

# Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 70 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Saturday March 23, 2024, Ramzan 12, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

## SC nullifies notification of dismissal from service in respect of former judge IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has declared null and void the notification regarding sacking of former judge Islamabad High Court (IHC) Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui.

A five-member larger bench comprising Justice Aminuddin, Justice Jamal Mandokhel, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Irfan Saadat headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa issued the reserved judgment.

The SC said in its decision appeals against the dismissal of Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui are accepted.

Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui should be given all the privileges of a retired judge.

Due to delay in fixation of case Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui has completed his 62 years age. He cannot be reinstated due to completion of his age. The court said in its decision Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui will be considered retired judge from high court.

SC had reserved judgment of the appeal against

the dismissal of Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui on January 23. During the hearing of the case CJP Qazi Faez Isa had remarked we will have to proceed cautiously so that the constitutional balance among the institutions is not disturbed.

During the hearing of the petition filed by Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui on December 15, 2023, SC had issued notices to former DG ISI Lt Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed, Brig (Retd) Irfan Ramay, former chief justice IHC Anwar Kasi and former registrar SC Arbab Arif.

Former DG ISI Lt Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed had filed reply in this case in SC on January 22. Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui was removed from the judicial office on the recommendations of the Supreme Judicial Council under Article 209 of the Constitution for misbehavior as a judge for a speech at the District Bar Association Rawalpindi on 21st July 2018.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer of Barrick Gold, Mark Bristow along with a delegation calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Reko Diq project will prove to be game changer: PM

Shehbaz encourages Barrick Gold to invest in other projects too; Plans to be chalked out for communication infrastructure; Reko Diq project feasibility to be completed this year; Local people are being given priority in jobs, Premier Shehbaz told

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Barrick Gold Company led by Chief Executive Officer Mark Bristow was called Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday and informed the delegation that the feasibility of the Reko Diq project in Balochistan would be completed by end of current year. The prime minister said that Reko Diq project would prove to be a game changer for the development of Balochistan and the region.

"This project will usher in a new era of development of the province and prosperity of the people," he added.

He said planning would be made regarding communication infrastructure, especially railway lines, to take full advantage of minerals in Balochistan.

The prime minister asked Barrick Gold to also invest in other mineral projects in the province.

He also proposed that the government and the Barrick Gold could collaborate to establish a technical university in Chagai district of the province.

The government is taking all possible measures to facilitate investors especially in the fields of road and communication systems, he remarked.

Briefing on the progress of Reko Diq project, the Barrick Gold delegation informed the meeting that the Reko Diq project feasibility would be completed by end of current year.

The prime minister was informed that preference was being given to local and Balochistan domiciled persons to work on Reko Diq project.

Barrick Gold said that it had set up three schools near Reko Diq under Corporate Social Responsibility while so far the company had also imparted technical training to 100 people including women.

Federal Minister for Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Muhammad Jehanzeb and relevant senior government officials participated in the meeting.

## Pakistan, China to form WG on 5 new economic corridors under CPEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and China on Friday agreed to establish a Working Group (WG) on five new economic corridors under the second phase of CPEC, aligning with the 5Es framework already prepared by the Planning Ministry.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between Federal Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, which lasted for more than an hour here at the Planning Ministry, a news release said.

The Chinese envoy Jiang Zaidong congratulated Ahsan Iqbal on assuming the role of Planning Minister for the fourth time.

During the meeting, both sides "agreed to expedite phase 2 of the CPEC, while deciding to establish a working group on five new economic corridors, including the Corridor of Job Creation, Corridor of Innovation, Corridor of Green Energy, and Inclusive Regional

Development."

Both the Planning Ministry and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China would prepare separate concept papers on the new economic corridors, which would provide a clear road map for each sector in the future. "These concept papers will be consolidated before presentation at the upcoming Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting expected in 2024," stated the Planning Ministry.

The Planning Ministry has already initiated the implementation of the 5Es framework, which includes Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment. "This framework will be aligned with the five new economic corridors to advance Pakistan's prosperity in each sector under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," emphasized the Minister highlighting the importance of accelerating Pakistan's export capabilities through enterprise development and job creation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zaidong calls on Planning Minister Prof Ahsan Iqbal in Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to discuss accelerated growth of CPEC projects.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with the UAE Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Almazrouel Suhail on the margins of the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels.

## Maryam approves establishment of Punjab Economic Corridor Development Authority

Directs to take measures for promotion of sports in province

Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved establishment of Punjab Economic Corridor Development Authority.

Speaking at the meeting in Lahore on Friday, she directed to complete the mapping of industrial areas as per international standards and requirement.

The meeting was briefed about small, medium and large industries at division level in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad,

Gujrat, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi.

Meanwhile Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to take measures for promotion of sports in the province and hiring services of national and foreign coaches for this purpose.

Chairing a meeting regarding the Sports Department in Lahore on Friday, she directed to restore the sports infrastructure in the province for keeping the young generation busy in positive and healthy activities.

She also directed to launch a Talent Hunt Program for promotion of basketball.

She said that all necessary resources will be provided for the progress of sports.

During the meeting, it was decided to set up a Sports Advisory Council in which former players and students will be the members.

The meeting also agreed to build multipurpose sports grounds in 91 constituencies of the province.

The meeting approved restructuring of the Punjab Sports Board.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif chairs an introductory meeting on arrival in Ministry of Defence Production.

## Govt keen to provide support to progress of defence production industry: Asif

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif says the government is keen to provide maximum support to progress of defence production industry of the country. He was speaking during his visit to the Ministry in Rawalpindi on Friday.

On arrival, the Minister was received by Secretary Defence Production Lieutenant General @ Muhammad Chiragh Haider and was introduced to the key appointment

holders of the Ministry, a news release said. The Minister was given an introductory briefing regarding the Ministry's executive departments and organizational structure.

The briefing was attended by senior officers of the Ministry of Defence Production. The Defence Production Minister appreciated the performance and contribution of the defence industrial sector and its due role in modernizing the defence capabilities of Pakistan.

## PM, SFD delegation discuss dev. projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD, during its visit to Pakistan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Friday and discussed its ongoing projects in Pakistan.

The Prime Minister welcomed the delegation and appreciated the long-standing friendship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and the efforts of SFD for providing financing to Pakistan in the fields of Health, Energy, Infrastructure and Education as well the recent floods.

The CEO, SFD thanked the Prime Minister and Government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as the conferment of the National Civil Award, Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam.

## Nation to celebrate Pakistan Day today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The whole nation celebrates Pakistan Day on Saturday with renewed pledge to work hard for the progress and stability of the country.

The day marks adoption of historic Lahore Resolution this day in 1940 that provided a framework for realization of the goal of a separate homeland for Muslims of South Asia.

The Day will dawn with 31-gun salute in the federal capital and 21-gun salute in provincial capitals.

## Armed Forces, CJCS, Services Chiefs congratulate nation on Pakistan Day

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) and Services Chiefs, congratulate the nation on 84th anniversary of "Pakistan Day." This promising day is reminiscent of great efforts of the Muslims of sub-continent when they determined our destiny in line with vision of our great leaders for a separate homeland for Muslims.

This historic day also reminds us of the greatest sacrifices and contributions of our forefathers which they made in the struggle for creation of Pakistan.

Today, plight of Muslims in India in general and JIOJK in particular, who are facing worst form of brutalities at the hands of the fascist regime, remind us of the importance and value of the Independence where we cherish and respect our freedom every day. Alhumdillillah.

On this day, Armed Forces of Pakistan renew their resolve to defend the motherland and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all times and at any cost; and uphold the national flag INSHA'ALLAH.

Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad, Pakistan Paidabad.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz chairing a meeting and approved establishment of Punjab Economic Corridor Development Authority

## Court orders to present PTI founder, Qureshi on April 20

ISLAMABAD (Online): Local court of Islamabad has ordered to present PTI founder and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the court on April 20.

Civil Judge Murid Abbas heard Azadi March vandalism case Friday which was registered against PTI founder, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and others in police station Karachi company.

## Two soldiers embrace martyrdom in DI Khan suicide attack

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two soldiers of Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom on Friday after a vehicle borne suicide bomber exploded himself on a security forces' convoy in Dera Ismail Khan District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the two brave sons of soil were identified as Naib Subedar Yasir Shakeel (Age: 38 years, resident of District Kohat) and Sepoy Tahir Naveed (Age: 34 years, resident of District Kohat) who embraced martyrdom.

"Security forces of Pakistan remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

## Grand Mufti of Bosnia prays for Palestine at Faisal Masjid

ISLAMABAD (APP): The esteemed Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Husein ef Kavazovic offered Friday prayer at the Faisal Masjid.



At the Faisal Masjid, the Grand Mufti was received by Incharge Protocol and Public Relations of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) Nasir Farid who extended a warm welcome to him.

He also conveyed heartfelt congratulations by the President IIUI, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi for his forthcoming receipt of the Sitare e Quaid e Azam Award on March 23rd, conferred by the President of Pakistan. Dr. Husein ef Kavazovic thanked IIUI President for the warm wishes and felicitations.

The Friday prayer at Faisal Masjid was also attended by the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Emin Cohodarevic, officials of International Islamic University, Diplomats of various Muslim countries, prominent religious and political figures, and thousands of faithful from twin cities.

## IMF demands 18% GST on petrol

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has demanded Pakistan to implement 18 percent General Sales Tax (GST) on Petrol.

As per details, the Monetary Fund has asked Pakistan to end sales tax relaxation on all items including petrol.

The newly elected government of Pakistan should

also implement sales tax on petroleum products along with a Rs 60 levy to increase the tax income. Earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommended the government of Pakistan implement an 18 percent General Sales Tax (GST) on food, medicine, petroleum products, and stationery.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Reactivating Nacta**

Confronted with a complex wave of terrorist violence, the state has little choice but to 'restructure' the National Counter Terrorism Authority, as the interior minister stated on Wednesday. Mohsin Naqvi was attending a meeting at the Nacta headquarters on the day Baloch separatists stormed the Gwadar Port Authority Complex, while only a few days earlier, militants believed to be associated with the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group had staged a deadly attack, martyring security personnel in North Waziristan.

The current terrorist threat is varied both ideologically and geographically, and over the last few years, particularly after the Afghan Taliban's capture of Kabul in 2021, militants have been further emboldened and have staged a large number of attacks in Pakistan.

Formed in 2009 in the midst of an earlier terrorist insurgency, Nacta — though it is supposed to be the state's primary counterterrorism organ — has been largely sidelined by the rulers after initial successes against militancy. Though envisioned as a 'one-window operation' to corral national CT efforts, the agency has not been empowered with the tools necessary to deliver on its mandated goals. Instead, the CT effort has been dominated by the military and its intelligence apparatus. While the military undoubtedly has a central role to play in rooting out terrorism, the militarised CT approach has its limits, particularly in urban areas, where civilian law-enforcement bodies, and related long-term CT strategies, are required to complement kinetic efforts. It is also essential that while Nacta provides the operational framework, the ideological element of the CT effort is guided by the National Action Plan. NAP, formulated after the 2014 APS massacre, was updated in 2021; the interior minister also reiterated the state's resolve to implement the plan "at any cost".

NAP specifically mentions the reconciliation process in Balochistan, as well as reforms in KP's merged districts, in its latest iteration. These ideas must not remain on paper, and need to be implemented with full vigour if the state is to uproot militancy permanently. In both instances — Baloch separatism as well as religiously inspired militancy in KP — poverty, deprivation and the state's apparent disinterest in the welfare of the populations of these affected areas, have contributed to swelling the militants' ranks. Therefore, to address the considerable CT challenges, Nacta must be fully empowered to coordinate the state's fight against terrorism. Moreover, civilian LEAs, particularly the provincial counterterrorism departments, should be provided with funds, equipment and training to pre-empt terrorist violence and break militant networks. Along with kinetic measures, NAP should be implemented in letter and spirit. In particular, sectarian and extremist actors that remain active in society must be put out of business. These malignant forces provide the ideological background that produces the violent foot soldiers powering terrorist insurgencies.

**Fifty is the new 40**

Mohsin Fareed

Historically, the term 'generation' is used to explain relationships amongst family members — grandparents, parents and children. However, the word now alludes more to (six) social generations: the Silents (1925-1945), Boomers (1946-1964), Gen X (1965-1979), Millennials (1980-1994), Gen Z (1995-2012), and Gen Alpha (born after 2013). The era in which one is born sometimes changes one's deportment and personal attributes more than the family that brings him up.

The study of generations is a useful tool to understand history as well as look at the future. Historic perspectives associate generations with events in history; like the Vietnam War for Boomers; fears of nuclear war with Russia for Gen X; 9/11 for Millennials; and the Covid-19 pandemic for Gen Z. The problem with this approach is that it does not account for cultural changes encountered during the intervening years. Expressing one's views on politics by attending a protest or writing a letter to the editor in the past is now accomplished by the inscription of a few words on a smartphone. As opposed to major events like wars and pandemics that revolve in circles, these cultural changes are linear, moving year after year in the same direction. So, what drives this cultural change? The answer is technology.

In today's world, the way we think, live, communicate, and interact has been completely revolutionised by technology. As expressed by Prof Jean Twenge, this technological model of generations is a new generational theory for the modern world. Technology has shattered the spokes of the old generational cycle with everlasting impact on the world today by influencing our societal norms. According to this model, technology has made individualism possible. Mere existence was a challenge up until the 20th century, with almost no time for thinking about oneself in the absence of clean drinking water, refrigeration, automobiles, central heating and washing machines. It was a collective integral living effort by societies. In comparison, as technology has relieved us of the chores of life, we have more time to think of our aspirations.

In addition to the direct linear impact of technology, generational differences are better understood by two intertwined factors that define the 21st-century generation: individualism and a slower life ambit. Whereas the former focuses on the self, the latter pertains to longevity. Individualism has different implications in different world cultures. Whereas the individualistic culture of the US considers personal space and freedom and equality as important factors, inclusive cultures such as South Korea emphasise group consensus and abiding by the rules. Although every industrialised nation cannot be individualistic, every individualistic country is an industrialised nation. Individualism also promotes equality based on sex, race, ethnicity, and transgender status. Recently, equality has been one of the most important forces driving cultural generational change evident in the Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter, #Me Too and transgender rights awareness.

Another cultural shift shaped by technology is the impact it has on society by making the average lifetime longer. Infant mortality has dropped from one in six in the late 1800s to one in 200 in 2020, resulting in an overall slower life course, as shown by a recent study utilising eight aging biomarkers where 40-59 years old Americans were two to three years and those from 60-79 years about four years younger biologically than the same age group in 1988-94. Today, fewer children are doing things on their own, teens are becoming less independent, young adults are postponing adult milestones, middle-aged people are younger, with 50 being the new 40 and people remaining healthier past retirement. Modern healthcare, birth control, labour-saving devices and a knowledge-based economy requiring more years of formal education are among the factors causing sluggish life curves. Propitiously, we live in the era of Big Data that can compare generations of the past with those of the present and get a glimpse of the future. Individuality in the current generation means choices based on personal preferences alone, whereas societies are interconnected and dependent on personal interactions. Since the surging popularity of social media, the lives of people of all ages have been affected, with the largest effects observed in younger people.

As a result, we see that their social and communication skill sets is different from those of older people; they prefer to stay indoors and do work from home. The technologically-advanced data-driven generation of today might create interesting political, workplace and domestic dimensions in future societies. As generations grow, so does the world. -- Courtesy Dawn

**The true hero**

Zubeida Mustafa

Pakistan enjoys the dubious distinction of being the fifth most populous state in the world. But unlike the four countries that precede it in population size, Pakistan has been unable to manage its demographic growth and economy to its advantage. The shocking revelation made by the census last year was that Pakistan's population had grown faster in the last five years. The annual growth rate was 2.55 per cent. It had been 2.4 pc in the 2017 census.

Other indicators are no better. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-2018 puts the total fertility rate at 3.6pc and the contraceptive prevalence rate at an appallingly low 34pc (which includes more than 10pc users of highly unreliable customary methods). The unmet need is 17pc. This data discredits the government's performance, and testifies to the disinterest of our rulers in improving the quality of life of the people.

There are many factors that account for the rapid rise in numbers. The most important is officialdom's reluctance to bring the population issue into the public discourse. There is no open debate on it. Along with this silence is the unwillingness of opinion-makers to take action against patriarchal structures and practices in our society. As a result, the status of women remains low. The UN has been convening international conferences periodically on population development. The Cairo conference of 1994 was a landmark one as it adopted the Programme of Action and for the first time there was a paradigm shift from controlling population as an economic compulsion to the human rights dimension

of individual men and women. A Shirkatgah report describes the emphasis on education, especially for girls; gender equity; infant, child and maternal mortality reduction; the provision of universal access to reproductive health services, and the inclusion of family planning and sexual health in the programme to empower women and girls. This is one of the most reliable pathways to the improved well-being of all.

All this has been beyond Pakistan. In the pre-Zia 1970s, the population programme had made a reasonably good start. Population centres were scattered all over the country, and motivators and counsellors played an effective role in getting people to become acceptors. The population growth rate fell to 1.9pc. Then came a dark age for women and the progress achieved was reversed. Now I see light at the end of the population tunnel.

I often hear from people working in this sector that they meet women who confide in them that they do not want many children but their partners do not agree. So some seek to space their children on the quiet. But they are unsure if that is a wise thing to do given their men's demand for large families. Since women have traditionally been the focus of birth control strategies and male motivators have never been the forte of any population programme in Pakistan, this is creating an unrecognised dilemma.

Now we have an answer offered by a remarkable Lady Health Worker in Khera Dero. She is Mashkoora, a widow aged 43 and the mother of seven. Mashkoora has endeared herself to her clients. Called 'Maasi' by the women she has emerged as their sav-

our. Mashkoora was hired by the Ali Hasan Mangi Memorial Trust (AHMMT) as a motivator and counsellor to persuade women to space their children and have themselves sterilised if they already had a large family. Her achievement? In a span of two years, she has personally arranged for the tubal ligation of 144 women, made numerous couples acceptors and created a demand for family planning advice.

Mashkoora's real feat is her ability to talk to men and persuade them to be-co-me acceptors. I asked her how she manages this in our patriarchal society. She tells me she has no qualms about talking to men on the issue. She is persuasive and explains to the men the ill effects of frequent pregnancies on a woman's health, and worse still, the neglect children suffer from when there are too many of them. She says she reminds them of how it affects them adversely. Mashkoora may be illiterate but she is worldly-wise. She has educated her children and knows what would appeal to a man. For instance, she tells me that she introduces herself as Mashkoora from AHMMT. That is half the work done as all the people from the 44 villages she visits are beneficiaries of one or the other of the Trust's projects — house-building, toilets, solar panels, school, healthcare, micro-loans, etc. A bond of mutual trust already exists that Mashkoora uses to her advantage.

Without her even knowing it, Mashkoora is what the paradigm shift, that was witnessed at the UN International Conference on Population and Development, suggests: treat family planning as a matter of human rights rather than economic compulsion. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Pakistan eyes \$300 mln by selling Panda Bonds to Chinese investors**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb said Friday that he was keen to tap Chinese investors by selling as much as \$300 million in Panda bonds for the first time ever this year.

In an interview with Bloomberg, the minister said, selling Yuan-denominated debt would allow Pakistan to diversify its funding sources and reach investors in a new market.

"We should have looked at quite frankly some time back," he said. China has the "second-largest and

deepest bond market in the world" and it is the "right thing to do for the country" to tap the market, given Pakistan has already sold dollar and eurobonds, he said.

Aurangzeb said that initial Panda bond sale would be about \$250 million to \$300 million, which would be followed by further issuances.

The finance minister said that government's cash balances are strong enough and it's able to pay its debts on time.

The payments are unlikely to put pressure on the currency, and he expects the rupee to remain stable, he said.

"I don't really see a huge pressure on the rupee at this point in time," he said.

"As we go forward, I think it's going to remain range bound around these levels." The "wildcard" is oil prices, he added, which remain uncertain given the Red Sea attacks.

Pakistan's rupee is up 1.3% this year, according to local pricing compiled by Bloomberg, among the best-performing currencies in Asia.

According to Bloomberg report, Aurangzeb's most pressing challenge is negotiating new loans with the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) to help bolster the country's reserves right after the current bailout program ends in April.

Bloomberg quoted IMF as having said earlier this week that Pakistan has expressed interest in a new medium-term program to improve its fiscal and external weaknesses and strengthen its economic recovery.

According to report, Aurangzeb said Pakistan will seek a new loan program from the IMF of at least three years. Further details will be discussed after the Washington-based lender's annual spring meetings, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding reforms in Pakistan's IT sector.



Dr. Walid Abdulwahab, Director IsDB Regional Hub Turkey and Dr. Kazim niaz Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs signing the Agreement on 22nd March 2024 in Islamabad.

**CEO Jazz advocates for policy reforms to ensure industry viability**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer of Jazz and Chairman of the Telecom Operators Association of Pakistan (ToAP) Amir Ibrahim on Friday held a significant meeting with the Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

During the discussion, Amir presented a comprehensive overview

of the telecom sector's vital contributions to bolstering Pakistan's digital infrastructure.

Highlighting a substantial investment of \$5.7 billion over the past five years, the sector has significantly contributed Rs. 1.27 trillion to the national exchequer, while fuelling broadband penetration from 32% in 2019 to 54.9% in 2024.

**RCCI urges youth to lead "Plant for Pak" drive**

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged the youth to lead "Plant for Pakistan" under vision Green Punjab Initiative 2024-27. RCCI President and Chairman RWMC, Saqib Rafiq while addressing the ceremony at a plantation and clean-up campaign, urged the younger generation to plant more saplings.

**Minister stresses need for in-farm water management sector**

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Agriculture Muhammad Sajjad here Friday highlighted the importance of in-farm water management sector in the development of agriculture. He said that the role of water management in the orderly arrangement of water for agricultural purposes in the province is unquestionable. The Minister expressed these

views on the occasion of visiting the Directorate General of Farm Water Management in Peshawar to take a briefing on infarm Water Management.

The sector should adopt better planning now in view of the concerns and need for future water scarcity due to global climate change. In view of the concerns and need of water shortage in the future, adopt better planning than now.

expressed high hopes for the transformation of the energy sector. The minister appreciated Ambassador Blome for always extending his support and reaffirmed that together, both countries can achieve shared energy goals.

Ways and means to promote a sustainable carbon-friendly footprint, renewables, and green hydrogen were also discussed, said a news release.

**PM seeks comprehensive strategy for increase in IT exports**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday sought a comprehensive strategy for increase in information technology exports of the country on priority basis.

He was chairing a meeting on progress of the information technology sector. Prominent information technology experts attended the meeting and gave their proposals.

The PM said information technology had a prominent role in the

economy. The capacity of the information technology sector to boost the country's economy would be utilized, he added.

He said every sector of the economy would be modernized with the use of technology.

Youth would be provided facilities of international level to equip them with knowledge and skills of the present age in the sector of information technology, he added.

The services of the information technology

experts would be hired for advancement of the IT sector, he remarked.

The meeting was informed that a strategy was being prepared for reforms in the information technology sector and digitisation. The strategy included increasing access of people to the internet, improvement of digital infrastructure, e-governance, training of youth in digital skills and increase of business opportunities in the IT sector.

**Shipping activity at Port Qasim**

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, APL Southampton, Bolan and Patras, carrying Container, Gas oil and LPG berthed at Container Terminal, FOTCO Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Thursday. A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them general cargo carrier "Trans Spring" left the Port on today morning while five more ships, APL Southampton, Tethis-7, Patras, Evriali and Crater are expected to sail on today afternoon.

**Food Minister visits food points**

LAHORE: In order to ensure the supply of healthy food to citizens in Ramadan, Food Minister Punjab Bilal Yasin visited food points at several places in Lahore.

The provincial food minister checked 13 well-known food points in Gulberg, Samanabad, Wagah and Shalimar Town. Four food points were sealed for poor arrangements during the visit while the other 4 were fined Rs. 2.5 lakh.

Similarly, rectification notices were also issued to 5 food points. Moreover, more than 2 tons of defective meat, oil and expired items were discarded at these food points.

Food Minister Bilal Yasin said that elements engaged in selling substandard food do not deserve any relaxation. He said that action has been taken on the presence of prohibited and expired items and poor cleaning arrangements.



# 23rd March: Pakistan Resolution Day

## Pakistan Day: A resolution of commitment March 23 is day of renewal of covenant

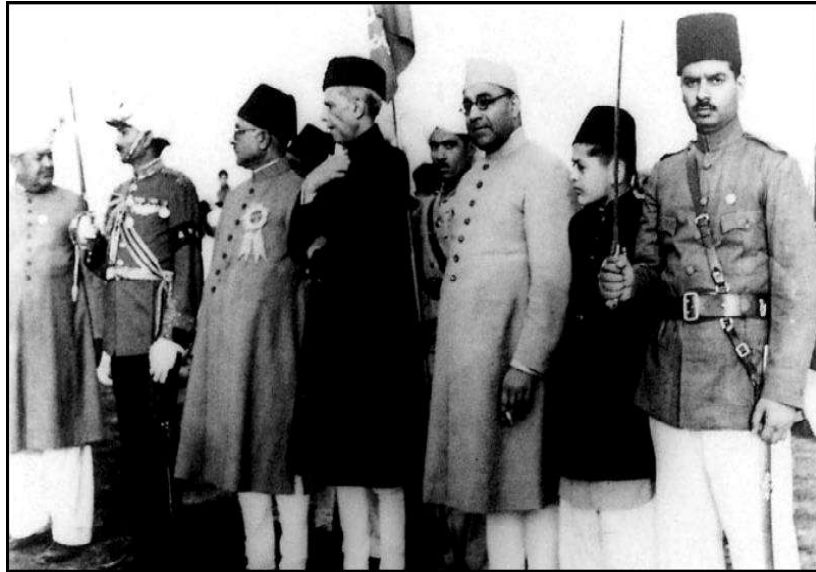
By Huma Kashif

*"We wish our people to develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think the best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people."*

— Muhammad Ali Jinnah

The nation of Pakistan is celebrating another momentous "Pakistan Resolution Day" which possesses an enormous commemoration in the historic struggle for acquiring Pakistan. The particular resolution is also renowned as "Lahore Resolution" made the Muslims of India to decide their own destiny and journey for the attainment of a separate entity to establish a Muslim State. That was the day when the Muslims of the sub-continent rejuvenated their political struggle for self-determination and acquisition of socio-political, economic, religious, and cultural freedom. On this particular day, the idea of a separate homeland for Muslims of India was converted clearly into the demand of Pakistan. Although presently, 23<sup>rd</sup> March day is losing its significance among our young generation. Most of our youth consider this day as just a public holiday, without realizing its true essence and spirit. But due to the emerging social chaos, and the political upheaval it is the need of the time that we should once again revitalize the spirit, struggle, and sufferings behind the freedom struggle.

Providing a short background, the British Raj, socio-political injustice, economic downfall, religious restraints, linguistic clash, cultural subjugation



led to the Pakistan Resolution and ultimately to the creation of Pakistan. Furthermore, the provincial autonomy achieved in 1937, and the discriminatory congress rule further strengthened the Muslims' notion of a separate sovereign state. The 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940 resolution was moved under the strong leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah also called the father of the Nation, who

rate homeland where they could live their life according to the teachings of Islam. Pakistan is a precious gift that has given to us by Allah Almighty, it is the time to do some constructive efforts for our beloved country. Pakistan's armed forces are fully equipped and have the capacity to defend the territorial integrity and state sovereignty. Pakistan Navy is a strongly capable force having the potential to protect the sea borders and national maritime interests of Pakistan. With its unremitting vigilance and professional competence, Pakistan Navy has recently once again surprised the Indian Navy by detecting and blocking its submarine from entering into Pakistani wa-

paredness, high morale, and exceptionally superior professional skills at sea. As Youth has always been a harbinger to a welcome change and given a proper direction, our youth can easily channelize the passion for their country. Ideally, 23<sup>rd</sup> March is the sort of day that should motivate people to seriously contemplate and reflect over our lives in a national sense rather than with the myopia of personal and individual evolution. Keeping in mind the countless sacrifices and sufferings of the men, women, children, old and young, certainly, it is not just another national day but it is the day to take a resolution at individual level to contribute positively in democratic structuring of Pakistan, give our

By Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri

March 23 is the day of renewal of the covenant in which a resolution was passed for the establishment of a separate country for Muslims in the subcontinent. Through a peaceful struggle under the great leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the dream of Allama Muhammad Iqbal was realized on August 14, 1947. In these circumstances, it is imperative that the Pakistani nation realize the spirit of this revolutionary resolution and move beyond the traditional kind of renewal. Go out and work for the ideological and geographical completion of Pakistan according to this resolution. In order to make this Kingdom of God truly the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam and Iqbal, we have to show the same continuous and selfless sacrifice at the individual and collective level which was characteristic of the trained soldiers of freedom of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In this historic gathering on March 23, 1940, the Father of the Nation had made it clear that "the fact is that the mutual disagreement between the "national concept of Islam and the social practices of the Hindu religion is a mere figment of India's imagination." To deny for a thousand years the civilizations of Hindus and Muslims have been intertwined and the two nations have been intertwined, but their differences are as strong as ever. It is totally wrong to expect that a revolution will take place in them and that Hindus and Muslims will become one nation only because of the imposition of a democratic constitution on them.

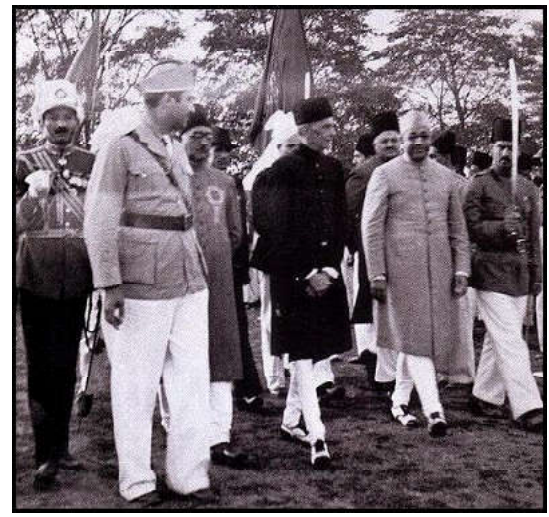
When the British government established in India for one and a half hundred years did not succeed in their work, how is it possible that the forcible establishment of federal system in the central government of India will achieve that success. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said that India's political problem was not about sects but about nations. Of course, this should be considered an international issue and a solution must be sought from that point of view. We need to acknowledge the veracity of this fundamental issue. As long as we do not accept it, the constitution we have drafted will fail and bring disaster. Islam and Hinduism are not just religions but in fact they are two different social systems. Therefore, this wish should be called a dream and dream that Hindus and Muslims will be able to create a common nation together." Pakistan came into being. When the British and the Hindus saw the seal of Pakistan being sealed, they by mutual alliance annexed several Muslim-majority districts of Punjab to India under the most unfair Red Cliff Award and also di-

vided Bengal into Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Ensured the establishment of a divided Pakistan.

If we look at the back in history, it would be correct to say that in fact the Muslims of the subcontinent

seen many ups and downs since the demise of these beloved leaders of the Pakistani nation. Especially after 9/11, Pakistan paid a heavy price for being a Muslim country.

The western world has laid the burden of uncom-



were facing a multifaceted decline after the failure of the War of Independence in 1857. During this time, the Muslim leaders made several attempts to put a stop to this decline and to organize the scattered Muslims, but they did not achieve the desired results until the day of reached March 23, 1940. On this day, thanks to the passage of the Lahore Resolution, the Muslim nation was revived under the op-

pression of the British government and the prejudice of the Hindu majority. He became aware of his right to self-determination and determined the direction and destination of his struggle for independence. The aim of this great struggle is to establish a modern Islamic, democratic and welfare state in which the religion of Islam is a stronghold.

By establishing the political, economic and social system of Islam on the golden principles of Islam, it can be proved to the nations of the world that these golden principles are as applicable today as the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (peace be upon him). He was in the blessed time of Allah and his Companions and the Righteous Caliphs. However, shortly after the establishment of Pakistan, the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah passed away and a few years later, his right-hand man Quaid-e-Millat Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was also martyred. The country has



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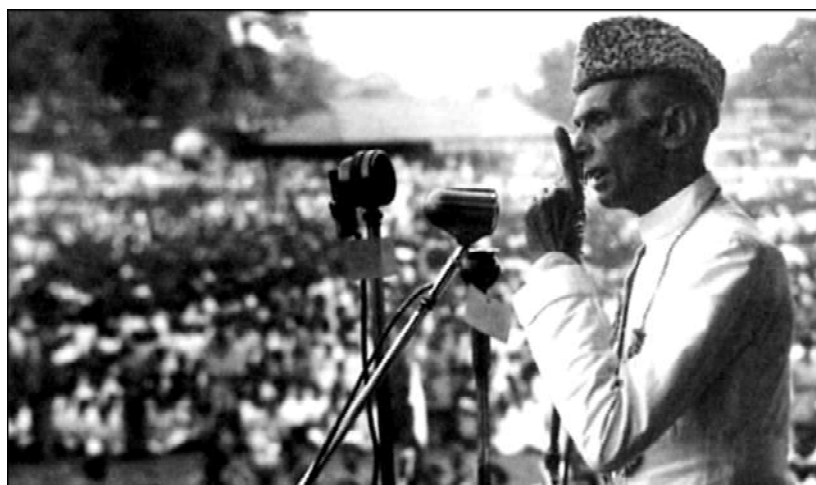
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only way to confront the enemies of Islam and Pakistan is through unity. We must realize that the more divided we are, the more difficult the journey of development will be. In these circumstances, there is a need for the Pakistani nation to realize the spirit of that revolutionary resolution and to move beyond the traditional kind of renewal and work for the ideological and geographical fulfillment of Pakistan in accordance with this resolution. In order to make this God-given kingdom truly the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam and Iqbal, we must demonstrate at the individual and collective level the same constant sacrifice and self-sacrifice that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions those fought for an independent country for Muslims. It was the specialty of the old, women, children and youth who got a separate country for the Muslims of the subcontinent by sacrificing millions of lives on the voice.

## Thank you Jinnah

By Ali Basit

As Pakistan prepares to celebrate the 82<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Lahore Resolution, it is vital to shed light on the event that changed the course of history in the subcontinent. As "Magna Carta" laid the foundation stone of people's power in Great Britain, the pledge made on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940 at the erstwhile Minto Park, for decades, serves as a cornerstone for Pakistan's socio-political culture. The Nation must utilize this moment to revisit the ideology and thought behind the historic resolution. 23<sup>rd</sup> March, revives the essence of nationalism among common people of Pakistan. As we breathe in a free country today, tribute must be paid to the ones who sacrificed their present for us. On this historic day, the Nation must be reminded of Quaid's words that defined the purpose and meaning of Pakistan. This article reproduces the most relevant quotes of the presidential address of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah at the Lahore session of All India Muslim League that carved out an independent homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. As the events highlighting bigotry and communalism unfold across the border, the Pakistani nation stands indebted to the vision and foresight of its founding fathers. The Quaid said, "You may remember that we appointed a committee of ladies at the Patna Session (1938). It is of very great importance to us, because I believe that it is of absolutely essential for us to give every opportunity to our women to participate in our struggle of life and death."



ment by inducting Pakistani women in various fields including medical, education and technical branches of the Tri-services. Pakistani women in uniform has contributed a lot in service to the country. The first ever Pakistani Female Engagement team in any United Nations (UN) mission around the world received UN medals for serving in the Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year. A team of 15 Pakistani women officers, received major recognition for being the first all-female group from Pakistan to serve in a UN peacekeeping mission. This service abroad for peacekeeping missions brought an immense respect to Pakistan at the global level.

At the same occasion, the Quaid further stated that, "We want that the British Government should in fact and actually meet the demands of the Arabs in Palestine." Muhammad Ali Jinnah backed the plight of Palestinians eight decades ago. In his all-important address, he did not forget to show solidarity with Palestinian brethren. To date, Pakistan's stance on Palestine is unchanged. On many occasions, PM Khan advocated a Two-State solution according to the aspiration and wishes of the people of Palestine. Pakistan should continue its unequivocal diplomatic support to the cause and must attempt to mobilize Muslim Ummah to resolve the crisis which has brought enormous pain to the people of Palestine. Jinnah reiterated,

"Muslims are not a minority. The Muslims are a nation by any definition. We find out that even according to the British map of India we occupy large parts of this country, where the Muslims are in a majority." Citing the work of London Times and the letter of Lala Lajpat Rai to C.R. Das, Quaid stressed on the separate identity of Muslims of the Subcontinent. He validated the 'Two Nation Theory' and presented colonialism with a workable solution to maintain peace in the Subcontinent.

Jinnah was well aware of the fact that Pakistan's due to its peculiar geostrategic location and the hostile neighboring environment needs strong Armed Forces to protect its national interests. Among the Tri-Services, Pakistan Navy was thus designated as an instrument to defend the maritime frontiers and interests of Pakistan.

During wartimes, Pakistan Navy has always espoused high standards of professionalism and valour. In 1965 war, Operation "Dwarka" launched by Pakistan Navy caused irreparable damage to Indian Navy, vehemently destroyed the Indian Radar system. In addition, Pakistan Navy's submarine Ghazi moved its patrol to Bombay harbor to challenge enemy's ships namely INS Vikrant and INS Mysore to dock out and get destroyed. This psychological fear of Ghazi adversely affected the Indian Navy's operational maneuvers. Yet again in the 1971 war, sinking of Indian warship

Kukri brought an immense wartime casualty by PNS Hangor, is the only incident after WWII wherein any conventional submarine sank a Warship. Furthermore, the detections of Indian Navy submarine, after Pulwama military standoff, by Pakistan Navy evidently portrays its effective employment strategy coupled with superior professional acumen.

Recent developments and reports of subjugation and ill treatment of Muslims coming out of India validate Muhammad Ali Jinnah's address at the Lahore Session of All India Muslim League. Quaid remarked, "Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in a Hindu majority government. Hindus and Muslims brought together under a democratic system forced upon the minorities can only mean Hindu Raj." The prediction of our visionary founding father made eight decades ago stands relevant and applicable today. In post-1947 India, it was evident that Nehru's sugar-coated secular democracy was bound to collapse one day or another.

Today, from revocation of Article 370 and Citizenship Amendment Act to Ayodhya Verdict, each development embosses Jinnah's words. This is what a Hindu Raj forced upon Muslims looks like. As renowned Indian author Arundhati Roy said, "Modi had been coming since 1925." Nehru's deodorized democracy was destined to fall apart and Gandhi's India was doomed to become Godse's India.

## Pakistan Day: A manifestation of Muslims' struggle for a separate homeland in subcontinent

By Fakhar Alam

Following the Independence War of 1857, the Muslims of subcontinent were subjected to an unending ordeal of discrimination, inequality and disparity after the colonial rulers had strengthened their grip over the united India.

The Muslims, who ruled over the united India for over 800 years, had faced great mental agony, sense of deprivation and dejection after they were pushed to the wall in terms of intellectual, political, economic and education decay. After failure of 1857 War of Independence, the Muslims of British India were given a new hope and direction by social reformer, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who instilled a new vigor into Muslims after an inspired teachings of the renowned religious leaders, Mojaddad Alf Sani and Shah Waliullah.

Brought about an intellectual revolution among Muslims through his educational, political and social reforms, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had succeeded to nullify the malicious propaganda of the colonial rulers, hindus and pessimist forces during an era of ominous, cruelty and oppression. He founded All India Muhammadan Educational Conference (AIMEC) at Aligarh in 1886, which carried forward his vision regarding modern education, socioeconomic empowerment and political unity of Muslims to regain their past glory. The network of educational institutions and political unity organized under AIMEC had enabled millions of Muslims to compete with other communities including Hindus and Sikhs by providing a launching pad for Muslims to initiate a peaceful political and democratic struggle for a separate homeland where they could live with dignity and freedom.

Sir Syed's reforms had excelled Muslims in education, social, economic and political sciences, resultantly their voices have strongly been heard by the British rulers. The Muslims, under the flag of All India Muslim League (AIML) founded on December 30, 1906 at Dhaka, got united by giving new impetus to the independence movement. It witnessed further momentum after Quaid-i-Azam spearheaded independence movement after formally joining AIML in 1913 and outlining of an independent state for Muslims majority provinces in North West India by the great poet philosopher Dr. Allama



Muhammad Iqbal during historic Allahabad address in 1930.

Thus, Dr. Allama Iqbal became the first statesman to articulate about the two nation-theories that Muslims were a separate and distinct nation besides deserving political independence from other regions and communities of the united India. "Pakistan Movement passes through different phases and finally achieved its practical shape in 1933 during a high-level gathering in London where Chaudhry Rehmat Ali had presented the name of Pakistan," said Professor Dr Muhammad Younas Khan, Chairman, Pakistan Studies Department, Islamia College Peshawar University (ICP) while talking to APP.

Recalling Chaudhry Rehmat Ali's famous saying "Now or never or parish forever", he said ICP's two former students, Aslam Khattak and Inyatullah Khan of Charsadda along with others Muslims leaders had endorsed the name of Pakistan. "Pakistan's name and Allahabad address had set a clear direction to the Muslims to achieve a separate homeland in the subcontinent," he said. The great Quaid united millions of Muslims at Iqbal Park, Lahore where they unanimously passed the historic Pakistan's Resolution on March 23, 1940. Following adoption of the Pakistan Resolution, Quaid-i-Azam had reorganized AIML on modern lines and made repeated visits to all Muslims majority provinces including KP (earlier called NWFP) to mobilize masses for Pakistan.



## President UNGA applauds Pak role in global peace efforts

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan's journey has been punctuated by remarkable achievements and an unwavering spirit expressed in the resilience of its people," the UN General Assembly President, Dennis Francis, said at a largely-attended Pakistan Day reception on Thursday.

Francis, who was the chief guest at the reception held at the Pakistani Mission to the UN in New York, applauded Pakistan's "steadfast, devoted and robust commitment" to multilateralism, noting the country's role as a member of the UN, its multiple terms on the Security Council, and its consistent presence and leadership in various UN bodies, including ECOSOC and the Human Rights Council.

He also commended Pakistan's significant contributions to UN peace-keeping missions, and acknowledged the sacrifices made by Pakistani peacekeepers in promoting global peace and security.

The reception was attended by top diplomats of the New York-based Permanent Missions, UN officials, members of academia, media, civil society organizations and the Pakistani diaspora.

Ambassador Munir Akram welcomed the General Assembly President, highlighting Pakistan's unwavering commitment to multilateralism and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

The Pakistani envoy emphasized Pakistan's active role as a member state of the UN since 1947, supporting initiatives aimed at promoting international peace and security, sus-

tainable development, and human rights.

In his speech, the General Assembly President extended his warm greetings to Pakistan, pointing out that the auspicious occasion commemorates the adoption of the Lahore Resolution in 1940 and the adoption of the first Constitution of Pakistan in 1956.

"As the largest contributor of police and troop personnel to the UN for decades, Pakistan's unwavering dedication to maintaining peace globally is clear and manifest," the President said.

The President of the General Assembly lauded Pakistan's diplomatic achievements, citing Sir Zafarullah Khan's presidency of the UN General Assembly and membership of the International Court of Justice.



ISLAMABAD: SFD CEO, Sultan Abdul Rahman Al Murshif and Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz, signing the Agreement.

## Pakistan, SFD sign \$107m hydropower agreements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Kazim Niaz and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) here Friday signed loan agreements worth \$66.00 million for Shounter Hydropower Project (48 MW) and \$41.00 million for Jagran IV Hydropower Project (22 MW).

Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema witnessed the signing ceremony, according to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division.

These endeavours aim at harnessing the indigenous available hydropower potential and generating 70 MW hydropower, which will be transmitted to the national grid.

Moreover, it will help in eradicating the menace of deforestation by providing electricity as an alternative to the energy needs of the local communities, who hitherto are entirely dependent on forest wood; and create economic opportunities for socioeconomic uplift of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

It is pertinent to mention that a delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), led by Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al Marshad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SFD is currently visiting Pakistan.

The delegation called on Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema, the statement said, thanked the CEO, SFD, and government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as the conferment of award.

## President approves remission for prisoners on Pakistan Day, Eid ul Fitr

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday approved remission for the prisoners on the occasion of Pakistan Day annually observed on March 23 and Eid ul Fitr.

The president granted a remission of 90 days each, for both occasions in sentences exercising his powers under Article 45 of the Constitution and Rule 15-A of the Rules of Business.

However, the remission would not be applicable on the prisoners involved in murder, espionage and anti-state activities.

Besides, the prisoners involved in rape, theft, robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and financial crimes, would also be ineligible for the remission.

The reduction in sentences would be applicable on the male prisoners of over 65 years age and female prisoners of over 60 years age, who had completed one-third of the sentence.

The juvenile prisoners, who had completed one third of their sentence would also be entitled for the remission.

## Cipher was conspiracy: Ali Amin Gandapur

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur has said cipher was conspiracy and he still stands by this statement.

"Cipher was conspiracy, I still stand by my statement. If there was no cipher then why PTI founder was convicted and sentenced, he said this while talking to media men on his arrival in judicial complex during the hearing of bail plea Friday.

He held the ambassador confirmed the statement of Donald Lu about cipher. If there is intervention in the home of respected Pakistani it is conspiracy. Asad Majeed be called and he be asked if talks were not held then who sent cipher. If Donald is speaking the truth then what was cipher.

He remarked no interference from any one in the country will be accepted. We are addressing the problems facing the people of KP. Federation has to pay money.

He underlined government came into being due to stealing the mandate. People did not cast vote in favor of them. The worst rigging of the history took place. 180 seats of PTI were stolen. People support is not with the government. What will they deliver.

## NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq says Parliament-to-parliament contacts vital for regional prosperity, economic dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday said that Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) enjoy cordial ties based upon shared religious and cultural values. He said that parliament-to-parliament contacts are vital for regional prosperity and economic development.

He added, "UAE has always supported Pakistan in difficult times and Pakistan values its tie with UAE." He expressed these views during his meeting with the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Alzaabi who called on him in Parliament House, said a news release. While talking about the significance of enhanced bilateral ties between the two countries, he emphasized the need to revive the Parliamentary Friendship group.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing joint Press Conference.

## Govt committed to steer country out of current challenges: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday said that government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, is determined to steer the country out of the current crisis. Addressing a press conference along with Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan and Romina Khurshid Alam, she said,

"The country will be put on the road to progress, prosperity, and development under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif."

She expressed confidence that the country would overcome all the challenges and crisis within the next three to four years.

Recalling about the past achievements of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, she highlighted the eradication of load shedding and terrorism, as well as the successful initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the remarkable economic growth witnessed during his last tenure.

She recounted that soon after assuming government in 2013, under the guidance of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, an agreement was made with the IMF. However, the government terminated the program within two years, leading the country towards economic self-reliance.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, she said, made all out efforts to protect the country away from default during his 16-month tenure. The Minister said that collaborative efforts of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and allied parties had stabilized the country economically during the 16-month period.

## National Party delegation calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the National Party called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday and discussed matters relating to mutual concerns.

The delegation congratulated the prime minister on assuming the charge of his office.

In the meeting, matters regarding the situation of law and justice in Balochistan and the issues of the youth of the province came under discussion.

The prime minister reiterated his determination to provide all possible facilities to the youth of Balochistan.

He said it was the responsibility of the state to provide the opportunities of education and earning livelihoods to the Baloch youth.

## Awais seeks USAID support for Pakistan's conservation initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday sought United States Agency for International Development (USAID) support for the implementation of conservation initiatives in Pakistan.

During a meeting with US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, the minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to clean energy. He also requested US assistance in unlocking the Green Climate Fund to prepare for impending environmental challenges.

The minister highlighted the key parameters of Pakistan's upcoming "Fan Replacement Program," which is set to be initiated shortly for energy conservation.

The US Ambassador expressed interest from US-based companies and the DFC in investing in renewable energy projects, aligning with Pakistan's goal to double the share of renewables in its energy mix over the next 8-10 years under Sustainable Development Goal 7.

The Ambassador stressed the importance of the upcoming Economic Dialogue in the USA and requested a strong presence from the Pakistani side.

## LHC dismisses plea against amendment to Elections Act

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday dismissed a petition challenging an amendment to the Elections Act 2017 aimed at reducing the disqualification period for a parliamentarian under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution from life to five years.

Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan announced the reserved verdict on a petition filed by Munir Ahmad. The court had reserved the verdict upon completion of arguments by the parties on March 19.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, presenting shield to the US Ambassador Donald Blome.

## LHC dismisses pleas against commuting lifetime disqualification

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday dismissed the petitions against decreasing the lifetime disqualification period to five years by Parliament.

Lahore High Court Judge Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan announced the reserved decision on the petition filed by Azhar Siddique advocate. The court said the applications were non-maintainable.

The lawyer of the federal government opposed the petition, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan heard the petition of citizen Shabbir Ismail. The petitioner, in his appeal, had taken the stance that parliament had amended the law of disqualification for life by reducing it to five years.

According to the rules, the law on lifetime disqualification could not be amended by parliament through specific members. The petitioner contended that passage of law by parliament was a violation of Supreme Court rulings.

He said the lifetime disqualification was made under Article 62 (1)(f) of the Constitution and the apex court had already elaborated the said article.

The petitioner prayed to the LHC that court should declare the law reducing the disqualification period to five years as null and void.

## Shahera Shahid highlights gov't commitment to strengthen Radio Pakistan



KARACHI (APP): Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Shahera Shahid on Friday, underscored the crucial role played by the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Pakistan), emphasizing its extensive reach across the nation with news delivery in multiple languages. During her visit to the PBC office, she addressed various issues including Radio Pakistan's financial matters such as liabilities, salaries, and pensions, which are currently being discussed at higher levels for prompt resolution. Furthermore, she mentioned the government's deliberation on enhancing financial self-

## 04 die, 2 injure in collision bikes in DIK

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least four youths died while two others sustained serious injuries as two speedy motorcycles collided with each other in the Kirri Shamozai area last night. According to Rescue 1122, six youths were coming on two motorcycles after performing Taraweeh prayers when their two-wheeled collided with each other near Mangal Morr in the Kirri Shamozai area due to overspeeding. As a result, four youths died on the spot while two others got seriously injured.

## VCs body advocates to halt creation of new universities

ISLAMABAD (INP): Recognizing the detrimental impact of proliferation in the number of institutions on the quality of education, the Vice Chancellors Committee has advocated for an immediate halt to the establishment of new universities. They also underscored the importance of consolidating existing institutions to enhance efficiency and optimize resource allocation.

In a concerted effort to address the pressing challenges faced by the higher education sector, the Vice Chancellors' Committee was convened for a two-day meeting in Islamabad with the participation of more than 160 public and private universities from across the country.

The gathering provided a platform for the university heads to engage in comprehensive discussions and formulate strategic initiatives to navigate the turbulent landscape of the country's tertiary education.

## Governor, Speaker KP Assembly face face in summoning session

PESHAWAR (INP): The Governor and Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly came face to face over the issue of summoning the assembly session.

Speaker Babar Salim Swati sought the opinion from the Law Department regarding summoning the assembly session. The Assembly Secretariat announced that there would be no assembly session today, while Governor Gulam Ali has demanded the provincial assembly session today, where elected women and minority representatives are to take oaths.

The Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly has asked the Law Department whether the Governor's summoning of the session is according to the law. The Assembly Secretariat announced that there will be no assembly session on Friday, and they are awaiting the Law Department's response, after which a decision will be made.

## Khawaja emphasizes peaceful atmosphere

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique underscored the paramount importance of providing a peaceful environment for the province's residents during the inaugural session of the Sub-Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, convened at the Home Department headquarters here on Friday. Presiding over the meeting, Minister Rafique reiterated the commitment to bolstering coordination with law enforcement agencies to uphold law and order across Punjab. Special attention was drawn to implementing robust security measures during Ramadan, encompassing Sehri and Ifar timings, Youm e Ali, Chand Raat, and Eid-ul-Fitr.

Additionally, a strategic initiative was proposed to address the issue of illegally residing foreign nationals within the province. The minister further highlighted the comprehensive security arrangements for Friday prayers and Taraweeh. The meeting also featured briefings on Border Military Police and Baloch Levi Police, delivered by Home Secretary Nurul Amin Mengal.



LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan presenting shield to Zoe Ware, Political Counselor of British High Commission, in Lahore

## Health Minister for strong Primary Health Care on district level

PESHAWAR: Minister Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Qasim Ali Shah has stated that in order to manage the burden of patients in major hospitals in Peshawar, it is essential to strengthen the Primary Health Care system on district level.

Under the Primary Health Care Reform Project, during a one-day training workshop for Lady Health Workers coordinators, he expressed the need for improvement in the system to ensure basic healthcare facilities are provided to people in health centers and DHQ hospitals in the province.

He emphasized that although there are challenges in the health system, working as a team would help in overcoming these challenges. Minister health further stated that it is his responsibility to provide the best healthcare facilities, especially in underserved areas.

He assured Lady Health Workers coordinators that all their challenges and issues would be addressed promptly, emphasizing the importance of not neglecting the health of the people.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah stressed the importance of treating patients as clients rather than just medical cases to ensure better facilities in hospitals.

## WB village civic facility programme reviewed

LAHORE: Punjab Local Governments Minister Zeeshan Rafique has directed to speed up the work on providing municipal services in 200 selected villages of sixteen tehsils with the support of the World Bank, saying that life standards will improve in the backward areas with provision of quality facilities.

During his maiden visit to the Punjab Rural Municipal Services Company (PRMSC), he welcomed the fact that the provision of rural municipal services has been planned keeping in mind the needs of the expected population till 2048. "In the first phase, sanitation and other model facilities will be provided in 200 villages of Punjab and I will request Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to expand the scope of this program", he pledged. On this occasion, PRMSC Chief Executive Officer Asadullah briefed the provincial minister regarding the company's affairs and future schemes.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Suleman Rafique presiding over the meeting to review law and order situation at Home Ministry.