



Pakistan, Iran to enhance trade, cooperation in energy and transport

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday and discussed matters of mutual concern. The PM thanked the President of Iran, Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, for his congratulatory message and telephone call to him... (Details on Page 8)



CM launches Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore initiative

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Tuesday, announced the launch of a 'Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore' initiative, under which all major and minor roads of Lahore will be repaired and constructed, streets paved, tuff tiles installed, and 222,000 streetlights restored. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Progress meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on foreign investment on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM for mechanism to double country's exports in five years

Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for formulation of a strategy aimed at two-fold increase in the country's exports within next five years. He also asked the Ministry of Trade for compiling of such a strategy in consultation with the successful entrepreneurs and stakeholders.
The prime minister chaired a high level meeting on the export sector. The meeting was attended by ministers including Jam Kamal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, prominent E-commerce entrepreneurs like CEO Utopia Jabran Niaz, Zeeshan Shah, Salman Ahmed and other relevant authorities. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister direct-

ed for extending facilitation to exporters in the E-Commerce sector who had been exporting country's product to the world, besides resolution of the issues of "Made in Pakistan" brand exporters.
He said that they were taking steps for maximum utilization of the export sector, adding for the promotion of IT, domestic use item, textile and other exceptional sectors, the relevant stakeholders should be taken on board.
The meeting was apprised of proposals and recommendations for the development of export sector and the strategy in this regard. The prime minister underlined for submission of recommendations over promotion of such industries that were exporting those items which had been part of the global value chains.

FIR registered over 'threatening letters' to eight IHC judges

Naveed Ahmad Khan
ISLAMABAD: A first information report (FIR) was registered over suspected threatening letters sent to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges on Tuesday.
The FIR was registered on the complaint of IHC clerk Qadeer Ahmed at the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) police station.
In his complaint, Ahmed said that he distributed at least eight letters placed in envelopes addressed to IHC judges.
However, court employee Qamar Khurshed in a telephone call warned him against opening

the envelopes, saying that they contained a chemical, he added.
According to the complainant, all of the readers at the court were then advised to not open the envelopes.
He went on to add that "white powder" was found in the envelopes after four of them were opened later.
Ahmed said that the contents in envelopes had criticised the justice system while referring to the "Tehreek-e-Namoos-e-Pakistan".
Earlier today, as many as eight judges, including the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court, reportedly received letters

containing 'anthrax'.
According to court sources, one of the letters was opened by a judge's staff and was found to contain an unidentified powder.
A team of experts from the Islamabad Police reached the premises of the Islamabad High Court to analyse the situation upon discovery of the suspicious substance.
The primary focus of the investigation revolves around determining the nature of the powder and its potential threat.
Court sources disclosed that along with the powder, the letters also contain threatening signs.
As per sources within the

court, the letter was written by a woman named Resham, with no specific address indicated.
The IHC came under the spotlight after six of its serving judges penned a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), urging it to summon a judicial convention to review the matter of "interference of intelligence agencies with judicial functions".
IHC top judges - including Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Baqir Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, and Justice Salman Rafat Imtiaz - penned the letter to SJC in the

aftermath of Supreme Court's March 22 judgement on Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's dismissal case.
A day earlier, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa took suo moto notice of IHC judges' letter in which they alleged interference by intelligence agencies.
The Supreme Court's seven-member larger bench including Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan will conduct a hearing on the case on Wednesday.

Ruling coalition sweeps Senate elections on 19 seats

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The ruling coalition won 18 out of 19 Senate seats on Tuesday unofficial results showed. Polls were postponed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the dispute over swearing in opposition members elected to reserved seats.
Elections were contested on as many as 19 seats - 12 seats in Sindh, five seats in Punjab, and two seats in the federal cabinet. A total of 11 seats in KP would also have been up for grabs if the elections took place.
According to the breakdown, the PML-N won six, the PPP 11 while the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan bagged one seat. Tuesday's victory has increased the N-league's

number in the Upper House of Parliament to 19 while the PPP's have risen to 24.
Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, and independent candidate Faisal Vawda won Senate seats.
In a post on X, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the successful senators and said the polls were a continuation of the democratic process.
"It is hoped that senators will play their role for the upliftment of the Constitution and the development of the country. Newly elected senators should participate in effective legislation for public welfare and national development and prosperity," he said.
The voting began at 9am and continued until 4pm.

Omar Ayub appointed NA opposition leader

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Omar Ayub Khan has been appointed Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly (NA) following the process of scrutiny. As per details, NA secretariat has issued a notification of the opposition leader in the Lower House of the Parliament.
The development follows after the nominated candidate for the opposition leader Omar Ayub, along with PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar and Aamer Dogar called on the National Assembly speaker wherein Ayaz Sadiq apprised Omar Ayub that a notification would be issued.
The appointment of the Leader of the Opposition and the Parliamentary Leader in the National Assembly was delayed due to disagreements over the issue of the Leader of the Opposition and the Parliamentary Leader within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

China to provide necessary assistance to Pakistan in Dasu attack: Wang Wenbin

Spokesman Report
BEIJING: China firmly supports Pakistan's counterterrorism measures and will provide necessary assistance in the investigation of Dasu terrorist attack, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday.
China firmly support Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question about Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's assurance of foolproof security measures for the Chinese national working on Dasu Hydropower Project as well as across the country and

exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of March 26 attack.
The spokesperson said, since the attack, China has been in close communication with Pakistan and added, we hope that Pakistan will get to bottom of what happened with utmost resolve and efforts, bring the perpetrators and whoever behind the attack to justice and do everything possible

to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in the country.
Wang Wenbin remarked that China firmly safeguards the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions overseas. "China will provide necessary assistance to Pakistan in the investigation of the case," he said and added, the terrorists will pay the price.
The prime minister visited the Dasu hydropower project days after five Chinese engineers and their Pakistani driver were killed in the terrorist attack on March 26 in Bisham city of KP's Shangla district.

Ministries given targets to provide early relief to people: Tarar

Bureau Report
LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that all ministries had been given targets aimed at overcoming challenges facing the country.
In a press conference at the PML-N's Secretariat here, he said that in yesterday's meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave short, medium and long term targets to all ministries aimed at bringing betterment to the people. "The Cabinet consist of experienced people, youths, seasoned politicians and technocrats," he added.
He said that the Prime Minister had decided to evaluate the performance of each ministry and key performance indicators had also been set for them.

Grand opposition alliance to launch anti-government movement after Eid

Naveed Ahmad Khan
ISLAMABAD: The Grand Opposition Alliance formed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and other major opposition parties announced an anti-government movement after Eid-ul-Fitr.
According to sources, the newly formed opposition alliance - also comprising, Sunni Ittehad Council, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) and Balochistan National Party (BNP) - would be holding the first joint public gathering in Quetta on April 14.
Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) also hinted at joining the opposition alliance as its Liaquat Baloch said that his party will make a final announcement after the approval of Majlis Shura.
The Grand Opposition Alliance would also be holding public gatherings in other parts of the country to protest against 'massive' rigging in the elections. The schedule for public gatherings in other cities would be announced later in consultation with all parties.
Sources privy to the development said that the Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman-led Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) would also be approached to join the opposition in the movement against the government.
BNP Chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal has been tasked to

contact Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman and Jiye Sindh Party. The Grand Opposition Alliance would carry out the movement with a motto of 'non-interference in politics, an independent judiciary, rule of law and supremacy of people'.
Earlier in the day, six major opposition parties including PTI held a meeting and discussed forming the 'grand opposition alliance' to give a 'tough' time to the government. Chairman PTI Gohar Ali Khan, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Liaquat Baloch, and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Achackzai attended the meeting.
Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) head Allama Nasir Abbas and Balochistan National Party (BNP) Chairman Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub and Asad Qaiser were also present on the occasion.
A press statement after the meeting said that all parties participating in the meeting rejected the 'manipulation' in the results of the general elections 2024 elections.
"The fake govt was strengthened and the unelected people were imposed with a fake mandate. All kinds of interference in politics should be stopped immediately. All the institutions should adhere to their respective limits according to the constitution," the statement said.

PTI attempts to politicize matter of judges' letter: Law Minister

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Tuesday said that statements of Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI), and its founder were an attempt to politicize

the suo-motu action of Supreme Court in matter of IHC judges' letter.
Giving reaction on a statement of PTI leader Barrister Gohar, the minister said that only the Constitution would be followed in this country, adding that what the PTI

founder said was not a law. He said that those who had been making references against judges in their regime shouldn't give advice to the government.
The law minister said that Barrister Gohar who himself was a lawyer should know that the

bench has been formed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution. Azam Nazeer Tarar said that a full court of SC has issued a declaration for interrogation of the judges' letter.
He said that it was the discretion of the Chief Justice of Pakistan

and a committee of senior judges to form the bench on any matter.
The minister said that it would be good for the country as well as for the judiciary if an important matter pertaining to the independence of the judiciary wouldn't be politicized.



Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to support Boy Scouts movement

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Scouting is a movement through which self-confidence and leadership skills can be developed not only among the youth but also among other groups. Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq said this today while meeting Provincial Secretary of Punjab Boy Scouts Association Tariq Qureshi.

He said that without doubt, through scouting, the paths of spiritual, mental, physical and social development of youth can be opened by involving them in healthy activities. He said that the business community of Faisalabad is fully aware of the importance and usefulness of this organization and will play its best role in the development of the Boy Scout movement.



He said that all possible efforts will be made to organize and coordinate this movement in Faisalabad.

He said that establishment of scout open group at the chamber level will also be reviewed so that the business community can also improve their leadership skills by participating in various courses. He emphasized on the connections with the Scout Association to provide this facility to the students of The Noorani Foundation and Labor Welfare Schools so that the students associated with them can also be a practical part of this movement.

On this occasion, Tariq Qureshi told them about the scout movement, its aims, objectives and procedures and said that efforts are being made to develop the boy scout movement in

Punjab and in this regard they need financial support from the business community. He said that there are offices of Pakistan Scouts in 5 divisional headquarters of Punjab, but Faisalabad is not included in them. He said that the staff of Rescue 1122 is also trained in scouting.

He said that this movement is currently limited to government educational institutions, but it is also being examined to extend its scope to private institutions.

He further informed that a 7-day desert hiking program has also been started, during which the students walk about 22 kilometers daily in the desert and learn the skills of living in difficult conditions. Dr. Khurram Tariq expressed his keen interest in the Scout movement and assured that he would fully cooperate with the organization.

Assistance

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust distributing Ramadan Food Packages to deserving and needy families in F-9 Park in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

NTS, Azad Kashmir education department reach historic agreement on teacher recruitment

MUZAFFARABAD: A historic agreement was reached between the well-known recruitment agency National Testing Service (NTS) and the Department of Education Schools for the recruitment of teachers in the Department of Education.

In the presence of Education Minister Diwan Ali Khan Chaghtai, Secretary Education Schools Razzak Ahmed Nadeem and Regional Head NTS Colonel Retired Yusuf Jamal signed the agreement. On this occasion, the officers of the Department of Education and Secretariat Education Schools were also present. In the agreement between NTS



and the Department of Education, paper-based procedure has been introduced by doing away with circle-wise and interview marks to ensure transparency.

Under the agreement, the education department has been empowered to make temporary appointments to run the interim system until the NTS exams are held.

After the agreement between the education department, schools and NTS, the largest recruitment process in the history of Azad Kashmir, i.e. more than 3000 teachers, has been started and the regular advertisement has been published in a couple of days. will go Addressing the ceremony, Minister of Education Schools Diwan Ali Khan Chaghtai congratulated the Secretary Schools and his team on the implementation of the first education policy across Pakistan and the agreement with NTS, saying that for establishing the supremacy of merit and transparency, the current Prime Minister

and His cabinet has itself removed the interview marks from the new NTS contract, overriding its discretion. Secretary Education Schools Razak Ahmad Nadeem said that the agreement with NTS is a milestone under which the biggest recruitment is going to be done in the education department. Under the agreement with NTS, the Ministry of Education had full patronage of schools. This agreement has been made in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq to ensure recruitment on the basis of competence and ability in a clear and transparent manner.

Saraiki leaders hail spring and Love Rivers at 'April Flower' ceremony

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Welcoming spring and loving rivers, our destination is the province of Saraykistan. These views were expressed by Saraiki leaders Zahoor Dharjia, Engineer Shah Nawaz Khan, Zafar Mulghani, Malik Javed Chand Advocate, Ajmal Khamosh, Razzak Zahid, Zubair Hasan Bhapla, Malik Iqbal Nandla and others spoke during the speech.



On this occasion, the ritual of putting flowers in the river Chenab was performed and flowers were put in the river Chenab while Saraiki singers presented songs in love with the river. Addressing the event, the Saraiki leaders said that the people of Saraiki Wasib love rivers and the message of

today's event is to love the rivers, instead of throwing garbage in the rivers, keep the rivers clean. Zahoor Dharjia said in his speech that every year we condemn the false civilization of the West and propagate the truth and reiterate our ancient cultural love for rivers.

He said that our destination is Saraiki-

stan. We will take our province anyway. Resolutions were passed on the occasion, which called for the creation of a province of Saraykistan comprising the cultural, cultural and geographical identity of the Saraiki Wasibs, provision of water from rivers and representation of the Wasibs in Arsa, Greater Thal and Kalabagh Dam in the resolution.

Malik Ali Hasan Bhapla, Sharif Khan Lashari, Malik Majid Jard, Ayaz Mehmood Dharjia, Zubair Vance, Mumtaz Dharjia, Ramzan Lashari, Malik Akram Jard, Malik Arham Jard, Social Star Sana Khan, Ayesha Kanwal, Afzal Ansari, Rubina Bukhari, Maqsood Bhutta, Siraiqi poets Maher Ajmal Khamosh, Javed Shani, Ashraf Mishkoor, Abdul Razzak Zahid, Anjum Bhutta, Murad Abadi, Zafar Dahan, Nazir Farid Bodla, Iqbal Arshad, Ashraf Pathane Khan and others were present.

Green Tourism Company 'fake' propaganda campaign against Azad Kashmir projects 'baseless'

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Recently some negative elements have started a baseless propaganda campaign against the Green Tourism Company in Azad Jammu and Kashmir which has nothing to do with reality. Green Tourism Company is dedicated to promoting tourism through eco-friendly projects as well as developing it on modern lines which is working on that will play an important role in the economic development at the national and regional level. It is noteworthy that Azad Kashmir has a rich tourism potential, the first right to benefit from which is the people of Azad Kashmir who deserve equal opportunities for development like the rest of the country. By promoting tourism in Azad Kashmir, where the local people will be provided with the best employment opportunities, it will also ensure a better future for the people.

The zealous and informed people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir are happy with the initiatives of Green Tourism Company, while the tools of some external forces and elements hostile to the development of Azad Kashmir are misleading the public by spreading false information for their personal interest and political purposes. Green Tourism Company's eco-friendly projects will play a key role in the construction and development of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, which will ensure a safe and sustainable future said Press release.

Sardar Attique met to Mehrul Nasa



Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, was met by Secretary General Ms. Mehrul Nasa Sahib and Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan and congratulated him on performing Umrah. In addition to this, on the occasion of the death anniversary of the late Mujahid Awwal Sarfaraz Abdul Qayyum on the 22nd of Ramadan, the late Rais-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, the late Ghazi Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim, all martyrs, for the freedom of Kashmir and Palestine, for the security of Pakistan. Prayed for. May Allah protect Pakistan from internal and external threats. President Muslim Conference prayed for the Muslim Conference workers who stand steadfastly with the Jamaat in adverse conditions and difficult times.

CTD arrests 22 terrorists linked with banned groups after Bisham attack

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Punjab province has foiled a major terror plot by arresting 22 terrorists linked with a different banned out-fits during operations after Chinese Engineers Attack in Bisham in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 232 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 233 suspected persons were interrogated and 22 terrorists were arrested with weapons, explosives and other prohibited materials.

Among the arrested terrorists are Sanaullah, Muhammad Shahzad, Mudassar Taj, Fazl Maula, Syed Muhammad Ilyas Saddam, Gul Azam Asadullah, Rahmanullah Qari, Muhammad Samiullah, Shafiq Asif, Syed Nabi, Fahad Islam, Zeeshan Akhtar, Raza Baig, Muhammad Osama Azam, Muhammad Zubair Qasmi, Shoaib Akhtar, Abed Irfan Abbasi, Syed Abdul Halim, Abdul Rehman Khodai, Umar Farooq Sohail, Rana Muhammad Yasir and Muhammad Kausar, he said and added that they belong to the banned organizations Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah Sahaba, Baloch Liberation Army, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizb-ul-Tahrir.

He said that the arrest of these alleged terrorists was carried out during intelligence-based operations in Chakwal, Mianwali, Khaniwal, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Bahawalnagar, Attock, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Bahawalpur, Mianwali and Jhang. The explosive material 3332 grams, IED bomb 03, detonators 27, safety fuse wire 60 feet, Prima Card 5.1, prohibited books 06, pamphlets 102, 89 stickers of banned organization, receipt books 07, 2 mobile phones and cash of Rs 66055 were recovered from the possession of terrorists, he said.

He said that 1081 combing operations were also conducted during this week with the help of local police and security agencies, 43792 persons were checked, 149 suspects were arrested, 134 FIRs were registered and 99 recoveries were made during these operations. The Counter Terrorism Department Punjab is diligently pursuing its goal of a safe Punjab and no stone will be left unturned in its efforts to bring terrorists and anti state elements behind bars.

Eid mela to celebrate happy Eid at Women University Multan campus

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Community Service Eid Mela was organized by the Department of English at Katchery Campus the Women University Multan. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Kalsoom Pracha was the chief guest. Various stalls were set up in the mela including mehndi and bangles, embellished clothes stalls and artificial jewelry stalls. A stall was also set up keeping in mind all the employees, the price limit was kept from 10 rupees to 200 rupees. The fair started at 10 am and continued till 4 pm. Addressing the inauguration ceremony Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Kalsoom Pracha said that Eid is the name of sharing happiness without discrimination. It is an occasion of spreading smiles on sad faces which is a great service to humanity. She said that every employee played a very important role in the development of the university and their untiring efforts and services will always be valued by the university. Focal person Registrar/ Chairperson Department of English Prof Dr. Mamoon Khan said the purpose of this festival is to equally involve our employees in the happiness of Eid, which is the greatest virtue. The event was attended by Controller Examinations Dr. Hina Ali, Director Students Affairs Dr. Adeela Saeed and all chairpersons.





Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:29 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 4:42 pm
Maghrib 6:30 pm
Isha 7:54 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224

PMLN govt is working day and night to end the rising inflation and economic depression

Khalid Chaudhry

MULTAN: District Acting General Secretary of Muslim League-N Multan, Rana Abid Boxer, has said that the party leadership should form committees at the tehsil and district levels to give a legitimate place to the ideological workers who made sacrifices in government institutions, like the committees formed in the previous regime. They were given to solve the problems faced by the people Abid Boxer further said that the present government Day and night to end rising inflation and economic depression.

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry visits National Emergencies Operation Centre

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) visited National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) to gain insights into its operational capacity at NDMA HQs today. The visit aimed to familiarize the delegation with the cutting-edge facilities and protocols in place to handle emergencies effectively.

The delegation was given a detailed briefing on the operational capabilities of the NEOC by Chairman NDMA, Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik HI(M). They were given a comprehensive overview of the center's state-of-the-art infrastructure, advanced technology and the skilled personnel tasked with managing emergencies of various scales.

President of Islamabad Chamber of



Commerce & Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri, expressed his admiration for the NEOC's impressive capabilities and its commitment to safeguarding the people of Pakistan. He lauded the center's proactive approach towards ensuring the safety and well-being of the citizens, emphasizing

ing the critical role it plays in emergency response and disaster management.

The visit concluded on a positive note regarding futuristic cooperation, collaboration efforts and capacity building of the nation's emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Shan-e-Mustafa

ISLAMABAD: Poet Shahida Lateef presenting her newly published book Shan-e-Mustafa (SAW) to the Chairperson Dr. Najiba Arif in presence of Dr. Prof Ehsan Akbar and Naseem Saahar at the event of Academy of letter in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PIDE unveils comprehensive reform agenda for economic revival

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has launched an ambitious reform strategy, "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda-IMF and Beyond," to propel Pakistan towards economic stability and growth amid its looming financial crises. This initiative, embodying the ideals of rethink, reform, and revive, responds to Pakistan's urgent need for external financing exceeding USD 120 billion over the next five years, as highlighted by the recent IMF Report. PIDE's strategy is a clarion call for a systemic overhaul to ensure economic progress and prosperity, moving beyond the narrow interests that often dominate the discourse on reform in Pakistan.

Former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to address Pakistan's economic challenges. The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has outlined an agenda aimed at tackling key areas such as regulatory modernization, tax reform, market liberalization, energy sector efficiency, and improvements in agriculture and banking. A central component of this strategy is the implementation of a 'Regulatory Guillotine' to eliminate burdensome regulations hindering business growth and innovation.

The PIDE VC further added that the agenda outlines a series of innovative reforms designed to rejuvenate Pakistan's economic landscape.



These include debt restructuring and intensified cooperation with the IMF, comprehensive tax reforms for a more business-friendly environment, and strategic opening of the economy to prioritize exports and modernize import regulations. Addressing the historical event, Dr. Ahmad Waqar Qasim, Dr. Afia Malik, and Dr. Mahmood Khalid Senior Research Economists of PIDE, also took part in presenting PIDE's pioneering study.

Nadeem ul Haque further stated that amidst the urgent need for tax simplification and policy certainty, this budget season demands immediate attention towards streamlining taxes in a revenue-neutral manner and ensuring stability for a decade, with a commitment to refrain from introducing new taxes in each budget cycle. The adverse effects of tax uncertainty and instability, as highlighted by the PIDE State of Commerce Report, cannot be overstated, as they have driven investments underground, hindered firm growth, and impeded corporatization and listing. In addressing the income tax regime, we advocate for a uniform tax rate across all sources of income, with provisions for agriculture income losses carry-forward and adjustment, along with the elimination of the presumptive tax regime and taxes on turn-

SRO-based exemptions within three years, and eliminating tariff cascading. Export subsidies should be contingent on performance, while corporate exporters could benefit from tax incentives tied to export values. Recognizing markets as efficient allocators of resources and wealth generators, it's crucial to address the over-regulation and bureaucratization stifling Pakistan's markets, fostering an environment conducive to investment.

"The power sector crisis in Pakistan extends beyond mere electricity theft or 'kunda' connections; it reflects systemic issues rooted in inadequate management, planning, and centralized decision-making," Afia Malik added.

Vice Chancellor PIDE further stated that Real estate stands as a focal point of discussion, yet its current state reveals a fragmented market marred by insider trading practices like 'qabza'. Reorganizing the market could yield substantial benefits, potentially unlocking a revenue gain of up to PKR 300 billion. Artificially administered prices, such as DC rates and FBR valuations, obstruct market development, compounded by the hindrance posed by multiple land rates for taxation. Regulatory incentivization of informalization hiding exacerbates transparency issues, with real estate agents wielding significant influence. Regulatory negligence has led to file trading becoming the predominant transaction mode. Moreover, zoning rules contribute to urban sprawl and market segmentation. Key decisions entail the abolition of FBR valuation and DC rates, regulatory oversight of file trading by SECP to treat files as securities,

and the separation of regulation from real estate business operations. Additionally, organizing the real estate brokerage sector, revising rental laws, and relaxing zoning regulations for vertical and mixed-use development across cities are imperative steps forward. State-captured real estate represents an underutilized but immensely valuable resource, hindering downtown growth and contributing to urban sprawl nationwide. With thousands of government houses occupying vast swathes of prime land in Islamabad alone, the unrealized, particularly evident in Islamabad where thousands of government-owned properties occupy prime land, amounting to a staggering PKR 2,278.6 billion in unrealized value. Unlocking this potential through rezoning and market-based high-rise developments could attract over USD 58.8 billion in investment, create 351,000 job opportunities, add 44.4 million sq. ft of commercial space, and generate an annual rental income exceeding Rs. 446.8 billion.

In the agriculture sector, bureaucratic approval processes hamper the seed industry, fostering the proliferation of low-quality seeds and imposing unnecessary costs on farmers. Despite the private sector's readiness to lead, inefficiencies in seed testing and approval procedures persist, resulting in limited access to high-quality seeds for small farmers. Addressing these challenges, estimated to yield a potential gain of PKR 1,722 billion, requires discontinuing commodity operations like wheat interventions, implementing market-driven solutions, and stimulating private investment through tax incentives.

AFWO holds event to boost its drive to double enrollment in its charitable schools



PNP

KARACHI: large number of philanthropists, donors, corporate sector representatives, and diplomats attended an event to get support for the philanthropic drive of a Karachi-based non-profit to increase the number of students from backward communities in its charitable schools.

Among the distinguished guests were Malaysian Consul, HE Herman Hardynata Ahmad, and two sons of the UAE Consul General in Karachi, Atiq and Syed.

The primary focus of the event was to raise funds to further the noble mission of the non-profit Al-Furqan Welfare Organisation (AFWO) in providing education to children from deprived communities. The five-year goal of AFWO is to double the number of students enrolled in its charitable schools and expand its geographical reach by establishing new school branches within Karachi as well as in Sindh. The AFWO aims to expand its outreach to other provinces to widen the scope of its impact and to empower underserved communities across the nation with access to quality education and essential resources. Concerned industry leaders from diverse sectors attended the event endorsing AFWO's mission and fortifying its resolve to make a tangible difference in the lives of underserved communities.

The students from branch-1 school of AFWO presented a captivating performance on "Lab pe Ati hai Dua", on the occasion, showing the power of hope and faith in overcoming the challenges.

Aneeq, a student of Class-V at Branch-1, presented a heartfelt speech about his journey at one of the AFWO's charitable schools and the opportunities that the non-profit Al-Furqan has provided to him for a better and bright future.

AFWO President, Rubina Faryal Asif, extended a warm welcome to all guests, acknowledging the remarkable journey her non-profit has undertaken so far, appreciated the performance of the students and emphasised Al-Furqan's commitment to achieving the long-term goals of ending illiteracy and providing quality schooling to children from the deprived families.

With each contribution and pledge of support, the participants of the event reaffirmed their fullest commitment to the noble cause of brightening the future of children from underprivileged families.

Shuja Asad bids a heartfelt bye to Khaie

PNP



KARACHI: In a heartfelt departure from the blockbuster drama 'Khaie,' that recently ended, rising star Shuja Asad bids farewell to his iconic role as Barlas Khan, expressing deep gratitude to his fans, producers, and fellow cast members.

Reflecting on his journey with the character, Shuja Asad shared, 'From the moment I heard Barlas' story, I knew it was meant to be. I had to play him—and I fought so hard to do just that.'

The young actor poured his heart and soul into the role, acknowledging the overwhelming love and respect he received from viewers: 'You brought Barlas to life. You gave him, gave me, SO much love and respect.'

In his Instagram post, Shuja Asad extended special thanks to the producers for taking a chance on him and praised director Wajahat Hussain Syed for shaping him into an artist. He also expressed appreciation to the star-studded cast and dedicated crew who brought 'Khaie' to life. As Shuja bids adieu to 'Khaie,' fans are left reflecting on the impact of Sardar Barlas Khan and the journey they shared with him.

Methodist Church opens door to promote social cohesion



PPA

QUETTA: In a landmark event hosted by the Methodist Church in Quetta, a diverse array of religious leaders and dignitaries gathered for a Dialogue cum Iftar dinner, a collaborative effort between the Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP) and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). Among the attendees was Speaker Provincial Assembly Cap (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, who emphasized the vital need for collaborative endeavours in fostering peace and understanding among communities. Achakzai urged attendees to carry forward the spirit of unity and understanding nurtured during the event, emphasizing that together, they can build a more prosperous and inclusive society.

Nadir Gul, the CEO of PPAF, emphasized the influential role of religious scholars in promoting education, countering extremist ideologies, and advocating for social justice and equality. He reiterated the vision of Quaid-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a Pakistan that embraces religious freedom and unity among all faiths.

Mr. Dawood Bazai, Secretary of Minority Affairs Government of Balochistan (GOB), shed light on the government's initiatives to promote interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and protect the rights of religious minorities.

Zahoor Balidi, a member of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, delivered valuable perspectives on the importance of dialogue and cooperation among various faith communities.

Bishop Khalid Rehmat emphasized the celebration of diversity and social pluralism, urging unity in embracing Pakistan's rich cultural tapestry.

Earlier, while welcoming to the participants Dr. Tahir Rasheed, CEO of BRSP, underscored the importance of cooperation among various stakeholders, including government agencies, donor organizations like PPAF, religious leaders, civil societies, and the media.

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 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Gender Disparity Undermining Pakistan's Climate Policies

Laiba Shamsher

In Pakistan, gender disparities in climate change policies are prevalent. Women, particularly those from underprivileged and marginalized communities, bear a disproportionate burden of the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation exacerbated by cultural norms and limited participation in decision-making processes. It is crucial for women to actively participate in addressing these global challenges and creating a strong barrier against them. In Pakistan, where approximately half of the population consists of women, their active involvement is even more vital. Gender disparity and lack of women participation in decision making has aggravated the climate crisis in various third world countries including Pakistan. But it is concerning that decision-making power about the future impacts of climate change is predominantly held by older males, while young people and women are often the most concerned about taking swift action. For instance, in Bangladesh, gender disparity has been reported to mar the ability to cope with the climate crisis. Women are more likely to be displaced from their homes, lose their livelihoods, and suffer from food insecurity. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index Report 2023, Pakistan ranks 143/146 for economic participation and opportunity, 138/146 for educational attainment, 132/146 for health and survival, and 95/146 for political empowerment. In Pakistan, a predominant patriarchal approach has historically influenced

climate-related decision-making, impacting the country's ability to address environmental challenges effectively. Sherry Rehman, as the former Federal Minister for Climate Change, has made significant strides in advancing climate resilience and environmental coordination in Pakistan.

Patriarchal restraints limit a woman's ability to adapt to climate change, making them more vulnerable to its impacts and the consequences of climate change-induced disasters. After the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) is mainly in charge of creating and executing policies that address the vulnerabilities women face during disasters. The government of Pakistan established National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) in 2012. In 2021, Pakistan updated its policy, focusing on both adaptation and mitigation strategies, with a significant emphasis on nature-based solutions. To further promote gender equality and women's empowerment in climate change discussions and actions, Pakistan introduced its first-ever Climate Change Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) on 21 July, 2021 in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ministry of Climate Change. This plan aims to ensure that women have a say in climate change decision-making and policy formation. However, the lack of implementation of this policy hampers the meaningful inclusion of women's perspectives and needs in policy formulation. It is crucial to prioritize the effective integration of gender into climate change actions to create more inclusive and equitable policies.

The gender gaps in climate change policies are worsened by inadequate

funding allocation for programs that promote women's involvement, empowerment, and education limits their ability to influence climate change policy and effectively mitigate its impact on vulnerable communities, especially women. Moreover, cultural barriers exist that restrict women from being involved in public and decision-making spaces. These barriers are often rooted in traditional gender roles that confine women to domestic responsibilities, limiting their engagement in broader social issues. Additionally, the dominance of hegemonic masculinity reinforces gender inequality by perpetuating the belief that decision-making is primarily a male domain. This power imbalance creates obstacles for women to contribute meaningfully to climate change policies. In contrast, Rwanda, has implemented policies that prioritize women's participation in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation. For instance, Rwanda's National Climate and Environment Fund (FONERWA) ensures that women are represented on its board and that gender considerations are integrated into climate finance decisions. This inclusive approach has helped Rwanda achieve notable progress in climate resilience and sustainable development.

According to Pakistan's First Biennial Update Report submitted to UNFCCC in April 2022, women's vulnerability may increase as a result of existing gender gaps in Pakistan's social structures and the country's climate change policies failing to pay adequate attention to them. In contrast, Sweden has taken a comprehensive approach to gender equality in climate change policies. They have implemented gender-responsive budgeting,

ensuring that resources are allocated to address gender disparities in climate-related initiatives. Sweden has also focused on training programs to empower women in climate-related sectors and promote their leadership roles.

Existing policies, including the National Climate Change Policy and the Climate Change Gender Action Plan, show commitments to gender equality, but their implementation is hindered by inadequate budgeting, absence of gender-categorized data, and cultural barriers that limit women's active involvement. The lack of gender-disaggregated data across various social, political, economic, and environmental issues is a significant challenge. Without data specifically collected on the impacts of climate change on gender, policymakers may not be fully aware of the potential dangers that climate change poses to women. It is crucial for academics and policy experts to have accurate analysis of existing issues, as this forms the basis for crafting effective policy options and evaluating their impact. By prioritizing the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, we can better understand the specific needs and challenges faced by women in relation to climate change, and create more targeted and impactful policies. Moreover, policymakers can ensure women's perspectives are included by implementing gender-responsive policies. Creating platforms for women's involvement in climate change decision-making, providing training, and establishing quotas can help bridge the gender gap. Additionally, fostering an inclusive environment is essential to overcome resistance to change.

Writer is M. Phil-IR student in Fatima Jinnah Women University

Pakistan elected to lead UN Disarmament Commission's 2024 session

Pakistan was unanimously elected Chairman of the UN Disarmament Commission as it opened its 2024 session amid rising geopolitical tensions and concerns over deepening mistrust between some of the world's largest military Powers. A vital subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly, the Commission makes recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament.

"I assure you that – in keeping with Pakistan's ethos and tradition of multilateral diplomacy – I will be an honest broker and a facilitator of dialogue," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said after his election, by acclamation, to head the Commission's 2024 session. "I will be listening to you patiently and attentively, and collaborating with the members of the extended bureau to utilize the available time efficiently and effectively," he told delegates.

The UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, was present. "It is a matter of great honour and privilege to have been elected as the Chairperson of the UN Disarmament Commission's 2024 substantive session," Ambassador Jadoon said. "I extend my gratitude to the Asia-Pacific Group for nominating me to this position, and to all UN Member States for reposing their confidence in me to lead the Commission's deliberations this year." The Disarmament Commission, he said, plays a crucial function as a "deliberative body" on disarmament issues.

It is distinct from the First Committee – which deals with questions of disarmament and related international security issues from a wider and higher political plane – and the Conference on Disarmament – which acts as the 'single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum' to conclude legally binding instruments."

The UN disarmament machinery, Ambassador Jadoon said, has delivered in equally challenging times in the past, and remains well equipped to do so in the present, with the right amount of political will and attention. "We need flexible attitudes based on mutual respect and a genuine understanding of the security concerns of all to build consensus-based and inclusive solutions."



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

The colossal dilemma of Modern Pakistan

Syeda Mahnoor Fatima

Isn't it ironic that it seems like we are living in dark ages. During the period of dark ages people were so fanatic that even a very slight incident that could effect their religious sentiments could lead a person at stake. It seems like Pakistan is still in dark ages. The trail of incidents with respect to blasphemy in Pakistan are enough to corroborate this statement.

Today, my pen is putting down a few drops of ink on a crucial and serious issue (which carries the gravity of a crime and is not limited to just Islam but any religion in the world). Recently, A Pakistani woman accused of blasphemy was surrounded by a mob in Lahore.

The men claimed that the Arabic calligraphy on her shirt depicted Quranic verses, but it actually bore the Arabic word for "beautiful." Since 1990, around 65 individuals have been reported to have lost their lives in Pakistan due to accusations of blasphemy. Additionally, on August 16, 2023, a Christian settlement in the Faisalabad district, Punjab province, was attacked by several hundred people following allegations of blasphemy against two community members. Such exemplary instances are encountered by us in the recent past.

The origins of blasphemy laws can be traced back to the British Raj in 1860, with further developments in 1927. When Pakistan gained independence in 1947, it inherited this legislation from the British colonial rulers.

Back in the early days, blasphemy was viewed as a direct form of disrespect

towards God, involving the use of profane language or mocking His divine powers. In Islam, blasphemy refers to insulting God, Prophet Mohammad, and other respected figures. Both believers and non-believers can commit blasphemy.

Apostasy from Islam and blasphemy against Islam are considered unacceptable. During medieval times, individuals who engaged in blasphemy were perceived as requiring correction. The Quran addresses blasphemy in a specific verse, Q6:108. This verse advises Muslims not to speak ill of the deities of other faiths to avoid retaliation, as it may lead to blasphemy against Allah by followers of those religions. In Islamic law, apostasy can lead to death, imprisonment, or property confiscation, while blasphemy is punishable by death. Converting from Islam to another faith is also viewed as a serious offense under Islamic law.

Now, I wanted to share some Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws. In 1986, the penal code was changed by the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1986. They included the blasphemy law in section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code. This law introduced the death penalty or life imprisonment as punishment for defaming the name of Prophet Mohammad.

Blasphemy laws penalize individuals who make spoken or written statements that are interpreted as showing disrespect for sacred entities. The new blasphemy law in Pakistan is aimed at Shia Muslims. The minimum penalty for insulting revered Islamic figures has been increased from three years to 10 years, with a fine of Rs. 1 million Pakistani rupees. The maximum punishment is life imprisonment, and the

offense of blasphemy is now considered non-billable.

Now the question arises here whether a person can be deemed deserving of punishment for blasphemy based solely on the aspect of offense without any investigation into their actions, as illustrated in the examples given above.

The answer to that is "No". There is no place or tolerance for this in any law of Islam or the world. Those who commit or support this crime should face strict Legal action.

The significant reason behind this enigmatic scourge is the lack of prudence among masses. We may appear to be living in a modern world, but our minds are still stuck in the past. Our minds have not yet awakened to the vastness, which is why hundreds of innocent people have fallen victim to death and continue to do so.. To prevent blasphemy, one possible action that can be taken is to promote education and awareness about religious tolerance and respect for different beliefs. By doing this Blasphemy can be discouraged and banned because it Damages the dignity of innocent, also becomes a reason of their death in various cases and it creates a wrong perception of the country in front of the world which is totally a shameful act. This can help foster a culture of understanding and acceptance, reducing the likelihood of blasphemy incidents. This really will help us to eradicate blasphemy from its roots and a reason to prove that we are living in a modern world not in stone ages.

The writer is a student of Law at University of Sargodha

'Beyond Interference: Redefining the Scope of Judicial Protection' - II

Analysts and jurists criticize the use of the phrase "interference of the executive". They argue that the type of interference faced by the judiciary transcends constitutional boundaries and legal frameworks. Rather than being categorized as executive interference, it should be characterized as unlawful coercion perpetrated by rogue elements within state institutions. These elements employ illicit means to manipulate and intimidate the judiciary, undermining its independence and impartiality therefore cannot be legally termed as executive. As such, they should not be regarded as lawful actors but as unlawful elements seeking to subvert the rule of law through coercion and intimidation tactics.

Henceforth, the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Commission should reflect a proactive approach, beginning with the acknowledgment that unlawful interference with the judiciary has already been substantiated. The Commission should then focus on recommending measures to safeguard the judiciary from undue, unlawful, and blatant interference perpetrated by rogue elements within state security institutions.

Secondly, the Commission should provide practical and actionable recommendations regarding how the lower and higher judiciary can respond effectively to such unlawful interference. These recommendations should empower the judiciary to maintain its independence and integrity in the face of external pressures.

Thirdly, the Commission must address the challenge of fixing responsibility on unlawful elements within the state security apparatus, even in the

absence of concrete evidence and witnesses. Given the sophisticated techniques employed by these elements to conceal their activities, the Commission should explore innovative strategies for holding them accountable.

Fourthly, the Commission should propose the enactment of new legislation and regulations aimed at establishing dedicated security forces tasked with protecting the lower and higher judiciary from unlawful interference, whether originating from within state institutions or external non-state actors.

Lastly, the Commission should recommend mechanisms to ensure the implementation of court decisions and prevent their violation or frustration through selective administrative, legal, or illegal means. These measures should reinforce the rule of law and uphold the authority of judicial decisions in the face of external pressures.

The proposed Terms of Reference (TORs) present a comprehensive and proactive approach to addressing the issue of unlawful interference with the judiciary. They prioritize acknowledging the existing problem and recommending concrete measures to safeguard judicial independence and integrity. By focusing on empowering the judiciary to respond effectively, holding accountable those responsible for interference, and proposing legislative reforms, the proposed TORs offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges at hand.



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

COMSTECH pledges five thousand more fellowships for Palestine in the second phase

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH launches the second phase of COMSTECH-Palestine scholarships and fellowships program in collaboration with APSUP and member universities of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence, on Tuesday at COMSTECH secretariat. The federal minister for science and technology, H. E. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui honored the launching ceremony as chief guest.

Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary informed that in the first phase of COMSTECH-Palestine program 500 fully covered fellowships were announced in various fields of STEM, health and agriculture. He said that in the second phase, APSUP and CCoE universities have generously pledged 5,000 fellowships. He informed that this mega program will also be announced by the OIC Secretary General in Jeddah soon.

Prof. Choudhary said that the unparalleled sufferings of Palestinian people since last seven decades and recent genocide represent the demise of human values and global norms. He said that the world has miserably failed to stop atrocities of unprecedented magnitude in Palestine.

The federal minister for science and technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, said that as the Federal Minister for Science & Technology and Federal Education and Professional Education, I am extremely pleased to launch this timely and most important initiative, a gift of Pakistan to our brethren in Palestine. He appreciated this large scholarships program of COMSTECH with partner universities in Pakistan and other OIC countries.

Dr. Siddiqui said that this initiative



is a reflection of inseparable relationship between Palestine and Pakistan at all levels, as per the vision of our founding Father Quid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He congratulated OIC-COMSTECH, Palestinian Diplomatic Mission, Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA), Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP), OIC General Secretariat and Vice chancellors of the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence universities for their collaborative effort for collective mission.

Dr. Siddiqui said that the Ministry of S&T greatly values the central role that COMSTECH in playing not only in the capacity building of OIC countries through bilateral and multilateral linkages and exchanges, but also its pivotal role in presenting the best of Pakistan's S&T capabilities for the promotion of exports. He said that we greatly appreciate large number of initiatives and programs, which have been launched under the leadership of Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary.

H. E. Hissain Brahim Taha, Secre-

tary General, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said that this collaboration between COMSTECH and leading member universities of the Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan and the esteemed Embassy of the State of Palestine in Islamabad, constitutes an important step in our commitment to support Palestinian universities and researchers. He said that this program represents a beacon of hope amid the challenges being faced by the Palestinian people and we commend COMSTECH for its unwavering dedication to this cause.

He appreciated the leadership of Prof. Choudhary for launching numerous scientific programs for capacity building and development socio-economic development. He invited institutions from other OIC member states to join COMSTECH in expanding the program thereby encouraging a spirit of fraternal cooperation and assistance to the Palestinians. He assured strong support for this program.

The Ambassador of the State of Palestine, H. E. Mr. Ahmed Jawad



Rabei said that on behalf of the Palestinian people, I am pleased and honored to join this launch ceremony of the COMSTECH program, in cooperation with private universities in Pakistan, which is providing 5,000 scholarships for Palestinian students.

He said that the Palestinian issue remains the most important issue in the conscience of the free people of the world, especially in our Islamic world, as the Palestinian blood continues to be shed on our blessed land, Palestine, as a result of the barbaric, fascist, terrorist attack carried out by the Israeli occupation forces, supported by countries—that falsely claim democracy, human rights, child and women's

rights—against our country and steadfast people in attempt to annihilate our people, displace them, abolish their national identity, take our land, and attempt to Judaize the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

He informed that under the guidance of President Mahmoud Abbas, we seek to have an advanced and effective system for education, learning, and vocational and technical training. He said that the Palestinians need support from their Muslim brothers, as the children and students of Palestine, who are being killed by the occupiers, need someone to support and sponsor their narratives. He extended his gratitude and appreciation to Pakistan for

the continuous unwavering support.

The ceremony was also addressed by Dr. Awais Raouf, Chairman board of governors, university of Lahore and Justice Dr. Syed Muhammad Anwer. Both the speakers talked about the historical context of the land of Palestine, its culture and occupation history.

The launching ceremony was attended by the Ambassadors and diplomats of Algeria, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Oman, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, TRNC, Yemen, and Vice Chancellors of the CCoE member institutions, foreign fellows of COMSTECH programs, Palestine students enrolled in Pakistan.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain receiving souvenir from Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H.E. Khazar Farhadov on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

APHC condemns BJP's attempts to destroy Kashmiris' identity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has strongly criticized the Narendra Modi-led Hindutva Indian government for its relentless efforts to obliterate the identity and economy of the oppressed people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement issued in Srinagar on Tuesday expressed grave concern over the escalating atrocities and political injustices faced by the people in IIOJK.

He highlighted that the Modi regime was actively pursuing the Hindutva agenda of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) with the intention of altering the majority character of the territory.

He called upon Kashmiris to unite against these malicious intentions, reminiscent of the land's spiritual leaders like Mir Syed Ali Hamdani and Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA). The spokesman emphasized that the BJP and RSS aimed to revive pre-Islamic Hindu civilization as part of their "akhand Bharat" agenda, leading the BJP regime to relentlessly erode the Muslim identity of IIOJK. He denounced the settlement of non-locals in the region through the issuance of domicile certificates, following the revocation of state subject laws. He underscored that Modi's illegal actions on August 5, 2019, were aimed at stripping Kashmiris of their identity and undermining their legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination.

OPPO Reno11 5G now available nationwide

PPA

LAHORE: The world's leading smartphone brand, proudly announces the nationwide availability of its latest masterpiece, the OPPO Reno11 5G. Priced at PKR 129,999, the Reno11 exemplifies OPPO's commitment to seamlessly blending refined design with cutting-edge technology, spotlighting its Ultra-Clear Portrait Camera System and sleek, ergonomic design. A Marvel of Design and Photography Excellence

The OPPO Reno11 5G emerges as the pinnacle of aesthetic appeal and functional excellence. Featuring a 50MP Ultra-Clear Main Camera with Optical Image Stabilization (OIS), the device redefines mobile photography standards.



Offered in two mesmerizing colors, Wave Green and Rock Grey, inspired by the serene elements of nature.

With its 3D Curved Design, measuring a mere 7.99mm in thickness and weighing 182g, the Reno11 stands out. The slim profile, combined with the Shimmering Silk Design and OPPO Glow technique, ensures the Reno11 is visually captivating and comfortable to hold.

Alms and Food Donation by High Commission of Malaysia's Club



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad under its club -Kelab Suruhanjaya Tinggi Malaysia Islamabad, in collaboration with the Ladies Association of the High Commission (PERWAKILAN Islamabad), handed over alms collection and food distribution to the Anjuman Faizul Islam Orphanage in Rawalpindi.

The Malaysian delegation, led by His Excellency Ambassador Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, was warmly received by the orphanage President, Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmad, along with the centre's administration team and over 300 orphanage resi-

dents. The High Commissioner also inspected the centre's Boy Scouts guard of honour during his arrival.

At the handing over ceremony, President Dr. Riaz expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Malaysian High Commission for their generous contributions during the holy month of Ramadan. He highlighted the institution's history, established in 1943 and sustained solely through public donations, providing a home and education to tens of thousands of orphans aged 3 to 16. Dr. Riaz emphasized the orphanage's commitment to offering formal education and technical skills training in the fields of electrical, mechanical, tailoring, and woodworking, among others.

In his address, Ambassador



Azhar commended the orphanage administration for nurturing its residents into successful adults despite their challenging backgrounds.

He encouraged the orphans to remain resilient and diligent in pursuing their bright futures, underscoring that although they may not have their parents and come from humble beginnings, their potential remains limitless.

Madam Amelia Amani Lee Abdullah, Chairperson of PERWAKILAN Islamabad, echoed similar sentiments, expressing admiration for the orphanage's discipline and pledging continued support. She noted that the modest donation to the 300 orphanages was aimed to assist the administration in any way possible.

Following the formal proceedings, the High Commission delega-

tion toured the orphanage's facilities, including dormitories, kitchens, classrooms, and technical education centres.

Concluding the visit, the High Commissioner reiterated Malaysia's commitment to continue supporting the orphanage and to explore providing vocational assistance to them as well as connecting the orphanage technical centre with Malaysian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

On the same day, as part of its annual Ramadan tradition, the High Commission also distributed more than 350 packs of Malaysia's traditional porridge the 'Bubur Lambuk' to the needy community at Bari Imam town and the security personnel at the Diplomatic Enclave.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan express keen interest to deepen collaboration on regional, international issue



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Europe Today: His Excellency Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, recently engaged in a fruitful meeting with His Excellency Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the Minister of Defence of Pakistan. The encounter focused on bolstering bilateral cooperation between the two nations, particularly in the realms of defense and strategic partnerships.

During the meeting, Ambassador Kistafin extended warm congratulations to Minister Khawaja Asif on his appointment as the Head of the Defence Ministry of Pakistan, expressing sincere wishes for his success during his tenure. Additionally, Ambassador Kistafin provid-

ed insights into the current agenda of Kazakh-Pakistani cooperation and outlined key activities planned for the ongoing year.

Furthermore, Ambassador Kistafin shed light on Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the forthcoming events scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan. Notably, he highlighted the upcoming meeting of Defence Ministers from SCO member states and extended a cordial invitation to Minister Khawaja Asif on behalf of the Minister of Defence of Kazakhstan to attend the event in Astana.

In response, Minister Khawaja Asif emphasized the significant potential for further enhancing cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan across various sectors, including military,

military-technical, and other strategic domains. Expressing gratitude for the invitation, Minister Khawaja Asif affirmed his commitment to participate in the upcoming event in Astana, underscoring Pakistan's dedication to fostering robust partnerships within the SCO framework.

The meeting between Ambassador Kistafin and Minister Khawaja Asif underscores the shared commitment of Kazakhstan and Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen collaboration on regional and international issues of mutual interest. As both nations continue to explore avenues for cooperation, such engagements serve to reinforce the enduring bonds of friendship and cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
66,886.26	66,796.32
Day's High	Day's Low
66,959.54	66,573.63
Index Value	Change
4,236,405,698	+89.94
Percentage	Time
+0.13%	2 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,935.09	-17.53
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	2 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,146.54	-420.31
Percentage	Time
-1.06%	2 Apr, 3:17 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
39,838.91	+35.82
Percentage	Time
+0.090%	2 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	740.4	748.4
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.5	38.9
Danish Krone	40.06	40.46
Euro	302	305
Hong Kong Dollar	35.57	35.92
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	904.55	913.55
Malaysian Ringgit	58.92	59.52
New Zealand \$	167.02	169.02
Norwegians Krone	25.38	25.68
Omani Riyal	723.17	731.17
Qatari Riyal	76.48	77.18
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.4
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	25.72	26.02
Swiss Franc	308.43	310.93
Thai Bhat	7.61	7.76
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.2
UK Pound Sterling	353	357
US Dollar	278.2	281.1

Bank Makramah Chairman of the Board of Directors apprises shareholders of BML's vision to excel in Islamic Banking

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Bank Makramah Limited (BML) held its 18th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the shareholders, headed by Mr. Abdulla Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of BML.

Addressing the shareholders and the bank's senior management, Mr. Abdulla said, "As we gather for our AGM, I am excited to share BML's vision towards contributing to the future of Islamic banking. With a global outlook, we're pioneering a futuristic approach, ensuring convenience to customers through the digitisation of processes. At Bank Makramah we pride ourselves in embracing modernity and introducing tailor-made technological solutions to transform our banking services."



Price control system is flimsy, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Tuesday that the decrease in the dollar's value has reduced the cost of imported goods.

However, it is unfortunate that certain importers are preventing the public from enjoying the advantages of reduced costs because of the compromised price control mechanism in the country, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the importers are filling their coffers instead of diverting the benefit of a strengthened exchange rate to the masses, which authorities should notice.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the import cost of petroleum products has also reduced,

but the price of petrol has increased, which is surprising.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the importers are busy filling their pockets instead of benefiting the people despite the fall of many commodities in the international market.

He said that the price control mechanism in the country is compromised, which is keeping the masses from benefiting despite unprecedented inflation.

He informed the dollar was available for 307 rupees in September last year, which has now decreased to 278. Still, the people are being deprived of its benefits.

The business leader said that the price of imported wheat has also reduced, but the masses are getting flour at high prices. For example, the import cost of wheat, pulses, and many other edibles and the production cost of sugar have also been reduced. Still, people need to be given benefits.



He said that India has started reliev-

ing its people by banning the export of onion and rice. Still, such a decision was not taken in Pakistan, providing an opportunity for exporters and smugglers to take full advantage of the situation at the cost of the masses.

The unabated export and smuggling of onion have increased its prices in the local market, compounding the masses' problems. Still, it has been ignored by those running the show.

Similarly, the prices of poultry, beef, and mutton are continuously increasing, which is expanding people's anxiety, but profiteering continues unabated.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that border security gets relaxed during the Eid holidays, taking advantage of smugglers bringing and dumping goods worth billions of rupees into the country, which should be stopped.

Increase in property tax is condemnable, should be withdrawn immediately. Atif Ikram Sheikh

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said regarding the increase in businessmen friendly tax scheme and property tax up to 400% that taxes should be rational, the priority of the government is to increase the tax net instead of imposing new taxes. If so, the economic situation will improve. The business community wants to pay taxes, but the tax system has to be modernized and simplified because the rotten and difficult tax system is a big obstacle in this way.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said that no one can become a member in the chambers of Pakistan without a tax filer. We pay taxes and are in favor of paying taxes, but taxes should be rational. In the difficult situation of the business community, imposing new taxes will make businesses more difficult.

He said that the increase in property tax up to 400% in the federal capital is cruel and should be withdrawn immediately. We suggest that a meeting be convened in



which all the stakeholders are consulted and a unanimous decision is taken to levy the tax because increasing the property tax with the current ratio will make Islamabad the most expensive city. At this time, the

businesses are almost closed. From where will the business community pay more taxes? We suggest that the government imposes a rational tax in consultation with the stakeholders.

BankIslami Hosts Iftar Dinner for Differently Abled Individuals at Dar-ul-Sukun

PPA

LAHORE: BankIslami recently organized an Iftar dinner at Dar-ul-Sukun, extending its warmth to differently-abled children and senior citizens. This event, held in the Holy month of Ramadan, emphasized the bank's unwavering dedication to foster joy and inclusivity.

The event featured lively activities, such as henna application, face painting, jumping castle, and distribution of Eid giveaways. These activities brought smiles to everyone's faces, and promoted a sense of community and togetherness. The event was also attended by the senior management of JS Bank and BankIslami Pakistan.

On this occasion, the Deputy CEO of BankIslami Mr. Imran Haleem Shaikh stated: "We are humbled to have the opportunity to host this event and spread happiness among



these incredible individuals." He added; "this event serves as a reflection of our corporate values, highlights the importance of compassion and active community involvement. We will continue to make positive impact in the community through such meaningful initiatives."

At the event, the CEO of JS

Bank, Mr. Basir Shamsie highlighted: "JS Bank and BankIslami spearheads such activities, we aimed to spend time with children and senior citizens, celebrating their moments and give them sweet memories." Mr Shamsie emphasized the importance of brotherhood taught by Ramadan, bringing everyone together and, also

appreciated the management of Dar-ul-Sukun.

In recognition of Dar-ul-Sukun's community support, JS Bank and BankIslami presented shield to Mr. Savio Pereira - Chief Executive Officer of Dar-ul-Sukun, and also extended a generous monetary donation to the organization.

Shan Foods unveils new corporate identity amid growing global presence

PPA

KARACHI: Shan Foods, one of Pakistan's longstanding food companies, has unveiled its brand new corporate identity under the name of Shan Shares. The culinary giant, which dominates the South Asian cuisine landscape in more than 70 countries worldwide, has been famous for its 'Taste Happiness' tagline since its inception from a single-room operation in 1981.

The company has remained actively involved in community efforts geared towards its amplifying its Corporate Social Value (CSV) since its early days. Through consistently impactful welfare work in different collaborations, Shan Foods tends to showcase itself as a peoples' brand, dedicated to uplifting and empowering the underprivileged.

Speaking about the new corporate identity, Sammer Sultan, the co-chairperson of Shan Foods, said: "CSR has always been close to us and the company. We have seen many areas where in our farmer-to-consumer chain where we can create a positive impact through our resources and our influence", hence, establishing the Shan Shares as yet another feather in the hat for the company.

The latest and highly-anticipated venture vows to encourage ethical practices across the board within the company, and also aims to utilize its presence and resources across the country to foster meaningful partnerships and memberships that encourage sustainable manufacturing, women empowerment, environmental preservation, educational advocacy, healthcare assistance, and a number of other social causes.

CCP issues show cause notices to fertilizer firms

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued Show Cause Notices to the Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC) and six leading fertilizer companies for allegedly fixing urea prices, a prima facie violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010.

Urea prices play a crucial role in determining the prices of essential food commodities. Any arbitrary increase in urea prices by fertilizer companies can lead to higher costs for farmers, ultimately resulting in more expensive food prices for consumers.

CCP's inquiry found FMPAC and its six member firms, including Engro Fertilizers Limited, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim Limited, Agritech Limited, and Fati-mafert Limited, of prima facie violating the Compe-

titution Law. The inquiry was prompted by an FMPAC's advertisement in November 2021, where they announced a 'Maximum Retail Price of Urea at Rs 1768 per 50kg bag', during a time of rising prices and reported shortages.

The inquiry proceedings revealed that urea prices were deregulated under the Fertilizer Policy of 2001. The advertisement contents were seen as a decision by an association on the sale rate of urea, a violation of Section 4(2)(a) of the Act.

The inquiry also noted a pattern of uniform pricing and price parallelism among urea companies, suggesting potential collusive activity.

Despite receiving subsidized feedstock gas from the Government of Pakistan, which varies in rate for each plant, these companies' prices showed uniformity in some instances. This raises questions about their cost structures and subsidies received.

Pakistan's economy to grow by 1.8 percent in fiscal year 2024: says World Bank

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy is expected to grow by only 1.8 percent in the current fiscal year ending June 2024. According to World Bank's latest Pakistan Development Update: Fiscal Impact of Federal State-Owned Enterprises released today, this subdued recovery reflects tight monetary and fiscal policy, continued import management measures aimed at preserving scarce foreign reserves, and muted economic activity amid weak confidence. The Update also highlights the high fiscal costs of federal state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the critical reforms needed to improve their performance, efficiency, and governance, including via privatizations.

After a contraction in FY23, economic

activity has strengthened over the first half of FY24 on the back of strong agricultural output. This, together with improved confidence, also supported some recovery in other sectors. But growth remains insufficient to reduce poverty, with 40 percent of Pakistanis now living below the poverty line. Macroeconomic risks remain very high amid a large debt burden and limited foreign exchange reserves.

"The structural reforms needed to durably improve the economic outlook are known. Developing a clearly articulated reform implementation plan that is ambitious, credible and that shows quick progress is now essential to restore confidence," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "In particular, better fiscal management will help to lower inflation, narrow the

current account deficit, improve financial sector stability and increase credit to the private sector, all of which are critical for robust economic recovery."

A sustained medium-term recovery will require a prudent macroeconomic policy mix coupled with reforms to improve the quality of expenditures, broaden the tax base, address regulatory constraints to private sector activity, reduce state presence in the economy—including via privatizations, address challenges in the energy sector, and increase public investments to improve human development outcomes.

The Update includes a list of key reforms in ten areas that should be considered for priority implementation to initiate a strong, durable and poverty-reducing economic growth recovery. "The current macroeconomic outlook

potential, with little poverty reduction and continued erosion of living standards," said Sayed Murtaza Muzaffari, lead author of the report. "Risks to this outlook remain high, including uncertainty around policy commitments and reform implementation, financial sector risks, potential increases in world energy and food prices in the context of intensification of regional geopolitical conflicts, slower global growth, and tighter than expected global financing conditions."

The Update highlights the high fiscal costs of SOEs operating in key sectors of the economy. These SOEs have been consistently making losses since 2016, and the government has been providing significant financial support through subsidies, grants, loans, and guarantees, leading to large and growing fiscal

exposure.

"Direct government support to SOEs in the form of subsidies, loans, and equity investments accounted for 18 percent of the federal budget deficit and 2 percent of GDP in FY22," said Quarat Ul Ain Hadi, co-author of the report.

To contain fiscal exposure from SOEs, the report recommends rapid progress with government plans for privatization, restructuring, and divestment—per the 2021 Triage plan. In addition, the update recommends establishing new guarantee issuance rules, mitigating credit risks, ensuring adherence to International Financial Reporting Standards and developing risk monitoring procedures. All SOEs, including those under the SWF, should be covered under the purview of the SOE Act to ensure financial transparency and good corporate

governance practices.

The Pakistan Development Update is a companion piece to the South Asia Development Update, a twice-a-year World Bank report that examines economic developments and prospects in the South Asia region and analyzes policy challenges countries face. The April 2024 edition titled Jobs for Resilience shows growth in South Asia is again higher than any other developing country region in the world at 6 percent in 2024, but that persistent structural challenges threaten to undermine sustained growth. This is hindering the region's ability to create jobs and respond to climate shocks. The report explores pathways countries can take to sustain long-term growth and reduce climate risks by boosting employment and increasing private investment.

Punjab sports minister, Iranian envoy discuss bilateral ties

Tahir Amin Malik

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Khokhar visited Iranian Consulate General on Tuesday where he and Iranian Consul General Mehran Movahhedfar discussed the strengthening of friendly bilateral relations and prospects of healthy sports competitions between the two countries.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Sports Minister said that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran will be expanded and cultural and sports programmes will be conducted between the two countries on regular basis. "Joint sports committee between Pakistan and Iran will also be constituted and made functional".

He said that Pakistan and Iran can cooperate with each other in several fields such as sports, culture, education, research, IT, science and technology and this cooperation can play a vital role in



the development and prosperity of this region.

Iranian Consul General on this occasion said that Pakistan is a country of sports lovers with plenty of talent of

different games. "The world's best sports equipment is produced in Pakistan's city of Sialkot and Pakistan-made footballs are famous all over the world which is definitely a great distinction".

Iranian Consul General Mehran Movahhedfar on this occasion also presented a souvenir to Provincial Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar.

Shan Masood wants Pakistan, India to play Test



A Sports

LAHORE: Test captain Shan Masood expressed his desire to play a Test match against India, stating it would be an honour for him to lead Pakistan against arch-rivals.

Pakistan and India have not played a Test since 2007/08 and a bilateral series in any format since 2012/13 due to the long-standing political tensions between the two neighbouring countries. The fierce rivals, however, only came face to face in multi-national events like Asia Cup and ICC World Cups.

They last met in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2024 at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, which witnessed a mammoth audience of around 130,000 while their T20 World Cup 2022 tie saw around 94,000 spectators filling the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

"My greatest memory has been playing India in the 2022 T20 World Cup at the MCG - it was around 94,000 people and that was surreal," stated Shan in an interview with Wisden Cricket Monthly.

"If we have a Test match in Pakistan or in India, even the Ahmedabad ground, or we play in Pakistan or in a neutral venue, I reckon an India v Pakistan match could sell out any venue in the world. It'd be great.

"You want to play the best teams in the world and India is certainly one of the best, especially when it comes to Test cricket. We just saw a very exciting India versus England series. I would love for that (India v Pakistan) to happen. It'd be a great honour to lead Pakistan against India."

Notably, India made it to the World Test Championship (WTC) final in both editions but Pakistan could not and thus the cricket fans' crave to witness a Test match between the two arch-rivals after a gap of almost 16 years, remained standstill.

But Pakistan captain Shan Masood is banking on the possibility of a Pakistan-India WTC Final, stating "there's always a case". "At the moment it doesn't look likely, but you never know. There's always a case for a World Test Championship final. That would be great," Shan added.

"But we have some work to do. We need to win probably all of our home series and get some points away but we're still in a decent position.

"We have to take it series by series. There's eight months to go before our next Test match so there's still some thinking to do in terms of how we want to approach that."

Pakistan likely to announce 18-member squad for NZ T20I series in two days

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is expected to announce the national squad for the T20I series against New Zealand in a couple of days, as a consultation process has begun to finalise the names in Kakul, Abbottabad, Geo News reported.

Consultation over finalising the names is underway between skipper Babar Azam and national selectors in Kakul, where players are undergoing strict physical training under the supervision of Pakistan Army staff.

A day earlier, the captain and selectors held a meeting with PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi for the same reason.

The sources said since it was a home series, an 18-member squad was expected to be announced. The T20I series is scheduled to take place on April 18 and the visiting team will reach Pakistan on April 14.

Fast bowler Haris Rauf, who suffered a shoulder injury during the recently concluded Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9, is not completely fit and would continue the rehab process.

Govt Jinnah College and Govt College 36-B Landhi moved into the Final of Inter College Ramadan T-20 Cup

Ghulam Ashraf and Sufiyan Usmani declared Player of the Match

KARACHI: Government Jinnah College and Government College 36-B Landhi No.4 moved into the Final of the Inter College Ramadan T-20 Cup after winning all their Group League Matches.

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

Scores in Brief:

Government Jinnah College beat Government College For men by 9 Wickets at Eid Gah Ground Nazimabad. Government College For men 119/9 in 20 overs. Rohail Nisar 39, Ali Rehman 22, Abdul Rehman 21. Muhammad Dawood (mf) 3/14, Ghous



Ibrahim 2/12, Naem Gul 2/33.

Government Jinnah College 123/1 in 14.2 overs. Ghulam Ashraf 53 9x4 1x6,

Rizwan Khan 48 6x4 1x6.

In the another match Government College 36-B Landhi no.4 beat Govern-

ment Pakistan Shipowners College by 24 runs at IBA Karachi University Ground. Government College 36-B Landhi no.4 136/2 in quota of 20 overs. Sufiyan Usmani 56 1x4 1x6, Muhammad Shahmeer Khan 36, Abdullah 21.

Government Pakistan Shipowners College 112/7 in allotted 20 overs. Noor Zaman 30, Abdul Rafay ul Haq 24. Muhammad Qasim (rls) 3/19. After the finish of the Match Chief Guest Jamshed Essa Director Sports IBA Karachi University give the Player of the Match Cash award Rs.5000/= to Sufiyan Usmani. Rahat Ali Shah Coordinator, Arif Waheed, Afzal Qureshi and Muhammad Tariq Hafeez also present on the occasion.

PSG coach Luis Enrique 'very happy' with Mbappe ahead of French Cup semi

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said Tuesday he was "very happy" with star attacker Kylian Mbappe during a press conference on the eve of his side's French Cup semi-final clash with Rennes, as he downplayed rumours of a rift.

Following Mbappe's announcement to the club in February that he would leave Paris at the end of his contract this summer, the Frenchman has seen his playing minutes reduced and he looked visibly unhappy when substituted off with half an hour to play in PSG's 2-0 win at Marseille on Sunday.

Asked about Kylian Mbappe's attitude when leaving the pitch at the Velodrome, PSG's Spanish coach Luis Enrique said: "What's curious is everything that's being said based on a piece of false news.

"Someone has invented an insult (based on a lipreading of a video showing Mbappe as he made his way off the pitch) and then from that comes all kinds of speculations."

After the match, Mbappe posted a photo on Instagram of himself walking



off the field under the rain, holding the captain's armband in his hand - in the absence of Brazilian defender Marquinhos, the attacker was PSG's captain on the night.

"I'm taking it all in my stride. I'm very happy with all my players, Kylian included, he's always behaved admirably," said Luis Enrique at Tuesday's press confer-

ence. Ahead of PSG's fixture with arch-rivals Marseille, the Spaniard said Saturday in an interview with Prime Video that Mbappe "can still change his mind" about leaving.

Although heavily linked to Spanish giants Real Madrid, Mbappe has still not announced where he will play football next season after his current contract

expires with PSG.

Still in contention for three titles - the French league, French cup and Champions League - PSG now enter a crucial phase of their season.

On Wednesday, they will welcome Rennes to the Parc des Princes where they are favourites to book a place in the French Cup final on May 25 in Lille.

The following Wednesday, Luis Enrique's former side Barcelona visit PSG for the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final tie.

"We're all in the same boat, sailing and seeking success," said Luis Enrique of his side's treble quest.

"I'd love this to end well for PSG, for Kylian, for everyone."

On Tuesday, Lyon host second-division Valenciennes in the first semi-final tie of the French Cup with the winners facing either PSG or Rennes in May's showpiece final.

Dominant Sri Lanka inch closer to series sweep over Bangladesh

A Sports

CHITTAGONG: Prabhath Jayasuriya, Lahiru Kumara and Kamindu Mendis took two wickets each to dismantle Bangladesh's batting lineup and propelled Sri Lanka closer to clean sweep the ongoing two-match Test series.

At the stumps on Day 4 of the ongoing second Test, hosts Bangladesh were 268-7, needing a further 243 runs to square off the series.

Lower middle-order batter Mehidy Hasan Miraz retaliated with an unbeaten 44 and forced the match into the fifth day while Tajul Islam accompanied him with a gutsy 10.

Mominul Haque was the only other batter to put up a fight with a brisk half-century. He made 50 off 56 balls before falling victim to Jayasuriya in the last over of the second session.

His dismissal was followed by a crucial 61-run partnership for the



fifth wicket between returning veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and Litton Das.

Off-spinner Mendis provided Sri Lanka with a much-needed breakthrough as Nishan Madushka took a sharp reflex catch at the silly point to dismiss Shakib on 36.

Das followed in the footsteps

of Shakib three overs later as the bottom edge while playing a pull shot drew curtains on his 38-run knock.

Kamindu Mendis broke another important partnership brewing between Mehidy and Shahadat Hossain by trapping the latter leg before on 15.

Opening batter Mahmudul Hasan (24), fellow opener Zakir Hasan (19), and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (20) all perished cheaply.

Resuming at an overnight second innings score of 102-6, Sri Lanka batted just over an hour to add 55 runs to their tally before declaring at 157-7.

Angelo Mathews top-scored for Sri Lanka with 56 runs before he was bowled by his Bangladesh counterpart Shakib after making his 41st Test fifty.

When the declaration came, Jayasuriya was unbeaten on 28 along with Vishwa Fernando, who had scored eight not out.

Debutant pacer Hasan Mahmud led the bowling attack for Bangladesh in the second innings with brilliant figures of 4/65.

Sri Lanka, who never succumbed to a Test series defeat against Bangladesh, humbled the hosts by 328 runs in the first Test at Sylhet.



SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

INVITATION TO BID

T#34/23-24

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan invites bids ONLY through PPRA's e-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (EPADS) from the authorized services providers/principal's authorized dealers/distributors/partners/resellers based in Pakistan and registered with Federal Board of Revenue/Respective Revenue Boards for Income Tax and Sales Tax and who are on Active Taxpayers List (Income and Sales tax) of the Federal Board of Revenue/Relevant Tax Authority for following requirements

S. No.	Requirements	Tender Ref No.	Bid Submission and Opening Date
1.	Support and Subscription Renewal for Oracle ERP Products	T# 34 (i)/23-24	April 18, 2024
2.	Annual Support and Subscription Renewal for VMware software	T# 34 (ii)/23-24	
3.	Annual Support and Subscription Renewal for IBM software	T# 34 (iii)/23-24	

S. No.	Requirements	Tender Ref No.	Bid Submission and Opening Date
1.	Subscription and Support renewal of IBM Guardium	T# 34 (iv)/23-24	April 19, 2024
2.	Support and Subscription for Fortinet Equipment	T# 34 (v)/23-24	

Bidding documents containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement, procedure for submission of bids, bid bond/security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification/rejection of bids etc. against above requirement are available for the interested bidders from the undersigned free of cost and can also be downloaded from <https://eprocure.gov.pk/> OR <https://www.secp.gov.pk/procurement/>

The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding document, should be submitted ONLY through EPADS on or before 1100Hrs of mentioned date with respect to each requirement and will be opened on the same day/date at 1130Hrs.

In case of any technical difficulty in using EPADS prospective bidders may contact PPRA at <https://www.ppra.org.pk/>

In case of any query, Admin Department may be contacted on Telephone No. 051-9195477/051-9195437 during office hours (Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays)

Mr. M. Ubaidullah Khalid, Add. Joint Director (Admin)
 NICL Building, 63 Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area Islamabad

PID (i) No: 5930/23

Condolence meeting

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited the Embassy of China Republic and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolence over the death of Chinese Nationals in a suicide attack in District Shangla.



All political parties unanimously condemn terrorists attack on Chinese nationals: NA Speaker

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Tuesday, unequivocally denounced the terrorist attack on Chinese nationals and said that all political parties have united in their condemnation of this despicable act.

During a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, at the Chinese embassy, he conveyed

profound sorrow and grief over the loss of innocent Chinese lives in the heinous terrorist attack in Shangla Besham.

He said that every Pakistani shares in the grief and sadness caused by this tragic incident. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that terrorists will never succeed in their nefarious designs to create a rift between the two nations. He expressed confidence that Pakistani security agencies, along with the support of the people and parliament, would

soon eradicate terrorism from the soil of Pakistan. Highlighting the significance of bilateral parliamentary cooperation, Sadiq mentioned that it was an honour for him to organize the first Speakers' Conference in 2017 to develop a shared declaration on enhancing regional connectivity and countering terrorism. He underscored the need to revive the Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) between both countries to facilitate the exchange

of parliamentary experiences. He reiterated his commitment to fostering consensus among all political parties in Parliament to devise a unified strategy for safeguarding Pak-China interests, especially projects related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He paid homage to the deceased Chinese nationals by inscribing condolence remarks in the Visitors' Book at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. Chinese Ambassa-

dor Jiang Zaidong thanked the Government of Pakistan, its parliament, and law enforcement agencies for their support and solidarity during this challenging time.

He affirmed that such cowardly acts would not deter China from supporting Pakistan and thanked Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for observing a minute of silence in honour of the deceased Chinese nationals during the proceedings of the National Assembly.

CM launches Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore initiative

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Tuesday, announced the launch of a 'Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore' initiative, under which all major and minor roads of Lahore will be repaved and constructed, streets paved, tuff tiles installed, and 222,000 streetlights restored.

The CM gave a 3-month deadline to complete the comprehensive development plan of Lahore, saying that she wanted to see every street and neighborhood clean. She said that she herself will review its implementation after every ten days. People should also support the government in this cleanliness drive, he appealed. She also directed to make all water filtration plants of Lahore functional at the earliest.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, former senator Pervaiz Rashid, Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azma



Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Minister for Local Government and Community Development Zeeshan Rafique, MPA Sania Ashiq, Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, Secretary Housing, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and other officers concerned attended the meeting.

Gandapur says will step down if fail to get KP's rights

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Tuesday asserted that he would resign from his position if fail to take back province's due rights.

In a statement, the KP chief minister regretted that the Constitution of Pakistan is being violated repeatedly, noting that they won't allow lawmakers elected on reserved seats to take an oath.

"Those who became assembly members illegally will not be allowed to take oath, we will not compromise on our constitutional right," Ali Amin Gandapur said.

"PTI founder Imran Khan had urged the need to seek the rights of the province. I will take every step for the sake of the uplift of the province," he said, adding that he would meet the premier and use all the ways to get the



rights of the province.

He reiterated the claim that the rigging was carried out in the recently held elections, saying: "The fake cases against us should be ended soon, otherwise, we will use all other means."

"Only 25 from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and 13 from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) emerged victorious in the general elections," GM Gandapur alleged.

Meanwhile, KP chief minister further also called for the formation of the full-bench court in line with the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) judges letter.

Pakistan, Iran to enhance trade, cooperation in energy and transport



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday and discussed matters of mutual concern.

The prime minister thanked the President of Iran, Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, for his congratulatory message and telephone call to him following his re-election.

He underscored that Pakistan attached great importance to Iran and the two countries enjoyed historic and brotherly relations.

The prime minister fondly recalled his meeting with the Iranian President when they jointly inaugurated a border market and an electricity

transmission line in May 2023. The two leaders had also met on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Samarkand in 2022.

He stressed the need for both sides to work together to enhance trade, energy cooperation, road and rail connectivity, cultural exchanges, counter terrorism efforts and security cooperation.

The prime minister appreciated Iran's support on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir. The situation in Palestine was also discussed in the meeting.

The Iranian Ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him and shared an overview of the current state of bilateral relations.

He also affirmed Iran's desire to further strengthen its relations with Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest.

UAE envoy calls on Commerce Minister Jam Kamal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, on Tuesday engaged in a fruitful discussion with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce. The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest and strategies to enhance bilateral trade.

During the meeting, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal, emphasized the strong brotherhood relations between the two nations, which have continued to strengthen over time, said a press release issued here. He emphasized the need to further bolster these ties on the commercial front.

Ambassador Al Zaabi echoed Minister Kamal's sentiments, expressing the UAE's desire to see Pakistan thrive across all sectors.



Despite existing challenges, he highlighted the untapped potential for increasing trade volume between the two countries.

Al Zaabi underscored the deep-rooted and unique relations between Pakistan and the UAE, emphasizing their strength and significance. Minister Kamal reiterated the vast opportunities for collaboration, particularly in fostering people-to-people business relationships. Both dignitaries expressed their commitment to exploring avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and cooperation in various sectors.

PTI founder claims Bushra Bibi poisoned in Bani Gala sub-jail

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday alleged that his wife Bushra Bibi was poisoned at the Bani Gala sub-jail.

The former prime minister made the startling revelations during a hearing of the £190 million settlement case in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail.

During the hearing, Imran Khan informed the accountability court judge that the former first lady had marks on her skin and tongue after "being poisoned".

"The court should pass an order for the medical examination of Bushra Bibi," he said. The PTI founder demanded that Bushra Bibi should be examined by Dr Asim of Shaukat Khanum hospital.

At this, the court directed PTI founder to submit a written application seeking the medical examination of Bushra Bibi. Earlier today, former first lady also alleged that in a poisoning bid floor cleaner was mixed in her food.

In an informal talk with media outside the accountability court after attending hearing of 190 million pounds graft case, Bushra alleged that on Shab-e-Mairaj, floor cleaner was added in her food.

It was found in research that consumption of the floor cleaner leads to deteriorating health condition one month after it being consumed.

"I am experiencing swelling in the eyes, discomfort in the chest and stomach, as well as a bitter taste in food and water," she said.

Bushra Bibi said, earlier something was also mixed in honey used by her.

Customs bust 530 tons of tea in Karachi warehouse

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Customs busted a massive amount of black tea being hoarded illegally in Karachi on Tuesday.

According to sources, Customs raided a warehouse in Hawkes Bay and found 530 tons of black tea which was illegally stored there.

Authorities believe that the tea's value could be as high as Rs1.6 billion.

Custom intelligence had started monitoring a consignment of 14 tons of tea that had been cleared by Port Qasim collectorate based on a tip off.

The intelligence team found that the subsidised tea was transferred to Abdullah Warehouse in Hawkes Bay instead of being transported to Kashmir.

At this the team sprung into action and recovered the hoarded tea in the warehouse.

Authorities believe that almost 3,000 tons of tea have been sold in Karachi without paying tax. The operations caused billions of rupees in losses to the national exchequer.

Tea is one of Pakistan's biggest imports, with \$336.423 million being imported in the last year alone.

PIA air hostess rearrested in Canada on drug possession charge

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The arrest of Pakistan International Airlines air hostess Hina Sani has taken a new turn after being rearrested after a drug possession charge.

Canadian authorities arrested Sani again in Toronto after ice was found in her shoes.

A PIA spokesperson has confirmed that the hostess was sent to jail without specifying the charges framed against her. The latest development reportedly took place around easter holidays. Sani is expected to be presented in court soon.

US anti-Muslim incidents hit record high in 2023 over Israel-Gaza crisis

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Reported discrimination and attacks against Muslims and Palestinians reached a record high in the US in 2023, driven by rising Islamophobia and bias as the Israeli bombardment of Gaza raged late in the year, data from an advocacy group showed on Tuesday.

Complaints totalled 8,061 in 2023, a 56 per cent rise from the year before and the highest since the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) began records nearly 30 years ago.

About 3,600 of those incidents occurred from October to December, CAIR said.

Human rights advocates have similarly reported a global rise in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian bias and antisemitism since the latest eruption of conflict in the Middle East.

US incidents have included the fatal



October stabbing of six-year-old Palestinian American Wadea Al-Fayoume in Illinois, the November shooting of three students of Palestinian descent in Vermont and the February stabbing of a Palestinian American man in Texas.

CAIR's report said 2023 saw a "resurgence of anti-Muslim hate" after the first ever recorded annual drop in complaints in 2022. In the first nine months of 2023, such incidents averaged around 500 a

month before jumping to nearly 1,200 a month in the last quarter.

"The primary force behind this wave of heightened Islamophobia was the escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine in October 2023," the report said.

The most numerous complaints in 2023 were in the categories of immigration and asylum, employment discrimination, hate crimes and education

discrimination, CAIR said. Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, killing 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's subsequent military assault on Gaza has killed over 32,000 people, according to the local health ministry, displaced nearly all its 2.3 million population, put Gaza on the brink of starvation and led to genocide allegations, that Israel denies.