



"We have 9.4 trillion annual revenues and half of our economy has been undocumented"

Pakistan's Finance Minister
Muhammad Aurangzeb

Undocumented economy has been biggest challenge: Aurangzeb

RIYADH: Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that the undocumented economy has been the biggest challenge for the country. Speaking at the World Economic Forum special meeting at Riyadh on Sunday, finance minister said that around 10 trillion tax circulating in the market. "We are considering over moving to digital currency," Aurangzeb further said. "We have 9.4 trillion annual revenues and half of our economy has been undocumented," Finance Minister said. He said that the government providing cash assistance to entitled women as income support. Beneficiary women want to get the cash by digital vault, he added. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaking at the World Economic Forum special meeting said some countries including Pakistan facing economic hardships. The IMF chief said some countries are doing well, but others are "falling behind," without providing further clarification. IMF chief said that Covid-19 pandemic hit hard to the economies of low-income countries. "The global economic suffered 3.3 trillion dollars loss during the pandemic Kristalina Georgieva said. INP

Immediate actions would be taken to upgrade the NADRA center in Shimla Pahari: Mohsin Naqvi



LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi visited the operational NADRA center in Shimla Pahari, Lahore, which operates continuously and handles a high influx of visitors, leading to a significant accumulation of grievances from citizens. During the visit, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi acknowledged the complaints raised by citizens and the apparent shortage of staff at the NADRA center. He assured citizens that immediate actions would be taken to upgrade the NADRA center in Shimla Pahari to a model facility, effectively addressing citizen grievances. Mohsin Naqvi also committed to resolving issues related to delays and prolonged waiting times. A senior citizen, expressing appreciation for the minister's visit, expressed optimism that long-standing issues would be aptly resolved. Additionally, citizens, while interacting with Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, expressed confidence in his capacity to enhance services at the NADRA Center, recognizing his esteemed reputation. SABAH



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the panelists of a session "Redefining Global Health Agenda" of World Economic Forum's Special Meeting on Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy for Development. APP

Saudi minister declares PM Shehbaz "Man of Action" as he highlights Pakistan's investment potential, policies

VOM Report

RIYADH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was declared the "Man of Action" by a Saudi minister on Sunday in recognition of his commitment to reviving Pakistan's economy through massive reforms and foreign investment. This acknowledgment came during his busy day in Riyadh, where he met different leaders and addressed a special meeting of the World Economic Forum. During the day, the prime minister held meetings with Saudi Minister for Investment Khalid Al-Falih, Minister for Finance Mohammad Al-Jadaan, and Minister for Industry Bandar bin Ibrahim Alkhourayef, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva and Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In his meeting with the prime minister on the margins of the Forum, Saudi Minister for Investment Khalid Al-Falih called him a "Man of Action," recognizing his performance and speed of work, along with his commitment to contributing to Pakistan's development and progress. This is the second time Shehbaz Sharif has earned such a distinction from foreign leadership as earlier, he was given the title of "Shehbaz Speed" by a Chinese leader to acknowledge his swift execution of development projects while serving as Punjab chief minister. "We are all aware of your performance and speed of work," the Saudi minister said, adding that the prime minister was advancing the mission of progress in Pakistan, with their full support. "Your mission is our mission," he remarked.

PM attends Special Dialogue, Gala Dinner hosted by Saudi Crown Prince

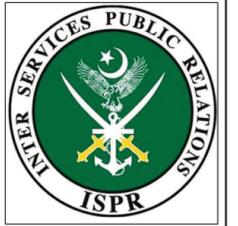


RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attended the Special Dialogue and Gala Dinner Sunday evening hosted by Saudi Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman during the ongoing Special Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh. During the event, the Prime Minister exchanged views with His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. He congratulated the Saudi leadership on the successful organization of the WEF Special Meeting and the excellent arrangements by the hosts. While recalling their recent meeting in Makkah during his visit to Saudi Arabia during Ramadan, the Prime Minister thanked His Royal Highness the Crown Prince for sending a high-powered delegation to Pakistan led by Foreign Minister His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah. The delegation held extensive discussion with their Pakistani counterparts on ways to enhance the portfolio of Saudi investments in Pakistan. To continue the discussion, the Prime Minister said that he has brought with him a high-powered delegation to Riyadh, including key Ministers responsible for investment, so that follow up meetings could take place between relevant officials. The Prime Minister conveyed his prayers and good wishes for the health, happiness and long life of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

During the meeting, it was agreed that Saudi Arabia would further explore opportunities of investment in Pakistan. He reaffirmed the support of Saudi Arabia in the economic progress of Pakistan and called the "progress of Pakistan the progress of Saudi Arabia". He said that Saudi Arabia had made difficult decisions for reforms at the government level regarding its Vision 2030.

Two terrorists gunned down in DI Khan IBO

RAWALPINDI: Two terrorists involved in target killing and extortion were shot dead during an intense exchange of fire between militants and security forces in Dera Ismail Khan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. As per the military's media wing, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Dera Ismail Khan on reported presence of terrorists today (April 28). "During conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, and resultantly two terrorists; terrorist Faheem Nawaz alias Gandapuri and terrorist Mohsin Nawaz were successfully neutralised and sent to hell," the ISPR stated.



The brief statement issued by the military's media wing stated that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the slain terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces and innocent civilians via target killings and extortion. It said that a sanitization operation was being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. The ISPR reaffirmed Pakistan security forces' determination to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country. As Pakistan witnesses a sharp rise in militancy, the military and armed forces have been actively engaged in actions to eliminate terrorists. On Saturday, the security forces killed a terrorist and injured another in a gun battle in Balochistan's district Harnai, the ISPR stated. The exchange of fire took place as the security forces reacted immediately and effectively engaged the terrorists trying to intercept civilian vehicles on Sanjavi Road, it added. PR

King Salman relief center extends emergency assistance to flood-affected families

ISLAMABAD: In a wake of the devastating floods due to heavy rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Baluchistan, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) has taken swift action by dispatching 9,000 Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) kits to address the pressing needs of the flood-affected population of both the provinces. Comprising essential relief items such as shelters, solar panels, blankets, plastic mats, kitchen sets, water coolers, and antibacterial soap, these 9,000 Shelter NFIs kits offer comprehensive support to 63,000 individuals, providing critical relief amidst the crisis, said a press release issued here on Sunday. "These provisions will directly benefit recent flood victims residing in five districts of KP (Upper Dir, Lower Chitral, SWAT, Charsada, D.I. Khan) and three districts of Baluchistan (Gwadar, Chaghi, Pishin). — VOM Report

Minister links progress to education

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said on Sunday that Islam underlines the importance of education and cleanliness and no nation could excel without acquiring education. Addressing a convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University held at Idara-i Nazaria-i-Pakistan here, he said he was honoured to attend the ceremony and congratulated the students for completing their degrees. He said, "The credit goes to teachers, parents and Allama Iqbal Open University for producing such talented students." Azam Nazeer Tarar said being Pakistani it was a matter of pride for all of us that Allama Iqbal Open University had been established in 1974 as a first distance learning university in the region. "Education is a personality building instrument and it also refines a person. An educated person or an educated mother contributes a lot to

society besides helping rise standards," he added. Azam said that country was full of potential and Pakistanis were proving their mettle in various fields all over the world. "It is a high time to make collective efforts to steer the country out of existing challenges," he maintained. The federal minister said that good teachers, skillful staff and best policies were required for making a prestigious university. "Education and health are among top priorities of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. When he served as Punjab Chief Minister in past, he had focused on school education, restructuring of universities and improvement of examination centres. It is the responsibility of the state to provide inexpensive education to children. It is a government responsibility to ensure a uniform system of education in the country so that the sense of disparity could be eliminated," he added. APP

Two-day 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' to start on May 2

ISLAMABAD: The third two-day, "Tashkent International Investment Forum" (TIIF) will be held on May 2-3, this year in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. The forum is organized at the initiative of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who will participate in the event. Two-day 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' to start on May 2. Meanwhile, 30 businessmen and investors from different sectors from Pakistan will participate in the third Tashkent International Investment Forum, in which mutual economic and investment meetings will be held between the two countries, said a release issued here. More than 2500 investor's, delegates from different countries and various businessmen will participate in the "Tashkent International Investment Forum," who will discuss the promotion of investment and regional business. The TIIF aimed at attracting foreign companies, investors and development partners to expand their activities as well as implement new projects and programs.

Continued on page 4

Deputy PM Ishaq Dar reiterates Pakistan's commitment to DCO's mission of enabling Digital Prosperity for All

Meets with the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization Deemah Al Yahya in Riyadh



RIYADH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) Deemah Al Yahya in Riyadh on Sunday. They discussed multi-stakeholder cooperation to bridge the digital divide and avenues of cooperation in promoting financial inclusion through digital economy, particularly for women and young people. Deputy PM reiterated Pakistan's commitment to DCO's mission of enabling Digital Prosperity for All. Pakistan will host the inaugural DCO-WEF Digital FDI Forum later this year. SABAH

First Margalla Hills Half marathon best effort to champion climate awareness: Romina

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Sunday appreciated the civil society's spirit to promote running as a healthy leisure activity and termed the first-ever Margalla Hills Half Marathon held at the scenic Trail-5 of the National Park as a best effort to champion climate awareness. Addressing the Margalla Hills Half Marathon which is the first and only trail running half marathon in the federal capital organised by the pioneer group of running, Islamabad 'Run With Us' as chief guest, the Prime Minister's Coordinator extended her felicitations to the winning athletes and participants for actively participating in the adventurous endeavour and championing the climate awareness. More than 150 participants from all across Pakistan including members of

diplomatic community, foreigners and experienced runners joined running on all the main trails of Margalla Hills covering an area of 21.1 kilometers, including the portion of Margalla Road from Trail 5 to Japanese Zoo parking and Pirsohawa Road from Talhar Mor to Monal Restaurant. Romina said the participants of the Half Marathon were the real celebrities of the event that deserve praise alongside the organisers of the activity. She added that climate and sustainable development goals (SDGs) are her passion for spearheading the climate agenda at the policy level which is also the need of the hour. The Minister on the occasion refused to take water in single-use plastic bottle as part of her flagship campaign and awareness drive to apprise masses to end one-time use plastics under the ban being imposed across the federal capital. "The nature and the planet is our mother and we turn to it for solace to get rid of our vagaries of life and have to ensure its



conservation. Say no to plastics and I am championing it, whereas media is our messenger and should carry forward this message as well," she said. She congratulated the marathon winners

and participants and lauded their determination to walk for nature. "Everyone got their reward in the form of the best clean air and natural environment during the marathon," she added. Chairperson, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), Rina Saeed Khan thanked the media for supporting the cause of environmental conservation and mass awareness on responsible role towards nature. Khan also lauded the Prime Minister's Coordinator for her warm support to the IWMB as a great supporter and advocate of the environment. "She (Romina) has a positive attitude and tremendous support towards IWMB and the Board will invite her on all its events," she added. The IWMB chair said that the marathon was a great experience and would be encouraged in the future as well. "IWMB has over 100 volunteers who are working without any reward and freely work on picking garbage from trails. We request visitors to enjoy nature but don't

litter and create noise and avoid staying in national park after sunset as most of the wildlife is nocturnal," Rina Saeed said. Founder of Islamabad Run With Us, Qasim Naz said that the main objective of the event was to promote a healthy lifestyle and create awareness to preserve the mesmerizing beauty of Margalla Hills National Park. He informed the participants that Islamabad Run With Us is the first community running club that started in 2016 and had held 600 events so far and also organise four races throughout the year including the Islamabad Half Marathon in April. "This time, due to Ramazan, there has been very little media campaign for the event within 8-9 days of social media campaign, Margalla Hills half marathon has bagged 150 participants that started running at 6:30 am and ended at 10:30am," he said. PM's Coordinator, Romina Khurshid Alam conferred the awards to the winners whereas in the female category, Sadia Maqbool stood third, Emily (a US National) got second position whereas Inab Khan was the winner who is also the member of running squad of IRWS and an international marathon runner. In the male category, the third position was secured by Athar Akhtar, second by Waqar Ahmed and the winner was Muhammad Akhtar. At the end Qasim Naz presented mementos to PM's Coordinator Romina Khurshid Alam and the Coordinator gave away the memento to Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan. CEO, North Naturals (co-partner of the event), Israr Uddin thanked the PM's Coordinator and organisers of the event for making the event a success and the leadership by the government. He said Pakistan existed in the geographical region prone to disasters and volatile ecosystems that needed special attention of all quarters of the society and his organisation through its products was playing that role.

Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan
 Editor: Muhammad Hasam
 Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,
 Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad
 Phone: + 92 51 8354964

A broken, bleeding society

GHAZI SALAHUDDIN

Every morning when I pick up the newspapers, I wonder if I will find a particular news, datelined Karachi, that is reported rather infrequently – once a fortnight or a month. The suspense lingers for a little while because it does not make the outer pages. In fact, it is surreptitiously buried in the inside or city pages. And it is invariably a very brief and single-column snippet.

What could it be? Besides, how could a news that reports a happening or an event be a repetition of what had been reported earlier? Only statements made by high officials and political leaders make big headlines even when they are exact repetitions of what had been said earlier. This means that I need to be more explicit about what I am saying. So, here is an example of what I found in a newspaper on Thursday. A suspected thief was lynched by a mob near Tariq Road the previous evening. Reportedly, the “suspect had barged into a house near the Noorani Kabab intersection to steal some valuable item”. Obviously, he was caught by the people who started beating him. He died on the spot. After his body was shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, the police surgeon said that the suspected thief, aged between 25 and 30 years, bore injuries with multiple fractures and open wounds. I would admit that this is not such an important incident, considering what else is happening in the country, including within the ambit of violent crime. Yes, an alarming increase in street crime in Karachi is troubling the authorities and high-level meetings have been held to discuss the law and order situation. A number of encounters between the police and armed criminals have been reported with tragic loss of life here and there.

But I feel very disturbed by the incidents of lynching of suspects that have almost become a ritual in Karachi. It has happened again and again. I also find it notable that this week's incident has taken place in a somewhat upscale locality. Tariq Road is a popular shopping area and remains crowded. Previously, such mob violence was generally reported from outlying neighbourhoods. As I said, these incidents do not seem to ruffle any feathers. I have not seen any in-depth coverage of any specific lynching, with graphic eye-witness accounts and an exploration of the motivations of those who had participated in the act of literally killing a person they did not know. Relevant experts have to be quizzed to make some sense of this behaviour. After all, there have to be cogent reasons for whatever is happening to our society. Perhaps the relevant experts, if we do have them to spare their thoughts on these matters, would come up with observations that are beyond the comprehension of our rulers and policymakers. According to conventional wisdom, political and economic stability is the goal for us. But can we move in that direction without building our human resources, creating social harmony and attending to our moral and intellectual deprivations?

Though my focus here is on mob lynching in Karachi and, indirectly, on social decay and the brutalization of Pakistani society, the nation's attention is riveted on political, economic and juridical proceedings. Politics has always been the obsession of the national media. While politics is certainly crucial as a game of thrones, I have always felt that conditions in which ordinary people have to struggle for survival are not adequately projected in the media. I think that any one of the many heinous crimes and fatalities that have recently shocked the people – and there have been many – could serve as a mirror of our society, raising issues that demand the urgent attention of the rulers. Some of these stories do create a lot of buzz in the media but they are seldom followed up on and meticulously probed. There is one such story that made me lose my sleep and I mention it only in support of my contention that our society is in a really bad shape. Because of poverty and social injustice and difficulties that relate to mental health, those who live in the lower depths have to face challenges that we cannot even imagine. The story I have is of a desperate man who took the lives of his wife and seven children in Muzaffargarh earlier this month. The report I read said that he used a glass-cutting cleaver to kill his family. He then surrendered himself to the police. Not inclined to dwell more on it, one question that I ponder is whether our society is fundamentally different from other societies of even developing and politically unstable countries. When we look at the current political situation, we feel that we are an emotional and active people and that our young people are politically alive. On this point, let me pick a thread from my last column in which I had talked about my visit to the University of Karachi's campus. With its student body of 40,000, I had found the place quiet and listless. There were no signs of youthful energy or excitement. I had compared this state of affairs with the turmoil that was taking place on the campuses of major American universities.

It so happens that pro-Palestine protests on American campuses have remarkably picked up this week. What began at Columbia University last week, where about 100 students were arrested, has spread to dozens of campuses and police have intervened in many places. In one video clip, visibly South Asian students were raising slogans for 'Azadi' – 'Hum kya mange, Azadi'.

This protest on American campuses is getting so serious and aggressive that there are references to the great revolt of the American students against the Vietnam War in the late sixties. But what is happening on our campuses? What are our students fighting for? And do they really care for human suffering – anywhere or in their own country?

The writer is a senior journalist. He can be reached at: ghazi_salahuddin@hotmail.com



Ammar Habib Khan

The power paradox

Lower electricity prices can stimulate industrial activity, which can catalyse economic growth. There is no dispute regarding this. However, how electricity prices can be reduced is a multi-faceted riddle that cannot be solved with linear thinking.

There is surplus power generation capacity in the country, which is not a bad thing – but that power generation capacity has largely been funded by debt denominated in foreign currency. An increase in interest rates globally, coupled with depreciation of the Pak rupee has led to escalation in the amount of local currency required to service such debt. The same local currency is effectively generated through electricity bills, resulting in a spiral of increase in electricity prices.

As electricity prices increase, the consumption of electricity decreases – which further increases burden on debt payments on electricity consumers, making up a significant proportion of capacity charges. If the scenario is not complex enough, there is significant seasonal variation in consumption of electricity, as consumption peaks during summer, while reverting to almost half of the peak during winter. Such significant variation results in pricing mismatch, as surplus capacity still needs to be paid for to support peak consumption during summer. Availability of such surplus capacity has an economic and financial cost attached to it,

which is passed on in the electricity bills.

To make things more complex, there is a mismatch between the composition of costs associated with generation, and the composition of price charged from consumers. Electricity generation costs are heavily skewed towards fixed costs, in terms of debt repayment costs, other operations and maintenance costs, and a fixed component for return on equity, etc. Meanwhile, revenue is collected predominantly on the basis of variable consumption. Such a mismatch is exacerbated during winter when variable consumption reduces, but fixed costs associated with generation capacity remain unchanged. To compensate for the mismatch, electricity price is increased further, which further reduces consumption. Adding another layer of complexity, almost 40 per cent of the country's residential consumers of electricity can be deemed as lifeline consumers, or those that consume less than 200 units of electricity in a month. Consumption of lifeline consumers is subsidized explicitly through the budget, and implicitly through cross-subsidy. In a cross-subsidy arrangement, industrial and commercial users are charged a higher price, to ensure that electricity remains affordable for lifeline consumers.

Linear thinking would entail complete elimination of cross-subsidies, but that would mean significantly increasing the burden of electricity prices on residential consumers, which would have a negative effect on welfare. More importantly, an increase in prices will further reduce their consumption – and push up capacity charges. This will also further incentivize residential consumers to accelerate a move off-

the-grid, thereby resulting in even greater destruction of demand of electricity on the grid.

The exodus from the grid has already begun, particularly from the richer households in the country. As more households either move off the grid, or opt for net metering, the capacity charges for the system will inadvertently be picked up by the poorer, and vulnerable households. Should households, and industrial/commercial units generating electricity from solar pay for excess capacity that is available, and which they do utilize, or should the bill of the same be footed by other consumers?

An argument here is that households can be considered as nano-power generators, which can sell electricity in a competitive market of electricity. But a competitive market for electricity cannot be developed till the elephant in the room – foreign currency debt, which accumulates to almost eight billion dollars – is addressed. An essential condition for a competitive market is low barriers to entry and exit, but due to excess capacity, and the accompanying financial cost, the barriers remain high.

If all of this wasn't enough, various taxes make up almost 30 per cent of a consumer's electricity bill. Although commercial and industrial users can adjust some of it, households do not have such luck. Effectively, electricity bills, ironically, act as a tool for the state's fiscal policy. The state gives a subsidy from one hand, thereby distorting the market, while taking back some of the same through various taxes. Such a manoeuvre distorts pricing signals, while unnecessarily burdening the consumers. Solving this riddle requires multiple

policy decisions to be taken in tandem, as well as sequentially. Reducing the mismatch between fixed generation costs and variable revenue, such that overall electricity bill does not change much on an annual basis, can reduce the mismatch, and subsequent subsidies, without burdening the consumers. Similarly, there exists a case for reducing various taxes that are imposed on electricity bills of residential consumers. Any reduction in this can be partially allocated towards reducing cross-subsidy that is provided by industries, while making them more competitive and increasing utilization of the grid. Similarly, necessary financial relief can also be provided to households, while making their electricity bills more predictable through reallocation of variable and fixed charges. The elephant in the room – the foreign currency debt which is paid by electricity consumers in lieu of capacity charges – needs to be resolved. This can be done through either socializing the costs through novating the debt from balance sheets of power plants to the sovereign, or the electricity consumer can continue to pay the same, thereby stunting growth in the process.

A restructuring of power sector debt remains critical to unlock electricity consumption. The inability to do this will continue to weigh on growth of consumption of electricity in the country, and inadvertently economic growth. There are no easy solutions here, but there is nothing here that hasn't been solved in different jurisdictions globally.

The writer is an independent macroeconomist.

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

Pakistan

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. It also produced a class of Muslim leaders experienced in organizing and mobilizing the public. This experience was of immense

value to the Muslims later during the Pakistan Movement. The collapse of the Khilafat Movement was followed by a period of bitter Hindu-Muslim antagonism. The Hindus organized two highly anti-Muslim movements, the Shudhi and the Sangathan. The former movement was designed to convert Muslims to Hinduism and the latter was meant to create solidarity among the Hindus in the event of communal conflict. In retaliation, the Muslims sponsored the Tabligh and Tanzim organizations to counter the impact of the Shudhi and the Sangathan. In the 1920s, the frequency of communal riots was unprecedented. Several Hindu-Muslim unity conferences were held to remove the causes of conflict, but, it seemed nothing could mitigate the intensity of communalism.

MUSLIM DEMAND SAFE-GUARDS

In the light of this situation, the Muslims revised their constitutional demands.

They now wanted preservation of their numerical majorities in the Punjab and Bengal, separation of Sindh from Bombay, constitution of Balochistan as a separate province and introduction of constitutional reforms in the North-West Frontier Province.

It was partly to press these demands that one section of the All-India Muslim League cooperated with the statutory commission sent by the British Government under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon in 1927.

SIMON COMMISSION

The other section of the League, which boycotted the Simon Commission for its all-White character, cooperated with the Nehru Committee,

appointed by the All-Parties Conference, to draft a constitution for India. The Nehru Report had an extremely anti-Muslim bias and the Congress leadership's refusal to amend it disillusioned even the moderate Muslims.

ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL
 Several leaders and thinkers, having insight into the Hindu-Muslim question proposed separation of Muslim India. However, the most lucid exposition of the inner feeling of the Muslim community was given by Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) in his Presidential Address at the All-India Muslim League Session at Allahabad in 1930. He suggested that for the healthy development of Islam in South-Asia, it was essential to have a separate Muslim state at least in the Muslim majority regions of the north-west.

To be continued...

Showbiz

Vin Diesel wishes 'Fast' costar Jordana Brewster in sweet birthday tribute

Vin Diesel and Jordana Brewster played the Toretto siblings on 'Fast and Furious'



Vin Diesel once again proved that when it comes to the Fast & Furious cast, nothing is more important than family. As his on-screen sister, Jordana Brewster, rang in her 44th birthday, Vin Diesel couldn't contain his emotions as he penned his birthday wish to her. Taking to his Instagram on Friday, April 26, Vin Diesel paid a heartwarming tribute to Brewster, posting a picture of the pair in a loving embrace, Brewster's bright smile visible. "That smile... The smile of joy, love, and light... one that represents the beautiful soul that you are," he began in the caption. "Blessed am I to call you my sister, both on screen and off... for more than two decades," he added.

Brewster plays Mia Toretto, sister of Vin Diesel's character Dominic Toretto, in the hit franchise, which began in 2009. Diesel continued, "Our brilliant accomplishments couldn't have been achieved without you..." He added, "The moments celebrating new life... or the hard times, when forced to reckon with losing a loved one... life itself has been better, because of you."

Tech

Latest discovery by astronomers challenges earlier beliefs about universe, galaxies

Astronomers from Durham University in the UK discovered old galaxies using a powerful James Webb Space Telescope which led them to challenge their pre-existing notions.

The study, published in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, noted that the galaxies that came into being just a few billion years after the Big Bang grew faster than earlier believed. The researchers noted in their study the structures called "star bars".

According to Space.com, star bars are described as elongated areas where the celestial object is dense similar to the centre of spiral galaxies. During their emergence, they push gas at the centre of the galaxy influencing the formation of a star. The findings of such bars suggest that a galaxy has passed the birth phase.

In a statement, a team leader at the Durham University, Zoe Le Conte said: "Galaxies in the early universe are maturing much faster than we thought. This is a real surprise because you would expect the universe at that stage to be very turbulent, with lots of collisions between galaxies and a lot of gas that hasn't yet transformed into stars." However, he said, thanks to the "James Webb Telescope, we are seeing a lot of these bars much earlier in the life of the universe, which means that galaxies were at a more settled stage in their evolution than previously thought. This means we will have to adjust our views on early galaxy evolution". The powerful telescope allowed scientists to see billions of years ago in the history of space more than Hubble Space Telescope, with experts hoping to find more by further research.

Stop farting by avoiding this food

Excessive farting can risk your stomach health

One of these unexpected food items is definitely the cause of your frequent gas episodes. Although farting is a typical part of the digestive process, no food item mentioned below should be totally forbidden, but it's always important to know how our food affects our body's processes. In addition, if persistent flatulence is interfering with your daily life, you might seek to reduce your intake of triggers and balance your diet by identifying which food is bad for your stomach. Not only do fried foods, snacks, and carbonated beverages make the list of foods that cause excessive farting; a variety of other common foods can

also cause intestinal distress.

Following are some of the common food items which cause farting.
Chicken like birds
 Turkey, duck, and chicken are rich in sulphur compounds, which are also responsible for the odour of farts.

"While poultry is generally considered a lean protein source, some individuals may experience flatulence after consuming poultry," nutrition coach and plant-based chef Lisa Marley told Metro UK.
Garlic, onions and more
 Compounds called fructans, which are fer-

mentable carbohydrates that some people find difficult to digest, are found in garlic, onions, leeks, and scallions.

Fructans enter the large intestine mostly undigested since the human digestive system is unable to metabolise them. Once food enters the large intestine, bacteria in the gut microbiome digest it, which causes severe flatulence.

Beef and pork
 Methionine, an amino acid present in beef, includes sulphur, which the body converts to hydrogen sulphide, the substance that causes farts.

Health



Pakistan's economy is on path of revival: SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed

Says our reserves have risen to around \$8 billion

KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmed has said that the firm commitment of the government and the SBP to respond to the macroeconomic challenges has resulted in significant improvement in the economy.

He was delivering his keynote address as the Chief Guest on the Members Convocation of ICMA Pakistan at a local hotel in Karachi.

Jameel Ahmed said Pakistan faced a very challenging macroeconomic environment a year ago. "Inflation reached as high as 38 percent; the Forex reserves were fast depleting; the exchange rate was under a lot of pressure; and uncertainty was quite high. However, today, inflation is coming down sharply; our reserves have risen to around \$8 billion despite heavy debt repayments and will so cross the \$9 billion mark; the current account deficit has narrowed quite significantly, and as a result, the PKR is stable. Uncertainty has also been reduced. Pakistan's bilateral and multilateral partners are continuing their support. And the stock market is reaching new highs", he said. The Governor SBP shared that progress was made possible because of a firm commitment of the government and the SBP to respond to the macroeconomic challenges effectively. He shared that unpopular yet necessary measures had to be taken. The State Bank raised the policy rate to 22 percent to reduce pressure on inflation and the current account deficit. The government also undertook fiscal consolidation by constraining non-essential current expenditures. This coordinated policy response is now yielding the desired results.

Jameel Ahmed stressed the need for fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to address the long-standing issues facing the economy. SABAH



BEIJING: Mr. Mike Liu, Vice President Centre for China & Globalisation, Mr. John Zhao, Director of external relations of the Global Young Leaders Dialogue, Ms. Lucy Tong, Strategy and Policy Consultant at AIB, Mr. Biman Liyanage, AI expert and Mr. Najeeb Haider, Director General, AIB speaking at a panel discussion during "Professionals and Students Forum" hosted by Pakistan Embassy.



BEIJING: A group photo of Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi with panelists at "Pakistan Professionals and Students Forum" hosted by Pakistan Embassy.

Sardar Masood Khan urges APPNA to explore health tourism; invest in IT

Says Palestinians' right to self-determination should be recognized

CHICAGO: "The solution for Palestine is written large on the wall. There should be immediate ceasefire. The humanitarian assistance should be resumed instantaneously. It should not be one corridor; it should not be one pier. There should be multiple corridors. Palestinians' right to self-determination should be recognized," said Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan.

Ambassador Masood Khan made these remarks addressing Spring Meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA)—the largest association of Pakistani diaspora who have been flying the flag of Pakistan in United States, Canada and around the world.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman and Congresswoman Delia Ramirez addressed the gathering. Addressing a jam packed hall of over 570 attendees comprising Pakistani American physicians, healthcare professionals, community leaders and other dignitaries, Masood Khan paid a glowing tribute to the services of APPNA for presenting a bright face of Pakistan and its people with their service to the humanity. The Ambassador thanked President APPNA Asif Mohiuddin and Chair Spring Meeting 2024 Sajid Mehmood, for providing him with an opportunity to attend and speak to an august gathering.

U.S. representative for Minnesota's 5th congressional district Ilhan Omar in her video message paid tribute to Pakistani physicians of APPNA for dedicating their lives to medical education and community service. "I am forever grateful in the ways in which you all show up to make sure our communities are taken care of," she observed.

Highlighting the important contribution being made by Pakistani diaspora especially physi-



cians in the US society, Ambassador told the audience that 18,000 Pakistani became American citizens this year—majority of them doctors and physicians. He highlighted that Pakistan and United States had two rounds of high-level health dialogue wherein the sides have taken momentous decisions to promote bilateral cooperation in healthcare. "We have requested US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help us establish a CDC in Pakistan for disease surveillance," stated the Ambassador. "We have also decided to invest our time, energy and resources in non-communicable diseases and prevention of child and maternal mortality," he added.

Highlighting significant investments being made by Pakistani-American doctors back home in telemedicine, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical transcription billing and other subsectors of healthcare, Masood Khan urged the doctors community to scale up their investments in Pakistan. "We can also experiment with the idea of health tourism on the model of Turkey," said the Ambassador. Another area

in which you can invest and some of you are investing already is IT," he added.

Masood Khan highlighted that the country has 192 million mobile phone users with 135 million broadband subscribers. This he said was a huge opportunity to capitalize in IT investments. "Pakistan is the most cost-effective country as far as IT is concerned," stated the Ambassador. "Do invest in Pakistan, do have confidence in Pakistan," urged the Ambassador. He reiterated that Pakistani diaspora in the United States, especially doctors, engineers and other professionals were the most abiding link in Pak-US equation. "It is very resilient bond and we are proud of it. This is an asset for Pakistan and for the United States," he observed.

Earlier, the Ambassador also interacted with Pakistani community at the residence of Consul General of Pakistan in Chicago. The attendees included business leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals and community leaders.

Addressing the gathering the Ambassador highlighted huge investment opportunities existing in Pakistan especially in IT, agriculture, renewable energy and extractives industries. He highlighted the critical role which was being played by Special Investment Facilitation Council in facilitating investments, removing hurdles and ensuring that the business community is provided with a congenial environment to undertake profitable business ventures in Pakistan. "Pakistan is poised to become tech hub in the region," said the Ambassador.

He highlighted young and talented human capital of the country and the exponential growth in tech industry during past few years that have created ideal conditions for scaling up investments and reap dividends of a huge market of the region. SABAH

Public services of welfare organizations must be acknowledged, says Governor

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has emphasized the need of acknowledging the public services of welfare organizations as it motivates other people too. He was talking to a delegation of Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation which called on him at Governor House Lahore on Sunday. The delegation comprised Chairperson Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, Cecilia Lazaro, founder and Executive Director of Akhuwat Foundation, Akhuwat Foundation, Abubakar Siddique and others. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that those who dedicate their lives for humanity are great.

While appreciating the welfare services of Amjad Saqib, head of Akhuwat Foundation, he said that conferment of Ramon Magsaysay Award on him is honour for the country. The Governor Punjab said that in Pakistan, Akhuwat, Edhi, Indus Foundation and other organizations like them are playing an important role alongside the government in poverty alleviation and social development. He said that people to people contact was very important in the relations between the two countries. He said that many foreign delegations meet him and tell him that got a different perception about Pakistan from media before visiting, but they found it otherwise. The participants of the delegation thanked the Punjab Governor for inviting them to the Governor House. While expressing their views, they said that the people of Pakistan are very hospitable. On this occasion, a visit to the Governor's House was also organized for the delegation.

Pak, China Edu Institutions to enhance collaboration promoting professional skills

BEIJING: Pak, China educational Institutions will enhance collaboration for promoting professional skills. Speakers at a Professionals and students Forum held here underlined the need of exploring various strategies and best practices for promoting mutual understanding between these two vital sectors. The theme of the Forum was "Building Bridges between Academia and Industry," China Economic Net reported.

The forum provided a platform for key stakeholders from academia and industry to engage in constructive dialogue and identify strategies to better align educational curricula with the needs of enterprises. Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi addressed the Forum, stating, as Pakistan continues to strengthen its economic ties with China through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it is essential to ensure that the country's workforce is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in this evolving landscape. Afifa Shajia Awais Education Attaché at Pakistan's Embassy in Beijing said that one of the key focal points of the forum was the role of academia in equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's dynamic job market. INP

Continuity of democracy only solution to all issues: Senate chairman

LAHORE: Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has said that continuity of democracy is the only solution to all national problems. He expressed these views while addressing the concluding session of the Asma Jahangir Conference 2024 as a special guest on Sunday. While keeping political differences aside, he said that all political parties should come together for the country's progress and fulfill their responsibilities. He said that elimination of violence and promotion of tolerance are essential for establishment of a peaceful society. He said that the Pakistan People's Party paid several sacrifices for the restoration of democracy. He said that the implementation of

the Constitution 1973 by the PPP founder leader and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a significant achievement.

He said that differences of opinion are a beauty of democracy, adding that everyone must play their role collectively for the national interest. He said that in our era, there were no political prisoners.

The senate chairman said that Asma Jahangir's services for human rights and democracy should always be remembered. He said that participating in the conference is an honor for him, and he congratulates both daughters and the organizer for the successful conference. — VOM Report

IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva expresses her concerns about the economic situation of Pakistan

RIYADH: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Sunday expressed her concerns about the economic situation of Pakistan. Kristalina Georgieva was speaking at a World Economic Forum (WEF) session in the capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. She said that China's performance in the first quarter was better than expected, while Pakistan was facing significant difficulties. According to Georgieva, Egypt has performed better but it still has difficulties. Expressing her thoughts she said: "The global economy had suffered more than \$3 trillion losses due to the coronavirus pandemic. The less developed countries had to face more losses due to the pandemic." Some countries, like China and Indonesia, had steered out of the coronavirus crisis. Speaking about the economic situation of advanced economies, Georgieva said: "The economy of the United States is better, but the situation in the Eurozone is not good." She said that the performance of emerging markets like Indonesia, Malaysia and India is also good. "The IMF has three basic priorities. The first priority is to bring inflation down to the target. It is also the IMF's target to create a balance between income and expenditures," said Georgieva. SABAH

Governor KP pays visit to Thandakoi Bazar in Peshawar city, meets with shopkeepers



shopkeepers, traders and people from different walks of life. In order to be safe from financial losses, he also appealed to take possible precautions including implementation of safety measures. The local population, business community, shopkeepers expressed their happiness and paid tribute to the Governor to visit the inner city.

The traders, shopkeepers and people from dif-

ferent walks of life appreciated the Governor for visiting and meeting with common people. It is for the first time that a Governor suddenly reached among the common people that is why (Haji Ghulam Ali) has earned the title of People's Governor across the province.

The citizens and businessmen expressed their happiness seeing the governor suddenly present in their midst and also informed the Governor about various problems and difficulties they are faced with. The people of the area said that Governor Haji Ghulam Ali not only met with the people himself, but also given easy access to the political and social personalities, including the general public to the Governor's House, which is highly commendable. Meanwhile, the Governor shook hands with the shopkeepers, met with them and got information about their problems and issues. He assured of his full cooperation to solve these problems on priority basis.

CPEC, Development Roads project to strengthen Pak-Turkiye bilateral trade volume, says senior Turkish MP



ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of Türkiye's ruling Justice and Development Party, Member of Parliament and Chairman of Pak-Turkiye Parliamentary Friendship Group, Ali Sahin, has said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Development Roads project will be helpful in increasing the volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Türkiye. He said Pakistan had significance in the world especially among Muslim countries and emphasized the need to strengthen trade ties between Pakistan and Türkiye.

Ali Sahin was talking to Head of Turk Pak Women Forum along with a group of Pakistani journalists in Ankara on Sunday. It is pertinent to mention that Ali Sahin also represents Türkiye in the NATO Parliament. He lived in Karachi from 1990 to 1997 for his higher education. He speaks Urdu fluently and during the interview he also spoke in Urdu. Ali Sahin said that people in Karachi had given him a lot of love and there were no words to describe the love of the people of Pakistan for Türkiye. He termed his stay in Pakistan a very fond and interesting experience. In response to a question, Ali Sahin said the love and devotion that Pakistan has with Türkiye would not be found anywhere else.

of economic and trade relations between the two countries to further improve the relations between them and to establish peace and order in the Middle East," he added. He said that Türkiye and Pakistan could make joint efforts to resolve the problem of Muslim countries and Ummah through mutual cooperation and mechanism. Ali Sahin said that Türkiye is working with Iraq, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE) on the important project of development roads and emphasized that Pakistan, Iran and China should also become part of this trade road project. He added that along with diplomatic and parliamentary relations, there is also a need to increase cultural relations. He mentioned that Türkiye was considering to produce a drama on Mahmud Ghaznavi. He favoured airing Pakistani dramas on Turkish channels and said that efforts would be made in this regard. He said that the Pakistani embassy in Ankara was playing an important role in promoting bilateral relations, especially Pakistani ambassador, Dr. Yousuf Junaid was always in touch with the Turkish government to facilitate the diaspora. He lauded the efforts of Turk Pakistan Women's Forum for promoting relations and bringing the people of both countries closer. APP

Two-day 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' to start on May 2

Continued from page 1

TIIF will serve as a unique platform of regional importance to promote business contacts with emphasis to such areas as digital transformation, transport connectivity, infrastructure development and green growth. The Tashkent International Investment Forum will be the region's largest international platform for discussing strategies to enhance Central Asia's role in the international investment market.

This event will create a new international platform for Central Asia, which will attract leaders of major investment, financial and economic organizations and companies interested in finding new growth points in the dynamically developing market of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Meanwhile addressing the business community in Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan,

Oybek Arif Usmanov said the 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' to be held on May 2 under the patronage of President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The ambassador highlighting the importance of 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' said that in this forum, foreign investors and businessmen will gather in Tashkent, to discuss bilateral and multilateral investment and business opportunities. He said that many agreements regarding investment and businesses will be signed during the forum, which will not only promote global investment but also businesses in the region.

Oybek Arif Usmanov said that major investment institutions and investors of the world will participate in the 'Tashkent International Investment Forum' which would provide a huge opportunity for multilateral cooperation to the partners. He said, it would be great opportunity for FPCCI to participate in this

international forum and become a part of the international investment. The Uzbek envoy said that there will be G2B and B2B meetings in the Tashkent Investment Forum.

"We need to start the Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor for smooth trade and economic activities," he said. He said that direct flights will be started from Islamabad and Lahore soon and we are committed to resolving visa issues as well to provide facility to the local business community. Meanwhile, President FPCCI, Atif Ikram Sheikh said that Tashkent International Investment Forum is a pivotal forum for global investment, which has great opportunities for Pakistani businessmen in various sector, in which the participation of Pakistani businessmen is extremely significant.

Atif Ikram said that Uzbekistan is an important trade partner of Pakistan with which Pakistan's economic and trade relations are extremely important. President FPCCI said that at

the end of 2023, mutual trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was \$387 million, which is an increase of 130 percent, compared to 2022, and adding that in the first quarter of 2024, the bilateral trade between the two countries was \$104 million, which is 107 increases as compared to same period last year 2023. He said Pakistan's exports with Uzbekistan have increased gradually in the previous years, which has to be further increased. He said that bilateral trade can be promoted in textile, pharmaceutical, rice, machinery, agriculture machinery, electromechanical and other sectors.

"We have to explore different avenues to further promote bilateral trade," he added. The high-ranking officials and business leaders from China, US, European Union, Gulf countries, Central Asia, South Asia and other regions will participate in the Forum with arrangement of bilateral, G2B and B2B meetings. APP