

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
 اُس دن ہاں کہہ رہی اللہ عز و جل سے روایت ہے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا آپس میں بغض نہ رکھو اور ایک دوسرے سے حسد نہ کرو پیچھے پیچھے کسی کی برائی نہ کرو بلکہ اللہ کے بنوے اور آپس میں بھائی بھائی بن کر رہو اور کسی مسلمان کے لیے جائز نہیں کہ کسی بھائی سے تین دن سے زیادہ تک بات چیت بند کرے۔
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Israel's Netanyahu: No Gaza truce without release of hostages

Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Israel would not agree to a ceasefire after six months of war against Hamas in Gaza until the hostages being held in Gaza are released. His comments made at the start of a weekly cabinet meeting came as a new round of truce talks in Egypt are set to begin. He said that despite growing international pressure, Israel would not give in to "extreme" demands from Gaza's rulers Hamas.



Islamabad starts work to complete 80km section of Pak-Iran gas pipeline

With Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's expected visit to Pakistan on April 22, authorities have commenced the work to begin the construction of the 80-kilometre section of the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline from Gwadar to a point where it can be connected with the Iranian section of the project. The News reported on Sunday. As per the publication, citing a senior official of the Energy Ministry, the IGS has already issued tenders.

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Bilateral ties

MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz meets with Saudi Crown Prince His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud on Sunday.



Photo: PID

PM, Saudi Crown Prince discuss bilateral ties

Spokesman Report

MAKKAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud at Iftar on Sunday and discussed bilateral ties and matters of mutual interest.

The Prime Minister along with his delegation was invited at Iftar by His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif conveyed prayers and best wishes for the health and well-being of

the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

He expressed gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him and his delegation by the Saudi authorities.

Both leaders appreciated the upward trajectory of long-standing fraternal relations.

The two leaders reaffirmed common resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties.

After Iftar, a bilateral meeting was also held followed by a one on one meeting between the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

President summons Senate on Tuesday

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the Senate to meet in the Parliament House, Islamabad on Tuesday, the 9th April 2024

at 09:00 am.

The President summoned the Senate session in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of article 54 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Two killed, five including cops injured in Khuzdar blast

Waseem Rind

KHUZDAR: At least two were killed and five injured including two police man and a woman in a blast near Umer Umar Farooq Chowk in Khuzdar, Balochistan.

Khuzdar Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan told media that the bomb was planted in a motorcycle parked in the middle of a chowk.

Security forces reached the spot and cordoned off the aread. Rescue officials moved the bodies and the injured to the nearby hospital.

The blast broke the windows of nearby shops and damaged vehicles. Police officials said that the nature of the explosion is being determined.



Security forces gunned down two terrorists in N. Waziristan



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Sunday killed two terrorists during an exchange of fire that took place on the night of April 6th and 7th between the security forces and terrorists in North Waziristan District. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists were killed whereas weapons and explosives were also recovered from them.

"Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," the ISPR said.

Tarar refutes Khan's allegations about Toshakhana case



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaulah Tarar refuted on Sunday incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan's allegations against the senior military leadership related to the Toshakhana case under which he was jailed for 14 years before elections. The sentence was last week suspended by the high court. "Totally false, fabricated and baseless allegations without any proof or evidence," the minister said in a post on social media platform X. "[Imran Khan] and his spouse have both been involved in the Toshakhana heist, audios have proven the level of involvement in corruption and embezzlement."

His reaction rebuttal comes after the former premier alleged that the senior military leadership "implicated" him and his

Continued on Page 8

Nation salutes martyrs of Gayari Sector Tragedy on 12th anniversary



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The nation on Sunday paid salute to the martyrs of Gayari Sector tragedy on its 12th anniversary remembering the tragic loss of soldiers after a large avalanche hit an army unit in the Siachen Glacier on April 7th, 2012. The Northern Light Infantry (NLI) battalion headquarters was completely destroyed in the tragedy while none of the people present could be rescued alive as 129 soldiers were martyred when an avalanche struck the military unit, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The foreign rescue teams had declared this mission impossible, but the Pakistan Army, especially the Engineers Corps, carried out the mission with great courage and bravery. In memory of the martyrs, the Yadgar-e-Shahada (martyrs' monument) as a monument was erected on the high peak of Siachen. "Today the entire nation pays homage to these martyrs of Gayari sector. The great sacrifice of martyrs of Gayari will always be remembered," the ISPR said.

MQM-P urges Sindh SHC to extend Rangers authority to whole province

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan has urged the Sindh High Court chief justice to extend the domain of Pakistan Rangers from Karachi to the whole province given the worsening law and order situation in the province.

"Rangers have demanded the SHC chief justice to give them powers in the whole province and we will ensure law and order. Definitely, they should be given the powers," MQM-P leader Khawaja Izharul Hassan said at a press conference in Karachi on Sunday.

On Saturday, Sindh High Court Chief Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi ordered the officials to ensure peace in Karachi and other cities within a month. He also ordered law enforcement agencies to launch a crackdown on criminals, their handlers and facilitators to curb street crime in Karachi and improve the security situation in other parts of the province, particularly the riverine area.

At the meeting, Rangers sought police-like powers to control the law and order situation.

Last week, the MQM-P hinted

Continued on Page 8

Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee to sight Shawwal moon on Tuesday



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A pivotal meeting of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee is scheduled for Tuesday to determine the sighting of Shawwal-ul-Mukarram moon at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. Headed by Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad, the meeting will witness the participation of esteemed members from various institutions, including the Ministry of Science and Technology, The Pakistan Meteorological Department, and The Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO).

Among the notable attendees are Director

Continued on Page 8

Pakistan stands firm to defend its sovereignty: Khawaja Asif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday asserted that Pakistan was fully prepared to provide a comprehensive response if India takes any aggressive action. Talking to a private news channel, he emphasized Pakistan's readiness to defend itself against any potential threat, stating, "If India takes any action, it will receive a full reply."

"We are prepared, and if anything occurs, we will not hold back," he said. The minister highlighted Pakistan's unwavering commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty against any form of aggression. He pointed to Pakistan's decisive response to India's reckless incursion in February 2019 as evidence of its resolve. Pakistan has consistent history of exposing India's hollow claims of military superiority,



he added. Khawaja Asif said, "We've consistently responded to India swiftly, and history is bound to repeat itself. For instance, in 2019, we exhibited restraint by returning an Indian pilot as a goodwill gesture, despite India's incursion following the Pulwama incident."

He further asserted that terrorism in Pakistan had ties to India, suggesting that India was seeking to escalate tensions for political gain. He accused Indian ministers of making statements aimed at securing political benefits. He reiterated Pakistan's determination to defend its sovereignty and protect its citizens against any hostile actions from India.

MQM-P benefitting criminals by making police controversial, alleges Sindh minister

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar has alleged that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) was benefitting the criminals by making police controversial.

"Law and order in the province are among the priorities of the government," he said in reaction to the MQM-P leaders' press conference where they claimed that police have failed in protecting the lives and belongings of the citizens.

In the recent past, Karachi has seen an increase in street crimes. Several CCTV footage in the city have shown thieves on motorcycles robbing people at gunpoint. Separately, the province is also dealing with dacoits in the riverine areas,

locally known as Katcha. MQM-P leaders demanded that Sindh Rangers should have the same powers in the whole province as the institution has in Karachi. They also urged the Sindh High Court chief justice who called a meeting on the law and order to follow the request.

The Sindh home minister added that the Sindh inspector general of police had a good reputation and every institution was serious about the law and order situation. "When the MQM-P is part of the government then everything is good and when the party is out of power then I don't know why everything seems bad to them." He reminded the MQM-P that thieves and dacoits have no caste. "We know how to deal with robbers," Lanjar said.

All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to support Kashmiris in their quest for independence

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the Muslim Conference will continue its political, moral and diplomatic support for the just struggle of the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Genocide, extrajudicial killings, custodial torture, use of chemical weapons, violence against children and women, enforced disappearances, pellet guns, mass punishment, black laws in India's failed attempt to suppress the freedom movement of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, is using illegal, inhumane and immoral tactics like false flag



operations. He expressed these views while talking to the Muslim conference delegations at Mujahid Manzil Rawalpindi. He expressed his concern over Modi's move to establish illegal Hindu settlements in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir

to convert them into a minority. It has seen a significant increase in issuance of Kashmiri domiciles. He further said that the global reach of the terrorist network of RSS is a threat to world peace. Peace will not be established in this region until the Kashmir issue is

resolved according to the aspirations of the Kashmiris and the resolutions of the United Nations.

The Muslim Conference Conference is running on the ideology of statehood and independence, this is the path of the leader of Kashmir Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. Those who continue to define Pakistan and India as the same are Indian Muslims and Indians in Occupied Kashmir. Look at Indian facitum today if Pakistan did not exist in this part, then India would be ruling the entire region. Asia's flash point has become the cause of conflict between the three nuclear powers, if the world does not take notice of this situation, this region may suffer further destruction he warned.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: CEO NHS Foods Nazabad Hussain Shah, presenting a bouquet to Chief Guest Mian Umar Farooq on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the new branch of Chaye Khana in Park View City, Chaudhry Abdul Rauf. Raja Umar of Pakistan Muslim League-N and others are also present on this occasion.



All Parties Alliance demands PM to change some ministers' portfolios

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: All Parties Alliance has urged Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq to immediately change the portfolios of some ministers involved in bad reputation, poor performance and commission looting and to file references against them and dismiss certain groups involved in the government from important positions. Demanded which despite the fact that the decision was made in the parliamentary party of the coalition parties, not implementing it is a show of bad faith. He said that the provision of funds to local bodies is a commendable decision, but now with the powers given to them, two-thirds majority is required to bring a no-confidence motion against the head of any



local body. The clause is undemocratic and against basic human rights. If the prime minister can be removed by a simple majority, what nuclear assets

are at risk? Shaukat Javed Mir, the chairman candidate of the Assembly Constituency Seven of the Parties Alliance, while talking to the media yesterday, said that the scams in the development projects are known to everyone, but the Prime Minister is only spreading milk and honey through rhetoric. They have won all the awards. In response to a question, he said that like Pakistan, the unity of the People's Party Muslim League-N is necessary in Azad Kashmir, otherwise both parties will surely reap the political harvest sown under the leadership of Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq in the general elections. Shaukat Javed Mir said that the clouds of chaos and uncertainty are overshadowing the entire state.

There is a solid argument that

Shaukat Javed Mir, with the authority of the Azad government, is creating such conditions to blackmail the federal government and institutions so that they don't get a chance to extend their power. Shaukat Javed Mir said that the People's Party And by giving the responsibilities of nominal departments to the ministers of PML-N, big departments were given to people who know the skill of fixing commissions with the blink of an eye because of providing facilities to Azad Kashmir government to the Shajar Sayedar of the People's Party. His policies are being licked like termites. Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Secretary General Faisal Rathore should call a meeting of the party immediately after Eid-ul-Fitr and take decisions in consultation.

APHC AJK: India cannot suppress Kashmiris' demand for self-determination

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan (APHC-AJK) chapter has said that India's continued military and police terrorism cannot suppress the Kashmiris stance on their right to self-determination in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir



APHC-AJK and Pakistan Conventer Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad said that India had actually converted the occupied territory into a military and police garrison. He said India has occu-

pied more lands of the Kashmiris after 2019 on designs of Israeli style of which Indian troops and non-Kashmiris were being allotted lands in different areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that actually India was distorting the population ratio in IIOJK by issuing large-scale domicile to non-Kashmiris in the occupied territory

Mehmood Ahmed Saghar said the dream of permanent peace in South Asia cannot be realized without resolving the long-pending Kashmir dispute as per the United Nations resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

He urged the international community to play its role in resolving the lingering Kashmir dispute so that durable peace could be established in the region.

Millions of Pakistani People due to lack of clean drinking water and unhealthy food: Dr Akmal Madni

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Specialist in heart disease, hormone, diabetes and blood pressure, Dr. Muhammad Akmal Madani, while giving a special talk on World Health Day, said that it is not just the absence of disease or weakness, but complete physical, mental and social well-being. The name of the condition is health, millions of people in Pakistan do not have clean water to drink every year Due to lack of supply and unhealthy food, people suffer from heart disease, diabetes, blood

pressure, cancer and other diseases and die, prevention is better than cure, exercise, fruits and balanced diet dream of a healthy life An interpretation can be made, Pakistan is 154 out of 195 countries in the world in terms of health facilities comes to number and less than 30 percent of the country's population does not have access to basic health facilities. Dr. Muhammad Akmal Madani said that exercise is also very important along with treatment for diabetes and heart diseases. He said that excessive use of the Internet, including depression. It is also causing other diseases that needs to be limited so that the health risks in this regard can be removed in real sense.

Business community is facing the worst economic and business conditions in history



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Election Commissioner Dr Ghazanfar Malik, Ejaz Hussain and Central Traders Leader Malik Kafait Hussain issued notification of the uncontested success of the full panel of Tajer Dost Group as per the Code of Conduct and Constitution of the Anjuman Tajran Hussainiya Bazar Chowk UBL Suraj Mayani Election 2024-2026. Said serious problems faced by the business community. Businessmen will have to unite and struggle for the solution. The business community is facing the worst economic and business conditions in history. In these circumstances, the business community has to forget personal and personal differences and work for the cause of businessmen. During the election, President Malik Muzamil Hussain, due to not submitting the papers of any candidate for any seat to the panel of the businessmen group, as per the rules and regulations of the election. Khakhi, Senior Vice President Muhammad Waqar Ahmed, Vice Presidents- Haider Khan Kheda, 2- Iqbal Hussain Pahlwan, General Secretary Chaudhry Noor Hussain, Finance Secretary Akhtar Hussain, information Secretary Muhammad Tahir Akhtar, Office and Administration Secretary Adnan Ahmed were notified of the uncontested success. General Secretary Chaudhry Noor Hussain addressed He said that they will fight sincerely for the solution of the problems of the traders and the unity of the traders and the problems should be solved by establishing a positive working relationship with the police and the administration.

Iftikhar Ali Sahu reviews Fair Price Shop in Multan on account of Ramadan



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu visited the Fair Price Shop under the Department of Agriculture at Model Bazar Wahdat Road Lahore and reviewed the quality, prices and supply and demand of the commodities. On this occasion, Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu purchased While talking to the citizens who came for this, he said that the Minister On the instructions of Chief Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, 51 fair price shops have been established across the Punjab province including Multan and South Punjab on the occasion of Ramadan. The prices at these fair price shops are 25% lower than the wholesale market. 13 items including vegetables, fruits are sold at these fair price shops. Dal, gram and besan are available in abundance. He said that the number of counters was also increased due to the rush of buyers during the entire month of Ramadan. In order to maintain the quality of the goods at these fair price shops, monitoring arrangements have been made fool-proof. Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu expressed his satisfaction with the arrangements of the fair price shop established on Model Bazar Wahdat Road and the officers on duty and Appreciating the efforts of the staff, Fair Price Shop It was instructed to keep it open till 6 pm. Later, Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu also planted a sapling in Model Bazar Wahdat Road under the Plant for Pakistan campaign.

FIA Multan crackdown against unregistered drugs/therapeutic goods

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Team comprising of Ghulam Abbas Inspector, Naeem Iqbal SI, M Sajjad ASI, Sajid ASI, Asif Lashari HC, M Amjad HC/D, Zeeshan Rafiq FC along with Usman Ghani Deputy Drug Controller, Muhammad Ali Drug Inspector Multan conducted raid at a drug manufacturing factory working in a house situated in Street Filter Plant Mumtaz Town Multan and recovered different unregistered drugs/therapeutic goods and drugs manufacturing machinery. The accused persons M Adil s/o M Jaffer, Salman s/o Qadir under the supervision of Rao Jamil owner of the factory have been found involved in manufacturing of unregistered drugs/ therapeutic goods. Both the accused persons have been detained and a case is being registered accordingly.



Studies show strawberries potential in kidney health

ISLAMABAD: A recent research showed that strawberries were potentially beneficial in the quest for better kidney health. Studies published in the Clinical Kidney Journal have highlighted the positive impact of fiber-rich diets on the progression of chronic kidney diseases.



Studies further underscore the potential benefits of incorporating strawberries into one's dietary routine for promising outcomes for individuals grappling with renal concerns.

Addressing the critical link between diet and kidney health, researchers have honed in on strawberries for their low potassium content. Strawberries, with their naturally low potassium levels, thus present a favorable option for those seeking to bolster renal well-being. Furthermore, the antioxidant-rich profile of strawberries, comprising notable compounds such as vitamin C, anthocyanins, and flavonoids is beneficial in combating oxidative stress and inflammation, research suggested. These properties hold promise in not only slowing kidney disease progression but also in reducing the incidence of other chronic ailments. Noteworthy is the fiber content of strawberries, which aids in digestion and blood sugar regulation. The versatility of strawberries in culinary applications offers ample opportunities for integration into daily meals and snacks.

IS Diplomatic journey of 70+ years

Thailand and Pakistan's Diplomatic Relations Showcase a History of Excellence

An exclusive interview of H. E. Mr. Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand to Islamabad, Pakistan

Amjad Mehmood

Thailand, officially known as the Kingdom of Thailand with its historical name of Siam until 1939, is a beautiful country in Southeast Asia on the Indochinese Peninsula. Spanning over 513,120 square kilometers (198,120 square miles). The country has an estimated population of 70 million with its borders in the northwest with Myanmar, northwest with Laos, Southeast with Cambodia, in the south with the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and in the southeast with the Andaman Sea. The country also shares maritime borders with Vietnam to the southeast and Indonesia and India to the southwest. Bangkok is the capital and largest city of Thailand. Thailand is a middle power in global affairs and a founding member of ASEAN, and it ranks very high on the Human Development Index. It has the second-largest economy in Southeast Asia and the 23rd-largest in the world. Thailand ranks 91st by nominal GDP per capita and is classified as a newly industrialized economy, with manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism as leading sectors.

Pakistan has decades-long strong diplomatic ties with Thailand and both countries give value to relationships by mutually supporting each other at global forums. Considering the valuable diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Thailand, Daily The Spokesman arranged an exclusive interview with H. E. Mr. Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand to Islamabad, Pakistan. Mr. Naveed Ahmed Khan, Editor, Daily Spokesman/Daily Imrooz and Tazeen Akhtar, Editor, Pakistan in World (Magazine) conducted this interview jointly.

While sharing his thoughts about Thailand & Pakistan's bilateral relations, he said both countries always enjoyed friendly and fruitful relationships. Thailand and Pakistan celebrated 70 years of diplomatic relations in the year 2021 (since October 1951) as both countries have strong foundations of bilateral ties. This relationship feels like spanning over thousands of years. He said the global pandemic halted life around the world as it was a big challenge but life is back to normal and right now both states' bilateral relations are in an excellent phase. He added despite several challenges over the past few years of COVID-19 and global economic downturn, both countries have taken new initiatives including on the political front when H. E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Islamabad to participate in the OIC ministerial meeting. His visit also included a political consultation meeting. Also, Thai military personnel have attended the Pakistan Army Team Spirits (PATS) exercise for the second year. Sharing details about economic ties, he said our mutual trade has reached a historical highest point of 1.8 billion dollars in 2022, and Thai investments in Pakistan expanded to benefit the local business community. He added that the Thai embassy took Pakistani businessmen from the major Chamber of Commerce and Industries to THAIFEX 2023, which is one of Asia's largest food and beverage trade fairs. For people-to-people contact, a Thai Festival in Lahore in 2022 was arranged which was attended by more than 10,000 people. He said Thai



Airways resumed flights to Thailand from Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi after COVID-19 and it is scheduled that the Bangkok-Lahore route will increase from 5 flights weekly to 6 flights weekly soon. He informed that currently around 70,000 Pakistani tourists travel to Thailand and similarly more Thai people are traveling to Pakistan as tourists. He said to promote Thai tourism in Pakistan, a famous Pakistani YouTuber, Mr. Mubashir was sponsored to visit Thailand and share his experience with other Pakistani nationals. He said Thai wall truck art is equally famous in Pakistan and Thailand. Sharing the details of cooperation on multilateral forums, the ambassador informed that the Thai embassy is expanding cooperation with the United Nations (UN) by organizing a training program for women to become home-based chefs of Thai food. Also, the activity included organizing a seminar on women's empowerment.

“Pakistan-Thailand current bilateral ties are in an excellent phase”

H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong expressing his affection for Pakistan and Pakistani people said this is his second term on the diplomatic mission and he always gives a special place to Pakistan in his heart. He appreciated the hosting standards for embassy staff in Pakistan from the government of Pakistan. He vowed to extend the best diplomatic services to Pakistani people at the Royal Thai embassy as he believed that foreign affairs must remain beneficial for the people of

both countries.

Further talking about the key areas of cooperation and potential growth between the two nations, he said with his team he visited several places in Pakistan to see the untapped areas and opportunities to advance the bilateral ties. He added there are plenty of opportunities available to increase economic cooperation as there are many Pakistani products that can grasp the Thai markets. He said the arrangement of Trade fairs between both countries is a good option to showcase the product of mutual interest and to increase the volume of businesses. He commented that an early decision on the Thailand-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement is very significant to boosting bilateral trade. Talking about the investment opportunities, he said CP and AMG-Thai Union have already made notable investments in Pakistan, particularly in agro-industry and shrimp feed. He added that opportunities exist to encourage further investments and diversification into additional sectors such as fruit processing, and fisheries, which can strengthen economic relations and contribute to shared prosperity. He said there is scope for joint ventures in Thailand in the technology sector and Thai Tech companies can utilize Pakistan's IT personnel and their experience through business outsourcing units.

Thailand is considered a dream destination for tourism with its vibrant culture, sharing his thoughts about the Thai Tourism sector, H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong said tourism is one of the key elements in the economic development of Thailand. However, there is much more to do for the promotion of tourism by creating understanding, and expansion of further opportunities for positive image building which can be achieved through the use of social media and



influential social media stars. He said sharing the best practices and socio-cultural norms help to allure the global tourists. He added hospitality is generally considered the backbone of the tourism industry and the stakeholders associated with the tourism industry should be trained on a professional scale. He said cross-cultural shows between both countries can augment the tourism opportunities in Pakistan and Thailand. He informed the Thai Culinary Institute will arrange a special lecture on Thai hospitality and tourism this year in Pakistan. Sharing useful tips for the promotion of tourism in Pakistan he said, cultural and museum exchange programs, heritage preservation, and the development of civilizations are tangible practices to promote the tourism industry. He said Thai people residing in Pakistan can play a pivotal role as cultural ambassadors and in a similar fashion Pakistanis in Thailand can perform the same role.

“Our bilateral trade touches to record high of \$2 billion in 2022”

While talking about the promotion of bilateral trade, the ambassador said ongoing negotiations for the Pakistan-Thailand Free Trade Agreement is a major step to boost trade relations. The conclusion of this agreement is expected to play a pivotal role in reducing trade barriers and facilitating increased commerce between the two countries. He said facilitation for the business community is a vital element that helps in trade promotion. He said the government of Pakistan's initiative of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would help to boost the trade between both countries. He said this is a strategic measure to simplify and expedite trade processes, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and enhancing the efficiency of cross-border trade. He further said that Thailand is actively promoting investments in Pakistan, and notable companies like CP, Thailand's largest Agro-Industry, have expanded their investments in areas such as chicken feed in Lahore. He said there is potential for collaboration in agriculture, livestock farming, and agri-business sectors. The existing investment volumes in chicken feed and shrimp feed with CP and AMG-Thai Union hinted at the potential for growth in this sector. He pointed out that connectivity and infrastructure help to boost trade between the two states and considering its worth, a land-bridge initiative on the Thai side would be a significant addition therefore, options may be explored under the mega project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong while sharing his thoughts about the global focus on sustainability and environmental protection challenge said climate change is a common challenge therefore, the Thai government stresses working together at mutual, regional, and global forums to counter the challenge amicably. He said both Thailand and Pakistan faced natural disasters such as heavy flooding last year. He added that Thailand along with the international community has given financial assistance to Pakistan for rehabilitation efforts for flood-hit areas. He said there is a need to address the root cause of the problem. Sharing the example from Thailand, he said we have adopted the sufficiency economy philosophy, an approach to life coined by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej which is also continued by the current King with the same spirit. Explaining further he said, these practices are aimed at assisting the people at the grassroots level who are otherwise suffering and seriously affected by climate change up to the survival stage. Sharing details about the Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model he said, the Thailand Interna-



tional Cooperation Agency has been providing training and workshops both online and physical with participants from around the world including Pakistan. This training program enables the participants to take short and long-term measures to minimize climate change's negative impacts.

“There is a dire need to view security challenges with an unconventional lens”

On an inquiry about regional stability and security for the promotion of peace and stability in the region, the ambassador while sharing his perspective said, he intends to view security in an unconventional way that involves political, economic, and social security which can bring sustainable peace and stability in true sense. He said with the end of the Cold War, regional cooperation was expanded in the form of the EU, ASEAN, BRICS, and BRI. He added each of these regional groupings was based on mutual benefits in politics and economics creating a safety net for security and peace. He wished that all regional groups around the globe should work more towards economic security which will lead to shared prosperity. He said in power competition, a small or medium-sized country should not be pressured to choose a certain block, rather such states should be given equal opportunities to work together for the benefit of the world and mankind. Expressing the standpoint of the government of Thailand, he said our country is a friend to all countries and always looks forward to working together. Talking about relationships with Pakistan, he said Pakistan is an important country in the region with its unique strategic importance. Both Thailand and Pakistan can further enhance cooperation in areas that Pakistan has strength in such as counter-terrorism, and intelligence sharing. Additionally, he said both Thailand and Pakistan can jointly contribute to peacekeeping operations.

While talking about Thailand's key role in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and Pakistan's potential role in the forum H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong said Thailand sees and commends Pakistan's efforts to enhance engagement with ASEAN. Appreciating Pakistan's initiatives such as holding digital financing workshops and training programs for ASEAN diplomats, and opening ASEAN Corner at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), he said such actions give a significant identity to Pakistan at this forum. Sharing further details about activities under the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, he said Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) 2024-2028 will serve as a framework and practical guide in achieving shared goals in political security by combatting national crimes, economic cooperation by advancing trade, investment, and promotion of tourism, socio-cultural cooperation in education, youth development sectors, disaster management, and health sectors. He emphasized that Pakistan with its decades-long experience in the fields of counterterrorism, and intelligence sharing can play a pivotal role in ASEAN.

“Pakistani youth has talent to shine on global horizons”

In the end, H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong congratulated the newly elected government in Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and expressed high hopes for mutually working in the areas of common interest between Pakistan and Thailand. He stated that both nations share tourism as a major strength and that by working together and providing support, they can both maximize the benefits of growing the tourism industry and strengthening their economies. He expressed his sincere love for the people of Pakistan and concluded that they are very brilliant and diligent people who, with hard work and commitment, can make their country proud around the world.

Photos by Raja Farid



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Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman:

A Beacon of Democratic Culture and Visionary Leadership in Jamaat-e-Islami

In a political landscape often marred by power struggles and lack of internal democracy, the election of Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman as the new Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami stands out as a shining example of democratic principles within the party. With over 45,000 members participating in the selection process, the peaceful transition of power underscores the beauty of democratic culture embedded within Jamaat-e-Islami, setting it apart from other political entities where such practices are often lacking.

Born in 1972 in Hyderabad, Sindh, Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman hails from a family with roots in Aligarh. His academic journey took him through the corridors of Pakistan Ownership College for his intermediate education and later to NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, where he obtained his degree in civil engineering. Furthering his academic pursuits, he earned a master's degree from the University of Karachi.

His early involvement with Islami

Jamiat Talaba showcased his energetic and multi-talented persona, eventually leading him to the position of President (Nazim e Ala) of the organization. Transitioning from student politics to mainstream activism, he joined Jamaat-e-Islami and quickly rose through the ranks, serving as Naib Nazim in 2001 and later assuming the role of Ameer in Karachi in 2013. Under his leadership, Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi witnessed a transformative period, marked by initiatives such as the "Haq Do Karachi Tehreek" and the "Youth Empowerment Program-Bano Qabil." These campaigns garnered significant traction and brought tangible benefits to thousands of youth in the city. In the 2023 local body elections, Jamaat-e-Islami secured the top position under his stewardship, a testament to his strategic acumen and grassroots mobilization efforts.

Before Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman's tenure, Sirajul Haq served as the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, laying down a solid foundation of integrity and service. Sirajul Haq's leadership was marked by a commitment to the party's principles and a tireless dedication to the welfare of the people. His visionary leadership paved the way for Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman to build upon, and his contributions are remembered with gratitude as the party moves forward under new leadership.

However, the 2024 elections presented a different challenge as the results were marred by allegations of rigging. Despite winning his seat, Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman displayed unparalleled integrity by relinquishing his position, a rare demonstration of honesty and courage in Pakistan's political history.

Beyond his political endeavors, Engr.

Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman is a man of diverse talents and interests. Fluent in multiple languages including Urdu, Persian, English, and Arabic, he is also a Hafiz-e-Quran and maintains a successful career as a civil engineer. His profound knowledge of Allama Iqbal's poetry reflects his intellectual depth and cultural awareness.

Despite his accomplishments and popularity, Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman leads a remarkably humble life, residing in a rented house—an exemplary practice for politicians in a country plagued by corruption and opulence.

Looking ahead, Engr. Hafiz Naeem ul Rahman's leadership offers a ray of hope for the youth of Pakistan. His visionary approach and commitment to democratic principles position him as a catalyst for building a prosperous and equitable society. As he assumes the mantle of Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, one can anticipate his continued efforts to steer the party towards new horizons and contribute positively to the socio-political landscape of Pakistan.



Analysis

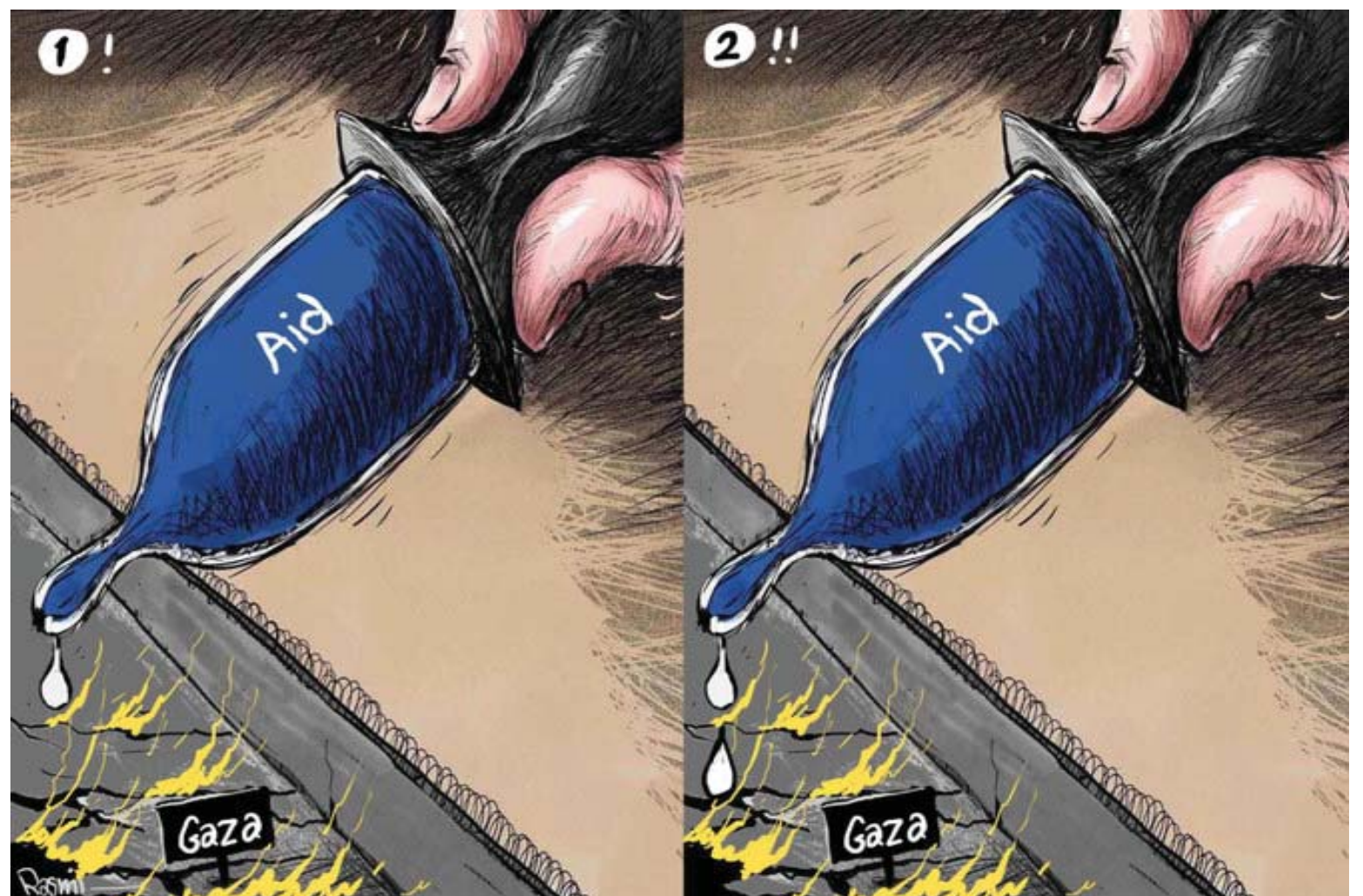
Sohail Ahmad Baber

Renowned Saudi philanthropist, religious leader Dr Al-Issa visits Pakistan

Dr Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, a distinguished figure in the realms of religion and philanthropy, on Sunday arrived in Pakistan for a significant visit from 7th April to 16th April 2024, aimed at fostering interfaith dialogue and cooperation. As the Secretary General of Muslim World League and Chairman of Council of Muslim Scholars, Dr Al-Issa has long been at the forefront of promoting a more inclusive and tolerant understanding of Islam. Dr Al-Issa's efforts to combat Islamophobia and promote religious co-existence have garnered international acclaim.

In 2019, he spearheaded a groundbreaking dialogue among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, resulting in the signing of "The Charter of Makkah," a testament to his dedication to fostering understanding and mutual respect. During his current visit to Pakistan, Dr Al-Issa is set to lead the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer at Faisal Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the world, located in the capital city of Islamabad. Additionally, he will inaugurate the groundbreaking Seerat-un-Nabi Museum, the first of its kind in Pakistan, dedicated to showcasing Prophetic Relics and employing modern technologies such as virtual and augmented realities to elucidate the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Dr Al-Issa's itinerary also includes high-level meetings with key figures in the Pakistani government, including the Prime Minister, Chief Justice, and Chief of Army Staff, underscoring the importance of fostering strong diplomatic and cultural ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Dr Al-Issa's visit comes on the heels of his previous accolades, including the prestigious Hilal-e-Pakistan award conferred upon him by the President of Pakistan in 2022 for his humanitarian efforts and role in strengthening the bond between the two nations. As Dr Al-Issa continues to champion interfaith dialogue and promote a message of peace and tolerance, his visit to Pakistan serves as a testament to the enduring importance of collaboration and understanding in building a more harmonious world.



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

Baseless Propaganda Against SIFC Related Activities in AJK - I

Nestled amidst the majestic Himalayas, Kashmir stands as a testament to nature's unparalleled beauty. With its snow-capped peaks, verdant valleys, and tranquil lakes, this captivating region rightfully earns its moniker as the "Heaven on Earth." From poets to travelers, Kashmir captivates countless souls, inviting them to explore its timeless landscapes and immerse themselves in its rich cultural tapestry.

The allure of Kashmir lies in its breathtaking scenery, which possesses an almost ethereal splendor. The iconic Dal Lake, with its shimmering waters and floating gardens, exudes a sense of serenity unmatched elsewhere. As the sun sets behind the encircling mountains, painting the sky in hues of pink and gold, one can't help but be filled with a profound sense of awe and wonder at the surrounding beauty. However, Kashmir represents more than just a visual delight; it embodies a treasure trove of cultural diversity and heritage. Hosting a vibrant blend of Kashmiri, Ladakhi, and Tibetan influences, the region boasts a historical narrative that spans centuries. From the exquisite craftsmanship of its traditional handicrafts to the melodic strains of its folk music, Kashmir's cultural legacy is as captivating as its natural allure. Nevertheless, amidst its striking landscapes and rich cultural mosaic, Kashmir has grappled with conflict and unrest in recent decades. The region's intricate political landscape has eclipsed its natural splendor, causing many to overlook its potential as a tourist haven. Yet, despite the challenges it confronts, Kashmir stands as a resilient emblem of hope and beauty. In recent times, endeavors have been undertaken to promote Kashmir as a peaceful and thriving tourist destination. With its pristine landscapes, opportunities for adventure sports, and warm hospitality, the region has the potential to ascend as a premier tourist spot in South Asia. From trekking in the picturesque mountains to exploring the ancient ruins of historical monuments, Kashmir offers an abundance of experiences. Furthermore, tourism serves as a vital pillar supporting the local economy and empowering the communities nestled within Kashmir. By advocating for sustainable tourism practices and bolstering local enterprises, we can safeguard Kashmir's status as a

beacon of hope and prosperity for generations to come. Despite its wealth of attractions, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) remains relatively unexplored as a tourist hotspot. However, the time has arrived to recognize and harness the immense potential of this scenic region and promote tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development and prosperity. AJK boasts a diverse range of landscapes, spanning from verdant valleys and meandering rivers to snow-capped mountains and pristine lakes. The Neelum Valley, with its crystalline waters and lush hillsides, emerges as a haven for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike. Similarly, the tranquil charm of Banjosa Lake and the towering peaks of Pir Chinasi offer awe-inspiring panoramas that rival those of any global destination. Moreover, AJK brims with historical and cultural richness, boasting a heritage that traces back centuries. From the ancient remnants of temples and forts to the vibrant customs of indigenous communities, the region provides a captivating glimpse into its storied past. Visitors to AJK can explore historical landmarks such as the Red Fort in Muzaffarabad and the Sharda Peeth Temple while immersing themselves in the vibrant festivals and cultural celebrations that define local life.

Despite its abundant natural and cultural allure, AJK has yet to unlock its full potential as a tourist magnet. Limited infrastructure, insufficient promotion, and security apprehensions have impeded the growth of the tourism sector in the region. However, through strategic investments and concerted endeavors, AJK can rise as a premier tourist destination, attracting visitors from across the globe and yielding substantial economic dividends for local communities. Fostering tourism in AJK not only holds the promise of stimulating economic expansion and generating employment prospects but also cultivating greater understanding and appreciation of the region's natural and cultural heritage. By showcasing the beauty and diversity of AJK to the world, we can foster cross-cultural exchange and dialogue, constructing bridges of camaraderie and cooperation that transcend borders. Furthermore, sustainable tourism practices can aid in preserving and safeguarding AJK's delicate ecosystems and cultural legacy for future generations. By advocating for responsible tourism practices such as eco-friendly

accommodations, community-based tourism initiatives, and conservation endeavors, we can safeguard the natural and cultural riches of AJK for future generations. Amid an era defined by environmental challenges and the imperative for sustainable development, Pakistan has taken a bold stride forward with the inception of the Green Initiative within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Investment Facilitation Committee (SIFC). This pioneering program endeavors to address pressing environmental concerns while fostering economic growth and societal advancement throughout the nation.

The Green Initiative under SIFC constitutes a comprehensive strategy encompassing a diverse array of initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and combating climate change. From renewable energy ventures to waste management schemes, the program seeks to leverage innovation and collaboration to cultivate a greener, more resilient future for Pakistan.

At the core of the Green Initiative lies a dedication to renewable energy and clean technologies. Pakistan boasts abundant renewable energy resources, including solar, wind, and hydropower, yet their full potential remains largely untapped. Through the Green Initiative, the government is investing in renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind farms, to diminish reliance on fossil fuels and foster a transition towards a low-carbon economy. In addition to renewable energy, the Green Initiative prioritizes enhancing waste management practices nationwide. Pakistan grapples with significant challenges in solid waste management, leading to environmental degradation and public health hazards. To combat this issue, the government is implementing innovative waste management solutions, including recycling programs, waste-to-energy plants, and landfill rehabilitation projects, to curtail waste generation and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Moreover, the Green Initiative under SIFC is driving endeavors to conserve and safeguard Pakistan's natural resources, including forests, water bodies, and biodiversity hotspots. Through initiatives like reforestation programs, watershed management projects, and conservation efforts, the government aims to rejuvenate degraded ecosystems and preserve crucial habitats for plant and animal species.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

'Extrajudicial Killing: Responding to India's Actions' - II

Though the diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan have already been downgraded, however, similar to Canada's expulsion of the Indian Ambassador and reduction of diplomatic ties, Pakistan may be considering diplomatic measures to register its protest.

Pakistan-India economic ties have already been downgraded, and this development has impeded any possible efforts through formal or informal channels to reconnect any meaningful trade, investment and business ties.

Pakistan must be actively engaging with the international community, particularly through the United Nations and other multilateral forums, to raise awareness and seek support for holding India accountable for its actions. This could involve filing formal complaints or seeking resolutions condemning India's violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

The Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) on its part must be conducting thorough investigations to uncover any other instances of foreign interference or covert operations on Pakistani soil. This could involve strengthening counter-intelligence

measures and monitoring suspicious activities more closely and developing appropriate, proportional and effective countermeasures as deterrent to any such attack in future.

While maintaining restraint and prioritizing de-escalation, the Pakistani armed forces must have already increased vigilance and readiness to defend the country's sovereignty against potential threats or provocations. This may have included enhancing border security, and maintaining preparedness to respond effectively to any hostile actions, similar to the responses against past airspace violations by India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Pakistan's response should be calculated, strategic, and focused on exposing India's misconduct on the international stage while ensuring the protection of Pakistan's national interests and security besides increasing collaboration with allied nations and multiplying diplomatic efforts aimed at garnering support and achieving accountability for India's extrajudicial actions.

Writer is former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

ICCI, IBECHS agree to build state of the art Expo Centre in capital city

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and industry (ICCI) and Intelligence Bureau Employees Cooperative Housing Society (IBECHS) have agreed to construct a state of the art Expo Centre in Gulberg Green. The sides also decided to join hands in terms of national development, promotion of exports, social and cultural events.

This understanding reached on Saturday, when a delegation of ICCI under the leadership of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari visited the Gulberg Green head Office to felicitate its management.

At the outset, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while extending heartfelt congratulations to the management said that Intelligence Bureau Employee's Cooperative Housing Society (IBECHS) is playing an important role in catering the shelter needs of the IB employees as well as others. He said that ICCI is willing to coordinate with the IBECHS for joint ventures aiming to attract

foreign investment saying that Islamabad is the most important diplomatic, governmental, parliamentary and commercial hub, but still lacks the facility of a splendid expo center and we wish to establish this Expo Centre in Gulberg Green, which is located at the most important juncture of the twin cities.

He added that the partnership between ICCI and Gulberg Green for the Expo Centre will be a step in the right direction to improve the economy as this permanent facility would showcase the exportable products of Pakistan and boost exports. He said that many countries including China and Turkey have increased their exports and tourism by organizing expos and hoped that this expo center would also help enhance exports and tourism in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has great potential to boost exports and expressed hope that the expo center would contribute positively towards achieving this goal.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari expressed the hope that the joint venture between the two organizations will go a long way



in attracting the foreign direct investments, much needed by the country.

He said that once the agreement is finalized, we wish that this most important project of country's economy should be inaugurated by Prime Minister

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari went on to say that ICCI is planning to construct

twin cities.

President IBECHS Tariq Mehmood assured the delegation that Gulberg Green will continue its cooperation with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in the national development especially the business activities.

He said that the Expo Center as a joint venture of Gulberg Green and ICCI in the Federal Capital would play an important role in promoting trade and exports. He said that Gulberg Green is situated at an ideal location and that the expo center would open up many new avenues for promotion of business, investment and exports.

He said that construction of an Expo Center in Islamabad is a long-standing project of ICCI and Gulberg Green will fully cooperate with the Chamber in this regard. He assured that soon after the Eid ul Fitr a MoU regarding the construction of the expo center will be finalized between the two organiza-

tions and they wish to complete this important project as soon as possible.

He also apprised the ICCI delegation about the IBECHS' pipelined mega projects which will also play role in accelerating the economic activities in the twin cities.

He congratulated the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and his entire team for envisioning the Expo Centre and other long-standing projects.

On this occasion, ICCI Group Chairman Khalid Iqbal Malik Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, Vice President Engineer Azharul Islam, Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari also shared their insight and experiences and hailed the IBECHS for its role in the field. On this occasion from ICCI side Saif-ur-Rehman, Faizan Shahzad, Khalid Chaudhry, Naveed Malik and other executives were also present.

Whereas from IBECHS side Ejaz Rasool Malik, Muhammad Ali, Awas Ayub, Sujaat Ullah Qureshi, Bilal Riaz Burki, Allah Rakha Nasir, Mohammad Zaheer, Masood Ahmed, Ch. Riffat and other executives were present.

SEPCO Dadu's electricity theft prevention campaign continues

Azad Baloch

DADU: During the crackdown against electricity thieves in the city, the team of Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO) Circle Dadu arrested one electricity thief by disconnecting dozens of illegal direct connections and registered a case against 2 accused.

The team under the supervision of Superintendent Engineer SEPCO Circle Dadu Zahoar Ahmed Mubarak and XEN Nisar Ahmed Gadhri arrested one accused Kabeer Lund during the operation in Mazdoor Abad area of the city, while in the complaint of SDO Sub division 1, 2 accused Ghulam Umar Laghari and Korra Khan Laghari were arrested. A



case of electricity theft has been registered against the A-section of the police station.

Zahoar Ahmed Superintendent Engineer SEPCO Circle Dadu while talk-

ing to journalists in his office said that during the campaign against electricity thieves on the special instructions of high officials, cases were filed against 995 accused and 78

crore 29 lakh rupees from SEPCO's liabilities of 46 billion rupees. Recovery has been done and action is being taken against electricity thieves on 127 feeders of Dadu Circle.

Kyrgyz businessmen want to collaborate with Pakistani counterparts, says Meher Kashif



LAHORE: Honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan, Meher Kashif Younis said on Sunday that tremendous positive response from Kyrgyzstan entrepreneurs to Pakistani counterpart underscores the potential for deeper economic ties between the two countries.

Sharing the outcome of his recent two-week long visit to Kyrgyzstan with a delegation of exporters and importers led by Chaudhry Faran Shahid Arain here, he said the Pakistani trade delegation under his leadership remained engaged in a series of fruitful and result-oriented meetings with representatives from both the private and public sectors.

The primary focus was on exploring avenues for cooperation in key sectors, notably pharmaceuticals, textiles and education etc.

He said the response from Kyrgyz counterparts was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a shared enthusiasm for collaboration.

Meher said that beyond these specific sectors, the delegation also emphasized the importance of strengthening overall bilateral trade cooperation between the two countries. By building upon existing economic ties and exploring new avenues for collaboration, they aimed to enhance mutual prosperity and contribute to regional stability.

He said as both countries continue to navigate the complexities of the global economy, partnerships built on mutual respect, trust, and shared objectives would be instrumental in realizing their collective economic aspirations. This visit marked a significant step towards realizing those goals and lays the groundwork for a more robust and enduring partnership between the two countries.

He said the pharmaceutical industry holds promise for mutual growth and development, with both countries recognizing the potential for partnerships in research, manufacturing and distribution.

Special squads formed to check over charging by transporters

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The District Administration and regional transport authority (RTA) Attock rolled up their sleeves and prepared to take on transporters who have been overcharging passengers travelling within the country for the Eid holidays. In a meeting of regional transport authority which was headed by Rao Atif Raza, Deputy Commissioner who is Chairman, RTA and attended by officials of regional transport authority, official from local administration, special magistrates and traffic Police besides representatives of various transport union and adda manages, it has been decided to form special squads to check exploitation by the transporters of the commuters travelling to their home towns to celebrate eid with their near and dear ones and will ensure only notified fares are charged. The transporters representatives who have also attended the meeting were warned of strict action against overcharging and overloading with punitive measures will be placed at different locations.

Counterfeit drug manufacturers the elements are killers. Sarfraz Mughal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sarfraz Mughal, a well-known socio-business leader, has seen and heard the news of the arrest of the fake medicine factories in different cities by the relevant agencies and the arrest of the involved persons. Who are the most humane authorities and lords Authority is a question mark for authority. These evils of society are killers of humanity. Those who manufacture fake medicines do not deserve any concession. When a person is sick, he takes medicine for treatment, but when the patient takes fake medicine, instead of getting well, he gets sick. Sarfraz Mughal has appealed to the government Strict action should be taken against the elements producing fake medicines and punishment should be given. It is the first priority of the duties of the state that the protection of public interest, health, life and property and other basic rights is an agricultural, moral and legal responsibility.



SCCI urges PIA to resume Peshawar-Karachi operations

PESHAWAR:

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has expressed concern over the closure of PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi and urged the authorities to consider the matter. Vice President SSCI, Ejaz Khan Afridi said that the closure of PIA flights would affect the business community besides inflicting losses to the national carrier, said a statement issued here Saturday.

He demanded the PIA authorities to start two flights from Peshawar to Karachi within a week to facilitate the business community and the people of the province. He said the resumption of flight operations from Peshawar to Karachi would also benefit travellers and help PIA to generate revenue.



M-tag to help ease traffic on motorways on Eid: One Network



Asad Hashmi

ISLAMABAD: Awareness campaign regarding M-tag was organized on Islamabad Motorway. Citizens traveling to their native areas on the occasion of Eid should get their vehicles M-tag registered to avoid long queues on the motorway to avoid the rush hour and use the express lane to head straight to their destination without

any wait. I am Yesterday, an awareness campaign to install M-Tag in vehicles was organized on Islamabad Motorway M-2 organized by One Network Company. According to the spokesperson of One Network, M-Tag is being made mandatory to facilitate the users at the entry and exit points of the motorways and to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

Users can also recharge using the "M-tag One Network" mobile application so that they can travel to their homes on the motorway without any hassle while traveling on the motorway. M-tag is applicable on all the motorways of Pakistan and M-tag facility is provided on all the motorways of Pakistan.

According to the spokesman, citizens should carry

their original identity card and vehicle documents for M-tag registration and use the M-tag one network mobile application for M-tag recharge.

If the toll tax is paid automatically through the automatic toll collection system, it will not only save the time of the citizens but also will not disrupt the flow of traffic, which is welcomed by the citizens.

Reason Why Restaurants Fail

Hospitality is a quiet dynamic industry, where you face challenges and opportunities every single moment, and it's your decision that takes your business on heights or the contrary. A number of cafes and restaurant open every other day, but a few survive. However, there's no single reason why restaurants fail, instead, it's a mishmash of factors, such as reduced cash flow, low profit margins, inexperienced, inflation and high staff turnover, and the most important poor services, that contribute to restaurants closing.

Knowing the reasons, you can better prepare to avoid these

challenges and count on prospects.

Lack of Statistics: If you don't have data about your business or customers, you're playing in dark. Without data, you could make business decisions that waste time and money on marketing initiatives that don't count. Let's say if you open a Japanese food restaurant in the suburbs of Punjab or Peshawar it is surely a disaster. Hence, it is wise do feasibility study.

Location: If your restaurant location is hard to find, you won't generate as much traffic, comparing you in a more prominent spot, which could lead to your downfall. In case if you can't move your restaurant, invest more in marketing. Advertising

to attract new customer beside implementing a loyalty program. Further, home delivery service is another option.

Turnover Rate: Staff turnover is notoriously high in the restaurant industry. In fact, the average restaurant employee tenure is just 110 days. In the competitive industry retaining talent is yet a big challenge. Reason restaurant employees leave because of low wages, scheduling inflexibility and lack of manager recognition. Fight these issues by offering competitive wages and

benefits, more flexibility around scheduling and opportunities for upward mobility.

Increasing Wages: The reason behind high ratio of turnover is increasing wages. But doing so can be difficult for restaurants struggling with cash flow due to high overhead costs and slim profit margins. Here you must be considering of putting the burden over customer by increasing the prices which I never suggest, instead you can reduce the number of labor and position them on multitasking

along taking help from technology, by having dine-in guests order on their mobile devices via QR codes.

Insufficient Marketing: Marketing helps you reach new customers and encourage existing guests to return. If your restaurant's marketing efforts don't extend past your grand opening, you could fail to attract customers. Make marketing a regular part of your business operations. You can choose marketing automation, that can help you engage customers before and after their visit to help elevate the guest experience and boost loyalty.

Failure in Retaining Customers: Your clients spend 31% more than the new customers. Indeed,

loyalty programs can help you in cultivating loyal customer base.

Poor Services: One of the very important reason of the failure is poor quality of service, that not only cost you walk ins, but influence the loyal customers and the risk of spread of bad word of mouth and obviously it can hit you the most. This needs regular training of staff to avoid mishandling.

Compromise on Quality: I question if you feed your family low quality food?

Inflation: Rising prices of food, labor and rent costs are affecting businesses in every industry. With consumers tightening their purse strings and restaurants experiencing low profit margins and cash flow

problems, inflation can shut restaurants down. Again, downsizing can help.

Competition: Hospitality is vibrant, where competition can get fierce day after day. If consumers prefer your competitors, you could run you out of business. Only alternative is to focus on generating repeat business through great service. Collect data about your customers through guest profile in CRM to personalize every guest interaction and make customers feel special.

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Analysis

Munaza Kazmi

Tourism sector is key to boost Pak economy: Luqman Ali Afzal

CEO & Founder Monal Group, Luqman Ali Afzal hosts a grand Iftar-dinner

Naveed Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The CEO and founder Monal Group, Luqman Ali Afzal and his spouse hosted a grand Iftar-dinner that proved to be the biggest 'Iftar' part of the federal capital so far. Former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, Federal Minister for Defence Production, Rana Tanveer, Former Federal Ministers, senior political leaders, senior diplomats, distinguished businessmen from Rawalpindi & Islamabad chambers, senior bureaucrats, intellectuals and media persons attended iftar party in a large number.

Mr. Luqman is quite famous for hospitality and this value forced the guests not to miss the invitation. The multi-dish reception was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests as Mr. Luqman remained engaged in personal care for every guest of the evening.

During the event, Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President, Pakistan Economy Watch informed that his travels to different parts of Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Islamabad led to interesting revelations reflecting enormous opportunities to promote tourism. While a network of motorways and roads from Karachi to the northern areas of Pakistan is functional, one is disappointed to encounter discomfort because of broken roads, lack of tourism facilities and unhygienic conditions rampant in parts of AJK and KP. There is no visible change in terms of tourist facilities reflecting the absence of amenities to people expecting to take a break from their routine life and enjoy beautiful landscapes.

Talking about promoting tourism in Pakistan, Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, the chairman of ISE Tower REIT Management Company Limited former President RCCI said in countries where the culture of tourism and hospitality exists, travelers feel comfortable and safe in spending their holidays. In Pakistan, given its multibillion dollar tourism potential, it is imperative that the subjects of hotel management and tourist guide are offered in universities so that a critical mass is produced in the coming 10 years which will be instrumental in modernizing the tourist industry. Departments focusing on tourism, hotel management and hospitality in the universities of KP, AJK and GB should be established where specialized courses on tourism and travel are offered. Experts from abroad should be engaged by such universities to train local students on how to promote the culture of tourism.

The ambassador appreciated Mr. Luqman Ali Afzal hospitality and said he is the ideal man and he promotes tourism in Pakistan and builds the Pakistan soft image in the world. He said that Mr. Luqman built Monal on the mountains which is in no way inferior to international standards.



al standards.

Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that statistics show that on average, around 7,500 Sikhs from India and around 2,000 from

Europe, the USA, and Canada visit Pakistan annually. Similarly, around 2,000 Buddhists visit their holy sites in Pakistan.

This is far below the potential as there are around 30 million Sikhs and around 500 million

Buddhism believers living in different countries across the world.

He said that the important need of the time is to promote inter-religious harmony so that income can be increased by

promoting religious tourism.

"Pakistan is a country with landmarks of various religious ethnicities and unexplored potential for religious tourism," Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added. Speaking on the occasion,

Luqman Ali Afzal said that Ramadan is a month of self-inspection and restraint and it essentially highlights the importance of sharing and helping our less fortunate fellow human beings. He said that Iftar meals bring people together and promote coherence between different segments of the society.

There is no doubt that Pakistan has a lot of potential in tourism but in order to attract tourists, we need to set our house in order. For example, leave alone a foreign tourist, even if a local tourist wants to travel from Islamabad to Hunza, will he/she find decent clean toilets on this long journey? Will there be a nice restaurant where a family can eat or a workshop where he can fix his car if the brakes fail? So the

answer is, unless and until we have our basic infrastructure in place, the volume of tourists will not increase. Our infrastructure has to be looked into before we open our areas to foreign tourists.

Regarding tourism and hospitality, he said if taken care of properly, the tourism and hospitality industry has the potential of contributing to the national economy to great proportions.

Look at our regional countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal and even Uzbekistan, where tourism and hospitality industries contribute significantly to the national exchequer. Mr. Luqman became the first Pakistani to be awarded a Pride of Performance award for 'entrepreneurship'.

Photo by Raja Farid

Empowering Artisans

Serena Hotels and Behbud Association Collaborate for Cultural Celebration

Tooba Khan

Serena Hotels under the Cultural Diplomacy initiative collaborated with Behbud Association to jointly organize the two-day Handicraft Eid Bazaar to support women artisans from all over Pakistan and to foster their economic empowerment.

The chief guest of the event, the Ambassador of Austria H. E. Andrea Wicke, who inaugurated the Eid Bazaar said, this is a way to celebrate the artistry and creativity of home-based workers. I understand the dedication and passion required to create beautiful pieces of art; therefore, I am particularly delighted to witness the exquisite craftsmanship on this event and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Behbud and Serena Hotels for organizing such a beautiful event to promote women empowerment. The two-day bazaar aimed to

celebrate the strength and creativity of home-based workers and women artisans across Pakistan, who continue in crafting remarkable artifacts despite facing challenging circumstances. Guests were treated to a diverse array of traditional crafts and needlework originating from various regions of Pakistan, including Ralli, Hand & Machine Embroidery, Kantha, Chikankari, Block Printing, Smocking, Cutwork, Cross-stitch, Taarkashi, Phulkari, Crochet, Knitting, and more. The artisans graced the stalls, offering live demonstrations of their craft and techniques. The exhibition attracted many visitors, who thoroughly enjoyed exploring the intricate craftsmanship on display.

The President of Behbud Association Ms. Abida Malik said, Behbud has been steadily working in the pursuit of the economic empowerment of the women from the most overlook communities of Pakistan. Over



the years, it has touched the life of thousands of women and their families in a very positive way. By investing in women, we invest in the future of our communities and our country. We recognize the immense potential and talent that women possess, and it is our mission to create an environment where they can succeed.

Serena Hotels, renowned for its support of cultural preservation and community empowerment, provided invaluable support for these initiatives. The collaboration with Behbud Association highlights their ongoing commitment to uplifting local

artisans and celebrating Pakistan's rich heritage. By hosting events such as the Handicraft Bazaar, Serena Hotels actively promotes sustainable tourism while showcasing the talents of home-based workers and women artisans to a global audience.



Babar Azam reflects on pre-season camp in Kakul

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has termed the pre-season camp in Kakul as highly successful, adding that it not only contributed to preparing the players for the long and challenging cricket season ahead but also strengthened unity and understanding amongst the group through strategically designed team bonding exercises and drills.

Babar Azam was joined by Aamer Jamal, Azam Khan, Imad Wasim, Naseem Shah and Shadab Khan in paying tribute to the facilities, atmosphere, and support of the highly trained and skilled instructors. They also believed the 11 days spent at the location will help them successfully overcome the demands of upcoming challenges and contribute in producing strong performances.

Twenty-nine elite cricketers attended the pre-season camp at the historic and iconic Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul from March 26 to April 6, with the training and drills designed by Pakistan Army experts and strategists. During the camp, there was a focus on team building aimed to enhance the physical and mental strength of the players, ensuring they were in the best condition to face the challenges ahead.

Under the guidance of experienced trainers and coaches, the players under-



went a comprehensive training regime tailored to elevate their fitness levels, agility, leadership, strategic thinking and overall performance on the field.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam:

"This was my third boot camp, and with each visit, I've gleaned new insights.

"This time, our focus extended beyond physical fitness to encompass team bonding activities and performance-improving lectures. These elements are crucial considering our team environment where collective performance is paramount for achieving desired results.

"The notable deviation from previous camps was the absence of cricket-centric activities. Instead, the emphasis was squarely on physical conditioning, teamwork and mental resilience. Immersed in such an inspiring facility, guided by top-notch instructors and a well-structured programme, all the players have experienced significant growth. I'm confident that we'll return to competitive cricket as better, fitter and mentally tougher athletes, there-

by enhancing our overall performance.

"Unlike our usual routine during other camps and international series, we engaged in confidence-building exercises and team-building activities. Notably, we opted to share rooms, facilitating deeper connections among team members. These shared spaces fostered discussions ranging from strategic planning and team combinations to the evolution of cricket, latest innovations in the sport, analysis of opponents and our approach to each day's challenges.

"Given the upcoming cricket fixtures, this camp proves exceptionally valuable. It not only mitigates injury risks but also augments both individual skills and collective team performance."

All-rounder Aamer Jamal:

"These sessions were instrumental in enhancing both our speed and endurance. Given the high altitude of this location, unique training methods were necessary to ensure sufficient oxygen flow to our muscles, and I believe this aspect was one of the most valuable takeaways from our time here in Kakul.

"Visiting this iconic facility was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The exceptional care and treatment we received added an extra layer of enjoyment and reward to this pre-season camp."

Wicketkeeper-batter Azam Khan:

"The rigorous training at higher



altitudes has not only pushed us to our limits but has also markedly enhanced our overall fitness and strength. The picturesque location, steeped in history and achievements, served as a massive source of motivation for all of us, inspiring active participation in the drills and prompting us to make the most of this opportunity.

"My primary focus has been on enhancing my endurance, and the instructors have been incredibly supportive in this endeavor. While I understand that this is a gradual process, I feel well-prepared and equipped to assimilate all the learnings from this camp and continue working towards achieving the required standards.

"One of the most valuable aspects

of this session has been the fostering of team bonding. We utilised this time to deepen our understanding of each other, drawing significant positive energy from these bonding exercises."

All-rounder Imad Wasim:

"Personally, I benefited tremendously as I was already focused on my rehabilitation and strength. These sessions and drills were markedly different from cricket-related training, but we dedicated extra hours that I'm confident will benefit us all in match situations.

"The time in Kakul was also crucial from a team bonding perspective. I've sensed, and I'm sure other players have too, that it was valuable to be here, spend time together, and grow closer to each other. This closeness will undoubtedly play a significant role in

our performances."

Fast bowler Naseem Shah:

"After some time apart due to the HBL Pakistan Super League, it was truly gratifying to come together and recharge for the cricket challenges that lie ahead. Undoubtedly, there was a significant emphasis on physical fitness, as every athlete aspires to reach peak condition. In this regard, I believe we've successfully met our objectives, and I'll return as a fitter and more adept athlete.

"We wholeheartedly engaged in each drill, occasionally even competing against one another. This not only fostered camaraderie but also reinforced our unity and team spirit."

All-rounder Shadab Khan:

"It has been a new experience training at these marvelous facilities under the watchful eyes of the Pakistan Army trainers. Undoubtedly, all the cricketers will return with improved fitness levels and standards that will significantly contribute when they take the field in the upcoming challenges. The fitter our players are during the season, the greater our chances of success will be."

At the conclusion of the camp, Pakistan captain Babar Azam, on behalf of all player, called on Brig Zafar Mehmood Abbasi - Commandant ASPT and thanked him and his entire staff for an outstanding time in Kakul. Babar also presented Pakistan cap to Brig Zafar Mehmood Abbasi.

Delegation from sports fraternity meets Rana Sikander Hayat

Tahir Amin Malik

A delegation comprising esteemed representatives from the sports community, including Moazzam Khan Klair, Chairman of the Punjab Cycling Association; Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, General Secretary of the Pakistan Federation Baseball; and Amjad Nawaz Khan, Coordinator, convened with the Honourable Minister of Education, Rana Sikander Hayat, to discuss crucial initiatives aimed at fostering sports development within government schools. During the constructive meeting, held at the Ministry of Education, the delegation emphasized the significance of providing accessible grounds within government school premises to nurture athletic talent from a grassroots level. Recognizing the pivotal role of sports in holistic education, the delegation advocated for the utilization of existing infrastructure to



promote physical activity and character building among students.

Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, Chairman of the Punjab Cycling Association, underscored the importance of incorporating cycling facilities within school grounds to encourage healthy lifestyle choices and cultivate a culture of fitness among the youth.

Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, General Secretary of the Pakistan Federation Base-

ball, reiterated the need for dedicated baseball fields within school premises to facilitate training and competitions, thereby creating pathways for aspiring athletes to excel at the national and international levels.

Amjad Nawaz Khan, Coordinator, echoed the sentiments of his counterparts, emphasizing the role of sports in promoting discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills among students.

He urged the Ministry of Education to collaborate with sports organizations to implement comprehensive sports programs across government schools.

In response, Minister Rana Sikander Hayat affirmed the government's commitment to promoting sports as an integral component of education. He assured the delegation of the Ministry's support in identifying and allocating suitable grounds within government schools for sports activities. Furthermore, Minister Hayat pledged to explore avenues for enhancing sports infrastructure and facilities to facilitate the holistic development of students.

The collaborative dialogue between the sports fraternity and the Ministry of Education signifies a significant step towards realizing the collective vision of nurturing athletic talent and promoting a culture of sportsmanship across educational institutions in Pakistan.

Dominant Max Verstappen wins Japanese GP in Red Bull one-two

Max Verstappen said Red Bull must capitalise on their early season dominance after romping to victory in Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix ahead of teammate Sergio Perez.

The triple world champion claimed his third win in the four races so far this year and on this evidence, the Dutchman and Red Bull will take some stopping once again.

Verstappen failed to finish in Australia a fortnight ago because of a brake issue but starting from pole he controlled the race at Suzuka from start to finish.

"I know there will be tracks coming up that might not be so favourable for us," said Verstappen, who took the chequered flag 12.5sec ahead of the Mexican Perez.

"But then of course when we do get to the tracks where we can be quick, we have to really take advantage of it and score maximum points as a team."

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, who triumphed in Melbourne, was third in dry, sunny conditions at Suzuka.

Verstappen has taken an early stranglehold on the world championship on 77 points, with Perez on 64 and Sainz's Ferrari teammate Charles Leclerc on 59.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff told reporters after the race that "no one is going to catch Max this year".

ARY Communications secures media rights for Pakistan's upcoming home series



Sports Desk

LAHORE: ARY Communications has won media rights for Pakistan's upcoming men's and women's home series against New Zealand and West Indies respectively.

The agreement was confirmed following a transparent tender process, which was run in line with the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) overarching strategy and policy to enhance the quality of international bilateral cricket broadcasts for Pakistani fans.

This agreement ensures that the five men's T20Is between Pakistan and New Zealand, scheduled from April 18 to April 27 in Rawalpindi and Lahore, and Pakistan women's versus West Indies women's series comprising three ODIs and five T20Is from April 18 to May 3 in Karachi, will be broadcast live on A Sports HD - the country's premier HD Sports Channel.

The partnership between PCB and ARY Communications had commenced in 2022 when the country one of the most popular and influential networks won the media rights for the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

The latest media rights agreement represents a significant 41 per cent increase from the previous series involving these sides.

This reflects the PCB team's adept sales skills, ensuring maximum revenue generation from the upcoming home series that can then be reinvested into cricket development.

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"A Sports HD will serve as the primary destination for Pakistan cricket during these two exciting series, and I am thrilled to continue ARY's longstanding partnership with the Pakistan Cricket Board," said Salman Iqbal, ARY Digital Founder and CEO. "We have curated our content portfolio to promote premium sporting events in Pakistan, and this partnership is a crucial step in achieving our mission."

"We are delighted to collaborate with A Sports HD for the upcoming men's and women's series against New Zealand and West Indies, respectively," said Salman Naseer, PCB Chief Operating Officer.

"This partnership underscores PCB Chairman Mr Mohsin Naqvi's vision of providing our fans with high-quality broadcasts through a fair and transparent process, thereby enhancing PCB's brand value as a national asset.

"We are optimistic that this new milestone in our partnership will be mutually beneficial."

A Sports HD has a successful track record of showcasing various prestigious events including the Pakistan Super League (PSL), bilateral matches featuring the Pakistan men's team, ICC Men's and Women's T20 World Cups, ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, South Africa's SA20, Lanka Premier League, Major League Cricket, Canada Global T20, Abu Dhabi T10, IIT20, Fair Break Invitational T20, Formula 1, Formula E, and La Liga.

Tickets for Ireland-Pakistan T20I series sold out

A Sports

DUBLIN: Pakistan's upcoming tour to Ireland drew massive attention from cricket fans as all the tickets for the three-match T20I series have been sold out.

Talking to X, formerly Twitter, Cricket Ireland confirmed that their home series against Pakistan was a sell-out.

"And that's a sell out! Thanks for your support. Further men's and women's home internationals will be announced shortly," the cricketing body stated.

The Pakistan Men's Cricket Team will tour Ireland for a three-match T20I series in May 2024. All three matches will be held at Clontarf in Dublin on 10, 12 and 14 May 2024 and will start at 3 PM local time. The three-match away series



will serve as a stepping stone for the Green Shirts to boost their preparations for this year's ICC

Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA).

Notably, Pakistan and Ireland are placed in the same group of the mega event and

are slated to lock horns on June 16 at Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderdale, Florida.

Notably, the Pakistan cricket team participated in a two-week long physical fitness camp, organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Army, to prepare for the upcoming five-match home T20I series against New Zealand.

New Zealand are slated to reach Pakistan on April 14 for the crucial series, leading to the ICC Men's T20I World Cup.

Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium will host the first three T20Is between Pakistan and New Zealand on 18, 20 and 21 April.

The two sides will then travel to Lahore to lock horns in the remaining two T20Is on 25 and 27 April, respectively.

Athletic Club edge Mallorca in Copa del Rey final to end 40-year trophy drought

Sports Desk

SEVILLA: Athletic Club ended a 40-year wait to win the Copa del Rey by beating Real Mallorca in the final on penalties 4-2 on Saturday following a 1-1 draw after extra time here at La Cartuja stadium.

The Basque side lifted the Copa del Rey trophy for the 24th time, behind only 31-time winners Barcelona, as they edged underdogs Mallorca.

Dani Rodriguez sent Mallorca ahead in the first half but Oihan Sancet levelled soon after the break and the sides could not be separated until penalties.

Athletic goalkeeper Julen Agir-

rezabala saved Manu Morlanes' penalty and Mallorca's Nemanja Radonjic lashed another spot kick over the bar, with Athletic converting all four of theirs to triumph.

Alex Berenguer stroked home the winning penalty to spark wild celebrations among the hordes of travelling Basque support.

Ernesto Valverde's Athletic, defeated in their six previous appearances in the final, brought an era almost to a close with a hard-fought win.

Having beaten Barcelona and Atletico Madrid en route to the final, Los Leones were able to secure the club's first major trophy since a domestic league

and cup double in 1984.

"This is incredible, we've made history," man-of-the-match Nico Williams told TVE.

"The team worked hard, the fans are always with us and they deserve it, I've dreamed of this for a long time."

Athletic Club, whose players celebrated on a boat known as the 'Gabarra' after they last won it, will now get the chance to launch the barge once again next week.

"I'm so excited (for that), I am so happy, this is the club of my life," added the Spanish winger, who taunted Mallorca with his dribbling all night.

Mallorca, winners in 2003, had started the stronger and

target man Vedat Muriqi's long-range effort was tipped over uncertainly by Agirrezabala.

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In the final for the fourth time, the islanders took the lead after 21 minutes through Rodriguez's perfectly placed finish.

After Giovanni Gonzalez's shot was blocked and Jose Copete's effort was saved, Rodriguez carefully placed the ball into the top corner, past Athletic's Dani Vivian on the line.

When Los Leones did create anything it came from the outstanding Nico Williams, and he slotted home after 39 minutes but was offside.

Yuri Berchiche blocked well to deny Copete as Mallorca had a sight of goal for their second before Nico Williams fired into the side netting after breaking into the area.

Agirrezabala thwarted Canada international Cyle Larin early in the second half before Athletic found the equaliser.

Again Nico Williams was heavily involved, sliding a pass into the box for Sancet to gleefully stroke beyond Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif to delight Athletic's raucous travelling support.

A brilliant dribble by Nico Williams almost helped the Basques take the lead but his cross flashed through his broth-



er Inaki Williams' legs, with the Ghana international unable to react in time to finish.

Greif beat away a Vivian pile-driver late on and Gorka Guruzeta headed narrowly wide, but the teams could not be split before extra time.

Nico Williams had a shot from close range brilliantly deflected wide by the lunging Pablo Maffeo

after 111 minutes.

At the other end, Agirrezabala was alert to shovel away Muriqi's header, with the Kosovo striker sporting a large bandage after a painful clash of heads with Unai Gomez.

What followed in the shoot-out was more painful still for Muriqi, who converted his penalty but his team-mates could not follow suit.

Naturally

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of cloudy weather in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Zardari, Erdogan call for further strengthening of bilateral ties between two countries

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip

Erdogan on Sunday called for further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields. The two leaders spoke

over the phone and discussed matters of mutual interest, a post on President of Pakistan X account said. President Zardari, President Erdogan call for

further strengthening of bilateral ties between two countries President Zardari felicitated the Turkish President on the forthcoming Eid-ul-Fitr and

invited him to visit Pakistan, besides expressing his best wishes for him and the people of Türkiye, another related X post said.



Latif Khosa hopeful PTI founder to be released in April



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sardar Latif Khosa has asserted that PTI founder Imran Khan will walk free from jail in April.

The former prime minister's sentence in the Toshakhana case has been suspended by the court while the cipher case will not stand even a week, he said during his appearance on ARY News show "Aiteeraz Hai" on Sunday.

Downplaying former prime minister Imran Khan's conviction in the cipher case, Khosa said that the documents were not presented before the court in the case while the PTI founder's presence was not proved in any case related to the May 9 riots.

CM Maryam orders complete treatment of 2-year-old boy

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the direction of Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz, 2-year-old Muhammad Moaz, a resident of Sialkot, has been provided with Rs6.862 million for medical treatment.

Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique conveyed an early health recovery message of CM Maryam Nawaz by visiting the residence of young Moaz.

Muhammad Usman of Sialkot suburban area Jamke Cheema had appealed to CM Maryam Nawaz for his child's treatment. 2-year-old Muhammad Moaz is suffering from a "genetic disease" MPS Type9 by birth.

On the direction of CM Maryam Nawaz, treatment of young Muhammad Moaz is underway in the Children Hospital Lahore.

CTD officials 'involved' in another abduction case in Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Another kidnapping incident - involving Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) officials - has emerged from Karachi.

The CTD officials abducted another citizen, Atif Aslam, from a tea hotel located in the vicinity of Gulshan-e-Iqbal for short term on March 30. Later, they withdrew Rs 200,000 from an ATM in Mehmoodabad and released Aslam with the assurance of receiving Rs 300,000 from him.

According to Atif Aslam's application filed with IG Sindh and DIG East, he serves as a student visa consultant in Karachi and was abducted by some unidentified officers in plainclothes, using a police vehicle, on March 30 along with his car. In his application, Atif claimed that he was tortured for four hours at an unknown location, meanwhile, the deal for his release - initially started at Rs 1.5 million - was finalized at Rs 500,000.

PUC welcomes Dr Al-Issa's visit, anticipates boost interfaith harmony

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) on Sunday extended a warm welcome to Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), as he embarks on a pivotal visit to Pakistan from April 7 to 16, 2024.

Talking to media, Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the visit is anticipated to herald a new era of collaboration and understanding, fostering interfaith harmony and cooperation in the region.

He emphasized the significance of Secretary General Al-Issa's visit, highlighting his steadfast commitment to humanizing the world and enabling individuals to practice their faiths and beliefs freely. Ashrafi commended Dr. Al-Issa's efforts in promoting tolerance and understanding on a global scale.

Funeral prayers of Naib Subedar Khalid Naseer Shaheed



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Naib Subedar Khalid Naseer Shaheed (age 46, resident of District Faisalabad) who was martyred in a landslide near Goonar Farm, Chilas, was offered funeral prayers in Gilgit. Participation of Pakistan Army

officers and soldiers in the funeral prayer.

The body of the martyr was sent to his native region where he will be buried with full military honours.

Armed forces of Pakistan are committed to serve the nation at all costs

Senate Secretariat establishes facilitation desk for Senators-elect

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Secretariat has established a facilitation desk in the Parliament House on Sunday to assist and support the recently elected members of the Upper House of the Parliament.

Muhammad Qasim Khan, the Secretary of the Senate, has already sent letters to the Senators. Addi-

tionally, he has directed the formation of a coordination committee to manage the registration and facilitation procedures for the newly elected Senate members. Staff members from different departments are actively involved in assisting the incoming Senators. The desk will be operational from 9 am to 5 pm to ensure the smooth completion of the registration process.

NAB asks AAA Associates' victims to submit compensation claims within fortnight

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has instructed individuals robbed by AAA Associates to submit their compensation claims to the NAB Rawalpindi bureau within the next two weeks. Those who have already submitted claims are advised not to resubmit their applications.

According to NAB, Rawalpindi sources, the Bureau was investigating the allegations of extortion of money, fraud, cheating, and false promises perpetrated by individuals such as Fawad Bashir, Shahzad Ali Kayani, and others from AAA Associates, targeting the general public.

The Bureau is probing allegations of money extortion, fraud, cheating and false promises perpetrated by individuals like Fawad Bashir, Shahzad Ali Kayani, and others associated with AAA Associates. Their alleged activities, centered at office no. 20121 on the Second Floor of

the Business Centre in Bahria Town, Rawalpindi, have targeted the general public.

The NAB has asked individuals deceived by AAA Associates with false promises to submit their claims for the return of their stolen money. These individuals are required to provide supporting documentation, including a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and receipts, either via post or email within next fifteen days. This will enable the commencement of legal proceedings against the culprits.

Victims are asked to submit their claims, along with required documents, to the office of the Director General, NAB Rawalpindi, the Investigation Officer at Investigation Wing-II, National Accountability Bureau (Rawalpindi), situated at Melody, Islamabad, G-6, Civic Centre. Contact details for inquiries include Fax: 051-9220832, Phone: 051-9222064, and email: rawalpindi@nab.gov.pk.

Islamabad's affordable housing crisis worsening as population rises

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Government employees and members of the middle class in Islamabad are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing in the Capital.

Called the city of outsiders due to its large population of salaried workers from other parts of the country, affordable housing has always been a major concern in the city.

However, the pursuit is becoming increasingly difficult in the face of a burgeoning population while more housing units fail to be set up.

In addition to the small number of government housing, many people are waiting for properties to materialise even if they have already paid for them.

One such area is sector I-12, where some people have been waiting to receive possession of their plots for over three decades.

Many of I-12's allottees recently met officials from the Capital Development Authority including Member (Engineering) Dr. Muhammad Khalid Hafiz and Member (Finance) Tahir Naeem Akhter, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan.



"Dr. Khalid Hafiz showed his willingness to consider provisional possession for the allottees in sector I-12," the APP report said.

However, APP also reported that the slow pace of development in Pakistan Housing Authority and Federal Government Employees Housing Authority, which were set up by the government itself.

Over the years, many projects such as the Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP), Apna Ghar Scheme, and Ashiana Housing Scheme have been announced but have failed to make a sizable impact on the housing crisis.

Meanwhile, the existing amount of government housing in the old sectors of Islamabad is becoming increasingly scarce. Many government employees have to wait years before they get a house allotted.

Tarar refutes Khan's...

Continued from Page 1

wife Bushra Bibi in the state gifts reference. On Saturday, a post on Khan's account on X shared the transcript of his conversation with reporters at Adiala Jail. The founder of PTI claimed that the senior military leadership was "driving the state affairs." He reiterated that it was part of the "London Plan" and alleged that his sentence was "plotted with the nexus" of the incumbent army chief and former premier Nawaz Sharif. He claimed that judges who heard his case were appointed by the Inter-Services Intelligence.

According to Tarar, such statements were a result of "a state of panic and despair." Without naming the PTI, he slammed the party for attacks on the state institutions and sensitive installations on May 9 following Khan's arrest in the graft case. "Attacks on state institutions like the one on May 9 and running disrespectful campaigns against martyrs have been his policy," he said, "truth cannot be concealed through propaganda and blatant lies".

The information minister added that Khan was in a "state of panic" at the Adiala jail.

The transcript of the talk also claimed that some PTI leaders were still in contact with the military establishment.

Former PTI leader Ali Zaidi "was also in contact", it said. Khan said: "I will not accept"

MQM-P urges...

Continued from Page 1

at parting ways with the PML-N-led coalition government if the killing of innocent people was not stopped.

"Karachi is Sindh and Karachi is not separate from Sindh. So Rangers have complete authority in Karachi and they don't have in Sindh," Hassan said and lamented that two systems were running in the province.

When asked, Faisal Subzwari agreed with the suggestion that Sindh Rangers should be given additional powers for the protection of citizens' lives and belongings. He wondered who would not give the authority to the institution.

He added that political forces should show some seriousness towards the protection of people's lives.

Central Ruet-e-Hilal ...

Continued from Page 1

General Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid, along with prominent figures such as Allama Muhammad Dr. Hussain Akbar, Mufti Fazl Jamil Rizvi, and Maulana Muhammad Yasin Zafar, among others. Zonal members from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar will also contribute to the deliberations. Emphasizing the importance of public involvement, Maulana Azad encouraged citizens to actively engage in moon sighting efforts for Shawwal-ul-Mukarram. Individuals are urged to report any sightings to designated contact numbers: Chairman (0321-9410041/0333-9100619), Director General Religious Affairs (0300-6831822), and the Office of Director Religious Affairs (051-9201425).

Norway removes Pakistan from National Threat Assessment List

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, Norway has taken the decision to remove Pakistan from its National Threat Assessment List, a private news channel reported on Sunday. This decision follows effective diplomatic efforts by Pakistan, which successfully persuaded Norwegian authorities to exclude Pakistan's name from their list of nations of security concern.

The announcement came through the latest report issued by Norway's Police Security Service, which holds responsibility for intelligence and security matters within the country. For years, Pakistan, among other nations, had been listed in Norway's National Threat Assessment, posing challenges for Pakistani students and researchers who encountered obstacles due to their country's inclusion on the list. Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives bore fruit, leading to its removal from the list.