Khalid Maqbool vows to play proactive role for improving education in Sindh

A landmark assembly convened by the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) echoed through the halls of Karachi, Sindh, as essential stakeholders converged to deliberate on the urgent matter of education and literacy within the province. (Details on Page 3)

Mushaal berates int'l community for lack of commitment to settle oldest unresolved Kashmir conflict

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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انہوں نے کہامیں نے انس رضی اللہ عنہ

(محيح بخارى: حديث نمبر 6380-6381 **Barkat Rice Mills** (Pvt) Limited

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Saturday.



**PM-Cabinet** 

## PM prods cabinet members to immediately move towards meeting five year roadmap targets

#### **Spokesman Report**

on Saturday urged his cabinet members to immediately commence work towards achieving the targets set in a five-vear roadmap as shared with all the relevant ministries.

Addressing a meeting of the cabinet, the prime minister said that he had shared broad parameters of the five-year plan with the relevant ministries by setting various targets to be achieved imme-

diately without wasting time. Under the parameters, he said the ministries concerned should evolve mechanisms, hire human utilization of the country's talentresources and formulate strategies to meet the set targets, he

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif five-year roadman as no system in "We have a five-year term to the world can progress without it,"

The prime minister said that for this purpose, all the available resources and tools should be explored besides, those not available immediately be procured.

He said that to overcome delays and red tape, a forum like the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was available, adding for the hiring of global consultants, the relevant rules should also be followed.

The prime minister stressed for ed human resources for achieving the targets. He also urged

the ministries to adopt innova-

tion of the country, but for that our respective work immediately," he emphasised.

To achieve self-sufficiency, the prime minister said that they had to reduce the burden of foreign debts, increase GDP, create jobs, develop agriculture and IT sectors, bring reforms in the energy sector and end smuggling.

When the wheel of economy moved on, the country would achieve progress, he said, adding that for economic stability, they have to take the required initiatives themselves.

The prime minister said that such a target was achieved in the "Responsibility with account- tive tools and thinking, besides, FBR digitalization plan was shortest term." LAHORE: Prime Minister ability will be the hallmark of the reducing the file work burden. underway. About Rs27 billion The prime minister also were stuck in the appellate courts transform the economic situa- and for expeditious disposal of resources for the defence of the these cases, they would bring purpose, we have to commence competent judges with enhanced incentives, he added.

> He said the Chief Justice of Pakistan, during a recent meeting with him, had also assured of complete support in this regard.

The prime minister noted that efforts should be made for reducing the official expenditures. He said achieving \$25 billion IT export target was not unfeasible.

The prime minister also appreciated the interim government for recovering Rs58 billion rupees in power sector and said that for the first time in the country's history,

assured to provide all possible country, adding that shaheed officers and personnel of the armed forces and security forces were the heroes of the nation.

The prime minister said on 26 March, an unfortunate horrifying incident occurred in Bisham in which five Chinese and one local were killed.

The Chinese leadership was assured that the investigation would be carried out immediately and the responsible would get exemplary punishment, he added.

The prime minister reiterated that they would not rest till the elimination of terrorism.

#### 跨 Bureau Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala sentenced on Saturday as many as 51 people to five-year prison terms following their conviction in the Gujranwala cantonment attack case on May 9 when violent protests broke out following former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest in a

to nine terms, a warrant of commitment on the sentence of the convicts said.

three terms while one year each in five terms. The court also imposed a fine of Rs10,000 for each of

Charges in the case included terrorism, murder, attempt to murder, possession of illegal arms, vandalism, and wounding government officers.

Statements of as many as 119 witnesses were recorded. Sup-inspector Mudassir Butt was the complainant in the case registered on May 10,

Sentences would run concurrently and the convicts would be entitled to the benefit of Section 382-B of the Criminal Procedure Code, which states that the period of detention of a prisoner has to be considered in the prison term when a person is convicted by a trial court.

It means that the detention periods served so

terms announced and thus subtracted from the highest term of five years. The warrant allowed the Gujranwala Central

alleged role in attacks on army installations during the violence.

## **Ex-CJP Tassaduq** Hussain Jillani to lead inquiry commission on the judges' letter

#### 😂 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former chief justice of Pakistan Tassaduq Hussain Jillani will lead the inquiry commission on the judges' letter, the federal cabinet has decided.

The federal cabinet finally convened on Saturday after the postponement of three meetings to take up the issue of alleged meddling by intelligence agencies in judicial affairs, as claimed by six judges who wrote a letter to the chief justice of Pakistan earlier this month.

Jilani served as the 21st Chief Justice of Pakistan from 2013 to 2014. He previously served as a Justice of the Supreme Court from 2004, after being nominated Justice of the Lahore High Court by Prime Minister Benazir Bhut-



The cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was held in Lahore with several ministers participating via video link.

The cabinet was to approve

the constitution of a commission of inquiry to probe the allegations levelled by judges of Islamabad High Court.

The meeting was also set to discuss the terms of reference or TORs of the commission. CJP Qazi Faez Isa has already expressed support for the one-member commission led by a former judge.

The cabinet meeting was to decide on some other key issues as well.

## Pakistan 'hopeful' to get \$7 to \$8 bln fresh loan programme from **IMF**

#### **Monitoring Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is hoping to get a fresh \$7 to \$8 billion loan programme from the International Monetary

As per details available with ARY News according to sources, Pakistan will seek a fresh three-year-loan programme from the IMF next week.

The IMF has hinted at negotiations on climate financing too during the talks with Pakistan which are expected to begin after the IMF's executive board meeting.

Sources further said, in formed for 5 years.

order to get the fresh IMF loan programme, Pakistan has to present its FY2024-25 budget as per the international lender's conditions including an increase in gas and electricity tariffs, cost recovery reforms and steps to increase the tax net.

Pakistan has to assure the IMF about external financing to avail of the fresh loan programme.

The sources privy to the development further said that the IMF has rejected the reservations of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and is committed to holding talks with the government

#### Aurangzeb assures Murad 51 convicts of May These senators make it to 9 riots jailed for five upper house unopposed years each

## ISLAMABAD: At least 18 candidates have been elect-

ed unopposed as senators out of a total of 147 aspirants who submitted their nomination papers for the 48 vacant Senate seats.

The final list of candidates from Returning Officers shows that out of 18 elected unopposed, seven are from Punjab's general seats.

Seven candidates for Senate's general seats from Punjab have elected unopposed including Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Ahad Cheema, Pervaiz Rashid, Nasir Mehmood, Talal Chaudhry, had been elected unopposed.

Sunni Ittehad Council's Hamid Khan and Raja Nasir Abbas were also elected on the Senate's gener-

Similarly, in Balochistan, senators for seven general seats, two women seats, and two Ulema/technocrat seats have won without any opposition.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's Ahmed Khan and ANP's Aimal Wali Khan, National Party's Jan Buledi, People's Party's Umar Gorgej, PML-N's Shahzeb Durrani and Syedal Khan Nasir have been elected unopposed as members of the Senate. Former caretaker prime minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar also elected unopposed as an independent candidate. The Sindh Assembly will elect 12 senators overall. The elections will be held in seven general seats, two for women, two for technocrats, and one for a for a minority.

Moreover, the elections will be held in 11 senate seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Meanwhile, ECP has completed preparations for

conducting elections on April 2 to fill 30 vacant seats. Ballot papers have been printed, and transportation of election materials to returning officers has also been finalized. The elections would be held on 29 General, eight women, nine technocrat/ Ulema and two non-Muslim seats.

In total, 59 candidates are vying for remaining Senate seats.

# of resolving at-source deduction issue 'amicably'

#### **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has assured Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah of resolving the at-source deduction issue "amicably".

He said this during a meeting with him at the CM House in Karachi on Saturday. The assurances came from Aurangzeb when Murad shared the provincial issues with him.

The Sindh CM pointed out that his government has always paid its electricity bills on time, and if any outstanding bills needed to be reconciled, the federal government should have brought the issue to their attention instead of making at-source deductions.

The FBR after reading a news item of the cars registered in Sindh from 1948 to 2015 had deducted Rs6 billion of the province at source, he said and added that despite the resolution of the issue still the



amount has not been refunded.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb told the chief minister that he was working to develop a proper professional working relationship between the federal and provincial organisations. "The federal and provincial organizations and institutions have to work together, learn from each other's expertise, support each other for growth and cooperate for collective uplift and development," he said. Hike in gas prices for industries

The CM and the federal finance minister also discussed the price escalation of industrial gas. The chief minister said that the industrialists were quite upset with the increase in industrial gas prices.

The finance minister said that during his meeting with the industrialists, they also complained to him about the same issue. Therefore, they agreed to discuss the matter with the federal petroleum minister to resolve the issue.

## ATC Judge Natasha Naseem Sipra announced the sentence. The rioters were charged according

They were sentenced to five years each in jail on

far will also be counted as a part of the prison

Jail superintendent to receive the convicts in his custody and execute the sentences by the law. Over 100 civilians are under trial for their

## **Economic recovery govt's** top priority: Tarar

#### 👺 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar said on Saturday that recovery of the country's economy and solving people's problems is the top priority of the government.

He was talking to media after condoling the death of PML-N worker Attique Chaudhry with his family at his house. Prime Minister Youth Programme's Chairman Rana Mashhood, Tauseef Shah and other party leaders and workers were also present.



government, the rupee value against the US dollar had stabilized, and the inflation rate would decrease further in the coming days.

Eulogising party workers, he said that the Pakistan Muslim League (N) always stood by the voice of its workers and sacri-Attaullah Tarar added that fices of political workers had due to the viable policies of the strengthened democracy

## PTI's Marwat describes ex-CJP Jillani 'misfit'

#### 跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat has described the former chief justice of Pakistan Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, who will preside over the inquiry commission to probe judicial meddling claims, as a "misfit".

In a post on X, formerly called Twitter, on Saturday, he



sion and announced that the party would challenge his appointment.

## Mushaal berates int'l community for lack of commitment to settle oldest unresolved Kashmir conflict

#### **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick blasted the international community and UN bodies for their lack of commitment and honoring their pledge to settle the Kashmir dispute, which was the oldest unresolved international conflict in the world at

Mushaal, a wife of unlawful incarcerated senior hurrivat leader Yasin Malik, said that in the volley. the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir had been dispute was not only the main decades-old conflict despite over seven-decades to quell the virtually converted into living source of contention between the fact that Pakistan and India dissenting voices and defuse



hill and killing field as around Pakistan and India but a one million brutal troops were permanent cause of regional stationed in the scenic valley to silent the dissenting voices

She recalled that Kashmir

over the longest unresolved dispute. The senior hurriyat leader

stated that Indian supremacist forces unleashed a wave of terrorism, as they were given a license to murder Kashmiri people with complete immu-

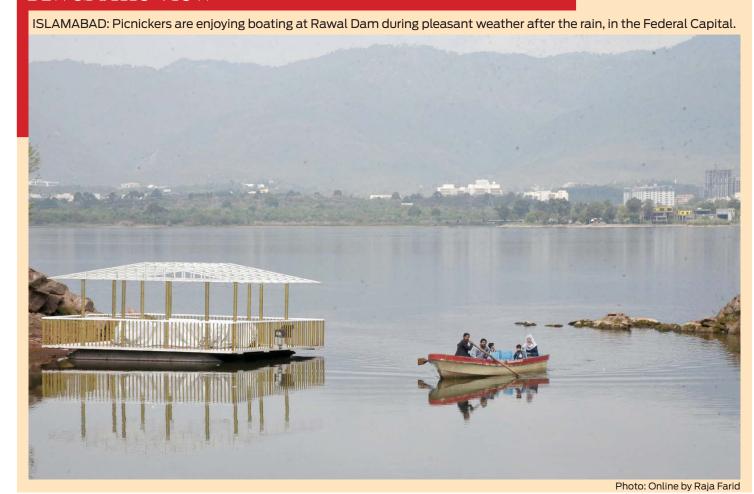
She said that Indian troops launched a cordon and search operation and harassed women and terrorized children even in the holy month of Ramazan.

Mushaal made it clear that the New Delhi had been using all brutal and coercive tactics and state terrorism for the last

had already fought three wars the flames of freedom movement but all such malicious plans proved counterproductive because these fascist steps further ignited the freedom movement

> Mushaal called upon the world community, UN bodies and human rights organisations that despite using all state terrorism, the brutal occupation authorities failed to break the rock-solid resolve of brave Kashmiri people, who proved that they could not be convinced to live in chains of Indian slavery at any cost; hence they would muster some courage to implement the UN-agreed resolutions on the Kashmir dispute.

## Awesome view



instability but even then that

world community adopted a

double-standard and hypocrit-

ical approach to iron out the

## Hailstorm effectees in Wana last year demand compensation

跨 🛮 Adam Khan Wazir

Qismat Ullah Wazir told Dawn on Saturday that of Wana. Wana occupies a prominent position in Khyber Pakh-Pakistan in terms of agricultural production.

He said Wana supplies 15% of apples to the coun- the production of wheat and try, which is more than all the districts of Pakistan.

He said that in the same apricot, walnut, pomegranHe said that 95 percent throughout the year.

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A of the nut pine (Chalghoza) well-known farmer in Wana that is shipped within and Lower, South Waziristan, outside the country is also provided by the dense forests

He said that among the vegetables, tomato, aloe, tunkhwa and the whole of pumpkin, cucumber and chilli etc. are shipped inside and outside the country.

Qismat Ullah said that corn in grains is not less than any other in all tribal areas.

He said that the poor way, apple, potato, peach, farmers of Wana are the and fertilizers, the governbest capital of our counate, olive and other fruits are try and they play their role

He criticized the provincial, federal government, NDMA and PDMA that last year the hailstorm had wreaked havoc in the entire district, but unfortunately no one has heard the voice of our hardworking farmers and farmers till today and they have not announced any big package for agriculture, nor

are they given any subsidy. He said that apart from the supply of seeds, agricultural machinery, medicines ment has not even helped any landowner in connec-

in the economy of Pakistan tion with the hailstorm last year, on which the farmers expressed extreme concern.

Qismat Ullah Wazir demanded NDMA and PDMA that arrangements should be made to compensate the farmers affected by hailstorm last year.

On the other hand, the district administration told Dawn that the administration has compiled a report on the damage caused by the hailstorm last year and sent it to the provincial government but till now no package or financial assistance has been sent by the government for the affected farmers

# appointment as judge

*Sardar Attique* 

congratulates

Azhar Iqbal

on British

跨 Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President of All is hoped that he will perform his duties as a judge well he added.

## Drug free Punjab program will be implemented: Maryam

👺 Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's initiative, the Drug Free Punjab Program, has been actively implement-ed by the Divisional Administration Multan. Commissioner Multan Division, Maryam Khan,



while deciding the rehabilitation of individuals under treatment at the Drug Rehabilitation Center, instructed the center's administration to compile a list considering the capabilities, interests, and skills of the individuals under treatment. Commissioner Maryam Khan stated that individuals addicted to drugs face social repercussions and can be rehabilitated from societal crises through treatment, counseling, medication, and economic opportunities. Providing suitable employment can help regain societal, economic, and personal stability, thus dignifying society. Therefore, efforts are being made to provide training and employment opportunities for drug addicts through TEVTA and the social welfare department.

They emphasized that addiction is treatable, and a positive attitude is crucial in combating it, promoting positive activities to save future generations from the menace of addiction. Commissioner Multan initiated a plantation campaign, where plants were distributed among drug addicts in the Social Welfare Complex, and each patient's name was tagged to a plant to raise awareness for tree plantation in Pakistan. During the visit, discussions were held with officials to provide skill training in various trades for the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

#### Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Rubina Akhtar to contest in NA-148 by-election

#### 👺 Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Political leader Dr Rubina Akhtar has announced to participate in the by-election of constituency NA-148 Multan. Former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Raza Gilani's seat



has become vacant after leaving, on which a by-election is going to be held. He said that the people are now becoming conscious, they know very well that those who take turns can never be sincere with the people, the greed of power has plunged the country into the mire of corruption. But the politicians who take turns to sell new scams every time during the election coming to the people, he said that this time, God willing, the people of the constituency will reject his politics and bring forward a new educated and transparent leadership who will spend the people's money on the people. During the corner meeting, I addressed the people of the constituency on this occasion, the women of the constituency. A large number of dignitaries declared their full support to Dr. Rubina Akhtar.

### Red Crescent Society to train Kashmir first aid: secretary

**Bureau Report** 



MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Red Crescent Society Azad Kashmir Ms. Gulzar Fatima has said that our mission is to fulfill our responsibility by providing first aid training to one person in each house of Azad Kashmir to deal with any emergency situation. Institutions should be strong. Personalities keep coming and going. We are taking steps to strengthen our institution. Our institutions will be

strong, then the state will develop. Utilize the skills and the employees perform their duties in a good manner. Ms. Gulzar Fatima while talking to the journalists expressed these views and said that the media is the touchstone of the state and it plays an active role in the development of the state and the freedom movement of Kashmir. Must be paid and defects should be pointed out with a positive and constructive thinking. Strong media is the need of the hour. The four pillars of the state will not be strong. The state cannot move towards development. The eyes and hopes of the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are linked to the base camp of Kashmir Liberation Movement. To train people through the workshop, which is in progress, he said that the tourist police will also be trained by the Red Crescent Society so that they are ready and trained to deal with any emergency situation, in this regard the IGP has assured full cooperation during the meeting was fruitful.

## **Women University to** train female students: Without training there is no education'

**Khalid Chaudhry** 

MULTAN: Registrar Women University Multan Prof. Dr. Maimona Yasmin Khan, Director Haj Multan Rehan Abbas Khokhar, Executive Member APWA Mrs. Tahira Najam, Principal Aspire College Prof. Riast Ali and President Young Pakistanis Organization Naeem Iqbal Naeem have said that without training there is no education. We, our young generation, are of no useThey are trying to make them educated, but they are not making them trained. Social media has alienated the new generation from religion and the world and they have made social media their world. Ramazan Mubarak is passing fast. It is the month in which we worship Allah with humility and gain the pleasure of Allah Almighty-He expressed these views, under the auspices of Young Pakistanis Organization and Spire Group of Colleges Multan Region, with the support of IICS Consultant Private Limited Multan and 14th Street Pizza Multan, Begum Rufi Nazar Shah Hall Spire College Multan. Ramazan held inOn the occasion of the 20th annual two-day review of Hasan Recitation Maryam Yasin was the second.

upon him) on the second and last day of the competition ceremony among female students, he was presided over by Director of Hajj Rehan Abbas Khokhar as a special guest, Registrar Women University Multan Prof. Dr. Maimona Yasmin Khan, Executive Member Apwa Multan Mrs. Tahira Najam while the guests of honor Principal Spire College Multan Prof. Rashtat Ali, President Young Pakistanis Organization Naeem Iqbal Naeem, Principal Government Secondary School of Special Education for Hearing Impaired Boys Multan Mian Muhammad Majid, prominent religious scholar Prof. Abdul Majid Wato, Vice Principal Spire College Prof. Muhammad Ramzan and social leader Faisal Idris were present. Prof. Abdul Majid Watto performedIn the light of their decision, Raus Aslam was the first in recitation competition, Ruhaha Ashraf was the second, Musafra Aslam was the second. 1st Aaliya Amin, 2nd Mahim Aslam, Swim-Mah Noor Javed was the first in the university level, Mafia Yasin was the first, Saba Parveen was the second,

and Naat Rasool Maqbool (peace be

## Sui Gas Task Force has started operations against gas thieves

Saim Tanveer

MULTAN: Regional Manager Sui Northern Gas Multan Syed Hussain Zafar said that on the instructions of the federal government, a "task force" has started operations against gas thieves. Gas theft worth crores of rupees from textile mills has been caught in DG Khan. Action is also being taken against the illegal use of bogus meters and compressors. He expressed these things during a press conference in his office yesterday. On this occasion, Exec-Arafat, Deputy Chief Engi-Engineer Zubair Ahmed, try's economy. After its estab-



Deputy Chief Admin Officer Usman Karim Baig, Safe Rahman and Syed Ahmed Kashif were also present. Regional Manager Syed utive Billing Officer Yasir Hussain Zafar further said that gas theft is causing irrepneer Asif Shamim, Senior arable damage to the coun-

ment issued instructions to to a question, he said that start operations against gas thieves at the national level. on which a task force has been established in the Multan region to tighten the perimeter against gas thieves. In the last two months, gas thieves Several actions have been taken against gas thieves. Gas theft of a textile mill was caught in DG Khan. Three crore 56 lakh rupees were recovered from the owners involved in gas theft. 57 cases were registered against the domestic consumers who were found involved in gas theft. 60% recovery work has also been completed from those consumers who have

lishment, the new govern- been fined RsIn response two colonies were operating a gas network illegally in Burewala, on which actions have also been taken against them. In the actions against illegal compressors, 200 consumers have been killed in the last two months. Action was taken against. Likewise, 344 fake meters and 37 tempered meters were seized have gone Regional Manager Syed Hussain Zafar said that during the financial year 2022-23, the replacement of 254 km long pipelines has been done at a cost of Rs.795 Millions The replacement of 190 km of lines will be completed.

Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan while congratulating Barrister Raja Azhar Iqbal on his appointment as a judge in the United Kingdom said that I am very happy to know that the Lord Chancellor has appointed you as a judge. I heartily congratulate you on this honor and pray for your success in this new role. My best wishes are with you. He said that it is a great honor for Raja Azhar Qaqibal from Azad Kashmir to be appointed as a judge in Britain and the entire Kashmiri nation congratulates him on this honor. Raja Azhar Iqbal is an experienced legal expert. He hoped to provide justice by following the constitution and the law. The development of any country depends on the supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law. There will be discipline and harmony in it. It





### **Namaz Timings** Maghrib ..6:27 pm

### EMEDGENCY

EMERGENCI
Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

ENQUIRY
Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092
HOCDITALC

#### HOSPITALS

CIVIT	011111
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

Mourning assembly holds in connection with martyrdom of HazratAli(AS)

ATTOCK: In connection with the martyrdom day

#### 👺 Raza Naqvi

of Hazrat Ali (AS), the 31st annual assembly organized by Anjuman Bizm Imam Mahdi was held in Imambargah Panjtani Attock city. Mourning organizations from all over the region continued to pay their last respects to their Imam in heavy hail and rain. Addressing the mourning meeting held at Imam Bargah Panjtani, Allama Momin Hussain Qumi, highlighting the virtues of Ali (AS) and martyrdom of Ali (AS) said, Hazrat Ali (A. S.) was killed because of his severity of justice Hazrat Ali (A. S.) was so strict in his system of justice that people could not tolerate the justice of Ali (A. S.), Allama Qumi said that if the sword of Ali (A. S.) and Khadija (RA) Islam could not stand on its own feet if it were not for the wealth of Islam, the amount of knowledge that has spread in the Islamic world at that time is the charity given by Hazrat Ali (AS), Allama Qumi said that there is a letter in Nahj-ul-Balagha which is written by the United Nations. The charter also includes that the guidance of Hazrat Ali (AS) is a perfect guide in running the world system. Believer Qumi said that all the attributes of Islam are the perfect manifestation of Hazrat Ali (AS), who is a complete model of Islamic teachings. Hazrat Ali did not leave any field of knowledge empty, he said that if you read the biography of Ali (a.s.) and not from the curriculum, you will extract the virtues of the Battle of Khyber, the Battle of Khandaq, the Battle of Badr and the Ahl al-Bayt.

# Khalid Maqbool vows to play proactive role for improving education in Sindh

#### 👺 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A landmark assembly convened by the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) echoed through the halls of Karachi, Sindh, as essential stakeholders converged to matter of education and literacy within the province. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddique, the esteemed Minister of Federal Education & Professional Training, assumed the mantle of leadership, guiding the discussions with unwaver-

The gathering witnessed the esteemed presence of the distinguished Madam of Operations; the dynamic gic pathways for the future.

Mr. Humza Khan Lashari, Deputy Director of Literacy; the proactive Mr. Sajjad Ali Memon, Deputy Director of Education; and the diligent Mr. Atta Hussain Dahri, Assistant Director of Education. Their collective their unwavering dedicaexpertise and unwavering commitment infused the deliberate on the urgent meeting with unparalleled significance.

In his inaugural address, Minister Siddique not only expressed gratitude for the warm reception but also underscored the critical importance of collaborative efforts. He paid tribute to the relentless endeavors of the NCHD in spearheading educational and literacv initiatives across Sindh. key figures from the NCHD The discussions revolved provincial team, including around the remarkable strides achieved by the Humaira Hashmi, Director NCHD and charted strate-

This assembly served as a pivotal juncture for collaboration between the NCHD and the Ministry of Federal **Education & Professional** Training. Both entities reasserted

tion to enhancing educational access and fostering literacy in the region. Such engagements, as highlighted by the staggering statistics shared by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), emphasize the urgent need for a unified approach to tackle the enrollment challenge facing 26.2 million Out-of-School Children (OOSC) nationwide. These collaborative efforts are not merely symbolic but imperative in reshaping the educational landscape and securing a brighter future for generations to come.



## Preparation of Eid

ISLAMABAD: People are busy is buying shoes at Karachi Company, in the Federal Capital, ahead of upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr.



# Navigating the carbon market: A pathway for Pakistan's sustainable development

ISLAMABAD: The concept of carbon trading is not just a buzzword in the global environmental discourse; it is a critical mechanism for countries like Pakistan to address the challenges posed by climate change while sustaining economic growth. A training workshop on understanding carbon market mechanisms, held in collaboration with the Embassy of Denmark and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), signifies a pivotal step towards integrating Pakistan into the global carbon economy.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI, emphasized the novelty of carbon marketing within Pakistan's climate change dialogue. The unsuccessful attempt to implement a carbon tax in 2010 and ongoing negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlight the complexities and the urgent



need for effective policy instruments in this domain.

Member National Assembly and founding chair of the Parliamentary Climate Change Caucus, Former Convener SDGs Taskforce, and SAPM, Romina Khurshid Alam presented participation certificates and appreciated for taking up a much-needed initiative in a convincing manner. She said the country is facing serious climate catastrophes that have been triggered due to global GHG emissions leading to a climate crisis.

Muhammad Fawad Hayat, Deputy General Manager of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), highlights the critical role of carbon markets as a mechanism to mitigate emissions. Carbon credits, which represent a ton of carbon dioxide, can be multiplied to account for methane—a gas 21 times more potent than CO2 in terms of global warm-

ing potential. The urgency to address these environmental challenges is evident. Pakistan has set nationally determined contributions (NDCs) targets under the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties platform, aiming for various sector-based goals

Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Senior Research Associate, SDPI presented a need assessment before the participants. He underscored that social media platforms had emerged as new forums to influence policy decisions and guide public opinion which could be utilized positively in the realm of creating awareness of the carbon market and trading mechanisms.

# Govt should impose tax on all ultra-processed products for healthy Pakistan



**Bureau Report** 

PESHAWAR: If the government doesn't take effective measures to reduce the consumption of Ultra-processed products in Pakistan, the continued rise in disease and fatalities could be prolonged, killing hundreds of Pakistanis every day. After every minute one Pakistani experiences a heart attack and after two and half minute, one Pakistani dies due to heart disease. As per International Diabetes Federation, approximately 1100 deaths in Pakistan are attributed to diabetes and its complication, every day. Unhealthy diet is among the major risk factors of heart, diabetes, obesity, kidney and many other fatal non-communicable diseases. Ultra-processed products are often very high in sugar, sodium and/or trans-fats. A substantial number of these fatalities could be prevented with effective policy measures targeting the reduction of Ultra-processed products. Increasing excise tax on these unhealthy products is one of the first and most effective evident based policy measures to reduce their consumption. Government of Pakistan must increase taxes on all Ultra-processed products in Finance Bill 2024-25 for a healthier Pakistan This was said by health experts during a session with senior journalists organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) at

Renowned Cardiologist, General (R) Dr. Masud ur Rehman Kiani, said that heart and related non-communicable diseases are increasing at an alarming rate in Pakistan. Unhealthy diet is among the top modifiable risk factors of these NCDs. Government shall focus on preventive health which is the most effective way to combat NCDs. Ultra-processed products like sugary drinks, ice creams, candies, bakery items, noodles, chocolates, chips, Vanaspati ghee and several such products are among the major unhealthy diets that we are consuming excessively.

Mr. Munawar Hussain, Consultant at Global Health Advocacy Incubator said that increasing excise tax on Ultra-processed products is an evidence based first and an effective policy action to reduce its consumption and related chronic diseases. This may be smart policy choice for government as it will reduce disease, hospital expenditure and increase revenue for government without spending any additional money and efforts. While referring a world bank study conducted in 2022, he said that increasing 50 percent excise tax on sugary drinks can generate on an average USD 810 million every year for next 10 years.

Sanaullah Ghumman General Secretary at PANAH said there is a strong public support to government for taking measures to reduce consumption of unhealthy diet, as revealed by national opinion poll conducted by Pakistan Health Research Council in 2021. Today we are here to sensitize journalists, so you can play a due role to help reaching to the policy makers in taking immediate policy actions aimed at reducing consumption of ultra-processed products like increasing excise taxes on all UPPs in the coming budget. This will be a win-win situation for Pakistanis, as increasing taxes on these unhealthy products will reduce their consumption, decrease the hospital expenditures and generate additional revenue for the government. We all must demand government to prioritize public health over corporate interests and save the precious lives of Pakistanis.

Other speakers also spoke on health harms of ultra-processed products and demanded the government to take effective policy measures to reduce their consumption and save public health. Journalists appreciated the efforts of PANAH to save public health in Pakistan and assured their support for this noble cause.

## Muhammad Usman Paracha: A Visionary Leader and Humanitarian Icon

### **Spokesman Report**

n the competitive world of business, where profit often overshadows compassion, there are rare individuals who defy convention, leaving an unforgettable mark on both the corporate arena and the lives they touch. Muham-Wonder Bread, was one such extraordinary leader. His legacy transcended boardrooms and balance sheets, etching itself onto the hearts of countless

Usman Paracha's entrepreneurial journey wasn't solely defined by shrewd business acumen. It was equally characterized by his unwavering commitment SMK Paracha Association, for instance,

passing on March 17, 2024, marked a profound loss for those who benefited from his generosity, kindness, and visionary leadership.

Born into a family of entrepreneurs, Paracha inherited a natural aptitude for business and a dedication to excellence. Under his guidance, Wonder Bread mad Usman Paracha, the late CEO of blossomed into a household name synonymous with quality and innovation. However, Paracha's vision wasn't limited by profit margins. He viewed business as a powerful tool for positive change and community empowerment.

Paracha's philanthropic endeavors were a testament to his unwavering belief in giving back to society. The

to social impact and philanthropy. His stands as a shining example. This initi-LRBT likely played a significant role in ative empowered countless young individuals by enhancing their technical skills, equipping them for a brighter future. His commitment to social good extended further with the establishment of a nursing training trade center in Shahpur Saddar, a project that will undoubtedly leave a lasting positive impact on the community.

Moreover, Muhammad Usman Paracha was associated with LRBT (Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust), a renowned eye care organization in Pakistan. LRBT is dedicated to providing high-quality eye care services to those in need, particularly focusing on preventing and treating blindness. Paracha's involvement with

supporting the organization's mission of eradicating preventable blindness by delivering comprehensive eve care services across Pakistan. His dedication to healthcare and philanthropy further exemplifies his commitment to improving the well-being of individuals in need of essential eve care services.

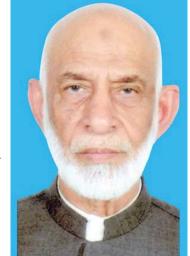
Usman Paracha's frequent pilgrimages to Mecca were more than just religious obligations; they were expressions of his deep faith and unwavering dedication to spiritual growth. His humility and devotion served as an inspiration to many, reminding them of the importance of leading a life guided by compassion and service.

As one admirer eloquently expressed,

"The gentle breeze of eternity has begun to blow, and Paradise has been awaiting this rose for a long time. May his soul rest in peace." Indeed, Paracha's passing leaves a gaping void not just in the business world but also in the hearts of those who knew him.

We mourn the loss of Muhammad Usman Paracha, a visionary leader and humanitarian icon. His contributions to business, philanthropy, healthcare, and community service leave an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire future generations.

In honoring his memory, let us us, his spirit lives on in the countless compassion, generosity, and unwavering commitment to social good. Though he may no longer walk among illuminate our path.



pledge to carry forward his torch of lives he touched. Farewell, Muhammad Usman Paracha, may your legacy of kindness and service continue to

## Editorial/Opinion

Sunday, March 31, 2024

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## **Another US State Department official** resigns

United States State Department official, who promoted human rights on behalf of the US government, has become the latest staffer to . leave her post in opposition to President Joe Biden's 'horrific' support for Îsrael's war against Gaza. Annelle Sheline, who was a Middle East analyst, announced her resignation in an interview with the Washington Post on Thursday, as the official death toll in Gaza reached 32,490 since October 7, and the World Food Programme has warned that famine in the enclave is immi-

Ms. Sheline's resignation from the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour is the most significant public departure from the department since last October, when Josh Paul, a senior official in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, announced he was calling it quits. "For the past year, I worked for the office devoted to promoting human rights in the Middle East. I believe strongly in the mission and in the important work of that office. However, as a representative of a government that is directly enabling what the International Court of Justice has said could plausibly be a genocide in Gaza, such work has become almost impossible," Sheline, who worked as a foreign affairs officer, said. "Unable to serve an administration that enables such atrocities, I have decided to resign from my position at the Department of State." "I was not planning initially to go public," she told CNN's Jim Sciutto Thursday. "I was only at the State Department for a brief time. But when I started to tell people that I was planning to resign quietly, they said, you know, please reconsider, please, please go public if you'd be willing to. So I decided I would." "I do think that public pressure is why we're starting to see the administration shifting here," she added. Tariq Habash, a Palestinian-American policy adviser in the Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, quit in January for similar reasons. The resignations came as the Biden administration has faced pressure from many Democrats to call for a permanent cease-fire and restrict how Israel uses US weapons and other military assistance in Gaza. The soaring death toll in Gaza prompted a group calling itself Feds United for Peace to organize a walkout of workers from across two dozen federal agencies in January. The following month, a 25-year-old US Air Force serviceman died after setting himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington to protest the Gaza war. For months, Biden administration officials have sought to address the dissent.

# 'US President's Letter: A New Chapter in US-Pakistan Ties'-I

than Swan in June 2021 had questioned the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, "Would you allow the American government to have the CIA here in Pakistan to conduct cross-border counterterrorism missions against Al-Qaeda, ISIS or the Taliban?". The answer was; there is no way we are going to allow any bases, any sort of action from Pakistani territory into Afghanistan. Absolutely not,". This statement was projected by the PTI social media's well oiled machine as an act of great bravery and gallantry and was spinned inside and around the world as an evidence of Pakistan's defiance of USA dictates and US bullying.

The entire leadership of the PTI capitalized on this statement, making it a rallying point in public meetings, media interviews, and press conferences. They sought to garner political mileage by invoking patriotic sentiments among the people of Pakistan. However, their bold defiance of the United States, the world's sole superpower, proved to be a costly miscalculation. The repercussions soon became evident as the former Prime Minister's government, already struggling, faced further challenges. The decision by the establishment to withdraw

downfall of the PTI government.

Naturally, Imran Khan's defiant statement was viewed by US policymakers as a challenge to their strategic interests in the region. They interpreted it as a signal of Pakistan asserting sovereignty and inde-

pendence in its foreign policy decisions, especially concerning military cooperation with the United States and US's counterterrorism interests in the region. Furthermore, it was perceived as potentially indicative of a shift in Pakistan's alignment or

a reevaluation of its relationship with the United States, a shift having significant implications for US security interests in South Asia and broader regional stability and prompted them to reassess their approach to engaging with Pakistan and managing bilateral relations.

The anger of the US president over the Prime Minister's undiplomatic reply, "Absolutely not," became apparent when, in August 2021, President Joe Biden made phone calls to nearly every country in the world but notably omitted contacting Imran Khan. This action was widely

HOB interviewer Jona-in Swan in June 2021 ical instability, ultimately leading to the al of Khan's stance on the Afghan polial of Khan's stance on the Afghan policy by US policymakers. The decision by President Biden to exclude a phone call to former Prime Minister Imran Khan could have been perceived differently by US and Pakistani policymakers.

From the perspective of US policy-

makers, the decision to knowingly, ignoring Imran Khan was a reflection of shifting priorities or diplomatic considerations and was a deliberate signal of their desire to reassess and recalibrate the US-Pakistan relationship based on evolving

strategic interests and objectives. The opposition in Pakistan of that time interpreted it as a snub and a sign of waning importance in the eyes of the US fuelling perceptions of strained bilateral relations or a downgrading of Pakistan's significance in US foreign policy

The culmination of US anger was manifested in the form of a secret communication, known as Cipher, between our Ambassador Asad Majeed and US Assistant Secretary of State, Donald Lu. Allegedly, this communication conveyed a clear

lishment to remove Imran Khan from power and install a compliant setup in the future government. This directive coincided with the IMF's refusal to enter into a Standby Agreement, exacerbating fears of an impending default in Pakistan's economy. The prospect of default sent waves of concern throughout the country's powerful circles.

Allegedly, in an effort to avert imminent default and regain favor with the US, the establishment expedited a regime change operation. Initially, crucial support that was instrumental in maintaining Imran Khan's government was withdrawn. Subsequently, Imran Khan was not only ousted from power but also faced over 200 legal cases and imprisonment. His marriage was deemed illegal, and his wife was also imprisoned. Imran Khan himself was permanently disqualified from holding office. The entire leadership of the PTI was either incarcerated or went into hiding. The PTI's symbol and name were seized, and the party's political capital was eroded. Allegedly, misguided PTI advocates, assuming control after the party lost its leadership, decided to merge with an unknown party, Sunni Itehad, thereby losing its brand identity.

To be continued



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

## Mohabat Khan Mosque attracts visitors, archeology lovers - II

Fakhar-e-Alam

eshawar has been remained a strategic city where invaders constructed worship places to freely perform religious obligations and use its peoples' strong bonds with religion in their favor to prolong

Being a gateway to the subcontinent and central Asian states (CARs), Peshawar was always a strategic city where kings, warriors and invaders constructed mosques, churches and gurdwaras at prime locations to worship in accordance with their marble. The mosque was finally completfaith besides molding public opinions after conquering it before extending their influence to the subcontinent.

The Muslims commanders and kings of different dynasties passed through the historic Khyber Pass from Central Asian Republics (CARs), Afghanistan stayed first at Peshawar where they constructed scores and minorities to promote interfaith harmo-

ny and bring people of all faith closer. "From recent GorKathri excavations, it was made clear that Islam had first spread in the border areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa administrative control to the Auqaf Departand Afghanistan after Sabuktigin, a Turkic slave commander laid the foundation of the Ghaznavi dynasty at Ghazi in 977 AD in Central Afghanistan," said Bakhtzada Muhammad, senior research officer of the archeology department KP while talking

Following an untimely death of Sabuktigin and a revolt against his son Ismail, Mehmud Ghaznvi had gained control over the Ghaznavi kingdom and extended his influence to Punjab after defeating Raja of Jaypala of the Kabul Shahis at the battle of Peshawar in 1001 AD," he said.

The construction of small and big mosques including the historic Yakagund mosque in Mohmand district, Sheikh Habib

gate mosque alais Khawja Maroof mosque some 600 years ago established at Peshawar by the Muslim rulers of various dynasties, resultantly Islam got flourished in these

After conquering Peshawar, the Mughal rulers started construction work of the iconic Mohabat Khan mosque in 1660-70 by the then Peshawar's Governor Nawab Mohabat Khan. An amalgamation of Islamic and Mughal architecture, Mohabat Khan's small portion was constructed by Mughal emperor, Shah Jehan and a major portion by King Aurangzeb Alamgir with beautiful white ed in 1680 and later renovated in 1898 after the vandalism of the Sikh rulers," he said.

The British took over Peshawar's control in 1949; the mosque was renovated and handed over to the people of Peshawar for worship. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the refugee tribal elders congregated in the mosque to forge of mosques and worship places for Muslims unity amongst Afghans against the Soviets invaders.

The fortune turned positive when the KP government declared Mohabad Khan mosque a historical site in 1982 and took its ment. Built on a high mound at Andar Sher bazaar near historic Chowkyadgar at Peshawar City, the worshipers enter its 30,155 square feet vast open courtyard with capacity to accommodate about 30,000 worshipers at a time besides a centrally located ablution pool and a single row of rooms lining the exterior walls with two tall minarets, which further magnified its look.

The prayer hall's facade is also capped by six smaller decorative minarets that flank the mosque's five arched entryways, with an additional two minarets and its prayer hall capped by three awesome domes that draw visitors' attention.

with elegant red frescoes in geometrics and religious and cultural tourism.

mosque in 1650 at Bala Manari and Gunj floral motifs while its exterior was decorated with Mughal frescoes that amplify its beauty.

> "Mohabat Khan mosque is the identity of Peshawar due to its unique architecture and glorious ancient history. For the last 12 years, I regularly came to this historic mosque of Peshawar for Jumma prayer, Namaz e Tarveh and Mahfil-e-Shabina of Ramazan ul Mubarak as its spiritual environment take the worshipers to a new world," said Zahid Shinwari, former President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry while talking to the news agency.

> He said Mohabat Khan's mosque architecture was a jewel of Peshawar, attracting tourists and archeology lovers from across the country. The shopkeepers, who had been rented shops by the Auqaf department, increased the size of their shops by many feet by digging more small cabins and encroaching on the entrance and surrounding area of the mosque which negatively impacted its exterior outlook

> The construction of illegally built large plazas and shops around the mosque has dversely affected its exterior architecture and demanded the demolition of all these illegal structures to restore its original grandeur and architectural designs

> "The mosque has recently undergone heavy conservation work after approval of Rs 87.70 million for Mohabat Khan Mosque's conservation project. We have almost completed rehabilitation and conservation work on its minarets, domes, ablution area, and other portions without compromising on its Mughal era's architectural designs."

Former Chief Minister Mahmood Khan during his visit to Mohabat Khan mosque had increased the allocation of the project to Rs160 million with direction for expansion of work and the amount was used on its beautification, decoration, and lighting system to magnify its look at night on the The mosque's ceiling was embellished pattern of Peshawar Museum to promote

## **Voices of the Helpless Persons**

bank staged a peaceful protest rally in Lahore. Retired employees from the bank were demanding from the bank administration, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the government of Pakistan to immediately resolve their pension issues in accordance with the court decisions that have been issued in their favor. Rally participants were holding banners and placards. "Respect the decisions of the bank administration, Supreme Court, and take immediate action on the decisions. ABL pensioners have been ignored." "Allied Bank owners must be held accountable for their injustice." "Pensioners are a respected profession, save the

elderly from dying." "Where should the old pensioners of banks go? Who should they appeal to?" "Respect the decisions of the bank administration and the Supreme Court. Immediately fulfill the obligations of pensioners based on their full basic salaries. "Respect the decisions of the bank administration and the Supreme Court. Take immediate action on the decisions." "Allied Bank, when will you

fulfill the pension obligations of the elderly pensioners?" "Who is responsible for implementing the decisions of justice, the Supreme Court?" "Bank owners have earned billions, but elderly employees who have served them for years are denied their rights." "An appeal will be made to the Chief Justice of Pakistan to do justice. The media is urged to raise awareness so that the legitimate demands of Allied Bank pensioners reach the government's halls." In the rally the retired employees threw off their clothes and wore garlands of dry breads, conveying the message to the houses that these helpless

people are forced to live a life of starvation. In Lahore, the leaders of the Pakistan Welfare Association, the All Banks Retired Employees Association, and the Allied Bank Retired Employees Welfare Association, including Maqsood Ahmed Chaghtai, Iftikhar Hussain Mir, Qaim Kazmi, Zaheer Sherazi, Muhammad Mustafa, in charge Women's Wing Rahila Shafiq. and Miss Sajida Maqsood Chaghtai, said that inflation is skyrocketing day by day. The prices of medicines have multiplied, essential commodities are out of reach and due to the lack of income, and the situation has reached the point of starvation. The Supreme Court of Pakistan should act on its decision.

The cases of retired employees from banks have

esterday retired employees from the been pending in courts for a long time. Even if a decision in favor of employees is made by any court, the relevant administration resorts to reviews and appeals, and thus, years pass without any benefit. Pensioner issues in the country have been unresolved for many years. Like other institutions and banks, Allied Bank is also an example. In January 2017, the Peshawar High Court and on January 17th, 2020, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled in favor of retired employees from Allied Bank, stating that retired employees should be paid pensions and benefits based on their final salaries. It is clear that the bank has not fulfilled the pension and benefits of retired employees based on their final salaries. The bank is also ignoring all decisions of the

superior courts, and the government is not taking action in favor of retired employees. Under its own circular, the said bank provided pensions and benefits to retired employees from its institution on June 30, 2002. Instead of respecting the court decisions and implementing them, the bank is still unnecessarily delaying. It is extremely regrettable that hundreds of retired

employees from various banks have lost their lives due to the economic oppression policy of bank administrations.

According to details, thousands of pensioners' families are victims of the economic terrorism of Allied Bank administration. Even today, retired people are receiving a few hundred rupees as their pension amidst the soaring inflation. It is unfortunate that thousands of pensioners from banks and widow families of pensioners have become dear to Allah while waiting for their legitimate rights. No one paid attention to the violation of rights, injustice, and this excess. In the end, how long will our rulers continue to oppress elderly pensioners? The government should take steps to ensure retired employees receive their rightful dues. Retired employees are the respected citizens of society whose human rights are being violated. The Chief Justice of Pakistan is requested to implement the clear decisions of the High Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan in favor of our elderly citizens. Retired employees and pensioners urge that: Please raise awareness of our injustice in electronic and print media and raise a strong voice in our favor so that the injustice against elderly citizens can be eliminated

Writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at javedullahraja@gmail.com

# Vietnam Embassy distributes Iftar dinner boxes in deserving people in Islamabad



**Spokesman Report** 

ISLAMABAD: Mr. & Mrs Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador of Socialist Republic of Vietnam and staff of the embassy with the enthusiastic participation of the kids of Vietnam arranged a special event at the embassy in connection with Muslim tradition of hosting Iftar for the poor on 29 March 2024.

Iftar dinner boxes were designed and prepared by the

ladies of the embassy that were distributed among the deserving. They included women, children and laborers in general. A large number of deserving people received the dinner

The event was followed by an iftar dinner for the Embassy'slocal staff and their families. Some overseas Vietnamese' people living in Islamabad were also invited.

The Ambassador and spouse

let the distribution event while the kids of the Vietnamese families were also participating in the activity. Their spirit was worth seeing. Their smiling faces were telling the story of the feelings of their hearts that were full of happiness on helping the needy in the sacred month of

Ambassador Nguyen Tien Phong while talking to the media at this occasion said:

"Ramazan is observed in the health in good manner as well. about one another."



Muslim world as a sacred month in which the Muslim community fast for whole day. It not only creates forbearance and sacrifice

The tradition of Fasting is also found in other religions as well. This is a point where all faiths and beliefs come near to build in them but also impacts their and promote understanding

"Embassy of Vietnam has with Vietnam. Both countries plans to organize more and are moving forward gradually important events in the coming to strengthen bilateral coopermonths in connection with people to people relations. Pakistan enjoys very cordial relations 📔 Photos by Raja Farid

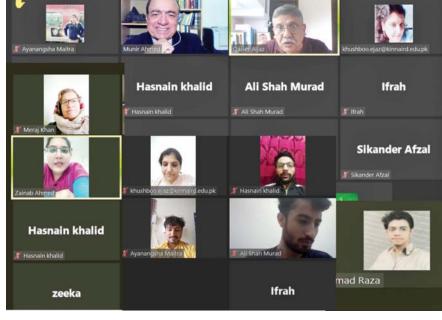
ation", Ambassador concluded.

## Pakistan's Slumber on Gas Pipeline Projects Sparks Multiple Concerns

the Muslims.

ISLAMABAD: Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies Executive Director Munir Ahmed said at a webinar that Pakistan's Failure to advance gas pipeline projects has sparked national and international concerns. Iran sleeves up to drag Pakistan into the Internal Court of Justice (ICJ) by September 2024 for a \$18 billion penalty. TAPI dusting the shelves for three year after a comprehensive feasibility report was approved. Russia is also uncomfortable with Paki-

Islamabad - (March 30, 2024) The experts have shown grave concerns on Pakistan's snag on the interstate gas pipeline projects as the country is facing the brunt on multiple fronts while speaking at a webinar. They said it undermines the country's efforts to address its energy crisis and meet the growing demand for natural gas, leading to energy shortages and economic instability. Additionally, the delays in implementing these projects hinder regional cooperation and potentially strain diplomatic relations with partner countries, impacting Pakistan's standing in the international community. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding these projects creates investment risks and deters foreign investors, hampering economic growth and development. Overall, Pakistan's failure to advance interstate gas projects poses significant challenges to its energy security, economic



need for swift and decisive government followed by recent action to overcome these obstacles.

The webinar was organized by the Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies on the subject "Interstate Gas Pipeline Projects: Challenges and the way forward to meet Pakistan's Energy Crisis" on Saturday. The panel of experts included environment projects involve governments and energy consultant Qaiser Aijaz, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed, Lahore Garrison University Associate Professor Dr Zainab Ahmed, and Kinnaired College for Women Associate Professor Dr. Khushboo Ejaz.

Mr. Qaiser Aijaz said in the light of current geopolitical and economic viability vis-àprosperity, and regional rela-situation, particularly domestic vis sky rocketing Rupee-Dol-

tions, highlighting the urgent political instability and weak general elections coupled with Russia - Ukraine conflict, Isra-

el - Palestine on-going war and rising tensions at the Pakistan - Afghanistan Border, it looks difficult to foresee any immediate progress on above-mentioned interstate gas pipeline projects. Unfortunately, all interstate gas pipeline and regions, which presently are baffled by their own set of problems including Russia, Iran and Afghanistan. Since, all above-mentioned projects have been stalled for long, it would require a detailed review and revisit of engineering design studies, project costs

lar parity for smooth sailing of gas pipeline and infrastructure

development projects. Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies Executive Director Munir Ahmed said at the webinar that Pakistan's failure to advance gas pipeline projects has sparked national and international concerns. Iran sleeves up to drag Pakistan into the Internal Court of Justice (ICJ) by September 2024 for a \$18 billion penalty. TAPI dusting the shelves for three year after a comprehensive feasibility report was approved. Russia is also uncomfortable with Pakistan's snag. Pakistan's foreign policy and energy diplomacy has failed miserably in the hands of

Dr. Khushboo Ejaz paints with predictable resistance.

a vivid picture of the intricate political economy surrounding pipeline projects, where politics, economics, and energy intersect. She describes it as a delicate dance influenced by government regulations, environmental concerns, and economic impacts, resulting in a complex landscape. In Pakistan's pipeline diplomacy, securing energy resources and enhancing strategic position-

ing are high-stakes endeavors. Dr. Khushboo said the fate of these projects is uncertain, especially the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, amidst internationanctions, financial challeng es, and geopolitical tensions.

Dr. Zainab Ahmed said the dynamics of geopolitics have shifted towards geoeconomics, with energy playing a central role. The world's heavy reliance on fossil fuels, particularly in the developed world and Europe's dependence on Russian gas, has been underscored by events such as the Russia-Ukraine war.

Dr Zainab said Pakistan urgently needs cheap energy sources due to its economic challenges, while Iran seeks regional gas exports amidst sanctions and declining oil production. Despite the potential benefits of the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, US sanctions remain a major hurdle. The rivalry between the US and China further complicates the strategic environment, with implications for regional cooperation. Pakistan's attempts to persuade the US to reconsider its sanctions on the Iran-Pathe inefficient white elephants. kistan pipeline have been met

## Pak High Commissioner attends Presidential reception



ISI AMABAD: Pakistan High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal attended the annual diplomatic reception hosted by President of Republic of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Madam Jane Yumiko Ittogi. Photo by Instagram

## Djibouti govt reiterates resolve to boost Pakistan ties for mutual benefits

**Spokesman Report** 

ISLAMABAD: Djiboutian Secretary General of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mahmoud Ali Hassan appreciating the close bilateral ties between Pakistan and Djibouti reiterated his government's resolve to further boost bilateral cooperation for benefit of the two peoples as well as the region. Hassan, in his address at the Pakistan Day cere-



mony held by the Pakistan Embassy in Djibouti, also lauded constructive role of Pakistani diaspora living in Djibouti comprising professionals,

businessmen and skilled workforce. He emphasized the need to establish strategic ties between the two countries, according to a press release received on Saturday. The chief guest of the ceremony was Dileita Mohamed Dileita, President of the National Assembly of Djibouti. Among other local dignitaries who attended the event were Mohamed Ali Houmed, former President of Djiboutian Parliament, the naval chief, parliamentarians including members of Pakistan-Djibouti Friendship Group, Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, members of the diplomatic corps, government officials and Pakistan community members residing in Djibouti. The ceremony started with playing of national anthems of the two countries. In his remarks, Pakistan's Ambassador Shahid Ali Seehar highlighted the importance of Pakistan Resolution passed on March 23, 1940 that led to the creation of Pakistan. Paying homage to the founding fathers of Pakistan, the ambassador congratulated Pakistani community members residing in Djibouti and around the world on the Day. At the end of ceremony, the guests were served with Iftar dinner, and the documentaries showcasing Pakistan's rich history, culture and touristic attractions were screened.

## Opening of IFAD country office in Islamabad next month to boost partnership ments. President IFAD welcomed the

**Spokesman Report** 

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan Ali Javed held a bilateral meeting with President of International Fund for Agricultural Development Alvaro Lario at IFAD Headquarters to review the trajectory of bilateral cooperation and discuss the opening of organisation's new office in Islamabad. Assisting the ambassador were Embassy's Counsellor for International Organizations and Alternate Permanent Representative whereas President IFAD was assisted by his team, according to a press release.

The IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialised agency of the United Nations that works to address poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries. President IFAD warmly recalled signing 'Host Country Agreement' (HCA) in June last year leading to establishment of IFAD Country Office in Islamabad and termed it a significant bilateral milestone. IFAD Country Director Pakistan Fernanda



on the occasion expressed her keenness to work with her counterparts in taking forward the bilateral cooperation to a new dimension. She will formally operationalize IFAD Country Office Islamabad next month. President IFAD underlined Pakistan's status as being one of

Thomaz Da Rocha who was also present IFAD's largest partner State and appreciated the formal confirmation from Islamabad towards pledge for IFAD's 13th Replenishment Cycle. With ongoing projects in all provinces of the country, IFAD's biggest portfolio has been in Pakistan with both sides have executed 28 projects for \$2.91 billions of invest-

smooth democratic transition in Pakistan through general elections in February and welcomed the timing of establishment of IFAD Country Office Islamabad coming at an excellent juncture. The ambassador extended an invitation to President IFAD for a bilateral visit to Pakistan to refresh contacts with political leadership and inaugurate IFAD Country Office Islamabad. President IFAD warmly received the invitation and expressed his intention to travel to Pakistan in last quarter of 2024. Acknowledging the pioneering role of former Foreign Minister of Pakistan late Sartaj Aziz in the establishment of IFAD, both sides welcomed their longstanding history of excellent cooperation since 1979, and expressed satisfaction over the status of ongoing projects. In conclusion, both sides resolved to consolidate bilateral cooperation and acknowledged institutionalized cooperation through upcoming IFAD Country Office Islamabad to serve as new chapter in their partnership.

#### Shahrukh Rohilla joined Xiaomi Pakistan

LAHORE: Xiaomi Pakistan, a renowned global technology brand dedicated to revolutionizing the smart life experience with affordable yet premium-quality consumer electronics, is excited to unveil a major change in its leadership structure. This announcement comes as part of Xiaomi's strategic vision for growth and evolution within the dynamic Pakistani market. With a steadfast commitment to providing innovative and accessible technology solutions to consumers across Pakistan, Xiaomi reaffirms its position as a leading force in the country's burgeon-

Xiaomi Pakistan is delighted to announce the appointment of Shahrukh Rohilla as the Director of Channel & Strategy, marking a significant milestone in the company's strategic leadership team. In his new role, Shahrukh will play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of sales channels, distribution management, and overall market and pricing strategies tailored to the Pakistani market & will be reporting to Country Head Mr. Chai Lijiu

With over 15 years of extensive managerial experience spanning across technology, distribution, and supply chain logistics sectors, Shahrukh Rohilla brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to Xiaomi Pakistan.

## **Bull & Bears** PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation			
Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index			
Current	Prev. Close		
67,005.10	67,142.12		
Day's High	Day's Low		
67,307.63	66,822.42		
Index Value	Change		
6,194,884,662	-137.02		
Percentage	Time		
-0.2%	29 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm		
Europe: FTS	SE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change		
7,952.62	+20.64		
Percentage	Time		
reicentage	Time		
+0.26%	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT		
+0.26%	28 Mar, 4:35 pm		
+0.26%	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT		
+0.26% USA: Dow Jones I	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT ndustrial Average		
+0.26% USA: Dow Jones I	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT ndustrial Average Change		
+0.26%  USA: Dow Jones Index Value 39,807.37  Percentage +0.12%	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT ndustrial Average Change +47.29		

Percentage	Time			
-0.50%	29 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9			
<b>Open Market Forex Rates</b>				

Change

+201.37

**Index Value** 

40,369.44

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	747.61	755.61
Canadian Dollar	204.25	206.45
China Yuan	38.74	39.14
Danish Krone	40.3	40.7
Euro	301.45	304.45
Hong Kong Dollar	35.55	35.9
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	910.14	919.14
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	59.85
NewZealand \$	170.56	172.56
Norwegians Krone	26.19	26.49
Omani Riyal	721.86	729.86
Qatari Riyal	76.57	77.27
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.4
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	75.4	76.15
UK Pound Sterling	353.5	357
US Dollar	278.1	280.85

#### RCCI office will remain open on Sunday for renewal of membership

**№** PPA

RAWALPINDI: Membership department of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) will remain open on Sunday for membership renewal as March 31 is the last date for renewal.

Saqib Rafiq, President RCCI, said that they had already intimated the members through letters, emails and SMS that the membership of Rawalpindi Chamber shall expire on March 31 and all members have been advised to get their membership renewed on or before the last date.

He said that the members have been intimated through letters, emails and SMS that their membership of Rawalpindi Chamber will expire on March 31 while members have been advised to get their membership renewed on or before the last date.

He said that for renewal of membership, "We have to submit an income tax return along with a fixed fee and sales tax return if

# Trade through Gwadar, Basra Seaports to bring revolution in Iraq-Pakistan relations: Envoy

ISLAMABAD: Iraq and Pakistan enjoy the best relationship and that by initiating trade through Gwadar and Basra seaports the relations between the two countries can be heightened to new heights. Both the sides are committed to fostering their multilateral relationship and that Pakistani manpower has a vast spectrum in the fields of agriculture, medical and petro-chemical in Iraq.

The two countries also enjoy exemplary ties in the field of defence and that Iraq has recently procured a complete package of Super Mushahk from Pakistan.

This has been stated by Iraq's Ambassador to Pakistan Hamid Abbas Lafta while talking to a delegation of ICCI which called on him under the leadership of Ahsan Zafar of Commerce and Industry.

The Ambassador said that both the countries always demonstrate complete harmony at regional and international forums, adding



Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber that Iraq is a country of opportunities with a relationships yet the trade relations are at the strong economy, having an annual budget of all the countries. He mentioned that although both Pakistan and Iraq are bonded in strong

lowest level which needs to be enhanced and \$110 billion and wants to promote ties with for this purpose the Chambers of both the sides can play a significant role.

On his part, President Islamabad Cham- Ali was also part of the delegation.

ber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that despite having a huge potential by both the sides, the trade volume is not upto the mark and to overcome the problem direct connectivity between the two brotherly countries was much needed.

He said that along-with other multiple investment opportunities in different areas Pakistan also enjoys the tourism potential especially the northern areas, thereby the Iraqi side must grasp this opportunity also.

He further said that ICCI was determined to play its role in the promotion of business relations between the two countries. On this occasion Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhatwari expressed the hope that the Ambassador being a dynamic figure will continue to play his role in furthering the ties between the two countries and that in this connection the bilateral visits of the highest leadership of both the sides will be a momentous one.

Executive member ICCI Ch. Mohammad

## Price hike

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is selling strawberry along Chak Shahzad Road in the Federal Capital



## **Cotton Campaign-first meeting** held to review challenges and goals of the campaign

LAHORE: Under the chairmanship of Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahoo, the first meeting of Cotton Campaign 2024 was held in which the basic issues, challenges and goals were reviewed. During the meeting, Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said that the miscellaneous duties of the various wings of the Agriculture Department have been abolished so as to accompany the farmers till sowing and picking of cotton. Secretary Agriculture Punjab instructed all the Divisional Directors Agriculture Extension to hold a meeting with their concerned Commissioners and all the Deputy Directors to hold a meeting with concerned Deputy Commissioner about the decisions taken in today's meeting.

He also instructed to take on board and issue advisory keeping in view the weather forecast for the next 15 days for the awareness of the farmers. Digital monitoring of the field staff will be done. He further said that this year the

campaign should be conducted with more effort and passion than last year so that the cotton production targets can be achieved. On this occasion, Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel said that the IPM model should be adopted for the control of cotton pests. In addition, the hard pan of the soil should be broken before cotton cultivation so that the nutritional needs of the plants can be met. Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali said in the meeting.

Atil, Vice Chancellor MNS Agricultural University Multan Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad Rajwana, Chairperson National Seed Authority Dr. Asif Ali, Consultant Agriculture Department Punjab Dr. Anjum Ali, Director Generals Agriculture (Extension and Pest Warning), Director Agricultural Information Punjab Naveed Ismat Kahlon along with Department of Agriculture. Extension divisional directors, deputy directors and progressive farmers Hasan Raza, Khalid Mehmood Khokhar

#### Getz Pharma rejects the dissemination of false news about its product

**₿ PPA** 

KARACHI: Getz Pharma issues this statement in response to the recent dissemination of false information about its product Risek IV 40 mg injection on electronic and social media. These malicious attempts aim to undermine the brand reputation of our product.

On February 12, 2024, the Federal Inspector of Drugs-IV, while conducting market surveillance in Moro, Sindh, identified counterfeit Risek 40mg IV injections at the premises of M/s Qalanari Medicos on Hospital Road, Moro, Nowsheroferoz. Samples were sent for testing, including confirmation by Getz Pharma. We confirmed the sample as counterfeit, not manufactured by us, and provided a comparative

analysis report to authorities, urging action. Getz Pharma manufactures safe and efficacious medicines in its WHO, PIC/s, and EAEU prequalified manufacturing facility. Stakeholders, including doctors, patients, chemists, and customers, should beware of misinformation and rely on credible sources. Genuine Risek 40mg IV injection is available nationwide through our authorized distributor network and can be purchased from licensed medical stores.

### **Mastercard report finds** human connections and technological innovation are key for Cities of the **Future**

**₿** PPA

KARACHI: Three in four people would be happier living in a smart and connected city, according to a new report by Mastercard, which features insights related to human aspirations and technological progress for smart cities in the Middle East. By 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will be living in urban areas, which places a renewed focus on urban living to ensure that the cities of the future are secure, sustainable and inclu-

Mastercard Cities of the Future Report revealed that respondents in Egypt, Saudi whelmingly agree that living cities.

in a smart city would make them happier (76%).

Priority innovations span connected buildings, smart travel and AI-powered servic-

The majority (62%) of respondents in Middle East and North Africa identified smart and connected buildings and homes as the highest priority innovation, followed by smart travel services (61%). Technological advancements widely generate more optimism than worry. Becoming less physically active is the top concern, followed by reduced human interaction and the loss of traditional jobs. AI and machine learning (58%) are considered the most impor-Arabia and the UAE over- tant technologies for future

## FRIA asks banks to ensure lending to priority sectors' SMEs to stimulate growth

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has asked the banks for lending to prioritv manufacturing sectors of SMEs to stimulate economic growth and development in the country.

The FRIA senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that we need to set our primary agenda to strategize and enhance financing and lending to priority sectors to stimulate economic growth and development in Paki-

He pointed out the government's ongoing efforts to promote economic stability, fiscal discipline, and sustainable growth.

He emphasized the critical role of the banking sector in supporting the government's development agenda and urged the banks to increase financing and lending to priority sectors, namely agriculture and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

He requested the Pakistan Banks to lead a task force comprising representatives from the banking sector, government, and relevant stakeholders, with the primary objective to accelerate financing in the priority sectors and devise actionable strategies to overcome the existing challenges and bottlenecks hindering the growth of these vital

## Faisalabad customs impounding 4 vehicles without proof despite cooperating with security agencies

Majid Abdul Majid

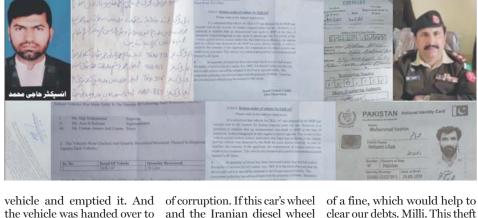
FAISALABAD: The customs authorities are misusing their powers even after Pakistan's security agencies cooperated.

BNP Rakhi Guard Check Post 4 vehicles No. PKN772, TKB147, TKH34, NAB883 under the patronage of Liaquat Khan, seized the vehicles full of diesel and handed them over to the customs officials Haji Muhammad, Customs in charge at Derahghazi Khan Steam Warehouse. While three vehicles are cleared and one vehiparked in Dera Ghazi Khan a month since a driver, Pathan,

Warehouse for 4 months. On this, the chain starts and transactions and other roles are involved in picking up the vehicle. In 4 or 5 months. Numerous transactions continue. What is surprising is that this vehicle was parked in Dera Ghazi Khan Customs warehouse for 4.5 months with 4000 liters as proof. While PNP measured on the spot and confirmed 4000 liters in this vehicle. Because of who were received by Resong that, the vehicle was impounded. The duty of Haji Muhammad, in charge of the warehouse, was set up at Ghazi Ghat check post. There was also an incident which cle, number TKB147, remains was not confirmed. It has been

was caught there too. He was fined so much that he died of a heart attack at the Ghazi Ghat check post. Haji Muhammad is the right was of the customs officers and is the earner, so no punishment could be given to him. Rather, by promoting him. Duty has been imposed in Garden Town. Now it is a matter of whether the money collected from the transaction of the vehicle which remained in the warehouse for 4.5 months with 4000 liters was used by Haji Muhammad Inspector Customs or if it was used by him. God knows best. The car which is being mentioned, Muhammad Hashim, son of Rehmatullah,

went to the customs office. There were customs officials. Muhammad Hashim fell into the hands of one of his disciples. More than Rs. Muhammad Hashim, son of Rehmatullah, paid his broker, Haji Muhammad Saif. The fake letter for the vehicle, TKB147, was issued, which contained 40 liters of Iranian diesel. While in another document, the oil of the same vehicle is written as 30 liters. Along with the fake paper, a fake gate pass was also made. And the vehicle was removed from the warehouse. 9 lacs. Despite taking the 4,000 liters of diesel in this vehicle, Haji Muhammad could not bear it anymore. He also took out the



the owners. It is a matter that were separated, five or six lakh such employees and officers are rupees would be collected in the thefts going on all over Pakistan

imposed on us, who is the king treasury of Pakistan in the form which need to be exposed.

is not one, but there are countless

# Govt College 36-B Landhi 3rd Consecutive Victory in Inter College Ramazan T-20 Cup

**Sports Desk** 

KARACHI: Government College 36-B Landhi 3rd Consecutive Victory in the Inter College Ramazan T-20 Cup and in the another match Government College for men defeated Beacon House System by 10 wickets. Ghazi Ghouri and Shayan Abdullah declared Player of the Match.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Pakistan Cricket Board.

#### **Scores in Brief:**

In the first match played at Eid Gah Ground Nazimabad Government College for men beat Beacon House System by 10 Wickets. Beacon House System 118/7 in allotted 20 overs.

Muhammad Shaffay 28, Haidh Sohail 20. Muhammad Zaid Hassan

Government College for men 119/0 in 13 overs. Ghazi Ghouri 65 5x4 3x6 not out, Abdur Rehman 48 5x4 not out. After the finish of the Match Ghazi Ghouri declare Player of the Match.

In the another match Government



College 36-B Landhi no.4 3rd Consec- mad 2/7, Saifullah Khan 2/17. utive Victory after beating Government National College by 6 wickets at IBA Karachi University Ground. Government National College 116/9 in allotted 20 overs. Sami Ghouri 31, Abdul Rafay 26. Haziq Qureshi 2/6, Syed Muham-

Government College 36-B Landhi no.4 116/4 in 20 overs. Sufiyan 39, Shayan Abdullah 38. Wahab Mirza

After the end of the Match Chief Guest Khalid Nafees, Chairman Tour-

nament Committee given the Player of the Match Cash award Rs.5000/= to Shayan Abdullah. Rahat Ali Shah Coordinator, Muhammad Ahmed Naqvi, Arif Waheed, Tariq Hafeez, Afzal Qureshi and Dr Arif Hafeez also present

## West Indies unveil squad for white-ball tour to Pakistan

**➢** A Sports

ANTIGUA: The Cricket West Indies (CWI) Women's Selection Panel on Saturday, announced a 15-member squad for the white-ball tour to Pakistan in April-May.

West Indies are scheduled to arrive in Karachi on 14 April to feature in eight white-ball matches, including three ODIs, which are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25.

The three ODI matches will be played at the National Bank Stadium (NBS) in Karachi on 18, 21 and 23 April.

The ODI series will be followed by five T20Is, to be played at the same venue, starting from 26 April.

The ODIs are set to begin at 330pm PKT, while the first ball in the T20Is will be bowled at 730pm PKT.

remarkable performances in the domes- competition after almost six months. tic circuit.

Qiana Joseph and Chedean Nation putting on sensational performances in the domestic tournaments, having missed out on the last tour to Austral-

ia in 2023. Lead Selector for West Indies



Right-arm medium pacer Kate termed the upcoming white-ball series added. Wilmott earned her maiden call-up to against Pakistan "extremely important" the national senior team on the back of as the side they return to international experienced player Nation will strength-

"The upcoming series against is extremely important for the team as they forced their way back into the team by return to international competition after almost six months, the last series being against Australia," said Browne-John.

will get some much-needed T20 matches as they prepare to participate in the

Women's Cricket Ann Browne-John T20 World Cup later this year," she

Browne-John added that the return of ship) en the team's batting unit

"The return of experienced player Chedean Nation will strengthen the batting and 19-year-old Fast Bowler Kate Wilmott will be making her debut. local time)

"The players have just completed the "Apart from the three ODI, the team regional tournament where some of the experienced players had encouraging performances, and it is hoped this will

continue into the Pakistan series." West Indies Squad for white-ball

series against Pakistan:

Hayley Matthews (c), Shemaine Campbelle (vc), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilia Connell, Afy Fletcher, Cherry Ann Fraser, Jannillea Glasgow, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Chedean Nation, Karishma Ramharack, Stafanie Taylor, Rashada Williams, Kate Wilmott.

#### Series schedule:

14 Apr - West Indies women's team arrival in Karachi

18 Apr - First ODI at National Bank Stadium (NBS), Karachi (330pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

21 Apr - Second ODI at NBS (330pm local time) (ICC Women's Champion-

23 Apr - Third ODI at NBS (330pm local time) (ICC Women's Champion-

26 Apr - First T20I at NBS (730pm

28 Apr - Second T20I at NBS (730pm local time)

30 Apr - Third T20I at NBS (730pm

2 May - Fourth T20I at NBS (730pm local time)

3 May - Fifth T20I at NBS (730pm local time)

## Sarfaraz Ahmed comments on the ongoing captaincy saga

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Wicketkeeper batter Sarfaraz Ahmed commented on the ongoing captaincy saga of the national men's cricket team, stating all the contenders have the ability to lead.

Former captain Sarfaraz appeared on a local news channel's show and was asked who among Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah Afridi would be the best to lead the Pakistan team.

"Look, it's the Pakistan Cricket Board's authority, they will appoint whoever they think is better.

"Currently, Shaheen Shah Afri- would be a wise decision for the team."



di is your white-ball captain and Shan Masood is the captain of the Test team. But, I think whoever becomes captain should be given adequate opportunity to lead the team.

"So, whatever the board decides, it

Sarfaraz Ahmed also shared his pacer if he continued to play internathoughts on Imad Wasim and Mohammad Amir's decision to come out of international retirement.

"Look, they have been really close friends of mine and very good teammates. I always told Amir that you should play cricket for Pakistan," said Sarfaraz.

"I think it's better late than never and they came at the right time as Pakistan needs them. So, I hope that their return would surely benefit the Pakistan team," he added.

Sarfaraz Ahmed then revealed that he advised Mohammad Amir against taking retirement and opined that it would be beneficial both for the country and the

tional cricket.

"Look, I advised Amir at that time too that we should not leave our field," shared Sarfaraz

"Obviously, he must have his set of reservations due to which he might have thought he should not play anymore.

"But, wherever he played cricket, he

played it really well. So, I think he wasted nese two to three years [of his career].

"Had he played for Pakistan, it would have been fruitful both for him and Pakistan but again better late than never.

"It is hoped that the Pakistan team will benefit from Aamir's presence."

## 'Mohammad Amir wasted his 2-3 years,' thinks Sarfaraz Ahmed

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed welcomed Mohammad Amir's retirement reversal but believes that the left-arm pacer wasted two to three years of his cricket.

Sarfaraz Wicketkeeper batter appeared on a local news channel's show and was asked to share his thoughts on Imad Wasim and Mohammad Amir's decision to come out of international

"Look, they have been really close friends of mine and very good teammates. I always told Amir that you should play cricket for Pakistan," said Sarfaraz.

"I think it's better late than never and they came at the right time as Pakistan needs them. So, I hope that their return would surely benefit the Pakistan team," he added.



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Sarfaraz Ahmed then revealed that he advised Mohammad Amir against taking retirement and opined that it would be beneficial both for the country and the pacer if he continued to play interna-

"Look, I advised Amir at that time too that we should not leave our field," shared

"Obviously, he must have his set of reservations due to which he might have thought he should not play anymore.

"But, wherever he played cricket, he played it really well. So, I think he wasted these two to three years [of his career].

"Had he played for Pakistan, it would have been fruitful both for him and Pakistan but again better late than never.

"It is hoped that the Pakistan team will benefit from Aamir's presence."

Sarfaraz Ahmed then went on to quash the rumours of him moving to the United Kingdom (UK) and stated that he has no such plans as of vet.

# Top-order blitz puts Sri Lanka 314-4 in Bangladesh



LAHORE: A top-order batting blitz brought Sri Lanka to 314-4 and left the tourists firmly in command of the second and final Test against Bangladesh on Saturday

Kusal Mendis top-scored with 93 in Chittagong while openers Dimuth Karunaratne (86) and Nishan Madushka (57) helping power the innings.

Dinesh Chandimal was batting on 34 alongside skipper Dhananjaya de Silva on 15 at stumps.

Bangladesh struggled to make an impact after being put in to bowl, with Sri Lanka batting through the morning session with-

Madushka was run out attempting a double shortly after lunch but Karunaratne and Mendis drove the tourists forward with a 114-run stand.

Hasan sent back Karunaratne, who chopped a delivery into the stumps, before the tea break.

He struck eight fours and a six in his 129-ball innings, surviving a run-out scare on 18 after a mix-up with Madushka while taking a single off Hasan Mahmud. Shakib Al Hasan denied Mendis his 10th Test century, forcing

an edge to Mehidy at second slip. Hasan picked up his second wicket when Mehidy caught Ange-

lo Mathews (23) from the same spot in the first over after the Chandimal struck two sixes to move past his early shakiness before helping Sri Lanka pass the 300-run mark with a four off

Sri Lanka lead the two-match series 1-0 after winning the opening Test by a resounding 328 runs.

## Army, Wapda move in Basketball tournament



#### semis

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army and Wapda moved into the semifinals in the departmental category of All Pakistan 3×3 Ramazan Cup Basketball Tournament here at outdoor basketball courts of Pakistan Sports Complex on Saturday.

The tournament was organized under the umbrella of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) in collaboration with Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

Army Greens, who were having the services of some young players, recorded victory against the Navy by 21-8 points and qualified for the semi-final round. Army's Shiraz Aslam scored nine points while Muhammad Usman scored six points. In the second quarterfinal match Wapda (A) overpowered Police Greens in another one-sided game by 22-10 points. Zain ul Hasan scored 10 points and Ali Raza scored 7 points for Wapda A. In the third quarter final, Wapda Greens defeated Police Blues by 22-9 points while Army (A) won against Wapda Red by 21-17 points.

In the women's category quarterfinals, Army players were far better against AK Club leading with 9 points as the match was concluded with 17-8 points. Army player Aamina Mohsin scored 10 and Aiman Riaz scored 5 points. In the second quarter-final, Lions C defeated Night Blues by 4-13 points. Madiha Nawaz scored six points while Maria Khan scored five points in the match. In the second quarter-final, Lycans C defeated Knight Blues by 13-4 points. Madiha Nawaz scored six points while Maria Khan scored five points in the match while Lycans A defeated Lycans D by 16-5 points and Lycans B defeated AK White by 5-0 points in the quarter-final matches.

Wapda Greens would face Pakistan Army A while Wapda A will face Army Greens in the semifinals of the tournament.

#### Pakistan selectors 'divided' on reasons to change Shaheen Afridi

LAHORE: The controversy over the captaincy continues as the selection committee tasked to decide on the matter by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) "stood divided" on reasons to change Shaheen Afridi as T20 captain, sources told Geo News Saturday. According to the TV report, the selection committee members

cited different issues for replacing the skipper and didn't agree on a single reason regarding Shaheen Afridi's replacement. The ongoing controversy has also "displeased" Afridi, the sources said, adding that the captaincy has been the focus of discus-

sion among players who are currently attending the army fitness camp in Kakul. Meanwhile, the selection committee has also reportedly contacted the T20 captain on the matter.

Babar Azam had stepped down from the captaincy across all formats following Pakistan's disappointing exit from the 2023 ODI World Cup after which the PCB appointed Shaheen as T20 captain and Shan Masood as Test captain.

However, following Lahore Qalandars' poor performance in the Pakistan Super League's ninth edition and the change in PCB setup, Babar has emerged as the top choice for the prized slot.

A meeting was also held on Thursday with PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi in the chair, attended by Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer, along with selection committee members Mohammad Yousuf, Wahab Riaz, Abdul Razzaq, Bilal Afzal, and Director of International Cricket Usman Wahla.

During the late-night huddle, selection committee members presented their recommendations regarding the national cricket team's captaincy.

# The Spokesman

# Called on ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Russian Federation Amb. Albert P. Khoprev calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday

## Pakistan wants to further enhance bilateral cooperation with Russia: PM

**E** City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday while noting the historic cordial ties between Pakistan and Russia, said that Pakistan wanted to enhance bilateral cooperation with Russia in a number of areas particularly in energy, trade and investment.

prime

expressed deep condolences on the loss of precious lives in the Crocus City Hall attack outside Moscow last week and said Pakistan stood in solidarity

prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of Pakistan to hold discussions the Russian Federation Albert P. Khorev who called on him. PM Office Media Wing said in existing level of trade and minister a press release.

The prime minister stressed the need for early convening of the 9th session of the

Inter-governmental Commisof the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit sion (IGC), due to be hosted by with Russia at this tragic hour. Russia later this year. in Samarkand in 2022, the prime minister reiterated his He also urged the Russian side to send a delegation to invitation to President Putin to undertake an official visit to with their counterparts to Pakistan at his earliest convenidentify ways to enhance the

He also thanked President investment ties between the Vladimir Putin for the congrat- actively involved in SCO.

While fondly recalling

their meeting on the sidelines

ulatory message sent to him on his re-election.

The Russian ambassador assured the prime minister that Russia wanted to build stronger ties with Pakistan and said that, in addition to energy, trade and investment, Russia was also keen to enhance cooperation in education and culture.

Both countries are also

## Ambassador hosts Iftar banquet for 'Friends of Ethiopia'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula has hosted an Iftar banquet for Parliamentarians, government officials, diplomatic corps, ambassadors, Ethiopian Diaspora and many prominent figures from the civil society and media of Pakistan. Prominent guests including Senator Mushahid Hussain, Senior Parliamentarian Romina Khursheed Alam, Africa-Pakistan Association President Zafar Bakhtawari, High Commissioner of Mauritius in Pakistan, Rashidally Soobadar and COMSATS Executive Director Nafees Zakaria graced the Iftar dinner.

Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula accorded a warm welcome to the guests upon in Islamabad. Speaking on pia, Pakistan and all over the He said Pakistan was a coun- of compassion, affability and



the occasion, Ambassador world on the holy month of try of generous people who Jemal Beker Abdula congrat- Ramazan that brought blesstheir arrival at his residence ulated the Muslims in Ethio- ings for everyone in this globe. around them in a deep sense

loved to share with others

affection. The ambassador also spoke about Ethiopia and its linguistic, social, religious and cultural diversity. Addis Ababa, the Capital of Ethiopia, witnessed a grand street Iftar on a regular basis giving a festive look during the holy month of Ramazan, he noted. The Ambassador also spoke about social, cultural, political and economic similarities between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He said both countries were heirs of ancient civilizations and shared the values of peace, justice, equality and democracy. The Ambassador expressed gratitude to all the guests for gracing the Iftar dinner with their esteemed presence and stressed that such gatherings were meant to further strengthen the already flourishing bilateral relations between the two countries.

## Japan hires 32 language teachers from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The embassy of Pakistan Tokyo is constantly exploring employment opportunities for Pakistani youth in Japan. In this context, Borderlink, a Japanese human resort company, has hired 32 Assistant Language Teachers from Pakistan in collaboration with the Embassy of Pakistan Tokyo and Overseas **Employment Corporation.** 

On Saturday, a welcome event for teachers was arranged by the embassy. Ambassador Raza Bashir Tarar advised the teachers to exhibit exemplary performance to open more doors for Pakistanis. He also urged them to promote a soft image of our beloved homeland.

## Huawei releases 2023 Annual Report: Performance in-line with Forecast

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Chinese technology company Huawei in its 2023 Annual Report released in Shenzhen has stated that its performance was in line with forecast, having generated CNY704.2 billion in revenue and CNY87 billion in net profits. Throughout the past year, Huawei's ICT infrastructure business remained solid, and its consumer business met expectations. Both its cloud computing and digital power businesses grew steadily, and its intelligent automotive solution business began large-scale

delivery. Huawei values research and innovation. In 2023, the company invested CNY164.7 billion back into R&D, which accounted for 23.4% of its annual revenue. Altogether, ness earned CNY52.6 billion, developers and 46,000 ecosysgent world."

the company's R&D investment over the past decade amounts to CNY1.11 trillion. "The company's performance in 2023 was in line with forecast," said Ken Hu, Huawei's Rotating Chairman. "We've been through a lot over the past few years. But through one challenge after another, we've managed to grow. The trust and support of our customers, partners, and friends around the world is what helped us keep going, keep surviving, and keep growing." 2023 revenue by business: The ICT infrastructure business generated CNY362 billion, up 2.3% YoY. The consumer business tries modernize. Committed recorded CNY251.5 billion, to succeeding through qualiup 17.3% YoY. The cloud computing business brought to make quality one of its core in CNY55.3 billion, up 21.9% competitive strengths. In its YoY. The digital power busi-



up 3.5% YoY. The intelligent automotive solution business generated CNY4.7 billion, up 128.1% YoY. Moving forward, Huawei will keep investing in technology and open innovation to advance technology and help different industy, the company will work hard engagement with 9.5 million

tem partners around the world, Huawei strongly advocates for open collaboration and helping others succeed. With this approach, the company will continue to focus on developing core ICT technologies, as well as building up platform capabilities for complex hardware and sophisticated software systems, which are then opened up to partners to promote shared success. "A new journey awaits us in 2024," Hu concluded. "We will create greater value for our customers and society by driving open innovation, building thriving ecosystems, and succeeding through quality. Here I'd like to thank those who have joined us - annd will join us - along the way. Together, let's make something extraordinary. Let's build a fully connected, intelli-

## **CM Maryam takes notice** as two more injured by loose kite strings

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz sought a report from the Inspector General of police after two were injured due to loose kite

A Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) employee was rushed to hospital after he was tangled in a loose kite string at Nish-

The man, identified as Rizwan, was riding on motorcycles when he was injured due to the kite string.

Officials of the Resue 1122 provided first-aid to the affected who was later moved to the hospital for further treatment.

Another city dweller was injured in Lahore's Model Town when he was entrapped by a kite string.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz expressed concerns regarding the incidents despite strict measures to curb kite flying using dangerous metal strings.



IG of the police, she resolved to put an end to the dangerous practice that was putting the citizens' lives at risk.

CM Maryam also urged the citizens to play their part in stopping the kite flying, saying that citizens should cooperate with the government in this regard.

It is pertinent to mention that Punjab police began a crackdown against kite flying and selling in the province following the death of a youth in Faisalabad.

The police registered cases and arrested kite and metal string makers, while the people were warned against While seeking a report from the kite-flying by public announcements.

## PTI, JI agree to continue 'struggle' for democracy

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on Saturday agreed to continue the "struggle for democracy".

According to details, the resolved was made during a telephonic conversation between PTI leader Asad Qaiser and Acting JI Amir Liaquat Baloch.

During the conversation, PTI leader Asad Qaiser urged the need to move forward by removing misunderstandings. "In the past, there were confusions in line with the contacts," he added.

Meanwhile, Liaquat Baloch said: "We acknowledge the struggle and sacrifices of the PTI workers. The JI is struggling for the uplift of law, constitution, and democracy.'

"There is a dire need to forget the bilateral differences and move forward in a bid to lead towards added.

It is ne

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) offer to form a coalition government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), JI's Central Naib Ameer Liaqat Baloch said following the February 8 elections, the PTI contacted JI seeking a common strategy for government formation.

It added that the JI chief immediately consulted with the central leadership, and officials and established a committee consisting of party's KP chief Prof Muhammad Ibrahim and Deputy Amir Inayatullah Khan under the leadership of Liaquat Baloch.

The statement added that the party informed the PTI of their concerns over the elections, stating that deliberately changing the poll results was a disgrace which would harm the country and democracy.

"JI has decided that coalition with PTI at the national level would be in economic and political stability," he the national interest, but if the PTI has changed its position, then they can settle their affairs with whoever the Jamat-e-Islami (JI) had declined they want in KP," Baloch added.

# Indian navy captures vessel from pirates, rescues 23 Pakistani crew members

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Indian Navy said it had freed a hijacked Iranian fishing vessel from nine armed pirates in the Arabian Sea on Friday, rescuing its crew unharmed.

The fishing vessel, Al-Kambar 786, was southwest of the Yemeni island of Socotra on March 28 when it was reported to have been boarded by pirates, according to a statement from the navy late on Friday.

INS Sumedha and INS Trishul, leading to "over 12 hours of intense coercive tactical measures" forcing the pirates to surrender, the navy said. The crew of 23 Pakistani nationals

were safe, it said. "Indian Naval specialist teams are

presently undertaking thorough sanitisation and seaworthiness checks of the fishing vessel in order to escort her to a safe area for resuming normal fishing activities," the statement said.

India has responded to 18 incidents, deploying 21 ships and 5,000 personnel in rotation, boarding and investigating over 1,000 vessels, the navy said last week. Its unprecedented presence has deployed more than a dozen warships some days. Taking advantage of Western forc-

The ship was intercepted by the es' focus on protecting shipping from attacks in the Red Sea by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi militants, pirates have made or attempted more than 20 hijackings since November, driving up insurance and security costs and adding to a crisis for global shipping companies.

## **ECP** allots election symbols today for by elections on April 21

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan will allot electoral symbols to candidates for by election on 23 national and provincial assemblies' seats.

The election commission has papers of the candidates.

The polling for by elections on six dent of Pakistan. National Assembly and 17 provincial assemblies' seats will be held on

tions on six National Assembly seats, two seats each of KP and Balochistan assemblies and 12 vacant seats of Punjab Assembly.

It is to be mentioned here that People's Party's Aseefa Bhutto Zardari returned unopposed on the National Assembly seat of Nawabcompleted scrutiny of nomination shah, which was vacated after Asif Ali Zardari's election as the Presi-

The election commission announced its schedule of by elections on vacant assemblies' seats The electoral body will hold elecacross the country on March 13.

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