

Media's liberty linked with democratic, judicial freedom

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Speakers at a national webinar on press freedom have called upon the need to create unity among journalist organisations to fight the war against unnecessary restrictions on media and said that media freedom in Pakistan was associated with the independence of democracy and judiciary.

The webinar was organised by Punjab University School of Communication Studies in which Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Saleem Mazhar, SCS Director Prof Dr Noshina Saleem, senior most teachers of journalism including Prof Dr Mehdi Hasan, Prof Dr Shafiq Jullandhry, Dr Mujahid Ali Mansoori, eminent journalists Salman Ghani, Hamid Mir, Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari, Punjab Union of Journalist President Rana Azeem, PU TV Director and moderator Dr Shabbir Sarwar, faculty members and a large number of students participated in the event. Addressing the webinar, Dr Mehdi Hasan said that we could not achieve press freedom unless we ensured "right to know" and promoted investigative journalism. He said that political parties and organizations of journalists should jointly work for the freedom of press in the country. Dr Mujahid Mansoori said that Pakistani media enjoyed a limited freedom however the people could not benefit even from that limited autonomy of the press to the extent they should. He said that it was the job of our media to bring positive change in the behavior of a common man and universities should also play their role in this regard. Mr Salman Ghani said that when the politicians were in opposition, they supported media freedom however when they came to power, they changed their mindset regarding press freedom. He said that Pakistani media organizations were working under immense pressure. He said that Pakistani media must protect national interest, respect state institutions and highlight human rights and other issues. He said that an independent Pakistani media would lead to its development. He said that strengthening of journalist organizations was a must to achieve media freedom in Pakistan. He said that Pakistani journalists had sacrificed their lives in the line of their duties. Mr Hamid Mir said that Pakistani media had faced restrictions in the name of national interest and patriotism. He said that an independent press in Pakistan could lead to economic development of the country as well. He said that if the Journalists Protection Bill was not passed by the National Assembly in 2021, Pakistan might lose GSP Plus status and its 40 percent exports of textile industry to Europe might suffer. He said that the elements who were delaying approval of the Journalists Protection Bill were actually weakening Pakistan. He said that press freedom was in the best interest of the state and democracy. He said that if the fourth pillar of the state was weak, then how could the state be strong?



LAHORE: A labourer gives final touch to a clay-made pot at his workplace.

PML-N MPA Azhar expresses confidence in CM leadership

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: PML-N MPA from PP-269 Azhar Abbas Chaudhary met with Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and expressed confidence in his leadership. He also apprised the CM about the problems of his constituency.

On the occasion, the chief minister assured to resolve the problems of the constituency on a priority basis adding that the government is serving the masses with sincerity and commitment. The incumbent government is fulfilling every promise, the CM added. He regretted that the small cities were kept deprived of development by the past governments and pointed out the resources were diverted towards Muzaffargarh and other cities of south Punjab for the first time. The foundation stone of the south Punjab secretariat has been laid and the building will be completed soon, he added. Meanwhile, the past rulers befooled the people of south Punjab with hollow slogans and the voters showed the door to them in general elections. You have always listened to us while giving full respect and honour and resolved our problems.

Timely completion of development schemes to facilitate citizens: CM

— Parliamentarians call Usman Buzdar

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Ijaz Alam, Energy Minister Muhammad Akhtar Malik, Sardar Muhammad Khan Leghari MNA and MPAs namely Mahindar Pall Singh, Saleem Akhtar and Ghulam Ali Asghar called on Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and discussed matters of mutual interest. The CM repeated his resolve to continue consultations with the parliamentarians for the timely solution of people-related problems and assured to give importance to their proposals adding that feasible suggestions will be implemented. A mechanism has been devised to monitor development projects at every level to yield positive results, he added. The CM said the timely completion of development schemes is important to facilitate the citizens and the sustained monitoring will ensure efficiency and transparency. The menace of corruption, in development projects, is a thing of the past and no one will be allowed any wrongdoing

now because development schemes are executed through hard-earned money of the people, he continued. I am personally monitoring different development projects by conducting regular field visits and a vigilant eye is kept on every development scheme, Usman Buzdar said while asserting that no one will be allowed to misappropriate funds. The chief minister announced to provide facilities to the people at their doorsteps by upgrading healthcare and educational facilities. Regrettably, money was wasted on exhibitory projects in the past while neglecting the actual demands and priorities of the people, he said. The incumbent government has eliminated this wrong tradition and the negative tactics of influencing people through political jugglery are also done away with. Similarly, the era of the lip-service is over and the government practically performs. Those who keep pending official instructions have no right to stay on their posts. No vindictive action has been initiated against anyone in the province nor would be done in future, he added. The CM maintained the minority em-

powerment package of Punjab is a worthwhile example for other provinces adding that resources have been provided for the repair and maintenance of temples, churches and gurdwaras of the minority communities. Similarly, necessary facilities were being ensured at the religious places of minority communities in the province, he added. Along with it, the PTI government is reforming mistakes of the past as the country has deviated from its destination due to the wrong policies of the past rulers. There is no room for any wrongdoer in Punjab as a country lagged due to corruption, he added. The PTI government has raised a strong voice against corruption and a new example has been set by introducing meaningful reforms in a short period, concluded the CM.

Rahat Amanullah MNA and PML-N MPA Mian Jalil Ahmad Sharqpur call on cm

Rahat Amanullah MNA and PML-N MPA Mian Jalil Ahmad Sharqpur met with Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and apprised him about the

problems of their constituencies.

The CM assured to solve their problems and appreciated the efforts of the religious community for playing a positive role in maintaining peace. Mian Jalil Ahmad Sharqpur expressed confidence in chief minister Usman Buzdar.

Talking on this occasion, the chief minister reiterated that the parliamentarians are his companions and their respect is his honour. The negative politics of the PDM has met its logical end as the people have rejected the anarchistic designs of the rejected elements, he said. The downfall of the PDM is a warning to others as well as a lesson to learn. The opposition's attempt to divide the nation is frustrated because the people will not be deceived by the corrupt elements, he said. The era of loot and plunder will not return and those making hue and cry should look into their own peep, added the CM. Mian Jalil Sharqpur announced to have full confidence over the leadership and policies of the chief minister adding that parliamentarians are standing with the CM in the journey of public.

Lahore Police take exemplary action against occupation mafia, thugs: IGP

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Inam Ghani has said that Lahore Police has taken exemplary action against the occupation mafia and thugs and retrieved over billions of rupees worth of private and government properties to citizens and government agencies and land grabbing mafia should be wiped out, and every rascal who causes trouble for God's creatures should be brought to justice.

He further said that in order to protect the lives and property of the people and maintain law and order in the society, the operations against criminal elements especially thugs, occupation groups and criminals involved in street crimes should be intensified under a comprehensive strategy, so that these elements which cause trouble to the citizens can be chained and severe punishments can be meted out by the courts.

He further said that occupation groups occupying private and government properties and their supporters do not deserve any concession and legal action should be taken irrespective of their social status and designation while detailed reports of these operations must be sent to Central Police Office every 15 days. He further said that no concession should be taken against the builders of illegal bases and parking lots of buses and vehicles while legal action against illegal cable operators and their workers should not be delayed. He further said that the pace of operations against rascals could not be slowed down and the command officers themselves should supervise the operations to arrest the A category rascals. He issued these instructions while presiding over a review meeting of professional affairs of Lahore Police at the Central Police Office here today. During the meeting, the crime graph of Lahore including operations against occupation groups and arrests of miscreants and rascals were reviewed in detail while CCPO Lahore briefed IG Punjab about the operations and results of police teams in the first four months of 2021.

International Firefighters Day: A tribute to unsung heroes

Miss Deeba Shahnaz Akhter

Every year, 4th May is observed as International Firefighters Day to pay tribute and show solidarity to fire rescuers, who serve for protection and safety of the communities. The date chosen for International firefighters' day was linked to the feast day of St Florian, who was the first known commander of one firefighting squad in Roman Empire. He along with his colleagues lost their lives in one of the tragic wild fire incident in Australia. These silent defenders, true sons of soil and unsung heroes are known as Fire Rescuers. Fire rescuers are respected all over the world due to the nature of unique and risky job they perform. Firefighting profession is highly technical, structured and supplied with various artifacts, which helps to decide actions in unpredictable and complex situation. It involves special skills to fight with flames, rescue the trapped victims and save properties. Formal trainings related firefighting helps to minimize risk by practicing safety procedures and get command over them.



History reveals that developed countries had also faced major fire incidents. One of the major fire incidents in the history of United States occurred at James Town in 1608, left large losses of lives and properties. Great fire of London Sept 1666 ruined many buildings included 13,200 house, 87 churches and left many direct and indirect losses. Similarly, Boston city experienced ravaging for

administration to give a serious thought to firefighting and fire prevention consequently new courts and rules regarding firefighting including laws pertaining to the uses of open spaces and fire resistant building material were developed. Firefighting departments were also established. Likewise Major terrorist attack in New York City and Washington DC witnessed the firefighters as the primary first responders responded the incident and more than 300 firefighters lost their lives while responding to attack on the world Trade Center. West fertilizer co-explosion on 3 May, 2013 highlighted the tough and volatile work of firefighters.

In Pakistan, in the tenure of Ch Perwaiz Elahi as CM Punjab Rescue 1122 Service was started in 2004 as an ambulance service under the leadership of Dr Rizwan Naseer DG Rescue Punjab. The Service earned respect and public trust within short span of time. Resultantly, the challenge of establishing fire service was also given and with support of then Scottish Parliamentarian and Ch Muhammad Sarwar and Hanzala Malik Rescue Officers had received international fire and rescue training, which was replicated to all fire staff at Emergency Services Academy and started Fire Rescue Service in 2007.

So far, Rescue Service has rescued over 9.2 million victims of different emergencies without discrimination with average response time of seven minutes and saved losses worth over PKR 490 Billion by improving response time and professional firefighting. As per data of Emergency Service of last year, Fire Rescue Service is managing an average 43 fire in-

idents daily in Punjab and short circuits, negligence and carelessness have become leading causes of fire emergencies. Implementation of Building Code of Pakistan - Fire Safety Provisions - 2016 has become need of the hour.

It is also pertinent to mention that immediate safety measure like Fire exits and stairs separated by fire doors, fire alarm system, external fire hydrants for firefighting, sprinkle system in multi storey buildings may be installed to prevent fires. Moreover, the fire emergencies caused by negligence can be prevented with little vigilance and care while using gas heaters, kitchen stoves, candles and domestic accessories. On this special day, I would like to pay rich tribute to 13 Shaheed fire Rescuers of Ghakkar Plaza disaster, who sacrificed their lives during fire and rescue operation and changed the firefighting history in the country. These unsung heroes were from Pakistan Ordinance Factory Wah, Rescue 1122, City Fire Brigade and Civil Aviation Authority. They proved that firefighters do not only sprinkle water on the flames from outside rather they are passionate and even can sacrifice their lives for protecting others. Their countless efforts to transform this profession shall always be remembered. May Allah rest their souls in Heaven, who sacrificed their lives to save others and salute to the real heroes of the nations from all over the world for their countless efforts for developing safer communities in their respective countries.

The writer is Head of Information Department, Rescue 1122 Punjab

UO organises webinar on Press Freedom Day

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The University of Okara's Department of Communication Studies organized a webinar in connection with the World Press Freedom Day. The keynote speakers included the UO Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Muhammad Zakria Zakar, In-charge Communication Studies, Dr Zahid Bilal, eminent journalist, Wajahat Masud and Chairperson of the University of Punjab's Department of Film Studies, Dr Lubna Zaheer.

The speakers discussed the current state of press freedom in Pakistan and argued that there could be no social and economic development in any country without its press being free from all biases and pressures. Highlighting the role of press for social development, Dr Zakar said, "Empowerment of the society is linked with the right to freedom of expression and access to information. If we need to remove poverty and illiteracy, our press has a crucial role to play." Recalling the role of the Muslim press in the subcontinent, Dr Zahid told that the missionary journalism of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar and others enlightened and empowered the Muslims. Commenting on the scenario of press freedom in Pakistan, Dr Lubna argued, "The situation of press freedom in Pakistan, according to the Reporters Without Borders is very precarious. This is the time we must take practical steps in this regard". Wajahat Masud maintained that Pakistan must learn from the past and mend the future accordingly.

Remembering Hazrat Ali (RA)

Malik Muhammad Aslam Awan

Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib was the cousin and son in law of the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW). He as fourth Caliph reigned from 656 to 661 AD. He is known by a number of titles, some derived from his personal qualities and other reflect particular episodes of his life. Abu Ali Hassan, father of Hassan (his eldest son), Abu-Turab (father of dust), Murtada (one who is chosen and contended) Asad Ullah (Lion of God) Haider (Lion) Ameer ul Mumineen (Prince of the faithful and Mawlay-i-Muttqiyyam) Master of God fearing.

Hazrat Ali (RA) is a prominent figure, after the last Prophet, about whom a lot has been written. When the mother of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) died, he had been brought up by his uncle Abu Talib and his wife Fatima bint-e-Asad. After Ali got the age of five years, he was brought up by the Muhammad (SAW) and his wife Kadajah (RA) at the age of 10 years, he became the second to Hazrat Khadijah to accept Islam. Being brought up under the pious guardianship of the last Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Ali became the most prominent figure after the last Prophet (SAW), whose spiritual guidance became most authentic to the believers and pious Muslims.

Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) on several occasions declared affirmatively that he himself is the city of knowledge and Ali is the door of the City. It is evident that without passing through

the door one cannot enter the city, by this declaration, Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) has made it clear that Hazrat Ali's knowledge is unquestionable and authoritative for all the believers of the age and for the later generations.

Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib, being brought up in the house of the last Prophet gained knowledge and piety from the last Prophet and that is why his sayings are oft quoted in all religious issues and considered as final opinion in matters relating to humanity. Immediately after his assumption to power, Amir Muavia the then Governor of Syria revolted against the central command and declared himself the Caliph of Muslims. Amir Muavia disrespected from Hazrat Ali on the grave issue of the martyrdom of Hazrat Usman.

He wanted and demanded that these involved in the assassination of Hazrat Usman be hanged without inquiry while Hazrat Ali stressed that the culprits would be punished after transparent inquiry. Muavia fought battles against Hazrat Ali. Even Hazrat Talha, Hazrat Zubair and Hazrat Aisha participated the battle of Jang-e-Jamal on the side of Muavia. Hazrat Talha, Hazrat Zubair embraced martyrdom while the legs of the camel of Hazrat Aisha were cut down and she fell on the ground. Hazrat Ali sent her to house with due respect and honour.

On the way back to home, the dogs of Taif barked upon her and she remembered the words of the last Prophet, one of my wife would be on wrong side and the dogs of Taif would bark upon her.

After she realized the fact, she refrained the rest of her life to side with Muavia. Hazrat Ali while praying in mosque were attacked by a Kharji, Ibn-e-Muljam and due to the wounds, on 21st Ramadan 40 AH embraced the martyrdom.

In the battle of Khyber in 629, the citadel of Jews, where they accumulated themselves after their expulsion from Madina, became almost invincible when Muhammad (SAW) called Ali and advised him to attack Khyber with Muslim force. Hazrat Ali attacked the fort and in one by one cotest killed the most chivalrous Jews leader "Marhab" in one stroke and after the conquest of Khaybar, his personality was augmented, admired and admitted as epitome in chivalry and courageous achievements.

In 632 returning from the pilgrimage, the last Prophet delivered a sermon at Ghadir Khumm, a central place between Mecca and Madina, and urged upon his followers to hold Hazrat Ali as their Maula, in the same spirit they consider Muhammad (SAW) their Maula. He declared Ali as his inheritor and brother. Ali's thoughts, sayings incarnated in the book titled Nahj-al-Balagh (the path of eloquence) is one of books most read and respected in Islamic history. His saying are held in highest esteem in all sects of Muslims, Shia, Sunnis. Muslims all around the globe hold Nahaj al-Balagh as spiritual, intellectual guidance for their success in life and the world hereafter.

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24,60,48 corona patients recovered in public sector hospitals

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: As many as 24,60, 48 corona patients are recovered in public sector hospitals being run under the control of Specialized and Primary & Secondary Healthcare departments, while 1783 patients are recovered during the last 24 hours. This was disclosed by Silwat Saeed, Special Secretary Specialized Healthcare Punjab today. She said that 7506 beds were reserved in all govt. hospitals for corona patients, out of which 4589 beds were unoccupied. Likewise, 1623 beds reserved in govt. hospitals of the provincial metropolises and 867 beds were vacant so far. The Special Secretary SHC&MED said that in view of the surging corona pandemic, the Health Department had arranged 3414 beds in Isolation wards of all govt. hospitals in the province, out of which, 2513 beds were vacant.