



Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the people and Government of Iran in fighting terrorism

Foreign Office spokesperson

Muntaz Zahra Baloch

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Israel's adventurism in region unacceptable; must be held accountable: FO

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday strongly condemning the recent attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria said the Israeli "adventurism" in the region was unacceptable. The Foreign Office spokesperson, in her weekly press briefing, said Israel must be held accountable for its irresponsible attack for its unabated atrocities in Gaza as well as the attack in an already volatile region. "Israel's adventurism in the region reached a new height with its irresponsible attack this week on the consular section of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, Syria. The attack is a violation of the UN Charter, international law, and Conventions," she remarked. She said over the past six months, Israeli authorities had been involved in cross and systematic violations of international humanitarian law by repeatedly targeting UNRWA, humanitarian relief organisations, and unarmed civilians. "The deliberate targeting of a humanitarian convoy bringing food to people facing famine is a serious violation of international humanitarian law."

Condemning the Israeli attacks on humanitarian convoys in Gaza, she called for international accountability of Israel for its crimes besides seeking "immediate, full, and effective" implementation of the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice. "We also reiterate our call for the full and expeditious implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2728, adopted on 25th of March, leading to a permanent ceasefire, lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance, and ensuring protection of civilians throughout the Gaza Strip," the spokesperson commented. She also condemned Thursday's terrorist attack in the cities of Rask and Chabahar in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, and conveyed Pakistan's solidarity with the government and people of Iran. Mentioning the ongoing visit of a high-level Iranian delegation to Pakistan, she said both countries had "re-engaged and re-established" all communication channels as existed before January this year. She said the government and the people of Pakistan looked forward to the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to their country.

Discussing the terrorist attack in Bisham that had killed Chinese nationals, the spokesperson said the law enforcement agencies were probing the incident and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fighting terrorism. She said the projects being executed by Chinese firms faced a temporary freeze following the terrorist attack but the work was resumed following the security audit. To a question, she reiterated that Pakistan would not hold any talks with TTP and expected the Afghan interim government to take action against the militant groups or forces involved in carrying out terror activities inside Pakistan. About the repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, the spokesperson said the policy was not Afghan-specific rather it featured the repatriation of all foreign nationals illegally staying in Pakistan. She said a limited number of foreigners were deported as the majority had returned voluntarily. She said there was no change in Pakistan's one-visa policy as all foreigners coming to Pakistan should carry valid passports and visas. She told the media that Secretary of National Security Division Waqar Ahmed visited Astana, Kazakhstan to attend the 19th meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which discussed the strategic security issues affecting the SCO member states with a focus on terrorism, extremism, human and transnational crimes. APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

New IMF programme crucial for economic stability: PM

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government was planning to enter a new programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which he said, was very important to consolidate the country's economy. "With the new IMF programme, the international institutions will have more trust on us and we will be able to move forward on the agenda of development and prosperity with more confidence," he said while speaking with the participants of the cabinet meeting held here under his chairmanship. He said the finance minister was going to Washington this month with a delegation to participate in the IMF spring meetings where he will also discuss details of the new programme with the IMF. He said although the terms of the new deal would not be so easy, but the government will shift the burden of the tough conditions from the less privileged to the wealthier. The prime minister hoped that after the IMF board meeting, the last tranche of existing standby agreement worth \$1.1 billion will be disbursed to Pakistan this month. With regard to PIA's divestment, he said the privatization process of Pakistan Airlines was on track and the schedule set for the process would be fully implemented. He said that for the outsourcing of the airports, a Turkish company was arriving Islamabad on April 6 which would negotiate the outsourcing process with the Pakistani authorities. About digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the

prime minister informed that the consultants for the digitization process would be appointed by end of the current month. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, he recently chaired a meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in which details of various sectors including finance, investment, exports, Information Technology, agriculture, power and petroleum were discussed. "After a detailed meeting, it was decided that I will personally review the sector wise performance to solve out the problems faced by the sectors and to streamline the country's economy," he added. The prime minister pointed out that the government had fulfilled its due responsibility with respect to the inquiry of the matter of letter by the Islamabad High Court judges by forming an inquiry commission led by former Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani. Afterward, he said Tassaduq Hussain Jilani refused from the commission, subsequently the Supreme Court took a suo motu notice of the letter. As regards of receiving letters by the judges with suspicious powder, the prime minister said the government was investigating the matter. "The government, with the sense of responsibility will also probe this matter to uncover the reality."

With respect to the security of the Chinese workers and engineers, the prime minister said the government was evolving a fool proof system for the security of the Chinese workers. The prime minister said the cabinet presented the finance division's Fiscal Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23, the Debt Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23

and the Year End Government Performance Monitoring Report in the meeting. The federal cabinet approved the submission of the above statements/report to the National Assembly under prevailing laws, he said. The meeting was told that the cabinet, on the recommendation of Foreign Affairs Division, allowed former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi to receive the "King Abdul Aziz Medal Badge of Honor of Excellent Class" on behalf of the Government of Saudi Arabia and "Darjah Kehaulwan Angkatan Tentera" on behalf of the Government of Malaysia. On the recommendation of Human Rights Division, the cabinet approved the appointment of the members of National Commission for Status of Women. Likewise, on the recommendation of Ministry of Human Rights, it approved the abolition of the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development, the National Child Protection Center and the Implementation of National Line of Action for Children, which are offices working under the Ministry of Human Rights. All the employees of these departments who are civil servants would be included in the surplus pool of Pakistan, the meeting was told. The meeting was also told that under the National Commission on Rights of Child Act 2017, the National Commission on the Rights of Child had been established therefore all other departments had become unnecessary as all the work related to these institutions is done by this commission. Keeping in view the austerity policy of the government, it has been decided to close these institutions, the meeting was told.

Pakistan desires to enhance energy, barter trade cooperation with Russia: President



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday said that Pakistan desired to enhance bilateral cooperation with Russia, particularly in the fields of energy and barter trade.

The president, in a meeting with Russian Ambassador in Islamabad Albert P. Khorev, who called on him here, emphasized that Russian banks should be persuaded to launch their operations in Pakistan to promote bilateral trade. He also called for strengthening cultural linkages between Pakistan and Russia particularly in the fields of TV and films industries.

President Zardari conveyed his message of felicitation to Russian President Vladimir Putin on his re-election and expressed good wishes for him.

He expressed the hope that under President Putin's leadership, Russia would achieve swift development besides promoting regional peace.

He also expressed condolence over the death of 130 people in a terrorist attack took place on March 22 in Moscow. Ambassador Albert Khorev told the president that Russia desired to play its part in the economic development and prosperity of Pakistan and that both countries were cooperating on mutual issues like anti-terrorism and drugs trafficking. The ambassador said that Russia desired to double the existing volume of bilateral trade with Pakistan. He thanked President Zardari for expressing condolence over the deaths in March 22 terrorist attack in the Russian capital. The envoy also felicitated President Zardari on assuming the office.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, Joint Secretary, Economic Affairs Division and Mr. Naoki MIYATA, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan are signing the Grant Agreement.

British envoy calls on Defence Minister



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott called on Minister for Defence,

Khawaja Muhammad Asif here on Thursday.

The Defence Minister expressed that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Britain and appreciates Britain's efforts in Afghan reconciliation process, a news release said.

The Minister for Defence expressed the desire of maintaining Pak-UK Defence Cooperation Forum (DCF) at the level of Defence Ministries.

The Minister and the High Commissioner expressed satisfaction over ongoing collaboration between the two countries for regional stability. Both sides stressed the need for expansion of defence and security ties between two countries.

CM meets World Bank country director

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had a meeting with World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine to discuss World Bank-funded development projects in Punjab.

Emphasising the need for early completion of the ongoing public welfare projects in the province, the Chief Minister said, "I will personally monitor the ongoing World Bank-funded projects." Mr Najy Benhassine congratulated Maryam Nawaz on being elected first female Chief Minister of Punjab. CM Maryam thanked him for the good words, and agreed to continue cooperation with the World Bank to achieve sustainable development in Punjab. The Chief Minister briefed the WB Country Director about the projects like province-wide solid waste management, Knowledge Park, and nutrition for the malnourished children in Punjab. She added, "The project of providing packaged milk to students in government primary schools is being started soon." She said, "The World Bank and other institutions will be welcomed to join this project." The CM highlighted the need for mutual cooperation for smog elimination and air quality improvement. The progress of WB-funded Punjab Green Development Program, and Punjab Cities Program was also reviewed in the meeting. Both leaders also agreed to cooperate in the field of information technology.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan vow to deepen cooperation



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan here on Thursday vowed to strengthen cooperation between the two brotherly countries in diverse fields for mutual benefit.

The commitment was made during the meeting of Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema, said a press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division (EAD). They engaged in discussions regarding matters of mutual interest. Minister Ahad Cheema acknowledged the longstanding fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, which have flourished since the independence of Azerbaijan. He emphasized that while trade and coopera-

tion between the two nations have progressed steadily, there remains a need to further strengthen people-to-people contacts.

Cheema reiterated the importance of robust economic relations between the two countries and underscored that through the Joint Commission mechanism, both nations were collaborating across various sectors including Trade and Investment, Defence Industry, Agriculture, Energy, Health, Transport, Banking, Tourism, Sports, Culture, and IT.

He informed that the Ministry of Economic Affairs was diligently monitoring the implementation of decisions taken during the 7th Session of the Pakistan - Azerbaijan Joint Commission. He expressed eagerness to host the next session of the Joint Commission in Pakistan at the earliest convenience.

Cheema assured continued collaboration and extended gratitude to the ambassador Farhadov for his visit to the Ministry to discuss matters of mutual interest. He pledged full assistance from his office for the prompt organization of the next session of the Joint Commission. APP

Tarar urges political parties not to politicize national economy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday urged opposition and other political parties not to politicize national economy stabilized due to consistent efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Addressing a news conference, the minister recalled the initiatives taken by PM Shehbaz Sharif led government during its previous tenure of 16 months. He was flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam. The minister gave credit to PM Shehbaz Sharif for successful negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that resulted into a standby agreement with the fund in the recent past. He said such initiatives had ultimately stabilized rupee against dollar and

brought an improvement in the exchange rate subsequently. The minister recalled the hardships faced by the exporters in the recent past due to the fast fluctuation in the exchange rate especially stemmed from the wrong economic policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led government. "There should be no politics on the economy and everyone should play their due role for economic stability," Tarar said while highlighting the positive indicators recorded with the arrival of PM Shehbaz Sharif's government in the country. He said Bloomberg had forecast a significant reduction in inflation in the country next year and simultaneously predicted an economic growth for Pakistan in the coming days.



The country moving in right direction as the economy had started to boom which was reflected from the positive economic

indicators, the minister noted. He lauded the role played by the media in creating awareness among the masses regarding privatization process of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) that recorded Rs 80 billion annual loss. It was the common man who had been bearing the brunt of such economic losses, he said, expressing the hope that the privatization would not only generate revenue for the country but also remove extra burden from the common man. He said entire focus was laid on economy and efforts were underway to digitalize the Federal Board of Revenue. Tarar said PM Shehbaz Sharif attached great importance to Pakistan-China friendship and he himself visited Dasu and met the Chinese engineers to express solidarity with them over the

attack. He said that the entire nation was united for the betterment of the economy and national interest. The minister asked the people to have hope and faith in the system and the leadership that could solve every other problem. "Shehbaz Sharif is a name of hope who has delivered in the past in accordance with the aspiration of people." The action plan would be announced very soon to empower the youth, he said in response to another query. In response to another question, he said that the problems of sports bodies would be resolved as a committee was being formed regarding the Pakistan Hockey Federation. With reference to Pak-Iran gas pipeline

project, the Minister said that there was no discussion about it in the cabinet meeting today.

In response to a question regarding APP, the Federal Minister said that a committee has been formed to investigate the recent incident in the APP. Senior officials of the Ministry of Information were investigating the incident.

The federal said that the recommendations of the inquiry committee would be followed. As regards the problems of media workers and reporters, the Federal Minister of Information said that he was visiting Karachi tomorrow where he would meet the members of Pakistan Broadcasters Association and All Pakistan Newspapers Society and listened to their issues for timely redressal.

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Why NATO's 75th birthday is a troubled one

ANDREW HAMMOND

NATO on Thursday marked the 75th anniversary of the signing of its founding treaty, yet the mood music is far from celebratory. Key leaders within the military alliance are increasingly concerned that the bloc is facing its biggest ever challenges. For example, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a former European Council president, last week warned that Europe is in a dangerous new "prewar era." He asserted that Ukraine must not be defeated by Russia for the good not just of NATO members but all those who value the post-1945 rules-based order. Tusk said that war is "no longer a concept from the past," that "it's real and it started" and "literally any scenario is possible."

This is one reason NATO is reportedly drawing up plans to secure a five-year military aid package of up to \$100 billion. The so-called Mission for Ukraine proposal is being shepherded by Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg for final approval over the summer, ahead of November's US presidential election. The plan would allow NATO to manage the supply of weapons to Ukraine for the first time since Russia began its attack in February 2022.

The reason for the urgency is that Tusk and other leaders have warned that the next few months of the conflict will "decide everything," given the urgent need for the West to help Ukraine rearm. The Polish PM said: "We are living in the most critical moment since the end of the Second World War." What Tusk is highlighting is the growing concern in key NATO nations that, absent a significant shift, the tide is turning in the Ukraine war in Russia's favor. Moreover, any outcome that could be perceived as a major victory for Moscow would significantly add to the threat environment facing other nations in Europe.

It is in this somber context that NATO is planning for the next half-decade, with a change of leadership anticipated in the second half of this year. The person widely anticipated to become the next secretary-general of the military alliance is long-standing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. The good news for the next NATO chief is that the context for the debate about the alliance's future has been transformed in the post-COVID-19 period. Only five years ago, there was widespread concern about NATO's purpose, with French President Emmanuel Macron saying that it was experiencing "brain death." Macron's remarkable outburst was driven by what he saw as a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. This included the US' diminished commitment to NATO under the Trump presidency.

Fast forward to today and Macron has said that Russia's invasion of Ukraine woke NATO up with the "worst of electroshocks," even though big questions remain about its future. It is an unexpected turnaround of fortunes, in the most serious of circumstances, that could also be fueled by Western concerns about China. The Ukraine conflict has underlined the continuing relevance of NATO, with its collective member state population of about 1 billion. For all its remaining weaknesses, it remains one of the world's most successful ever military alliances and has helped underpin the longest period of sustained peace in the West's modern history. While this is positive, NATO could, however, face a major internal challenge from November if Trump wins a new term. Former Trump administration officials, including ex-National Security Adviser John Bolton, have confirmed that the former president came close to announcing the US' withdrawal from NATO during his first term. For instance, Trump threw the alliance's 2018 summit into disarray by threatening to pull the US out.

Despite the strength of the other NATO members, there is no question that America's withdrawal would be a body blow to its credibility. Trump, who originally described Russia's invasion of Ukraine as "genius," may also have plans to try to warm ties with Moscow, as was his intent in his first term. Behind the scenes, there is much scenario planning going on regarding the feasibility of NATO without US participation. It is possible that the Western alliance could try to keep the military organization functioning for a few years in the hope that the successor to any second Trump presidency might bring Washington back into the fold. In the meantime, Rutte and other Western leaders assert in public that the best way for Europe to prepare for any change of incumbent in the White House is to increase defense spending. It is important, therefore, to see all member nations in Europe now commit to meeting the target of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense. In 2024, 20 NATO members are expected to do so, up from just three in 2014. Some, including Poland, have gone much further and now spend some 4 percent of GDP on defense.

If other nations move in the direction that Poland is heading, there may well be a possibility for intra-alliance harmony with the US. Here, it is the combination of Russian military assertiveness, instability in the Middle East and Africa and Trump's uncertain commitment to Europe's security that is turning this picture around.

In the longer term, it is also plausible that such higher defense spending will be locked in by NATO concerns about wider shifts in the global security environment, including threats from China. What is perceived as Beijing's increasing international assertiveness is a growing concern in the West and this will become especially significant if Xi Jinping continues to consolidate his strategic partnership with the newly reelected Vladimir Putin.

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RAY HANANIA

Israel losing support in US due to Gaza violence

Israel's excessive violence against Palestinian targets in Gaza is steadily undermining the support it has long enjoyed among the American public, especially among young people, who generally rely more heavily on social media for their news and information than the largely biased US media.

Separate surveys by the Pew Research Center and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research show this trending shift away from supporting Israel. Israel still enjoys significant support in America, but the results of these surveys reflect a significant generational divide, with younger Americans questioning Israel's actions while older Americans continue to embrace blind loyalty to the nation founded on Palestinian lands in 1948.

Although the mainstream media depicts the conflict as being the result of the violent assault by Hamas militants on Oct. 7, calling it terrorism, social media videos and reporting frames this attack as a response to Israel's long history of anti-Palestinian violence.

Claims regarding the Oct. 7 violence that were reported without verification by the mainstream media have been challenged on social media, with many people questioning the allegations of rapes and horrific violence against babies originally made by pro-Israel military sources.

Younger Americans are also seeing videos of heavily armed Israeli soldiers laughing and celebrating as they shoot and kill unarmed Palestinian civilians as they walk on destroyed Gazan roads. One video, which has been widely viewed and shared on TikTok and X, shows four

unarmed Palestinians in civilian clothing walking on a destroyed major road before being blown up by Israeli weaponry. One of the four initially survives but is then quickly killed in a second explosion.

Videos posted online also show Israeli soldiers beating and brutalizing women and children and razing mosques, hospitals, schools, homes and businesses in Gaza. The number of fatalities has risen to about 31,000, but many believe the real figure to be

Biden before it becomes law.

America has been bombarded by one-sided pro-Israel messaging and public relations spin ever since Israel's founding. Such messages have dominated Hollywood movies, the publishing industry and the mainstream news media, where pro-Israel writers significantly outnumber pro-Palestinian journalists.

But social media is having an impact thanks to the gut-wrenching images of Israelis killing Palestinian civilians

The poll also shows that 34 percent of younger Americans say Hamas' reasons for fighting Israel are valid, while 30 percent say they are not. The remaining 35 percent say they are unsure — a significant crack in Israel's domination of the American public.

Older Americans are less likely to see Hamas' reasons for fighting as valid and far more likely to see them as not valid, the Pew survey shows. For example, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of 65-plus Americans say Hamas' reasons are not valid.

The Pew research reflects similar findings by others. An AP-NORC center poll released in February showed that half of American adults believe Israel has "gone too far" in Gaza.

The shift from the beginning of Israel's war in 2023 to early 2024 is also reflected among Republicans. By late January, 33 percent of Republicans said Israel had gone too far, up from only 18 percent. Similar shifts took place among independents, Democrats and all US adults, according to the AP-NORC poll.

A change in Americans' view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would result in more pressure on Tel Aviv to accept genuine peace with the Palestinians. But to make this happen, people throughout the world will have to do a better job of countering the pro-Israel propaganda in America.

It will not be easy to undo the brainwashing Americans have long experienced at the hands of the pro-Israel lobby, but it is necessary to achieve a genuine and lasting solution to the conflict.

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Claims regarding Oct. 7 that were reported without verification by the mainstream media have been challenged on social media

even higher, as Israel prohibits foreign journalists from entering Gaza to cover the conflict. Meanwhile, the Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 103 media workers have been killed in Israeli strikes.

Israel has always enjoyed unquestioning political support from American governments. US support also includes hundreds of billions of dollars in funds, nearly unrestricted access to American weaponry and protection at the UN Security Council. Since Oct. 7, Washington has vetoed three resolutions calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. It finally abstained on a fourth resolution last month in the face of a growing anti-President Joe Biden voter movement called #AbandonBiden.

The erosion of support among young Americans is one reason, maybe the primary reason, Israel's political supporters introduced and last month passed legislation in Congress that threatens to ban TikTok. The proposed law faces a tougher fight in the Senate. It must pass through the upper house and be signed off by

in Gaza.

Not surprisingly, attitudes among younger Americans are impacted by social media and are changing, showing growing support for Palestinian rights and less support for Israel. That erosion is less obvious among older Americans, surveys show.

The Brookings Institution in November cited a pre-Oct. 7 Pew survey, which showed the significance of the generation gap in America in terms of attitude toward Israel. That poll showed 55 percent of Americans held a favorable view of Israel, while 41 percent had an unfavorable view. More significantly, only 41 percent of Americans aged 18 to 29 had a favorable view, compared to 69 percent of over-65s.

Polling released this week by Pew further highlights that shift, with younger Americans generally opposed to military aid to Israel. Only 16 percent of adults under 30 favor the US providing military aid to Israel to help in its war on Gaza, compared with 56 percent of those aged 65 and older.

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



[84] Announcing a new self-reliance program, Suhrawardy began building a massive military and launched a nuclear power program in the west in an attempt to legitimise his mandate in West Pakistan.[85] Suhrawardy's efforts led to an American training program for the country's armed forces which met with great opposition in East Pakistan. His party in the East Pakistan Parliament threatened to leave the state of Pakistan. Suhrawardy also verbally authorised the leasing of the Inter-Services Intelligence's (ISI) secret installation at Peshawar Air Station to the CIA to conduct operations in the Soviet Union.[85] Differences in East Pakistan further

encouraged Baloch separatism, and in an attempt to intimidate the communists in East Pakistan President Mirza initiated massive arrests of communists and party workers of the Awami League, which damaged the image of West Pakistan in the east.[85] The western contingent's lawmakers determinedly followed the idea of a westernised Parliamentary form of democracy, while East Pakistan opted for becoming a socialist state. The One Unit Program and the centralisation of the national economy on the Soviet model was met with great hostility and resistance in West Pakistan. The eastern contingent's economy was rapidly centralised by Suhrawardy's government.[84] Personal problems grew

between the two Bengali leaders, further damaging the unity of the country and causing Suhrawardy to lose his authority in his own party to the growing influence of cleric Maulana Bhashani.[84] Resigning under a threat of dismissal by Mirza, Suhrawardy was succeeded by I. I. Chundrigar in 1957.[84] Within two months Chundrigar was dismissed. He was followed by Sir Feroz Noon, who proved to be an incapable prime minister. Public support for the Muslim League led by Nurul Amin began to threaten President Mirza who was becoming unpopular, especially in West Pakistan.[82] In less than two years, Mirza dismissed four elected prime ministers, and was increasingly under pressure to call new

elections in 1958.[86] **1958-1971: first military era**
1958: military rule
Main article: 1958 Pakistani coup d'état, Iskandar Mirza
 In October 1958 President Iskandar Mirza issued orders for a massive mobilisation of the Pakistan Armed Forces and appointed Chief of Army Staff General Ayub Khan as Commander-in-chief.[87] President Mirza declared a state of emergency, imposed martial law, suspended the constitution, and dissolved both the socialist government in East Pakistan and the parliamentary government in West Pakistan.[88]

To be continued....

Dakota Fanning practices more 'gratitude' after turning 30

Dakota Fanning opened up about happily embracing her 30s



Dakota Fanning said that she is practising to be more grateful after turning 30. The actress, who recently celebrated her happy milestone in February, told People Magazine that she is enjoying every present moment of life.

Dakota said, "I don't know what it is, it's just like some of the most happiest. I'm sort of having to do crazy things like schedule-wise and really busy, but I'm totally fine with it. Nothing's bothering me." The War of the Worlds actress said that she's "focusing on being grateful for what I do have, rather than constantly ruminating on what I don't have yet."

She added, "And really just focusing on the present and taking advantage of this time in my life and enjoying every moment of it, and instead of being like, 'Oh, when's that going to happen, when's that going to happen, when's that going to happen?'" The actress further said, "Just being like, 'Oh my God, how exciting that hasn't happened yet,' and kind of reframing it in that way." On the professional front, Dakota was recently seen in a thrilling Netflix series, Ripley, alongside Andrew Scott.

Showbiz

Tech

Apple's 'next big thing' are home robots?

Apple is currently working on a venture into household robots, which might become the company's "next big thing" after the Vision Pro headset and having abandoned its decades-long effort to develop a self-driving electric automobile.

The company's AI and machine-learning team and hardware engineering division are allegedly collaborating on the prospective new device. Marc Gurman of Bloomberg stated that Apple engineers are thinking of creating a mobile robot that can follow customers around the house, citing people with knowledge of the project. According to The Guardian, Apple announced a 2% increase in sales at the end of the previous year, ending a four-quarter



streak of dropping revenue. However, the situation for the people who created the iPhone is not good. During that quarter, its revenues in China fell from \$23.9 billion to \$20.8 billion. Moreover, iPad sales decreased to \$7 billion from \$9 billion over the same period last year. The publicly traded corporation is under more pressure to explore new revenue

3 meals for better mental health

Mental health can be improved by consuming nutritional diet

Our physical and emotional well-being are entirely dependent on the food we eat.

According to research, those who consume a diet high in fruits, vegetables, seafood, and whole grains are actually 25% to 35% less likely to suffer from depression than persons who follow a Western diet, which is high in fat, sugar, and ultra-processed foods. "Many people don't realise the link between food and mental well-being," said Signe Svanfeldt, lead nutritionist at Lifesum. "A nutritious, balanced diet positively impacts our energy and mood, as well as our gut microbiota, which influences our mental well-being,"

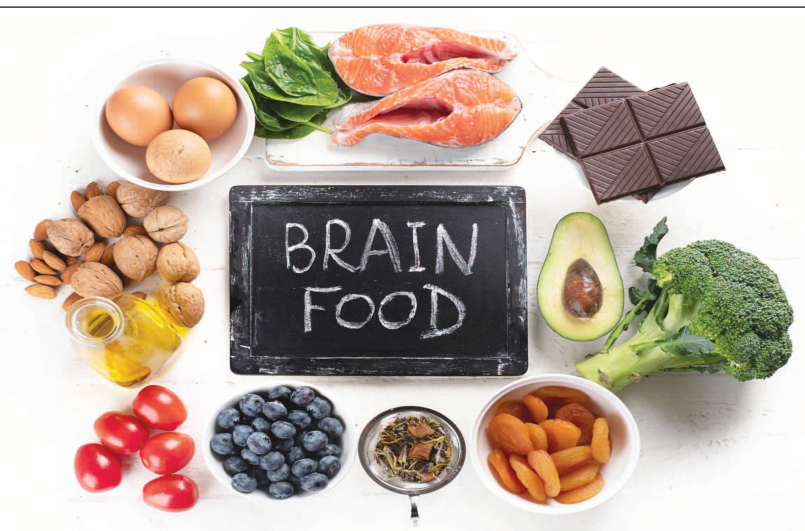
she added. Following are three essential diet nutrients needed for a good mental health, according to Yahoo Life. Broccoli, spinach, carrots, quinoa, brown rice, beans, lentils, and chickpeas are examples of prebiotic foods.

According to Svanfeldt, probiotics and prebiotics help lower inflammation, which raises serotonin levels in the body, a neurotransmitter that controls mood and lessens signs of stress and anxiety. Other diets contain Omega-3 foods, which include walnuts, salmon, trout, tuna, chia seeds, hemp seeds, and flaxseed.

Omega-3s are good fats that have been demonstrated to lessen brain inflammation that has been connected to mood problems. As a result, they may aid in enhancing well-being, as per Svanfeldt.

Additionally, foods high in polyphenols include peppers, red cabbage, spinach, walnuts, hazelnuts, kiwi fruit, and red cabbage.

"Polyphenols promote healthy blood flow to the brain and can protect it from oxidative stress and inflammation," Svanfeldt said. "This may affect mental health, by reducing depressive symptoms and increasing overall mental well-being."



Health

Govt to provide policy support to industrial sector in upcoming budget



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday said that the government will provide economic and trade policy support to the business community and their suggestions will be implemented in the upcoming budget.

The government is fully aware of its responsibilities for economic and industrial competitiveness and productivity and in this regard, full support will be provided to the industrialists.

The Minister for Commerce said this while addressing the Pre-Budget 2024-25 seminar arranged by Ministry of Commerce here.

The Seminar was aimed at creating awareness on tariff rationalization for Trade bodies and associations, exporters, and public sector stakeholders from Ministry of Industries and Production, Federal Board of Revenue, National Tariff Commission, Ministry of Finance, and Board of Investment among others.

The seminar was also attended by representatives by the key chambers of commerce and industry, product associations and sector specialists from all over Pakistan. In his keynote address, the Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal termed the tariff rationalization process as a critical function of the government to enhance trade competitiveness and foster economic growth.

He said the government will further improve the economic environment for confidence building of businessmen and industrialists and priorities and measures have been initiated in this regard.

He stated that by simplifying and streamlining tariff structure, the Ministry of Commerce aims to reduce costs for domestic industries, boost exports and attract foreign investment.

The Secretary Commerce, Saleh Ahmed Faruqi highlighted that the Pre-budget seminar was organized to provide a platform for stakeholders for engaging in a meaningful discourse on the benefits and implications of tariff rationalization.

He informed the participants that the pre-budget exercise was an opportunity for stakeholders to gain insights into the tariff rationalization initiatives, learn their impact on various sectors and provide inputs to aid the process of making strategic changes to the existing tariff structure.

Every year around February, a comprehensive drive is run by the Tariff Wing at the Ministry of Commerce to invite budget proposals on a specific format from stakeholders across the country.

The call for proposals along with the prescribed format is available at the website of Ministry of Commerce.

Through the Pre-Budget Seminar, participants learned how they can provide feedback and recommendations to policymakers on tariff structure and rationalization measures. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Ethiopian Ambassador Announces Mobilization of Another Pakistani Business Delegation



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Thursday announced to mobilize another trade delegation of Pakistani businessmen to Ethiopia by May-end this year for further strengthening business, trade and commercial connections between the two countries.

Addressing the business community at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), the Ambassador recalled the experiences related to the first-ever trade delegation mobilized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad last year in March.

"We received overwhelming response to the first trade delegation which I called Hijra Trip to Ethiopia that enabled the business community of Pakistan to explore business, trade and investment opportunities in Ethiopia," the ambassador noted.

He said more than 75 businessmen participated in the first trade delegation to Ethiopia and got an opportunity not only to directly communicate with the high-level government officials but also businessmen from the major sectors.

"I would like to urge every businessman in Pakistan to become part of our Hijra Trip II and contribute to the efforts of the Ethiopian Embassy in establishing strong trade relations and partnership between the two countries," the ambassador stressed.

On the occasion, the Ambassador also highlighted extraordinary trade and investment opportunities offered by home-grown economy of Ethiopia in diverse economic sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, ICT and tourism.

He said Ethiopia was producing cheap, clean, sustainable and affordable energy, exporting to its neighboring countries including Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan and others. Likewise, multiple incentives including one-window operation were introduced to facilitate the foreign direct investment in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, he said Pakistan also offered immense trade and investment opportunities to the business community of Ethiopia especially in the areas of manufacturing, agriculture, fertilizer, chemicals, pharmaceutical, surgical equipments, textile, automotive and others.

Speaking on the occasion, FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh lauded the socio-economic development in Ethiopia during the recent past especially under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia. He expressed full support for the Embassy of Ethiopia in Islamabad for mobilizing the trade delegation being planned for May-end.

The FPCCI President vowed to be part of the delegation along with a number of businessmen which were part of the federal trade body as well as regional ones to explore and harness opportunities availed in Ethiopia and Africa.

Hafiz Naeem elected Ameer JI for 5-year term

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan on Thursday elected Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman as its new Ameer for five-year term.

Head of the JI Election Commission, Rashid Naseem, along with members of the election cell made the announcement during a press conference at Mansoorah. Rashid Naseem told media that the majority of the JI members, known as Rukns, cast their votes in favor of Hafiz Naeem to lead Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan. A professional engineer by trade, Hafiz Naeem currently serves as the Emir of the JI Karachi chapter. His tenure as JI Emir Pakistan will end on April 8, 2029. Prior to his involvement in national politics, Hafiz Naeem was actively engaged in student politics and previously held the position of elected Nazim-e-Aaala (president) of the Islami Jamiat Talba.

Rashid Naseem revealed that over 82 percent of the members participated in the election of the JI Emir. JI has over 45,000 members (Rukns), including approximately 6,000 women, and they take part in the election of the JI Emir. The JI Election Commission, an elected body itself, was responsible for overseeing the election process of JI Emir.

Comprising Head Rashid Naseem, secretary Qudrat-ullah Butt, and members Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman, Sardar Zafar Hussain, and Engineer Akhlaq Ahmed, the commission was specifically elected by the JI Majlis Shura for the purpose of conducting the Emir election. Naseem affirmed that the commission's duties culminate with the successful election of the JI Emir. JI Shura is also 100 plus members elected body.

Rashid Naseem said that the election of the JI Emir was conducted through secret balloting.

The process for the JI Emir election commenced on February 19 with the printing and distribution of ballot papers among the Rukns, concluding on March 25. Rashid Naseem said the election process was smooth and peaceful, culminating on April 3.

The JI Shura had proposed three names for the consideration of the JI members: the current Emir Sirajul Haq, vice-emir Liaqat Baloch, and Hafiz Naeem. However, members were also free to suggest any other name as well. It's noteworthy that Jamaat-e-Islami is the only political party in Pakistan that regularly conducts intra-party elections since its establishment in 1941. The party's founding Emir was Syed Maududi, a renowned religious scholar, writer, and politician. Subsequently, Mian Tufail Muhammad, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Syed Munawar Hassan, and Sirajul Haq served as the second, third, fourth, and fifth Emirs of JI, respectively. INP



Meeting of the Iranian delegation with the Minister for Law and Justice senator Azam Nazeer Tarar happened today at Law Ministry.

Provision of free teaching books among priorities of govt: Minister

PESHAWAR: Provincial Education Minister, Faisal Khan Tarakai has said that provision of free teaching books to students in priority of government and 58 percent of supply has been completed so far.

Chairing a meeting to discuss free supply of educational books to students here Thursday, he said that 58 percent of supply had been completed through targeted and planned efforts and students would get course book timely.

The minister said that significant amount of Rs 1.5 billion had been released to printers while the finance minister would be contacted for release of remaining payment.

On the occasion, the minister was told that 100 percent supply of nursery level books had been completed while full supply of books have been

given to districts including Tank, Malakand, Hungu, Swabi and Kohat.

Education minister was informed that there are 453 primary level circles and 80 and cumulative supply of 50 percent has been completed in these circles. The minister was also informed about enrollment drive of 2024. He was told that record of all students is available online. Faisal Tarakai directed to constitute teams of district education office and directorate to complete the supply of books and said that far flung areas should be given special focus.

The meeting was also attended by Secretary Education, Masood Ahmad, Additional Secretary, Abdul Akram, Chairman Textbook Board, Muhammad Faruqain and other concerned officials. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries & Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired a meeting of the Sugar Advisory Board (SAB).

Shaheed Zulfiqa Ali Bhutto laid foundation democracy: Balochistan CM

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday said that Shaheed Zulfiqa Ali Bhutto laid the foundation of real democracy and he linked all the decisions with the intention of the people.

He stated this in his message on the 45th death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqa Ali Bhutto, the founder of Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The CM said that Shaheed Zulfiqa Bhutto fought to serve the people in true sense, the impression and charm of Shaheed Bhutto's personality is still in people's minds.

He said that guidance from people for difficult issues was the hallmark of Shaheed Zulfiqa Ali Bhutto's politics adding that Bhutto's

vision would carry the guiding principles of democracy and social justice.

The CM said that Shaheed Bhutto's legacy was an example for all of us, justice principles of his need to be adopted.

By following these principles, Pakistan can be freed from political, economic and social problems, he said.

He said that PPP was trying to provide equal rights to the downtrodden sections saying that the people of Sindh and Balochistan have expressed confidence in the PPP party. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that he would deliver the people from the problems who were facing by following the vision of Shaheed Zulfiqa Ali Bhutto. APP

ECP rejects vote recount request in NA-266

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday rejected the Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) candidate's request for a vote recount in NA-266 (Kila Abdullah-Cum Chaman). Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai emerged victorious from the NA-266 seat by securing 67,028 votes. JUI-F's Salahuddin who finished runner-up with 58,439 votes challenged Achakzai's victory and requested for a vote recount.

The ECP pronounced the verdict that was reserved, rejecting the request, and maintained that there was a difference of 8589 votes between the successful and the runner-up candidate.

The ECP also rejected for re-verification of votes at 36 polling stations. "The petitioner failed to provide concrete evidence in favour of his claims," the ECP said. The ECP's verdict added that the petitioner might approach the Election Tribunal in this regard. INP

Pakistan, Japan sign two projects in weather surveillance, health sectors

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has moved forward to work with Chinese company to modernize waste management in Karachi.

Karachi, the largest city in Pakistan, is set to witness a transformative development in its waste management efforts, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.

China State Construction, the world's largest investment construction group, has recently won the bid to undertake Karachi's inaugural solid waste treatment project, modern garbage transfer stations, a move that marks a milestone in the city's waste management efforts and represents a strong step forward in environmental protection. Spread across an area of 150,000 square meters, the project comprises two sections, Section 1 and Section 2, and includes the construction of solid waste transfer stations, office buildings, dormitories, roads, steel structures and ancillary facilities.

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This comprehensive scope ensures a comprehensive approach to waste management, encompassing not just the transfer stations but also the necessary infrastructure to support their efficient operation. It not only highlights the technical expertise and construction capabilities of China State Construction, but also strengthens the bond between China and Pakistan in the field of infrastructure development. China State Construction's involvement in this project demonstrates its dedication to contributing to the well-being of communities and the environment at large. Currently, the city faces numerous

challenges in effectively managing its solid waste, including limited resources and outdated infrastructure. The construction of modern garbage transfer stations is a crucial component of the overall plan to address these issues.

The successful completion of this project is expected to significantly enhance Karachi's urban hygiene index and contribute to the overall improvement of the city's environmental health. With the construction of these modern garbage transfer stations, Karachi is poised to take a significant step towards a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable future. INP

Enhancing trade, business, energy cooperation; pivotal for deepening historically strong Pak-Iran ties, says NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy historically strong bilateral ties which are based on shared values, similar culture, same religion and being neighbouring countries. He reaffirmed his commitment for extending parliamentary support to further deepen these ties by supporting cooperation in energy, trade, business and especially by creating synergy among private sectors of both nations said a news release.

Speaker expressed these views during a meeting with Iranian Parliamentary Delegation led by Mahdi Safari, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy along with Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam at Parliament House.

While emphasizing the need for streamlining cooperation in private sector, the speaker said that both nations have vast opportunities in enhancing trade and business by managing bor-

der markets, increasing import-export volume, resolving IPP Gas pipe line issues, working on Gawadar-Chahbahar as sister projects and by bringing parliament of both nations closer.

The Speaker reiterated his commitment to cement parliament to parliament contacts between both nations by reviving Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) between Parliaments of both nations and by encouraging mutual visits of Honourable Parliamentarians of both nations. The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs and Diplomacy extended warm felicitation to Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for his successful election as Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan. He said that both nations have vast opportunities to explore in business, trade, and energy sector. He also said that issues related to IPP Gas Project need to be resolved amicably along with enhancing border trade and cooperation in energy sector.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi lauds China's help to Pakistan through BRI, CPEC

BEIJING: Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi stressed the importance of building a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future, as he condemned a terror attack that killed some Chinese workers in his country last week.

Describing the March 26 attack that claimed the lives of five Chinese workers in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province as a very sad incident, Abbasi denounced the attack and said his country is committed to protecting Chinese nationals working in the country.

In an interview with China Daily in Boao, Hainan province, Abbasi lauded China's help to Pakistan through the Belt and Road Initiative and the flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, project, saying he finds China's engagement and the way the Chinese system works fascinating.

BRI projects are "basically left to the host country to decide what to do", said Abbasi, who recently took on a new role as a member of the board of directors of the Boao Forum for Asia. He said the Chinese side's framework for the CPEC had only two requirements: projects should be economically viable, and they should be environmentally sustainable. According to him, CPEC projects have been developed at an amazing speed in the past decade. Now, the focus is shifting to high-quality BRI. INP