

DAILY TIMES



Shahid Khaqan hints: Launching his new political party soon



Court reserves verdict on acquittal pleas of Hassan, Hussain Nawaz

PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people

BY: APP

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a report regarding swift completion and transparent provision of relief to the people affected by recent torrential rains across the country.

He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to accomplish a joint survey report in collaboration with the provinces, besides enhancement of cooperation with the provinces to face the future calamities.

The prime minister also sought an



implementation report over his directive in the previous tenure regarding technical improvement of NDMA, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was given a detailed briefing by the NDMA about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Ahad Khan Cheema, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen. Inam Haider Malik and relevant senior officials.

Minister for Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the meeting through video link. The meeting was apprised of the recent damages, rescue efforts and distribution of assistance amount. The NDMA

with assistance of provinces; specially Balochistan would soon complete a collective verification survey over number of complete and partially damaged houses. Under the prime minister's directive, a total of 766,000 kg dry ration would be distributed in Gwadar till March 24 out of which about 388,000 kg ration had been distributed so far till March 16. Moreover, 97,000 kg ration had been distributed in Quetta and Dalbadin, it was further informed. The prime minister directed that the relief process should be completed immediately, besides ensuring transparency in its distribution.

Afghan nationals in Army were dismissed, reveals defence minister

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif revealed on Tuesday that Afghan nationals serving in the army, including two on officer ranks, were among those expelled from the country under its drive against illegal immigrants.

Referring to terrorists affiliated with the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan, Asif said the vast majority reside in Afghanistan while 3,000-4,000 militants were brought to Pakistan for 'resttlement' during the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "We also briefed the National Assembly on the issue."

Speaking to a private TV channel, he maintained that there was no further influx from Afghanistan has occurred at the state level, however, infiltration attempts by militants occur from time to time.

The defence minister emphasized the porous nature of the Pak-Afghan border, highlighting the ease with which individuals can cross into Pakistani territory, obtain legal documentation, and even be recruited into the armed forces.

"As the minister of defence, I signed two or three files in

which Afghan recruits were discharged, one of them was a captain and one was a lieutenant."

The defence minister also narrated an event - where through a letter - a soldier's father confessed his Afghan citizenship and prolonged residence in Pakistan, including property ownership and business ventures in Quetta. Despite his established ties to the country, the individual was compelled to leave, said Asif.

Stressing the need to address the issue collaboratively with the Afghan government, the minister cited a visit to the country's western neighbour made by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government during its tenure, where the involvement of Afghan nationals in terrorist attacks in Pakistan was discussed and evidence was presented.

Tensions flared on Monday between Islamabad and Kabul following overnight raids by the Pakistan Air Force. Pakistan said the attack had targeted armed groups hiding out in border regions. The Taliban claimed eight women and children were killed in the strikes which came mere days after a militant attack martyred seven soldiers including two officers.

Court acquits Imran in two long march vandalism cases

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD

A judicial magistrate of Islamabad acquitted former premier Imran Khan in two long march vandalism cases on Tuesday.

Judicial magistrate Shaista Kundi announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day. The court, however, rejected the request to produce the PTI founder in court.

During the hearing, Imran's counsel Naeem Panjtoha stated that all cases against the ex-premier were limited to the extent of

intimidation. He was booked in multiple similar cases in one day. The complainant in the case is an SHO and he does not have the authority to lodge a case. The case also does not include the statements of witnesses, he added.

The judge inquired whether Imran had been acquitted in cases before, to which the counsel responded in the affirmative. The court then reserved the verdict to announce it later in the day. The complaints against the former premier were registered at the Sahala

and Lohi Bhair police stations. On May 27, 2022, the Islamabad police filed separate cases against 150 people including then PTI chairman Imran Khan, and other party leaders including Asad Umar, Asad Qaiser over allegations of arson and vandalism in the federal capital a day earlier.

The footage of the Safe City cameras as well as those from private TV news channels were included in the challans of the cases as evidence. At least 39 people were taken into custody after identifica-

tion from the footage. Two FIRs were registered at Kohsar police station over the complaint of sub-inspector Asif Raza and sub-inspector Ghulam Sarwar under Sections 109 (abatement), 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapon), 149 (unlawful assembly), 186 (obstructing public service), 188 (disobedience), 353 (assault on public servant), 427 (causing damage) and 435 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

SI Raza stated in his FIR that he was patrolling with his other police personnel near Jinnah Avenue's China Chowk when at 11 PM, around 100-150 people with PTI flags suddenly moved towards Express Chowk. He added that the police tried to stop the PTI supporters due to the imposition of Section 144 in Islamabad but they did not listen and instead pelted stones at the police officers and also set fire to trees. The SI said 36 individuals, "acting at the behest of Imran and other PTI leadership", were

"brought under control". In May 2022, Imran launched a march toward Islamabad to topple the coalition government that assumed power after he was ousted as the premier following a vote of no confidence. The rally was part of the PTI's struggle to achieve "real freedom" and deliver the nation from the "slavery" of the "US-backed" coalition government. Imran accused the coalition government of being an "imported government that came to power through a US-backed conspiracy".

Pak-Afghan rift deepens amidst diplomatic deadlock

BY: SYED FAWAD ALI SHAH

ISLAMABAD

Afghanistan has seen a surge in its relationship with India, prompting concern in neighboring Pakistan.

Following Pakistan's expulsion of Afghan refugees, many Afghan businessmen have relocated their factories to India, while the Indian government has raised alarm bells in Pakistan, particularly as the Afghan

government openly criticizes Pakistani attacks. Efforts by Pakistani delegations sent to Afghanistan have failed to yield results, highlighting the ongoing challenges in achieving peace amidst the conflict.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan is considering implementing visa-free entry for Indian citizens, reciprocated by India for Afghans, in a bid to further enhance bilateral relations. Afghanistan's diminishing

dependency on Pakistan is underscored by its growing support from key global players such as the US, China, Turkey, Russia, and Qatar. Additionally, the Afghan Taliban's leaders have been engaging in frequent visits to China, Turkey and other developed nations, indicating a paradigm shift in perspective as they assess their losses in the war compared to progress made elsewhere.

PHC orders federal govt to give details of cases against Gandapur

TIMES REPORT

PESHAWAR

The Peshawar High Court on Tuesday ordered the federal government to provide details of cases against Ali Amin Gandapur.

A division bench of the high court comprises of Justice Ishaq Ibrahim and Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard petition of KP Chief Minister Ali Amin

Gandapur seeking details of cases against him.

"This problem has not yet resolved?" Justice Shakeel Ahmed questioned. "Problems still persist, we don't know the cases registered in Punjab," counsel Arshad Ahmed said.

"Get bail if involved in any case in Punjab," Justice Shakeel said, "if they will provide us details than we will go to

courts. They are not providing us details of cases, and nothing has been shared in writing till now," Gandapur's lawyer said. "There are two inquiries against him in D.I.Khan," FIA's Director Legal Abdul Rehman said. "He is chief minister of the province and the people of the province have reposed confidence in him," Justice Ishaq Ibrahim said.

Govt will take steps to regulate social media

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD

Nomination papers of Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi for Senate elections were approved on Tuesday.

Talking to media on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi hope that he will bag victory in election on April 2. He further said there will be no compromise with terrorists. Terrorists who attacked on the sovereignty of Pakistan will be given befitting

reply. Interior Minister also indicated that government will take steps to regulate social media.

He said all the foreigners living in Pakistan will be sent back and all foreigners must come to Pakistan on visa. He said Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will talk to government of Afghanistan regarding TTP hideouts. He pledged that the wave of terrorism will be eradicated from the country.

LPG prices soar again across Pakistan

TIMES REPORT

KARACHI

The local marketing companies in Karachi have reportedly raised the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) without obtaining prior approval from the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), according to media reports on Tuesday.

This is the third time during Ramadan that LPG prices have seen an arbitrary increase of Rs30 per kilogram. Despite the government's fixed price of Rs257 for LPG, it has

been observed to be sold at Rs300 in the market.

Additionally, domestic cylinders, which were previously sold for Rs 3,030, are now being priced at an alarming Rs 4,200 in the local market.

The Chairman of the LPG Association, Irfan Khokhar, condemned the unauthorized price hike and emphasized that any increase without proper notification is unjustifiable.

The LPG association called for action against those involved in black market activities.

Advertisement for Mujahid Ramzan Mithai. The ad features several packages of Mujahid Ramzan Mithai products, including 'Mujahid Ramzan Mithai' and 'Mujahid Ramzan Mithai'. The background shows a mosque with a crescent moon and stars. The text includes 'Mujahid Ramzan Mithai', 'Ramadan Kareem', and 'اوقات سحر و افطار' (Magical and Fasting Times). The time slots are 06-20PM and 05:04AM.

NEWS CITY



Inflation Worries During Ramadan: People Struggle with Rising Prices



PESHAWAR: Adviser on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, is expressing his views in a program organized on Hamara Peshawar, MNA Arbab Sher Ali is also present.

Minister visits DG Agri Engineering Office

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Muhammad Sajjad on Tuesday visited office of Director General (DG) Agriculture Engineering Tarnab and inspected machinery workshop. He also visited sections of the office and directed to utilize machinery for facilitation of farmers enabling them to increase production. He was also briefed about ongoing projects being underway under agriculture department. The minister was told that agriculture engineering department is working on various projects including installation of solar pumps, levelling of uncultivated land, provision of agricultural machinery and implementation of public sector developmental program. Minister was informed that efforts of agriculture engineering department aims facilitation of farmers and use of uncultivable land to increase production and achieve food self-sufficiency.—APP

“Sheen Khyber” campaigners distribute plants in Jamrud

AHMAD NABI
KHYBER: Under the “Sheen Khyber” (green Khyber) drive, plants were given away freely to the locals aimed to make district Khyber more green and verdant here on the last day. With assistance of representatives of Sheen Khyber campaign, Additional Assistant Commissioner, Jamrud Nasir Abbas Khalil distributed siblings among the tribesmen in various localities. Speaking on the occasion he said that the purpose of the welfare activity was to enhance greenery in Khyber. He urged the locals to actively participate in the drive and plant even a single sibling in their houses to make the district verdant.

Enrolment campaign drive 2024 held at Alpurai

BY: SAYED SAJID SHAH
SHANGLA: The enrolment Drive Campaign 2024, was held at GPS Alpurai No 1 District Shangla. The campaign drive was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Adnan Khatak, DEO Muzafar Ali Khan, SDEO Aurangzeb Khalil, ASDEOs Govt and non governmental organization representatives along with Media persons. In the campaign many children were enrolled, officially by the ADC with the provision of books and school bags. During his speech the ADC told, the media that education is the only tool of development which plays important role both in personal life as well as in the development of nation. He said, that enrolment of 21000 children as big target to be achieved in the year 2024 and this can not be done without research, planning and spirit.



Verdict Issued in Blasphemy Murder Case of Madrasa Teacher in DIKhan

DIKHAN: The trial for the murder of a female madrasa teacher accused of blasphemy in Dera Ismail Khan has reached its conclusion, with Additional Sessions Judge 2 Dera Muhammad Jameel delivering the verdict. The teacher was brutally slain with a knife. In this notorious case, two students of the madrasa have been sentenced to death and fined Rs. 2 million each for their role in the heinous crime. Additionally, a minor student involved in the incident has been sentenced to life imprisonment and fined one million rupees due to being a juvenile offender. Public Prosecutors Tanseer Ali Advocate and Haji Shakeel Advocate represented the prosecution, while Asad Aziz Advocate defended the accused during the proceedings. Also Read: Border Tensions Escalate: Mortar Attacks Spark Migration in Kurram District. The incident occurred on March 29, 2022, at the Jamia Islamia Falah Al-Banat madrasa gate, situated on Multan Road in Dera Ismail Khan. Three 18-year-old students, Razia Hanifa, Ayesha Noman, and Umra Aman Hanifa, intercepted the 18-year-old teacher as she arrived at the madrasa, holding her at knifepoint before brutally slaughtering her.

Annual prize distribution ceremony held at Smart School Mardan Campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT
MARDAN: The annual prize distribution ceremony was organized by The Smart School Mardan Campus Sheikh Multoon. Students and parents participated in large numbers. The function was presided over by former president of Mardan Press Club Mustar Khan Asil while Additional Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Junaid Khalid and social personality Anwar Kamal were special guests on the occasion. School Principal Sohail Iqbal while addressing the event said that real change can be brought in the society only through education. Along with government educational institutions, private educational institutions are also playing an active role in this field and this is the reason why public trust in private educational institutions has increased. He said that Smart School is providing education to its students according to modern requirements. In the field of arts and science, students have also achieved significant success at the national level.



Economic consensus: Faig throws his heavy-weight behind minister' remarks

TIMES REPORT
PESHAWAR: Chairman and founder of the Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faig Shah threw his heavy-weight behind a statement of a senior member of the federal cabinet, in which he had asked for an economic consensus with all political parties to push the country towards economic prosperity. “Synergized efforts are essential to tackle all issues being confronted by our country on the internal and external front.”, About unveiling government’ austerity plan, Shah said instead of only lip service and cosmetic steps, it is essential to implement initiatives practically and should drastically cut down lavish expenditures of cabinet members and unnecessary expenses. He asked to keep the size of the federal cabinet at its lowest. It is a dilemma of the whole nation that Pakistan, which is blessed with natural treasures and deposits, is carrying a begging bowl and relying on foreign debts, he noted. Faig called spending on public money cabinet members luxuries tantamount to slavery to a country which is highly trapped under the foreign debts. Talking about public miseries, Shah asked the government to avoid burdening the nation with further heavy loans by accepting IMF’s harsh conditions.

Ex cop shot dead in Khesghi

PESHAWAR: Unknown assailants on Tuesday shot dead a retired police official in the Khesghi area of Nowshera district. Police said a retired police official identified as Ehsan Ullah was on way home when assailants riding a motorcycle shot him dead in Khesghi. The attackers managed to flee the area after committing the crime. The body of the deceased was shifted to hospital for medico legal procedure while a police team collected evidence from the crime scene for investigation.—APP

Delegation of Canadian Pakhtun community calls on KP Speaker

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Canadian Pakistan Pakhtun Community Association led by Fakar-ul-Islam called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Speaker, Babar Salim Swati. Provincial ministers including, Meena Khan, Qasim Ali Shah were also present on the occasion. The delegation congratulated Babar Salim Swati for assuming responsibility of speaker and invited him to visit Canada. The delegation also discussed with speaker the problems confronted by overseas Pakistanis and urged him to play role in resolving issues of expatriates.—APP

Aac Arrests Bisp Agent From Toru

PESHAWAR: Following instructions of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayyaz Khan Sherpao, Additional Assistant Commissioner Khaula Haqdar on Tuesday visited Ehsaas Kafalat centers and reviewed the arrangements. During inspection an agent in village Qasim of Toru area was found deducting Rs.500 from deserving women. The Additional Assistant Commissioner took prompt action and arrested the culprit and sent a report against him to the concerned Assistant Director BISP. The BISP authority blocked the agent’s ID and confiscated his device.—APP

CPPCA delegation meets with Speaker KP Assembly

PESHAWAR: The Canadian Pakhtun Community Association (CPPCA) delegation led by the association’s founding leader Fakhru Islam Toru met with Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati and Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru here at Speaker House on Tuesday. On this occasion Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi and other officials were also present while Colonel Jahanzeb, Dr. Farman, Dr. Tariq, Dr. Manzoor, Dr. Ejaz Mehbub, Zardas, Jahanzeb, Bahader Khan, Fahim Khan, Farooq Khan Toru and Sohail Khan were included in the delegation. Overseas Pakistanis congratulated on assuming the responsibilities of the Speaker. The Speaker welcomed the delegation on their arrival at the Speaker’s House. Ali Amin Gandapur and Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru were invited to visit Canada. Minister Food Zahir Shah Toru hosted Iftar dinner in honor of them.—APP

Official visited Ehsaas Kafalat centers

OUR CORRESPONDENT
MARDAN: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayyaz Khan Sherpao, Additional Assistant Commissioner Khaula Haqdar immediately took action and arrested the culprit and sent a report against him to the concerned Assistant Director BISP. The BISP authority blocked the agent’s ID and confiscated his device. AAC Khaola Haqdar has asked the public to collect the full amount of Rs 10,500 from the agent in the established centers and contact Deputy Commissioner Complaint No. 09379230048 for any complaint.

Rain effectees compensate in Khyber

AHMAD NABI
KHYBER: Forty two families recently affected by torrential rain in district Khyber were granted financial support last day. In the light of the announcement made by the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to help the rain affectees, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) paid 15.4 million rupees to the deserving families in Khyber. In this connection a simple gathering held in (Khyber House), Deputy Commissioner (DC), Office, former parliamentarian and local leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Haji Shahjee Gul Afridi and ex-Member Provincial Assembly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bilawal Afridi distributed cheques among the affected tribesmen. DC, Khyber Capt (Retd) Sanaullah, rain effectees, local leadership of PML-N, tribal elders and other officials were among the participants of the moot. Speaking on the occasion Haji Shahjee Gul Afridi said that the incumbent government of PML-N was aware of the miseries of the rain effectees and would never leave them in that time of need and every possible assistance would be provided to them. The tribesmen thanked the Prime Minister for the provision of forthwith relief to them.

Ramazan food packages distributed

OUR CORRESPONDENT
MARDAN: Save The Life Welfare Foundation Baghdada Mardan distributed Ramazan food packages of Four Hundred and eighty thousand rupees among ninety five deserving families as part of their Ramazan Package initiative. Each Ramazan Food Package contains 10kg of flour, 5kg Rice, cooking oil of 2 liters, 2kg of Sugar, 1kg of Daal Chana, 1kg of Dates, 1kg basin and half kg of black tea which will be sufficient for a family throughout the holy month of Ramazan. A special ceremony was held in this regard, which was presided over by the Foundation’s Patron-in-Chief Maulana Abdul Haq.



Opinion & Editorial

Afghan turbulence

RELATIONS between the newly formed government and Afghanistan's de facto Taliban rulers have begun on an inauspicious note. After seven security personnel were martyred in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan on Saturday, Pakistan hit targets in Paktika and Khost provinces early on Monday targeting "terrorists belonging to [the] Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group", according to an FO statement released yesterday. Afghan officials, on the other hand, claimed "civilian homes" had been struck. Moreover, there were reports of cross-border exchanges of fire in Kurram district on Monday. Militants had also staged attacks in Mohmand, Nowshera and Bannu over the weekend. What is important at this juncture is that matters do not escalate with Kabul. While terrorist attacks targeting civilians as well as security personnel are a red line and cannot go unanswered, and the frontiers must be defended, unilateral action should not become the norm. This will only cause further deterioration of ties with the Afghan Taliban, and Pakistan may lose whatever leverage it has with Kabul, adding to our security concerns. Soon after the new government took over, there was a routine exchange of pleas-

Steady, tight money

The State Bank of Pakistan's decision to maintain its policy rate steady at 22 per cent is quite in line with market expectations and, coming at a time when a newly elected government has just assumed power, further validation of the central bank's policy independence. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has correctly argued that although the central bank's tight money approach has started to pay off in terms of more subdued year-on-year headline inflation in January, this is no time to let up on the high policy rate for a variety of reasons. In other words, while the downsides of a contractionary monetary policy are not lost on anyone, throttling inflation and bringing down inflation expectations has to take priority over growth for now. High inflation stunts growth in its own way, and it confounds businesses and households alike by making it difficult to estimate what their nominal costs in the coming month or quarter will be. This can throw a pall on consumer spending and business investment, exerting a drag on eco-

Disruption or destruction?

People tend to cling to ideas formed previously; they tend to work better within already established networks; and they tend to be more comfortable with associations that are familiar.

Even the most intelligent and capable people. Even people who can think outside the box. Even people capable of creativity. Indeed, even people that have a lot of knowledge and expertise. No one is immune from these tendencies to stick to what one already knows.

The common theme among societies and countries that are broadly seen to be successful is disruption, but this disruption cannot be wild and out of control. Instead, meaningful disruption tends to be within a canopy of a stable architecture - something akin to some broad rules of the game.

Change takes place when long-standing ideas about what is normal and how things should be are challenged by new ideas, but those new ideas are afforded space through a delicate balance between radical new approaches and robust adherence to stability. Too radical and you end up creating instability, which undermines the entire ecosystem that you are interested in improving through new ideas. Too strict about stability and you end up throttling any new ideas.

Just like ideas, networks

and associations also work the same way. There needs to be enough churn in how people and communities relate to each other to create the tensions and alliances that help advance new ways of doing things, but there cannot be so much churn and so much flux that the whole system is thrown into uncertainty and instability.

There is a lot of genuine sadness, disenchantment, and anger about the trajectory of Pakistan today. At the heart of the matter is a growing belief that the people running Pakistan - what I refer to as the 'elite' of the country - are incapable of governing over the changes that Pakistan desperately needs. It needs disruption, but it doesn't need destruction. Sadly, it seems it cannot get one without getting the other. This was crystallized on May 9 last year, but it has been the under-girding and overwhelming motif of Pakistan throughout its history.

The internal economic situation is dire - as two years of relentless inflation and uncertainty have battered household incomes and complicated the already delicate economic balancing act that millions of Pakistani families must deal with. The vast and overwhelming youthfulness of the country has a low base of human capital, limited economic and social mobility for young women, no financial support from the state, and no market-based solutions to meet the

Courtesy The News

Is India's judiciary up for the fight?

Jawed Nagvi

OBSERVERS around the world were not necessarily being malicious - with the exception of Winston Churchill - in thinking that India might not last as a democracy for too long after 1947. The Cassandras were wrong, and the new nation's refurbished state institutions, led by a robust parliament and an enviable judiciary, fortified the trust the masses reposed in the complex multicultural nation state.

Swiftly putting the trauma of partition behind, India's Nehruvian promise - a gold standard for according impoverished masses dignity and equal rights - melded a Babel-like cluster of linguistic and religious groups into a cosy nation, the opposite of the same differences propelling post-Westphalian Europe into fragmented neighbourhoods. The Indian experiment defied the rule.

The ideal of a multicultural democracy contended with headwinds but withstood the occasionally bumpy ride, which at one point, in 1975, threatened to derail the political project altogether. The close call was tamed, however, and not for the first time, the initiative to save the day belonged to the masses. Indira Gandhi's rout was a high point of their prowess, and her chastised return a symbol of their grounded politics.

The journey over the next four decades saw the steady clip beginning to miss the beat, for example, in the loss of the moral compass in Punjab, followed by the horrific pogrom of Sikhs in the heart of Delhi. The ground looked fertile for a rightward push, hastened by the loss, no doubt, of India's economic and political anchor in the USSR. The BJP's migration from its sullen posturing that feigned to court democracy - which vanished with the fight against Mrs Gandhi - to become the spitting image of a religio-fascist party gained speed under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Courtesy Dawn

Extremists cannot hold the civilized world to ransom

Baria Alamuddin

The Gaza conflict is fueling tension around the world in a multitude of ways, with huge pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Western capitals often triggering political backlashes. Increasing violence and hate speech against Muslim and Jewish communities threaten to take us back to the divisions and polarization of the post-9/11 years.

With some British ministers denouncing pro-Palestine protests as antisemitic hate marches, it is no coincidence that Muslim groups singled out by the government in its new definition of what constitutes extremism are outspoken critics of the UK's official position on Gaza.

The new measure, announced last week, defines extremism as "the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; to undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally creating a permissive environment for others to achieve those results."

It is important because British government ministers and civil servants will be banned from talking to or funding any group defined as extremist.

The minister behind the new definition, Michael Gove, exploited parliamentary privilege to disclose the names of some of the organizations likely to be covered by the new definition, several of which have threatened legal action.

While extreme-right organizations will also be covered, the targeting of Muslim organizations appears designed solely to throw red meat to deeply Islamophobic grassroots supporters of the Conservative Party. No less than the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby warned that the



new definition risked "disproportionately targeting Muslim communities."

As with much of Europe, the size of Britain's demographic minorities is growing rapidly, with nonwhite communities constituting about 20 percent of the population and Islam the second-largest religion. In Wales last week, Vaughan Gething became the first Black leader of a national government anywhere in Europe. It is the backlash against this inexorably growing diversity that reactionaries have sought to exploit.

Tory MPs in danger of losing their seats have little to brag about other than the implementation of Brexit.

Across Europe, extreme-right parties have experienced both victories and set-

backs. In last week's Portuguese elections, the far-right Chega (Enough) party became the third-largest political force, while the Netherlands' far-right leader Geert Wilders was compelled to accept that he could not be the next prime minister because other parties refuse to work with him. There was widespread concern about the arrival in 2022 of far-right leader Giorgia Meloni as Italian prime minister, although on the international stage she has proved to be a relatively collegiate figure in addressing issues such as Ukraine. Meanwhile, polls continue to indicate that French far-right leader Marine Le Pen could win the 2027 presidential election.

Britain's Conservative Party manifestly has an Islamophobia problem (the party refuses to even acknowledge the term), despite many around the world marking March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia. In a deranged media article last month, former Home Secretary Suella Braverman wrote: "The truth is that the Islamists, the extremists and the antisemites are in charge now." She warned that Britain was "sleepwalking into a ghettoized society." The party's former deputy chairman Lee Anderson babbled that London and its Mayor Sadiq Khan were controlled by Islamists. He was duly suspended and defected to the even more right-wing Reform party.

This Conservative government's revised definition of extremism perfectly encapsulates the intolerant, divisive entity the party is mutating into.

Courtesy Arab News

Why not Pakistan's citizenship for persecuted Indian Muslims?

Dr Moonis Ahmar

On the eve of Indian elections, the Modi regime notified rules of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). In December 2020, the Indian government had introduced CAA and also came up with National Register of Citizens so as to track down those who were illegally residing in India, particularly from Bangladesh. Prior to that, in 2019, CAA was passed by the Indian parliament which led to an uproar from the Muslim community and opposition parties.

The BJP government introduced an act in December 2020 according to which Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians facing persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and who arrived in India before 2015 can claim Indian citizenship. One can

have a legitimate argument that if India can open doors for persecuted Hindus in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, then Indian Muslims who are facing state-sponsored persecution should be granted the right to citizenship of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Alleged persecution of non-Muslim minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan may have some truth, but the manner in which Indian Muslims are being persecuted is documented adequately. National Register of Citizens (NRC) and CAA are the two recent initiatives taken by the Modi regime reflecting its

nationalistic policy for protecting the interests of non-Muslim population particularly Hindus and to document the data so that required information is available about the number of illegal Muslim immigrants from India and non-Muslims from

Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan living in the country since 2014. Critics argue that both CAA and NRC are being pushed for implementation at a time when general elections in India are due in April-May this year and that BJP strategists want to augment their vote bank by fanning religious sentiments.

Viewing the temptation of India's policy to provide space to Hindus particularly those living in Pakistan to seek nationality in India, some Hindu families, particularly from Sindh, migrated to India, but after some time they realised that life in Pakistan was better, and so, they returned to their country of origin. By pursuing a policy to deport illegal immigrants who happen to be Muslims from Bangladesh and elsewhere, BJP hopes to widen its political support and vote bank in the forthcoming general elec-

tions. The counter argument dispelling fear among Indian Muslims that they will be targeted through CAA and NRC has gained ground in India. It is argued that neither CAA nor NRC is detrimental to the interests of Indian Muslims and the policy is to document demographic landscape of India particularly religious minorities. Under the title of an article, 'Why is India's Citizenship Amendment Act so Controversial', Al-Jazeera reported, "Home Minister Amit Shah, a close confidant of Modi, posted on X that the law will enable minorities persecuted on religious grounds in neighboring countries to acquire Indian citizenship. Before the CAA, India's citizenship law did not make religion a determinant of a person's eligibility for an Indian passport."

Courtesy Tribune

Gold rates up by Rs.400 to Rs.227,300 per tola



BUSINESS

PSX stays bullish, gains 612 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 612.09 points, a positive change of 0.94 percent, closing at 65,502.60 points against 64,890.51 points the previous trading day. A total of 323,281,871 shares valuing Rs.17,059 billion were traded during the day as compared to 211,758,341 shares valuing Rs. 7,785 billion the last

day. Some 341 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 184 of them recorded gains and 140 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 27,822,745 shares trading at Rs.1.38 per share, Telearc Limited with 20,828,617 shares with 9.23 per share and Bank of Punjab with 17,912,724 shares valuing Rs. at Rs.6.14 per share. —APP



MUZAFFARABAD: A trader is busy in cleaning the utensils in the shop at Imam Bargah Street in the City.

Youth from poor nations joining Russia-Ukraine war

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Brigadier (ret) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Tuesday that unemployed youth from poor nations are joining the Russia-Ukraine war in large numbers. Human smugglers are promising youth good jobs in Europe and then delivering them to the armies of both warring nations, he said. Aslam Khan said in a statement issued here today that this tendency can't be stopped as the unemployed youth of poor nations will continue to become part of this war for money, irrespective of their political



affiliations. He said youth should be prevented from becoming the fuel for the war. The family members are not even informed in the event of the death of a person in a foreign land. Human traffickers transport youth to Russia on the promise of a good future in Europe. The youths are told they are being sent to Europe via Russia, where they will get a huge salary. On reaching Russia, they are handed over

to the army after snatching their passports. They are sent to barracks and given brief training, after which they are sent to the front line. Similarly, many young people are being handed over to the Ukrainian army. Young people from the same country fight and die on both sides to feed their families. Aslam Khan said that apart from human trafficking, both countries are attracting the youth of poor countries in various ways, including citizenship after one year of military service. Retired people with military backgrounds also have a heavy salary in the army. He informed me that fifteen thousand

Pakistan can be a major beneficiary of China's higher-standard opening up: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD(INP): As Pakistan adapts to a dynamic global economy, partnering with China offers pathways to prosperity. By aligning with China's unfolding agenda, Pakistan can drive sustainable growth, positioning itself as a key beneficiary for years ahead, said Dr Liaquat Ali Shah, Head of Policy at the Centre of Excellence for CPEC, in an interview with WealthPK. "China's rise as a global economic power has initiated a significant realignment of global economic forces and relations. As China has risen as a prominent exporter of goods and services, its substantial demand for raw materials has catalysed economic growth in numerous countries. It has reshaped the way countries interact economically, influencing trade patterns, supply chains, financial markets, and geopolitical dynamics on a global scale." The policy head stated, "If developing nations like Pakistan want to fully benefit from China's transition, they must understand what the 'New Normal' involves.



Amid China's shift towards a consumption-driven and service-oriented growth model in the current economic environment, Pakistan finds itself presented with a compelling opportunity. "To capitalize on this potential, Pakistan must strategically align its production capabilities with the evolving demands and preferences of the Chinese market. By doing so, Pakistan will be poised to access and cater to the expanding consumer base in China," he said. He suggested that Pakistanis should engage in collaboration with their Chinese counterparts to effectively address regulatory challenges, streamline trade procedures, and foster cultural exchanges. It is but also underscored what the 'New Normal' involves. Pakistan to grasp

marketplace." He said Pakistan stands at the cusp of immense opportunity, driven by its diverse market dynamics. Leveraging this diversity is pivotal for Pakistan to unlock its full economic potential. Forming a joint venture (JV) with an international partner could yield strategic advantages, such as cost reduction, entry into global markets, increased competitiveness, and acclimatization to the distinctive global business climate. "JVs with China across specific industries hold promise not only for economic growth but also for generating employment opportunities. China's steadfast focus on mines and minerals has cast a spotlight on Pakistan's abundant natural resources, paving the way for substantial collaboration and investment opportunities. With China's great demand for raw materials to fuel its industrial expansion, Pakistan stands to benefit immensely from enhanced trade relations and partnerships in the mining sector," Sohail said.

UBL profit jumps 65% in 2023: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD(INP): United Bank Limited (UBL), one of the country's largest commercial banks, posted an unconsolidated profit-after-tax (PAT) of Rs53.1 billion for the year ended December 31, 2023, with notable growth of 65.8% over the previous year, reports WealthPK. According to the financial results submitted to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), the bank recorded a profit-before-tax (PBT) of Rs108.1 billion for CY23 versus a PBT of Rs68.3 billion in the calendar year 2022. The improved profitability was primarily fuelled by higher



net interest income and provisioning reversals. UBL announced an impressive earnings per share (EPS) of Rs43.44 for CY23. The net markup income posted immense growth, reaching Rs142.8 billion for CY23, compared to Rs103.2 billion in CY22. High interest

rates along with time-repositioning in the asset base improved margins during the period under review. However, non-markup interest income for the year dwindled 33.6% to Rs22.8 billion year-on-year. Higher fees and foreign exchange income were offset by

a loss on securities and an enormous decline in other income. The bank's continuous focus on expediting the digital transformation journey, combined with delivering 'unparalleled' services to the customers facilitated a robust fee income growth of 10.4%, reaching Rs17.5 billion during calendar year 2023 from Rs15.8 billion over the year earlier. Foreign exchange income increased by 49% to reach Rs12.4 billion for the year ended December 31, 2023, as compared to Rs8.4 billion for the year ended December 31, 2022.

Punjab govt's decision to promote solar power use to benefit businesses, households: WealthPK

FAISALABAD(INP): The Punjab government's decision to provide people with subsidised solar panels will help boost various businesses, particularly the agriculture sector. Zafar Ali, an electrician by profession, told WealthPK that it was heartening to know that the Punjab government was going to promote the solar power in the province by providing the solar plates to households and businesses. He said the move would ensure cheap electricity for consumers. "As an electrician, I frequently visit homes to fix faults. Many



households are facing the brunt of the high cost of electricity. They are struggling to ensure food for their children after paying the hefty power bills," he remarked. Immediately after assuming power, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz announced a plan to provide solar panels to people consuming 300 or fewer units of elec-

tricity per month. During her maiden speech in the Punjab Assembly, she said, "I am working on a plan to provide solar panels in installments to the consumers using up to 300 or below units of electricity." Zafar Ali urged the government also to ensure the availability of materials like wires, switches, stands, batteries and other allied components for installation of solar systems at affordable rates. The province's agriculture sector also stands to benefit from the project. Chaudhry Asim Rafique, Director of Irrigation Reform, Faisalabad Division, said that the government would promote installation of solar-energised tubewells for irrigating croplands. He said the facility would benefit the agriculture sector and help farmers reduce their input costs. He said the government was working to shift all tubewells on solar system.

Kot Addu Power Company posts 44% profit growth in 1QFY24: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD(INP): Kot Addu Power Company Limited's (KAPCO) net profit dropped to Rs1.18 billion in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year 2023-24 (1QFY24) from Rs2.109 billion in the same period of FY23, posting a 44% decline. According to the company's financials, the main reason behind this reduction is the firm made no sales during the period. The power generation and distribution company observed a gross loss of Rs805.6 million in 1QFY24 compared to a gross profit of Rs1.57 billion in 1QFY23. During the period under review, the company's administrative expenses widened by 4.92% to Rs184.4 million. In 1QFY24, operating profit fell 35.22% to Rs3.25 billion from Rs5.027 billion in the same period last year. Profit-before-tax dropped to Rs1.93 billion in 1QFY23. The



company paid a lower tax from Rs10.6 billion in 2018 to the highest of (Rs755.6 million) in 1QFY24 compared to Rs1.03 billion in the same quarter of the previous year. The earnings per share stood at Rs1.34 in 1QFY24 compared to Rs2.4 in 1QFY23. Historical trend analysisA significant decrease has been witnessed in the company's total turnover between 2018 and 2023. The turnover fell to Rs50.3 billion in 2021 from Rs91.9 billion in 2020. Nevertheless, R ratios analysis the company posted an impressive turnover of Rs136.6 billion in 2022, but it plunged to Rs25.4 billion in 2023. The net profit exhibited an increasing trend

in 2022, and -2.24% in 2023. This reflects the company's revenue generation continued to dip compared to the cost of production during this period. The net profit margin fluctuated as it decreased from 33.01% in 2020 to 7.24% in 2022, but improved to 15.56% in 2023. The company's earnings per share growth remained negative in 2021, 2022 and 2023, with values of 56.69%, 3.27%, and 59.96%, respectively. However, only in 2020, the company observed positive earnings per share growth of 80.7%. A similar trend was followed by the price earnings-to-growth ratio, with a positive value of 0.01 in 2020 and negative values of 0.07 in 2021, 0.75 in 2022, and 0.08 in 2023. Productivity analysisThe productivity trend of the company showed that it generated a total of 7,437GWh of electricity in 2018 with a 44% thermal efficiency.

SPORTS



National Tchoukball Championship in May

Abdul Rahman won the All Pakistan Table Tennis Championship held at Malam Jabba

TIMES REPORT

SWAT: Abdul Rahman Farooq emerged victorious in the All Pakistan Table Tennis Championship held at Malam Jabba, Swat. The championship saw participation from teams representing all four provinces of Pakistan. Hosted in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Swat Table Tennis Associations, the event showcased the talent and competitiveness of players from across the country.

In the final match, Abdul Rahman Farooq faced off against Ryan Ali, securing a 3-1 victory and claiming the winner's trophy. Throughout the championship, players displayed remarkable skill and determination, contributing to the overall excitement of the event.



The closing ceremony, graced by the presence of the Deputy Commissioner of Swat as the chief guest, was a fitting conclusion to the tournament. Medals and trophies were presented to the deserving players, recognizing their achievements and celebrating their success in the championship. Among the attendees were senior officials from the Provincial Table Tennis Association, including the senior vice president Kifayatullah, and coach Mian Absar Ali, further highlighting the importance and prestige of the event within the table tennis community.

CM aide directs expediting construction work on Arbab Niaz Stadium Peshawar

BY: M FAKHAR UL ISLAM

PESHAWAR: Adviser on Sports and Youth Affairs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Fakhir Jahan Tuesday directed that the construction project for the improvement of Arbab Niaz Stadium Peshawar should be accelerated on an emergency basis so that this important project can be completed this year.

He expressed these views while presiding over the review meeting regarding the construction work of the "Feasibility and Improvement of Arbab Niaz Stadium Peshawar" development project here on Tuesday.

In the meeting, Director General Sports Abdul Nasir and Mohammad, Chief Planning Officer



Hamid Naveed, Chief Mega Projects of Communications and Construction Department Ijaz Khan, Superintendent Engineer Quadratah Marwat, XEN Ijaz Bangash and other relevant officials attended the meeting. He said that this was in the province. There is an important project for the revival of world cricket, and we are trying to prepare it for international cricket and other league matches as soon as possible.

Shadab Khan named captain of Team of HBL PSL 9

BY IJAZ AHMAD

PESHAWAR: Shadab Khan of Islamabad United was appointed as the captain of the HBL PSL 9 Team of the tournament. The panel was led by Usman Wahla, Director - International Cricket, comprising independent members, Danny Morrison, Mark Butcher, Tariq Saeed and Urooj Mumtaz. During the selection process, the independent panel considered various aspects of T20 cricket, including consistency, impact on the team, overall performance, and best possible team combination. 25-year-old Shadab, led United to the third title in HBL PSL, was also named player of the tournament for his all-round performance, which included 305 runs and 14 wickets from 12 matches. Along with Shadab, two Islamabad United players - Imad Wasim and Naseem Shah also made it to the team of HBL PSL 9. Imad, played a vital role in United's winning campaign in HBL PSL



9, as his five for 23 in four overs and unbeaten 19 off 17 balls in Monday's final led his side to a two-wicket win over Multan Sultans at the jam-packed National Bank Stadium. The 21-year-old Naseem Shah, who returned from shoulder injury after six months, was another vital cog in United's success.

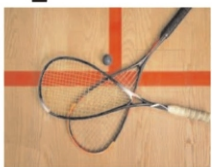
The right-arm pacer bagged 15 wickets at an economy rate of 7.56. Multan Sultans' who played their fourth HBL PSL final (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) on Monday night, had five players making it to the playing XI, which included three foreign players - Usman Khan (430 runs, 21000s, 2x50, strike-rate 164.12), Chris Jordan (six wickets, 8.42 eco.) and David Willey (15 wickets, 7.46 eco.). The two local players from the Sultans' side are leg-spinner Usama Mir, who topped the bowling charts with a record 24 wickets from 12 matches, with six for 40 being his best figures, and Iftikhar Ahmed, who scored 259 runs with a strike rate of 193.28. Multan Sultans' captain Mohammad Rizwan is named as 12th man of the side. The team also includes Karachi Kings emerging category player Muhammad Irfan Khan, who scored 171 runs at a strike rate of 140.16 and also bagged eight catches. Peshawar Zalmi's opening pair of Babar Azam and Saim Ayub also made it to the HBL PSL 9 Team.

Squash Open to be held in April

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Defending champion Nouran Gohar and World No.1 Ali Farag have been named as the top seeds for the Black Ball Squash Open 2024 after the draws for the PSA World Tour Gold event were released.

The event would take place from April 11 to 16 from the Black Ball Sporting Club in Cairo,



Egypt said a press release. Women's top seed Gohar would be looking to defend her title from 2023 and claim her first title of the season.

The World No.3 was sidelined for four months with a plantar fascia injury earlier in the season but bounced back strongly to reach the final of both the J.P Morgan Tournament of Champions and Windy City Open. She will open her tournament campaign against either Emilia Soini or Fayrouz Aboulkheir after a round one bye. USA's Olivia Weaver is the No.2 seed for the event. The American has produced some of the best squash of her career this season, winning two events on home soil as well as recorded a semi-final finish at the U.S Open in October.

The 28-year-old has never progressed past the semi-final stage at a Gold event and will be determined to achieve that milestone as she looks to break into the world's top five.

Karachi Kings' Irfan Niazi gets dual honors in PSL 9

TIMES REPORT

KARACHI: In a thrilling culmination to the HBL Pakistan Super League 9, Islamabad United clinched the title, but it was Karachi Kings' emerging talent Muhammad Irfan Khan Niazi who stole the spotlight in the post-match ceremony. Hailing from Mianwali, Niazi was named both the Fielder of the Tournament and the Emerging Player of the Tournament. Having debuted for Karachi Kings in the 2023 season, Niazi continued to make his mark in the 2024 edition as one of the retained players from the previous squad.

His outstanding performance throughout the season included scoring 171 runs in 8



innings at an impressive strike rate of 140.16. Notably, he played a pivotal role in securing a crucial victory against Lahore Qalandars with a match-winning knock in a must-win game for Kings, earning widespread acclaim. Additionally, he ranked fifth in the list of highest run-scorers for Karachi Kings in PSL 9. Irfan Niazi's fielding prowess was evident throughout the tournament, with the emerging player taking 8 catches in 9 matches, further solidifying his reputation as a dynamic asset on the field. His exceptional contributions have not only bolstered Karachi Kings' performance but have also underscored his potential as a rising star in Pakistani cricket. Karachi Kings congratulate Irfan Khan Niazi on his well-deserved accolades and look forward to witnessing his continued success in the future.

Islamabad United becomes champion of the ninth edition of PSL

SHAKEELUR REHMAN

LAHORE: Islamabad United became the champion of the ninth edition of Pakistan Super League. Multan Sultans failed this time like the last two finals. Once again an all-round performance by Imad Wasim. Shakeelur Rehman. In yet another sensational final of PSL9 Islamabad emerged victorious in the final of the event for the third time and became the first team in the history of PSL to lift the trophy three times. Lahore Qalandar won this trophy twice. Another interesting thing is that Multan Sultans failed in the final for the third time in a row. It should be remembered that this is the third consecutive defeat of Multan Sultans, who made it to the final for the fourth time. Multan Sultans were defeated by Lahore Qalandars in the last two editions while they were able to win the sixth edition of PSL in 2021. With the victory in the PSL final, the players of Islamabad waved Palestinian

flags and the ground in support of the Palestinians. Circled. As a whole, Sultans' bowling in the tournament has been better than all the franchises, not just United. The two best bowlers of the tournament are Muhammad Ali and Osama Mir. So, in the presence of such resources, how can an inferior captain like Bhalla Rizwan even think of giving up? Sultans not only showed excellent bowling but also fought for their lives in fielding. And Rizwan's captaincy was also brilliant and courageous. When in the last overs, Iftikhar Ahmed brought in the attack and revived the dying contest so much that Low could not extinguish it till the last ball. Muhammad Rizwan's role was so prominent that without him. It was not possible to complete the story. Whether he played a blistering innings to provide a platform for a tough collection, whether he pulled through a struggling innings in traditional fashion to hold an edge, his presence at the crease was indis-

pensable for 32* off 20 balls. Many more about him. Questions will be asked as to why he batted so low down the order, especially given that his best strike rate was Imad Wasim's five-wicket haul, the first in a PSL final. Islamabad United defeated Multan Sultans by two wickets on the last ball in the final of the tournament being played at the National Stadium, Karachi, Multan Sultans captain Muhammad Rizwan won the toss and decided to bat first. Usman Khan scored 57 runs on

behalf of Multan Sultans, Mohammad Rizwan scored 26 runs. Iftikhar Ahmed played an unbeaten offensive innings of 32 runs, he hit 3 sixes and 3 fours in 20 balls. Playing first, Multan Sultans scored 159 runs in the loss of 9 wickets in the allotted 20 overs. On behalf of Islamabad United, Imad Wasim got 5 wickets for 23 runs and Shadab Khan got 3 wickets. Islamabad United achieved the target of 160 runs given by Multan Sultan at the loss of 8 wickets on last ball, Colin Munro

scored 17 runs and was dismissed by Khushdil Shah. Was out, captain Shadab Khan was a victim of Iftikhar Ahmed after scoring 4 runs, Martin Gupthill was run out after scoring 50 runs, Azam Khan was a victim of Osama Mir after scoring 30 runs, Haider Ali was out after scoring 5 runs on Welle ball, Faheem Ashraf, was dismissed by Iftikhar Ahmed, he could score only one run, Naseem Shah scored 18 runs and was dismissed by Muhammad Ali while Imad Wasim scored 19 runs and Haneen Shah

remained not out on 1 runs. It should be remembered that Multan Sultans, who made it to the finals for the fourth time, were defeated by Lahore Qalandars twice in 2022 and 2023, while Islamabad United reached the finals twice in 2016 and 2018 and lost each time. Multan Sultans are the only team in PSL Season 9 who scored 569 runs. Bowler of the tournament went to Osama Mir. Fielder of the Tour was nominated for Irfan Khan Niazi, Saem Ayub got the Best All Rounder award, Azam Khan got the Wicketkeeper of the Tournament award, Emerging Player Award went to Irfan Khan Niazi, Best Umpire of the Tournament went to Asif Yaqoob and Peshawar Zalmi got the Spirit of Cricket award, Player of the Tournament award was given to Shadab Khan, HBL PSL runner-up money was given to Multan Sultan, Rs. There was a full crowd in Karachi. The players of Islamabad United were awarded with medals. Murad Ali Shah distributed the medals. Islamabad United received a prize money of fourteen crore rupees. PSL 9's Hanif Muhammad has become part of Babar Azam's cap. He scored 569 runs in 11 matches. The best innings was 111 runs. He scored five half-centuries and one century during this time. Muhammad Usman of Multan Sultans is in this list. He is second with 430 runs, including two centuries, His best innings was 106 runs. Muhammad Rizwan, Janhoo has scored 407 runs on the third number. Mohammad Rizwan has scored four half-centuries. On the fourth number is Dosan of Lahore Qalandar, who scored 364 runs thanks to one century and three half-centuries.



Trump says Jews who vote for Democrats 'hate Israel' and their religion



WORLD NEWS

UN chief warns against 'sequel to 'Oppenheimer''

UNITED NATIONS, UNITED STATES: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres invoked Oscar-winning film "Oppenheimer" on Monday as he warned that the world faced the highest risk of nuclear war in decades. At a Security Council session called by Japan, Guterres said that the biopic about the morally conflicted father of the atomic bomb "brought the harsh reality of nuclear war to vivid life for millions around the world." "Humanity cannot survive a sequel to "Oppenheimer," Guterres said. "We meet at a time when geopolitical tensions and mistrust have escalated the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin has made thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons as he warns the West against its support for Ukraine, which Moscow invaded more than two years ago. Without naming Putin, Guterres said, "Nuclear saber-rat-



UNITED NATIONS, UNITED STATES: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addresses a meeting of the United Nations Security Council on maintenance of international peace and security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, at U.N. headquarters. (AP)

To have peace, Europe must prepare for war, EU council president says

BRUSSELS: Europe must strengthen its defense capabilities and shift to a "war economy" mode in response to the threat posed by Russia, European Council President Charles Michel said on Tuesday.



In an op-ed published in European newspapers and the Euractiv website, Michel — who will chair a meeting of EU leaders on Thursday to discuss support for Ukraine — said Europe needed to take responsibility for its own security and not rely heavily on the support of countries such as the US.

"If we do not get the EU's response right and do not give Ukraine enough support to stop Russia, we are next. We must therefore be defense-ready and shift to a 'war economy' mode," Michel said. "If we want peace, we must prepare for war," he said. Michel said while Europe had made strides since Moscow's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine — including by increasing military manufacturing capacity by 50 per-

cent — far more was needed and, for decades, Europe had not invested enough in its security and defense. Michel urged EU countries to ensure Ukraine received what it needed on the battlefield — including by spending EU money on military equipment, and using windfall profits from Russia's immobilized assets to purchase arms for

Ukraine. He urged countries to facilitate investments in defense — including by considering changing the mandate of the EU lending arm, the European Investment Bank, to allow it to support Europe's defense industry. EU countries approved an agreement on Monday to increase the EU's support for Ukraine's armed forces by 5 billion euros (\$5.4 billion) — amid warnings that Kyiv's forces need more resources to hold the line against a larger Russian army as a \$60 billion US aid package for Ukraine is being held up by Congress. (Agencies)

North Korea fires ballistic missiles as Blinken visits Seoul

SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles on Monday in what analysts said was a calculated move to grab attention as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits South Korea for talks. Blinken is attending the third Summit for Democracy and met President Yoon Suk Yeol in Seoul early Monday. He is also meeting his South Korean counterpart on the sidelines of the event, for discussions now likely to be dominated by the allies' efforts to counter threats from the nuclear-armed North.

Washington and Seoul wrapped up one of their major annual joint military training exercises last week, prompting angry retorts and live-fire drills from Pyongyang, which condemns all such exercises as rehearsals for invasion.

Seoul's military said it had detected the launch of "multiple short-range ballistic missiles" early Monday, which flew around 300 kilometers (186 miles) before coming down into the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan. "We are closely sharing relevant information with the US and Japan and are maintaining utmost readiness," the Joint Chiefs of Staff added. (Agencies)

EU, Philippines resume stalled trade negotiations

BRUSSELS: The European Union and the Philippines said on Monday they would resume negotiations on a free trade agreement as the EU seeks to tap into Asia's faster economic growth and gain access to critical raw materials. Free trade negotiations stalled in 2017 over EU concerns about the human rights record of then Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte, who was succeeded in June 2022 by Ferdinand Marcos Jr. EU trade chief Valdis Dombrovskis said the bloc welcomed the "positive change of



direction" taken by the Philippines' new administration, while encouraging further progress on human and labor rights. The EU has targeted agreements with the Philippines' fourth largest trade partner. Trade in goods was worth 18.4 billion euros (\$20 billion) in 2022 and 4.7 billion euros (\$5.1 billion) in 2021. A trade deal could increase trade by 6 billion euros, Dombrovskis said. The EU has targeted agreements with southeast Asian countries and has accords with Singapore and Vietnam and is in negotiations with Indonesia and Thailand. (Agencies)

Foreign students offering prayers attacked in India during Ramadan

NEW DELHI: Indian police said on Monday that they had arrested five people over an assault on international students who were offering prayers during Ramadan at a university hostel in Gujarat.



Officials say that a heated argument over the location of the prayers had led to the physical assault in Gujarat University in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad on Saturday. "Five accused have been arrested in this case. They were also students and they have been arrested, and further

investigation is going on," Tarun Duggal, deputy commissioner of police in Ahmedabad. "All four injured have been discharged from the hospital, marks a period of religious reflection, family get-togethers and giving for Muslims across the world. (Agencies)



North Korea typically stages missile launches 'as a tit-for-tat' after US-South Korea joint military drills. (AFP)

Muslims in London encouraged to reduce food waste and meat consumption during Ramadan

LONDON: British Muslims attending an ethical iftar event in East London on Saturday were encouraged to reduce food waste, their consumption of meat, and use of plastic during Ramadan. During the holy month, families and friends often gather in the evenings to break the daily fast together, or send gifts of food as they share traditional dishes and delicacies.



The downside of this culture of communal and shared eating included increased use of single-use plastic items to reduce the amount of clean-up, and high amounts of wastage as more food is often cooked than is eaten. In particular, the consumption of meat, a staple of many traditional meals, tends to increase at this time of year. To help raise awareness of how such excesses contribute to the environmental crisis and are contrary to the Islamic tradition of caring for the Earth, the community-focused arts center Poplar Union hosted an evening of prayer, food and conversation in partnership with several Muslim organizations in London that promote sustainability and environmental issues, including: Green Deen Tribe, which highlights the relationship between Islamic teachings and environmentalism, climate-action group Sustainably Muslim. More than 60 par-

ticipants enjoyed a going to be very nutritious, three-course vegetarian meal of vegetable soup, bread, aromatic rice with a choice of egg or chickpea curry, salads, and traditional desserts from various cultures. Sofia Ali, a volunteer with Green Deen Tribe who helps manage the organization's projects, said that meat eaters who attend ethical iftars are often surprised by how satisfying a vegetarian meal can be. "When people think about healthy food, they don't necessarily think it's

going to be very nutritious, three-course vegetarian meal of vegetable soup, bread, aromatic rice with a choice of egg or chickpea curry, salads, and traditional desserts from various cultures. Sofia Ali, a volunteer with Green Deen Tribe who helps manage the organization's projects, said that meat eaters who attend ethical iftars are often surprised by how satisfying a vegetarian meal can be. "When people think about healthy food, they don't necessarily think it's

462 social media accounts suspended in Pakistan

TIMES REPORT ISLAMABAD

The anti-extremism unit of the Islamabad Police on Tuesday suspended 462 accounts found involved in spreading religious and ethnic hatred on social media platforms in Pakistan.

According to the details, the capital police identified a total of 1522 accounts found involved in spreading negative activities after which the Federal Investigation Agency took action and suspended 462 accounts while, the remaining 1060 accounts will also be closed soon.

Upon identifying 1522 accounts, Islamabad Police spokesperson disclosed that a letter was penned to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) requesting the closure of said accounts.

The spokesperson disclosed that out of the 462 closed accounts, 65 were implicated in spreading religious hatred, 47 were found propagating anti-national sentiments, and 350 were engaged in disseminating terrorist content.

However, efforts are underway to promptly close the remaining 1060 accounts as well.

Earlier to this development, the Minister for Information and Public Relations Attaullah Tarar stated that the government will not tolerate the anti-state use of social media.

Addressing a news conference in Lahore today, he said that people should use social media responsibly as the anti-state use of social media will not be tolerated.

He maintained that government understands the economic challenges faced by the country and that Prime Minister holds meetings on daily basis to overcome these challenges.

Tarar said that the present government, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's dynamic leadership, is working tirelessly for Pakistan's progress.

Expressing sorrow and grief over loss of precious lives in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan, the Information Minister said armed forces have presented unprecedented sacrifices during war against terrorism and continue to do so.

Punjab to adopt Britain's educational experiences: Education Minister

TIMES REPORT LAHORE

Education Minister of Punjab Rana Sikandar Hayat and British High Commissioner Clara Strandhøj discussed the educational landscape of Punjab and potential collaborations between Britain and Punjab.

In the meeting, the Minister highlighted the educational challenges faced by Punjab and expressed interest in initiating various educational projects in the province with British cooperation.

The Minister emphasised the importance of girls' education and shared potential measures to enhance it.

He expressed his intention to implement reforms the educational manifesto in Punjab, drawing from Britain's educational experiences.

Hayat is committed to achieving a 100% literacy rate in Punjab and eradicating the educational deprivations of the past 76 years. He pledged to take responsibility for the education of more than a million out-of-school children.



He also promised that unlike the previous government, his administration will not give false hopes but will restore the public's trust.

The Minister assured that the benefits of the budget will reach every out-of-school child. With Britain's cooperation, Punjab will plan to tackle teacher training, school upgrades, and other challenges.

The Minister also announced the introduction of technical education and modern IT and technology courses for students. He affirmed that they are bringing both short-term and long-term education reforms.

Shares at PSX gain over 600 points as inflation indicators improve

TIMES REPORT KARACHI

Bulls maintained their position at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday as shares gained over 600 points in intraday trade.

The KSE-100 index gained 680.68 points, or 1.05 per cent, to stand at 65,571.18 points at 12:55pm from the previous close of 64,890.50.

Finally, the index closed at 65,502.59, up by 612.09 points, from the previous close.

Faran Rizvi, head of equity sales at JS Global, said that the "current market conditions indicate a consolidation phase within the 63,500 to 66,000 range."

"Despite short-term fluctuations, our overall market outlook remains bullish, with an optimistic view of favourable trends in the coming days," Rizvi said, adding that "recent resolution of political uncertainty and promising inflation numbers serve as positive indicators for an economic upswing."

He recommended that investors "consider allocating their portfolios toward oil and gas sectors, as well as banking stocks".

Yousaf M. Farooq, director of research at Chase Securities, said, "The central bank has adopted a more conservative stance by maintaining rates amidst increasing inflation expectations. Additionally, the bank has emphasised that adjustments in administrated energy prices could further elevate inflation."

This week, it is worth noting that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)'s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained the interest rate at 22pc, adding that although inflation had declined noticeably, it still remained "high and its outlook is susceptible to risks amidst elevated inflation expectations".

"These circumstances warrant a cautious approach and continuity of the current monetary stance to bring inflation down to the target range of 5-7pc by September 2025," the central bank statement said.

Moreover, Farooq observed that "risks on the political front had relatively diminished" with the new team in the finance ministry appearing to be determined to fulfil the current International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme obligations while also pursuing a longer-term one.

Gaza's catastrophic food shortage means mass death is imminent, monitor says

BY: REUTERS GAZA

Extreme food shortages in parts of the Gaza Strip have already exceeded famine levels, and mass death is now imminent without an immediate ceasefire and surge of food to areas cut off by fighting, the global hunger monitor said on Monday.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), whose assessments are relied on by U.N. agencies, said 70% of people in parts of northern Gaza were suffering the most severe level of food shortage, more than triple the 20% threshold to be considered famine.

The IPC said it did not have enough data on death rates, but estimated residents would be dying at famine scale imminently, defined as two people out of every 10,000 dying daily from starvation or from malnutrition and disease.

Gaza's health ministry has said 27 children and three adults have died so far from malnutrition.

"The actions needed to prevent famine require an immediate political decision for a ceasefire together with a significant and immediate increase in humanitarian and commercial access to the entire population of Gaza," it said.

In all, 1.1 million Gazans, around half the population, were experiencing "catastrophic" shortages of food, with around 300,000 in the areas now facing the prospect of famine-scale death rates.

The prospect of a man-made famine in Gaza has brought the strongest criticism of Israel from Western allies since it launched its war against Hamas militants following their deadly attack on Israeli territory on Oct. 7.

"In Gaza we are no longer on the brink of famine. We are in a state of famine... Starvation is used as a weapon of war. Israel is provoking famine," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said at a Brussels conference on aid for Gaza.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz responded that Borrell should "stop attacking Israel and recognise our right to self-defence against Hamas' crimes".

Israel allowed "extensive humanitarian aid into Gaza by land, air, and sea for anyone willing to help", Katz said on X, and aid was "violently disturbed" by Hamas militants with "collaboration" by the U.N.'s aid agency UNRWA.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the IPC report an "appalling indictment" and said Israel must allow complete and unfettered access to all parts of Gaza.

Britain's foreign minister David Cameron said he would carefully review the report: "It's clear the status quo is unsustainable. We need urgent action now to avoid a famine."

Israel, which initially allowed aid into Gaza through only two checkpoints on the enclave's southern edge, says it is opening more routes by land, as well as allowing sea shipments and air drops. The first boat carrying aid arrived last week.

Aid agencies say they still cannot get enough supplies through or distribute them safely, especially in the north.

In the ruins of Gaza City, the main settlement in the north of the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces launched a major assault on Al Shifa hospital overnight. Once the Gaza Strip's biggest hospital, it is now one of the only medical facilities still even partially functioning in the north of the territory.

Israel said it had killed more than 20 Hamas fighters, including a senior Hamas commander, Fayeq al-Mabhouh, in the hospital. Hamas said he was a Palestinian police official tasked with overseeing the protection of aid deliveries in Gaza.



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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar convened and chaired a meeting of Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue at Law Ministry.

Pakistan, Bangladesh and India bottom in air quality rankings in 2023, data shows

BY: REUTERS SINGAPORE

Pakistan remained one of the world's three most smoggy countries in 2023, as Bangladesh and India replaced Chad and Iran, with particulate matter about 15 times the level recommended by the World Health Organization, data published on Tuesday showed.

Average concentrations of PM2.5 - small airborne particles that damage the lungs - reached 79.9 micrograms per cubic metre in Bangladesh in 2023, and 73.7 micrograms in Pakistan. The WHO recommends no more than 5 micrograms.

"Because of the climate conditions and the geography (in South Asia), you get this streak of PM2.5 concentrations that just skyrocket because the pollution has nowhere to go," said Christi Chester Schroeder, air quality science manager at IQAir, a Swiss air monitoring organisation.

"On top of that are factors such as agricultural practices, industry and population density," she added.

"Unfortunately, it really does look like it will get worse before it gets better." In 2022, Bangladesh was ranked as having the fifth-worst air quality, and India was eighth. About 20% of premature deaths in Bangladesh are attributed to air pollution, and related healthcare costs amount to 4%-5% of the country's GDP, said Md Firoz Khan, an air pollution expert at Dhaka's North South University. Indian pollution also increased last year, with PM2.5 levels about 11 times higher than the WHO standard. India's New Delhi was the worst-performing city, at 92.7 micrograms.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool calls for tangible steps to develop technology

BY: APP ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday emphasized transitioning from technology adopter to generator.

He stressed the need to take concrete steps to address the ministry's challenges and enhance its functionality.

During the discussions with the heads of different wings of the ministry, Dr. Maqbool Siddiqui stressed cooperation to streamline ministry functions and tackle existing issues. The Pakistan Halal Authority's role in promoting 'Halal' trade and monitoring imports was highlighted in the meeting.

It was briefed that the Council for Works and Housing Research, in Karachi, requires restructuring for improved efficiency, as conveyed to the minister.

Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Afghanistan in response to attack in KP, admits US

BY: NEWS DESK WASHINGTON

The United States expressed "regret" at the loss of life at a military post inside Pakistan and urged the Taliban "to ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil."

State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said during a media briefing here on Monday that the United States wanted that "Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists."

Replying to a question he said the US understands that "Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Afghanistan in response to the attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday."

Spokesperson Patel added: "We deeply regret the loss of life and injustices sustained during the attack in Pakistan, and the loss of civilian lives during the strike in Afghanistan."

Afghanistan. We urge the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil, and we urge Pakistan to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counterterrorism efforts. And we urge both sides to address any differences. We remain committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States or our partners and allies."

He, however, insisted that "every step possible is taken" during operations that "it's the perpetrators that are being held to account and not the civilians."

Responding to a question regarding the US assistance to Pakistan in counterterrorism operations and intelligence sharing, he we continue to engage with our Pakistani partners on regular communication. And they discussed a number of issues as well."