to do to Muslims in Kashmir. We

will send Hindu fanatics to fight side by side, raping, killing, and murdering because this is what we intend to do to Muslims." January 21, 2024 The Jerusalem Post.

UCLA law professor Dr. Khaled Abou el-Fadl said on a YouTube live stream on the Usuli Institute channel that "some of the worst massacres committed against Palestinians in Gaza are by Indian soldiers serving in the Israeli army," Memri TV reported. Israel has become the second top arms exporter to India. According to recent report in reputed newspaper Haaretz. According to weapons monitors, India is the largest purchaser of Israeli-made arms, spending in excess of \$1bn per year which is supposed to increase manifold in

coming years.

The nexus between India and Israel poses a severe threat for Kashmir and Palestine. Both these countries share the evil design of expansionism and elimination of the Muslim population of their occupied lands. The political experts and analysts believe that India and Israel share a common geo-strategic interest in destabilization of Pakistan. India and Israel alliance is a strong recipe for major global conflicts based on their immoral theory of Islamophobia and two countries are brazen violators of international treaties. The two countries have well-funded propaganda agencies, and their sole task is to demonize Islam and portray genuine freedom struggle as terrorist movements.

What is very sinister that time and again news has leaked that the Israeli agents are frequently visiting Kashmir and providing strategic information to India about raising West Bank style settlements and altering the majority character of the region. Since August 5, 2019, India is aggressively pursuing this agenda and hundreds of thousands of Hindu fundamentalists have provided residential rights in

occupied Kashmir. The strong headed and blatant criminal activities of these two occupiers is the consequence of weak kneed approach of United Nations who have utterly failed in implementing the resolutions they passed.

At present Israel is involved in unfettered genocide of Palestinians. Till date about 37,000 innocent people of Gaza including thousands of women and children have been brutally massacred. The rest of the surviving population is on the brink of starvation. Food and essential medical supplies are unavailable, and all the hospitals have been reduced to rubble.

The Muslim world and all other peace-loving Jews and Christians have joined the protests against these barbaric actions. It will not be sardonic to state that rulers of major Muslim countries are entangled in their own blatantly luxurious or amorous agenda and have ignored the problems of Palestine and Kashmir. At this juncture the pain for people of Palestine by the peace-loving citizens is totally justified but at the same time the hardships of Kashmiris should not be forgotten.

As stated above, thousands have been massacred, raped and

maimed by Indian armed forces. Kashmir has been turned into prison and Indian army can, kill, rape, plunder and destroy property with impunity. While watching the cries and moans of innocent people of Gaza we should be reminded that Kashmiris are going through similar torture at the hands of Indian occupation. The difference is that while in Gaza world media has limited access and news percolates out, but in occupied Kashmir as stated by New York-based, 'Committee to Protect Journalists,' the news media in Kashmir is at the brink of extinction.

Undoubtedly, we have to provide unstinted and unwavering support for Palestinian brothers and sisters, but we cannot lower our guard on Kashmir where Muslim population is facing threat of annihilation. Let us pay attention to the warning given by Dr. Gregory Stanton, Chairman, 'Genocide watch' during his testimony before the US Congress in January 2022 that "Kashmir was at the brink of genocide."

Dr. Imtiaz Khan is a Kashmiri American human rights defender and board member of Washington-based world Kashmir awareness Forum.

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

Trade diplomacy must be employed to bridge trade deficit

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned industrialist, Atif Iqbal, has stressed that Pakistan needs to employ trade diplomacy on a regional—as well as single-country—basis through targeted, tangible outreach efforts in a 360-degree manner encompassing people-to-people (P2P), business-to-business (B2B) and chamber-to-chamber (C2C) partnerships. The only way forward for the country's economy is to aggressively tap new export markets and diversify the exports basket, he added.

Atif Iqbal also expressed his desire that the European Union will consider Pakistani pharmaceutical products to be included in its GSP+

program for Pakistan. He elaborated that this can be a game-changer for the economy of Pakistan as it is a huge industry with enormous potential to expand.

It is pertinent to note that former finance minister, Miftah Ismail, MNA Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, SVP FPCCI, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, consul generals and top diplomats of Germany, Malaysia, Indonesia, UAE, Oman, Morocco and Philippines discussed their ideas on economic stabilization in a high-profile iftar dinner session—hosted by Atif Iqbal, who has recently been elected as the Chairman of Pakistan-Philippines Business Council of FPCCI.

H. E. Mr. Andreas Wegner, Deputy Head of



German Mission, apprised that social and B2B engagements can unleash new possibilities in trade, investments, JVs, industrial collaborations and social sector uplift. He appreciated that important figures from Pakistan and diplomatic circles gathered to brainstorm the avenues of cooperation.

Miftah Ismail maintained that Pakistan

needs reforms that make economic sense as ad hoc arrangements and lack of planning have never delivered the results for Pakistan. He expressed his satisfaction that top diplomats from EU, GCC, Southeast Asia and other countries gathered have friendly concerns and warmth for Pakistan—and, this goodwill can be utilized to promote trade and economic ties.

Exertion

ISLAMABAD: Labourers working on new gas pipeline project along Sector G-8 in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Bikulon sees vast scope in Pakistan's pharma, textile sectors

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Head of Regional Development and Investment Attractive Department of National Investment Agency Kyrgyzstan Bikulon Damirbek said the pharmaceutical and textile sectors of Pakistan hold vast scope for bilateral trade with Kyrgyzstan, having a wide array of opportunities for economic cooperation between the two countries.

He stated this while talking to a Pak trade delegation led by Kyrgyz honorary Consul Meher Kashif Younis, currently visiting Kyrgyz to explore the potentials of enhancing bilateral trade, said the consul's spokesman here Sunday.

Bikulon said Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector is one of the largest in the Islamic world, with a diverse range of products catering to both domestic and international markets. Its pharmaceutical companies have developed expertise in producing high-quality generic drugs, which could address Kyrgyzstan's healthcare needs. By exploring partnerships and collaborations in this sector, Kyrgyzstan could gain access to affordable medicines while Pakistan could expand its market presence in Central Asia.

Bikulon said exploring the vast scope of Pakistan's pharmaceuticals and textile industry in Kyrgyzstan requires concerted efforts from both governments to facilitate trade and investment. This could involve initiatives such as trade delegations, joint



ventures, and the establishment of trade agreements to create a conducive environment for business collaboration.

He was of the view that enhanced connectivity through improved transportation links and logistical infrastructure would further facilitate trade between the two countries, asserting that investments in transportation corridors and border facilitation measures would reduce trade barriers and enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade.

On this occasion, Meher Kashif Younis said that Pakistan's pharmaceuticals and textile industry in Kyrgyzstan offer a signif-

icant opportunity to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties.

"Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan can unlock new avenues for economic growth and prosperity by tapping into each others potential and fostering collaboration."

He said Pakistan's textile industry is a cornerstone of its economy, accounting for a significant portion of its exports. With a well-established infrastructure and skilled workforce, Pakistan produces a variety of textile products. Kyrgyzstan, with its strategic location in Central Asia, could serve as a gateway for Pakistani textile exports to reach other countries in the region.

Oil steady after slipping on Gaza ceasefire talks

Reuters

NEW YORK: Oil prices stabilized on Friday as the possibility of a ceasefire in Gaza weakened crude benchmarks, while steadying U. S. interest rates and the war in Europe cushioned the fall.

Brent futures eased 20 cents to \$85.58 a barrel by 10:48 a.m. EST (1448 GMT), while U. S. crude fell 24 cents to \$80.83 per barrel. Both benchmarks were largely unchanged on the week.

U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday he believed talks in Qatar could reach a Gaza ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.

Blinken met Arab foreign ministers and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in

Cairo as negotiators in Qatar centred on a truce of about six weeks.

"A ceasefire would help calm fears that the situation in Gaza might spread more broadly across the region," IG analyst Tony Sycamore said.

"Additionally, it may encourage the Houthis to stand down and allow oil tankers to pass through the Red Sea, which would also be a positive development in terms of helping to balance out the supply and demand dynamics."

While a possible ceasefire meant oil could move more freely globally, the potential for easing U. S. interest rates helped support prices.

"We are still keeping fresh highs on the table given broad based expansion in risk

appetite that accelerated following the mid-week Fed comments that proved less hawkish than anticipated," said Houston-based Jim Ritterbusch, of Ritterbusch and Associates.

The conflict in Eastern Europe also kept oil prices from moving lower. Russia launched the largest missile and drone attack on Ukrainian energy infrastructure of the war to date on Friday, hitting the country's largest dam and causing blackouts in several regions, Kyiv said.

Ukraine has in recent weeks masterminded a series of attacks on Russian energy infrastructure. The United States has reportedly urged Kyiv to halt strikes on facilities, warning that they risk provoking retaliation and driving up oil prices.

Peshawar Traders Chamber lauds Chief Minister for fulfilling vision of Imran Khan

PPA

PESHAWAR: In Peshawar, addressing the business community, Ghulam Bilal Javed, a senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, stated that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has indeed honored his commitment to the people of KP. He emphasized that electricity and gas load shedding during Sehri and Iftar has been practically eliminated. Ghulam Bilal stressed the importance of the vision of Imran Khan, just as the Chief Minister is doing. Practical actions should replace mere photo sessions. Ghulam Bilal reiterated that our current objective is to ensure Khan's release from jail. A peaceful protest is proposed on March 30, not only in Peshawar but across all of KP, to expedite our mentor's release. During the meeting, former Cantt Board member and

Vice Chairman of Peshawar Traders Chamber, Ghulam Hussain Chand, expressed confidence in Khan Sahib's supporters to follow his path. Despite their recent appointment as ministers, our ministers have already shut off their mobile phones. They need to become true representatives of the people and learn to live among them. He emphasized the need for a cabinet like that of Chief Minister Ali Amin, always ready to serve the people and the business community.

A significant number of members from the business community participated in the meeting. In conclusion, Ghulam Bilal thanked the business community and assured them that he would soon arrange a meeting with Chief Minister KPK, Ali Amin Gandapur, where all businessmen can present their issues. He expressed confidence that Chief Minister KPK's leadership would promptly resolve all problems.

Property tax imposed on housing societies, farmhouses in Islamabad

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority has imposed new taxes on housing societies and farmhouses in the federal capital.

At least Rs24,000 of tax has been imposed on the owners of 140 square yards of plots present in the sectors and housing societies including Shehzad Town, Margala Town, and Rawal Town, according to the notification. As much as Rs180,000

of property tax has been imposed on the owners of farmhouses spreading over eight kanals and Rs442,000 of levy on owners of 90 to 120 kanal farmhouses in Islamabad.

The notification added that the property tax would be levied at Rs22 per square foot for private hospitals, Rs180 per square yard for petrol pumps and CNG stations and Rs13 per square foot for marquees and marriage halls.

Barrick Gold CEO speaks up on prospects of Reko Diq project

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Barrick Gold Corporation's President and Chief Executive, Mark Bristow spoke up on the prospects of Reko Diq project.

In an exclusive interview with ARY News programme "Aiteraz Hai", Barrick Gold Corporation's President and Chief Executive, Mark Bristow said that the Reko Diq project is anticipated to run for 45 years initially, but there is potential for it to extend to 100 years, and working on this game-changing project is an honor for them.

Bristow highlighted that the Reko Diq project should have commenced much earlier, as it has the potential to yield an additional 45 million tons of gold and copper annually from the

site. Explaining economic impacts, he said that with an estimated investment of \$10 billion over the next 8-9 years, the Reko Diq project is poised to transform the regional economy.

He said that the company is also investing in education, from primary to university levels, and building vocational skills through partnerships with NGOs. He promised that all the out-of-school children would be registered in school by the end of this year.

Earlier, Barrick Gold expressed interest in investing \$7bn to revive Pakistan's mining project, Reko Diq, which experts believe contains one of the world's largest untapped reserves of copper and gold.

Shabbar Zaidi says imposing tax on retailers only way-out



Monitoring Desk

KARACHI: Former chairman FBR Shabbar Zaidi has said that there is no way-out except imposing tax on retailers.

Talking in ARY News show 'Sawal Yeh Hai' Shabbar Zaidi said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has to put his political repute at stake for imposing tax on retailers.

"Every government has failed to impose tax on retailers. They down shutters when tax imposes over them, which results in losses," former chief of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said.

It is to be mentioned here that the FBR has launched a compulsory tax registration scheme focusing retailers and wholesalers in major cities of Pakistan.

The scheme has been launched in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Quetta and Peshawar and will come into effect from April 1, as per an FBR notification.

However, traders will make their first tax payments on July 15, said the notification.

The tax collector body of Pakistan gave a month, with the last date on April 30, to traders and wholesalers to get registered.

The scheme will apply to the traders and shopkeepers operating through a fixed place of business including a shop, store, warehouse, office or similar physical place.

The FBR will launch a Tajir Dost application to create a database of traders and shopkeepers for registration and advance income tax payment.

As per the scheme, traders are bound to pay monthly advance tax on the 15th of each month. They will have to pay a minimum of Rs1,200 per annum income tax even if their income is below the income tax threshold.

Meanwhile, the FBR announced a 25% tax incentive for traders who pay their full tax in advance before the due date of every month.

PCB announces 7-member selection committee with unprecedented powers Naeem Niazi

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday announced an all-powerful seven-member selection committee for the Men's national, U-19 and Pakistan Shaheens cricket teams, and with the mandate to pick the team captains.

Addressing a press conference at the PCB headquarters at Gaddafi Stadium, he said no chief selector had been appointed to the selection committee comprising former test cricketers Muhammad Yousaf, Wahab Riaz, Abdul Razaq, Asad Shafiq, team captain, team head coach and a data analyst, adding that one two coordinators will also be appointed but they will not have a vote on the committee. The data analyst will provide the members with insightful statistics and data to help in team selection.

Justifying the logic behind absence of chief selector in the committee, Mohsin Naqvi said that all members would enjoy equal powers in the committee and the majority decision would prevail. He said the selection committee would take all decisions regarding team selection, appointment of captain and other professional affairs.

Defending his decision to pick comparatively recently retired test cricketers, the chairman said: "I personally believe these cricketers are more

familiar with the current players than the cricket greats who retired some two decades ago. I believe this is the best of the best group of selectors in the present scenario."

The PCB chairman also announced doing away with the previous practice of picking the team captain as chairman, adding that the selection committee would select captain of the cricket team. He said he believed the former cricketers were better placed to decide on the matter of appointment of team captain rather than the chairman PCB. "I am management man and I will take administrative decisions for betterment of the PCB, but the selection of a captain should be left to the professionals," he added.

The PCB chairman dispelled the impression that team captain's inclusion in selection committee would raise conflict of interest issue, adding that the captain must have a say in selection of the team, as he is to lead the team and account for results, adding that consultation is not enough and the captain must have full say in the selection of the team.

About appointment of the team captain, Naqvi said that the team captain for the national T20 team would be picked by the selection committee by the end of the team's fitness camp, starting from March 25 (tomorrow). He said that the new



captain would be appointed for a long tenure.

Naqvi said that the PCB was negotiating with the foreign coaches and a dream coaching panel comprising foreign and local coaches would be finalised and details would be shared

with the media and Pakistan cricket fans shortly.

Naqvi said Imad Wasim had been invited to play the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the United States and the Caribbean, adding that No Objection Certificate (NOC) for foreign

leagues had not come under discussion with the veteran all-rounder.

About Haris Rauf, the PCB chairman said his Central Contract had been restored after a satisfactory response from the ace fast bowler, adding that the PCB was concerned about his

shoulder injury, but it would be taken care of well. However, he stressed to implement the PCB policy of no more than two NOCs for foreign leagues.

To a query, he said that the PCB coffers would be opened for the players and the development of infrastructure, adding that he did not believe in keeping money in the banks for profit. He said the Gaddafi Stadium, Pindi Stadium and National Bank Stadium Karachi would be revamped in preparations for the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 to be held in Pakistan.

To a query, the PCB chairman was confident that the Champions Trophy 2025 would be held in Pakistan and said the Board was doing what was required to ensure a successful Champions Trophy event in Pakistan. He said he did not have a magic wand to make the teams reach the ICC top rankings, adding that he would work with honesty and dedication to make the team reach top of the world.

Naqvi, responding to a query, said the PCB COO Slaman Naser was working diligently on the Pakistan Super League (PSL) for Women besides weighing the possibilities of raising the number of franchise teams to eight in the next edition of the HBL PSL. Without disclosing his plans, the PCB chairman promised that a lot was being done behind the doors for promotion of Women's cricket in Pakistan.

Pakistan Master Tenpin Bowling C'ship in April

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF) would be holding Pakistan Master Tenpin Bowling Championship at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi from April 27 to 30

According to President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation Ijazur Rehman, players from all over the country would participate in the Championship. Two categories competitions will be held in the championship, including men's singles and men's doubles, he said.

The registration of players to participate in the championship would be opened on April 1 and the players who wish to participate in the championship can register their names by



April 15.

The championship would continue till April 30 and the first runner-up in the men's singles events of the championship will be awarded a prize money of

two lakh rupees, while the second and third runners-up will get a prize money of one lakh rupees and fifty thousand rupees respectively.

Prize money for the men's

doubles competition include the first runner-up will get a prize money of Rs 100,000 while the second and third runners-up will be awarded a prize of Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000, respectively.

PCB dissolves selection committee ahead of T20 World Cup 2024

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday dissolved the current national selection committee ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024, said its spokesperson in a statement.

The spokesperson said that a new selection committee will be announced soon.

"The new selection committee will make merit-based independent decisions to select the team," added the spokesperson.

The now dissolved selection committee was being led by former Pakistani pacer Wahab Riaz while other members included Tauseef Ahmed, Wajahatullah Wasti, Wasim Haider.

Kamran Akmal and Rao Iftikhar were the consultant members and Hasan Muzaffar Cheema was the manager analyst in the committee.

According to the sources, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi will hold a press conference today during which he will likely announce the new selection committee.

The sources revealed that Wahab is likely to retain the chief selector's position while all-rounder Abdul Razaq is a strong candidate to become a member of the committee.

Fifteen Lions DG Khan Cricket Club Won the Ramadan Cricket Champion Trophy



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The final match of Ramadan Premium League Season 2 was played between Fifteen Lions DG Khan and Dream XI Multan at DHA Sports Complex, which was organized by CEO and Head Coach Cricket Addiction Multan Tahir Mehmood Faiz in the best arrangements and electronic assistance. The Champions Trophy and the most in Multan's history The big cash prize was Rs.250,000, in which Fifteen Lions DG Khan won the champion trophy and cash prize. According to the details, Dream XI Multan scored 120 while playing first, in which Uzair Mumtaz was the outstanding player with 56. Team Dream in front of Rahe Mehtab and Asif Fawad's great bowling Multan XI was facing difficulties, later Fifteen Lions completed the desired target at the loss of five wickets after the best competition and won the match with the excellent batting and partnership of Asif Fawad and Kashif. Uzair Mumtaz with 326 score and six wickets. 13 in bowling to win the Man of the Event award Mehtab was declared the best player from the champion team with a wicket. Similarly, Uzair Mumtaz won the best batsman award. Asif Fawad won the best player award in the final. Multan, Shaigan Madani CEO DHA Sports Complex, Aziz Rafique CEO Balle da Dera, Jameel Kamran X Elite Empire and DSO Multan, Jameel Kamran CEO Reshape, Farhan Bashir Assistant Director Sports BZU, Naveed Ashraf distributed prizes among the players. And CEO & Head on event management in successful electronic reinforcements Coach Kirk Addition Multan congratulates Tahirbhai.

Naseem to showcase his exceptional talent in The Hundred

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani speedster Naseem Shah's exceptional talent has propelled him into the upper echelons of the highest-paid players in the recent player draft for England's cricket tournament, The Hundred.

Birmingham Phoenix has welcomed Naseem Shah into their lineup, securing his services for a substantial sum of 125,000 pounds.

This milestone not only establishes Naseem Shah as the first Pakistani cricketer to command such a hefty price tag but also translates to an impressive 4.5 crore Pakistani rupees.

The Hundred has also embraced other Pakistani cricket players. All-rounder Imad Wasim and fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi have been recruited into the



tournament.

Trent Rockets have acquired Imad Wasim for a fee of 100,000 pounds, while Welsh Fire has secured Shaheen's services

for the same amount, marking his second consecutive season with the team, as per en.vnews.pk.

Furthermore, Welsh Fire has retained

the talents of Haris Rauf from the draft, while Manchester Originals have kept Usama Mir on board, further enhancing the Pakistani presence in The Hundred.

The Hundred promises an electrifying 100-ball cricket experience that captivates audiences. Featuring a lineup of world-class players and renowned names from across the globe, this tournament comprises eight city-based teams, each meticulously crafted for The Hundred's unique format, competing over five intense weeks every summer.

With separate men's and women's squads, the tournament offers simultaneous excitement for both genders.

The fourth installment of The Hundred kicks off on Tuesday, July 23, as the Oval Invincibles square off against Birmingham Phoenix, promising riveting action from the outset.

Mohammad Amir 'available' to represent Pakistan in ICC T20 World Cup 2024

A Sports

LAHORE: Left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir on Sunday announced taking his retirement back from international cricket and declared himself available for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled to run from June 2 in the USA and the West Indies.

Amir took to his official X (formerly Twitter) account and shared his decision to reconsider his retirement after 'positive discussions' with PCB officials.

"I still dream to play for Pakistan! life brings us to the points where at times we have to reconsider our decisions," posted Amir.

"There has been few positive discussions between myself and the PCB where they respectfully made me feel that I was needed and can still play for Pakistan after



discussing with family and we'll wishers I

declare that I am available to be considered

for upcoming t20WC.

"I want to do this for my country as it comes before my personal decisions. Donning the green jersey and serving my country has always been, and will continue to be, my greatest aspirations."

Mohammad Amir shockingly announced retirement from international cricket back in 2020 at the age of 28 citing differences with the then-team management.

However, time and again the star pacer was asked about making a comeback to international cricket, citing his exceptional performances in league cricket.

He claimed ten wickets in nine matches for Quetta Gladiators during the recently concluded Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine. He has represented Pakistan in 50 T20Is and picked 59 wickets at an average of 21.40.

Need to hold sports activities in educational institutions: Rana Ikram

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: International Kabaddi Umpire Rana Muhammad Ikram believes for the development of sports in the country, there was a dire need of holding sports activities at educational institutions on regular basis. Kabaddi is our cultural game and immense Kabaddi talent exists in the rural areas of the country that needs to be brought to fore.



To a question, he said Pakistani athletes have made the country and nation proud by winning laurels at the international level. He said therefore it was very important for the government to encourage the athletes who have been performing with all their might in sports. Praising the services of Muhammad Sarwar Rana, Secretary General of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation for the promotion of Kabaddi in the country, he said Rana becoming the Secretary General of World Kabaddi Federation was a great honour for the country and nation.

ICC pays tribute to Shaharyar Khan

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has expressed its sorrow at the passing away of former Pakistan cricket chief Shaharyar Khan at the age of 89. Shaharyar was a career diplomat, who served as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chair from 2003 to 2006 and again from 2014 to 2017, also representing the PCB on the ICC board. In a statement on Sunday, ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice said, "This is sad news for the cricket world. Shaharyar was a very prominent and important figure who contributed hugely to the development of the game over many years. "His experience as a diplomat helped him lead cricket administration very skillfully in Pakistan and he was also a respected member of the ICC Board. On behalf of the ICC, I would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends as well as to our colleagues at the PCB."



Appreciations

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the insignias of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Heavy destruction, forced marches in ongoing Israeli raid around Gaza hospital

News Desk

RAFAH: Palestinians who fled during an ongoing Israeli raid in and around the Gaza Strip's main hospital described days of heavy fighting, mass arrests, forced marches past dead bodies and flattened buildings in interviews Sunday.

The Israeli military says it has killed over 170 militants and detained some 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began last Monday, portraying it as a heavy blow to Hamas and other armed groups that it says had regrouped in the medical compound.

But the heavy fighting has also highlighted the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in an isolated and heavily destroyed part of Gaza where troops have been forced to return after launching a similar raid back in November.

Kareem Ayman Hathath, who lived with his parents and two brothers in a five-sto-

ry building about 100 meters (yards) from the hospital, said they huddled in the kitchen for days while gunfire and explosions echoed outside, sometimes causing the whole building to shake.

Early Saturday, Israeli troops stormed the building and forced them and dozens of other residents to leave. He says the men were forced to strip to their underwear and four were detained. The rest were blindfolded and ordered to follow a tank south, as more blasts thundered around them.

"From time to time, the tank would fire a shell," he told The Associated Press in an interview from another hospital in central Gaza, where he has sought shelter. "It was to terrorize us."

The head of Israel's southern command, Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, said the Shifa raid had been a "daring, tricky and most impressive operation so far," with



"hundreds" of militants apprehend and the acquisition of valuable intelligence.

"We will finish this operation only when the last terrorist is in our hands — alive or dead," he added in a statement released by the military on Saturday.

Shifa Hospital had largely stopped functioning following the raid in November. After claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command center inside and beneath the

hospital, Israeli forces exposed a single tunnel leading to a few underground rooms. They also said they found weapons in parts of the hospital.

Gaza City, where Shifa is located, suffered widespread devastation in the early days of Israel's offensive, launched after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the war. Israeli forces have isolated the city and the rest of northern Gaza since November, and hardly any aid has been delivered in

recent weeks. Experts said last week that famine is imminent in northern Gaza, where over 210,000 people are suffering from catastrophic hunger.

Jameel al-Ayoubi, who was among thousands of people sheltering at Shifa when the raid commenced last Monday, said in a phone interview that tanks and armored bulldozers had plowed into the courtyard of the sprawling medical compound, crushing ambulances and civilian vehicles. He said he saw tanks driving over at least four bodies of people killed early in the raid.

The Health Ministry said five wounded Palestinians trapped at Shifa had died without food, water or medical services. The World Health Organization's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, described the conditions there as "utterly inhumane." release, but weeks of indirect talks between Israel and Hamas have failed to yield an agreement.

President confers military awards upon officers of Pakistan Armed Forces

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday conferred insignias of military awards upon 42 officers of Pakistan armed forces.

The Presidential Investiture ceremony was held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in connection with Pakistan Day and was attended by senior officers of Pakistan armed forces, government officials and families of the recipients of the awards.

The recipients of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) included Lt. Gen. Mohsin Muhammad Qureshi, Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan, Air Marshal Tariq Zia, Air Marshal Ghulam Abbas Ghuman, Major Gen. Shoaib Ahmed, Major Gen. Naseer Ahmed Samore, Rear Admiral Habibur Rehman, Major Gen. Shazia Nisar, Major Gen. Ejaz Ghani, Major Gen. Nadeem Ahmed Rana, Major Gen. Waseem Ahmad Khan, Major Gen. Arshad Naseem, Rear Admiral Syed Ahmed Salman, Major Gen. Arshad Mehmood, Major Gen. Muhammad Atif Mansha, Major Gen. Javed Dost

Chandio, Major Gen. Muhammad Irfan Khan, Major General Syed Asif Hussain, Major Gen. Sheheryar Parvez Butt, Air Vice Marshal Zaffar Aslam, Major Gen. Imranullah, Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, Rear Admiral Abdul Munib, Rear Admiral Faisal Amin, Major Gen. Muhammad Raza Aizad, Major General Muhammad Ishaq Khattak, Major Gen. Ch. Amin Ajmal, Major Gen. Jawwad Ahmed Qazi, Major Gen. Ahmad Bilal, Major Gen. Iftikhar Hassan Chaudhry, Major Gen. Ehsan Ali, Major Gen. Kamran Nazir Malik, Major Gen. Wajid Aziz, Major Gen. Muhammad Umer Bashir, Major Gen. Asad ur Rehman Afzal Cheema, Major Gen. Mushtaq Ali, Major Gen. Muhammad Imtanan Babar, Major Gen. Muhammad Farhan Yousaf, Rear Admiral Syed Faisal Ali Shah, Major Gen. Ahsan Altaf and Major Gen. Abeena Choudry.

The president also conferred Sitara-i-Basalat (posthumous) upon Captain Abdul Wali Shaheed, who embraced martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in North Waziristan.

USAID chief Samantha Power calls her high Pakistan Day award 'testament' to enduring Pak-US ties

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Samantha Power, has thanked Pakistan for conferring Hilal-e-Quaid-i-Azam, a high civil award, calling it a testament to the enduring partnership between her organization and the Pakistani people. The President of Pakistan conferred that award on her on the Pakistan Day in recognition of her "outstanding contribution" towards strengthening Pakistan-U.S. relations.

"The efforts by Ms. Power are a reflection of her commitment to assist the people of Pakistan and forge a strong and deep partnership between Pakistan and the US," stated the citation that was read out the occasion.

Ms. Power, who has been serving as USAID chief since May 2021, is a proponent of strong Pakistan-US cooperation in humanitarian and socio-economic sectors like health, education and climate change and promoting people to people exchanges.

"As USAID administrator, she was



instrumental in the provision of significant life-saving US humanitarian assistance to mitigate the disastrous impacts of the floods in 2022," the citation said. In a video message, she also recalled the devastation when one-third of Pakistan was inundated due to devastating floods in 2022.

"I will never forget visiting Pakistan in September of 2022. Flying over the floods, feeling sure that I was flying over an ocean, only to be reminded that the ocean was in fact hundreds of miles away. And there were entire towns submerged under the seemingly infinite expanse of water below." She spoke about the support from the highest levels of the White House and both houses of the US Congress that facilitated an assistance of \$215 million to the flood affected people.

Pakistan, Afghanistan to hold trade talks today

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani official will embark on a two-day official visit to Afghanistan today (Monday) to discuss matters related to trade, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zehra Baloch said in a statement on Sunday. "Secretary Commerce Khurram Agha will undertake a 2-day visit to Afghanistan on Monday, 25 March 2024 to discuss trade-related matters," she wrote on X. Pakistan remains committed to promoting trade and people-to-people ties with Afghanistan, the spokesperson added.

The development comes amid strained ties between the two countries over the use of Afghan soil by terrorist outfits including the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) to launch attacks inside Pakistan.

J. Salik to share his greetings of Palm Sunday

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Conventor World Minorities Alliance, Human Rights Activist, Nominee for Nobel Peace Prize, and Former Federal Minister of Pakistan Mr J Salik share his good wishes on the day of Palm Sunday.

In his message here on this Sunday he said that Palm Sunday, also referred to as Passion Sunday, holds significant importance of peace in the Christian calendar as it marks the commencement of Holy Week.



He further added that the most sacred period for Christian communities worldwide Observed on the Sunday before Easter Sunday, Palm Sunday's date varies annually, contingent upon the date of Easter.

Palm Sunday, also referred to as Passion Sunday, holds significant importance in the Christian calendar as it marks the commencement of Holy Week, he added. He pray for the happiness of all Christian community on the festival of Palm Sunday."

Embassy holds exhibition in Tehran to mark Pakistan Day, Nouroz celebrations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Pakistan in Iran organised a photo exhibition titled "Khoobsurat Pakistan" as part of the Pakistan Day and Nouruz celebrations at Buraj Azadi to promote Pakistan's culture and tourism. Ambassador of Pakistan Mudassir Tipu inaugurated the exhibition along with Ali Raza Dabbaghi, a representative of Iran's Ministry of Culture.

Embassy holds exhibition in Tehran to mark Pakistan Day, Nouruz celebrations The Iranian Ministry of Culture accorded a special permission to Embassy of Pakistan to hold this event at the venue which signifies the close cultural ties and brotherly relations of both the countries.

The representative of Ministry of Culture appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Embassy and called it a milestone towards promotion of tourism and people to people contact, that will further strengthen the brotherly relations of both



countries. Ambassador Mudassir thanked Ali Raza for all the support of the Iranian government. He said that Pakistan was blessed with marvelous beauty as its mighty mountains, virgin beaches, snow dappled mountains, deserts and historical monuments were custodians of ancient civilizations. He said that as Iran was also a very beautiful and unique country, therefore such ventures would help improve the tourism between both countries. A large number of people visited the exhibition and appreciated the beauty of Pakistan.

McDonald's stores close in Sri Lanka

Reuters

SRI LANKA: McDonald's has ended an agreement with its local partner in Sri Lanka and all 12 outlets in the country have been closed, an attorney for the US company said on Sunday.

"The parent company decided to terminate the agreement with the franchisee due to standard issues," said Sanath Wijewardane, an attorney for McDonald's. "They are not in business in the country. They may decide to return with a new franchisee."

He said the deal was cancelled on Wednesday but the stores had continued to operate for some days. A spokesperson for the local partner, Abans, declined to comment.

Govt committed to provide low-cost, affordable living opportunities: Pirzada

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has said that the government is committed to providing low-cost and affordable living opportunities to the poor and vulnerable segments of society. While chairing a meeting of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), he emphasized the importance of ensuring that plots are allocated strictly on merit.

During the meeting, Riaz Pirzada was apprised about the management and working of the department by Director General FGEHA Capt. (R) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal. The minister urged the identification and removal of any irregularities to uphold transparency in the allotment process. Furthermore, he directed the Director General to conduct a thorough and transparent audit of the authority stressing the need for stringent measures against corruption, as no one will be spared



on any irregularity. "We must deliver what we committed to the allottees and highlighted the urgency of completing ongoing and stalled development projects to facilitate the government employees and the general public," he added. Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash and other senior officers of the ministry and FGEHA were also present during the meeting.

FIA seals counterfeit medicines factory

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) sealed a factory manufacturing counterfeit and prohibited medicines in Islamabad on Sunday.

As per details, a crackdown against the sale of prohibited and fake drugs is underway on the directives of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

FIA's Anti-Corruption Circle Islamabad led by a deputy director aided a factory in Ghauri Town that produced illegal and counterfeit medicines

Drug Controller Naveed Anwar, Assistant Director FIA Noman Khalil, and other officials were also present during the raid. The FIA stated that a significant

amount of illegal and counterfeit pharmaceuticals were found during the operation, adding that the plant also included heavy machinery have been seized

The case was registered by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Paki-



stan (DRAP), and teams have been assembled to apprehend the suspects who are still at large.