



Resolve to develop the aviation industry of the country for increasing its contribution in national economic growth

Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation
Khawaja Asif

IMF mission in Pakistan to conduct the second review of the Stand by Arrangement

Finance minister thanks IMF for their continued support & hopes for productive meetings during the second review

ISLAMABAD: An IMF mission called on Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb in the Ministry of Finance on Thursday.

The IMF mission is in Pakistan to conduct the second review of the Stand by Arrangement (SBA). Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the mission and expressed the government's commitment towards working with IMF on the reform agenda for economic growth and stability of Pakistan. IMF mission head Nathan Porter, congratulated the Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on his appointment. Discussions were held on the overall macro-economic indicators, government's efforts on fiscal consolidation, structural reforms, energy sector viability, and SOE governance.

Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, thanked IMF for their continued support and hoped for productive meetings during the second review.

Khawaja Asif expresses resolve to develop the aviation industry of country for increasing its contribution in national economic growth

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif has expressed the resolve to develop the aviation industry of the country for increasing its contribution in national economic growth.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif chaired a meeting spanned more than four hours wherein he was given detailed briefing by the secretary aviation on role of aviation ministry, National Aviation Policy 2023, the challenges faced by Pakistan Aviation industry, the opportunities, and the air services agreements with other countries.

The minister was also briefed on the entities working under the ministry including Pakistan Airlines Corporation Ltd, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, Pakistan Airport Authority, Bureau of Air Safety Investigation, Air Port Security Forces and Pakistan meteorological department. While being briefed on PIACL, the minister remarked that the privatisation of PIACL would be the priority of this government. He also commended the joint venture for mix use re-development of Roosevelt Hotel. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the state of Qatar to Pakistan Ambassador Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM reviews five-year roadmap for economic progress



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday chaired a high-level review meeting on a five-year roadmap for economic progress of the country.

The five-year roadmap focused on decrease in inflation, poverty alleviation, and provision of employment. The prime minister said consultation

should be held on this plan with all stakeholders of different sectors of the economy.

Without wasting any time, implementation of projects for the economic stability and progress of the country should be ensured, he added.

The prime minister said a schedule of implementation for the projects should be presented, adding steps should be taken on priority basis to speed up progress in

the sectors of agriculture, livestock, information technology, foreign investment and small and medium industries.

He said the government would reduce its expenditure and he would not allow further waste of money of poor people.

He said in the next five years, the country's economy would be stabilized to put the country on the path of progress.

The PM said tax revenue would be increased with digitalization and technology, while the per acre yield in the agriculture sector would also be increased with the use of technology.

The loss-making government institutions would be privatized on priority basis, he added.

The meeting was informed in detail about the roadmap for economic progress and about proposed measures in important sectors including electricity, agriculture, livestock, exports, small and medium enterprises, taxes, information technology, small and medium enterprises, investment, and privatization.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Jehanzeb, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Dr Musadiq Malik, Minister of State Shiza Fatima Khawaja, Jehanzeb Khan and high-ranking officers attended the meeting.

Attaullah Tarar felicitates Yousuf Raza Gilani on becoming Senator

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday congratulated former prime minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on becoming Senator. The minister, in a news statement, welcomed the victory of Yusuf Raza Gilani as a Senator and called him a senior and seasoned politician. He said Yousuf Raza Gilani's experience and knowledge would bring positive changes in the political and economic landscape of the country.

Ethiopia, Pakistan discuss aviation sector cooperation



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Pakistan have discussed potential areas of cooperation in the aviation sector to further strengthen their bilateral relations.

The areas of cooperation were discussed during a meeting between Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula and Federal Secretary for Aviation Saif Anjum, said a news release.

Both sides had a detailed discussion on the matters of mutual interests including bilateral cooperation for knowledge sharing and technology transfer in the aviation sector.

On the occasion, Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula expressed his gratitude for the crucial support extended by the Government of Pakistan in the start of the Ethiopian Airlines' operations in Karachi.

The Ambassador briefed the Secretary on the pivotal role being played by Ethiopian Airlines in the effective implementation of the "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policies of Pakistan that were aimed at strengthening government-to-government, people-to-people, and business-to-business relations between both Pakistan and African countries.

He also highlighted the growing popularity of Ethiopian Airlines among the people of Pakistan who have been fully appreciating the services offered by one of the largest airlines in the world.

On the other hand, Federal Secretary for Aviation Saif Anjum acknowledged the critical role being played by Ethiopian Airlines in bringing Africa closer to Pakistan and assured the ambassador of his institution support in advancing the bilateral cooperation in the Aviation Sector.



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister Khawaja Muhammed Asif presided over meeting wherein he was given detailed briefing on role of ministry of aviation and it's attached entities.

Pakistan deeply concerned about atrocities against people of Gaza



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan remained deeply concerned about the ongoing atrocities against the people of Gaza by Israeli occupation forces.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing here on Thursday, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "We strongly condemn yesterday's attack on UNRWA's food distribution center in the eastern part of Rafah in southern Gaza.

The attack against the few remaining food distribution centers for a population on the verge of famine is part of Israel's deliberate and inhumane policy of mass starvation. It is inhumane, unconscionable and a crime against humanity."

"UNRWA serves as a lifeline for over two million people, providing shelter and delivering vital food and primary healthcare services. It needs enhanced international support and protection during the ongoing inhumane war on Gaza," she added.

She said, "Pakistan also condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the recent Israeli decision regarding construction of 3500 new settlement units in occupied West Bank. The Israeli action violates international law, international humanitarian laws and relevant resolutions of the United Nations and OIC. It would further undermine the prospects of an independent, sovereign and contiguous Pales-

stinian state." "We call on the United Nations Security Council to bring an end to these crimes of the occupation authorities against the people of Palestine and to fulfill its responsibilities under the UN Charter to bring an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people."

The spokesperson said, Pakistan strongly condemned the decision of Indian authorities to declare illegal yet another political party in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, the Jammu and Kashmir National Front.

"With this decision, a total of nine Kashmiri political parties have become outlawed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Their leadership and cadres are also facing persecution. The Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir National Front, Naeem Ahmed Khan, has been languishing in Indian jails since 2017."

"These oppressive measures reflect a vicious intent by India to stifle dissent and freedom of expression in IIOJK in complete disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law. India should immediately lift the curbs on the banned Kashmiri parties; release all political prisoners and dissenters; and forthwith implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," she added.

She stressed that Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions. APP

President Zardari welcomes interaction between PM, CM KP



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed the recent interaction between the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. "It is high time we start thinking of working towards healing the divisions Pakistan has been going through", he added. The president said that he had always advocated for prioritizing Pakistan above all else, and it was time we gave people hope in the democratic process by showing them it could work. "This outreach is a good beginning", he stated. APP

PM chalked out strategy for development in Rural, Urban centers: Musadiq Malik

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik on Thursday said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has chalked out a comprehensive strategy for development in Urban and Rural Centers across the country.

It a statement issued here, he said that for development in rural centers, farmers need water, seeds and fertilizer, therefore the PM has decided to ensure to provide fertilizer on subsidized rates to the farmer.

Musadiq Malik said that the government will provide imported seeds to the farmers so they can increase production. To resolve the issue of water, the government will provide solar tube wells to the farmers meet the requirements of cultivation. He said if all these three ingredients are provided to the farmers, his growth will largely increase.

He said the government will also encourage the farmers to make small agricultural industrial farms and this would be a start of green revolution in the country.

For urban centers, the prime minister has directed that the banks must be asked to provide small loans to youth and Small medium enterprises (SME) for their businesses.

The minister said the government has decided to organizes "Boot Camps" to train the fresh students coming out of the universities so they can compete at international level in the field of artificial intelligence.

If required, the government will invite master trainers from abroad to train the children, he said adding the PM has strictly asked to make a sustainable programme. Musadiq Malik said the government has decided to open schools following the model of Danish School to provide free of cost education to the intelligent students from poor segment of society. INP



Air Chief, Commander Bahrain National Guard discuss issues of bilateral interests

ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National Guard General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa on Thursday called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu in Islamabad. Various areas of shared interest aimed at bolstering government-to-government cooperation in the realm of emerging technologies emphasis on drone technology and collaboration within the cyber and networking domains came under discussion during the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed stressed the deep-rooted brotherly relations between both nations. The visiting dignitary praised the exceptional professionalism of PAF



personnel and the remarkable progress achieved by Pakistan Air Force. Commander Bahrain National

Guard also visited PAF Cyber Command where he was briefed about the operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force.

Expressing profound interest in the strides made by PAF in the cyber domain, the visiting dignitary conveyed his intention to dispatch a specialized team to PAF to assess and address any existing gaps within the emerging technologies architecture of the Bahrain Armed Forces.

The Air Chief reassured the Commander Bahrain National Guard of PAF's wholehearted cooperation and pledged full support to work together towards fortifying technological frameworks of the Bahrain Armed Forces. INP

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Lessons from Egypt's IMF deal

DR ABID QAIYUM SULERI

Like many nations burdened by debt, Egypt once again found itself navigating a storm of economic challenges, a scenario all too familiar to Pakistan. With an external debt-to-GDP ratio breaching the 42 per cent mark as of September 2023 and short-term liabilities teetering close to \$40 billion against a backdrop of dwindling foreign reserves pegged at \$35 billion, the macroeconomic quandary was palpable, and the inflation last August had crossed 40 per cent. External shocks – notably, the unfortunate situation in the Middle East and the Red Sea's vicissitudes – further muddied the waters, jeopardizing critical foreign exchange lifelines such as tourism and Suez Canal revenues. In 2022-23, against the odds, the tourism sector did not do that badly, with earnings clocking in at a commendable \$13.6 billion. Nonetheless, the looming spectre of inflation was rekindled by the Red Sea tumult and a stark nosedive in Suez Canal receipts, which halved in January 2024 compared to the year prior, heralding potential trade disruptions and shortages. In a bid to staunch the economic haemorrhage, Egypt, the second largest debtor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after Argentina, once again courted the IMF for succour, culminating in a strategic entente last week. This pact, a lifeline intended to shore up Egypt's faltering economy, was predicated on ensuring debt sustainability, recalibrating price stability, and spurring private sector-led growth through a gamut of structural reforms.

The key terms and conditions agreed between the IMF and Egypt include shifting to a flexible exchange rate system; monetary and fiscal policy tightening, including containing off-budget capital expenditure and recalibration of infrastructure expenditures; targeted budget support for vulnerable households through an expansion in coverage of the Takaful and Karama cash transfer programmes; and balancing public and private sector roles through reducing the state footprint and strengthening the ability of the private sector to better contribute to economic growth. Building upon a previous \$3 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) from December 2022, this accord burgeoned into an \$8 billion lifeline, including a \$1.2 billion tranche earmarked for environmental sustainability endeavours. It's important to note that under the prior arrangement, Egypt struggled with implementing a market-based exchange rate, divesting state assets, and curtailing the military's economic footprint, leading to a delay in the first review of the 2022 EFF initially slated for March 2023.

Parallel to this IMF pact, Egypt clinched a land agreement with the UAE sovereign fund ADQ, a move criticized by the opposition, but it did channel critical liquidity into the domestic economy. The \$35 billion pact, inked on February 23 for the Ras al-Hikma coastal development, not only encompassed a \$24 billion land acquisition but also the strategic reallocation of \$11 billion from the UAE's pre-existing Central Bank deposits in Egypt. This monumental investment is poised to catalyze an additional \$150 billion in investments, envisaging Ras al-Hikma's metamorphosis into a vibrant economic nexus, thereby bolstering employment and propelling growth, with Egypt maintaining a 35 per cent stake in the venture. The currency flotation that ensued saw the Egyptian pound depreciate to 50 per dollar from a previous rate of 30, marking the fifth devaluation since April 2022; the black-market rate ominously surged to 70. The Central Bank of Egypt also increased its overnight lending rate by 600 points to 28.25 per cent. This financial recalibration and the UAE's capital injection have kindled a spectrum of reactions within Egypt. While the government heralds these developments as a panacea for the prevailing macroeconomic malaise, dissent brews among civil society, underscored by vociferous opposition from social movements, NGOs, and legal circles, criticizing President Sisi for selling off Egypt's pristine beaches and apprehensive of the austerity's bite and its ramifications on the vulnerable. Despite the criticism, the initial tranche of the Emirati investment pegged at \$10 billion and expected to be completed within the next two months, is anticipated to mitigate the adverse impacts of the devaluation, thereby alleviating banking constraints and easing the remittance flows.

The economic sagas of Egypt and Pakistan, particularly their frequent engagement with the IMF (Pakistan is the fourth largest borrower of the IMF), mirror each other's struggles with the cyclical nature of the crisis, intervention, and temporary reprieve. This pattern highlights a critical challenge: the difficulty of sustaining reform momentum post-IMF intervention, a challenge compounded by a lack of political ownership and a tendency to revert to short-term political expediencies at the expense of long-term economic stability. Both nations also grapple with the ramifications of external shocks, such as global commodity price fluctuations or geopolitical tensions, which can derail economic progress and magnify existing vulnerabilities. Both have also struggled with structural issues, including governance challenges and the need for deeper institutional reforms, which can impede the long-term success of IMF-supported programmes. Egypt's case, particularly its recent IMF deal and the consequential sale of a significant stake in Ras al-Hikma, exemplifies the high stakes and complex decisions countries face in the throes of economic distress. For Pakistan, Egypt's experience is not merely a distant tale but a mirror that reflects on its economic challenges and the potential strategies for recovery. Two crucial lessons emerge from Egypt's experience. First, the international community's willingness to assist is often tinged with geopolitical considerations. The IMF, which had suspended its 2022 program with Egypt due to a lack of progress, willingly increased the loan amount by nearly three times in 2024, thanks to its strategic importance. It is obvious that Egypt's potential role as an interlocutor between Hamas and Israel amidst the Gaza conflict catalysed a more favourable engagement from the IMF and international stakeholders.

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Husain Haqqani

The price of extremism

After a flurry of praise for the police officer who saved her life, most Pakistanis seem to have forgotten the incident in Lahore involving the woman who was accused of blasphemy for wearing a dress with Arabic calligraphy. That a woman was almost lynched for wearing clothes that an illiterate crowd mistook for religious text highlights Pakistan's extremism problem. Dismissing events like this incident as outliers or choosing to ignore them will not prevent them from occurring again. In December 2021, the Sri Lankan manager of a factory in Sialkot was beaten to death and set ablaze by a mob over allegations of blasphemy that turned out to be spurious. The woman in Lahore with the dress bearing Arabic language words was lucky that she escaped a similar fate. The dress worn by the woman in question bore the word 'Halwa' in Arabic script. The word means beautiful in Arabic, and it is not uncommon in the Muslim world for Arabic calligraphy to be used to adorn dresses, buildings, and much more. But the irrational environment in Pakistan over religious matters, especially allegations of blasphemy, put the woman's life at risk. The international publicity over the incident ensured that everyone around the world who might be thinking of doing business

with Pakistan had to think about facing similar risks. Nations pay a hefty price when the rest of the world sees them as irrational or extreme. Racist violence, for example, acts as a disincentive for business travelers belonging to different races from traveling to countries where race is an issue. In the case of Pakistan, religious extremism and vigilantism have become a factor in the decisions of potential investors and merchants. Two days after the Lahore incident, an Arab businessman remarked to me that he immediately thought of his wife and daughters. "They wear Arabic calligraphy designs as part of their dress," he said, adding, "I was thinking of expanding my business to Pakistan, but do I want to walk through Lahore or Karachi with my wife or daughters, risking such attacks?" Pakistan already has the world's toughest blasphemy laws and blasphemy is punishable by death after a trial. But some groups do not wait for the law to take its course and want to act as judge, jury, and executioner. Several people have been lynched before their cases go to trial and those acquitted due to lack of evidence are also attacked as if the allegation of blasphemy requires no proof other than the allegation itself. Judges, too, have to fear the backlash of those who pretend to be all-knowing while hearing such cases. Instead of making Pakistani society more religious or pious, the practice of whipping up a crowd in a religious frenzy has created situations in which mobs lose all fear of God. Even in the recent case of the woman wearing the Arabic calligraphy dress, the crowd had to be

pacified with an apology from the woman though she had done nothing wrong. As Maulana Tahir Ashrafi pointed out, the men in the crowd, rather than the woman, should have been the ones to apologize. Government after government in Pakistan has appeased groups that use religious slogans to divide and scare Pakistanis. Some have even seen the extremists as guarantors of Pakistan's security or as instruments of Pakistani influence across the border in Afghanistan or Kashmir. But the net impact of nurturing a religious outrage industry has only been to undermine Pakistan's external relations and weaken its economy. Official data suggests that between 2001 and 2018 "the direct and indirect cost incurred by Pakistan due to incidents of terrorism" amounted to \$123.13 billion. Add to it the cost of fostering a society driven by anger and unable to figure out its real place in the modern world. Since falling under Western colonial rule, the Muslim world has developed a narrative of grievance and Pakistan is no exception. Like all national and community narratives, it has some true elements. But the current weakness of the Muslim world or of Pakistan is not entirely the fault of Western colonialism or postcolonial machinations. Pakistanis must understand the consequences of low literacy rates, poor quality of higher education, and low female participation in the workforce. Instead, they are fed narratives of conspiracy theories and hate against more powerful nations and a steady diet of religious-sounding rhetoric that is

more political than religious. On March 6, 1948, Pakistan's first opposition leader, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (who later became prime minister for a short time) warned the country's earliest leaders against building "a state which would be founded upon caucuses and coteries, a state which will be founded on sentiments, namely that of Islam in danger or of Pakistan in danger." According to Suhrawardy, "a state which will be held together by raising the bogey of attacks and which you keep together by keeping up a constant friction between yourself and your sister Dominion [India], that state will be full of alarms and excursions. You think that you will get away with it but in that state there will be no commerce, no business and no trade." Cautioning against attacks on non-Muslims in the immediate aftermath of partition, Suhrawardy said that such a course will only erode rule of law. "There will be lawlessness and those lawless elements that may be turned today against non-Muslims will be turned later on, once those fratricidal tendencies have been aroused, against the Muslim gentry and I want you to be warned in time," he observed. Today, those words seem prescient. Even now, a comprehensive strategy of pushing back extremism is the only way forward for a country that faces a multitude of challenges.

The writer, former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, is Diplomat-in-Residence at the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy in Abu Dhabi and Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington DC.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



He, therefore, opposed the Indian National Congress when it was founded in 1885 and advised the Muslims to abstain from its activities. His contemporary and a great scholar of Islam, Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928), shared his views about the Congress, but, he was not opposed to Muslims organizing themselves politically. In fact, he organized the first significant political body of the Muslims, the Central National Muhammadan Association. Although, its membership was limited, it had more than 50 branches in different parts of the subcontinent and it accomplished some solid work for the educational and political advancement of the Muslims. But, its activities waned towards the end of the nineteenth century.

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a number of factors convinced

the Muslims of the need to have an effective political organization. Therefore, in October 1906, a deputation comprising 35 Muslim leaders met the Viceroy of the British at Simla and demanded separate electorates. Three months later, the All-India Muslim League was founded by Nawab Salimullah Khan at Dhaka, mainly with the objective of safeguarding the political rights and interests of the Muslims. The British conceded separate electorates in the Government of India Act of 1909 which confirmed the Muslim League's position as an All-India party. Attempt for Hindu Muslim Unity The visible trend of the two major communities progressing in opposite directions caused deep concern to leaders of All-India stature. They struggled to bring the Congress and the Muslim League on one platform. Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) was the leading figure among them. After the

annulment of the partition of Bengal and the European Powers' aggressive designs against the Ottoman Empire and North Africa, the Muslims were receptive to the idea of collaboration with the Hindus against the British rulers. The Congress Muslim League rapprochement was achieved at the Lucknow sessions of the two parties in 1916 and a joint scheme of reforms was adopted. In the Lucknow pact. As the scheme was commonly referred to, the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates, and the Muslims, in return for 'weight age' to the Muslims of the Muslim minority provinces, agreed to surrender their thin majorities in the Punjab and Bengal. The post Lucknow Pact period witnessed Hindu Muslim amity and the two parties came to hold their annual sessions in the same city and passed resolutions of identical contents.

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

The Hindu Muslim unity reached its climax during the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movements. The Muslims, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, launched the historic Khilafat Movement after the First World War to protect the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) linked the issue of Swaraj (self-government) with the Khilafat issue to associate the Hindus with the Movement. The ensuing Movement was the first countrywide popular movement. Although the Movement failed in achieving its objectives, it had a far-reaching impact on the Muslims of South Asia. After a long time, they took united action on a purely Islamic issue which momentarily forged solidarity among them.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Dua Lipa shares major updates on 3rd Album 'Radical Optimism'

'Houdini' hitmaker Dua Lipa reveals Tracklist and Release Date for 'Radical Optimism'



Radical Optimism, Dua Lipa's third album, is officially ready and also has an official release date. "RADICAL OPTIMISM MY 3RD STUDIO ALBUM OUT MAY 3RD 2024 SHOT BY @tyronelebon!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" the singer revealed on Instagram Wednesday, March 13, with the record's cover art in the post. Lipa wrote the caption over the album's cover art, which features the singer by herself in the middle of the ocean at dusk with what looks to be a shark's fin swimming close. Lipa also shared a list of its 11 tracks, which include hits like French Exit, Anything for Love, End of an Era, Happy for You, Illusion, and more.

"A couple years ago, a friend introduced me to the term Radical Optimism. It's a concept that resonated with me, and I became more curious as I started to play with it and weave it into my life," Lipa shared in a Wednesday statement, as per Us Weekly. She also shed light on the gist radical optimism, which is "the philosophy that argues for looking at the good in every part of life, based on reason and evidence," made her realize she could face anything that the universe made a problem. "It struck me – the idea of going through chaos gracefully and feeling like you can weather any storm," she said.

Tech

Elon Musk's SpaceX readies Starship for third test flight — will it explode like ones before?



Elon Musk's SpaceX's next-generation mega rocket is scheduled to take off on a critical test flight on Thursday with the goal of showcasing new technologies and procedures that will be essential for upcoming moon and beyond missions. According to SpaceX, the forthcoming launch will be the rocket's third and most ambitious test flight. The launch is highly anticipated since Starship, the roughly 400-foot-tall launcher, is anticipated to be a key component of NASA's return-to-the-moon programme. Starship is set to launch from SpaceX's Starbase test site in Boca Chica, Texas. The estimated time of liftoff is 8:30am ET, however it is subject to vary depending on the rocket's condition and

the local weather. Early on Thursday, SpaceX said that 70% of the weather was suitable for the test launch, according to NBC. Starting at approximately 8am ET, SpaceX's website will broadcast the launch live. SpaceX aims to show on this trip that Starship is capable of a controlled re-entry into Earth's atmosphere, ending with a splash-down in the Indian Ocean. Prior to it, the test comprises a number of distinct goals from the rocket's first two missions. This time, SpaceX aims to open and close the vehicle's payload door, activate one of Starship's Raptor engines while in orbit, and move propellant between two of Starship's tanks. Numerous of these methods could support SpaceX in executing upcoming satellite deployment missions and pave the way for moon landings as part of NASA's Artemis programme. NASA chose Starship to be the spacecraft that would transport humans to the moon for the future Artemis III mission, which is scheduled to launch in 2026.

Health

Rebutting myths: Can milk help you grow taller?

Some studies suggest that drinking milk increases height and decreases chances of stunted growth in children

Kids are often told that drinking milk will help them grow taller, but does it? Milk, no doubt is filled with nutrients, that are needed for human growth. It contains micro and macronutrients such as calcium, protein, and zinc, among others that affect growth and development, Very Well Health reported. However, studies suggest height, depends 80% on genetics. In children and teens Some studies suggest that drinking milk increases height and decreases the chances of stunted growth in children. But some also found that fac-

tors such as diet and access to healthcare also play a major role. In adults Calcium in milk is good for bones. It makes them stronger. However, milk is not the only source of it, other foods such as cheese, almonds and beans among others also have calcium in them. According to research, the human body stops growing after puberty so it can't make you any longer than you already are but it can make you grow stronger. What determines height? Doctors say height mostly depends on Deoxyri-

bonucleic acid (DNA), and more than 700 gene variants play a direct role in determining a person's height. However, factors that do play a role include: During gestation: Maternal nutrition. Mothers smoking habits. Usage of hazardous substances. During adolescents: Sleep. Physical activity. Infections/diseases. Nutrition.



دی اسٹینڈنگ ٹیگراف

ایسٹرن ایڈیشن

جمعہ المبارک 15 مارچ 2024ء

2 سابق وزراء اعظم کو سزائیں

سانچوالے جج محمد بشیر ریٹائر

اسلام آباد (پریس رپورٹ) دو سابق وزراء اعظم کو سزائیں سنائے والے جج محمد بشیر ریٹائر ہو گئے۔ جج محمد بشیر ریٹائر ہو گئے۔ جج محمد بشیر ریٹائر ہو گئے۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف کی زیر صدارت اجلاس جاری ہے۔

وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب کی مزدوروں، ورکرز کا جامع ڈیٹا مرتب کرنیکی ہدایت

مریم نواز کا مزدوروں کے تحفظ کو یقینی بنانے کیلئے رسک سیکٹر کی نشاندہی کیلئے عالمی معیار کو لیب قائم کرنے کا حکم

لاہور (پریس رپورٹ) وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب مریم نواز نے صوبہ بھر کے مزدوروں اور ورکرز کا جامع ڈیٹا مرتب کرنے کی ہدایت کر دی۔ وزیر اعلیٰ مریم نواز کی زیر صدارت خصوصی اجلاس ہوا جس میں ہزاروں ورکرز کو سوشل سیکورٹی فراہم کرنے کیلئے ضروری اقدامات کا جائزہ لیا گیا۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر عضو بندی اور ترقی احسن اقبال کے زیر صدارت اجلاس جاری ہے۔

پی او ایف ورکنگ ایسوسی ایشن کے انتخابات

حسین نواز خٹک جیتل کامیاب

گیٹلا، واہ ویگن (تارنگار) پی او ایف ورکنگ ایسوسی ایشن کے انتخابات میں حسین نواز خٹک جیتل ہوئے۔ حسین نواز خٹک جیتل ہوئے۔

گرافروٹوں کیلئے کارروائیوں کا سلسلہ جاری، راجہ رحیم

اکہ ڈسٹرکٹ رپورٹ) علیٰ آفیسری او آئی ٹی ڈی ویڈیو راجہ رحیم نے کہا ہے کہ حکومت پنجاب کی ہدایات اور ڈیڑھ لاکھ روپے کی رقم کے تحت کارروائیوں کا سلسلہ جاری ہے۔

پشاور ہا نیکیورٹ، سنی اتحاد کونسل کی مخصوص نشستوں کی درخواست مسترد

پولیتکل پارٹی کی تعریف یہ ہے کہ اس نے الیکشن میں حصہ لیا ہو، یہ نہیں کہ اسی الیکشن میں لازمی حصہ لیا ہو، فیڈیشنل ایڈووکیٹ جنرل مبشر منظور، دلائل مکمل ہونے پر 5 رکنی بینچ نے فیصلہ سناتے ہوئے درخواست خارج کر دی

پشاور (پریس رپورٹ) پشاور ہا نیکیورٹ سنی اتحاد کونسل کی درخواست خارج کر دی۔ سنی اتحاد کونسل کی درخواست خارج کر دی۔

امریکی بحری جہاز انڈیا پوسٹ کا کرپٹی کی بندرگاہ کا خیر سگالی دورہ

کراچی (پریس رپورٹ) امریکی بحری جہاز انڈیا پوسٹ نے کراچی کی بندرگاہ کا خیر سگالی دورہ کیا۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر توپانی صدق ملک پرائس کانفرنس سے خطاب کر رہے ہیں۔

پاکستان کی آئی ایم ایف کو تمام ترجیحی نکات پر عملدرآمد کی یقین دہانی

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) پاکستان اور عالمی مالیاتی فنڈ (آئی ایم ایف) کے مابین تمام ترجیحی نکات پر عملدرآمد کی یقین دہانی کی گئی۔

پیپلز پارٹی 4 لیگ اور جے یو آئی ایک ایک نشست پر دو بارہ پیپلز پارٹی

اسلام آباد کی نشست پر حکومتی اتحاد کے مشترکہ امیدوار یوسف رضا گیلانی اپنی ہی خانی کی ہوتی نشست پر دو بارہ پیپلز پارٹی، اسلم ایڈووکیٹ یوسف رضا گیلانی کا میا

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) پیپلز پارٹی کی نشستوں پر حکومتی اتحاد کے مشترکہ امیدوار یوسف رضا گیلانی اپنی ہی خانی کی ہوتی نشست پر دو بارہ پیپلز پارٹی، اسلم ایڈووکیٹ یوسف رضا گیلانی کا میا



غزہ کے پٹی کے جنوبی شہر خان میں اسرائیلی حملہ کے بعد ایک خاتون بچے کے سامنے آہ بکا کر رہی ہے۔

اسلام آباد ہائی کورٹ کا عمران خان سے ملاقات کا طریقہ کار طے کر نیکا حکم

بیمبر سے پاس 7 ہزار قیدی ہیں، عدالت نے پوپے 16 افراد کو ملنے کی اجازت دی جو ہمارے لئے ممکن نہیں، پیر سٹینڈنٹ ڈیپارٹمنٹ

اسلام آباد (پریس رپورٹ) اسلام آباد ہائی کورٹ نے عمران خان سے ملاقات کا طریقہ کار طے کر نیکا حکم دیا۔

پنجاب ثقافتی دیہاڑے "سومنا پنجاب" کے عنوان سے مناس کا انعقاد

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) پنجاب کی تہذیب و ثقافت اپنے حسن اور دلہنہ پری کے باعث پوری دنیا میں مشہور ہے۔



اسلام آباد، ہوا بازی کے وزیر خواجہ آصف کی زیر صدارت اجلاس جاری ہے۔

پشاور پولیس موہاں پر حملے میں رنجی ایس آئی 2 روز بعد چل بسا

پشاور (پریس رپورٹ) پشاور کے علاقے چنی گٹ ڈاک گھر میں پولیس موہاں پر ہونے والی فائرنگ میں رنجی ایس آئی 2 روز بعد چل بسا۔

سعودی عرب نے ہر آزمائش میں پاکستان کا بھر پور ساتھ دیا، حسن نقوی

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) وفاقی وزیر داخلہ حسن نقوی نے سعودی سفیر نواف سعید المذکی نے عہدہ سنبھالنے پر مبارکباد دی۔

رمضان میں گرافروٹوں کو عوام کو لوٹنے کی اجازت نہیں دینگے، ڈپٹی کمشنر استور

اسٹور (پریس رپورٹ) ڈپٹی کمشنر استور نے رمضان کے روزوں میں گرافروٹوں کو عوام کو لوٹنے کی اجازت نہیں دینگے۔

آئے والا دروسوں میڈیا کا دور ہے، راجہ رضوان

چکوال (ڈسٹرکٹ رپورٹ) پیپلز پارٹی شیعہ چکوال کے صدر راجہ رضوان نے ڈیڑھ گھنٹے کے اجلاس میں کہا ہے کہ آئے والا دروسوں میڈیا کا دور ہے اور نوجوان نسل کے علاوہ تمام جماعتوں کو بھی عوام میں شامل ہونا چاہیے۔

پروٹیم مصنوعات کی قیمتوں میں ردوبدل کا کوئی امکان نہیں

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) اومرا نے پروٹیم مصنوعات کی قیمتوں میں ردوبدل کا کوئی امکان نہیں دیا۔

گرافروٹوں کیلئے کارروائیوں کا سلسلہ جاری، راجہ رحیم

اکہ ڈسٹرکٹ رپورٹ) علیٰ آفیسری او آئی ٹی ڈی ویڈیو راجہ رحیم نے کہا ہے کہ حکومت پنجاب کی ہدایات اور ڈیڑھ لاکھ روپے کی رقم کے تحت کارروائیوں کا سلسلہ جاری ہے۔

گرافروٹوں کو لگام ڈالنے کیلئے بلا امتیاز کارروائیاں جاری ہیں، ڈی سی اٹلک

بڑوں و بچوں کے سفر میں استحکام رکھنے کیلئے میڈن اوٹی کی کڑی نگرانی جاری رکھی جائیگی، راجہ عطا علی نے ہدایت کی۔

راولپنڈی شہر میں صفائی کیلئے کوشاں و پرعزم، آر ڈبلیو ایم سی ٹیم

راولپنڈی (سٹاف رپورٹ) راولپنڈی ویسٹ ڈسٹرکٹ کی طرف سے ڈیڑھ لاکھ روپے کی رقم سے کوشاں و پرعزم، آر ڈبلیو ایم سی ٹیم کی تشکیل کی گئی۔

کہیں پر بھی کلسٹر ڈسٹرکشن کی کوئی شکایت نہیں ہونی چاہیے، کمشنر راولپنڈی

راش پٹیج ڈسٹرکشن کے ساتھ ساتھ دیگر ڈسٹرکشنز کی ویلنکس کا عمل بھی جلد مکمل کیا جائے، ڈی سی اٹلک نے ہدایت کی۔

سعودی عرب نے ہر آزمائش میں پاکستان کا بھر پور ساتھ دیا، حسن نقوی

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹ) وفاقی وزیر داخلہ حسن نقوی نے سعودی سفیر نواف سعید المذکی نے عہدہ سنبھالنے پر مبارکباد دی۔

پشاور پولیس موہاں پر حملے میں رنجی ایس آئی 2 روز بعد چل بسا

پشاور (پریس رپورٹ) پشاور کے علاقے چنی گٹ ڈاک گھر میں پولیس موہاں پر ہونے والی فائرنگ میں رنجی ایس آئی 2 روز بعد چل بسا۔

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Court cancels Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Nawaz's arrest warrants, approves bail

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad on Thursday approved bail of former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's sons, Hasan Nawaz Sharif and Hussain Nawaz Sharif, in exchange for Rs50,000 bond each in the three references pertaining to Al-Azizia Steel Mill, Avenfield apartments and Flagship. The court also cancelled the brother's perpetual arrest warrants and fugitive status in the said cases. Hasan and Hussain had to appear before the accountability court on Thursday to get their perpetual arrest warrants suspended, as they were given relief by the court till March 14. On request of the defendants' counsel, Qazi Misbah, the court adjourned further hearing of the case till today (Friday).

Upon petitions filed by Nawaz Sharif's sons for acquittal, the accountability court issued a notice to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Whereas, Qazi Misbah filed a petition for appointment of his clients' pleader saying the petition regarding the pleader was being lodged for security reasons. Upon which, Rana Irfan was appointed as their pleader. Presenting arguments, Qazi Misbah said, he had pleaded to suspend his clients' perpetual arrest warrants on previous hearing. Since the suspects had surrendered themselves as per the court's condition, their warrants should be cancelled, he said.

Accountability court judge Nasir Javed inquired if Hasan and Hussain were nominated in the three references. The counsel replied in affirmative saying they were nominated in the cases as co-accused. He added the trial court had vindicated them in the Flagship reference.

While, he said, all the accused were acquitted by the high court in the Al-Azizia and Avenfield references with the exception of his clients, who weren't able to appear before the court.

The judge asked if the suspects would leave the country soon. The lawyer said for the time being they were in the country. Following that, the court adjourned the hearing till today (Friday). SABAH

Envoy discusses matters of Pakistani Prisoners with Malaysian authority

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan High Commissioner in Malaysia Syed Ahsan Raza Shah on Thursday met Commissioner General of Prisons Datuk Haji Nordin in Kuala Lumpur and discussed matters pertaining to welfare of Pakistanis in Malaysian prisons were discussed.

The High Commissioner thanked the Malaysian Commissioner General for regular consular access and facilities provided to Pakistanis.

In the meeting, it was agreed to maintain regular contact for early finalization of Transfer of Prisoners agreement. APP



ISLAMABAD: The IMF Mission Chief for Pakistan Mr. Nathan Porter and Federal Minister for Finance Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb along with their teams started second review of Stand-by Arrangement.

PM Shehbaz led govt committed to 'charter of economy & reconciliation': Tarar

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to the "charter of economy and reconciliation" for fully restoring the political and economic stability in the country.

Speaking in a talk show on private media, the minister welcomed the active participation of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the ongoing democratic process including the election of all the constitutional positions including the President and Prime Minister.

To a query, he said the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur held the other day in a pleasant environment and matters of mutual interest came under discussion. The minister also hailed the subsequent joint media talk of the KPK chief minister and Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal as a good initiative for democracy.

He also welcomed the coordination between the federation and the province. Tarar said it was Prime Minister Shehbaz

Tarar said it was Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who had not only passionately advocated for the charter of economy among all the stakeholders but also for the charter of reconciliation. Until or unless there was nothing anti-state, the matters should be resolved through reconciliation

Sharif who had not only passionately advocated for the charter of economy among all the stakeholders but also for the charter of reconciliation. Until or unless there was nothing anti-state, the matters should be resolved through reconciliation, he remarked. He also regretted the violations of the law committed by the PTI while recalling the wrong precedents set by the party during its rule. To a query, he said independent elected members were given three days to join a party in the House while the reserved seats were only allocated to the political parties of the House.

A party that had not participated in the election was not entitled to the reserved seats, he added. Had the independent candidates joined a party in the House, the situation would have been different, he said while asking whether the Sunni Ittehad Council had released any list of reserved seats before the election. Sunni Unity Council had not secured any seat in the House, nor participated in the election, the minister noted. He said the government was committed to the right of freedom of expression and the national interests as well. There should be a code of conduct for social media platforms, he stressed.

AJK President calls for the European Union's role to help resolve Kashmir dispute

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu Kashmir State President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the European Union can play an important role as a mediator between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. He expressed these views while talking to the Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka and Political Consul Rukiye Komurcu, who called on him at the Presidency in Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Thursday, the AJK President's office said. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK president said that the long-running dispute posed a serious threat to peace and security in South Asia. Stressing the need for early settlement of the dispute, Barrister Chaudhry said that the Kashmir conflict could lead to a nuclear war between the two nuclear powers, Pakistan and India. "Any mishap, no matter how small or big, can be a precursor to a nuclear war between the two nuclear neighbors," the president said. Given the volatile situation in the region, Barrister Chaudhry expressed that the European Union should appoint its special representative on Kashmir to help resolve the Kashmir issue amicably. INP

CM KP Ali Amin Gandapur held meeting with PM Shehbaz with permission of Imran Khan: Barrister Gohar

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has said founder PTI Imran Khan had knowledge of meeting between Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur. In an interview, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said being party we take all decisions after developing consensus. He said Ali Amin Gandapur is a chief executive of a province and a number of funds of this province are with the federal government. He said there were number of issues due to which meeting was necessary.

He said meeting between provincial and centre heads is also a constitutional restriction, adding we have to maintain this working relationship. He said for the rights of the province, Ali Amin Gandapur would go anywhere. Gohar Khan said that Chief Minister KPK is working hard and "we hope that all those funds which are with the federal government would be obtained by the provincial government."

Gohar Khan said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur held meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with the permission of Imran Khan.

Meanwhile PTI leader Zartaj Gul during an interview said that by holding meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz, Ali Amin Gandapur has given a good message as he talked about his province which shows he is able to head the province. Zartaj Gul further said that now Punjab should observe its status. We are the people who were being punished because we stood by Imran Khan or took up voice of truth, she said, adding on other side statements like 'she would sternly deal with' are coming. SABAH

US Navy ship arrives Pakistan to conduct sea exercise with Pak Navy



on contemporary issues besides planning and coordination meeting for conduct of joint sea exercise.

At sea Pakistan Navy Ship ALAM-GIR with embarked helicopter carried out sea exercise with visiting US Navy ship to enhance interoperability between both navies. The sea exercise was aimed to strengthen mutual professional

skills through cooperation and learning from each other experience. Pakistan Navy, in line with government policy, has always contributed significantly towards safety, security and freedom of navigation at high seas. In this regard Pakistan Navy's Regional Maritime Security Patrol and participation in Coalition Maritime Forces operations since 2004 is a manifestation of PN resolve for safe and secure seas for common cause of peace and stability in the region. PR

During the stay at Karachi, activities included professional interaction with PN officials and Ship's crew in the form of table top discussions

KARACHI: US Navy Ship USS INDIANAPOLIS, Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) here on Thursday visited Karachi Port and conducted a sea drill with the Pakistan Navy. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), upon arrival at Karachi, US Navy Ship was received by senior officials of Pakistan Navy.

CEC dismisses speculation of foreign ambassador appointment



ISLAMABAD: The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Thursday rejected the

rumors of being appointed as an ambassador for a foreign country, clarifying that neither has the government made any offer nor does he have any intention of accepting such a position.

A spokesperson of the ECP stated in a press release that the CEC will remain in the country after completing his current tenure and has no interest in seeking any assignments abroad.

The ECP issued a warning to those spreading and inciting rumors, urging them to act responsibly to avoid legal consequences. The CEC is adept at dealing with such individuals and anti-state elements. APP

President of Iran's visit could seal free trade agreement, says Ambassador

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on Thursday said that there is a strong possibility that the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will be finalized in the upcoming visit of the President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan.

He said that from the upcoming visit of the Iranian president to Pakistan, there will be several bilateral economic and trade agreements between the two countries. He said that the agreements will further strengthen the mutual economic and trade relations along with promoting the bilateral business between the two countries. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam made these remarks during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) at the invitation of President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar

The Ambassador emphasized the closeness of maritime links between the two countries, especially Karachi and Gwadar and Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports. He said that Gwadar and Chabahar should be declared as sister ports.

He said that it is the era of trade links and at this time both countries need to connect with regional and global trade through these ports. He said that the Pakistan-China Trade Corridor and BRI projects also have strong prospects for economic and trade integration.

He said that the world is currently being connected and both countries can make their place in the global trade market by connecting to the North-South and East-West trade corridors. He said that both countries can be connected with markets of Central Asian and European mar-



Bakhtawri here on Thursday.

The Iranian ambassador said that the current bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Iran is \$2.5 billion, which has increased by 11 percent in the last 11 months.

He said that after the FTA and bilateral agreements between the two governments for the promotion of mutual trade, there is a strong possibility of doubling the mutual trade between Pakistan and Iran to reach \$5 billion in the next few years.

He said that the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is a huge facility for the people of Pakistan on behalf of the government of Iran, which will benefit both the domestic and industrial sectors of Pakistan.

He said that Iran completed its section of the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline in 2009 at a cost of \$1 billion, bringing it to Pakistan's border to help resolve the country's energy problems. Iranian Envoy said that Iran is already trading with Turkey, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan in the sector of energy and gas and Pakistan can also adopt the procedure adopted with these countries.

Dr. Reza Amiri said that Iran has a banking channel with Turkey, Bahrain, and Iraq, and Pakistan can follow this procedure.

He said that Pakistan and Iran need to have strong air, maritime, and sea links, which will strengthen the economic relations between the two countries. He said Pakistan will also be connected to regional and global trade with these connections.

He said that Pakistan and Iran can fulfill 70 percent of each other's needs by engaging in mutual trade. He highlighted that Iran imports halal meat and Pakistan can do a lot of work in this sector.

The ambassador said that Iran is issuing electronic visas to Pakistani businessmen and easing the process of getting visas. He said that the relations between the business community of Pakistan and Iran, especially Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce and Industry, should be further improved.

Meanwhile addressing the forum, the President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri said that Pakistan and Iran's trade volume exceeds \$2.5 billion annually, with Pakistan selling rice and other products to its neighbor, while people living in the border area of Balochistan save money by buying Iranian food and goods from traders across the border.

He said that as part of a five-year trade cooperation plan for 2023-2028, Pakistan and Iran aim to increase the annual trade volume between the two countries to \$5 billion. President ICCI said that the two countries are also members of various regional and international fora such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Iran's forthcoming full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) further facilitates expanded interaction and collaboration between Pakistan and Iran. APP

PUC spearheads nationwide observance of 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia' on Friday

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) is set to lead the charge in commemorating the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on Friday with a nationwide campaign in a bid to raise awareness and foster solidarity against discrimination targeting Muslims. This day, designated by the United Nations in 2022, is commemorated in 140 countries on March 15, worldwide, coinciding with the anniversary of the Christchurch mosque shootings, where 51 individuals lost their lives during Friday prayers. Talking to Arab media, PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi underscored the alarming rise of Islamophobia as a global threat to Muslims. He urged world powers to accelerate their efforts in eradicating Islamophobia, emphasizing the urgent need for swift action.

Ashrafi stressed the collective responsibility of the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other international entities to spearhead initiatives aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination. He emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of love, tolerance, and coexistence as fundamen-

tal pillars of a harmonious global society. Ashrafi underscored gravity of the situation and urgent need for concerted efforts at both the national and international levels to address the scourge of Islamophobia and uphold the principles of equality and



mutual respect among diverse religious communities. Ashrafi said the day holds significant importance, particularly for the PUC, which has long been at the forefront of advocating for religious tolerance and understanding.

Urging unity and collective action,

he called upon Ulema (religious scholars) and Mashaykh (religious leaders) from all schools of thought to utilize their Friday sermons to highlight the significance of this day and emphasize the importance of respecting religious diversity. With Islamophobia on the rise glob-

ally, Ashrafi said the council's initiative comes at a pivotal moment, aiming to dispel misconceptions, foster dialogue, and promote mutual understanding among different faith communities. He said the council's commitment to combating discrimination aligns with the fundamental

principles of human rights and religious freedom enshrined in international law.

By standing together and amplifying their voices, he said the council wants to create a more inclusive society where all individuals can live free from fear and discrimination based on their religious beliefs. Furthermore, Ashrafi expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Saudi leadership for their unwavering support and pivotal role in advocating for legal rights of the Muslim Ummah on the global stage. He commended Saudi Arabia's consistent efforts to champion the cause of Muslims and uphold justice at international forums.

The resolution for this day was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and was unanimously adopted by the 193-member world body. It was co-sponsored by 55 predominantly Muslim countries, emphasizing the fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief. Furthermore, it recalls a 1981 resolution urging for the eradication of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief. APP