



Pakistan 'deeply disappointed' by UNSC dissensus on Palestine's full UN membership; regrets US veto

Pakistan on Friday expressed its disappointment on the United Nations Security Council's inability to reach a consensus on Palestine's full membership of the United Nations, also regretting the US decision to veto the draft resolution. (Details on Page 8)



British army chief lauds Pakistan Army's professionalism, expertise

Several decorated British military officers paid glowing tributes to the allure of Pakistan while referring to the hospitality of Pakistanis as being unparalleled. They appreciated the professionalism and versatility of the Pakistan Army, calling it one of the best and most disciplined military organisations in the world, according to a press release received here. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Calls on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Turkish investors calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM for further strengthening economic, trade ties with Turkiye

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the government's resolve to further strengthen economic relations and trade partnership with Turkiye. He was talking to a delegation of the Turkish investors which called him here at the Prime Minister Office. The Turkish investors, expressing confidence in the leadership of the prime minister, took keen interest in investing in Pakistan's diverse areas. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan and Turkiye had a

long-standing brotherly relationship spanning centuries. He said reforms had been made in the system to take full advantage of the potential of foreign investment in Pakistan. Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci, CEO Terminal YAPI Cenk Coskun and other Turkish and Pakistani officials participated in the meeting. Federal ministers Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Ahmad Khan Cheema, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officials also attended the meeting. The delegation thanked the prime minister for the warm welcome.

Pakistan committed to ensure safety of foreign nationals: FO

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government on Friday strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attack in Karachi's Landhi area, saying it was fully committed to ensure the safety of foreign nationals. "All necessary measures will be taken to bring the perpetrators to justice," a Foreign Office news release said.

It added that such dastardly acts only strengthened the resolve of the Government and the people of Pakistan to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. "Pakistan remains committed to ensuring the safety of foreign nationals residing in the country. We will continue to work with our international partners to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

Two killed in suspected suicide bombing in Karachi targeting foreigners

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: A suspected suicide bomb explosion in Karachi's Landhi Mansehra Colony killed two individuals and injured two security guards on Wednesday. The deceased are believed to be suicide bombers.

SSP Tariq Mastoi said that police had foiled the attack by acting dilligently. He confirmed that a vehicle carrying foreign nationals had been targeted but all four foreigners inside had remained safe.

The SSP added that the foreigners were travelling to the Landhi Export Processing Zone.

Mastoi said that a total of three attackers had been involved in the incident including a suicide bomber on a motorcycle. He added that one attacker had been killed by firing from the police while the



third had managed to flee the scene. The injured security guards and the dead bodies have been transferred to Jinnah Hospital.

Initial reports suggest the vehicle belonged to foreigners. Reuters later reported that the van was carrying Japanese

nationals.

"We received information about the presence of terrorists in the same area a few days ago," a source in the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) stated.

Images from the scene showed what looked like body parts of the suicide bomber and

a dead body of another person lying on the ground.

Windows of the van carrying foreigners was shattered. It's airbag had been deployed due to the crash.

Eyewitness account A security official who survived the attack said that the foreigners were travelling as a three-vehicle convoy.

He added that a security vehicle led the way, while four foreigners were in a van behind them followed by an SUV which also carried foreigners.

The security official confirmed that only the van carrying the foreigners had been targeted and security had immediately pushed back the SUV to keep it safe.

He said that there had been a loud explosion followed by intense firing from the attackers.

He added that police had immediately arrived on the scene and engaged the attackers, killing one of them.

Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar has taken notice of the recent attack on a convoy of foreign nationals, Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

According to spokesman for Sindh home minister, Lanjar has instructed the additional inspector general of Police, Karachi, to furnish a detailed report on the incident.

He emphasized the importance of thorough investigations by the police into the matter.

Lanjar has instructed the police to provide a comprehensive account of the actions taken in response to the attack. He reiterated that the province's peace and security are paramount and that any attempts to disrupt it will not be tolerated.

CCTV footage of Karachi bombing shows attacker seconds before attack

Bureau Report

KARACHI: A CCTV footage of the terrorist attack that targeted foreign nationals in Karachi has revealed how the alleged terrorists freely reached the site of the attack without any obstructions.

Multiple videos of the incident have emerged since the attack. One of them shows two of the three alleged attackers riding a motorcycle towards the site of the incident.

Another footage shows the foreign nationals' vehicle travelling on the road as it is rocked by an explosion.

A man can be seen prowling on the sidewalk in anticipation of the vehicle. As soon as the vehicle appeared, the man can be seen running across the road and blowing himself up near the vehicle travelling in the fast lane.

Another vehicle behind the van, immediately reverses to get away from the explosion.

Bilawal Bhutto demands govt to hold tripartite dialogue to curb terrorism

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday demanded the government to initiate tripartite dialogue with the neighbouring countries to curb the menace of re-surgng terrorism. While talking to media outside the Parliament House, the Chairman Bilawal appreciated Sindh police for thwarting a terror attack in Landhi, Karachi yesterday morning.

Bilawal said, "This is also a reminder that the menace of terrorism is once again rising in Pakistan. The federal and provincial governments will have to take action against the terrorists and ensure to engage the neighboring countries to take action against them." The Chairman PPP said that as a foreign minister he had



held a tripartite dialogue at the foreign ministry among the foreign ministers of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, adding, "We should have similar efforts to eliminate terrorists." The Chairman PPP said Imran Khan's government policy regarding the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, terrorism and about the neighboring country, the way that government let free the terrorists from prisons and invited the terrorists who were in Afghan prisons before the fall of Kabul to enter Pakistan were all wrong. The parliament was not taken

on board and the President of the time was giving the terrorists clemency, he added. "That was the policy of Imran Khan's government. We had criticized that policy then and now we should have a clear stance to see the issue as political but as an issue of national security. You cannot have the policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. This dual policy will not work and the Army, police, common people rendered great sacrifices to eliminate these terrorists in the past," he said. Speaking about the destruction by the floods in the modern country like United Arab Emirates, Chairman Bilawal said that the climate change is increasing in its intensity with time. Pakistan is an under-developed nation and we are trying to give relief to the people with our limited resources.

Pakistan aims to agree outline of new IMF loan in May, says finance czar

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb is interviewed by Karin Strohecker, Reuters Chief Correspondent Emerging Markets, during the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting at the IMF and World Bank's 2024 annual spring meetings in Washington on April 18, 2024. Reuters

Pakistan hopes to agree the contours of a new International Monetary Fund loan in May, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told Reuters, and has kicked off talks with ratings agencies to lay the groundwork for a return to international debt markets.

The country's current \$3 billion arrangement with the fund runs out in late April and the government is seeking a longer and bigger loan to help bring

Continued on Page 8

Centre, Punjab's failure led to Faizabad sit-in: commission

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The commission probing the 2017 Faizabad sit-in has termed it the failure of then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal and Punjab governments.

The inquiry commission in its findings revealed that then Punjab government led by Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif - incumbent Prime Minister - did not attempt to stop the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) protest in the province.

According to the report, the provincial government allowed free movement of the protesters and also provided security to the gathering.

The report said that Punjab government was hesitant to take action against the protest-

ers owing to threats to the lives of PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, Rana Sanaullah and other government officials.

The Punjab government was relieved after the protesters entered Islamabad as the Shehbaz Sharif-led provincial government wanted the centre to deal with the matters related to the Faizabad sit-in.

However, the Islamabad administration was overwhelmed by the approaching situation amid the free movement of the protesters into the capital city, the report stated.

As per the report's findings, then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and the Punjab CM had a heated verbal exchange during a meeting as

Continued on Page 8

Prime Minister says will utilize all available resources for development of Azad Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the government would utilize all available resources for development of the state and well-being of its people. Prime Minister Haq said this while addressing the divisional development review meeting held here today. While reiterating his commitment to serve the people of the state with utmost sincerity, said that delaying tactics on the part of state machinery won't be tolerated. For development and prosperity of the state, he said, the state administration will have to work with a missionary spirit. He said that the state resources were solely meant for the development of the state and welfare of the masses. "There is no shortage of funds in any sector", the PM said. He, however, said that proper utilization of funds and timely completion of projects was his

first and foremost priority. He said that all the development projects were being carefully reviewed. "Misuse of public funds, corruption or any kind of negligence will not be tolerated", he said, adding that those found guilty will have to face the consequence. Directing local government officials to finalize all local government schemes by May 15, the PM made it clear that "No scheme will be approved after May 16". He said that funds for all the ongoing projects of the Mirpur Division would be released in second week of May. "All under-construction roads across the Mirpur division should be completed before June", the PM said. "The government has saved 21 billion rupees from various departments this year", he said. He said that maintaining law and order in the state was the coalition government's top priority.

The meeting was also attended by Senior Minister Col. Retd. Waqar Noor, Government Secretaries, Chief Engineers, Divisional and District Officers. Earlier The Prime Minister also witnessed a MoU ceremony in Islamabad at Kashmir plan House and Hailing the signing of memorandum of understanding between TEVTA and NAVTTC as a significant development, the prime minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that it was high time that talented, educated and hard-working people especially the youth should come forward and take full advantage of this opportunity. The AJK premier, while speaking at the signing ceremony, said that the MoU between TEVTA and NAVTTC would provide a rare opportunity for skill development of the youth in Azad Kashmir. "It will help reduce the growing unemployment in the region", the PM said. Earlier, the Executive Direc-



tor NEVTTA Aamir Jan and Chairman TEVTA Chaudhry Farid Ahmed signed the memorandum of understanding. Amongst others who were present on

the occasion included senior minister Col. (retd) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Minister TEVTA Sardar Amir Altaf, Chief Secretary Dawood Muham-

mad Burich, Chairman NEVTTA Ms. Gulmina Bilal, Director General Planning NEVTTA Moin Hasan Khokhar and others.

Fire

ISLAMABAD: Firefighters try to extinguish a fire in oil tanker at PSO petrol pump in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ghazi, Niazi institute award ceremony in Multan to honor outstanding Pakistani writers

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The first annual award ceremony with the support of Ghazi and Niazi Promotion of literature Society and Ansar Adab was held at Gillani House, Multan under the chairmanship of Gillani family head and Chairman Tehreek Aman Pakistan Makhdoom Yazdani Gilani. Makhdoom Javed Hashmi Makhdoom Syed Tanveerul Hasan Gilani, Makhdoom Rajan Bakhsh Gilani and Nawabzada Tabish Khan Durrani were in this annual award conference, more than a hundred writers from all over Pakistan will be given awards for their literary services, including Life Achievement Award, Recognition Art Award, Pride of Performance Award, Rahmatul Ul Alamin Award, Service Literature Award Noor Ahmad Ghazi Award and



Dr. Mukhtar Zafar, Dr. Farhat Abbas, Dr. Baghi Marwat, Dr. Saeed Asim, Mumtaz Athar, Dr. Saeed Asim, Azhar Saleem Majuka, Prof. Naseem Shahid Nasir Bashir, Arshad Iqbal Bhatta, Aamir Shahzad Siddiqui, Fazal Abbas Zafar, Ali Raza Khan, Dr. Farzana, were

included in the Rajan Bakhsh Gilani Award. Kokab Ali. Imran Mumtaz. Imran Ali Awan. Sheikh Salim Naaz. Dr. Shozab Kazmi Khalifa Masroor Hussain Siddiqui. Ahmed Masood Qureshi. Abbas Malik. Dr. Mushtaq Mehdi. Jasrat Khayali. Majeed Salik

Advocate. Professor Iman Qaisrani. Ashfaq Ahmed Ghori. Sarwar Samdani Advocate. Ghazanfar Hashmi. Yasin Raza Towana. Ejaz Danish. Dr. Imran Haider Gardizi Dr. Maqbool Gilani. Sultan Mahmood Shaheen. Professor-Jameel Ahmad. Dr. Qasim Jalal, Akmal Hanif. Syeda Tasneem Bukhari. Umar Siddique Ansari and others are among the recipients of the award. In his presidential address on this occasion, Makhdoom Yazdani Gilani said that in the current crisis situation of the country, the responsibilities of the pen have increased and For the country's development and development, the pen is full role should be played On this occasion, Rahat Ameer Khan Niazi Tri Khelvi and Sabir Ansari expressed their gratitude to the people of the pen and expressed their determination to continue the annual award. A banquet was also organized

'We will march to Lahore' if wheat purchase not started: Senator Aon Abbas

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Abbas Bapi said that if the purchase of wheat at Rs 3900 per maund is not started from the farmers by April 28, then the farmers will take a long march from Multan to Lahore, which I am giving an ultimatum. And they will jam the whole of Lahore, he expressed these thoughts at the Multan Press Club During the press conference, Moin Riaz Qureshi MPA General Secretary PTI South Punjab Malik Adnan Dogar. MPA City President PTI Multan Barrister Waseem Khan Baduzai. MPA Sunni Unity Council Leader PTI Multan senior leader Ejaz Hussain Janjua was also present Aun Abbas Bapi further said that during the last seven months, wheat was ordered



from Ukraine, although during the PDM government, four million tons of wheat was in the warehouses of Punjab, which is still there today. He would not be in trouble, he said, "Unfortunately, wheat from Ukraine." A profit of one billion was made by ordering, which should be fully investigated and told to the people who benefited from Ukraine's wheat. He said that the current government is not ready to buy even two million tons of wheat. We don't mind

putting the father's picture on the bardana too, but all the ones with the picture. The government should buy wheat. Wheat is currently flowing on the roads. Because Maryam Nawaz Sharif did not get the vote in South Punjab, she is taking revenge from the farmers, but she has no idea if the farmer gets the right price for his wheat. If not found, he will not cultivate wheat in the next year, which will reduce wheat in the country including Punjab-

a serious crisis may arise. 32 million tons of wheat were brought from Ukraine. Among those who brought wheat from Ukraine were Shehbaz Sharif, Anwar-ul-Haq, Dr. Mohsin Naqvi and the government of that time. What if the official price of wheat in Punjab is fixed at 39 hundred rupees per maund till April 28? If it is not done, then the farmers' movement will not be able to be stopped We will shut down the entire

Lahore with the farmers. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will run a movement with the farmers. Maryam Nawaz Sharif has not yet told how much wheat will be bought. Maryam Nawaz Sharif will decide by April 28. It is our right to protest. Govt. Now wheat is behind those who profit from wheat bought from Ukraine. In response to a question, he said that wheat may have been ordered from Ukraine due to international pressure, but the government has not announced how much wheat it will buy in Punjab. Despite 4 million tons of wheat in Punjab, why did they order wheat from Ukraine? Even though the wheat of the farmers of Punjab is lying in the warehouses and nobody is ready to take the flour with green bags, the farmer will take his wheat on trolleys and go to Lahore.

First anti-rape crisis cell in Punjab to help victims of sexual violence

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan was briefed in meeting by the United Nations Women Punjab Program Coordinator Sidra Humayun on the establishment of the first anti-rape crisis cell at Nishtar Hospital. She

informed that the first anti-rape crisis cell in Punjab province has been established at Nishtar Hospital. So far, 48 cases have been reported. This anti-rape crisis cell has been established at Nishtar Hospital in collaboration with the Punjab Health Department, UN Women, and the US Government, providing medical aid to women and children victims of sexual violence to facilitate their access to justice based on evidence. This cell is part of the protection program in collaboration with the US, which the Punjab Health Department has established with the technical assistance of the United Nations Women. The anti-rape crisis cell is operating 24 hours a day. Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan said that the establishment of the anti-rape crisis cell in Multan is very important in the context of the importance of South Punjab. This cell plays a crucial role in providing justice and is evidence of the government's ongoing war against sexual violence. She said that meetings should be convened immediately on these cases so that issues can be resolved.

Wana police foiled smuggling attempt, forest dept fined 3 lakh 70 thousand on truck

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: District Police Officer Farman Ullah has said on Friday that the police foiled a major smuggling attempt in Daza Ghundai area of Wana tehsil, and the police took important action. DPO said that the Daza Ghundai police stopped the truck for checking, so valuable wood worth lakhs of rupees was hidden in the junk. DPO Farman Ullah added that the Daza Ghundai Police referred the truck to the Forest Department for further legal action. Forest department officials took immediate action and imposed a fine of 370,000 on the truck.

On the other hand, the District Police Officer told the media that all possible measures are being taken to prevent smuggling and no one can be allowed to do business in the name of smuggling. He said that smuggling is an illegal business so all the business community should stay away from this business and your legitimate business should be prioritized.

Addl. Secretary BISP Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor launches inaugural tender

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In adherence to the "E-Pak-Procurement Regulations, 2023" stipulated by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor, Additional Secretary of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), marked a significant milestone today by initiating E-Procurements within the organization. The inaugural tender, titled "Procurement of Enrollment Slips with QR Code Receipts", was officially launched through the E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (e-PADS) of PPRA today, at the BISP Headquarters.

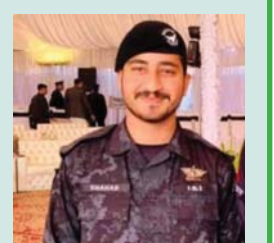


The introduction of E-Procurements in BISP underscores the organization's commitment to modernize its procurement processes in line with contemporary regulatory frameworks. By leveraging e-PADS, BISP aims to streamline its procurement operations, enhance transparency, and ensure the efficient utilization of public funds.

Constable Shahab Ali Khan Shaheed

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

MARDAN: Takht Bhai, Constable Shahab Ali Khan, who was killed in an attack by unknown terrorists on a customs squad vehicle in Dera Ismail Khan, was laid to rest with official honors and while removing the martyr to the grave, a police force saluted the martyr. According to details, unknown terrorists attacked a customs squad vehicle in Dera Ismail Khan yesterday, in which five police officers and two passers-by were also martyred. Among them, young FC Constable Shahab Ali Khan son of Maher Gul of Londkhor Dagai area of Takhtbhai was also martyred. Shaheed Shahab Ali Khan was buried with official honors on Friday. High officials attended in large numbers.



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Will IK be released any time soon?

In an interview with a national TV channel, Mr. Rauf Hassan disclosed several key aspects of PTI's policies and decisions on pressing issues. These included the party's stance on bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, their approach to the six judges' charge sheet against the executive and intelligence agencies, their policy towards JUI, the return of the election symbol of PTI, the reintegration of deserted party members, the party's perspective on internal divisions within PML(N), and the efforts to improve relations between PTI and the influential establishment.

though left the party, neither gave statements against the party nor joined another party. When specifically asked about Mr. Fawad Hussain, he categorically said that he falls in the first group while Malika Bukhari and Shireen Mazari fall in the second group.

In the matter of the Election Symbol, he said that intra party elections were conducted exactly in accordance with the law, results were submitted to the Election Commission who after examination accepted the result. However, since then, PTI has held two more meetings and will approach the Election Commission for the fourth time. He expressed doubt that PTI would not get back the election symbol until all by-elections are complete and there would be no need to continue depriving the party of its election symbol.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

I know Mr. Rauf Hassan from the date of his appointment as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for the Ministry of Information. As Joint Secretary, I received and ushered him to his office. Though he was not very popular amongst the PTI's political leadership of that time, following the removal of many frontline leaders after the crackdown on the party, he virtually emerged as PTI's primary spokesperson, particularly in handling complex and challenging decisions.

While reacting to Sheer Jan Marwat's statement on Saudi Arabia, he said that Mr. Imran Khan, was shocked to hear the unwarranted and obnoxious comments and narrated many instances where Saudi Arabia had rescued Pakistan from difficult financial, economic, and diplomatic situations. He advised the PTI's core committee to meet with the Saudi Ambassador and explain to him the party's stated position, emphasizing that the PTI greatly values the bilateral, fraternal, and brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia and that PTI had no intention to derail Saudi Arabia's investment commitment in Pakistan.

He said that currently, a status quo exists between PTI and the Establishment and relations are icy without any

sign of melting, and effectively poured cold water on assumption of IK's release any time soon. He said after the Chairman's arrest, there was great pressure on him to leave the country, and as soon as the conditions were made favorable, he would be called back. However, the chairman refused to succumb to any pressure whatsoever. He emphasized that the army, an important and vital institution of the country, already has its plate full owing to external and internal security and safety threats. Therefore, they should focus on their core functions and leave politics to the politicians and the people of Pakistan, who are the final authority to accept or reject any political leader. Mr. Rauf Hassan, however, said that the establishment would have to enter into negotiations with the Chairman, as currently, he is the only legitimate and genuine leader in the country.

While discussing the possibility of rapprochement with the JUI, he mentioned that within PTI there are two factions: one headed by Mr. Asad Qaiser in favor, and the rest of the party against such a proposal. He said that the history of animosity between JUI and PTI is very bitter, and it would perhaps take much more time and effort to mend fences and develop a consensus on relevant issues confronted by the nation.

Regarding the decision to take back party leaders who had deserted the party under immense pressure from the establishment, he clarified that the party is well aware about the hardships they had faced and therefore had made a clear distinction between those who left the party, gave derogatory statements against it, and joined other parties, and those who

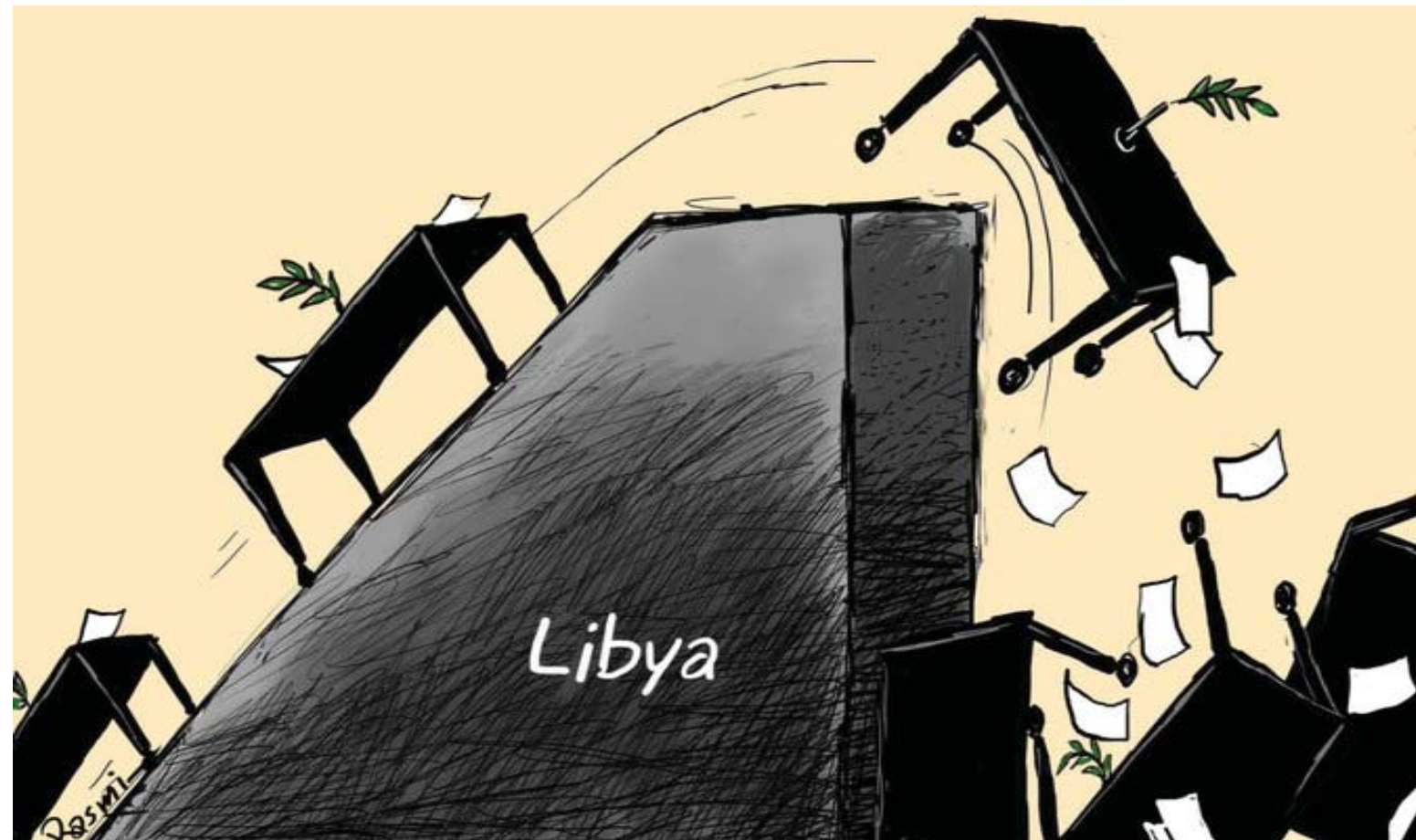
Regarding Mian Nawaz Sharif's decision to become a party to the Supreme Court's suo moto proceedings on six judges' letters, he said that in principle, PTI would stay away from any proceedings as it believes that the judiciary, as a pillar of the state, should be able to resolve the matter amongst themselves, and any outside interference or indulgence would be counterproductive. He added that without a strong, independent, free, and fair judiciary, the state cannot function properly, as is the case in Pakistan currently. He mentioned that the helplessness, unfairness, and biasness of the judiciary were admitted by none other than the judges themselves, and this is the reason the state structure in Pakistan has crumbled. He advised the judiciary to reclaim its lost space as quickly as possible to put the country

back on the path of progress and development.

Referring to the internal division within PML(N), he said that, according to credible information the house of PML(N) and the family of Mian Nawaz Sharif have clearly been divided into Nawaz and shahbaz groups. Nawaz Sharif's group believes that Shahbaz, in connivance with the Establishment, has betrayed Nawaz Sharif and effectively destroyed his political career. He said that the conflict between the two factions simmering within the family and close circles of PML(N) will soon escalate to the national level, and many deals that were made underhand by both factions of the PML(N) will wreak havoc on the entire party and its followers.

However, despite many policies of the PTI being unveiled, many burning questions remain. When and how will the Chairman of PTI's ordeal finally end? Will he be breathing in fresh air any time soon? Without Imran Khan, will the movement kick started by the PTI and its allied parties in Balochistan, demanding the reissuance of election results on the basis of form 45 gain enough momentum to pose credible pressure on the government and the establishment to either reissue the election results, or decide to conduct fresh elections? Questions also remain about how the incumbent government of PMM(N) will deliver and survive when stalwarts of its own party are withdrawing their support, alleging that even in PML(N), picking and choosing was exercised to select certain candidates and reject others. Another question is how strongly and how soon Nawaz Sharif will commence opposition to the government of his own brother.

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



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

Shaping the Future: The Evolution and Impact of ICFP 2025

Family planning is defined as "the ability of individuals and couples to anticipate and attain their desired number of children and the spacing and timing of their births." This is accomplished through the use of contraceptive methods and the treatment of involuntary infertility. Family planning involves considerations such as the number of children a woman wishes to have, including the choice to have no children and the age at which she wishes to have them. Factors influencing these decisions include marital situation, career considerations, financial position, and any disabilities that may affect one's ability to have and raise children. For those who are sexually active, family planning may also involve using contraception and other techniques to control the timing of reproduction.



Analysis

Mansoor Qaisar

Family planning decisions date back to the 16th century in Djenné, West Africa, where physicians advised women to space their children, recommending a three-year interval between births. Additional elements of family planning include sex education, prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections, pre-conception counseling, and infertility management. As outlined by the United Nations and the World Health Organization, family planning services extend to preparations for conception. While abortion is not generally recommended as a primary method

of family planning, wider access to contraception can significantly reduce the need for it.

Pakistan has experienced continuous population growth since the 1940s, with the population increasing nearly sixfold from about 33 million in 1947 to 250 million today. The Population Welfare Programme aims to reduce this growth rate, which is essential for developing countries like Pakistan. As we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, governments have reaffirmed the importance of the Programme of Action and its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The increased use of contraceptive methods in recent decades has led to improved health, educational, and economic outcomes, particularly for girls and women. Despite significant progress, challenges remain, including the fact that some 214 million women in developing countries lack access to safe and effective family planning methods.

Better reproductive healthcare, including voluntary family planning, can boost economies and contribute to sustainable development by enabling women to complete their education, enter the workforce, be more productive, earn higher incomes, and increase savings and investments. Furthermore, for each additional dollar spent on contraceptive services above the current level, the cost of pregnancy-related care is reduced by \$2.30.

The last ICFP 2022 in Pattaya City, Thailand took place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely disrupted family planning services worldwide. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), these disruptions led to 1.4 million unintended pregnancies. The conference also highlighted pre-existing challenges, as the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that even before the pandemic, at least half of the world's population was unable to access essential health services, including family planning. This context set the stage for discussing the urgent need to restore and expand family planning services globally.

The event also marked a decade since the significant 2012 London Summit on Family Planning, celebrating the substantial increase in global contraceptive use and the expansion of commitments from governments and NGOs to improve family planning access. The ICFP serves as a crucial platform for these stakeholders to reaffirm their commitments and introduce new initiatives, such as the historic pledges announced at this year's conference, including a five-year, \$15 billion commitment from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These commitments are essential for advancing family planning and reproductive health services amidst the ongoing global challenges affecting SRHR.

The author is a freelance journalist specializing in FP, SRHR. He shares his insights and updates on X under the handle @MansoorQaisar

A paradigm shift in sociopolitical awareness

In the annals of political history, rare are the figures who manage to transcend the boundaries of mere leadership to become catalysts for societal transformation. Imran Khan, the enigmatic Prime Minister of Pakistan, stands as a luminary example of such a phenomenon. His journey from a celebrated cricketer to a transformative political leader has reshaped the landscape of the nation's awareness and engagement with political affairs.

With a charismatic appeal and an unwavering commitment to social justice, Khan has single-handedly stirred the embers of political consciousness among the masses, igniting a fervor that has reshaped the very fabric of Pakistani society.

From the chaotic tumult of a dispersed crowd, Khan has woven the threads of unity, forging a nation bound not by ethnicity or creed, but by a shared vision of progress and prosperity. His ascent to power marked a watershed moment in Pakistani politics, heralding the dawn of a new era where the voice of the common man resonates with unprecedented clarity.

Central to Khan's message is the importance of utilizing one's political rights effectively. Through his advocacy and example, he has taught the masses the value of their votes and the power they hold in shaping the course of governance. This empowerment has led to a more engaged electorate, unwilling to be mere pawns in the game of politics but active agents of change.

ble. Khan's government has embraced this paradigm shift, leveraging social media and digital platforms to foster transparency and communication with the citizenry.

Imran Khan's leadership style, characterized by his accessibility and authenticity, has endeared him to the masses. Unlike traditional politicians who may seem distant and detached, Khan's approachability has allowed him to connect with people from all walks of life. This personal connection has been instrumental in fostering a sense of trust and solidarity among the populace.

Khan has instilled a sense of civic responsibility and national pride among Pakistanis, fostering a collective consciousness that transcends partisan divides. Through his leadership, citizens are encouraged not only to demand change but to actively contribute to the betterment of society.

In the wake of Khan's leadership, Pakistan has emerged not as a nation blinded by ignorance, but as a beacon of enlightenment and progress. With every policy decision, every speech, and every action, Khan has sown the seeds of political awareness, nurturing a populace that is not only informed, but actively engaged in shaping its own destiny.

Yet, for all his accomplishments, Khan remains a polarizing figure, his detractors quick to point out the challenges and shortcomings of his administration. But amidst the cacophony of criticism, one cannot deny the indelible mark he has left on the political landscape of Pakistan.

As Pakistan continues on its journey of political evolution, Imran Khan's legacy transcends the confines of conventional politics, embodying the transformative power of leadership to inspire, to empower, and to awaken the dormant consciousness of a nation. Whether through his bold reforms or his unwavering advocacy, Khan has irrevocably altered the course of Pakistani politics, leaving behind a legacy of empowerment and enlightenment.

As Pakistan marches forward into an uncertain future, it does so with the unwavering resolve instilled by Khan, propelled by the collective aspirations of a people united in their pursuit of a better tomorrow.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

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Hari Raya Aidil Fitri

High Commission of Malaysia Hosts Eid-ul-Fitr Open House in Islamabad



Naveed Ahmad Khan

Hari Raya Aidil Fitri/Eid-ul-Fitr the most important festival in Malaysia is the Islamic New Year celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr, or as it is known in Malay, Hari Raya Aidil Fitri.

It is customary for some Muslim families to host 'rumah buka' or 'open house', where they welcome neighbours and members of the community into their house to join in the celebrations where one can enjoy festive food such as curry chicken, beef rendang, chicken satay, ketupat, lemgang, rose syrup, cakes, cookies, and tarts.

On the 19th of April 2024, the High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Ambassador Mohammad Azhar Mazlan

and spouse, Madam Amelia Amani Azhar hosted an Eid-ul-Fitr Open House at the Malaysian High Commission. The invited guests represented a cross section of the society from the diplomatic corps, senior government officials, Pakistani captains of industry, friends of the media as well as the Malaysian diaspora were among those present to celebrate the joyous occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Donning their national costumes, the host-hostess with his team and families at the High Commission welcomed the guests with renowned Malaysian Hospitality. The guests were served with a delightful array of traditional Malaysian and Pakistani cuisines such as mee goreng, mutton curry, nasi goreng, satay with peanut sauce and traditional Eid cookies.

Such a gathering reflects the true spirit

of friendship and peaceful co-existence amongst nations especially with the host

nation, Pakistan. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Azhar underscored

the importance of cultural understanding and mutual respect in strengthening bilateral ties, emphasizing the commonalities and traditions that bind the people of Malaysia and Pakistan.

In his remarks, Ambassador Azhar expressed gratitude to the guests for joining in the celebration and reiterated Malaysia's commitment to advancing

cooperation with Pakistan in various fields, including trade, investment, education, and tourism, among others. Considering the candid remarks and feedback from those present, the gathering was a success, exemplifying the strong brotherly ties and cooperation between Malaysia and Pakistan.

Photos By Raja Farid

Kazakhstan Ambassador calls on Speaker National Assembly

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that Pakistan highly values its relations with Kazakhstan and committed to further enhance them through increased people-to-people contacts, strengthened parliamentary cooperation, expanded economic ties, and regional connectivity. He noted that both countries share common views on various regional and international issues of mutual interest. He made these remarks during a meeting with the Kazakhstan Ambassador, Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, who called on him at the Parliament House.



Sadiq stressed the importance of enhancing parliamentary cooperation, noting that both countries were committed to strengthening their parliamentary links

through increased interaction between the two legislatures. He mentioned fully activating the Pak-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Friendship Group and encouraging

high-level exchanges between the two parliaments to bring the brotherly countries more closer.

The Speaker also proposed increased interaction between the business communities of both countries for mutual benefit, highlighting the immense potential for investment in oil exploration, energy generation, agriculture, and other economic sectors.

Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin congratulated the Speaker on his successful re-election and expressed his country's high regard for its friendship with Pakistan, keenness to strengthen relations, and enhance cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, including parliamentary cooperation.

COMSTECH distinguished scholar visits Malaysia

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH distinguished Scholar, Prof. Dr. Murtaza Najabat Ali has visited Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), in Malaysia, under COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar Program. Prof. Dr. Murtaza Najabat Ali, is a COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar in the fields of biomaterials, drug delivery systems, medical device research and development.

He is CEO of Revive Medical Technologies (RMT), Inc., a pioneering medical devices and healthcare equipment Research and Development (R&D) company headquartered in the USA, with R&D facility in Pakistan. His expertise spans non-active and active medical devices / wearable devices, AI-based solutions, biomaterials, and drug delivery systems. His

visit, scheduled from April 16 to 19, was organized in partnership with the College of Engineering at UiTM. Prof. Murtaza was warmly received by Prof. Dr. Hamidah Mohd Saman, Assistant Vice Chancellor of the College of Engineering, UiTM, said a news release issued here on Friday. He had productive discussion with Prof. Datuk Dr. Shahrin bin Sahib, Vice Chancellor of UiTM, who expressed keen interest in utilizing Prof. Murtaza's expertise to enhance UiTM's research capabilities and bridge the gap between academic research and commercialization in the biomedical field.

During his visit, Prof. Murtaza delivered talks at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Hospital Al-Sultan Abdullah, and at the College of Engineering at UiTM.

He also engaged with the Business Innovation & Technology Commer-

cialization Centre (BITCOM) at UiTM, providing insights into regulatory pathways and strategies for overcoming challenges in commercialization and FDA approval processes for biomedical products.

In addition, he shared his expertise in a radio interview at UiTM's Konti Radio UFM 93.6Mhz, and highlighted the role of COMSTECH in enhancing scientific research and collaboration among OIC member states.

Furthermore, Prof. Murtaza also toured various medical research facilities at UiTM Sungai Buloh Campus, and Institute of Medical Molecular Biotechnology (IMMB).

Prof. Murtaza's visit to UiTM highlights the commitment of COMSTECH and UiTM to fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange in biomedical research and development.

Expense on education is not expenditure but investment: Khalid Maqbool

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, called on the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in his office. The meeting was attended by Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Wani and the Country Director British Council Mr. James Hampson.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the Ministry of Education is working on a programme that aims to declare education emergency in Pakistan.

He said that the number of Out of School children of Pakistan is ballooning and the only way to address this issue is by making it a national agenda. He said that due to rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation slums in major cities are propping up.

He said that these slums are ignored in every education policy. He highlighted the

importance of ensuring that no child should be left behind.

He encouraged the UK to provide support in the cause of eliminating out of school children. He said that we need to bring all the stakeholders especially donors on the same platform so that all the effort can be channelled and streamlined.

He said that we are burning the midnight oil in ensuring that the cause of education becomes one of the main agendas of national effort towards progress.

Ms. Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan said that UK and Pakistan are the oldest partners and have been shoulder to shoulder since 1947.

She informed the minister that UK encourages expansion of its green programme which can lead to an increase in enrolment of Pakistan students in UK universities via distance learning.

She also informed the minister that Google

Education is highly interested in supporting Pakistan in its bid to address the issue of access to education.

British High Commissioner and the education minister also discussed the challenges and opportunities that come with the devolution of education to the provinces.

Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Wani highlighted that Ministry of Education is developing a comprehensive plan which will declare an education emergency in the country and will furthermore align all the stakeholders on the same page.

He said that all the donors and NGOs operating in Pakistan are working in silos and compartments. He said that there is a concerted effort on the way to ensure that a single platform can align and channel the effort of all stakeholders in the education sector of Pakistan.

James Hampson, Country Director British Council told the minister that after China



the biggest British Council Programme is in Pakistan. He requested the minister that the Global Chief Executive of British Council will be visiting Pakistan in May and would like to visit him.

Federal Minister welcomed the initiative

from the British Council and expressed a deep desire to enhance collaboration between British Council and Pakistan especially with respect to increasing educational outreach programmes for slums in the metropolitan cities of the country.

Called on

Rawalpindi: Major General (Engineer) Talal Bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi, Assistant Minister of Defence, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at GHQ.



Photo: ISPR

President for enhancing road & railway connectivity with Turkiye

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday called for enhancing road and railway connectivity between Pakistan and Turkiye to further promote people-to-people contacts between the two brotherly countries. He said that overland transport was cost-effective, which would not only lead to increased interactions between the two nations but would also enhance bilateral economic ties.

The president expressed these views while talking to the Turkish Chief of General Staff, General Metin Gurak, who along with his delegation, called on him, at Aiwan-



e-Sadr. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, and Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Dr Mehmet Pacaci, also attended the meeting. Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan was committed to further deepening mutually beneficial cooperation with Turkiye in all areas of common interest. He urged the need to increase bilateral cultural exchanges, particularly in the areas of literature and poetry, to bring the people of two brotherly countries further closer. The president highlighted that Turkiye was a sincere friend of Pakistan and both countries had enjoyed deep fratern-

ties, which needed to be further strengthened for the mutual benefit of the two sides. He expressed satisfaction over the existing level of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, adding that Pak-Turkiye relations were on an upward trajectory marked by increased high-level exchanges. Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) on the Turkish Chief of General Staff, General Metin Gurak, in recognition of his outstanding services in strengthening and promoting defence ties between Pakistan and Turkiye, at a special investiture ceremony, held, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday.

British army chief lauds Pakistan Army's professionalism, expertise

News Desk

LONDON: Several decorated British military officers paid glowing tributes to the allure of Pakistan while referring to the hospitality of Pakistanis as being unparalleled. They appreciated the professionalism and versatility of the Pakistan Army, calling it one of the best and most disciplined military organisations in the world, according to a press release received here.

Around 50 senior British military men of the Quetta Command and Staff College in the last 50 years shared their views after attending a luncheon in their honour hosted at the Army and Navy Club in London. UK Army Chief General Patrick Sanders was the chief guest on the occa-

sion. The event was organised to cherish the indelible imprints of the British officer's stay at Quetta. The veteran British officers paid rich tributes, unbounded homage and reverence to the great institution at Quetta. Notable British military officers who attended the event included Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin (1980 graduate), Lieutenant General Anthony Palmer (1981 graduate), Brigadier Nick Thompson (1971 graduate), Brigadier Tony Berry (1970 graduate) and Major General Seumas Kerr (1985 graduate).

They were accompanied by their wives who were equally delighted in reminiscing the good old memories of the past. The event was conducted by Colonel Taimur Rahat, Army and Air Adviser at Pakistan High Commission London. He spoke on the achieve-



ments of the Staff College and informed the audience of the value that Staff College beholds for the training and grooming of officers from 1905 onwards. Col Taimur gave various examples of how command and staff echelons in all major battles fought by the British Army from 1900s to 1950s were

groomed at Quetta. He stated that students who studied from this prestigious institution have gone on to become Viceroy, Governor Generals, Presidents and Field Marshals. Some are even credited with being founding fathers of various Arms / Services in their country's armed forces. Countless

have laid the supreme sacrifices of their lives in almost every theatre and battlefield of the world. The message of Commandant Command and Staff College Major General Nassem Anwer was also read out in the gathering to the applause of everyone.

Souvenirs were presented on the occasion to the chief guest and other notables by spouse of the High Commissioner, Pakistan High Commission. Commenting about the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces, the British

Army Chief said there was no comparison to the Pakistan military's professional finesse and expertise. General Patrick Sanders termed Pakistan as UK Army's foremost priority in various avenues of Defence Association and Defence Collaboration during his tenure.

Centre, Punjab's failure...

Continued from Page 1

they disagreed on the resignation of then Law Minister Zahid Hamid.

The report revealed that Sharif had pushed for the resignation of Hamid while Shahid Khaqan Abbasi opposed the decision.

The commission termed it one of the few reasons, both Punjab and Centre failed to counter the Faizabad sit-in on time.

The probe commission said that the Islamabad and Punjab police's November 25, 2017, operation was a complete failure as the move resulted in creating further chaos.

According to the report, both the government were trading blames as the protesters continued to put them under pressure.

Interior ministry decides to launch joint operation in Kacha area of Sindh

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, after consultation with all stakeholders in the interior ministry decided to conduct a joint operation in Kacha area of Sindh province, with full force to clear the area from dacoits.

An important meeting of the National Action Plan Implementation Review Committee was held at NACTA headquarters here on Friday under the chairmanship of the Interior Minister which was attended by Federal Interior Secretary, Head NACTA, DG FIA, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

IGs and provincial secretaries Interior besides National Coordinator NACTA, all teams of National Action Plan and Intelligence agencies and Chief Commissioners also attended the meeting.

The top brass after detailed brainstorming, decided to conduct a joint operation in the Kacha area with full force and close



coordination between the provinces and all stakeholders to clear the area from dacoits.

Detailed consultation and consideration was made to provide new modern technology to the police across Pakistan.

The meeting also carefully reviewed the measures taken regarding the security of Chinese citizens while All the IGs gave a detailed briefing on security and safety measures for Chinese citizens in Pakistan.

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Pakistan Army chief, Saudi minister discuss military cooperation in wake of regional challenges

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: H. E Major General (Engineer) Talal Bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi, Assistant Minister of Defence, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at GHQ.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence collaboration including defence production and military training were discussed. COAS affirmed Pakistan Army's continuing support towards capacity building of Royal Saudi Land Forces.

The visiting dignitary acknowledged Pakistan Army's achievements and sacrifices in war against terrorism and Army's valuable contributions towards regional peace and

stability.

The visiting dignitary also participated in the 5th Meeting of Pakistan-KSA Defence Collaboration at GHQ, which he co-chaired by CGS Pakistan Army.

The forum discussed challenges to global and regional security and their implications on Defence Forces. Forum noted that rapid advancements in modern technologies necessitated defence industrial cooperation in critical capabilities between the two brotherly countries.

Both sides reiterated their resolve to solidify the efforts in defence collaboration with focused approach to target specific capabilities in land, air and sea domains.

In this context, concrete proposals were deliberated by the forum to meet tangible objectives within specific timelines.

Pakistan 'deeply disappointed' by UNSC dissensus on Palestine's full UN membership; regrets US veto

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday expressed its disappointment on the United Nations Security Council's inability to reach a consensus on Palestine's full membership of the United Nations, also regretting the US decision to veto the draft resolution. "Pakistan is deeply disappointed by the result of last night's debate at UNSC and its inability to reach a consensus and recommend Palestine's membership to UNGA. We regret the US decision to veto the draft resolution granting full membership of the UN to Palestine," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing.

The Security Council blocked Palestine's bid to become a full member of the United Nations due to a United States veto on a widely-supported resolution that would have recommended the granting of such status. The proposal, submitted in the 15-member Council by Algeria, received 12 votes in favour, with the United States casting a negative vote and Switzerland and the United Kingdom abstaining.

A Council resolution requires at least nine votes in favour and



no vetoes from its five permanent members — China, France, the Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States — to pass. "We believe, the time has come for admission of Palestine to the UN. This will be a step towards correcting the historic injustice suffered by Palestinians for over 75 years.

It will affirm their right to self-determination," she remarked. The spokesperson said that the people of Palestine had their inherent right to live in a sovereign Palestinian state with the pre-1967 borders and Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Ambassador Hashmi visits Huawei exhibition center in Beijing

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi visited Huawei exhibition center in Beijing and discussed its projects and partnership with Pakistan. Upon arrival, Ambassador Hashmi was warmly welcomed and informed that Pakistanis are the largest group of foreign nationals employed by Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices.

Commercial Counsellor, Ghulam Qadir, Science and Technology Counsellor, Khan Muhammad Wazir and other officials from the embassy were present. Pleased to visit @Huawei exhibition center in Beijing and discuss its projects and partnership with Pakistan. Happy to note Pakistanis are largest group of foreign



nationals employed by Huawei. Amb. Zhangs company was an added bonus, the ambassador posted on social media platform X after the visit. Meanwhile, Ambassador Hashmi held a meeting with Chairman of China Great Wall Industry Corporation, Hu Zhongmin and discussed matters of mutual interest. Had a pleasant and productive interaction with Hu Zhongmin, Chairman of China Great Wall Industry Corporation. Look forward to further building on existing collaboration, the ambassador shared on X.

Pakistan aims to agree...

Continued from Page 1

permanence to macroeconomic stability as well as an umbrella under which the country can execute much needed structural reforms, the minister said.

"We expect the IMF mission to be in Islamabad around the middle of May—and that is when some of these contours will start developing," said Aurangzeb, who met with the Fund's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Wednesday during the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring Meetings.

He declined to outline what size programme the government hoped to secure, though Pakistan is expected to seek at least \$6 billion. Aurangzeb added that once the IMF loan was agreed, Pakistan would also request additional financing from the Fund under the Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

The struggling South Asian nation had managed to accumulate foreign exchange reserves in recent months and was on track for its war chest to hit \$10 billion—or roughly two months import cover—by end-June.