

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے اس کی نیک نیتی اور نیک نیتی سے کیا گیا ہے
ہم سے اس کی نیک نیتی سے کیا گیا ہے اور ان سے
نے ان سے اعتراف کیا اور ان سے اعتراف کیا
رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ
و سلم نے فرمایا جب اللہ تعالیٰ مخلوق کو پیدا کرے
چکھو گوش کے اوپر اپنے پاس یہ لکھا کہ میری
رحمت میرے غصے سے آگے بڑھ گئی ہے۔
(کنز الدقائق، حدیث نمبر 7453)

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Will spare no effort to provide relief to common man: Nawaz Sharif

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif has said that government will spare no effort to provide relief to common man. PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif ranged up Member Punjab Assembly (MPA) Rana Muhammad Arshad who was elected from Shahkot and congratulated him... (Details on Page 8)



State Dept sidesteps question on Imran's meeting with US officials

A United States official declined to comment on Thursday as to why officials from its embassy in Pakistan have not met Imran Khan in prison. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller was asked during a scheduled press briefing about why US officials had chosen to meet Zahir Jaffer but had not visited Imran Khan who is in the same prison. (Details on Page 8)

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COAS celebrates Eid-ul-Fitr with front line troops in North Waziristan

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), undertook a visit to Miran Shah & Spinwam in North Waziristan Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where he joined troops in celebrating Eid. Commencing with Eid prayers at the frontline, COAS offered supplications for enduring stability and prosperity of Pakistan.

He conveyed heartfelt Eid-ul-Fitr greetings to the troops, commending their unwavering dedication and service to the nation. Subsequently, COAS received a comprehensive briefing on operational readiness and the prevailing security landscape, with a specific focus on border security measures along the Pak-Afghan Border. Acknowledging the formation's monumental efforts in fostering peace and stability, COAS attributed these strides to the sacrifices of our martyrs, facilitating secure environment conducive to socio-economic development, particularly in the Newly Merged Districts and throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Emphasizing the adverse impact of terrorism upon development, COAS underscored the collective imperative to safeguard the hard-earned peace. He urged all stakeholders, especially the local populace, to remain vigilant against adversarial elements seeking to destabilize the region.

"Maintain unwavering focus on your professional duties in service to the nation," COAS concluded.

Earlier, on arrival, COAS was warmly received by Commander Peshawar Corps.

Solidarity

COAS Gen Aism Munir offers Eid prayers with troops in North Waziristan.



Photo: ISPR

Finance minister briefs PM about his upcoming meetings with IFIs during US visit



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and briefed him about the upcoming visit to the United States. The finance minister discussed with the prime

minister his scheduled meetings with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other institutions, according to a PM Office press release.

In the meeting, they also deliberated over the overall economic situation of the country.

PTI-led opposition alliance launches protest movement from Balochistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI-led six party opposition alliance has announced that it will launch a nationwide movement against the government from Balochistan. The movement has been named as 'Tehreek-e-Tahfuz Aain' or the Movement to Protect the Constitution.

Leaders from the opposition political parties met in Quetta on Friday. BNP Chief Akhtar Mengal chaired the meeting.

PTI's Omar Ayub led a press conference after the meeting and told reporters that Mahmood Khan Achakzai will lead the movement as its president.

He said protest rallies will be held under the movement. Achakzai said that the constitution was a civic agreement and to protect it the opposition was going to launch its effort from the very next day (Saturday).

He urged people to participate in the position rally being held in Pashin on Saturday. Mengal said the movement should have been launched 20 years ago.

Pakistan army issues statement on Bahawalnagar incident, launches joint inquiry

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army on Friday issued a statement on an alleged clash between troops and police personnel in Bahawalnagar district of Punjab earlier this week.

The military has called the incident unfortunate and announced a joint inquiry with police.

The Punjab government, soon after the announced by the military, said it had formed a joint inquiry team.

A statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media arm of the military - also condemned "vitriolic propaganda" on social media.

The statement said, "An unfortunate incident occurred in Bahawalnagar recently, which was promptly addressed and resolved through collaborative efforts of military and police authorities.

"Despite this, certain factions with vested motives started fanning vitriolic propaganda on social media to create divisions between state institutions and government departments.

"To ensure a fair and deliberate inquiry, and to determine responsibility for violation of laws and misuse of authority, a joint inquiry comprising security and police officials will be conducted for ascertaining the

facts and apportioning responsibility." Earlier, the local police issued a statement that the issue had been resolved "amicably".

On the first day of Eid, several social media users claimed that 40 to 50 army personnel stormed a police station of Bahawalnagar and beat up the policemen present there.

Other reports later said some of the police officers had illegally raided a house, beating women and holding people in unlawful confinement.

Police also registered an FIR over the illegal raid against some police personnel.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson of the Punjab government announced the formation of a joint inquiry team to investigate the Bahawalnagar incident.

The team will consist of officials from various security agencies, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Interior.

The purpose of the inquiry is to ascertain the facts and determine the individuals responsible for the incident, the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson further stated that no permission would be granted to propagandists and those spreading misinformation against the law enforcement agencies.

Israel's brutality

Dozens of Palestinians martyred in Gaza

Reuters

GAZA: Israeli forces fought Palestinian militants in the north and center of the Gaza Strip on Friday as Khaled Meshaal, a senior official in Gaza's ruling Hamas movement, said its six-month-old battle with Israel would "break the enemy soon."

Most Israeli troops have been pulled out of Gaza in preparation for an assault on the southern city of Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians are shelter-

ing, but fighting has continued in various areas.

Residents of Al-Nusseirat camp in central Gaza said dozens were dead or wounded after Israeli bombardment from air, land and sea that had followed a surprise ground offensive on Thursday, and that houses and two mosques had been destroyed.

Health officials said earlier that six people had been killed in strikes on the camp, and around 70 wounded, including three Palestinian journalists.

In Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said at least 25 people had been killed and several wounded in an Israeli air strike on a house in Al-Daraj neighborhood. Gaza's health ministry said 89 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli military strikes in the space of 24 hours.

The Israeli military (IDF) said it was pursuing "a precise intelligence-based operation" against militants and their infrastructure in central Gaza.

"Over the past day, IDF fighter jets struck over 60 terror

targets in the Gaza Strip, including underground launch posts, military infrastructure and sites in which armed terrorists operated," a military statement said. "In parallel, IDF artillery struck terrorist infrastructure in the central Gaza Strip."

Meshaal spoke at an event in Doha, Qatar, to mourn members of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh's family killed in an Israeli air strike in Gaza on Wednesday. "This is not the final round," he said. "It is an important round on the path of liberating Palest-

tine and defeating the Zionist project."

At least 33,545 Palestinians have now been killed since the Israeli offensive began, Gaza's health ministry said, with most of the 2.3 million population displaced and much of the enclave laid to waste.

The war began when Hamas led an attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 in which 1,200 people were killed and 253 taken hostage. Around 130 are still being held incommunicado in Gaza, Israel says.

ADB's report validates correct economic policies: Ahad Cheema

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Cheema here on Friday termed the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) report for April 2024 as a validation of the government's correct economic policies. "The ADO from the Asian Development Bank is a strong endorsement of the government's correct economic policies," said the minister according to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division.

The minister said, the ADO portrayed positive prospects for Pakistan's economy adding under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government had started working towards a stable

IMF chief says very important issues to be solved in Pakistan ahead of new programme

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is in discussions with the International Monetary Fund on a potential follow-up program to its nine-month, \$3 billion stand-by arrangement, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said on Thursday, adding that it had important issues to solve.

Georgieva told an event at the Atlantic Council think tank, that Pakistan was successfully completing its existing program with the IMF and its economy was performing somewhat better, with reserves now being built up.

"There is a commitment to continue on this path, and the country is turning to the fund for potentially having a follow-up program," Georgieva said, flagging issues that the struggling South Asian nation still needed to

address. "There are very important issues to be solved in Pakistan: the tax base, how the richer part of society contributes to the economy, the way public spending is being directed and of course, creating... a more transparent environment."

Pakistan and the IMF last month reached a staff-level agreement on the second and last review of the \$3 billion stand-by arrangement, which, if cleared by the global lender's board, will release about \$1.1 billion to the struggling South Asian nation. The IMF's board is expected to review the matter in late April, but no firm date has been set, a spokesperson said.

Both sides have also spoken about negotiating a longer-term bailout and continuing with necessary policy reforms to rein in

deficits, build up reserves and manage soaring debt servicing.

Pakistan will discuss an Extended Fund Facility with the IMF in Washington this month, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said in March.

Cash-strapped Pakistan's standby \$3 billion arrangement with the global lender expires on April 11, and the two sides reached a staff-level agreement regarding the disbursement of the final tranche of \$1.1 billion earlier this week.

Pakistan plans to seek a new loan of at least \$6 billion from the International Monetary Fund to help the incoming government repay billions in debt due this year, Bloomberg News reported in February, citing a Pakistani official.

China will continue to play constructive role in resolving Middle East issue: Mao Ning

Spokesman Report

BELJING: China will continue to play a constructive role in resolving the Middle East issue on its own merits and contribute to cooling down the situation, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said on Friday.

The Chinese side calls on all parties to the ongoing Gaza conflict to immediately cease fire.

Mao Ning made the remarks while briefing the media during a regular press conference on Thursday's phone conversation between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

During the phone call, Wang said China strongly condemned the attack on the Iranian embassy in Syria and stressed that the security of diplomatic institutions is inviolable and the sovereignty of Iran and Syria should be respected, according to Mao.

Mao added that this round of escalation is the latest manifestation of the spillover from the Gaza conflict, and it's imperative that the conflict be put to rest as soon as possible.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Continued on Page 8

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We will try to change the economic situation of the country together with all the allies: Yousaf Raza Gillani



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani has said that we will try to change the economic situation of the country together with all the allies.

Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani further said that Pakistan Army is fully defending the eastern and western borders of the country and crushing terrorism and terrorists. We are proud of the brave forces of Pakistan who are sacrificing their lives day and night to protect Pakistan and the people of Pakistan.

He expressed these views while talking to the media after performing the Eid prayer at Darbar Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed. He further said that after the Senate election, the delegation of

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf came to the chamber and met me and demanded that a parliamentary leader and a leader of the opposition be made and we will make them. He said that I myself have been in jail, the cases of political opponents are under hearing. Yusuf Raza Gillani further said that on the occasion of Eid, the oppressed Palestinians must be remembered, the testimonies of Palestinians should not be in vain. He said that our enemies are attacking brave men, we condemn it, today we must remember those who were martyred while protecting our country. He said that I have been given a huge responsibility in difficult situations, I will try to fulfill the aspirations of the nation.

Chairman Senate said that the

common citizen should feel that he is getting relief, political parties should give relief to poor people. He said that Senate is a symbol of federation, I will try to fulfill the hopes of all the members and take everyone together. He said that the People's Party has always promoted the politics of reconciliation, we will try to take all the political parties together for Pakistan, we will not compromise on the honor and respect of the upper house and the members.

Regarding the by-elections, Yusuf Raza Gillani said that we have fought by-elections before and we will fight again. Later, an Eid Milan function was organized at Gillani House Multan, which was attended by a large number of civil society representatives, lawyers,

political leaders and activists. Chairman Senate Yusuf Raza Gillani received Eid from political workers and elders and congratulated them on Eid. Speaking on this occasion Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani said that the coalition government is aware of the country's problems, all the political parties have to work together to solve the problems facing the country, the coalition government is trying to deal with the country's problems.

He said that he has been trying for the development of Multan before and will continue to play a role for the development of Multan in the future. Regarding the separate province, he said that Pakistan People's Party always struggled for the establishing of Sarai-ki province, we got the bill passed by

the Senate, and now we will take more steps for the establishment of the province by smoothing the public opinion. Besides, Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani, in his special message on the occasion of Constitution Day, paid tribute to those great personalities who gave the draft of the 1973 Constitution to the nation. Chairman Senate said Constitution Day is an important day which has been established by the Senate of Pakistan.

The Constitution of 1973 has played an important role in strengthening the Federation of Pakistan and promoting unity among all the federal units by establishing the Upper House.

Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani said that we have to work together to promote democracy and

democratic attitudes, problems can be overcome only through unity and unity. It is the responsibility of all the democratic forces to play their role for the survival of the Constitution of Pakistan and the strengthening of the democratic system and to contribute to the development and prosperity of Pakistan. On this occasion, Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani assured the local businessmen and elders of the city that special economic zones will be established in Multan, which will create employment opportunities and develop Multan. Development works of Multan will start to be seen after Eid. He said that a special fund has been kept for the people of Multan, now the people of the constituency will also get jobs, Multan will be made a city of lights.

Enjoyments

ISLAMABAD: People enjoying Eidul Fitr holiday at Shahdara picnic point in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Protest against Israeli-Palestinian atrocities after Eidul-Fitr Prayer in Jhelum Valley



Bureau Report

SHARIAN/ JHELUM VALLEY: Azad Jammu and Kashmir District Jhelum Valley Constituency No. 7 Union Council Goharabad District Jhelum Valley big congregation was held at Central Eidgah Government Alhaj Qazi Abdul Aziz Boys High School Sharian Eid-ul-Fitr Prayer led by Former Chairman Education Board Mirpur Azad Jammu and Kashmir Allama Prof Qazi Muhammad Ibrahim Chishti. It was performed in which people from far flung areas of Jhelum Valley district participated in a large number while addressing the Eid al-Fitr gathering he said that at that time, the Muslim Ummah should unitedly and unanimously fight against the infidels. There is a need for opposing alignments, otherwise the infidels of the whole world will leave no stone unturned to wipe out each and every country of the Muslim Ummah. Innocent children, old people and women are being brutally massacred to wipe out. The indifference of the rulers of the Muslim Ummah is alarming. In the crowded gathering of Eid-ul-Fitr, there was a protest against the atrocities on Kashmiris and Palestinians and later Eid-ul-Fitr. After the prayer, special prayers were offered for the oppressed Palestinian and Kashmiri brothers for the security of the forces of Pakistan and Pakistan and for the protection of the borders.

Sui Gas task force arrests twenty alleged gas thieves during Eid: Hussain Zafar

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Regional General Manager Sui Gas South Punjab Hussain Zafar said that the action of Sui Gas Task Force Multan against twenty gas thieves during the Eid holidays.



According to the details, four consumers in Multan city and South Punjab were using the household meters for commercial purposes. The various teams, acting on the spot, disconnected the meter. A customer whose meter was connected to a commercial but direct gas was involved in the crime of theft. The task force team took action by disconnecting the meter and taking possession of the direct consumption material so that it can be submitted for legal proceedings.

Three consumers who were on non-billing were stealing gas by installing illegal meters. The task force has disconnected their meters and seized them. So that bills can be issued according to the units used. In the remaining twelve cases, the consumers were involved in the crime of illegally supplying gas to more than one house whose extensions were removed. The task force in charge has said that our operations against gas thieves will continue day and night and Regional General Manager Hussain Zafar Further Said a zero tolerance policy against gas thieves. Which will be strictly followed.

JI condemns Israeli attack on Ismail Haniyeh family

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: On the day of the Eid of Israeli terrorism, the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political wing of Hamas, three sons and 5 grandchildren were performed in absentia across the country on the appeal of Jamaat-e-Islami.



Also in Madrasah Jami Uloom in Multan, the absent funeral prayer of the sons and grandchildren of Ismail Hania, Hafiz Islam, leader of Jamaat-e-Islami. Naib Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Mian Asif Akhwani, Asrar Hussain and others were also present on this occasion. Speaking on this occasion, Hafiz Islam, the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, said that the courage and perseverance of Ismail Hania is proud of the fact that he has defied Israel even after the martyrdom of 60 members of his family, while our so-called Muslim rulers are inhumane. The picture is made. On this occasion, Naib Amir district Mian Asif Ikhwani said that the system of oppression has to end. Israel has been defunct in Palestine. Now looking for a way to escape, Hamas and Mujahideen of Palestine have reminded them of the holiday milk. Today the world powers are silent on this terrorism. The status of Pakistan is the heart of the Muslim Ummah, but this heart is also dead because the rulers here have a dead conscience and they know how to conquer themselves. Israel was crushed by the Palestinians. Now Netanyahu is in a panic. We assure Ismail Haniyeh that the rulers continue to do the work of America.

Situation in Gaza, the world should realize this fact, Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

GHAZIABAD: President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that without solving the problems of Kashmir and Palestine, it is impossible to establish real and lasting peace in the Middle East and South Asia.

After the situation in Gaza, the world should realize this fact, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, while talking to the delegations from Azad Kashmir on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr at Mujahid e Awwal House in Ghaziabad, he said that today the whole world The hearts of the Muslims are saddened by the worst massacre in Gaza and the seriousness of the situation where the Muslims



have suffered, it is also a question mark for the international system and the reputation of the United Nations. And the cruel act of depriving Muslims from offering Eid prayers in this historic mosque is also an open interference in their

affairs. He said that the hearts of the people of Azad Kashmir beat with the people of Occupied Kashmir and Palestinians. The message of perseverance is received. The workers of the Muslim Conference should work with enthusiasm to inform the new generation about their ideas.

The struggle should be carried forward. Muslim conference workers from Azad Kashmir and Pakistan and leaders of other political parties met and congratulated President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan on Eid, Umrah and Itikaf. Among those who received Eid, well-known lawyer of Pakistan Sardar Abdul Raziq Khan Advocate, District Bar Bagh President Sardar Abdul Rasheed Chaghtai, Dhir Kot Bar President Amjad Gurdi-

zi, former DG Local Government Arshad Abbasi, (ret'd) Director Local Government Sardar Jandad Khan. Abbasi, Sardar Manzoor Chaghtai, Sardar Shaikat Afzal, Khurshed Abbasi, Haroon Azad Maimuna Kayani Advocate, Sheikh Maqsood Ahmed, Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Muneeb Ishaq Qureshi, Humayun Chaghtai, Syed Tassawer Mousavi and the officials of MSF Youth Wing Lawyer Wing Trade Wing. On the second day of Eid, and congratulated, on this occasion Sardar Usman Ali Khan, the chairman of the Muslim Conference Youth Wing, along with his team, welcomed the guests. Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan distributed Eid among the small children and the poor and orphans on this occasion.

APHC-AJK strongly condemns the atrocities in Palestine and Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan chapter (APHC-AJK) has strongly condemned the atrocities committed by Israel against innocent Palestinians and India in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

APHC-AJK chapter's Convener Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad said that Israel and India persist in forcefully subjugating unarmed civilians in Palestine and Kashmir, respectively.

Saghar condemned the Israeli forces' bombings and attacks on civilians, including the killing of the sons and grandchildren of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, and expressed solidarity with Palestine.



He emphasized that Kashmiris and Palestinians have the right to resist as long as the occupation of their lands continues. He called for transnational

solidarity campaigns to expose the false facade of normalcy presented by the occupiers, India and Israel, and to highlight the war crimes and ethnic

cleansing being perpetrated by the two states.

"We must work together to hold India and Israel accountable for their war crimes and crimes against humanity, ensuring that justice is served for the oppressed people of Kashmir and Palestine," Saghar stated.

He stressed the need for the international community to acknowledge the righteous demands of Kashmiris and Palestinians and ensure their voices are heard.

Saghar concluded by emphasizing the importance of continuing to express solidarity with the Palestinian cause and working towards building a strong transnational movement to effectively counter the settler colonial programs of India and Israel in Kashmir and Palestine.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings
Fajr 4:14 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:46 pm
Maghrib 6:37 pm
Isha 8:04 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum is an important asset of the country: Yousaf Gilani

Bureau Report

MULTAN: Group Chairman of S. M. Food and Volka Food International, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, congratulated Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on becoming the Chairman of the Senate by visiting his residence and extending congratulations.

On this occasion, Syed Ali Haider Gilani was also present. He said that Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani will fully contribute to solving the issues of industrialists and factory owners in Pakistan and will eliminate the sense of deprivation among the people.



Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, the newly elected Chairman of the Pakistan Senate, thanked Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum for his congratulations and assured to play his full role in solving the issues of industrialists.

The Chairman of the Senate said that this city is my own, I am well aware of its issues.

He further said that the Gibbs and Volka Foods companies play a significant role in the development and progress of the country, besides helping the government in tackling unemployment, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum is an important asset of the country. We, the people of Multan, are proud of him, may Allah grant him a long life and honor.

Prayer

ISLAMABAD: People leaving Faisal Mosque after offering Eidul Fitr prayer in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Three children killed in Waziristan IED blast

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In a tragic incident, three children lost their lives, while one sustained severe injuries in a blast caused by an explosive device in the border area of Shawwal Alwarah between North Waziristan and South Waziristan.

According to the police, the children were on their way from their homes to the playing field to watch a volleyball match when the explosion occurred along the mountainous path.

As a result of the blast, Naqeebullah, Noor Muhammad, and Fakhruddin tragically lost their lives, while Hakimullah sustained critical injuries. The injured child was rescued by the young soldiers of the Pakistan Army.

Local sources have reported that the age of all the children ranged between 10 and 12 years.

Stakeholders urged to prioritize the rights and well-being of Street Children in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of International Street Children Day, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) emphasized the urgent need for collective action to tackle the challenges confronting street children in Pakistan. This day serves as a solemn reminder of the harsh realities endured by millions of children who are compelled to live, work, and beg on the streets, deprived of their basic rights and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Asiya Arif Khan, Executive Director of SPARC, expressed, "On International Street Children Day, we stand in solidarity with the countless street children in Pakistan who face unimaginable hardships daily. According to estimates, the number of street children in Pakistan is around 1.5 million; however, this data is outdated. These children encounter a multitude of challenges, ranging from extreme poverty and lack of access to education and healthcare to



exploitation and abuse. It is imperative that we prioritize their rights and well-being and take concrete steps to ensure they receive the protection and support they deserve. Failure to address this segment of society may result in increased delinquency among juveniles and youth." She emphasized the need for the federal and provincial govern-

ments to conduct a street children survey to gather data about their numbers and plan strategies to reintegrate them into mainstream society.

Asiya shared that SPARC, in addition to advocacy, provides service delivery in the form of non-formal education and distribution of essential items among these children.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, emphasized, "Despite the ratification of international conventions such as the UNCRC, street children in Pakistan continue to encounter systemic barriers that deprive them of their fundamental rights. To address this issue, we urge the government to implement comprehensive measures, including establishing safeguarding mechanisms, child protection services, and rehabilitation programs tailored to the specific needs of street-connected children. Furthermore, collaboration with the private sector and civil society is essential to enhance government efforts and provide holistic support to these vulnerable children."

CM ensures compensation for families of Victims in Hub Road Mishap

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed deep grief on loss of 17 lives in a road accident near the famous shrine of Shah Noorani in Balochistan province.

He said that a caravan of three to four vehicles was together from Thatta heading towards their final destination when the tragic incident occurred, adding that one of those vehicle developed a fault after which passenger riding that vehicle was shifted to another vehicle that met the incident. The CM expressed his satisfaction on the treatment being provided to the injured at Trauma Center of Civil Hospital Karachi.

"I have directed MPAs and MNAs to facilitate the affected families and we will try to compensate the families of the victims"; he mentioned.



After attending the funeral prayers for victims Syed Murad Ali Shah met with the bereaved families. He further said that he was not going to defend his government but the moves of caretaker

government were not people friendly. On the other Halem Adil Sheikh of Sunni Itehad Council warned of launching movement against Sindh and Balochistan governments if they

failed to provide relief to the relatives of the victims.

"The incident was throbbing and we stand by the bereaved families"; he held, and added that they would also seek intervention of President Asif Ali Zardari to compensate the affected families.

"CM Sindh has shifted all the burden on the caretaker government but he has forgot that PPP ruled Sindh for three consecutive terms"; noted Halem adding that Balochistan government should ensure renovation of the road leading to the shrine of Shah Noorani to avert such incidents in future. He lashed out at Sindh government over its failure to maintain law and order situation in Sindh.

At least 17 people were killed after a truck carrying pilgrims to Shah Noorani from Thatta plunged into ravine in Hub district on Wednesday night.

Security forces organized three days a fun fair at Gomal Zam Dam



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: A three-day fun fair was organized by security forces at the scenic spot of Gomal Zam Dam, located 20 kilometers away from the Spin area of Wana tehsil, South Waziristan Lower District, to mark the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitar.

The event featured boat races, food stalls, and various swings for children. According to security forces, the purpose of the fair was to provide people with healthy recreational opportunities and promote local culture.

According to the report around three thousand people, mostly children, participated in the fair. Traditional dance performances, including Attan, were also showcased, with enthusiastic participation from the attendees.

A tourist named Sher Ullah Wazir expressed satisfaction with the fair and praised the arrangements made by security forces. Boat rides were a highlight of the fair, and attendees greatly appreciated the security measures implemented by the authorities. The event highlighted the community's cooperation in efforts to establish peace and security in the region.

On the other hand, enthusiasts and youth demanded that guest houses be constructed in other areas of Waziristan, such as Kharrang, Mantoi, Masardina, Neza Narai, Margha China, Valley Shakai, and Angoor Adda, to facilitate tourists and ensure convenience in accommodation and dining.

Six killed, 7 injured in different incidents during Eid

Raza Naqvi

ATTACK: At least Six persons among them a woman have lost their lives while seven others injured in different incidents in various parts of Attock district during eid, police and hospital sources said. According to sources, the most casualties reported due to drowning incidents at water spots.

In the first incident, three teenage men drowned in river Indus near Attock Khurd picnic spot. Police and rescue source said 19 years old Hussain Shah and 18 years old Waqar and 20 years old Abdul Ghani went to river Indus for picnicking on the first day of Eid. As Waqar went to deep waters and loses control and starts drowning as Abdul Ghani went to rescue him also drowned. Observing his friends in distress, Hussain also jumps in to the water to save them also drowned. Later rescue 1122 launched operation and retrieved the body of Hussain only till filing this news report. Moreover, a man drowned in Jabba water channel near Hakla-DI Khan motorway in the limits of Jand Police station on Friday. Police sources said 22 years old Hammad went to water channel to enjoy swimming, he loses control and drowned. Later local volunteers have retrieved his body and shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Jand where he pronounced dead. Separately, a man died of burn injuries in Hazro town of Attock on Friday. Rescue sources said that 35 years old Asad Ali- an employee of CNG station burnt when he on the supply line of the station after eid vacation as gas accumulated in the control room. He died of burn injuries on way to hospital. Meanwhile a female shepherd has lost her while saving her goats from a Karachi bound passenger train coming from Peshawar in Shaheedabad area in the limits of Hassanabdal Police station on Friday. Police sources said that 40 years old Maruf Jan was dazing her goats along with railway line when the train approaches and in a bid to save her goats, her came on the railway line resultantly locomotive hit her resultantly she died on the spot.

Meanwhile five persons among them two kids were injured when two motorcyclists collided each other due to over speeding near Tarela Chowk in the limits of Hazro Police station. Separately two motorcyclists identified as Aftab and Zhoab received critical head injuries as their motorcycles collided each other near Torayali in the limits of Jand Police station. Respective Police registered separate cases and launched further investigation.

PMD predicts rainfall in Karachi on coming weekend

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted that Karachi will receive heavy to moderate rainfall on the coming weekend — April 13 and 14.

According to the Met department, different areas of Sindh including Sukkur and Larkana are also expected to witness moderate to heavy rainfall in the coming days. A series of westerly winds continue to affect the country's upper region and the same system will be entering the southern and eastern regions of the country today, bringing with it a new round of rainfall, according to the Met Office.

As per the Meteorological Department, the weather in Karachi will remain hot and humid in the next 24 hours and the temperature may reach a maximum high of 36°C.

Currently, the humidity in the air is 75% and the winds are blowing from the west at a speed of 11 kilometres per hour.

Previously, weather analyst Jawad Memon had predicted that there will be rain in most parts of the country due to westerly winds from April 13 or 14. He further added that the country may receive more rain in April than usual.

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Can Pakistan do better than ADB's predictions?

The Asian Development Bank's recent outlook points to growth potential, contingent upon addressing underlying issues, building a more stable political environment, diversifying the economy, and investing in infrastructure which will usher the country towards sustained economic prosperity.

The SWOT analysis of ADB's outlook for Pakistan's economy reflects a mix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. One of the strengths identified is the potential for GDP growth of 1.9% in 2024 and 2.8% in 2025 if Pakistan adheres to the economic adjustment program critical for restoring macroeconomic stability and gradual growth recovery. This anticipated rebound is bolstered by ongoing IMF support, which enhances market confidence and attracts external financing. However, growth prospects still hinge on higher crop output, improvements in manufacturing, and a rebound in private sector investment, contingent on factors such as progress in reform measures driven by increased confidence, reduced macroeconomic imbalances, achieving greater political stability, and improved external conditions.

Opportunities lie in attracting private sector investment through reforms, enhancing infrastructure to boost efficiency, and fostering regional cooperation to access new markets. Threats including a global economic slowdown, climate change impacts on real growth.

Pakistan has been facing cyclic economic crests and troughs since the past 50 years marked by periods of impressive growth followed by setbacks triggered by political instability, external shocks, and natural disasters. The "Asian Tiger" era of the 1960s and the remittance-fueled boom of the 2000s contrast

with lows in the 1970s and 1990s due to political instability. External shocks like the global financial crisis and wars, along with natural disasters such as floods and the recent pandemic, have further challenged economic stability.

These cycles underscore key vulnerabilities, including frequent changes in government that hinder long-term planning, a heavy reliance on imports, and inadequate infrastructure leading to bottlenecks. Moreover, persistent high government spending exceeding revenue has contributed to debt and inflation.

In recent years, Pakistan experienced impressive economic growth, reaching 6.2% in 2022 across various sectors including agriculture, large-scale manufacturing, real estate, and IT. However, this growth was overshadowed by political uncertainty triggered by a no-confidence motion against the prime minister, followed by PTI agitation that disrupted governance. These events contributed to a sharp decline in the value of the Pakistani rupee, imposed curbs on imports, and weakened production, consumption, and investment. Additionally, devastating floods further compounded the challenges faced by the economy. This period of uncertainty persisted through coalition and interim governments, leading to an overall economic slowdown in fiscal year 2023 (ended 30 June 2023).

Achieving sustainable economic growth and proving the prediction of international financial institutions wrong is possible. Many other countries like South Korea, India and Ireland which had been facing the similar situation, but on the strength of competent leadership, applying innovative and creative macro-

economic and fiscal measures not only defied the predicted low GDP growth but surprised the world by achieving much higher economic growth.

South Korea faced severe economic challenges during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, including a sharp decline in GDP growth and currency devaluation. The IMF and World Bank initially predicted a slow recovery. However, under the leadership of President Kim Dae-jung, South Korea implemented bold reforms, including corporate restructuring, financial sector reforms, and opening up to foreign investment. These measures helped South Korea recover in 2002 across various sectors including agriculture, large-scale manufacturing, real estate, and IT. However, this growth was overshadowed by political uncertainty triggered by a no-confidence motion against the prime minister, followed by PTI agitation that disrupted governance. These events contributed to a sharp decline in the value of the Pakistani rupee, imposed curbs on imports, and weakened production, consumption, and investment. Additionally, devastating floods further compounded the challenges faced by the economy. This period of uncertainty persisted through coalition and interim governments, leading to an overall economic slowdown in fiscal year 2023 (ended 30 June 2023).

In 1991, India faced a balance of payments crisis, and the IMF and World Bank projected low GDP growth. The Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, implemented significant economic reforms, including liberalization of trade, deregulation, and opening up to foreign investment. These reforms transformed India's economy. Since then India has grown with an average growth rate of 7% and has become the world's fifth largest economy valuing at \$3.7 trillion in 2023 compared \$266 billion in 1991, while its purchasing power parity increased from \$1 trillion in 1991 to \$13 trillion in 2023.

Ireland experienced a severe economic downturn during the 2008 global financial crisis, with IMF and World Bank projections indicating prolonged economic stagnation. The Irish govern-

ment, under Taoiseach Brian Cowen, implemented a series of measures including fiscal consolidation, banking sector restructuring, and policies to attract foreign investment. These efforts contributed to Ireland's economic recovery, exceeding initial growth projections and since then over the past decade to 2022, Ireland's economy recorded an average growth rate of 9.1%, which is above the 1.4% average for the Euro Area.

Pakistan can also defeat these pessimistic predictions by proactive and innovative leadership and by adopting innovative, creative, and out-of-the-box solutions to achieve sustainable economic growth.

The key innovative strategies which have worked for other countries should also work for our country. These strategies include implementing comprehensive structural reforms to enhance business environment and labor market productivity, investing in education and healthcare to develop a skilled workforce, accelerating infrastructure development to address bottlenecks, promoting export-oriented industries to diversify exports and reduce reliance on imports, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through incentives and streamlined processes, fostering innovation and technology adoption, addressing governance challenges and corruption, prioritizing climate resilience and sustainability, strengthening social safety nets, and fostering political stability and consensus-building. These efforts, supported by policymakers, business leaders, civil society, and international partners, can pave the way for sustained high economic growth, positioning Pakistan's economy for long-term prosperity and resilience.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Chinese hydrogen produced

The Port of Shanghai completed China's first methanol ship-to-ship bunkering operation. China's first operational methanol fuel bunkering vessel, the Haigang Zhiyuan, provided 504 tonnes of eco-friendly methanol to the Astrid Maersk, a large methanol-powered container vessel at Yangshan Port, part of the Port of Shanghai.

Also, this groundbreaking operation represented the first methanol bunkering for a large container vessel in China. "The total annual carbon dioxide emissions of the global logistics industry are 3.5 billion tons, of which the international shipping industry accounts for about 3 percent," Jens Eskelund, North Asia Chief Representative of Maersk, proposed at the Clean Energy Forum of the China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE) held late last year, "we choose green methanol as a short- and medium-term solution to help us achieve our decarbonization goals. Maersk are convinced that China can become the world's leading green methanol supplier with its abundant resources and unparalleled production capacity. "In November 2023, Maersk have just signed the first related purchase agreement with Chinese partners. The supply of this order could cover half of our current orders for methanol-powered ships," Eskelund emphasized. For a long time, the shipping magnate has attached great importance to working with Chinese partners to commit to achieving the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from all businesses in 2040, CEN reported. Astrid Maersk, the second of 18 large methanol-powered container ships ordered by Maersk, can sail using green methanol and traditional marine fuels. Running using green methanol can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 280 tons per day compared with similar ships sailing using heavy oil. Hai Gang Zhi Yuan, the world's largest methanol refueling vessel, is 135.1 meters long, 20.2 meters wide, and 11.2 meters deep, with a total volume of 16,000 cubic meters and 12 cargo holds inside. It supports synchronous methanol refueling and container loading and unloading, cutting the time needed for the turnaround of international vessels in port. Specifically, the global shipping industry emits approximately 1.076 billion tons of carbon dioxide every year. Obviously, the use of clean fuels is the most indispensable measure for decarbonizing the whole industry, with methanol is generally considered to be one of the most promising clean fuels for ships. This achievement marks that China's technology and service capabilities in the field of green shipping have reached a new height. "First, China has the world third largest waste resources and abundant scenery resources, which can be used to produce green methanol; second, the country has unparalleled engineering capabilities and rapid and efficient scale-up capabilities; third, China can produce green methanol with 100% freely available resources, thereby reducing the need for energy imports, enhancing energy independence while reducing carbon emissions, all of which is a true win-win," Jens Eskelund has no doubt about China huge role in the future green transformation of the global shipping industry.



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

The Power of "HER"

Dr Sonia Omer

Woman, as the poet of nation Allama Muhammad Iqbal said, is the portrait of the universe. She is the one whose existence is inflamed with the relish of creation.

As the world celebrates the women's day on March 8, the larger section of women in the mosaic of Pakistani society still presents a dismal picture. The United Nations celebration of women's day this year highlights the pivotal theme of "Invest in women: accelerate progress". However, the social and cultural scene of Pakistan negates this theme. The women population is more than fifty percent in the country but their suppression is one dilemma that is intensifying with each passing day. Gender inequality is of noteworthy concern for Pakistan since its inception.

The significant findings by the a UN report of 2023 reveals that in global gender gap index report, Pakistan stands at 145 out of 146 as far as economic participation of women is concerned. Similarly, we are at 135 out of 146 countries when we talk of educational attainment, and the same poor numbers are presented when it comes to health and survival and that is 143 out of 146.

The impact and recurrent natural catastrophes that Pakistan has witnessed and its standing in top 10 countries of the world that have been badly affected by climate change make things challenging for women. This further makes women journey on the road to empowerment difficult.

As a matter of fact, the Pakistani women

are a marginalised segment of society which is struggling hard with a myriad of challenges. The multifaceted issues and trials for Pakistani women shed light on the intricacies of the fabric of our society where a birth of a girl in many household is still not celebrated.

Be it education or employment, the social and cultural barriers impede the full participation of women in various fields. For instance, out of 22.8 million children aged 5-16 who are out of school, 14 million are girls.

The increasing population of Pakistan also draws our attention to large family sizes where an average Pakistani woman is still not aware of her reproductive right, thus resulting into maternal mortalities. This throws light on complexities of struggle of women in Pakistan.

The situation further perpetuates the cycles of poverty and marginalisation among greater majority of Pakistani women. Millions of women with rural background in particular endure these issues with more intensity compared to those living in urban settings.

There are issues that women face beyond their geographical location and setting in the country and they include the Pakistani women's struggle to endure different forms of gender-based violence. The gender-based violence is deeply rooted in patriarchal behaviours and poor law enforcement mechanism in the country.

Forced marriages, domestic violence, and honour killings are few of those harsh realities that are horrendous in nature and biggest obstacle to a better status of women in Pakistani society.

As a matter of fact, for the general prosperity and socioeconomic development of any country,

balance needs to be maintained for all genders in the country. There have been examples of women making the nation proud with their extraordinary achievements in the fields of politics, science and technology, sports, philanthropy or entrepreneurship.

The journey of women empowerment in the country, despite all the challenges, needs to be undertaken with a collective action and firm stance by key institutions of the state. There is a dire need to prioritise literacy among girls/women, inclusive approach in employment, combating issue of gender-based violence and strengthening legal framework for women that can pave the way for progress and empowerment for Pakistani women.

Be it our mothers, sisters, wives, or daughters, women make this world a better place to live in. Better and equal opportunities are the need of hour for women in Pakistan, particularly those living in underdeveloped and underprivileged areas.

The improved social and cultural environment with people investing in their girls is the only hope and way forward for Pakistan's progress and development.

Women's presence is required at all levels, including the top, to bring modifications in the fabric of society and restructure the conversation to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded.

It's time we recognised the power of 'Her' and ensure equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life.

Dr Sonia Omer is an associate professor of social work and Director Sughra Begum Centre for Education Policy and Development, University of the Punjab

Parallel world

"There was a naughty boy" by John Keats is about a boy who is naughty as he wants to see things around the world and is bored with his own country, England. His exploratory desire

to see new things is termed his "naughtiness". He imagines that things in Scotland are different from England and he runs away from his hometown to visit this new place. When he reached Scotland he was utterly surprised to see that everything in Scotland was the same as in England. In this poem, John Keats is talking about the naughty in us.

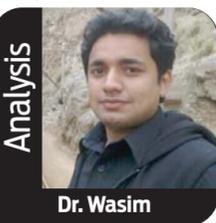
The poet tries to bring out the mindset condition of those who dream to visit some distant place that they imagine would be wonderful and dreamy altogether. Contrary to the main theme of this poem, I left my Country and reached on the shores of England. Unlike the naughty boy I turned into a decent boy to see the civilization at its peak in England. The environment, the ambience, the aura had mesmerized my senses, for a moment I thought I am on a doorstep of heaven because the clean and tidy environment had really refreshed my nostrils. Every day was a new experience for me as the sun was less brighter in summer and the clouds used to chase it all the time. The thunders, the lightning and the drizzle used to change the bright day into a dark evening and the cold wind into an icy one. I had seen less bright sun light in England and that's why a bright sunny day is a blessing in England and they enjoy it like

an event. I had seen every nook and corner of this country in a very developed form, from bus stations to shopping malls and from train to tram, everything was in perfect order. In the cold breezy nights when a gust of breeze struck my window It made me think about the wrecked state of my own homeland, a cloud of despair and gloominess haunted me every night as I pondered about my countrymen. The ultimate question striking my conscience is that how we shall improve? What strategies could be adopted to improve?

Infact a true heaven gifted to us by our forefathers is no longer a country to live. As Faiz ahmad faiz admitted in an interview many years later, 'Subh-e azadi' (Dawn of freedom), written in August 1947 already speaks of this disillusionment and exhorts his countrymen to 'go on, our goal is not reached yet.

Ye daagh daagh ujala, ye shabgazida seher, Wo intizar ta jis ka, ye wo sehr tu nahin (This stained light, this night-bitten dawn; This is not that long awaited day break) Now nobody runs from Scotland to see England, but poor nations flee in boats to see England putting their lives at stake. I must say "Leaving your heaven for another heaven in a stray boat makes you to a permanent heaven".

Writer is medical graduated from Khyber medical college Peshawar and working as Interventional cardiologist in Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar



Analysis

Dr. Wasim

Tokayev outlines priorities for Kazakhstan's science, technology development

News Desk

ASTANA: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev set goals for the advancement of science and technology in Kazakhstan during an April 12 meeting of the National Council for Science and Technology, reported the Akorda press service. The event marked the Day of Science Workers.

Welcoming the meeting participants, Tokayev drew their attention to the current situation in the country.

"Severe floods that have not been experienced in over 80 years caused significant damage to the country's several regions. Many settlements are flooded. In general, the situation is very difficult," he said, emphasizing that global climate change has led to an increase in the number of natural disasters throughout the globe.

In 1980-1985, nearly 1,700 disasters were recorded in the world, and in 2010-2015 their number exceeded 3,700. Almost half of them were related to water. According to Tokayev, this poses a serious threat to all humanity. The world faces an extremely urgent task to prevent such emergencies and ensure the safety of the population. Science should be one of the tools to implement this task.

"During the current floods, we especially acutely felt the shortage of qualified specialists and scientists in the country. I have repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing domestic

science. It is clear that this cannot be done in a day or even in a year. This will require years of long and hard work," the President emphasized.

Tokayev emphasized the critical need to rebuild the nation's scientific potential. Today, countries that prioritize scientific progress have taken leading positions in the world and Kazakhstan needs to be one of those countries.

"Last year it was decided to allocate 625 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion) for the development of science during three years. In the future, the state will keep progressively raising the science budget," he said, highlighting that the scientists' salaries have doubled.

According to Tokayev, it is critical to promptly adjust to changes and continuously seek out new opportunities for growth to ensure the country's continued progress.

In this regard, the President outlined five pressing problems that should be resolved to strengthen the potential of domestic science and create conditions for the widespread introduction of innovations in all spheres of life.

Science as a tool in predicting natural disasters

The President underlined how critical it is to use science's full potential to forecast both man-made and natural disasters and combat climate change.

"Science cannot exist in isolation from pressing issues of state development. It should serve society and the country, and, therefore, be not abstract,

but applied in nature, and be useful in everyday life. Life itself confirms that the lack of a scientific approach is fraught with serious negative consequences," he said.

Science should contribute to the progressive development of the economy

Despite the measures taken to industrialize the national economy, its raw material nature has not yet changed significantly. The government faces the task of building a new economic model, the core of which should be sustainable value chains. According to Tokayev, the petrochemical and oilfield services sectors have a lot of promise in this area (production of plastic, carbon nanotubes, carbon fiber, graphene).

"Scientific endeavors must not only address academic needs but also consider the strategic objectives of national development and economic requirements. To do this, clear research priorities should be determined based on the best international experience," he said.

Tokayev also focused on the commercialization of scientific developments.

"Domestic science faces serious challenges in light of the need to decarbonize the economy of Kazakhstan. Many developed countries are implementing projects on renewable energy sources and already have the appropriate technological potential for the transition to carbon-free development and the creation of new economic clusters. To keep up with global trends in this area, we



need our own scientific developments given our features," the President noted.

Accelerated development of artificial intelligence

According to some estimates, artificial intelligence will make up 7% of global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 and by 2027, the capitalization of the global artificial intelligence market will significantly exceed \$400 billion.

"In Kazakhstan, artificial intelligence is efficiently used in security, medicine, banking services, logistics, and education. ... At the same time, for the successful development of the industry, comprehensive government support is required. We need to create an ecosystem that provides shared access to data and technology infrastructure," Tokayev said.

It is important that the development of artificial intelligence take a creative approach. Thus, creating ethical guidelines, safeguarding data, and preventing cyberattacks need to get more focus in this field.

Development of university science and scientific infrastructure

Effective reforms in science and secondary education undertaken in recent years have led to an outflow of personnel from the higher education system. Qualified teachers with academic degrees began to move to schools and scientific organizations with higher salaries, Tokayev said.

"Today, among university professors and teachers, the share of specialists with an academic degree is just over 40%. These trends cannot but affect

the quality of training not only for master's and doctoral students, but also for bachelors," the President noted, instructing the relevant ministry to take concrete measures.

Strengthening the human resources potential of science

Tokayev outlined the need to strengthen the training of specialists for priority sectors of the economy and provide comprehensive support to young scientists.

"It is crucial to provide our scientists with the opportunity to undergo internships abroad under postdoctoral programs. At the same time, it is important to ensure a decent scholarship to allow them to concentrate on research," the President said.

Tokayev noted that the share of doctoral students among all students in Kazakh universities remains low, and urged relevant bodies to address this issue in detail and take adequate measures.

The development of science is a strategically important priority for Kazakhstan, the President emphasized. It is crucial to create conditions for talented and capable youth to engage in science. Creation, innovation, knowledge and dedication to science are the main qualities that a truly advanced country needs.

"Schools should encourage students' interest in science. We must direct all our efforts to promote knowledge and science," Tokayev said.

Uzbek FM takes part in the meeting of the CIS Foreign Ministers Council

News Desk

TASHKENT: Today, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov took part in a meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS CMFA) in Minsk, Dunyo news agency reports.

Issues on the global and regional agenda, as well as cooperation within the CIS, were discussed at the meeting.

During the meeting, several documents were signed aimed at strengthening multilateral ties in various directions, including in political, humanitarian and other spheres.

The heads of foreign policy departments of the CIS member states unanimously decided to declare the cities of Ganja (Azerbaijan) and Almaty (Kazakhstan) sports capitals for 2025 and 2026, respectively.

Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov is in Minsk on 11-12 April on his first official visit to Belarus.



Bakhtiyor Saidov takes part in the Ministerial meeting in the 'Central Asia + Russia' format

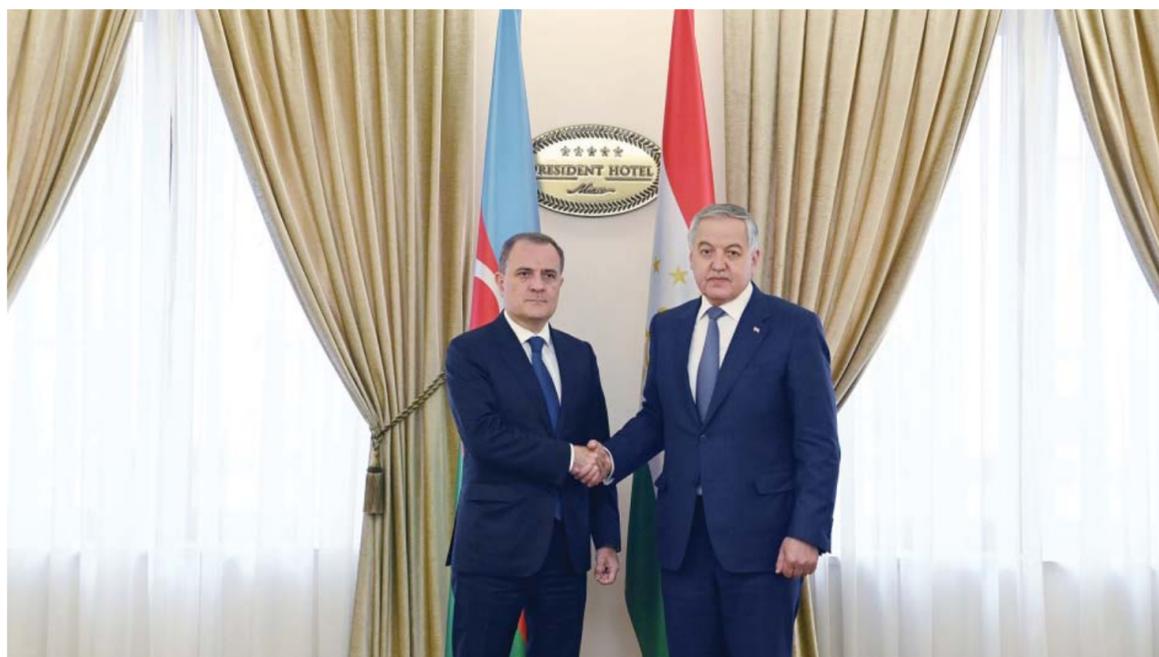


News Desk

TASHKENT: Today, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan took part in the meeting of foreign ministers in the "Central Asia + Russia" format in Minsk, Belarus.

"Together with the delegations of the Foreign Ministries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Russia, we reviewed current topics of our multilateral cooperation, as well as proposals for the development of economic ties and the implementation of promising projects. "Green" energy, water shortage and environmental issues are becoming increasingly relevant," noted Bakhtiyor Saidov in his Telegram channel.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister briefs his Tajik counterpart on the preparations for COP29



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: During his working visit to Belarus, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov met Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhiddin on Friday.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the historical, cultural, and religious ties between Azerbaijan and Tajikistan as the foundation of their friendly relations.

The ministers highlighted the extensive potential for

further deepening the expanded partnership developed in recent years.

Bayramov underscored Azerbaijan's significant emphasis on relations with fraternal and friendly Central Asian countries. He also noted the importance of Azerbaijanian President Ilham Aliyev's participation, at the invitation of Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, in the Fifth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia in Dushanbe on September 14th, 2023.

Bayramov expressed Azerbaijan's intention to elevate relations with Central Asian states, with which Azerbaijan shares common historical, religious, and cultural bonds, to a qualitatively new level. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the intensity observed in mutual visits between the two countries and continuing and developing cooperation in international and regional organizations, as well as bilateral political consultations.

The ministers also stressed the importance of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission between Azerbaijan and Tajikistan in developing economic ties between the two countries.

They highlighted the significant potential for the development of relations in trade, industry, agriculture, investments, ICT, transport, and other spheres.

They discussed studying ways to develop mutual tourist ties and exploring opportu-

nities for cooperation on joint tourist routes and the Middle Corridor, considering the rich tourist potential of both countries.

Additionally, they reviewed preparations for the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) and assessed opportunities for cooperation within this process.

The meeting concluded with an exchange of views on other issues of mutual interest.

Kyrgyzstan launches construction of solar power station

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: According to the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, the foundation stone for the 400-megawatt solar power station in the vicinity of the city of Balykchy was laid by Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Akybek Japarov.



Japarov highlighted that the construction of the solar power plant is backed by investments totaling \$400 million from Chinese companies (Fortis, Molin Energy). It is anticipated that the solar station will commence operations within 1.5 years.

"Over the past 2 years, Kyrgyzstan has embarked on the construction of several large-scale energy projects, such as the Kambarata-1 HPP, Kulanak HPP, Bala-Saryu HPP, and hundreds of small hydroelectric power stations. Our goal is to achieve energy independence," Japarov said.

He further noted the completion of the first phase of the Kambarata-1 HPP, with ongoing efforts towards the actualization of the feasibility study. Japarov emphasized that the utilization of solar, wind, and biogas energy technologies remains one of the Cabinet of Ministers' key priorities.

According to Kyrgyzstan's State Statistical Committee, the country generated over 3.434 billion kWh of electricity from January through February 2024, which is an 8.2 percent decrease compared to the same months in 2023.

Kabul to Appoint Ambassadors to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan

News Desk

KABUL: Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, without specifying when, said ambassadors to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan would be officially introduced.

Asked about where the ambassadors would be appointed, the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate said, "It will be to Uzbekistan, as well as Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan."

Several political experts said the appointment of new ambassadors by the Islamic Emirate to these countries will be beneficial for improving the relationships of the interim government with these nations.

Salim Paigir, a political expert, said: "For now we have interactions, not formal relations. It would be better for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to have a systematic legal system so that the world can have formal relations with us."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
70,314.71	69,619.98
Day's High	Day's Low
70,677.29	69,857.14
Index Value	Change
11,887,576,551	+694.73
Percentage	Time
+1%	9 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,995.58	+71.78
Percentage	Time
+0.91%	12 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
37,964.72	-494.36
Percentage	Time
-1.29%	12 Apr, 3:55 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
39,523.55	+80.92
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	12 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.7	184.5
Bahrain Dinar	739.38	747.38
Canadian Dollar	204	206.2
China Yuan	38.45	38.85
Danish Krone	40.45	40.85
Euro	299.95	302.9
Hong Kong Dollar	35.57	35.92
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.91	912.91
Malaysian Ringgit	58.92	59.52
New Zealand \$	167.63	169.63
Norwegians Krone	25.38	25.68
Omani Riyal	722.1	730.1
Qatari Riyal	76.35	77.05
Saudi Riyal	73.3	74.05
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	25.72	26.02
Swiss Franc	307.11	309.61
Thai Bhat	7.61	7.76
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.2
UK Pound Sterling	349.5	353
US Dollar	277.5	280.5

Thailand's Central buys German luxury retail property



Reuters

DUESSELDORF: Thai retailer Central Group has acquired the landmark KaDeWe property in central Berlin from the insolvent Austrian company Signa in what it said was another step towards buying the group.

Central said in a statement on Friday that it was optimistic about talks to acquire the entire KaDeWe Group, which includes Alsterhaus in Hamburg, and Oberpollinger in Munich.

The Thai retailer already holds a 50.1% majority stake in the group.

"The acquisition of the KaDeWe building is the first important milestone for us in the attempt to restore and restructure the KaDeWe Group operating company towards a sustainable, financially viable business," said Vittorio Radice, board member of Central Group Europe, in a statement.

The insolvent Signa Prime, which owns shares in the KaDeWe luxury department stores, declined to comment.

The purchase price for the building, a popular tourist destination in Berlin, was reported by the German business daily Handelsblatt at roughly 1 billion euros (\$1.07 billion).

Central did not say how much it paid for the property.

Signa, the property empire founded by tycoon Rene Benko, has been one of the biggest casualties of Europe's real estate crisis, with creditors filing claims worth billions of euros.

The group's holding company, which sits at the centre of a web of hundreds of firms, has declared insolvency, as have its two most important units, Signa Prime and Signa Development.

Positive progress is being made on the economic front

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Friday that the investment climate in Pakistan is improving, which is restoring the confidence of local and foreign investors.

He said that fears of bankruptcy in the country are almost over as the economic situation is improving, which may lead to a reduction in interest rates.

Administrative measures against hoarders and profiteers are necessary to reduce the prices of essential commodities and provide relief to the masses, he added.

Shahid Rashid Butt said in a statement issued here that the visit of the Prime Minister to Saudi Arabia has remained fruitful, and

there is a possibility of an investment of five billion dollars.

He said the economy is improving, international institutions are satisfied, inflation is decreasing, and an interest rate cut seems in sight.

The process of privatizing loss-making enterprises is going well, while the boom in the stock market is also proof of investor confidence.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that the decision by Saudi Arabia to invest in Reko Diq is also welcome and will have a positive impact on the economic situation.

He also lauded the Prime Minister's move to contact his Kuwaiti counterpart with the aim of boosting economic cooperation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah,



stressing the significance and need to promote economic cooperation and trade between the two brotherly countries.

He said that the decades-long energy crisis has shaken the country's economy. This affects the growth rate every year. The continuous increase in the price of electricity, gas, and fuel has not helped, so the present government should accept it as a challenge and rid the country of this problem.

He lauded the government's decision to provide relief to inflation-stricken masses by reducing electricity prices for April's power bills.

The per-unit price of electricity fell by Rs3.83 in April. He informed that the overall reduction is due to the quarterly and fuel price adjustments in dollar terms.

He said the fuel price adjustment has been reduced to Rs4.92 from Rs7.6 for April, and the quarterly adjustment has come down to Rs2.75 from Rs4.43.

Cake for Eid

LAHORE: A worker unloading cakes from a loading van carrying in a bakery for customers on Eidul-Fitr day, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

12.4% decline in IT exports alls for policy intervention: Noman Said

PPA

KARACHI: Leading IT exporter Noman Said has maintained that the state bank of Pakistan's data for information technology exports in January 2024 is alarming as it records the decline of 12.4 percent to \$265 million in IT exports on a month-on-month (MoM) basis as compared to December 2024; where it stood at \$303 million.

He added that we must accept that there are challenges in the IT industry with an open mind; which are hampering the efforts to realize the full potential of IT exports. Three hundred million dollars a month is a psychological barrier vis-a-vis IT exports; and, will translate into attainment of the country's annual IT exports target for the year FY24; i.e. \$3.5 billion—and that should

precisely be the target for the outgoing fiscal year, he added.

Noman Said reiterated his stance that IT is a sector which can help Pakistan improve its socio-economic indicators through stabilizing rupee-dollar parity and reigning-in costlier dollar's multiplier effects on inflationary pressures on the back of swiftly increasing the country's exports. It is pertinent to note that IT is an industry which doesn't require an incubation period of 5-10 years as is the case in most of the other export-oriented industries of the country, he added.

Mr. Said further elaborated the role and scope of special investment facilitation council (SIFC) for attracting investments into the IT industry through clearing red tape and inconsistency in policies for a few years to come.

Agriculture should be protected from climate change

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Friday that the nation's agricultural growth is progressing slowly and needs improvement.

He said the lack of water would impact the Kharif harvest, hitting many crops, including the most important cotton crop.

Protecting agriculture and farming communities from the effects of climate change is very important; therefore, he demanded it should be given due importance.

In a statement issued here today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the population growth is very fast while the overall economic development including the agricultural growth rate is disappointing.

He said that climate change must be handled correctly, as it affects agricultural production and millions of farmers.

He remarked that the country has been



facing drought for the last several years due to a lack of rain and mismanagement, which has affected production.

Cotton is the most important crop among the affected crops, and it employs millions of farmers and workers in textile mills. During the Kharif harvest, the water

shortage has been estimated to be 30 to 35%, which must affect the crops and farmers' income.

There will be less water for crops; even the big landowners will steal water, leaving nothing for the small farmers.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said that the Kharif crops include sugarcane, rice, cotton, bajra, jowar, maize, sesamum, turmeric, chilies, groundnut, soybean, safflower, and sunflower, and a reduction in output will hit farmers and trigger inflation.

The cotton production will be reduced, and cotton will have to be imported, wasting valuable foreign exchange. Through good water management practices, production can be increased despite water shortage.

Monitoring the cotton crop and using seeds that yield well in low water and high heat can be increased. He said this method can also reduce the use of fertilizers, benefiting the farmers.

ADB forecasts Pakistan's growth but stresses on reforms

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank forecast that Pakistan's growth to restart gradually this fiscal year and improve slightly next year if economic reforms, which face risk from a key factor of political uncertainty, are implemented.

"In Pakistan, growth is forecast rising at 1.9% in FY2024 (ending on 30 June 2024) and 2.8% in FY2025, up from the 0.2% contraction last fiscal year. The shift back to positive growth will come from a recovery in both agriculture and industry.

However, domestic demand will remain

constrained by the surge in living costs and tight macroeconomic policies," the regional bank said in its annual Asian Development Outlook Report 2024.

Political uncertainty that affects macroeconomic policy making will remain a key risk to the sustainability of stabilization and reform efforts. On the external front, potential supply chain disruptions from escalation of the conflict in the Middle East would weigh on the economy.

With Pakistan's large external financing requirements and weak external buffers, disbursement from multi-lateral and bilateral partners remains crucial.

Japan's ambitious Osaka World Expo

AFP

OSAKA: One of the largest wooden structures ever built is taking shape in Osaka, but hopes that Expo 2025 will unite the world are being dogged by cost blowouts and a lack of public enthusiasm.

The imposing circular centrepiece will be crowned by a 20-metre-high (65-foot) sloping canopy, designed by top architect Sou Fujimoto, known as the "Grand Roof".

It has a circumference of a staggering two kilometres and 161 countries and territories will show off their trade opportunities and cultural attractions at pavilions within the vast latticed ring.

A crane hoisted a block of beams into place this week as organisers said construction was largely on schedule, one year before visitors will be welcomed.

Expo 2025 global PR director Sachiko Yoshimura maintained that global participants would be "united" by the event even though there are conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and elsewhere.

Russia will not be among the participants at Expo 2025,

which will run from April 13 to October 13.

"Of course, there are so many crises around the world, but we want everybody to get together and think about the future and sustainability," Yoshimura said.

It has also met a lukewarm response in Japan, where promotion is ramping up and the red-and-blue Expo 2025 mascot "Myaku-Myaku" — billed by the official website as "a mysterious creature born from the unification of cells and water" — is ever-present.

A recent Kyodo News survey found that 82 percent of Japanese companies, sponsors and others involved said "fostering domestic momentum" would be a challenge.

Ballooning budget The construction budget has ballooned 27 percent from 2020 estimates to 235 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) due to inflation and Japan's chronic worker shortage.

Some say the costs are also hard to justify when 6,300 people are still in evacuation centres and hotels after an earthquake on New Year's Day devastated parts of central Japan.



Fujimoto's "Grand Roof" alone has a price tag of 35 billion yen and has been slammed by opposition leader Kenta Izumi as "the world's most expensive parasol".

The "Grand Roof" and other structures are temporary, with no clear plan for them other than organisers saying they will be reused or recycled.

The site on an artificial island in Osaka Bay will be cleared after the Expo, with plans to build a resort there containing Japan's first casino.

Jun Takashina, deputy secretary general of the Japan Association for Osaka 2025, acknowledged budget and regulatory "struggles" among foreign participants but said organisers would help make sure the displays are ready in time.

Among the most hotly anticipated attractions are flying electric cars, which take off vertically, showcasing the event's technological and environmental aspirations.

But the vehicles — subject

to reams of regulations — will be a "kind of experiment", Yoshimura said.

More than 1.2 million tickets have already been sold and organisers hope to attract 28.2 million visitors, including 3.5 million from abroad.

That would be four million more than the last World Fair in Dubai but pales in comparison to the 64 million people who attended the 1970 Expo in Osaka, a record until it was overtaken by Shanghai in 2010.

Future like science fiction

The first world fair to celebrate culture and industrial progress was held in London in 1851, with the Eiffel Tower built for the 1889 Paris World Fair.

Osaka academic Shin-ya Hashizume, a specialist in architecture history and town planning, said he was amazed as a 10-year-old when he saw a "future that looked like science fiction" at the 1970 Expo.

The first film in IMAX format was shown at that event and visitors could admire rocks brought back from the Moon.

"Those six months were extraordinary for Osaka. Simply put, the whole town was having a party," he said.

The advent of mass tourism and hyper-connected societies may have since lessened the attraction but some Osaka residents still think it's a good idea.

Kosuke Ito, a 36-year-old doctor, said it would "strengthen the economy".

However, Yuka Nakamura, 26, said she might be put off by adult entry fees ranging from 4,000 to 7,500 yen (\$25 to \$50) a day.

Al-Sagheer Hockey Club clinch second Ramadan Night Hockey League title

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Member National Assembly Khawaja Izhar ul Hasan has said that North Karachi Hockey Academy is working at the grass root level in the true sense, the talent that will emerge from here will be entitled to wear the green shirt of Pakistan. He expressed these views while watching the final of the Ramadan Hockey League held at the North Karachi Hockey Academy. And after making a detailed visit to the academy, he did in the discussion. On this occasion, it was also announced that Khawaja Izharul Hasan has been made the head of the North Karachi Hockey Academy and member Sindh Assembly Rehan Akram has been made the patron.

A game in which we ruled the world, today is so decaying that we are continuously losing in Asia as well. He thanked for working at the grass root level and assured his full cooperation and said that many members of our Sindh Assembly are also present here at this time to play their role for the North Karachi Hockey Academy.

Member of Sindh Assembly Rehan Akram said that he was very impressed by the performance of the young children of North Karachi Hockey Academy. The coaches and officials of the academy deserve congratulations for promoting hockey without any greed, playing their role, he said that we will fully support the North Karachi Hockey Academy in every way. International hockey player Mubbashir Mukhtar Assuring his full cooperation while commending the services The ceremony was presided over by Olympian Islah uddin Siddiqui, Olympian Ayaz Mehmood, Olympian Kamran Ashraf, International Mohammad Ali Khan, Chairman of Al-Sagheer Hockey Club and Vice President of Sindh Olympic Association Imtiaz Ahmed Sheikh, President of Al-Sagheer Hockey Club Syed Sagheer, Hussain and Secretary General Azmat Pasha, Amir Siddiqui, senior player of Al-Sagheer Hockey Club and Director of Sports of Habib University, Naem Haider, senior hockey player, Mubbashir Mukhtar, the spirited international of North Karachi Hockey Academy,

Maqbool Arain, President of Pakistan Students Olympic Association, Director of Higher Education Commission, HEC. Javed Ali Memon, International Goalkeeper Ghafoor Ahmed, International Goalkeeper Abuz Amrao, International Goalkeeper Ijaz Khokhar, Taslim Usmani, International cup player and head coach North Karachi Hockey Academy Masroor Javed, Al-Sagheer Hockey Club coach Junaid Aslam Kamran Naseem, KMC Director Sports and Karachi Student Olympic Association Chairman Faisal Aziz, former Deputy Director Sports KMC and Sindh Catchball Association Treasurer Nadeem Khan, Ismail Shah District Sports Officer Karachi East, Ms. Hajra Nawab District Sports Officer Central District, National Hockey Player Shaheen Sultana, Director of Physical Education Ms. Zarqa International Arif Bhopali Dr. Samar ul Islam, International Empire Younis Siddiqui Junaid Jahangir, Mahmood, Azam Khan, Haji Ghulam Muhammad Khan, son of late Jahangir Muhammad Khan, founder of Nishitar Hockey Club, performed the duties of compar-



ing, Muhammad Umar, International Muhammad Ali Khan, Naveed Ahsan, International Sarfaraz, Taslim Usmani aka Raju, Shoaib, Kashif Farooqui, Salimuddin Babar, Latafat Shah, Engi-

neer Athar Hussain, Zulqarnain, Irshad Haider, District Sports Officer Central District, Senior players and veterans of Al-Sagheer Hockey Club, in addition to the members of the Mahalla Committee

of the area, Javed Bhai, Adnan, Zahid, Tariq Khan, Faisal Javed, Raheel Khan, Abid Khalil, Fahad, Adnan Naqvi, parents of children and other elders of the city were present.

Kapp reprimanded for breaching ICC code of conduct

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: South Africa all-rounder Marizanne Kapp has been reprimanded for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the first ODI of the ICC Women's Championship series against Sri Lanka in East London on Tuesday.

Kapp was found to have breached Article 2.3 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "use of an audible obscenity during an International Match."

In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Kapp's discipli-



nary record, for whom it was the second offence in a 24-month period, taking her total demerit points to two, said a press release.

Kapp received her first

demerit point in the third Women's T20I against Sri Lanka earlier this month.

Tuesday's incident occurred in the 44th over of South Africa's innings, when

Kapp used inappropriate language after her dismissal. Kapp admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Shandre Fritz of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Karren Klaaste and Jacqueline Williams, third umpire Lauren Agenbag, and fourth umpire Thomas Mokorosi levelled the charge.

Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

Eight South Africa venues confirmed for ICC Men's World Cup 2027



A Sports

LAHORE: Eight notable cricket stadiums in South Africa including Wanderers, Kingsmead and Newlands have been shortlisted as venues for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027, the country's renowned news outlet News24 reported Wednesday.

The 16th edition of the Men's Cricket World Cup, scheduled to run across October and November in 2027 will be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Meanwhile, Pholetsi Moseki, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cricket South Africa (CSA) in an interview with the aforementioned news outlet, explained various logistics behind the selection of certain venues for the mega event.

"The exercise (of choosing the venues) was a scientific one and also included the number of hotel rooms and the availability of an airport. If there was disappointment, it was also tempered by the reality that was based on the venues that were chosen," Moseki was quoted as saying.

Moseki then acknowledged that it was a challenging call for the cricketing body to leave out three ICC-accredited venues Benoni, JB Marks Oval, and Diamond Oval.

"We do indeed have 11 ICC-accredited venues, so it was hard to leave out three, but a whole lot of things were taken into consideration."

"There's also the important matter of training venues outside of the ones available at the venue, Moseki added while explaining the exclusion of the venues in Benoni, JB Marks Oval, and Diamond Oval.

It is worth mentioning here that hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe have already earned direct qualification for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 but the third co-host Namibia will have to go through the African qualifiers.

A total of 14 teams will participate in the upcoming 50-over World Cup, which will be divided into two groups.

The top three teams from each group will then advance to the Super Six stage.

The top four teams after the conclusion of the Super Six stage will reach the semi-finals, followed by the grand finale.

Pak squash team displays top notch in Australia Junior Squash C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani squash team has showcased exceptional talent by clinching gold and bronze medals in the Australia Junior Squash Championship 2024 held at the Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre at Albert Park, Victoria.



Pakistani players, dominated the courts throughout the tournament, culminating in impressive victories on the final day, said a press release.

In Boys U-13, Huzaifa Shahid (Pakistan) defeated 2nd seed Gng Hung Yu (Australia) by 3-0 (11-6, 11-3, 11-2). In U-15 Boys, Yahya Khan (Pakistan) triumphed over Henry Kross (Australia) by 3-0 (12-10, 11-7, 11-3). In Boys U-17, Ibrahim Zeb (Pakistan) secured victory against Brodie Bennett (New Zealand) by 3-0 (11-3, 11-7, 11-6). In Girls U-13, Mahnoor Ali (Pakistan) outshined Emily Senior (Malaysia) by 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-4). In Girls U-17, Mehwish (Pakistan) emerged victorious over Erin Wylie (Malaysia) by 3-2 (10-12, 11-6, 11-9, 9-11, 11-6). Meanwhile, Harmas Ali Raja, Fawad Khan and Azaan Ali Khan have secured bronze medals in U11, U13 and U15 categories, respectively, further highlighting Pakistan's success in the championship. Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) congratulated all the young champions for their exceptional performances in the extravaganza. Their hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship have not only brought glory to the nation but also inspired countless others with their passion for the game.

Mohammad Rizwan is better than me, says Sarfaraz Ahmed

A Sports

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed commented on his competition with Mohammad Rizwan and termed the latter the better wicketkeeper batter currently.



Sarfaraz appeared on a local news channel's sports show and talked about various aspects of cricket and his career before being asked to name the better wicketkeeper batter between himself and Rizwan.

In reply, the former captain unhesitatingly named Rizwan. "Mohammad Rizwan has become more mature with time. The way he has been playing, everything about him has improved," said Sarfaraz. "So, I think, currently he is the better wicketkeeper batter," he added.

Sarfaraz Ahmed then claimed that providing a player with consistent chances gives him confidence which ultimately leads to better performances, while denying the claim that he strived less than Rizwan. "When I was playing, the performance was almost alike. [It's] just that [when you play consistently, your confidence grows]," stated Sarfaraz. "And, as I said earlier in international cricket, the more you play, the more you'll get better."

"So that's the reason, like when I played, I gave some good performances. And now the way Rizwan is playing and getting consistent chances, he is growing in confidence and getting better and better."

He then went on to offer a piece of advice to emerging wicketkeeper batters like Azam Khan, Mohammad Haris, Haseebullah Khan, Rohail Nazir and Saad Baig, who could go on to represent Pakistan as the first-choice wicketkeeper in the future.

Two-time winner Stefanos Tsitsipas eases into Monte Carlo semis-finals

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas kept alive his hopes of a third Monte Carlo Masters title as on Friday he breezed into the semi-finals dismissing Russian opponent Karen Khachanov 6-4, 6-2.

Tsitsipas, winner in Monte Carlo in 2021 and 2022, needed just 81 minutes to record his eighth win in nine meetings with an out of sorts Khachanov.

The 25-year-old Greek will meet the winner of the quarter-final between Holger Rune and Australian Open champion Jannik Sinner.

"I was very effective from the start, I had a lot of pace and gained momentum," said Tsitsipas.

"I tried to do my part and press and it worked out really well."

Khachanov had cheekily said to the umpire prior to the match "Are you going to stay focussed?" to which the official replied "Always, of course."

It was Khachanov who should have

asked himself the question as he rarely seemed to be and was way off the form he had shown in Thursday's defeat of compatriot Daniil Medvedev.

The opening exchanges were messy from both players with three successive breaks of serve — Stefanos Tsitsipas breaking the run to open up a 3-1 lead. Khachanov finally won a service

to serve out the set.

Khachanov, who seemed to be troubled by a pain in an upper quad, came under pressure on his serve at 1-1 in the second set — but he saved a break point and then held.

However, it was a very unhappy Khachanov who returned to his chair at the next change over as a series of errors gave his Greek rival the break at 3-2.

The 27-year-old Russian flung his racket angrily to the ground as he took his seat.

Stefanos Tsitsipas did not ease up winning 11 points in a row to surge to a 5-2 lead and served out easily for a place in the last eight.

He admitted the tournament brought out the best in him though it is yet to lead to him winning the big one on clay. The French Open.

"I would lie if I said it did not bring out the best in me," he said grinning.

"There are many good memories and stepping out here and coming back here it revives those good memories."

game of his own — to make it 3-2 — displaying a fine mix of power hitting, delicate touch and agility.

However, he required medical attention at the change over at 5-4 down, but returned to the fray only for Tsitsipas



Depleted New Zealand sustain major blow ahead of Pakistan T20Is

Sports Desk

LAHORE: New Zealand's inexperienced squad for the five-match away T20I series against Pakistan got weakened as hard-hitting opener Finn Allen and speedster Adam Milne have been ruled out of the series.

According to New Zealand Cricket (NZC), Allen and Milne suffered injuries in the team's training session that concluded just hours before their departure for Pakistan.

Adam Milne felt discomfort in his ankle while Finn Allen sustained an injury to his back and were subsequently left out of New Zealand's already depleted squad.

"We feel for both Finn and Adam, suffering injuries so close to the start of the tour. They have been strong performers for us in the T20 format since the last World Cup," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said.

"Our support staff and medical networks will be working closely with both players over the next few weeks to complete plans for their treatment and subsequent return to cricket."

As a result, wicketkeeper-batsman Tom Blundell and all-rounder Zak Foulkes replaced Allen and Milne respectively.

Blundell has previously visited Pakistan while uncapped Foulkes will likely be making his debut for New Zealand.

"Zak has had an impressive season for Canterbury including being their leading wicket-taker in all three competitions," Stead said.

"He has displayed impressive skills with the ball, particularly in T20 cricket for the Kings. We also know he has skills with the bat and it will be an excellent opportunity for him to be part of the group."

New Zealand squad: Michael Bracewell (c), Tom Blundell, Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Ben Lister, Cole McConchie, Zak Foulkes, Jimmy Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert (WK), Ish Sodhi.

Pakistan Squad: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saim Ayub, Usman Khan, Ifthikhar Ahmed, Azam Khan (wk), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Amir, Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Fakhar Zaman, Irfan Khan Niazi, Usama Mir, Zaman Khan

Reserves: Haseebullah, Mohammad Ali, Agha Salman, Sahibzada Farhan, Mohammad Wasim Jr.

New Zealand are slated to reach Pakistan on April 14, two days after Pakistan's squad announcement, 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 trav-

el to Lahore to lock horns in the remaining two T20Is on 25 and 27 April, respectively.

Visit

Islamabad: Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the secretary-general of the Muslim World League (MWL), welcomed by children at the Ali bin Abi Talib Orphanage in Islamabad.



Photo: Raja Farid

MWL Secy-Gen celebrates Eid with orphaned children, inaugurates new facilities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Secretary-General of Muslim World League (MWL), Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, extended the spirit of Eid-ul-Fitr to orphaned children during a heartfelt visit to the Ali bin Abi Talib Orphanage on Thursday.

Dr. Al-Issa joined the children in celebrating the joyous occasion, spreading smiles and sharing moments of

happiness.

During his visit, Dr. Al-Issa inaugurated new facilities aimed at enhancing the well-being and development of the orphaned children. Among the newly unveiled amenities were a state-of-the-art gymnasium and a training center, providing opportunities for physical fitness and educational advancement. These additions signify the MWL's commitment to supporting vulnerable

communities and fostering a nurturing environment for orphaned children.

Dr. Al-Issa emphasized the importance of compassion, solidarity, and support for those in need, especially during festive occasions like Eid-ul-Fitr. He highlighted the significance of providing a loving and supportive environment for orphaned children, enabling them to thrive and realize their full potential.

Dr. Al-Issa's visit to orphanage is a poignant reminder of the MWL's dedication to humanitarian efforts and its ongoing mission to uplift marginalized communities worldwide. Through initiatives like the visit to the Ali bin Abi Talib Orphanage and the inauguration of new facilities, the MWL continues to make tangible contributions towards building a more inclusive and compassionate society.

The children at the orphanage expressed their gratitude and joy for the memorable Eid celebration and the newly inaugurated facilities, which will undoubtedly enrich their lives and empower them to pursue their dreams with confidence and hope.

Dr. Al-Issa's visit resonated deeply with the values of empathy and kindness, underscoring the importance of collective efforts in creating a brighter future for all.

State Dept sidesteps question on Imran's meeting with US officials



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A United States official declined to comment on Thursday as to why officials from its embassy in Pakistan have not met Imran Khan in prison.

State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller was asked during a scheduled press briefing about why US officials had chosen to meet Zahir Jaffer but had not visited Imran Khan who is in the same prison.

Miller declined to answer the question, adding that it was a matter for the US embassy in Pakistan to decide.

"I would defer to the - our embassy in Pakistan for - answer that question,"

Miller said.

Miller was also asked by a journalist about a recent statement by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi about Shehbaz Sharif's current regime being built on a 'stolen mandate'.

However, Miller said that decisions about government in Pakistan are for the people of Pakistan to make.

"Ultimately, as you've heard me say once or twice from this podium, decisions about the Pakistani Government are for the Pakistani people to make," he added.

US under secretary of State Donald Lu had been recently called to a Congressional hearing to discuss irregularities in the Pakistani general election.

US representative Brad Sherman had called for the US ambassador to meet Imran Khan in prison during the hearing as well.

"There is one thing you need to do. The US ambassador needs to visit Imran Khan in prison and make sure that he lives to tell the tale of how he was wrongfully imprisoned through selective prosecution," Sherman had said.

Mehmood Achakzai named President of opposition alliance

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The six opposition parties named Mahmood Khan Achakzai as president of their newly formed alliance "Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aaen" (Constitution Protection Movement) against the government.

As per the details, Balochistan National Party (BNP) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal hosted a meeting of the alliance that was also attended by Omar Ayub of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Mahmood Khan Achakzai of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen's (MWM) Allama Nasir Abbas and Liaquat Baloch of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).

Disturbing video of ASF officer mistreating young girl at Karachi airport sparks outrage

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In an incident at Karachi Airport, a video has gone viral on social media showing an ASF (Airport Security Force) officer callously throwing a young girl onto the ground after forcefully grabbing her by the hair. The officer's actions have drawn severe criticism from users on social media platforms.

An ASF spokesperson on Friday confirmed that the video is authentic but added that the officer was responsible for his action not the entire force.

The incident captured in the viral video took place at the International Arrivals

section of Karachi Airport. The footage shows a young girl eagerly running towards her father, who had arrived from abroad. However, the ASF officer, dressed in a blue uniform, heartlessly snatched the underage child and heartlessly threw her to the ground.

Upon seeing her father, instead of expressing joy, the distraught girl burst into tears and ran towards him, embracing him tightly, with tears streaming down her face. The video has ignited a firestorm on social media, with users expressing their outrage and condemnation.

In response to a query, an Airport Security Force spokesperson stated that this was an

old, isolated incident and an individual act by the officer in question. The spokesperson emphasized that such inappropriate behaviour is strictly prohibited, and disciplinary action has been taken against the officer.

The ASF unequivocally stated that they do not tolerate any form of misconduct or mistreatment.

Social media users, including former national cricket team captain Shahid Afridi, have expressed their dismay over the incident. Afridi, in a tweet, expressed his deep sorrow, mentioning that the innocent girl ran towards her father for the first time, unaware that a heart-

less person would callously throw her to the ground. He emphasized that anyone incapable of showing empathy towards children should not be entrusted with any public-facing responsibilities.

The incident has raised concerns about the behavior and training of security personnel at airports, prompting calls for stricter oversight and measures to ensure the safety and well-being of passengers, especially children. Authorities are expected to investigate the matter further to prevent similar incidents in the future and maintain the dignity and respect of individuals passing through airports.

Section 144 imposed in Pishin ahead of joint opposition's gathering

Correspondent

PISHIN: Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) has been imposed in Pishin ahead of the opposition alliance's public gathering on April 13.

The Deputy Commissioner of Pishin has issued a notification that reads, "Section 144 has been imposed to ensure public safety and maintain law and order".

Under Section 144 of CrPC, a ban has been imposed on gatherings of more than five people within the city.

Additionally, no one would be allowed to block main highways and roads.

The development came after the newly formed Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aaen (Constitution Protection Movement), the six-party opposition alliance announced to hold a public gathering in the city on April 13.

The six opposition parties

named Mahmood Khan Achakzai as president of their newly formed alliance "Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aaen" (Constitution Protection Movement) against the government.

As per the details, Balochistan National Party (BNP) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal hosted a meeting of the alliance that was also attended by Omar Ayub of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Mahmood Khan Achakzai of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen's (MWM) Allama Nasir Abbas and Liaquat Baloch of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).

Omar Ayub said that all opposition parties also agreed to establish a coordination committee, with Mahmood Achakzai nominated as the president. He said that they would hold two public gatherings in Balochistan on Saturday (April 13).

Will spare no effort to provide relief to common man: Nawaz Sharif



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif has said that government will spare no effort to provide relief to common man.

PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif ranged up Member Punjab Assembly (MPA) Rana Muhammad Arshad who was elected from Shahkot and congratulated him on his victory in the recount.

Speaking on this occasion, PML-N leader Sharif acknowl-

edge the contributions of people of Nankana Shahkot and said government would keep all promises made with the public at Nankana rally.

He further said that educational institutions would be established in Nankana and government would bring back the era of prosperity throughout the province.

The PML-N would leave no stone unturned to provide relief to youth, farmers and the ordinary man.

Later, Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz reached Murree on Friday to celebrate the Eid holidays.

Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz will stay in Murree for three to four days along with their families.

There will be no political meeting during their stay in Murree. It is also informed that both will stay at their Kashmir Point residence.

Chairman JUI (Sami) urges world to help resolve oppressed Palestinian issue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Sami), Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq Haqqani, underscoring the profound significance of Eid-ul-Fitr, said it serves as a beacon of unity, solidarity, and compassion, resonating with the plight of oppressed communities worldwide.

Addressing the gathering on Wednesday, he highlighted the enduring sacrifices made by the oppressed Muslims of Palestine, who steadfastly endure the relentless bombardment and persecution by the Zionist state of Israel.

In a stark condemnation, Haqqani lamented the deafening silence of international human rights organizations and the United Nations. He urged the world community and human rights organizations to come forward for resolving the issue and alleviating the sufferings of oppressed Palestinian.



Haqqani also urged to continue support for the oppressed Palestinians imploring faithful to offer prayers and extend various forms of assistance to address their plight.

He emphasized the imperative of collective action and solidarity in the face of injustice and oppression.

Govt launches interest-free e-bikes project for students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Chief Minister of Punjab launched the project for the provision of 20,000 bikes under the Chief Minister Youth Initiative for students across the province.

With this initiative of CM Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, the students can acquire motorcycles and e-bikes through easy monthly installment plans with male students have the option to pay Rs 11,676 per month, while female students can avail the offer at Rs 7,325 per month.

Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim appointed acting Chief Justice in PHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, appointed the most senior judge, Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, as the Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court.

In a recent development, the Law Ministry in Islamabad has issued a significant notification regarding judicial appointments in Sindh and Peshawar.

Meanwhile, in a move to bolster

the Sindh High Court's bench, the President has appointed six additional judges, including a female judge.

Among the newly appointed judges are Justice Sana Akram Minhas, Justice Amjad Ali, Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro, Justice Muhammad Abdul Rehman, and Justice Arbab Ali Hakro, all of whom are poised to contribute significantly to the Sindh High Court's judicial proceedings.

IMF chief says very important ...

Continued from Page 1

The country will seek to negotiate an Extended Fund Facility with the IMF, the report said, adding that the talks with the global lender were expected to start in March or April.

Pakistan averted default last summer thanks to a short-term International Monetary Fund bailout, but the programme expires next month and a new government will have to negotiate a long-term arrangement to keep the \$350 billion economy stable.

ADB's report validates correct...

Continued from Page 1

and sustainable economy. Inflation is decreasing in the country and this has also been confirmed by global financial institutions, Cheema said. He said, the government has been working to improve financial discipline, promote invest-

ment, and facilitate a better business environment in the country. He said, the previous coalition government during past 16 months had taken necessary measures to stabilize the economy while it also saved the country from default and the economic measures taken by it have stabilized the value of rupee.