

Positive Post



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April in History

April 8, 1950: Liaquat-Nebru agreement is signed in New Delhi for Inter-Dominion problems.

April 18–24, 1955: Pakistan participates in the Bandung Conference.

April 22, 1961: Government institutes Film Awards.

April 6, 1970: First ordinance factory is inaugurated at Ghazipur.

April 21, 1972: Martial Law lifted; constitutional rule is restored in the country. Hamood-ur-Rehman is sworn in as Chief Justice of Pakistan.

April 10, 1973: 1973 Constitution of Pakistan enacted by the National Assembly.

April 6, 1978: First of the 13 volume exhaustive Urdu Dictionary is published by Taraqqi-i-Urdu Board.

April 8, 1982: Jahangir Khan wins British Open Squash Championship.

April 20, 1988: Jahangir Khan wins seventh Squash title in a row.

April 25, 1991: Jahangir Khan creates history by winning British Open Squash title for the record tenth consecutive time.

April 26, 1992: Pakistan's Alam Channa enters Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest man in the world.

April 15, 1999: Pakistan conducts test of a nuclear capable short range ballistic missile, Shabeen.

April 16, 1999: Pakistan won Coca-Cola Cup final at Sharjah crushing India by 8 wickets

April 26, 2006: Pervez Musharraf lays foundation stone of Diamir Bhasha Dam.

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2018 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan ranked 112th out of 167 countries in the Democracy Index scoring 4.17 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 4.26 in 2017.

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 139th out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index scoring 43.24 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 43.55 in 2017.

Index from 0 (most press freedom) to 100 (least press freedom)

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

TERRORISM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 5th out of 163 countries in the Terrorism Index scoring 8.18 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 8.40 in 2017.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 131st out of 180 countries in the Economic Freedom Index scoring 54.4 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 52.8 out of 100 in 2017.

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic and Political outcomes.

Shehbaz vows to raise Balochistan's missing persons with powerful quarters

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that he would raise the issue of Balochistan's missing person with powerful quarters because unless the issue was resolved the province could not make progress.

The prime minister visited Quetta where he chaired a high level meeting on the law and order situation in the province.

He also laid the foundation stone for a 303km section of Khuzdar Kuchlak National Highway in Khuzdar and promised funding for Chaman-Karachi highway.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of Khuzdar-Kuchlak highway, Shehbaz Sharif lamented the fact the natural gas was discovered in Sui and was transported to all parts of Pakistan but many areas of Balochistan could not benefit from it.

Speaking at length on the "deprivations" of Balochistan, he admitted that the province did not have basic facilities.

Shehbaz Sharif also said that the issue of "missing persons" was a major issue for the province and it was raised before him by Akhtar Mengal, other tribal leaders as well lawyers and other people of the province.

"I will raise the issue faithfully" before the powerful quarters, the prime minister announced adding that unless the issue was resolved Balochistan could not make progress.

He also urged people of province to bridge the gulf between South Balochistan and North Balochistan. Shehbaz Sharif announced that an additional 500,000 families in Balochistan would be covered under BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) with Rs10 funding from the federal government.

But he also said that there was a "condition" attached and the tribal leaders would be required to make sure that children of these families go to school. Failing this, the programme would be closed, the prime minister said.

"This is because we don't want to create an army of beggars," he said. Shehbaz Sharif recounted how Balochistan had been affected by terrorism and a new wave of terrorism was rising. But it would be defeated, he said.

The chief minister also said that the pre-qualification process for development projects in Balochistan must be completed because he had observed that several projects had



been "closed" due to a lack of due diligence.

He said that he had asked the Balochistan authorities to carry out a feasibility study for Quetta Metro Bus and if the project was feasible the federal government would help fund it.

He said laptops would be provided to students in Balochistan so that instead of carrying "weapon" they hold a laptop in their hands.

The prime minister also announced a high end technical university for Balochistan which he said would be established wherever the provincial government recommends.

He opened his address by saying that Balochistan's tribal elders had decided to join Pakistan after Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah addressed them in Quetta before 1947.

Earlier, addressing the meeting on law and order, the prime minister said that overall law and order situation in Balochistan is satisfactory, according to Radio Pakistan.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo, Muhammad Akhtar Mengal, Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Maulana Abdul Wasey and high-ranking officers attended the meeting, which was briefed on the law-and-order situation in the province.

The Prime Minister said that the federal government will extend all possible assistance to the provincial government for ensuring peace and stability in Balochistan.

At another meeting on administrative policies, Shehbaz Sharif said that the development of Balochistan province was among the top priorities of the government.

Courtesy: Saama TV

Action sought against film for 'ridiculing' trans people

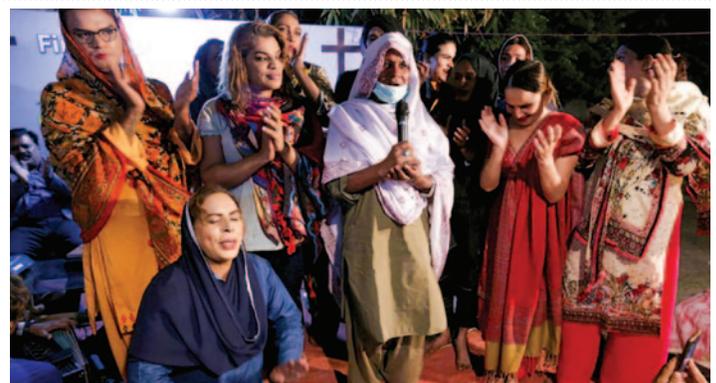
The Lahore High Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs on a petition by a transgender person challenging an objectionable dialogue in an upcoming film.

Zanaya Chaudhry, a transgender rights activist, filed the petition through Barrister Ahmad Pansota, requesting the court to direct the respondents to take action against violation of the existing laws ensuring basic rights to the transgender community.

During the hearing, the counsel told the court that a private film production and distribution com-

pany based in Karachi had recently aired a trailer of its upcoming film, Dum Mastam. The movie violated the rights of citizens and in particular transgender persons, as the word "khusra" has been used for the community, which was a derogatory term and the Pemra council of complaints also deliberated upon the same.

The counsel stated that the matter pertained to the right to life, liberty and dignity, and the responsibility of the respondents to uphold the constitutionally guaranteed rights. The particular dialogue in the film was in grave violation of fundamental rights under Articles 4, 9, 14, 25A of the Constitution.



He argued that all citizens were equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the law. The Constitution envisaged no discrimination on the basis of sex. He asked the court to order the respondents to take action against the violation of the laws and also direct that all such programmes, which use the word "khusra" and

make fun of the community, be banned and no one be allowed to ridicule the khwajasira/transgender community in any manner.

After hearing initial arguments of the counsel, Justice Shahid Waheed sought replies from the respondents within a fortnight.

Courtesy: Dawn

PM orders immediate end to prolonged outages

Amid prolonged outages in various parts of the country, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the relevant authorities to reduce power glitches immediately and held the previous government responsible for the energy crisis.

“Neither fuel was purchased by the former government nor power units were repaired,” said the premier.

The premier said Imran’s government had shut the power units that the PML-N government had set up for low-cost electricity generation. “Instead, the previous government had utilised those low power generation units which supplied expensive power and due to this injustice, the nation had to pay a heavy price in the shape of Rs100 billion every month.”

Mr Sharif said the PTI government had not purchased Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) when an LNG consignment cost Rs6 billion, but now it has gone up to Rs20 billion. “The nation had to pay more than Rs500 billion this year due to such injustice done by Imran Khan’s government,” he added.

Expressing his resolve to provide relief to the public, he said that neither he would sit idle nor let anyone rest till the resolution of the issue.

The PM said all possible efforts should be made to save citizens from the discomfort created by the criminal negligence of the former government and directed the authorities concerned to make temporary arrangements till the provision of oil and gas.

“Nawaz Sharif’s government had generated the surplus power, but Imran’s government failed to add a new single unit,” he added.

During his visit to Pakistan Liver Transplant Institute (PKLI) in Lahore, PM Sharif said it was quite disturbing to know that 14 of the 20 kidney transplant units at PKLI had been lying out of order while merely 17 per cent poor patients were offered treatment services as 83pc others had to pay partially or completely from their pocket.

Speaking to media persons, the prime minister said he had asked the chief secretary of Punjab to review steps for PKLI’s revival and discuss it with him within the next 48 hours.

He said the state-of-the-art institute was established with the joint efforts of the previous Punjab government, officials and philanthropists at a total cost of Rs20 billion, but the PTI government destroyed



the PML-N’s flagship project just as it had done with other state institutions. “This state-of-the-art facility was established and inaugurated in 2018 for the poor people of Pakistan,” he said, recalling that several liver transplants were conducted at the facility free of cost until the mid of 2018.

Billions of rupees being spent on liver transplant treatment in India and China was saved with the establishment of the facility in Lahore, the prime minister said, adding that it benefited the less privileged patients from across the country. “It is the responsibility of the state to provide quality treatment to poor patients free of cost,” he asserted. However, he bemoaned, “I had even faced inquiries and languished in NAB torture cells twice” though the National Accountability Bureau could not prove charges of even 20 paisas corruption.

He said this facility was planned to

curb illegal organ trade and operations being carried out at private places without considering standard protocols.

He also thanked Dr Faisal Dar for running the institution despite the challenges that the PKLI had faced for past couple of years.

Meanwhile, PM Sharif directed the Punjab government to provide financial assistance to Sialkot farmers whose wheat crops had been destroyed by fire caused by a harvest machine fault.

Standing wheat crop over 77-acre area in the Bijot sector was burnt on April 23 when the fire broke out and spread quickly as soon as flames engulfed an 80-litre diesel reserve tank.

The fire brigade managed to control the fire and stop further damage to the standing crops.

Courtesy: Dawn

Mohammad Hasnain successfully rectifies bowling action: report

Pakistan pacer Mohammad Hasnain has successfully modified his bowling action, according to a report by Cricket Pakistan.

He was suspended from bowling at international level after biomechanical testing confirmed his action was illegal, the country’s cricket board said in February.

Hasnain was reported for a suspect action during a stint with the Sydney Thunder in Australia’s Big Bash Twenty20 league last season. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Cricket Australia (CA) had verified the report.

“The modification of Hasnain’s



bowling action has been completed under the supervision of Umar Rasheed at the National High Performance Center (NHPC),” he reported said.

“Tests at a local laboratory also found that the elbow of his arm was within the legal range of 15-degree limits. After complete satisfaction, the PCB will now formally request a review from the

ICC,” it added.

Under the International Cricket Council rules, an illegal bowling action is one in which the bowler’s elbow extension exceeds 15 degrees.

Sydney Sixers captain Moises Henriques accused Hasnain of “chucking” during a Big Bash match, telling him “nice throw, mate” at one stage.

The umpires reported his action, which was later assessed in Lahore. Hasnain is a promising fast bowler who has so far played 18 Twenty20 internationals and eight one-day internationals for Pakistan.

Courtesy: Saama

Zalmay Khalilzad offers to help better Pak-US ties

Former US special envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad on Fri-day offered help to Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa in improving bi-lateral relations.

A statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations after a meeting between Gen Bajwa and Amb Khalilzad said the former US official promised to “play his role” for bettering the ties between the two countries.

The ISPR said that besides Afghanistan various facets of bilateral cooperation were discussed during the meeting.

Mr Khalilzad is visiting Pakistan for participating in the National Security Dialogue. He had closely worked with Gen Bajwa on Afghan peace and reconciliation as the special envoy.

Relations between the two countries touched a new low after Prime Minister Imran Khan’s claim that Pakistan’s Ambassador to US Asad Majeed was warned by Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu that Mr Khan’s continuation in office



would have repercussions for bilateral ties. PM Khan is facing a no-confidence motion tabled in the National Assembly by the joint opposition.

The National Security Committee that met a day earlier expressed ‘grave concern’ over the United States meddling in Pakistan’s internal affairs and decided to lodge a strong protest with it. Demarches were later in the night delivered by the Foreign Office to US Charge d’ Affaires in Islamabad and State Department.

White House and State Department have denied the allegation. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who too had been invited to the Dialogue and was expected to make a video statement, reportedly skipped the event because of the new controversy.

Courtesy: Dawn

Arooj Aftab makes history at Grammys

Singer and musician Arooj Aftab on Sunday became the first Pakistani to win the prestigious Grammy Award in the Best Global Performance category for her song ‘Mohabbat’.

The 37-year-old who has lived in New York for around 15 years, has been steadily gaining global attention for her work that fuses ancient Sufi traditions with inflections of folk, jazz and minimalism.

After receiving the award, a visibly stunned Arooj said onstage at the 64th Grammy Awards, “I think I’m [going to] faint. Wow, thank you so much. I feel like this category in itself has been so insane like Burna Boy, Wizkid, Femi Kuti, Angélique Kidjo... should this be called the yacht party category”.

“I made [this record] about every-



thing that broke me and put me back together. Thank you for listening to it and making it yours.”

Arooj was also up for the coveted Best New Artist prize, but lost out to Olivia Rodrigo.

“I am beyond thrilled,” the artist told journalists backstage at the pre-gala ceremony, at which the vast majority of awards are handed out. “I’ve been very nervous all day. And we’re off to a good start.”

Born in Saudi Arabia, Arooj spent her teenage years in Lahore before relocating to Boston’s prestigious Berklee School of Music to study musical production and engineering.

After the award was announced, Pakistani social media was flooded with congratulatory messages for her.

The Foreign Office felicitated the singer, tweeting: “She is the first Pakistani Singer to win at #GrammyAwards. We are proud of you!”

Arooj is only the second Pakistani to be nominated for a Grammy award.

Courtesy: Dawn

Sindh, Punjab move closer to resolving water disputes

Punjab and Sindh have agreed to jointly measure water discharges and let each other conduct surprise visits to barrages for checking inflows and outflows a measure that can help address one of the biggest sources of provincial discord, i.e. perceived misreporting.

According to sources, the breakthrough came during a technical committee meeting of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on March 31. During the meeting, both provinces agreed to open up their water ways to mutual inspection and surprise visits to verify each other’s data.

Should it happen smoothly, it would be “the biggest step forward after a water accord in the early 1990s”, said an official of the Punjab irrigation department.

“In fact, Punjab has long been arguing for such a reciprocal arrangement to bring transparency in water gov-

ernance in the country and save the federation from water frictions,” said the official, who did not want to be named because minutes of the meeting have not been issued formally.

“If Sindh agrees to it now, nothing would be better than that. Punjab would be the happiest participant in such a plan. But agreeing to the proposal is one thing and making it actually happen is quite another. Let’s keep our fingers crossed,” he said.

Mohsin Leghari, a former irrigation minister for Punjab, also hoped that an agreement between the two provinces would bring transparency to water distribution a highly emotive and divisive national issue.

“It’s going to be a huge relief for everyone, and Irsa, Punjab and Sindh must be credited for it,” Mr Leghari said. The irrigation department official said provinces also agreed to let each other’s officials, who were temporar-



ily deputed at different barrages, continue their work. “Punjab irrigation officials were put at Guddu and Kotri barrages to monitor discharges and Sindh officials have been overseeing Taunsa and Panjnad barrages. Both federating units have agreed to let them continue.”

He said it had been a beneficial exercise for Irsa, as reports submitted by these officials helped reduce water losses by half at both barrages. On the basis of these reports, Irsa was able to close Rabi season, as predicted, at 26 per cent losses, which otherwise might have crossed the 30pc mark.

Irsa wanted to continue with the exercise, to which provinces agreed.

These three steps joint monitoring, allowing surprise visits and letting officials continue working should bring a paradigm shift in water governance and bring it closer to reality, the official said.

The technical committee has also agreed to fix 28pc water shortages in the Indus arm and 10pc for the Jhelum arm for the early Kharif season.

Sindh, like last year, wanted to fix Indus arm losses at 40pc. But Punjab opposed it and was ready to allow only 10pc losses. A consensus was found by averaging out losses for the last 20 years, thus arriving at 28pc losses for the early Kharif season.

Courtesy: Dawn

New PM sends positive signals to China, US

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reiterated the need for cooperation with the United States and India, while assuring Beijing of further deepening of relations.

“The new government wishes to constructively and positively engage with the US to promote shared goals of peace, security and development in the region,” the Prime Minister’s Office said in response to a White House statement on Mr Sharif taking over as the new prime minister.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki had earlier said that a democratic Pakistan was critical to US interests.

Ties between Islamabad and Washington touched a new low after former prime minister Imran Khan accused the US of conspiring to dislodge his government. He based his allegation on a diplomatic cable in which it was reportedly said that a State Department official had warned of consequences for bilateral ties if the no-confidence motion failed.

Beijing, Moscow send messages; Kashmir solution inevitable, Shehbaz tells Modi

Mending fences with the US would be one of the top foreign policy priorities for the new government.

Mr Sharif, while speaking in the National Assembly after his election, noted “confusion” in ties and said

that it did not mean an end to the historic relationship.

The same was repeated in the PM Office statement, which welcomed US reaffirmation of long-standing ties with Pakistan and said that the new government looked forward to deepening this “important relationship” on the principles of equality, mutual interest and mutual benefit. Messages from other leaders

Meanwhile, in response to a congratulatory tweet by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr Sharif called for securing peace and focusing on socio-economic development of the people.

“Pakistan desires peaceful & cooperative ties with India. Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes, including Jammu & Kashmir, is indispensable,” he further said.

Talking to the Charge d’ Affaires of People’s Republic of China, Ms Pang Chunxue, who called on him, PM Sharif affirmed his government’s commitment to further deepening the win-win economic cooperative partnership between the two countries.

He expressed his government’s resolve to speed up high quality development of CPEC projects and make it a symbol of China-Pakistan friendship and close partnership. He, moreover, underlined the importance of enhanced investment

Fighting terrorism shared responsibility of international community: China

shared responsibility of the international community, calling for coordination and cooperation to combat terrorism, news agency Xinhua reported.

Zhao made the remarks at a regular press briefing when asked to comment on the UN Security Council on Thursday condemning the terrorist attack in the University of Karachi, which claimed the lives of three Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver.

A press statement from the council expressed deepest condolences to

the families of the victims and to the governments of Pakistan and China, while underlining the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice.

The statement also urged all states to actively cooperate with the governments of Pakistan and China, as well as all other relevant authorities in this effort.

Zhao said the press statement reflects the strong indignation and severe condemnation of the terrorist



from China in industrialization, agriculture, and digital technologies.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also greeted Mr Sharif. According to a statement by Russia’s embassy in Pakistan, hoped that the new government will “contribute to further development of the Pakistan-Russia cooperation and partner interaction on the Afghan settlement as well as countering international terrorism.”

At the Monday afternoon news briefing in Washington, a journalist asked White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki what was the administration’s reaction to the new developments in Pakistan. “Does President Biden plan to speak with the country’s new prime minister?”

Responding to the first part of the question, Ms Psaki said the United States “support(s) the peaceful upholding of constitutional democratic principles. We don’t support one political party over another, and we certainly support the principles of rule of law and equal justice under the law.”

Recalling that the United States and

Pakistan were old allies, she said:

“We value our long standing cooperation with Pakistan, and have always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to US interests. That remains unchanged, regardless of who leadership is.”

Responding to the question about President Biden calling the new prime minister, she said she did not “have anything to predict at this point in time. Obviously, we stay in close touch with them at a range of levels.”

A third journalist tried a different approach and asked to get more information from the White House Press Secretary on Mr Biden’s call. “What arrangements does the administration have to contact him (Mr Sharif) and what’s moving forward on that?” he asked.

“We have a long, strong, and abiding relationship with Pakistan, an important security relationship, and that will continue under new leaders,” she added.

Courtesy: Dawn



act by the international community.

“Justice will not be absent, and evil acts will be severely punished,” Zhao said, emphasizing that terrorism is a common enemy of all mankind, and combating terrorism is the shared responsibility of

the international community.

He called on all parties to strengthen coordination and cooperation, take all possible measures to combat terrorism, and jointly maintain world peace and tranquility.

Courtesy: Saama

Former PM Imran hosts record-breaking 'Twitter rally'

IT took only a couple of minutes for the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan to break the internet, and quite likely a global record on Twitter.

Nearly half a million users (over 446,000) from around the world interacted with Mr Khan via Spaces, an audio live feature on Twitter. The average number of users listening at a time was 165,000. The address was also live-streamed on other platforms with thousands watching such as Facebook and Instagram.

For PTI supporters attending from within Pakistan and without, however, the highlight was being able to convey their support and concern with their leader. "How are you doing?" asked a worried supporter, officially starting the session that lasted over an hour.

To a question about a threat to his life at the Lahore rally today, Mr Khan said he would attend no matter what. "Minar-i-Pakistan is a special place because the Pakistan resolution was presented there. Indian Muslims decided that they wanted [a] separate [home]land. We will also launch our freedom movement there. I believe a record number of people will come," he said.

The PTI leader said that he did not

expect such huge crowds would come out in his support after his government was ousted earlier this month. "I had expected just five per cent of what actually came out. When I saw people I was so happy because I saw a nation emerging for the first time I saw where we should have been 75 years ago," he added.

Terming the protests by overseas Pakistanis "unprecedented", the former PM said that conspiracies would not work anymore as people had become politically aware.

Amid a crackdown by FIA on social media activists running anti-state campaigns and PML-N's allegations of involving bots to trend these campaigns, the PTI leader urged his supporters to not say anything against the armed forces of Pakistan. "Never ever speak against the army. If we didn't have the army, we wouldn't have survived. The army is more necessary than Imran Khan," he said.

He added that enemies of Pakistan were attacking the army and both Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari undermined the army when in power. "What were Dawn leaks and Memogate?" he asked.

There were other issues of importance that needed urgent attention by the PTI leader. For, instance, what happens to the memes that the social



media supporters said they were tired of making. "I have stopped reading papers. Social media has taken over, I only watch social media," replied Khan.

Talking about the chief election commissioner, Mr Khan said ECP's judgements were "anti-PTI". "The day [foreign funding] cases of all three parties are heard simultaneously, it will be clear that only PTI has a proper system of funding," he added.

In terms of future strategy and choosing electables over PTI core workers, the chairman said they gave out tickets to wrong people and this time he would prefer ideological workers over electables next time. "Last time, I didn't give tickets myself. This time I will not approve a single ticket without scrutiny," said Khan.

Answering a question about 95pc of media being against Imran Khan's government and politics, the PTI leader maintained that the country's media was the freest during his

tenure. "So-called liberals used to attack us about media freedom. We faced the most criticism and propaganda. They spread fake news against us. Today, all of the media is blacking us out...This is because these mafias coopt media owners," he said.

"I found out three months ago that journalists and anchors were getting foreign offers to run campaigns against us. But this will not work in the age of social media, information will get out and it cannot be stopped," he said.

Mr Khan said that after the Lahore rally, he would start speaking to international media as well.

Before concluding the session, Mr Khan said that he had never witnessed this widespread sense of nationalism in people as he had seen after his government was removed. "This will make Pakistan a nation... I urge everyone to come to Minar-i-Pakistan tomorrow. We will create history at a historical place."

Courtesy: Dawn

Hasan Ali wants 'basic changes' in current domestic structure

Star Pacer Hasan Ali believes that some basic changes to the current domestic structure can bring Pakistan cricket back on track.

The revival of the departmental cricket is under discussion since the departure of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, with many former and current cricketers raising voice for the old setup.

However, Hasan, who is representing Lancashire County, has a different take on the issue.

"I feel that instead of a complete overhaul, some basic changes to the current structure can be made to improve the situation," the 28-year-old

told PakPassion. "So for example, six regional teams can be increased to ten or more and to ask departments to form their teams again, which will result in many more cricketers getting a chance to play."

Veteran pacer Wahab Riaz said that many cricketers could benefit from the revival of departmental cricket. "Many cricketers have benefited from departmental cricket which includes financial support as well," he told The News. "I also polished my skills while playing in that system."

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Test cricketer Kamran Akmal also requested the new government to revive the department of cricket.



Some of the players have even gone to the USA to play cricket since the move, which is a clear indication that there are fewer opportunities for playing cricket in Pakistan.

Former wicketkeeper-batter Moin Khan said that it is his plea to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to restore departmental cricket. "I still oppose

the decision and this is still something I disagree with," he said in an exclusive interview with cricket Pakistan. "Being a cricketer, seeing cricketers become unemployed is wrong. I still stand on the same opinion and I think cricketers should be employed through different departments."

Courtesy: Saama

Bilawal becomes Pakistan's youngest foreign minister

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari took oath as the foreign minister, formally joining the federal cabinet of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath to the PPP chairman at the presidency. On the occasion, the venue echoed with slogans of "Jiye Bhutto" as soon as Mr Bilawal was sworn in as Pakistan's youngest foreign minister. PM Sharif, PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Sanam Bhutto, the sister of slain former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, were also present at the swearing-in ceremony.

Interestingly, President Alvi, who had expressed his inability to administer the oath to the prime minister, later met Bilawal who paid a courtesy call to the president.

The PPP chief assumed charge of the first public office of his political career immediately after being sworn in, and took a briefing on the country's foreign affairs. He also called on Prime Minister Sharif along with his father, former president Zardari, and expressed his gratitude for including him in the cabinet.



Thirty three year old Bilawal was first elected to the National Assembly in 2018. This is the first time he will be serving as a member of a federal cabinet. Mr Bilawal is the 12th foreign minister of the country.

Three days after his mother's assassination in December 2007, he had taken over the reins of the PPP. Despite being suddenly pushed to the top political echelons, he initially kept a low profile, focusing instead on finishing his history degree at Oxford University. He returned to Pakistan in 2010, and has since then taken on an increasingly active role as the PPP chairman.

Bilawal's grandfather, former premier and PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had served as the foreign minister from 1963 to 1966. ZAB had also served as president of the

country from 1971 to 1973 and as prime minister from 1973 to 1977.

In a tweet, Bilawal's sister Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari congratulated him before he took oath.

"Today Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will take oath as Pakistan's foreign minister in this unity government and we couldn't be more proud of him! Already outshone in parliament and always stuck to his democratic values excited to witness this path if God wills," she had tweeted.

Bilawal had hinted during a press conference that he would be allocated the portfolio and confirmed he would be sworn in as a federal minister the next day.

At the press conference, the young

PPP chief had also explained his decision of joining PM Sharif's cabinet, saying "one-sided decision making" was not possible and it was up to all the political parties to find solutions to the country's problems collectively.

Earlier, the PPP party leader, MNA Hina Rabbani Khar, was made the minister of state for foreign affairs.

A couple of days ago, the PM had appointed Tariq Fatemi as his special assistant on foreign affairs, but the portfolio was later withdrawn.

Media reports had stated that Mr Bilawal, who was at that time visiting the UK where he also met PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, will join the cabinet after his return.

Soon after assuming charge of his office, the newly inducted foreign minister went straight to the Chinese Embassy where he expressed condolences with the ambassador over the lives of three Chinese nationals lost in a suicide bombing in Karachi.

Bilawal vowed to further strengthen the bilateral relations with China, and stressed the culprits behind the terrorist attack will be punished soon.

Courtesy: Dawn

Muree authorities set up complaint desks for tourists, impose restrictions

Tourists across the country planning to visit Muree during the Eid holidays will have to follow some travel instructions.

The federal government has announced four days of holidays from May 2 to May 5 on the account of Eid-ul-Fitr 2022.

Although the weather this time is different from that in January, the Met office has forecast rains with gusty winds from May 2 to 5 during the Eid holidays.

The district administration has, therefore, stepped up its efforts to ensure that tourists' visit to Muree is hassle-free.

A meeting was held in this regard with Deputy Commissioner Tahir

Farooq in chair.

The meeting imposed complete ban on the parking of vehicles at the entry and exit points of the hill station.

The deputy commissioner said the provision of facilities to tourists was a top priority, but it was the people's responsibility to follow the traffic plan to avoid inconvenience.

Special teams have, therefore, been formed to resolve public issues, he said.

Tahir Farooq said visitors would not be allowed to park their vehicles outside parking lots and cooking on the roadside would be prohibited. Taking selfies and motorbike wheeling would not be allowed as well.

The deputy commissioner said the



assistant commissioner would ensure that there was no clash between the visitors and local residents.

He said desks had been established on The Mall to register complaints against hotel owners who overcharged visitors while traffic police would deploy sufficient staff to handle the flow of vehicles.

He said the main control room was set up in Muree to coordinate with

all departments of the federal and provincial governments, adding that there would be no issue of coordination as the station commander of Muree was in contact with the administration

Mr Farooq said a comprehensive plan had been chalked out to resolve the water shortage issue in the hill station and improve sanitation condition during the holidays.

Courtesy: Saama

In GB, hope evaporates as glaciers melt faster and faster

With glaciers melting faster than before, Gilgit-Baltistan residents in some areas live under the constant threat of a natural disaster.

Those living in downstream areas and near lakes and rivers are most vulnerable, particularly those near Shisper and Hoper glaciers.

Glaciers in the Himalaya, Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountain ranges have melted rapidly, creating thousands of glacial lakes in the country's northern areas.

Around 30 of these lakes are at risk of sudden hazardous flooding, known as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), the climate change ministry said earlier this week, adding that around seven million people were vulnerable.

In the Hassanabad village of Hunza Valley, the vast Shisper glacier dominates the landscape, heading towards villagers at an estimated speed of around four metres per day.

Climate change is causing most glaciers worldwide to shrink, but due to a meteorological anomaly, this is one of a few in the Karakoram mountain range that are surging.

This means hundreds of tonnes of ice and debris are pushing down the valley at ten times the normal rate or more, threatening the safety of the people and homes below.

The unusual surge blocked water flow from a stream originating in the nearby Muchuhur glacier, which normally falls into Hunza River at Hassanabad, thus forming an artificial lake.

According to the GBDMA assessment, the possible lake burst could submerge a portion of Karakoram Highway, a bridge, over 37 houses in

Hassanabad, two powerhouses, a Frontier Works Organisation camp office and vast fertile lands. It may also block the flow of Hunza River, triggering an Attabad-like disaster.

The water discharge from the dammed lake increases in summer when glacier melting starts.

Tariq Jamil, a resident of Hassanabad valley, told Dawn that hundreds of kanals of fertile land, trees, homes, a powerhouse and water channels along with Hassanabad nullah were damaged by high water flow last summer.

"Three families were displaced when their homes located near the nullah were damaged last year when water eroded land," he said. "The government has failed to provide alternative arrangements to people living in the red zone."

In summer, residents live in constant fear as water discharge increases, he said, adding that this time around, water discharge had increased even before the season started.

Another resident, Amjad Ali, said the people of Hassanabad were at risk of dammed glacier lake outbursts.

He agreed that water discharge from the dammed lake was high this season. "If heatwaves continue in the next months, an outburst of the dammed lake or high water flows are feared, resulting in floods," he said, adding that he was unsatisfied with the arrangements to protect the lives and property of local people.

Officials said work was under way to channelise the nullah and construct protective walls to control the excessive flow of water.



Besides, the administration was monitoring the daily movement of the glacier and has set up an automatic weather station and rebuilt irrigation channels.

Likewise, the unusual surge of an 18km-long Hoper glacier in Nagar district also gives residents nightmares.

Ahmed Hussain, a resident, told Dawn that the speed of Hoper melting had increased this season.

The height of the glacier has decreased, crevasses have appeared and the sound of falling ice can be heard. Several lakes have also formed in the glacier.

Residents of Hoper valley have to cross the glacier to access the other side. However, the recent glacial movement has blocked trekking paths, making the exercise extremely dangerous. A local resident recently got injured while crossing the glacier.

Mr Hussain said the surging Hoper glacier had also destroyed many tourist destinations and adversely impacted the ecology, reducing the snow leopard and Markhor population in the recent past.

Another resident, Dr Sajjad Hussain, told Dawn that Hoper was one of the rare glaciers in the world situated downside of human settlement and cultivated land. He said it was alarming that the glacier started moving at an unusual speed this summer.

He regretted that the possible threats from the glacial surge to local people had never been discussed and the government had yet to take steps to mitigate the potential threats and or even make locals aware of them.

Shahzad Shigri of the GB Environmental Protection Agency told Dawn that possible heatwaves could affect the speed of melting glaciers across the region.

He said snow received in winter at peaks particularly in Astore, Diamer and Ghizer started melting rapidly, creating flash floods and thus endangering people living in downstream areas.

Pakistan has more glaciers than any other country outside the polar region nearly 5,300 in the Karakoram, Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

They feed the Indus River system, the country's water lifeline. But data gathered over the last 50 years shows that almost all glaciers exhibit signs of melting due to rising temperatures.

As the glaciers retreat, they leave behind lakes supported by ice dams or accumulations of rock and soil. Inherently unstable, these dams often burst, sending huge volumes of water rushing into the villages below them.

Courtesy: Dawn

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