



Punjab to impose complete ban on plastic bags from June 5

The Punjab government has decided to impose a complete ban on the use of plastic bags from June 5 to combat pollution and enhance environmental quality, without giving an alternative to several shopkeepers and vendors. (Details on Page 8)



By-Election: ECP issues form 47 results for 22 constituencies

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued Form 47 to the winning candidates of the recent by-elections. A total of 21 forms were issued, corresponding to the 21 constituencies where by-elections were held on Sunday. The winner was also declared in a constituency of Qila Saifullah where re-polling took place at some polling stations on Sunday. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

New era begins

ISLAMABAD: President of Iran H.E. Dr. Syed Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Islamabad on Monday. He was received by Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada at the Nur Khan Airbase.



Photo: PID

President warmly receives Iranian President Dr Raisi



Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday said that he was honoured to welcome President of Iran Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, on his arrival at the President's House. "We expressed satisfaction at the trajectory of bilateral ties and agreed to further strengthen our dialogue and cooperation to reinforce existing ties," a post on the official X account of the President of Pakistan said.
He further said that Pakistan and Iran were bound by common religion, history and culture.

Pakistan, Iran for promoting bilateral trade ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Monday agreed to enhance bilateral trade ties and promote business activities at the border areas to ensure development and prosperity of the people of two countries.
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, in a press talk along with President of Iran Dr Ebrahim Raisi after witnessing the signing of bilateral agreements and MoUs at the PM House, said under the leadership of the Iranian President, the two countries could bring development and prosperity in their respective sides by turning their borders into hub of business activities.
He said during their meeting, the two sides held detailed discussions on various fields of mutual

interests including economy, trade, investment, diplomacy, security and culture.
The Iranian President, who arrived here on Monday on three-day official visit to Pakistan along with a high-powered delegation, said that the trade volume between the two brotherly countries was not reflective of the true potential and they wanted to increase it to US\$10 billion annually in five years.
President Raisi stressed that steps were needed to enhance border markets to give spur to the business and trade activities at the border areas, besides enhancing security.
He said that the two countries shared common affinities and no one could separate them, adding the two sides in their meetings, decided to further promote the

bilateral ties between the two countries in trade and economic sectors.
President Dr Raisi said that there were a number of common issues including fight against terrorism, efforts to curb organized crimes and smuggling, in which the two sides could enhance their cooperation.
The president stressed that it was significant to further broaden the bilateral ties for the benefits of the two countries, besides continuity of cooperation at the highest level.
He said that the historic and durable ties between Iran and Pakistan provided them opportunity to fully utilize them for the welfare and prosperity of the two nations.
President Raisi said that Iran had achieved immense progress

in science and technology and the country was ready to share their experiences and knowledge.
President of Iran Dr Ebrahim Raisi, conveying best regards from the people and the Supreme Leader of Iran to the people of Pakistan, said they had always been supporting the oppressed people of various areas of the world, specially the people of Gaza and had always been defending Islam and raising their voice for the freedom of Quds Al-Sharif.
He believed that today people in different parts of the world were in pain due to current situation in Palestine. At the same time, he said the international organization such as United Nations and UN Security Council who claimed to support human rights, could not perform their core responsibility.
President Raisi emphasized

that the people belonging to all religions across the world including that of Iran and Pakistan, were calling for an end to the oppression and barbarism against the people of Palestine.
The Iranian President believed that the position adopted by the people around the world and by the Palestinian resistance would surely be realized one day.
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended Iran's robust stand for the Muslims of Gaza and the barbarism being committed against them, saying that Pakistan in this regard also fully supported the oppressed people of Gaza.
He said the resolution of the UN Security Council with respect to Palestine was being violated. He regretted that over 35,000 people had so far been martyred in Palestine.

PM Shehbaz, President Raisi plant a sapling to mark Earth Day



City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and visiting Iranian President Syed Ebrahim Raisi on Monday planted a sapling in the lawn of the Prime Minister's House to mark the annual Earth Day. Accompanied by his spouse and a high-powered delegation of ministers and businessmen, the Iranian president arrived here on a three-day official visit.
Both the dignitaries planted the sapling of Chir pine, also known as Pinus roxburghii – a hardy species native to the Himalayas. PM Shehbaz, President Raisi plant a sapling to mark Earth Day Prime Minister Shehbaz, earlier in a message to the nation on Earth Day, urged the countrymen to reaffirm their commitment to using plastic responsibly and embrace recycling and eco-friendly alternatives to achieve a plastic-free society. Earlier, as the visiting dignitary arrived at the PM House, he was given a guard of honour before the tete-a-tete between the prime minister and Iranian president.

IHC adjourns PTI founder's appeal in cipher case till tomorrow

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday adjourned hearing till tomorrow (Tuesday) on appeals against the conviction of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), founder and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in cipher case.
A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals of two accused.
During the course of proceeding, on the query of chief justice FIA's prosecutor Barrister Hamid Ali Shah said that every coded document is secret as per law. He said that cipher was received by foreign office through email on March 7, and a telegram number was allotted to it. The lawyer also produced the book of secret language before the court and said that it was issued on the name of deputy attorney general.
The prosecutor said that this book could be issued only to the certain people and the allottees have to give assurance in every six month regarding its custody.
Justice Hassan Aurangzeb questioned if the coded cipher message was intercepted at any stage. The prosecutor answered in negative and said that the soft copy of the document must be with the foreign office.
He said that a cipher has three forms, adding that not only cipher but also its content should be protected.
The prosecutor said that concern department of foreign office was responsible to classify a cipher. Later, the court adjourned further hearing of the case till tomorrow.

IHC Cf Farooq summons full court on judges letter

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq has summoned a full court meeting on the letter written by six IHC judges on Tuesday, sources said. Judges are scheduled to meet at 1:30pm tomorrow.
This comes two days after the high court sought suggestions from all judges, including district and sessions court, by Monday on the letter.
In a letter to the five members of the Supreme Judicial Council, six out of eight IHC judges demanded a judicial convention be summoned over the alleged interference of intelligence agencies and the executive in the judiciary.
"We believe that individual judges must not be required to be as brave as Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the chief justice of Pakistan, to fight persecution at the hands of the executive on their own, or as resolute as Justice Siddiqui, to continue to fight a wrong for personal vindication long after removal from office," said the 12-page letter sent last month to the SJC.
The six judges who signed the letter are Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, and Justice Rafat Intiaz.

Murad Saeed, other PTI leaders' names removed from ECL

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the federal government on Monday removed the names of Murad Saeed among other Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) leaders, who were part of the then cabinet, from Exit Control List (ECL).
Sources told that the federal cabinet approved the removal of their names from the ECL on recommendation of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and sent copies of a notification issued in this regard to all the authorities concerned.
The names, removed from the ECL, include Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Ghulam Sarwar, Parvez Khat-tak, Shafqat Mahmood, Ijaz Shah, Ali Zaidi, Khushro Bakhtiar, Azam Swati, Asad Umar, Omar Ayub, Mehboob Sultan, Fawad Chaudhry, Farog Naseem and Shireen Mazari.
However, names of PTI founder Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, Farah Gogi and Zulfi Bukhari were not removed from the list.
The no-fly list or ECL is a legal tool to restrict the movement of individuals and stop them from flying abroad.
The names of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) leaders were placed on the no-fly list at the request of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a case related to Al Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer.
As per the charges, the former prime minister and others accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion – 190 million pounds at the time – sent by Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the government.
The PTI chief registered Trust for Al-Qadir University Project on Dec 26, 2019.

PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif leaves for China

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif left for China on Monday night on a five-day visit to the country, party sources said.
They added that the visit is a private one and will also involve a medical check-up.
Nawaz will also be accompanied by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.
However, the sources also added that Nawaz will also hold meetings in connection with development projects in Punjab. He will also meet the leadership of multiple Chinese companies.
Meanwhile, the Foreign Office spokesperson rebuffed reports of FM Dar visiting China. In a statement, the spokesperson said that such reports were based on lies and rumours.
She added that Dar's China trip is not planned this week.

Pakistani nation warmly welcomes Iranian President: Interior Minister

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The entire Pakistani nation warmly welcomes the Iranian President and his delegation to Pakistan, Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday in a meeting with Iranian Interior Minister Dr. Ahmad Valhidi and Iranian Law Minister Amin Hussain Rahimi.
During the meeting, various issues including security cooperation, anti-terrorism, smuggling, border management, facilities for Pakistani visitors and exchange of pris-
oners were discussed.
The Iranian President's visit to Pakistan is very important in terms of bilateral relations, the interior minister said



Chaudhry Latif strongly condemned the alarming situation in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Senior Parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar strongly condemned the alarming situation arising from the continuous bloodshed of innocent freedom fighters in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine from the platform of OIC Security Council, called for an emergency meeting and said that if the United Nations and influential countries do not give up the double standard by revising the policies subject to interests, then global peace will collapse and meaningful progress for the global



village will become a story. Pakistan is the strong fortress of the world of Islam and the country that wants to have relations with mutual

respect around the world and is the defender of humanity against terrorism.

According to Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's enlightened and progressive philosophy of politics, time and circumstances are calling for the whole nation to put aside all ideological differences and come together under the shadow of the green crescent flag. While talking to the media after the meetings with the public delegations in his chamber, he said that the international forces will have to take a firm stand in the movements of independence and secession. It is one thing, but the non-implementation of the

approved resolutions of this organization is a historical pattern of both the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that the two occupying countries have openly committed violations of the Geneva Convention, but they have been given an open leave. Speaker Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that in Pakistan The established democratic government should fulfill the duties and responsibilities of highlighting the Kashmir issue at every forum by forming the National Kashmir Committee in consultation with the Kashmiri leadership of both sides.

World Earth Day Celebrated at Women's University Multan



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The World Earth Day was celebrated at Women's University Multan with the determination that all sectors of life must take joint action to eliminate pollution, limit the use of plastic to prevent diseases like cancer and barrenness of the earth. Department of Botany, Women's University, A one-day seminar was held in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Sciences and Forests, titled "Our Earth Against Plastics". The chief guest of the seminar was Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Kulsom Paracha, while addressing that plastic pollution is a global crisis that has impacts last many years, millions of tons per year plastic waste ends up in our oceans, rivers and landfills, posing a serious threat to marine life, ecosystems and human health. From plastic bags to microplastics, the presence of these pollutants disrupts the delicate balance of our environment, resulting in habitat destruction, wildlife entanglement and toxic pollution. 55 billion plastic bags are used in Pakistan annually, are and according to WWF in their use increasing by 15% annually, scientists say that wherever and whenever plastic is made around the world, no matter how long ago it was first made, it is still not finished, but in the same state. International Organization World According to the Wildlife Fund, 25 million tons of plastic waste is generated annually in Pakistan These include plastic bags, bottles and food packaging etc. Out of this 25 million tons, 163 million tons i.e. 65% reaches the beach. This rate is very dangerous and alarming for our ecosystem. There is an immediate need to educate the public across the country, to be implemented and a one-time campaign is not enough, but plastic The time has come to campaign against pollution in a sustained and innovative way. Organizers Dr. Adela Haroon and Dr. Saima Noorin said that we are united to save our planet and its precious resources. This year's focus is on the important issue of planet vs. plastic. Forest Officer Rashid Mehmood, Deputy Director of Environment Mohammad Idris said that plastic is purely biodegradable, meaning it persists in the environment for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. As a result, plastic waste accumulates in our ecosystems, causing long-term damage to wildlife and ecosystems. It is imperative that we address the root causes of plastic pollution and protect our planet for future generations. Work towards sustainable solutions to protect the world's next day Accordingly, the students who participated in the poster making competition were awarded with certificates, a walk was held on the occasion and saplings were planted while starting the plantation campaign.

Presentation

MULTAN: Daily The Spokesman Special Edition Presented to Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari at MEPCO Headquarters, Multan on Monday.



Photo: Spokesman

Cotton Crop is Very important For Pakistan Economy: Marium Khan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan participated in the seminar on growing more cotton at Hafiz Muhammad Wala near Qureshi Wala. In the seminar, cultivation of cotton on maximum area, obtaining high production of cotton and informed the landowners and farmers about modern agricultural factors. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Abdul Rauf Mehr, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Syeda Anna Maududi, Director Agriculture Shahzad Sabir, Principal Agriculture Officer and Deputy Director Agriculture Extension Muhammad Shafiq, other officers of the Department of Agriculture Extension and officers of related institutions were present in the seminar. Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan while addressing the cotton cultivation seminar said that the cotton crop is very important because the individual economy of the farmer along with the country's economy depends on the cotton crop. He said that the national duty should be fulfilled by cultivating cotton on maximum area. He said that the cultivation of cotton will provide an opportunity to earn foreign exchange, which will make the country's economy stronger and more stable. Commissioner Multan Division said that the field officers and staff of the Agriculture Extension Department should provide guidance to the field officers and staff, landowners and farmers for cultivating cotton on more area and getting better production and make them aware of modern agricultural sciences. He said that the officers and staff of the Department of Agriculture should go to the village and union council levels to ensure better cotton production and management and monitoring of the cotton crop.

Speaking at the seminar, Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Abdul Rauf Mehr said that the Punjab government has set a target of cultivating cotton on a total area of 272 thousand 640 acres for Lodhran district. He said that the government has set a target of 61 thousand 580 acres of BT cotton, which has been started from April 15, while the target of general seasonal cotton has been set at 2 lakh 11 thousand 60 which is currently being planted. It will be cultivated at the end of the month.

CEO MEPCO Assigned the Financial and Administrative Powers of Various Sectors

Syed Nadeem Kazmi



MULTAN: Chief Executive Officer Mapco Engineer Rana Muhammad Ayub Khan has assigned the financial and administrative powers of various sectors/circles to General Managers and Chief Engineers and has also authorized departmental action against Grade 18 Executive Engineers/Deputy Directors. General Manager Operations Engineer Nasir Ayazgarmani has been entrusted with the administrative and financial responsibilities of O&M, T&G, Health, Safety, Civil, M&T I, II, Power Distribution Centre, Load Management and Transformers Workshop, Planning and Engineering, Strategic Planner, Development PMU, Customer Services and Information Technology to General Manager Technical Engineer Jam Gul Muhammad Zahid, Chief Engineer Customer Services Syed Jawad Mansoor Ahmed, Operations Circle Bahawalpur, Commercial, M&S and Internal Audit, Chief Engineer T & G Muhammad Akram Sial Ko Khanewal, Sahiwal, GSO Multan and Sahiwal Circle, Chief Engineer O&M Distribution Muhammad Shehzad Rai to DG Khan Circle, Regional Training Centre, Circle Training Centres, Regional Complaint Centres, Mapco Headquarters Attach Officers and TRW Technical Staff, Chief Engineer (Development) PMU Saifullah Surani to Muzaffargarh Circle, Procurement PMU, GSC, Chief Engineer Planning and Engineering Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood to Multan Circle, P&E, MM, Procurement Distribution and Construction Directorate, Chief Strategic Planner Malik Ashfaq Ahmed to Rahim Yar Khan Circle, Strategic Planning Directorate, Director General IT Muhammad Asghar Khan Ghalu has been entrusted with the administrative and financial responsibilities of Vihari, Bahawalnagar circles and the IT department.

Rotary Club of Faisalabad organized a President-Elect Learning Session

Abdul Majid

ISLAMABAD: Rotary Club of Faisalabad organized a President-Elect Learning Session & Graduation Seminar at a local hotel in which the President of Rotary International, PDG Madam Pobodo de Zoya was the chief guest. Masroor J Shaikh, President Rotary Club Faisalabad Chaudhry Ahmed Kamal, Zonal Coordinator South Salim Nasir, Zonal Coordinator North Naushirwan Khalil Khan, Zonal Coordinator Central Madam Ishrat K besides all Rotary leaders belonging to South Zone Pakistan participated.



Addressing the participants of the seminar, the chief guest, President of Rotary International, PDG Madam Pobodu D. Zoya of Sri Lanka, Colombo, said that this event will be a comprehensive training for the future presidents of the Rotary Club by Rotary leaders and district advisors. Opportunities were provided.

During the event, various sessions were organized for the participants throughout the day, with the aim of developing and enhancing the leadership skills of the participants, besides enlightening them about the mission and values of Rotary. At the end of the

seminar, the presidents-elect were presented with certificates of congratulation, which reflect their commitment and dedication to community service during the coming year. On this occasion Madam Pobodo de Zoe Sane said that the commitment and enthusiasm of the leaders of Rotary

South Zone did not leave her without inspiration.

He said that together we will be the forerunner of positive change while serving the society. It should be remembered that this seminar on the selection and training of presidents is a reflection of Rotary's passion to serve humanity beyond itself and its unshakable commitment to positive change in the world.

Pobodu de Zoya also visited Government Girls High School Madina Town and appreciated the project run by Rotary there. President of Rotary Club of Faisalabad Chaudhry Ahmad Kamal Qudus briefed him on various projects.

Sirakistan National Council led the protest demonstration against the exploitation of farmers: Dharija

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Sirakistan National Council Pakistan Zahoor Dharija, Chairman of Sirakistan National Council Pakistan, led the protest demonstration against the exploitation of farmers and the failure to fulfill the promise of the province by the Sirakistan National Council Dharija Nagar. It will not stop, they will continue to protest. On this occasion, the protestors said against the government, "Stop exploiting the farmers, the rate of wheat should be set at five thousand rupees per maund, the farmers should be given bardana, fertilizer should be given at a controlled rate, the prices of seeds and agricultural medicines should be reduced. Electricity should be made free for agricultural



purposes, tractors, agricultural implements and prices of diesel and petrol. Along with the slogans of "Kim Ki Jain" slogans were raised in favor of Saraiki Province. District President Maqsood Dharija and others also addressed the protest demonstration. Renowned Saraiki singer Ashraf Pathane Khan sang the Saraiki anthem. Zahoor

Dharija, the chairman of Saraikistan National Council, said in his speech that

I ask all the Saraiki parties and all the people of Wasib to unite for the province of Wasib, the rulers are not ready to give the province, now they will go out on the streets and do long marches, sit-ins, protests and in differ-

ent areas of the country. All parties will hold Saraiki conferences. He said that it is cruel to see that Saraiki province is included in the manifesto of all the parties and all of them have promised the province, but no one has fulfilled the promise. Under the leadership of Imran Khan, Tehreek-e-Insaf cheated the Saraiki nation the worst and People's Party (N)-League have been accusing each other of obstructing the establishment of the province, today both parties are in power. should-Maqsood Dharija said that Bengalis are being treated like Saraiki Wasib, resources of Wasib are being robbed, they have been deprived of their jobs, today the young Fakir Bakhsh Jamali of Jamali Nagar, an adjacent settlement of Dharija Nagar, died from Balochistan.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:00 am
Zohr 12:06 pm
Asr 4:50 pm
Maghrib 6:44 pm
Isha 8:14 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

Will Karachi, Lahore receive rain as wet spell forecast from April 24 to 29?

Putting authorities concerned on "alert", the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted a new spell of rainfall expected to grip different parts of the country, mostly upper areas, from April 24 to 29.

A westerly wave is likely to enter western parts of the country on April 24 night and likely to grip most upper parts on 26th April. Under the influence of this weather system, several parts of the country would receive light to heavy rains and thunderstorms.

Balochistan

Rain-wind coupled with thunderstorm, with isolated heavy falls, were predicted in Noushki, Pishin, Harnai, Zhob, Barkhan, Gwadar, Kech, Awaran, Chagi, Kharan, Kalat, Mastung, Jhal Magsi, Naseerabad, Sibbi, Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Loralai, Qilla Saifullah, Qila Abdullah, Quetta, Ziarat, Shirani and Musa Khel from 24th (night) to 27th April (morning).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Rain-windstorm/thunderstorm (few heavy falls) with snowfall over high mountains is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Manshra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Malakand, Waziristan, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Bajaur, Mohmand, Karak, Khyber, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan and Kurram with occasional gaps from 25th (evening/night) to 29th.

Hailstorm is also expected at isolated places during the period.

Gilgit Baltistan, Kashmir

Rain-wind/thunderstorm (few heavy falls) with snowfall over high mountains is expected in Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Kashmir (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur) with occasional gaps from 26th to 29th.

Wife of Iranian President visits NUML

PPA

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Dr. Jamileh-Sadat Alamolhoda, wife of the President of Islamic Republic of Iran, visited National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on Wednesday. Rector NUML Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (Retd), Director General NUML Brig Shahzad Munir, Pro Rectors, Deans, Directors, and large number of students were also present on the occasion.

In her address H. E. Dr. Jamileh said that Islam has enlighten the whole world with its teachings about knowledge 1400 years ago, and knowledge without ethics has no value. She said that during colonial era religious leaders of Iran and this part of the region play significant role to keep the nations united. She admired the role of the great poet of east Allama Iqbal and his invaluable role to preserve the Islamic message of knowledge and ethics.

Her excellency also spoke at her own book launch titled "The Art of living Femininely" and said that her book is being translated into Urdu as well. She praised NUML's role in knowledge production and dissemination and also desired to



explore the possibilities of mutual academic collaboration in the filed of science and technology and languages. She also thanked NUML administration for a warm welcome and on providing her an opportunity to interact with the students and faculty. Honourable guest also inaugurated the cultural festival at NUML and visited various national & international stalls showcasing various cultures and

their traditions. Speaking on the occasion Rector NUML Major General (retd) Shahid Mahmood Kayani said that Pakistan & Iran are enjoying historic, brotherly, and mutually trusted bilateral relations; and both the countries have deep rooted people to people relations. Rector NUML also awarded an honorary PhD degree to the honourable guest in Educational Sciences.

Celebration

ISLAMABAD: Graduates throw their academic caps in the air as they leave the graduation ceremony in 22nd Convocation held on Monday in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

COO CBD Punjab leads high-profile delegation to Karachi

PPA

LAHORE: A high-profile delegation from Punjab's premium development authority, the Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab, (CBD Punjab), led by COO Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, along with Director of Business Development Ali Waqar Shah and Director of Architecture and Planning Sameer Aftab Sial, recently embarked on a significant visit to Karachi. The purpose of the visit was to project the upcoming auction of three commercial and three residential plots in CBD Punjab, Nawaz Sharif IT City (NSIT) and other pivotal projects spearheaded by the authority.

The delegation actively participated in a seminar organized by the Association



of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD), the prestigious event was graced by Governor Sindh Kamran Tesori and other distinguished dignitaries, including Chairman of ABAD Asif Sam Sam, Ibrahim Habib, Senior Vice Chairman of ABAD, and Mohsin Shekhani.

During the seminar, COO CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, provided valuable insights into the forthcoming auction of CBD

Punjab, highlighting the offering of six plots, including three commercial and three residential plots. H

CBD Punjab stands as the custodian of the establishment of the country's largest and premier IT district, the Nawaz Sharif IT City. Notably, CBD Punjab has already orchestrated two of the most extensive auctions in the history of Punjab, solidifying its position as a key player in the region's development landscape.

Governor Punjab Kamran Tesori emphasized the pivotal role of the construction industry and the IT sector in bolstering Pakistan's economy. He stressed the urgent need for legislative action to further propel these sectors forward.

Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, COO of CBD Punjab, remarked, "We are excited to present these unparalleled investment opportunities to the business community. CBD Punjab is committed to driving sustainable growth and development, and we invite investors to join us in this transformative journey."

The visit to Karachi marks a significant milestone for CBD Punjab, signifying its commitment to fostering strong partnerships and promoting investment opportunities that will contribute to the socio-economic advancement of Punjab and Pakistan at large.

Government misses opportunity to earn billions by delaying gas reforms in fertilizer sector

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Fauji Fertilizer (FFC) increased its urea prices by Rs 633/bag (17%) to Rs 4,400/bag. This price increase was made even though there had been no change in its gas input cost. It is still receiving Mari network gas on the subsidized price of PKR 580/mmbtu compared to other manufacturers on SSGC and SNGPL networks that faced a tariff hike to PKR 1,597/mmbtu in February 2024. The Government has taken notice of this sudden urea price hike by FFC as there has been no increase in the manufacturers' gas input costs. For the fertilizer industry, gas prices are key and account for around 70 percent of the input costs. In case FFC is unable to provide a convincing justification for the price increase, the Ministry of Industries & Production may take administrative measures against it under Section 5 of the Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding Order, 2021.

The missed opportunity to earn billions in revenue becomes difficult to justify, especially in view of the ongoing economic crisis and IMF loan discussions. This revenue could be used for investment in the agricultural sector through targeted projects and initiatives that generate economic activity and growth in the country.

According to industry analysts, if the Government had removed the current price discrimination among fertilizer manufacturers earlier this year, it would have been able to collect between PKR 80 - 100 billion in revenues. This is a missed opportunity for the Government and detracts from its objectives of reducing the national debt and achieving long-term urea price stability for the farmers.

It has been suggested that the only way to bring stability to the urea market is to immediately remove the current price discrimination among fertilizer manufacturers for the same homogenous product (gas). Through uniform gas pricing, 40% of the fertilizer manufacturing capacity on the Mari network should be charged the same rate as the existing 60% on SSGC and SNGPL network.

Malicious propaganda against reduction in tobacco use puts public health at risk

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Recent insidious propaganda against tobacco control seems to undermine the efforts of the government and anti-tobacco advocates to reduce consumption of tobacco in Pakistan. National Tobacco Control Strategy NTCS has been approved in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other donor organizations working in tobacco control along with all provincial health departments and civil society organizations. In this regard, malicious and misleading propaganda against tobacco control efforts will worsen the gravity of the situation.

The absence of domestic funding for tobacco control leaves the field vulnerable to the insidious machinations of the tobacco industry. Its interference extends across various fronts, from advocating for the legalization of heated tobacco products (HTPs) to contesting measures aimed at enhancing public awareness through larger pictorial health warnings and levying higher taxes on cigarettes. Such interventions serve to perpetuate the cycle of addiction i.e., 1200-1500 children start smoking every day, further deteriorating 163,000 annual deaths caused by smoking in Pakistan while undermining public health initiatives.

Communication Officer, Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR), Ashfaq Ahmad said that the aggressive marketing strategies employed by the tobacco industry, coupled with its demonstrated capacity to influence governmental decision-making processes, underscore the gravity of the situation. Despite the escalating public health crisis posed by rising tobacco consumption in Pakistan, governmental funding earmarked for tobacco control remains conspicuously absent. Project Coordinator, Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTCT-Pak), Zeeshan Danish said Government and tobacco control advocates while utilizing expertise of donor agencies, have been working together to reduce the use of traditional and new tobacco products.

The malicious campaign aimed at discrediting donor agencies collaborating primarily with the government and also with the anti-tobacco advocates in Pakistan demands nationwide condemnation. We appreciate donor agencies' help and expertise in assisting reducing use of cigarettes and other tobacco products and saving public health in Pakistan.

Rainbow Propaganda and Children's Animated Media

Fiza Fatima Naqvi

Children's Animated Media has been a subject of bad controversy in recent years due to its destructive results on youngsters. Concerns have been raised about the effect of this kind of media on kid's development. Critics argue that such media can make a contribution to the early sexualization of children, in addition to the perpetuation of harmful social norms and values. Additionally, there had been growing concerns approximately the ability for this form of media to desensitize children to violence and promote aggressive behavior. In the last five years, there were numerous research and reports highlighting the bad impact of The Rainbow Propaganda and Children's Animated Media on youngsters, leading to calls for more regulation and responsible content introduction inside the industry.

There have been numerous examples of LGBTQ+ inclusion in children's media. One such example is the show "The Loud House," which introduced a character with two dads. This portrayal was met with both positive reception and backlash from audiences and critics. Other shows, such as "Adventure Time" and "The Legend of Korra," subtly incorporated LGBTQ+ themes through the development of complex character relationships. On the other hand, movies like "Onward" and "Toy Story 4" "Blues Clues", "Coco melon", "my little pony", "Ciau", "Arthur" have taken a more explicit approach by featuring openly LGBTQ+ characters. The range of approaches highlights the industry's commitment to inclusivity while navigating the sensitivity and complexity surrounding this representation.

Lets look some of the recent film and have a brief insight on to the type of animations that kids were exposed to! The three movies that were most prominent were Nimona, A Strange World as well as the debut film by Dan Levy Good Grief. Nimona a film featuring a non-binary protagonist and a gay couples romance. The question is the same is this type of exposure necessary? The Disney Film A Strange World features a gay teenager and his supportive family. The point is that this film is suppose to be about three generations of explorers finding themselves in the middle of a strange world. Yet for their to be a gay character seems extremely far fetched and unnecessary. Simply put it's like a trend that entertainment companies have to be a part of.

The concept of diversity in itself isn't problematic. The real problem lies with how our media has pushed it in the minds of young kids. It's a common known fact children mimic behavior.

To have this expectation that children will understand the complexities of gender identity or sexual orientation is outrageous. It is high time parents are made aware of this issue and regulate the type of content their child is exposed to.



Construction work on CPEC Jandola, Sararogha road will start soon: MPA Asif

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: MPA PK109 Asif Khan Mehud has said on Monday that there are problems in South Waziristan Upper District, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur is trying to solve the problems.

Construction of the road from CPEC Yarak to Jandola, Sararogha and Shawal will be started soon.

According to the details, the delegation of Mehud Press Club registered under the leadership of President Mehud Press Club Farooq Mehud met Member Provincial Assembly PK 109 South Waziristan Upper Asif Khan Mehud at his residence.

On this occasion MPA Asif Mehud said that there are problems in Upper



South Waziristan which they are trying to solve.

He said that CPEC has submitted PCI for the construction of road from Yarak to Jandola, Sararogha and Shawal, which will be approved soon.

He said that the construction of the road will promote Pak-Afghan trade.

He added that I have a special meeting with the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for the compensation of the houses destroyed during the Operation

Rah-e-Nejat and the payment will be made possible soon.

Asif Mehud said while talking to a delegation of journalists that providing employment opportunities to the local people including agriculture in Upper South Waziristan is among the main priorities.

Apart from this, the provincial government is working on providing government jobs to the injured people including paying compensation to the residents of Waziristan who were martyred in landmines in Upper South Waziristan.

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is not only serious in solving the problems of Upper South Waziristan rather, he is taking special interest in solving problems of all Districts KP.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Railways, on the way to improvement

Pakistan Railways is the largest transport organization of the country, which has been providing day and night services for the transportation of goods and resources for the past seventy years. Undoubtedly, it is the most important institution among institutions of public interest. Thanks to the ongoing reforms, the Railway Department is on the way to improvement. Pakistan Railways has started fuel management system based on modern technology in two major cities Karachi and Lahore and it is going to install the system at six other points as well. The credit for the implementation of this project goes to the Secretary of the Ministry of Railways / Chairman Railways Syed Mazhar Ali Shah and Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Railways Aamir Ali Baloch who finalized the project in mutual consultation with the concerned railway officers.

The project is being taken forward by a joint venture between the two entities, in which Pakistan State Oil (PSO) is also playing an important role, which will ensure the supply of fuel within the railway's oil supply facility. PSO has a state-of-the-art fuel management system which the Railways will now also benefit from. The agreement will see railway oil supply centers upgraded as per OGRA

standards. It is also gratifying that all the eight points in the railway will be insured and modern fire fighting system will also be installed at these points. The installation of this system will save the financial resources of the railways, prevent wastage of fuel and also eliminate the possibility of theft of oil.

Due to the continuation of the best policies, the railways are being run in a very balanced manner despite the deteriorating economic situation. The coming days will bring the promise of improvement in the railways because now the salaries of the employees are also being paid on time and the payment of other departmental dues of the employees is also seen to be assured. The revenue of Pakistan Railways will touch the highest level in history. In the first week of April 2024 itself, Pakistan Railways had earned 65 billion rupees and now there are bright prospects of earning more than 80 billion by the end of the financial year. Railway employees are also happy with the good management of the institution. On Eid-ul-Fitr, the Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Railways announced the remission of punishments and fines

imposed on the employees for minor offenses, which was greatly appreciated by the union leaders and employees.

Due to the hard work of railway workers and officers, the train operation is being run in a better manner and the regularity of train movements has increased to 95%. To ensure safety in railways, all the divisional level workers are ready all the time. Safety seminars are being conducted regarding living and adopting safety rules so that both safety and security are kept in mind.

Special trains were run for the Sikh pilgrims coming from India in connection with Baisakhi Mela celebrations and full security was also provided to them. The timings of special trains run for Sikh pilgrims were also ensured. Apart from this, Pakistan Railways also organized a safari train between Lahore and Narowal for Sikh pilgrims, which was operated with the help of steam engines, reflecting the olden days. The Sikh guests expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made by Pakistan Railways and the security and facilities provided. Pakistan Railways has re-launched

the Safari Tourist Train between Rawalpindi and Attock Khurd in partnership with a private company for domestic and foreign tourism enthusiasts. This safari tourist train will run every Sunday morning from Rawalpindi between Golra Museum and Attock Khurd. After visiting the Attock Khurd Fort, it will return to Rawalpindi in the evening on the same day.

Pakistan Railways also ran train operations on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr in a very efficient manner and provided four Eid special trains to other cities of the country including Karachi and Quetta, giving passengers an opportunity to celebrate Eid with their loved ones. Railway passenger train fares were reduced by 25% on all three days. Despite the increase in the prices of petroleum products, Pakistan Railways has not increased the fares of passenger trains. 370,000 liters of diesel is used daily to keep the train operations running on the system of Pakistan Railways.

The fares of Pakistan Railways are less than the normal public transport and people should prefer railways for traveling and freight forwarding through Pakistan Railways as well.

Pakistan Railways can play an important role in the country's economy by regaining its lost position due to government attention.



Analysis

Syed Ijaz Ul Hassan

Kazan Forum held in Russia



RUSSIA – ISLAMIC WORLD KAZANSUMMIT

An international event titled "Russia – Islamic World: KazanForum" is scheduled to be held in the capital of Tatarstan next month to discuss the development of medical tourism in Russia and the OIC, new opportunities for patients from the Islamic world as well as the provision of medical halal services. At the Forum scheduled to be held from May 14-19, the topic of medical tourism will be particularly discussed besides halal industry, Islamic finance, the development of transport corridors, and education.

The Republic of Tatarstan launched a regional programme "Halal Tourism" with voluntary certification of sanatoriums to receive guests from Islamic countries. At the federal level, the Roskachestvo-Halal certificate is valid on the territory of the Persian Gulf countries, a number of states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and also in the countries of the Customs Union. Medical tourism is developing in Russia with a remarkable increase in foreign patients from 300,000 in 2017 to 1.2 million in 2022 with a significant number of those from the OIC countries.

The top five OIC countries, whose citizens show the greatest interest in medical services in the Russian Federation include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The most popular destinations and profiles among medical tourists are medical treatment, transplantation, dentistry, oncology, ophthalmology, neurosurgery and surgery, including cardiovascular surgery, otorhinolaryngology, obstetrics and gynaecology, urology, traumatology and orthopedics. Such data was revealed at the KazanForum 2023 with Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko saying that ophthalmology is the most demanded service by foreign patients in Russia, including those from Arab countries. Experts believe that the increase in the number of patients is due to the work in Russia of the federal project titled, "Development of exports of medical services" from 2019. It is noted that halal medical tourism has already appeared and is developing in the country.



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

Need of SIFC Investment for AJK - II

As stewards of this natural treasure, it is our responsibility to safeguard AJK's pristine beauty and ecological balance for future generations. Sustainable tourism practices, conservation initiatives, and community engagement are vital to preserving the region's fragile ecosystems and cultural heritage. By embracing responsible stewardship and cultivating environmental consciousness, we can safeguard AJK's status as a haven of natural splendor and an endless well-spring of inspiration for future generations.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) stands as a region of unparalleled natural magnificence and cultural diversity. From verdant valleys and pristine rivers to snow-crowned peaks and historical landmarks, AJK harbors a wealth of attractions capable of enchanting travelers from every corner of the globe. Acknowledging the pivotal role of tourism in driving economic prosperity and social advancement, the promotion of tourism in AJK emerges as an essential priority with wide-ranging benefits.

The promotion of tourism in AJK holds the potential to unlock a plethora of economic opportunities for local communities and enterprises. As visitors flock to the region to discover its scenic marvels and rich heritage, they catalyze growth across diverse sectors, including hospitality, transportation, handicrafts, and culinary arts. The infusion of tourist expenditures stimulates local economies, fosters job creation, and nurtures entrepreneurial ventures, thereby elevating livelihoods and mitigating poverty. Additionally, revenue generated from tourism can be rein-

vested in infrastructure enhancement, conservation endeavors, and community initiatives, thereby fostering sustainable socio-economic advancement in AJK.

By drawing visitors from diverse backgrounds, tourism acts as a catalyst for cultural interchange and mutual comprehension. The rich mosaic of traditions, languages, and customs in AJK provides fertile ground for immersive cultural encounters, promoting dialogue and fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity. Furthermore, tourism promotion can aid in conserving and promoting AJK's cultural heritage, encompassing historical sites, traditional crafts, and indigenous wisdom. By safeguarding both tangible and intangible heritage assets, tourism contributes to the identity, pride, and resilience of local communities, reinforcing their social fabric and preserving their legacy for future generations.

As stewards of pristine natural landscapes and biodiversity hotspots, responsible tourism practices are imperative for safeguarding AJK's ecological treasures for posterity. Through initiatives such as eco-tourism, wildlife conservation, and waste management, AJK can mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of tourism while maximizing its benefits. By advocating responsible travel behavior, raising environmental awareness, and implementing conservation measures, tourism stakeholders can ensure the long-term sustainability of AJK's natural assets, while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

The promotion of tourism in AJK not only enriches its economic and cultur-

al vibrancy but also serves as a potent instrument for diplomacy and international engagement. By showcasing the region's attractions to visitors worldwide, AJK can bolster its soft power and increase its global visibility. Positive travel experiences can foster goodwill, cultivate cross-cultural friendships, and dispel misconceptions, thereby contributing to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts in the region. Moreover, tourism promotion can attract foreign investment, facilitate knowledge exchange, and forge partnerships with international stakeholders, thereby advancing AJK's development agenda and augmenting its global standing.

Furthermore, in the pursuit of sustainable energy solutions, hydropower emerges as a significant ally, offering a clean, dependable, and renewable source of electricity. By harnessing the kinetic energy of flowing water, hydropower stands poised to supply homes, businesses, and industries with electricity, all while mitigating the environmental repercussions associated with burning fossil fuels. As nations globally strive to transition towards low-carbon energy systems, the significance of hydropower as a fundamental element of the energy portfolio becomes increasingly apparent.

A primary advantage of hydropower lies in its cleanliness and renewability. In contrast to fossil fuels, which release greenhouse gases and pollutants upon combustion, hydropower generates electricity by directing water through turbines. This process results in minimal air pollution and contributes negligibly to global warming, positioning hydropower as a crucial asset in combating climate change. Furthermore, water, being a naturally replenished resource, ensures that hydropower remains a dependable and sustainable energy source for future generations.

To be continued

Pakistan: A land of tourism, archeological wonders

Fakhar-e-Alam

Internationally recognized as home to six United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage sites, second highest mountain peak, long coastline and vast cultural and religious heritage, Pakistan offers plenty of tourism activities for local and foreign tourists.

It is also a unique country with enchanting deserts, mesmerizing plains and snow covered peaks, adventurous sea shores and plenty of cultural and archeological sites, ancient Muslim architecture and religious sites of Buddhism and Sikhism. Archeological wonders of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh, Harappa in Punjab, Buddhist Ruins in Takht Bhai and Sahri Bahlol in Mardan and Taxila, ancient Indus and Gandhara civilizations, Thal and Thar deserts and architecture of ancient rulers especially Mughal era can be future hot spots for tourism. Five highest mountains peaks of above 8,000 meters, including the second highest peak – the K-2 (8611m), 108 highest peaks of above 7000 meters, Deosai plain, cultural diversity of Sindh, Punjab, KPK, Balochistan and Azad Kashmir, historical monuments and much more across Pakistan are other hallmarks of our tourism treasure. Although local tourism flourished visibly in recent years yet unfortunately these bounties remained untapped to the maximum due to multiple reasons like insufficient projection, facilities for tourism and law and order situation due to turmoil in the region. Since Pakistan has a meager share in global revenue earning from tourism, the experts believe that if the government fully employs the latest digital techniques and social media to highlight these hidden destinations, it can earn billions of dollars annually. Therefore, at a time when international media predicts full recovery of tourism industry during 2024, Pakistan needs to tighten belts for securing its due share from trillions of dollars tourism economy. UNWTO has recorded an estimated 1286 million international tourists (overnight visitors) around the world in 2023, an increase of 34% over 2022 as international tourism recovered 88% of pre-pandemic levels. The Middle East led the recovery being the only region to overcome pre-pandemic levels with arrivals 22% above 2019, Europe reached 94%, Africa recovered 96% and the Americas 90% and Asia and Pacific recovered 65% with the start of 2023. Following a strong rebound in 2023, the sector's outlook reflected

in the latest UNWTO Tourism Confidence Index survey, reveals 67% of tourism professionals indicating better or much better prospects for 2024 compared to 2023. "Our share is too meager as compared to international tourism earning. We secure just a billion or so dollars out of this trillions dollar economy," remarked Ex-Chairman Economics Department, Peshawar University, Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem. "This is pathetic and urge us to transform our efforts keeping in view the modern trends, exploiting all latest tools for projecting our potential." "I expect from the new government to appoint digital professionals and experts to promote tourism to harness our due share in tourism economy," he stated.

Besides nature's bounties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, there are ancient and religious sites in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab to attract millions of foreign tourists. "Scientific advancements and modern technological inventions have virtually turned the world into a global village. Therefore, we should vigorously project our amazing sites and archeological wonders," remarked Manzoorul Haq, former ambassador. "As developed nations have replaced conventional publicity methods with digital tourism, so we also need to exploit global positioning system (GPS) and artificial intelligence for quick dissemination of information and projection of our sites," he stated and proposed to patronage v-loggers, bloggers and social media groups for the purpose. Although Pakistan's foreign tourism has witnessed 115% increase during 2023 as mentioned by the then Caretaker Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah, yet it earned just US\$ 1.3 billion. 'World Tourism Barometer' published by World Tourism Organization of the United Nations, had also mentioned that Pakistan had made a remarkable recovery in tourism to pre-pandemic levels. Showing 115% increase, is just start of a journey towards an overall revolution in this sector that may reach 500% or even thousands percent provided that it is transformed on modern lines projecting Pakistan's potential. It is unfortunate that a country having much more potential than other nations, earn much lower than them that direly needs right person for the right job, political will and modern approach to excel in this arena. This approach should be multi-dimensional, promoting natural, religious, cultural and adventure tourism on war footing to bring in precious tourism associated foreign exchange to support our economy and move forward for economic sustainability.

Pearls of Wisdom in Languages: World English Language Day & Shakespeare

For ages & eras, languages came about from peoples and places of sorts both independently and needs-based cross-fertilization of diverse and even disparate customs, traditions & values. These in turn found and advanced orally and in black & white by writers of various interests & backgrounds led gradually to language-dependent literature of different kinds & forms.

Human civilization since time immemorial has been cognizant of and accordingly served time & efforts in developing the needed medium of communication which resulted in words & phrases founded on personal & sound-based signs used by animate objects – in particular human beings – culminating into a language of expression.

Today, as languages throughout the world developed in shapes & formats, we see an unlimited world of languages alongside literatures enriched by their unabated and definitive inculcation through human cultural pursuits giving identity to each one of them, recognized and esteemed the world over.

No wonder, in this respect, one sees with awe and values all languages & literatures in man's modern world. And, here, the United Nations fortunately ensures valued continuity & development of these modes of human expression as prevalent and as required to preserve and promote any of them from going extinct.

The English Language Day, founded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010, is traditionally observed to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization.

The English Language Day was established to commemorate birth anniversary (23rd April, 1564) of the most famous and celebrated worldwide English playwright and poet, William Shakespeare,

who died on the same date in 1616.

This Day aims to entertain and inform people and for increasing awareness and respect about the history, culture and achievements associated with each of the six working languages among the UN community. The day often features book-reading events, English quizzes, poetry and literature exchanges, and other activities that promote the English language.

William Shakespeare is considered by many to be the father of modern English Literature. It is not just his popularity and influence on modern writers that allows for this title to be attributed to him but because of the massive contributions he made to the development of the English language.

Shakespeare's 154 sonnets are marked by recurring themes and variable beauty with the transcendent power of love and art. Today, over 400 years later, his plays are performed and read more often and in more nations than ever before.

The Tamil language of South Asia is recognized as the oldest language in the world and it is the oldest language of the Dravidian family. This language had a presence even around 5,000 years ago. According to a survey, 1863 newspapers are published in Tamil language every day.

Surprisingly, another very old Sanskrit-based language of South Asia – that is Bengali – spoken by the majority people of Pakistan (then Eastern Wing), received recognition from the UN in the context of a four-year-long movement since 1948 to achieve officialdom of the Bengali language. The 21st Feb. (1952) declared by the world body as International Mother Language Day is a worldwide annual observance to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.

The other old language that is English was founded in the year 450 when German tribes spoke a similar language. The language of that time is referred as

Old English. Even native English speakers find it difficult to understand that, as it has a lot of differences to what we consider as the English Language.

The current English language that we speak is referred as Modern English. It is originated in the year 1800. Modern English has more words, which was founded to name new technologies during the time of the industrial revolution.

A Germanic language that began to develop during the 5th and 6th centuries when Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain, early English is also influenced by French, Latin, and many other languages. These influences were so profound that that modern English could be regarded as a Latinized, Frenchified dialect of Old German (an over-simplification, of course) to which it bears some resemblance. The Germanic roots of English are evident in the many words that are virtually the same in both modern tongues.

The Latin influence on English gave the developing language a richer vocabulary, and, since the monasteries were centers of literacy and learning, today the learned among us tend to use a lot of words with Latin roots, while the less educated speak "plain" (Anglo-Saxon derived) English. The sciences and fine arts employ a great deal of terminology that comes from the language of the Church, in which all learned discourse was conducted (both words come from Latin).

The French nobility brought with them many words to English language; French is widely regarded in English speaking countries as the language of refinement and high culture. From fine cuisine to what's in vogue (both words French in origin), this strong French influence is evident today.

The closest major language to English is Dutch. With 23 million native speakers, and an additional 5 million who speak it as a second language, Dutch is the 3rd most-widely spoken Germanic language in the world after English and German.

When the British Empire spread English around the globe, its language had already taken its modern form, and dialects spoken in America, Canada, and Australia are all variants of "the king's English" comprehensible to all native Anglophones. Our modern language was born and raised in England. That's why it's called English.

While English is the most spoken language in the world, it is the native tongue for only one-quarter of those who speak it. Or more impressively, for three-quarters of those who speak English, it is at least their second language if not a third or fourth.

The father of English Language & Literature is Geoffrey Chaucer, who was born in London sometime between 1340 and 1344. He was an English author, poet, philosopher, bureaucrat (courtier), and a diplomat.

Of English language ownership, no one owns English; there is no single standard for it, though American and British English are the main dialects in the world today; they are both very influential in different spheres but the future of World English will be largely determined by people who speak it as a second language.

The English language is far from perfect. With so many words that mean the same thing, or phrases and sayings that make no literal sense. Weirdly, two people with English as a second language can communicate information easier and more accurately than two English people.

Billions of people study English

around the world, making it the third most widespread native language, and many are enrolled in an English speaking course as an adult or from a young age. Though apparently difficult, it has been one of the most simple languages, especially in the Common-wealth countries.

Unlike other languages, English is somewhat easy to learn as it has no cases, no gender, no word agreement, and arguably has a simple grammar system. English speakers sometimes have difficulties when learning Portuguese because they are not used to words having genders.

English is easy because it's much easier to spell than most languages, and none of the grammatical rules have any exceptions. Thirdly, it only has easy sounds for foreigners to pronounce unlike difficult languages like Spanish, which has such strange tongue twisting sounds.

Unlike other languages, English has no cases, no gender, no word agreement, and arguably has a simple grammar system. English speakers sometimes have difficulties when learning Portuguese because they are not used to words having genders.

The English language is beautiful because it has many languages combined into it. German, Norse, French, and Latin are just a few. The way it is spoken nowadays, probably turns some people off.

The beauty of the English language lies in its simplicity. Try saying "I love you" in any other language and you will see the difference. More than a formal expression, it cloaks a certain warmth and sincerity vital to make it reflect the delicate inner closeness you cherish in a relationship.

English is an Easy Language. English is the Language of International Communication. Although English is not the most spoken language in the world, it is the official language in 53 countries and is spoken as a first

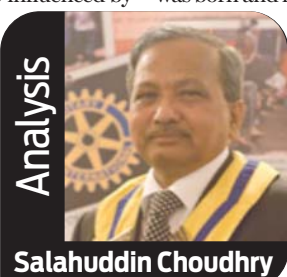
language by around 400 million people worldwide. But that's not all, it is also the most common second language in the world.

English as a language in Pakistan has been almost a natural phenomenon after it became independent from two-centuries of British rule and continued to be used and practiced by the Govt. and people. Alongside national language Urdu, as a matter of convenience, English was declared to be the official language of the country and remained a major medium of communication and as second language in the educational institutions at the federal level and in all the provinces. English is a major international language and in Pakistan it is spoken and understood generally in urban areas; it is not too difficult to learn and mostly found to be comfortable in fostering.

The special thing about English is that people find it flexible and easy to pick up. It is a huge entity of vocabulary and is constantly absorbing new words, whilst at the same time seeping into foreign languages. English contains over 750,000 words and there are hundreds of words adopted from Urdu language and other dialects of Pakistan as well.

Most people in Pakistan cite good reasons for the popularity of the English language, such as that it is "not too difficult to learn" or that it evolves with our changing times. Despite debates & controversies over preponderance and usage of English vis-à-vis Urdu and other provincial languages, English in Pakistan continues to sustain, shine and English literature wears new spectrums by the day through those who practice and believe in universality of English as a paragon.

The author is a former senior career diplomat, Founding Chairman, Centre for Public-Cultural Diplomacy, Islamabad. "He can be reached at saladinch168@gmail.com and @SaladinCh



Analysis

Salahuddin Choudhry

Creating Bright Futures: Xin Xing Launches Solar Initiative in Takal Village, to Brighten Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: China's leading energy sustainability company, Xin Xing, has embarked on a transformative journey in Takal Village, Punjab, Pakistan, bringing hope and progress to over 3000 residents from middle to lower-income backgrounds.

The collaborative effort between Xin Xing and the Takal village community marks a significant step towards sustainable development and prosperity. The warm reception extended by Takal's elders, nobles, and community members exemplifies the spirit of unity and shared commitment to progress. Public representatives from diverse political affiliations also joined hands in supporting this noble cause.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, a resident of the Takal Village and Director of the China Pakistan Study Center at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, delivered a welcoming address, underscoring

Xin Xing's commitment to brightening Pakistan starting from the heart of its countryside. He emphasized that over 200 deserving families were identified to benefit from this endeavor, receiving solar kits to alleviate their energy needs.

Expressing gratitude for the community's collaboration, Chairman of Xin Xing, David Lee, affirmed their dedication to improving lives starting with Takal Village. He further said, Xin Xing International Solar Energy Technology Development Private Co., Ltd., renowned for its lithium-ion battery manufacturing and comprehensive power system solutions, is poised to establish a production facility in Pakistan by 2025. This facility will not only cater to local demands but also export a diverse product line to the region and beyond, fostering local employment and expertise.

With a focus on research and development, Xin Xing aims to introduce innovative solutions, including solar-based vehicles, refrigerators, ovens, and electric



scooters, advancing sustainability efforts. The solar kits provided by Xin Xing include charging units, two light bulbs, and a solar panel, demonstrating the company's commitment to empowering rural families with reliable energy

solutions.

Xin Xing's solar power system, designed for small rural households, can power six units, which can be one fan and three light bulbs for up to 8-10 hours, charging efficiently through solar panels.

As a frontrunner in lithium-ion battery technology, Xin Xing emphasizes quality, efficiency, and innovation in its operations. With over 20 years of expertise and a dedicated team, the company remains steadfast in its mission to contribute to sustainable energy solutions globally.

As electricity bills continue to soar, many citizens are increasingly turning to solar options to alleviate the financial strain. The relentless rise in traditional energy costs has prompted individuals and households to seek sustainable alternatives that not only offer relief from exorbitant bills but also contribute to environmental conservation. Solar power presents an appealing solution, providing a renewable and cost-effective

source of energy. Takal Village, situated in the Rawalpindi District of Punjab, Pakistan, represents the first step in Xin Xing's journey towards creating a brighter and more sustainable future, embodying the company's commitment to social responsibility and community development.

Xin Xing International Solar Energy Technology Development Private Co., Ltd. is a leading provider of lithium-ion battery solutions and comprehensive power systems. Founded in 2003, the company's commitment to innovation and quality has positioned it as a front-runner in sustainable energy technology.

Takal Village, located in Punjab, Pakistan, is the largest village in the Choha Khalsa Union Council of Kallar Syedan Tehsil. With a rich history and a vibrant community, Takal Village represents a significant milestone in Xin Xing's efforts to empower more than 3000 people of rural communities with sustainable energy solutions.

China's Vision for Regional Development: Lessons from CIDCA's Practices

In a glittering ceremony held at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, Ambassador Luo Zhaohui, Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), was bestowed with the prestigious Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam by the Ambassador of Pakistan. The honor was conferred in recognition of Ambassador Luo's exceptional contributions to strengthening the bond between China and Pakistan. Ambassador Luo also served as ambassador stationed in Pakistan. During award ceremony, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, in his remarks, lauded Ambassador Luo as a devoted friend of Pakistan, emphasizing his unwavering support and referring to him as a 'great friend of Pakistan'.

This acknowledgment underscores the pivotal role Ambassador Luo has played in fostering diplomatic relations between the two nations. Expressing profound gratitude for the award, Ambassador Luo described Pakistan as his second home, reminiscing about the remarkable support he received during his tenure as China's Ambassador to Pakistan. This sentiment reflects the deep personal connections Ambassador Luo has forged with Pakistan and its people over the years. The Investiture ceremony, attended by dignitaries, officials, and media from both China and Pakistan, highlighted the significance of the

occasion in strengthening bilateral ties. It served as a testament to the enduring friendship and cooperation between the two nations. The Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam serves as a symbol of the deepening friendship and cooperation between China and Pakistan, reaffirming their commitment to furthering diplomatic relations. Worth mentioning that Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam is a civil award conferred by the President of Pakistan. It is one of the highest civilian honors in Pakistan, recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions to various fields, including public service, diplomacy, literature, arts, and social welfare.

CIDCA, under Ambassador Luo's leadership, has played a pivotal role in promoting development cooperation between China and Pakistan. Established in 2018, CIDCA aims to enhance China's foreign aid and cooperation efforts, contributing to global development initiatives. The agency's role in facilitating projects and initiatives in Pakistan reflects the depth of the bilateral partnership and underscores the potential for further collaboration. The future of the CIDCA appears promising, as it continues to play a crucial role in Chinese diplom-

cy and foreign aid initiatives. As China expands its global footprint and seeks to deepen its engagement with other nations, CIDCA is expected to take on an increasingly prominent role in facilitating development cooperation projects and initiatives around the world. CIDCA's mandate encompasses a wide range of areas, including foreign aid, international development cooperation, and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). With China's commitment to the BRI remaining steadfast, CIDCA is likely to be at the forefront of coordinating and implementing BRI projects, fostering infrastructure development, trade, and connectivity across regions.

In addition to its involvement in large-scale infrastructure projects like the CPEC, CIDCA is also expected to focus on areas such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, education, and environmental protection. By addressing key development challenges in partner countries, CIDCA aims to contribute to global sustainable development efforts and promote mutual prosperity. Furthermore, CIDCA's role in Chinese diplomacy is expected to evolve as China seeks to enhance its soft power and influence on the global stage.

Through development cooperation initiatives, CIDCA can help build positive relationships with partner countries, strengthen bilateral ties, and promote China's image as a responsible and reliable international partner.

In the ever-evolving landscape of international development cooperation, China's vision for regional development shines through the principles and practices embodied by CIDCA. Established in 2018, CIDCA has become a cornerstone of China's foreign aid and international development efforts, embodying key lessons that shape the nation's approach to regional development.

Streamlining and Centralization lie at the heart of CIDCA's mandate, highlighting the importance of efficiency and effectiveness in foreign aid endeavors. By centralizing coordination and implementation efforts, CIDCA aims to maximize the impact of development projects and ensure resources are allocated strategically to address pressing needs. Policy Cohesion is another pillar of CIDCA's approach, emphasizing the significance of clear and coherent policies to guide development cooperation activities. With a focus on alignment with broader national and international development goals, CIDCA's policy formulation efforts lay the groundwork for sustainable and impactful interventions in recip-



ient countries.

CIDCA's Hands-On Approach underscores the importance of active management and oversight in achieving desired development outcomes. By taking a proactive role in project implementation, CIDCA ensures that interventions are tailored to local contexts and effectively contribute to the improvement of livelihoods and communities.

A Capacity Building Focus reflects China's commitment to empowering recipient countries to lead their own development efforts. Through investments in human capital and institutional strengthening, CIDCA aims to foster self-reliance and resilience, enabling countries to address their development challenges sustainably. Collaborative Engagement lies at the heart of CIDCA's approach, emphasizing the importance of partnerships and coordination in tackling complex development issues. By engaging with multi-

lateral organizations and development partners, CIDCA leverages complementary resources and expertise to maximize the impact of development cooperation efforts. Transparency and Accountability are core principles that guide CIDCA's operations, ensuring that foreign aid resources are managed responsibly and ethically. By promoting openness and accountability, CIDCA builds trust with recipient countries and stakeholders, fostering a conducive environment for sustainable development.

Principled Engagement forms the bedrock of CIDCA's approach, emphasizing mutual benefit and win-win cooperation in international development cooperation. Through principled engagement based on shared goals and mutual respect, CIDCA seeks to foster equitable partnerships and achieve sustainable development outcomes that benefit all parties involved. Overall, CIDCA's char-

acter provides valuable lessons for China's vision for regional development, highlighting the importance of strategic planning, effective governance, collaborative partnerships, and principled engagement in advancing international development cooperation efforts and contributing to global development goals. As China continues to play a leading role in global development, CIDCA's principles and practices serve as guiding lights for a brighter and more sustainable future for all. CIDCA is poised to continue playing a central role in advancing China's foreign policy objectives, promoting economic cooperation, and fostering mutual benefit and development cooperation with countries around the world.

The bonds between China and Pakistan deepen through ongoing diplomatic efforts, moments like the acknowledgment of Ambassador Luo's contributions stand as pivotal markers along the path to enhanced collaboration and shared prosperity. Such occasions not only symbolize the strength of their relationship but also inspire confidence in the bright prospects of their enduring partnership.

(The author is a commentator on foreign affairs, media advisor and Secretary General of the Pakistan China Friendship Association, Kyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, can be reached via email at syeed.gilani@gmail.com.)



Analysis

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
71,433.46	70,909.90
Day's High	Day's Low
71,861.18	70,882.44
Index Value	Change
22,972,734,365	+523.56
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	22 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,023.87	+128.02
Percentage	Time
+1.62%	22 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,401.53	+415.13
Percentage	Time
+1.09%	22 Apr, 1:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
37,438.61	+370.26
Percentage	Time
+1.00%	22 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	182.8
Bahrain Dinar	740.22	748.22
Canadian Dollar	201	203
China Yuan	38.47	38.87
Danish Krone	39.75	40.15
Euro	293	296
Hong Kong Dollar	35.55	35.9
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	902.83	911.83
Malaysian Ringgit	58.19	58.79
New Zealand \$	164.22	166.22
Norwegians Krone	25.61	25.91
Omani Riyal	722.92	730.92
Qatari Riyal	76.45	77.15
Saudi Riyal	73.3	74.05
Singapore Dollar	204.5	206.5
Swedish Korona	25.31	25.61
Swiss Franc	305.75	308.25
Thai Bhat	7.56	7.71
U.A.E Dirham	75.2	75.9
UK Pound Sterling	342.5	345.8
US Dollar	277.7	280.45

A clear policy should be adopted for the sale of PIA: Shahid Butt

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that adopting a clear policy for the sale of PIA is necessary as confusion will not serve any purpose.

He said that every state-run organization squandering trillions of rupees ought to be sold, as the masses have been paying the price for their losses for a long time.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the government has not yet made it clear that this institution will be sold entirely or that the government will retain some shares.

He stated that the country's interest lies in selling PIA altogether to avoid the annual loss of billions of rupees.

The business leader stated that the sale of Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore airports could



only occur after the PIA sale. He said that selling national assets is undesirable, but Pakistan has no other option.

He continued, saying that despite spending trillions of rupees, the government has not yet been able to turn the sick units into profitable businesses.

In addition to PIA, we should sell all other

institutions that squander trillions of rupees to alleviate the burden on low-income individuals. On the other hand, the remaining profitable institutions should be protected from politicians.

Shahid Rasheed Butt stated that the IMF has yet to pay the final installment of the \$1.1 billion loan to Pakistan and has not included it in the meeting's agenda for early May. The lender is waiting for some steps on Pakistan's behalf, after which it will be better able to make a decision.

He said that for Pakistan to achieve its goals of becoming a middle-income economy and ending the ongoing cyclical crisis, the country must travel the same road that other countries have successfully gone.

He added that the government must undertake reforms honestly to control the government's role in the economy and encourage the private sector to take the lead in growth.

Our economy must be integrated with the region's and global economy by removing barriers to trade and investment.

These reforms, on the other hand, will have to be founded on policies that are designed to maintain fiscal stability over time, said Mr Butt.

To revitalise the Pakistani economy, it was more crucial to prioritise the implementation of reforms than negotiating the size of the loan.

At this point, it is essential to speed up the reforms and increase the emphasis placed on the framework of reforms to allow Pakistan to realise its full growth potential.

Our elite is still endeavouring to find a way to circumvent the stringent reforms that will hurt their privileges, which is the source of our crisis because geopolitical rent is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.

A nation burdened by debt cannot hope to daydream about becoming a middle-income economy.

He demanded that the sale of PIA be finalized within two months to start reducing the deficit.

Carpet

ISLAMABAD: A carpet seller decorating different kinds of rugs for attracting customers at Sector F-10 Round-About in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

TCL Pakistan unveils C655 QLED TV: Elevating home entertainment

PPA

LAHORE: TCL Pakistan's No.1 LED TV brand has introduced the C655 QLED TV. Adding to its line up of cutting-edge LED TVs. Designed with the modern viewer in mind, the C655 offers an unmatched viewing experience, elevating home entertainment to new heights.

This QLED TV boasts unparalleled picture quality, delivering stunning visuals with its 4K UHD resolution and Wide Color Gamut (WCG) technology. Viewers can expect lifelike picture quality with vibrant colors with exceptional detail. Which is enhanced further by features such as Dolby Vision ensuring a cinematic

experience right in the comfort of your own home. Even in brightly lit rooms, the C655 QLED TV maintains clarity and minimizes distractions thanks to its low reflection technology.

In addition to its visual prowess, the C655 QLED TV prioritizes viewer comfort with its array of eye care features. Whether indulging in a movie marathon or catching up on the latest TV series, users can enjoy extended viewing sessions without worrying about eye strain. It features ONKYO Speakers 2.1ch, offered in sizes 55" and above, providing an enhanced audio experience. With Dolby Atmos support, you'll feel like you're right in the middle of the action.

Mobilink Bank carries out nationwide plantation drive

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Living up to its standing as a responsible corporate entity, Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, carried out a nationwide plantation drive to help enhance the country's forest cover as well as mitigate the looming impacts of climate change. Mobilink Bank's teams from all 109 branches nationwide participated in the drive with remarkable enthusiasm and planted approximately 5000 saplings to protect the environment and hand down a serene and greener Pakistan to future generations.

The campaign was part of Mobilink Bank's Climate Action Program, Change to Sustain, which envisions a sustainable and prosperous Pakistan that is resilient and effectively shielded against the far-reaching impacts of climate change. Sustainability is at the heart of the Bank's corporate philosophy, which it seeks to replicate through impactful social responsibility initiatives for the broader societal benefit.

Sharing his thoughts regarding the plantation drive, Chief Operating Officer of Mobilink Bank, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, said, "Mobilink Bank is proud to achieve the remarkable milestone of planting approximately 5000 trees nationwide



under its Climate Action Program, Change to Sustain. The program stems from our organizational values of sustainability and social responsibility, where we seek to create shared value for the communities we serve. The need for aggressive plantation cannot be overstated, as Pakistan is amongst the

top eight countries most affected by climate change. Our program strengthens the safeguards against climate change to protect the livelihoods, natural resources, and lives of vulnerable communities, mainly women. We firmly believe we can build a sustainable and prosperous future for our country."

Pak-Qatar Family Takaful offers the first ever Voluntary Pension Scheme

PPA

ISLAMABAD: April 22, 2024 - Pak-Qatar Family Takaful (PQFTL), part of Pak-Qatar Group, Pakistan's premier and pioneer Islamic financial services group, becomes Pakistan's first ever Takaful operator to introduce a Voluntary Pension Scheme (VPS).

By offering VPS, PQFTL brings a unique investment option to the public which benefits them to save for their retirement, while at the same time helps in reducing tax liability up to 20%. Individuals can opt for the plan with a contribution as low as PKR 1,000. The product also provides complimentary Takaful coverage against natural death up to PKR 10

million or two times of investment balance (whichever is lower) and an accidental death coverage up to PKR 20 million or four times of investment balance (whichever is lower). By investing in VPS you can also avail discounted rates on additional coverage for Family Sehat (Individual health), Motor Takaful and House Takaful.

"This scheme not only facilitates retirement savings but also offers the potential for excellent returns on investment. We are dedicated to providing innovative products and services that empower our customers to make informed investment decisions and achieve long-term financial security, said the Company's Senior Official."

Ripe time for diaspora to come forward and invest in Pakistan: Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that Pakistan is an excellent destination for foreign investments and Pakistani diaspora should come forward to play its more active role in the development of the country through investments not only by itself but alluring foreign investors as well. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said this while talking to Pakistani-American, Chairman and CEO of Falcon Holding LLC Texas, United States who called on him along with a delegation here on Monday.

Chairman Founder Group, Khalid Iqbal Malik drew attention of the guests towards the alarmingly low literacy standard in the country and impressed them for giving priority to the sector for enhancing the literacy rate.

Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Pakistani diaspora is actually the Ambassadors of Pakistan and we have utmost respect for it and hope that they will continue to contrib-



ute for the betterment of the country.

Former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zubair Ahmed Malik described the diaspora as a great asset of Pakistan by assuring all out support for

its businesses in Pakistan. The attendees include Asad Aziz, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Maqsood Tabish, Abdur Rehman Siddiqui, Khalid Chaudhry, Ch. Mohammad Ali and others.

Unity Foods set to host the 7th Edition of Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit

PPA

KARACHI: The 7th Edition of the Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit (LIIBS), Pakistan's premier corporate event, is set to be hosted in the capital city on April 23rd and 24th, 2024. Unity Foods stands as a proud supporter of the conference that brings together global leaders, strategists, innovators, and futurists to discuss and shape the business landscape of tomorrow.

Under the overarching theme of "Collaborating for Growth," LIIBS 2024 aims to foster cooperative efforts among industry stakeholders to drive sustainable leadership initiatives within the country. Sponsorship of the holistic event signifies the commitment of Unity Foods to facilitating discussions, influencing strategic frameworks, and executing ideas that contribute to the sustainable development of Pakistan's business ecosystem.

Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit 7th Edition To Start Today

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 7th Edition of Pakistan's biggest corporate event, LEADERS IN ISLAMABAD BUSINESS SUMMIT 2024 (LIIBS), will take place on April 23 & 24, 2024, at a local hotel. Curated under the theme of Collaborating for Growth, this summit brings together a spectacular array of national and international speakers to deliberate on the challenges confronting the world and possible solutions.

LIIBS provides a forum for consultative working, sharing of ideas and expertise, and for reiterating the need to work together to achieve common goals, in the best interest of regional and global economies.

The 7th Edition of LIIBS is jointly hosted by Nutshell Group and Unity Foods Limited, in collaboration with OICCI.

CCP approves Singaporean company's share acquisition in Pakistani Food Company



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval to the share acquisition in a Pakistani food company by four acquirers, including a Singapore-based investment holding company.

The approved transaction involves the acquisition of a 23.20% shareholding in M/s. Unity Foods Limited by the four acquirers. One of acquirers is M/s. Wilmar Pakistan Holdings Pte. Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of M/s. Wilmar International Limited, a Fortune 500 company incorporated in Singapore.

The other three acquirers include M/s. Unity Wilmar Agro (Private) Limited, a private limited company incorporated in Pakistan and engaged in the edible oils business, and two individual Pakistani investors who are also the existing shareholders of the target company.

CCP's merger analysis revealed that the proposed transaction will not result in dominance of the acquirers in the relevant market, post-transaction. Therefore, the merger has been authorized.

This approval reflects the confidence of international investors in Pakistan's economy and its potential for growth. Wilmar International's investment in Unity Foods reaffirms its commitment to Pakistan's economy, showcasing confidence in the resilience and potential of the country's economic landscape.

This merger approval is expected to enhance consumer choice and spur innovation in the food business sector, ultimately benefiting Pakistani consumers.

OSA Blues wins OSA Platinum Jubilee Cricket Tournament

Spots Desk

BAHAWALPUR: OSA Blues has won the first edition of the OSA Platinum Jubilee Cricket Tournament after beating OSA Whites in the final match played at Main Cricket ground of Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur.

OSA Blues won the toss and elected to field first. OSA Whites managed to score 136 runs in the allotted 20 overs for the loss of 9 wickets. Muhammad Furqan of OSA Whites scored an unbeaten 50.

Captain Ali Bukhari, Abdul Moez, and Ali Hassan shared 2 wickets each for OSA Blues. OSA Blues chased the target in 11.2 overs with 10 wickets in hand. Openers Usama Mustafa and Ali Hassan scored unbeaten 50s.

Usama Mustafa was adjudged Man of the Match for batting and exceptional keeping while Ali Hassan shared the Man of the Match award for all-round performance.

In the individual prizes, the Best



Batsman award was given to Ali Hassan of OSA Blues, the Best Bowler award was given to Muhammad Asim of OSA Whites and Abdullah Aziz of OSA Reds

was adjudged Player of the Tournament for his all-round performances.

Principal Sadiq Public School David Dowdles was the Chief Guest who gave

away trophies and awards. Senior Old Sadiqian and retired civil bureaucrat Maqbul Abbasi was the Guest of Honor of the final match.

Chief Minister Punjab Baseball League Culminates in Spectacular Closing Ceremony

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The grand finale of the Chief Minister Punjab Baseball League concluded with an electrifying closing ceremony at the FC College Baseball ground, Lahore. The esteemed Chief Guest, President of the Pakistan Federation Baseball, Shaukat Javed, graced the occasion, epitomizing the spirit of unity and sportsmanship.

The ceremony kicked off with the distribution of trophies to the victorious men's and women's teams by Chief Guest Shaukat Javed. The Multan Mustangs secured victory in the men's final, triumphing with 4 runs against the Lahore Lions, who were unable to secure any runs. In an equally thrilling women's final, the Faisalabad Falcons emerged victorious with 9 runs against the Multan Mustangs.

The excitement of the matches was heightened by the ceremonial first pitch, thrown by FCCU Rector,



Dr. Jonathan S. Addleton, setting the stage for a series of captivating showdowns.

During the ceremony, Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, the General Secretary, introduced foreign coaches to the President, acknowledging their invaluable contributions during the training camps, which played a pivotal role in the league's success.

Special gratitude was extended to the media and

the CEO of Global Sports Partner, Mr. Steve Devoss, whose unwavering support made the event possible. Mr. Devoss honored a special pin to the Executive Director, Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, in recognition of his significant contribution.

In closing remarks, Organizing Secretary Amjad Nawaz Khan, along with Amir Bhatti and Hamza Ashraf, expressed heartfelt

appreciation to all officials, coaches, umpires, players, staff, and security personnel whose collective efforts ensured the resounding success of the Chief Minister Punjab Baseball League.

The closing ceremony served as a testament to the enduring spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie, reaffirming the commitment to fostering a thriving baseball culture in Punjab.

Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tournament Schedule of Semi Finals and Final announced



Spots Desk

KARACHI: M. Touseef Siddiqui, Secretary Regional Cricket Association Karachi Tournament Committee announced the Schedule of Semi Finals and Final of the Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tournament. According to the announcement the First Semi Final will be played on Tuesday 23rd April between Zone-VI Blues vs Zone-IV whites, on this occasion Mr. Khalid Nafees Chairman Tournament Committee will be the Chief Guest and the 2nd Semi Final will be played between Zone-VI Green vs Zone-VI Whites, on this occasion Mr. Azam Khan, Coordinator Regional Cricket Association Karachi will be the Chief Guest.

Final of the Tournament will be on Friday 26th April. All the matches will be Played at KCCA Stadium.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Kohli fined for angry outburst at IPL umpires

Spots Desk

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli reacts as he walks back to the pavilion after his dismissal during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on April 21, 2024. AFP

India star Virat Kohli has been fined half his match fee for an angry outburst in response to his dismissal from an Indian Premier League match, the league said Monday.

Kohli fell early in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's chase on Sunday after he was caught and bowled by Kolkata Knight Riders pace bowler Harshit Rana and his team went on to lose by one run at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

But the former India captain looked



confident the high full-toss was above his waist as the umpires checked for a no-ball.

TV umpire Michael Gough declared it out after technology suggested the trajec-

tory of the ball dipped below the waist of the batsman, who returned furious after exchanging words with the on-field officials.

"Kohli committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct," an IPL statement said.

"He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction."

Visuals on social media showed Kohli having a long discussion with an umpire after the match ended and pundits weighed in on the dismissal.

Former India batsman Navjot Singh Sidhu slammed the call and asked for the "rules to be changed"

Ex-India quick Irfan Pathan said on X, formerly Twitter, "if Virat Kohli was standing at the popping crease the ball would have been lower than his measured waist height, making it a legal delivery".

Kohli has been the top run-getter in the T20 tournament so far with 379 runs in eight matches but his team Bengaluru remains bottom of the 10-team table with just one win.

Peshawar upset strong Swat in PM Youth Talent Hunt Boys & Girls Table Tennis

Spots Desk

PESHAWAR: Peshawar upset strong Swat in the Boys team event league round match in the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Boys and Girls Table Tennis League being played here at Sports Arena, Qayyum Sports Complex on Monday.

Senior Advocate Manzoor Qadir, President KP Table Tennis Association Ahmad Nawaz, Member Executive Council Pakistan Table Tennis Federation Mian Shafat, Vice President Kifayat Ullah, Coaches Directorate General Sports Yasir Aziz, Saira Khan, Miss Amna, international referee Masood Ahmad from Lahore, Nadeem Khan from Rawalpindi, Organizing Secretary Ali Hoti, players, officials and large number of spectators were also present.

In the first match, Peshawar Region defeated Swat Region by 3-0. In the first singles Usman Ahmad of Peshawar defeated Kashif Bacha of Swat in a thrilling three sets battle 2-1, the score was 14-12, 11-13 and 11-9. Both Usman and Kashif Bacha exhibited classical display of forceful smashes and cross-court smashes and received cheering responses from the sitting spectators.

Usman took the first set after a hotly contested contest wherein both stretched to 14-12, the set was tied at 5-5, 8-8, 9-9, 10-10, 11-11, 12-12 and at the end, Usman got the set by 14-12. In the second set Usman, after winning the first set, lost the second set, taken by Kashif Bacha by 11-13. Both presented an excellent display of attacking shorts and the set was tied at 8-8, 9-9, 10-10 and 11-11 and Kashif took the set by 11-13. It was the third

set in which Usman played well and did not give much time to his strong rival Kashif to strike back. He took the lead right from the start and raced to win the set by 11-9 before taking the lead of 5-1.

In the second singles of the Team event Haroon of Peshawar beat Umar Khan of (Swat) by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 13-11. Umar Khan did some resistance, especially in the second set but overall Haroon dominated the match. The set was thrice tied at 7-7, 9-9 and 11-11. In the third singles international player Obaid Shah beat Shayan of Swat by 2-0, the score was 11-7 and 11-5 in a one-sided affair.

In the second match Mardan Region beat Bannu Region by 3-1. In the first Mudassar of Mardan lost from Shairan of Bannu by 2-1, the was 8-11, 11-9 and 11-9, Jawad of Mardan beat

Danish of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9, 13-11, Hamza of Mardan beat Huzaifa of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 11-7 and in the last reverse singles Jawad of Mardan beat Shairan by 2-0, the score was 11-7 and 11-7.

In the Girls Team event Mardan Region defeated Bannu Region by 3-0. In the first singles International player Hiba Iqbal of Mardan defeated Wajeha of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 13-11 and 11-9, Hooria of Mardan beat Maryum of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 11-9. Another international player Hiya Noor beat Insha of Bannu by 2-1, the score was 11-13, 11-9 and 14-12. Insha of Bannu played well against strong Hiya Noor where in both stretched to three sets battle.

In the second match Peshawar Region recorded victory against



Swat Region by 3-0. In the first singles top seeded Alishba of Peshawar beat Khadija of Swat by 2-0, the score was 11-9, 13-11, former national junior champion Zainab of Peshawar beat Atika of Swat by 2-0, the score was 14-12 and 13-11 and in the third singles promising national ranking player Safina of Peshawar recorded

victory against Sumaya of Swat by 2-0, the score was 13-11 and 11-7.

The final and prize distribution ceremony of the League of Boys and Girls will be played on Tuesday at 11.00 a.m. Representatives of the HEC would also grace the occasion at the final and price distribution ceremony.

First South Punjab Chess Mela has been won by the Shabir Hussain players of Karachi



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The first South Punjab Chess Mela, decorated with renowned players and emerging talent, has come to an end. The first South Punjab Chess Mela has been won by the players of Karachi. Chess Association, Multan District Chess Association in collaboration with Sports Board Punjab and Chess Federation of Pakistan, the first South Punjab Chess Fair concluded. More than 250 players from all over the country participated in the event with a prize worth of Rs. 17 lakh. Chief Guest Fawad Hashim Rabbani and Additional IG Kamran Khan. According to the results, the master category co-title was won by Sabir Hussain, National Master of Karachi. He won the tournament with six and a half points while remaining unbeaten. He made us ambassador and was entitled to a prize of 50,000, Karachi itself FIDE Master of K. Muhammad Waqar won the second position with six points and was entitled to Rs.25,000. Wajid Hussain eighth and Sabat Ali ninth while international Master Tanveer Gilani stood at the tenth position, Mujahid Hussain of Dera Ghazi Khan won the first position in the South Punjab category and got a prize of Rs. 25000, Arslan Akhtar, Mubasher Saeed sixth, seventh, Subhan Saghir in the female category, Fareeha Siddiqui of Bahawalpur won the first position and she was awarded 15,000 rupees, while Zuniba Wasif of Karachi stood at the second position and she was awarded 10,000 rupees in the under-14 category. 51 thousand rupees cash for the first place The prize was given, while the second place was Rehan Khan of Quetta, he was awarded 10 thousand rupees while addressing the closing ceremony, the special guest, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Fawad Hashim Rabbani, said that this is a wonderful event, which is hosted by the city of Auliya Multan. If any chess or any in any city of Punjab Additional IG Kamran Khan said that he had heard of such events in foreign countries in Pakistan and after seeing the event in Multan, he believed that even today Pakistan There is no shortage of people working for development, no one for mind games It must have been working, never thought that the police services would be present for the chase. Raja Gohar, Secretary General of Chess Association, while presenting the letter of appreciation, said that chess is the oldest game in the world and Multan, which is one of the oldest cities in the world, welcomed its guests with an open heart and honored the association. President Dr. Naem Rauf said in his address that the golden age of chess is back He returned. Later, the guests were honored with shields and flowers.

UGI arranges 9th sports festival at Bahria campus

Spots Desk

LAHORE: Unique Group of Institutions (UGI) organized the 9th Annual Sports Festival under the auspices of its Bahria Town Campus, here on Monday.

The festival took place at Bahria Town Cricket Stadium and featured various sports including musical chairs, aerobics, balloon balancing games, and relay races. Students from pre-nursery to eighth grade actively participated in different sports, showcasing their talents.

During the closing ceremony, Rector UGI Professor Amjad Ali Khan emphasized the importance of promoting both academic and extracurricular activities among students. He highlighted that societies that neglect sports fields never progress, while those where sports thrive contribute to holistic social development. Prof. Amjad Khan emphasized that sports teach children resilience and the difference between winning and losing.

UGI Bahria Campus Project Director Prof. Muzamil Hussain stressed the significance of sports for students' physical health. Even in today's digital age, providing a healthy environment through sports is essential. Unique Group ensures that its students have opportunities to participate in both classroom activities and the heat of the sports field, he said and added that this commitment is evident as hundreds of students showcased their spirit in this sports festival. Sports not only contribute to students' physical well-being but also play a role in character-building, he added.

The festival concluded with the distribution of medals among victorious students.

UGI Head Coordination Prof. Hamad Hassan, Principal Coordination Unit-Anam Yunus, Principal Unique Boys High School Bahria Town Prof. Maqsood, Principal Unique Girls High School Bahria Town Prof. Nabila, parents, teachers, and numerous students were present.



Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on Monday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan keens to expand existing relations with Iran: NA Speaker

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday said that Pakistan values its historical fraternal relations with Iran and was keen to expand the existing relations by promoting parliamentary and economic ties. During a meeting with the President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, the Speaker expressed his confidence that the visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan would not only enhance the relations between the two

Islamic brother countries but also among other regional countries due to its far-reaching impacts.

Pakistani Parliamentary delegation comprising members of all the political parties including Syed Naveed Qamar, Aoon Chaudhry, Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar, Noor Alam Khan, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Khalid Hussain Magsi, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry were also present in the meeting, said a news release. The Speaker warmly welcomed

the Iranian President on behalf of the parliament and the people of Pakistan.

He said that sustainable peace in the region is hinged upon the resolution of bilateral issues amicably through dialogue.

He said that there were vast opportunities for cooperation in trade, energy and other sectors, which were essential for the development and prosperity of the people of both countries. He hailed the establishment of trade centers on both sides of the Pakistan-Iran border and

said that the establishment of trade centers on the Pakistan-Iran border would bring prosperity to the lives of the citizens living on both sides of the border. He said that people-to-people and parliament-to-parliament contacts play a pivotal role in rendering bilateral relations more stable.

President Raisi expressed his excitement to visit Pakistan. He said that the Pakistan-Iran ties were more than the traditional and diplomatic relations as the people of the countries are bound in eternal relations of brotherhood,

neighbourliness and love. He thanked the people and government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation in Pakistan. He said that close ties between the two countries will usher in a new era of regional development and prosperity. While talking on the occasion, MNA Syed Naveed Qamar said that Pakistan values its parliamentary contacts with Iran and added that the Parliament of Pakistan aimed to promote relations with Iran's National Assembly.

Pakistan, Iran sign eight accords to strengthen bilateral cooperation in multiple sectors

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Monday signed a total of eight accords on varying subjects to enhance cooperation in the different fields including trade, science technology, agriculture, health, culture, and judicial matters. The documents were signed between the two countries on the occasion of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's three-day official visit to Pakistan.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President Raisi witnessed the ceremony as the representatives from both sides signed the documents.

The two countries signed an MoU on the Establishment of the Rimdan-Gabd Joint Free/Special Zone. The memorandum was inked by Secretary Board of Investment Ambreen Ifthikhar and Iranian Advisor to President and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade Industrial and Special Economic Zones Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki.

The MoU on Mutual



Recognition of the Standard of Iran and Pakistan was signed by Minister of Science and Technology Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Iranian Minister of Road and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash.

An MoU on Cooperation between the Ministry of Cooperative Labour and Social Welfare of Iran and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistani and Human Resources

Development of Pakistan was also signed by Minister of Overseas Pakistani Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Iranian Minister of Road and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash. Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and Iranian Minister of Justice Amin Hossein Rahimi inked an agreement on Judicial Assistance in Civil Matters between Iran and Pakistan.

Pakistan and Iran also signed an Agreement of Cooperation on Animal Hygiene and Health. The document was signed by Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Iranian Minister of Agriculture Jihad Mohammad Ali Nikbakht.

Similarly, the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in the Field of Quarantine and Phytosanitary was also inked

by Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad Mohammad Ali Nikbakht. The two sides also signed an MoU for Legal Cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of Iran and the Ministry of Law and Justice of Pakistan.

Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and his Iranian counterpart Amin Hossein Rahimi signed the memorandum. An MoU between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan and Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs of Iran was inked to promote film exchange and cinema cooperation between the two countries.

The document was signed by Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili. The signing ceremony also marked the ratification of a security cooperation agreement between the governments of two countries.

Punjab to impose complete ban on plastic bags from June 5

City Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to impose a complete ban on the use of plastic bags from June 5 to combat pollution and enhance environmental quality, without giving an alternative to several shopkeepers and vendors.

"Today marks the launch of the 'No to Plastic' campaign with a complete ban on plastic bag usage slated for June 5 to foster a cleaner environment," Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said at a press conference in Lahore on Monday.

Every year in winter,



Lahore has been ranked the world's most polluted city with the worst air quality, especially in winters.

Last year, the caretaker government had its maiden experiment with artificial rain

to combat smog. It improved the city's air quality level from "hazardous" to "unhealthy". "Modern machinery is being provided to farmers to address crop residue burning, while the ban on plastic

bags aims to eliminate smog and protect public health from diseases such as lung cancer," she added and emphasized ongoing efforts to reduce industrial pollution, carbon emissions and deploy modern technology to purify the air.

She expressed confidence that Punjab would set a shining example of environmental stewardship in the coming years.

The senior minister announced awareness campaigns in educational institutions to educate students about the importance of environmental preservation and the adverse

effects of pollution.

In addition to launching Punjab's largest tree plantation drive, the government is introducing electric buses and a modern air quality monitoring system, she noted.

She underscored the integration of environmental studies into the education curriculum to nurture a culture of environmental consciousness among students.

Furthermore, efforts are underway to safeguard forests and wildlife, with initiatives such as wildlife mapping and accelerated campaigns for forest conservation, the senior minister added.

Pakistan, Iran agree to ban terrorist organizations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Monday decided in principle to ban terrorist organizations in their respective countries.

The decision to the effect was taken in a meeting between Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, and his Iranian counterpart Dr Ahmad Vahidi and Law Minister Amin Hussain Rahimi.

The two sides agreed on a joint plan of action to deal with the menace of terrorism being a common problem, with further improving mutual support and exchange of intelligence information. It was decided to sign a security agreement in that regard at the earliest.

It was also decided to provide all possible facilities to the Pakistani pilgrims on the occasion of Arba'een. The Iranian Interior Minister extend-

ed an invitation to his Pakistani counterpart to visit Iran in that regard where the Iraqi counterpart would also be invited.

The two sides observed that joint initiatives would help ensure the provision of best facilities to the pilgrims.

Interior Minister Naqvi thanked his counterpart for the invitation to visit Iran.

Both sides also agreed to waive the fines imposed on their nationals imprisoned in each other's country.

Mohsin Naqvi said that he wanted that the Pakistani prisoners in Iran should return to the homeland as soon as possible.

The two countries also decided to increase cooperation in border management, including steps for prevention of smuggling and drugs trafficking.

By-Election: ECP issues form 47 results for 22 constituencies

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued Form 47 to the winning candidates of the recent by-elections.

A total of 21 forms were issued, corresponding to the 21 constituencies where by-elections were held on Sunday.

The winner was also declared in a constituency of Qila Saifullah where re-polling took place at some polling stations on Sunday.

National Assembly Results
NA-8 Bajaur: Mubarak Zeb (Independent)

NA-44 D. I. Khan: Faisal Amin Khan
NA-199 Lahore: Ali Pervaiz (PML-N)

NA-132 Kasur: Nasir Ahmed Khan (PML-N)

NA-196 Qambar Shahdadkot: Khurshid Ahmed (PPP)

Punjab Assembly Results
PP-22 Chakwal: Falak Shabir Awan (PML-N)

PP-32 Gujrat: Musa Elahi (PML-N)

PP-36 Wazirabad: Adnan Afzal Chattha (PML-N)

PP-54 Narowal: Ahmed Iqbal (PML-N)

PP-93 Bhakkar: Saeed Akbar Khan (PML-N)

PP-139 Sheikhupura: Rana Afzal

Balochistan govt to launch air ambulance service

Bureau report

QUETTA: The government of Balochistan has announced the first-ever air ambulance service in the province's history.

According to the details, Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that an air ambulance service would be started soon for the first time in the history of the province.

Balochistan government has decided to use one of the two planes owned it for public facilitation instead of selling it.

In a statement, the chief minister said that the People's Air Ambulance service would be launched for the emergency shifting of patients to expand the provision of emergency medical facilities to the masses.

With the launch of Air Ambulance, patients can be transferred to major hospitals across the country, including the provincial capital Quetta on an emergency basis.

CM Bugti said that efforts would be taken to improve service delivery in all sectors including health services in Balochistan and substantial results can be achieved by changing decision-making priorities.

He said the provincial government has working hard to provide quality medical facilities to the poor people by bringing extraordinary reforms in the health department.

CM Bugti said that the available resources would be utilized for the public interest.

Earlier on April 17, Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif said that the development and prosperity of Balochistan is the top priority of the federal government.

FBR launches nationwide crackdown against illegal cigarettes

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has launched a crackdown against non-stamped and counterfeit cigarettes across the country.

During the crackdown, the board of revenue team conducted raids on a total of 4,652 retailers and sealed 33 shops found involved in the illegal trade of tobacco.

The Chairman of the FBR and Inland Reinforcement (IR) operation members have commended the dedication and efforts of the 204 teams, comprising a total of 1047 individuals, who actively participated in the enforcement drive.

The Chairman FBR emphasized the active stance of the IR against the illicit trade of cigarettes.

"Despite facing challenges such as limited resources and logistics, the Inland Re-enforcement Network remains steadfast in its efforts," the FBR Chairman highlighted.

The FBR underscored its commitment to dealing decisively with criminals involved in illegal trade and revenue theft, vowing to take stringent action.

Additionally, the FBR announced plans to intensify the crackdown in the next phase, with a focus on apprehending repeat offenders.

Last month, the market share of illicit cigarettes increased to 39 percent in the past two months, while the availability of smuggled cigarettes in the Pakistani market increased by 200 percent.

According to Pakistan Tobacco Company, as many as 70 smuggled cigarette brands have entered the market in the past two months, while the market share of illegal cigarettes increased to 39 percent.