

Daily The Spokesman

RAWALPINDI



Bangladesh takes pride for marvelous social & economic growth, says envoy

To celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the independence and National Day of Bangladesh, High Commissioner H.E. Mr. Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique & Mrs. Shamshad Ara Khanam hosted a reception here at a hotel in Islamabad. (Details on Page 5)



High-level official & business delegations arriving in Pakistan on May 9: Envoy

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula on Friday said high-level official and business delegations were arriving in Pakistan from Ethiopia on May 9 to advance bilateral and multilateral cooperation in diverse fields to further strengthen relations between the two countries. (Details on Page 8)

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First lunar eclipse of 2023

RAWALPINDI: A view of first lunar eclipse is partially seen on the sky in the city, The first lunar eclipse of 2023 will be taking place between May 5 and 6, and the rare phenomenon will be visible in Asian countries, and southern and eastern Europe.



Photo: Online

Accession of King Charles dawn of new era for Commonwealth countries: PM

News Desk

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday called upon leaders of the Commonwealth countries to mark the accession of King Charles III as the dawn of a new era and the opening of new vistas and fresh avenues for the remarkable family of nations of the Commonwealth.

While speaking at a meeting of Commonwealth leaders here, he urged the leaders to reimagine and reinvigorate the Commonwealth and infuse it with ever greater synergy and an even stronger sense of purpose.

The Prime Minister also



spoke of his government's commitment to equipping the Pakistani youth with the right kind of skill sets and opportunities.

He added that his government was empowering women and mainstreaming the marginalized youth, religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and the transgender community.

No dialogue with India till review of Aug 5, 2019 unilateral actions: Bilawal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday, reiterating Pakistan's "unchanged" position, said his country could not engage in any meaningful dialogue with India till the latter reviewed its unilateral and illegal actions of August 5, 2019, revoking the special status of Kashmir.

"Unless India reviews the action it took on August 5, 2019 (abrogation of Article 370), Pakistan is not in a position to engage bilaterally with India... As far as Pakistan's position on bilateral relations with India or any meaningful engagement or dialogue with my Indian counterpart, our position remains unchanged," the foreign minister said in an interview with India Today.

Bilawal, who was in India on a two-day visit to attend the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation

Don't use terrorism for diplomatic point-scoring, says Bilawal

GOA: "Let's not get caught up in weaponising terrorism for diplomatic-point scoring," Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari told the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) summit in Goa, minister after Indian counterpart raised the issue of cross-border terrorism at the meeting.

Addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) on Friday, FM Bilawal Bhutto urged member nations to refrain from using terrorism as a diplomatic tool.

Earlier, Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar addressed

the SCO meeting, in which he highlighted the issue of cross-border terrorism.

Jaishankar said: "While the world was engaged in facing Covid and its consequences, the menace of terrorism continues unabated. Taking our eyes off this menace would be detrimental to our security interests."

Furthermore, the host reiterated his country's "long-standing" demand that English be made the third official language of the moot. At the moment Russian and Mandarin are the languages used at the form officially.

Addressing the SCO summit, it had caused the largest number of casualties among any other SCO countries.

"Pakistan wants to quell

terrorism not because India said it or the Indian government said so, but because we want to end this menace.

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"Pakistan has suffered the most. I myself am a victim of terrorism, so Pakistan and myself are wholly committed to combating this menace," he reiterated.

To a question, the foreign minister said Pakistan was willing to engage any Indian concerns but India would also have to address Pakistan's concerns.

"India will have to explain what Kulbhushan Jadhav – a state actor, a navy commander – was doing in Pakistan, carrying out terrorist attacks on Pakistani soil. Does that not come under cross-border terrorism?" he asked.

He said the victims of the 2007 Samjhauta Express bombing, which had killed around 70 people, mostly Pakistanis, had yet to see any justice.

To a question, he said the trial on the Mumbai attacks was facing delay because India had not been producing witnesses as a legal requirement.

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Envoy for all-possible efforts for release of Pakistani prisoners languishing in Saudi jails



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki here on Friday assured Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah of all-possible efforts for the release of Pakistanis languishing in Saudi jails.

During the meeting with the minister, the envoy also discussed matters of mutual interests including bilateral relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, said a news release.

The meeting also reviewed progress on an agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia for "Road to Makkah project".

Both the dignitaries agreed to finalize the agreement at the earliest possible time for facilitating Pakistanis in Hajj pilgrim.

According to the press release, the Pakistani pilgrims would be provided easy and hassle-free immigration facility under the project which is being launched from Islamabad Airport. Forty thousand pilgrims will be benefited from the project this year.

The interior minister said that the project would be extended to other major cities soon to benefit more pilgrims.

He said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had historical, longstanding and brotherly relations.

The people of Pakistan have special devotion and love for Khadim Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain (custodian of the two holy mosques), he said.

The interior minister lauded the efforts of the Saudi Ambassador for further strengthening bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries.

Chinese foreign minister in Islamabad to attend trilateral dialogue



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang on Friday arrived here on a two-day official visit, at the invitation of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

This is his first official visit to Pakistan since assuming office.

Besides the bilateral meetings, the Chinese foreign minister will participate in the 5th China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue on Saturday.

Pakistan, China reaffirm resolve to work together for regional peace, prosperity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have reaffirmed their resolve to work together for promoting regional peace and prosperity and for jointly coping with external challenges.

Both sides emphasised the need to further advance and deepen bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy, culture and defence for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

The two sides also called for increasing bilateral exchanges, people-to-people contacts, and cooperation in the fields of culture and tourism to further cement bilateral ties.

The bilateral matters were discussed at a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the visiting State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Qin Gang,



who along with the members of his delegation, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar, Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Sun Weidong, and senior government officials of Pakistan and China.

Welcoming the Foreign Minister of China, the President said that Pakistan-China relations were rooted in mutual trust, understanding, goodwill and both sides firmly

supported each other on core issues. He highlighted that Pakistan-China mutual cooperation was assuming an even greater significance in the light of new developments taking place in the regional and international arenas.

The President said that Pakistan was committed to the completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar port, which would play a significant role in the promotion of bilateral trade, besides enhancing regional trade and connectivity.

He said that Pakistan would take effective measures to ensure the security of the Chinese personnel working on various CPEC projects.

He expressed optimism that the recent opening of Khunjerab Pass would facilitate the movement of goods from Xinjiang to Gwadar and vice versa.

Improvement of Pakistan in global media freedom index: Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said that the improvement of Pakistan in global media freedom index was a manifestation of the fact that Pakistan's direction was correct and the government had intentions to improve it further.

Expressing her gratitude over Pakistan's improvement of 7 ranks in the world ranking of press freedom, she said in a statement that the era of media-bashing, kidnapping, shooting, rib-breaking, accusing media persons of selling loyalties and dirty character assassination campaigns was slowly ending, which was also being acknowledged globally.

Foreign Ministers in SCO

INDIA: Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari among SCO Foreign Ministers participating in Council of Foreign Ministers in Goa.



Photo: Online

President Alvi confers Education Excellence Award to UAJK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD : The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) has been honoured with the 'Education Excellence Award' by the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, for its exceptional contributions to promote quality education and research in the region.

The award was conferred at a summit organised by the Rawalpindi Chamber Of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) at the Aiwan-e-Sadar, where prominent universities from all four provinces and federal capital territory were recognised for their national services in the field of education.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, attended the ceremony and received the award from

the President on behalf of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Commenting on the recognition of the university at the highest level, the Vice-Chancellor expressed his deep gratitude to the President of Pakistan for this honour and expressed his resolve to continue efforts for providing high-quality education and values-based guidance to the students for shaping the future of the country.

The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has made a significant mark in the field of higher education since its inception in 1980 by offering a comprehensive multi-disciplinary education ranging from engineering to medical sciences and from social sciences to basic and applied sciences. The present administration of the univer-



sity has implemented a reform agenda within a short period of time and made UAJK one of the leading universities of the country.

The UAJK offers 86-degree programs in 29 departments under four faculties, including modern science, artificial intelligence, media sciences, and engineering technologies, among others. Its faculty members, out of whom 133

are Ph.Ds, are dedicated to providing competitive, quality education to nearly ten thousand students.

Under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi as Vice-Chancellor, the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has recently crossed a very important milestone by establishing its new state-of-the-art campus at Chatter Khas in the outskirts of Muzaf-

farabad. The campus built with the financial assistance of Saudi Arabia government has a capacity to provide educational facilities to over 7000 students in a peaceful environment.

Located at the distance of 20 km from Muzaffarabad city on main Muzaffarabad Islamabad highway, the newly constructed King Abdullah Campus helps the university to further expand its academic activities and operate at its full capacity.

The Education Excellence Award is a testament to the university's commitment to providing high-quality education and contributing to the development of the region. The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will continue to strive for excellence and provide opportunities for students to achieve their full potential.

Imran Khan says PDM Govt 'Bajwa's gift' to the nation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan has alleged that the regime change decision was made behind closed doors in which a person declared him 'dangerous' and ordered to bring Shehbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar to the government.

While addressing PTI workers and supporters, Imran Khan alleged that the incumbent government is a 'gift of Qamar Javed Bajwa'. He added, "A person had declared me dangerous and suggested to oust me. The same person also suggested bringing Shehbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar to the government."

The former premier claimed that he had asked Qamar Javed Bajwa to refrain from toppling his government but he toppled the PTI government.

"I had made maximum efforts to hold elections before the formation of a new government. Constitution also orders to hold elections in 90 days after the dissolution of the assembly. 15 judges of the Supreme Court (SC) had also given their opinion to hold polls in 90 days but the caretaker government is unwilling to organise polls."

Khan alleged that the supporters of Maulana Fazlur Rehman have been handed over the caretaker set



up in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), whereas, pro-Shehbaz Sharif people are present in Punjab's caretaker government. "They have planned to be in the government till October and they will not hold polls."

Imran Khan said that they sought orders from the Supreme Court (SC) for timely polls in Punjab. "This Supreme Court had once rejected PTI's plea for holding polls. I have never complained about facing difficulties when the courts were opened late at night."

"After the SC ruling, PTI commenced electioneering but the rulers started torturing us. During talks, the government suggested to hold polls after budget. I am continuously telling everyone that they are going to waste time as their intentions are bad."

He reiterated that elections are the only solution to pull the country out of the crisis.

PTI agreed on same-day elections, Govt tells SC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has submitted its response to the Supreme Court (SC) regarding dialogue with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for developing consensus on the elections in the country.

The statement submitted by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar through the attorney general of Pakistan said the negotiations with PTI for elections yield positive results. "The coalition partners showed flexibility in the talks."

In the negotiations, the matter of dissolving assemblies before time was also discussed but no consensus was reached on the matter. The coalition-govt believes that the solution to political matters lies in

negotiations, the reply submitted by Ishaq Dar to SC read.

In the larger interest of the country, the coalition govt is ready to commence the talks again, the SC was told by the federal govt.

On Wednesday, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) submitted a detailed report of negotiations with the ruling alliance in the Supreme Court (SC).

The report had been submitted to SC Registrar's Office with the details regarding three rounds of talks held with the coalition government.

Taking to his Twitter handle earlier, Fawad wrote that the party in its report will also request the apex court to implement its order [April 4 verdict] regarding the Punjab Assembly elections.

Chinese navy ship rescues Pakistanis from dire situation in Sudan

Xinhua

SWABI: Nasrullah Khan, a 42-year-old Pakistani mechanic who worked in Sudan, experienced the real adversity of life for the first time since his birth when sitting anguished and penniless in Port Sudan in recent days.

Now safely in his home in Swabi, a city in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, he recalled the intense and moving experience, saying that "the Pakistan-China ironclad friendship helped him out of danger."

Deadly armed clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces erupted on April 15, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands.

"It was the worst time of my life when the conflict in Sudan broke out. I was so uncertain if I could get back home because the situation was getting dismal back there. With every passing hour, my hopes were fading until I heard an announcement to get on board a Chinese navy vessel to take a voyage towards peace," Khan, who worked in a printing factory in Sudan, told Xinhua.

According to Pakistan's foreign ministry, over 200 Pakistani evacuees in Sudan were brought to Jeddah city of



Saudi Arabia by the Chinese navy ship Weishanhu.

"We are grateful to our Chinese friends for this gesture of support and friendship," the ministry said.

Khan told Xinhua that he and other Pakistanis spent four days in a hotel near the port, adding that initially the Pakistanis were being evacuated in groups of 30 to 40 people, but when the Chinese

navy vessel arrived, it evacuated over 200 Pakistanis waiting at the port.

"Chinese friends opened their doors and hearts for us during our most dire circumstances, they took good care of us and ensured that our 18-hour-long voyage to Jeddah was a comfortable one," Khan said while ruffling his daughter's hair in affection.

Khan took selfies with the Chinese

navy staff, enjoyed the halal cuisine specially prepared for the Pakistani evacuees, and eventually had a peaceful sleep in a cozy room in the vessel after many days of fear and uncertainty in Sudan.

"Throughout my life, I had heard about the Pakistan-China friendship, but never had I imagined the depth of the friendship until I experienced it myself... It made my heart swell with pride that my best friends saved my life and reunited me with my family. For us, China is indeed the most valuable friend in this time of need," the father of four children told Xinhua.

Khan Ghalib, Khan's 65-year-old father, a white-bearded man living with the children of Khan and four of his other sons in an old ancestral home in the remote area of Swabi, said that he had several sleepless nights when Khan was stranded in Sudan.

"I was worried about his life and well-being, and I sighed with relief when I saw him safe and sound before my eyes," Ghalib told Xinhua.

He said that since his son returned safely, he always wished the crew which had evacuated Khan the very best, and hoped that the Pakistan-China friendship would further bloom.

Karachi: Minor maid speaks up on abuse after brutal torture

Bureau Report

KARACHI: A house owner has allegedly tortured her minor maid for mistakenly dropping fry pan full of hot edible oil on herself and sustaining burn injuries in the kitchen in Karachi.

Over a minor mistake, the house owner allegedly tortured a 12-year-

old maid in Karachi. The maid had mistakenly dropped a fry pan full of hot oil while cooking kebab in which she sustained burn injuries on her hands, face and other parts of her body.

Instead of giving medical assistance, the woman allegedly subjected the maid to torture and used the same fry pan for hitting the housemaid, as per

the statement of the victim.

The victim said in her statement that the house owner exhibited extreme cruelty as she made herself busy eating kebabs without paying attention to her burn wounds.

After receiving a complaint, police sent the victim girl for medical examination and contacted her parents.

Surprisingly, police adopted complete silence over the housemaid torture case after her medical examination conducted at Jinnah Hospital.

Police told the media that the wounded housemaid will be handed over to her relatives and legal action will be taken on their request.

Later, police said that the relatives



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula on Friday said high-level official and business delegations were arriving in Pakistan from Ethiopia on May 9 to advance bilateral and multilateral cooperation in diverse fields to further strengthen relations between the two countries.

Addressing a news conference here, he said 60-members delegation would comprise of the representatives three major ministries including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Regional Integration Ministry and Innovation Technology as well as high officials of the Investment Commission of Ethiopia and Industrial Park Development Corporation.

From the business side, he said it would represent multiple economic sectors of Ethiopia including agriculture and agro processing, pharmaceutical, textile, surgical equipment, sports, tourism, mining and ICT.

The ambassador said the official delegation would sign Memoranda of

Understanding with their counterparts in Pakistan in technology, tourism and other fields. He said trade agreements would also be signed between the business communities of both the countries to boost the trade volume which was minimal to this day.

H.E. Jemal Beker said two business forums were also being organized in Karachi and Islamabad to bolster the bilateral trade by strengthening trade and commerce ties between the two countries.

He said Pakistani business community was keen to increase bilateral trade between the two countries since the ongoing development in Ethiopia's diverse economic sectors had really impressed them during their recent visit to the capital city Addis Ababa.

Likewise, business community of Ethiopia also wanted to develop business and trade ties with their counterparts in the country.

On the occasion, the ambassador also congratulated the people of Ethiopia on Patriots' Victory Day which was being observed in his country today to honour the veterans of resistance movement against Italy.

President AJK urges G-20 nations to boycott the group's upcoming event being held IOK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmoed Chaudhry has urged the G-20 countries to avoid from participating in the group's upcoming event being hosted in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In a letter addressed to the ambassadors of G-20 nations based in Islamabad, the AJK president, while highlighting the worsening political and human rights situation in the held territory said that Indian nefarious designs behind holding a meeting of the G-20 countries in Srinagar was to deflect world attention away from the real issue of Kashmir.

He said that India continues to violate human rights on a large scale in the troubled region that happens



to be an internationally recognized disputed territory. "By organizing the G-20 Summit events in Srinagar and Leh, India wants to hoodwink the international community and create a false notion that all is well in Kashmir", the president said. He pointed out that the picture being presented of occupied Kashmir by New Delhi was quite different from the ground reality. Referring to the dire situation in

the restive region, Barrister Chaudhry said that occupied Kashmir was still reeling under relentless oppression, barbarism and brutality of the Indian occupation forces.

Drawing the G-20 nations' attention towards the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir, the president said that India, which has forcibly occupied the territory and held its people hostage by the dint of force, has no right whatsoever to organize G-20 conference in the disputed area. Terming Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory, the president said that the issue of Kashmir was still pending on the UN agenda. He said that the situation in the region has further deteriorated since the Modi government stripped the region of its special status. He said that Indian occupation forces deployed in length and

breadth of the territory have made life difficult for the Kashmiri people and were violating human rights there on a large scale.

He said that essential fundamental freedoms, including the people's right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful protest and assembly remained largely suppressed in the region. He said that legitimate political voices have been suppressed as prominent Hurriyat leaders, rights defenders and civil society activists have been jailed under trumped-up charges by the occupation authorities. He said that under the given circumstances, G-20 nations should realize the Indian motives behind the move and refrain from participating in the group's upcoming event being hosted in occupied Kashmir.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi Chairs 15th Provincial Cabinet Meeting At CMO



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over the 15th Provincial Cabinet meeting at CM Office today. The Punjab Cabinet meeting by taking an important step regarding e-governance has decided to close down traditional file system in all government departments and approval for the imposition of paperless system has been accorded during the meeting.

E-filing system for the departments will be implemented by 15th May period. Billions of rupees will be saved due to this austere step of the Punjab government. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi directed to digitalize ACRs. The Punjab Cabinet acknowledged the endeavours of Chairman Planning & Development Board, Secretary Implementation and Chairman Punjab Information Technology Board on introducing paperless system in the departments. The Punjab Cabinet has decided to give laptops to the intelligent male & female students of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir by adopting a nice step.

The Cabinet also granted approval to award available laptops to the promising male and female students. The Punjab Cabinet granted approval to give Rs.15 lakh financial assistance per head to the heirs of the youth resident of Ichhra who lost their lives due to falling down of a jeep into River Neelum. Approval to the amendment of Punjab Police (Ministerial Posts) Rules 2017 was granted during the meeting. Conditional approval was granted during the meeting for signing MoU between Special Education Department and "Tare Zameen Per" NGO Trust. The Cabinet Standing Committee for Legal Affairs will make a final decision after reviewing the MoU. The Cabinet endorsed the decisions of the Provincial Cabinet 11th, 12th, 13th & 14th meetings.

Caretaker CM launches Punjab Police Public App

Bureau Report

LAHORE :Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has launched the Punjab Police Public App at a ceremony attended by Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir, IG police, MD Punjab Safe Cities Authority, CCPO & CTO Lahore, Chairman Punjab Information Technology Board and others.

During the briefing, it was informed that 11 features have been added to this app for the convenience of the public. People can get missing, family tracing, crime reports, traffic services and other facilities through it. Similarly, the Mera Piara feature will assist in the recovery of lost & and finding the missing heirs. A report about a missing person can be made at home through the app. A differently-abled child or individual can also be registered in view of the fear of missing. A missing and recovered child or person can also be reported on the "Mera Piara" app. It will be possible to search for missing and recovered children on the Mera Piara app.

The accused will be able to be immediately traced or arrested through the women harassment feature as 18 services of Khidmat Center are included in Punjab Police Public App. Character certificates, Tenancy, FIR, employee registration and other services can also be accessed online through Khidmat Center services. The facility for filing complaints or crime reports will also be available on the police app. Uploading incidents of hate speech and terrorism on the app will directly reach the CTD. Similarly, the facility of youth internships in police and attached departments will also be available and people will also be able to get the location of the nearest police station through it.

Caretaker CM expressed his appreciation for the team's efforts and acknowledged that the idea for the Punjab Police Public App originated during the search for missing heirs in Gujranwala, where the CTO Lahore played a commendable role in locating a missing child.

Strike camp of Info Dept employees against the illegal appointment of DG continues for the 4th day



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: The strike camp of Directorate General Information employees continues for the fourth day, after closing down 5 FM radio stations in the merged districts, the FM radio stations of Swat and Kohat were also closed.

Discussions of information employees' strike on social media, journalists and media workers belonging to various press clubs are continuing to arrive at the venue.

The first phase of the protest will continue for fourteen days, after 14 days the strike will enter the next phase, until the suspension of the notification of the imported DG, journalists and information workers are united.

President Information Welfare Association the strike camp of Directorate General Information employees against the appointment of imported DG remained continue for the fourth day.

President Information Welfare Association, said to media, after 5 FM radio stations in the merged districts, the FM radio stations of Swat and Kohat have also been closed from today.

President Information Welfare Association Attaullah has said in a statement from here that the first phase of the protest against the appointment of the imported DG will continue for fourteen days, while the strike will enter the next phase after 14 days whose strategy has been set.

He further said that until the suspension of the notification of the imported DG, the journalists and the employees of the information department are one and the same.

He also said that the leaders of the journalist community will be taken into confidence for any negotiations and they will be a part of the negotiation committee.

Sewage problems

KARACHI: An ambulance is facing trouble due to sewerage water accumulated in dregs at Manghopir Road, which is the open sign of the negligence of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online

Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq chaired the high level meeting

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, the review meeting of the third quarter of the annual development program of the secretaries of the government was held. The progress of the ongoing projects was discussed in the meeting. The Prime Minister directed that the projects should be completed on time and the quality of the work should be kept in mind. No negligence will be tolerated in this regard. The prime minister said that all the allocated funds of the annual development program of the federal government are expected to be received soon. Therefore, development departments should immediately set up a fund utilization program to ensure timely utilization



of funds. The Prime Minister directed that the officers of all the development departments posted in the districts will remain and work in their respective districts of posting and no officer will leave the authorized authority station without permission. The Prime Minister directed the secretaries to ensure strict implementation of the guidelines laid down. Projects should be completed with specifications and quality.

The Prime Minister directed the Roads Department to complete the Neelum to Tau Butt road in the current

financial year itself. In this regard, the government will provide all required funds in the current financial year. Neelum district is a tourist destination. Road improvement will help in increasing tourism. The Prime Minister directed the Tourism Secretary that all the field officers of the Tourism Department should be seen in their respective areas. The employees posted in the rest houses, cooks, waiters and watchmen should be present at their respective places of posting. The inactive rest houses should be activated immediately. The Prime Minister will conduct a surprise inspection of all such tourism facilities in the districts in the coming days.

There will be no room in the districts for such officers who will adopt asraf. The Prime Minister directed the Secretary Schools to prepare a briefing with-

in two weeks with the help of the coordinators of all government schools in which the details of the number of schools, number of students, budget and expenditure per student should be presented in the briefing. The laws framed should not be self-explanatory, but the implementation should be ensured as per the law. He said that as the prime minister, I have made myself accountable and every citizen can object to the orders of the prime minister. Similarly, all the employees should also be accountable. The prime minister also directed the information secretary. That the information department should also give adequate coverage to the opposition. The most senior minister Colonel (ret'd) Waqar Ahmed Noor and Government Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also participated in the meeting.

Seminar: Enhancing employability of IT professionals

Bureau Report

GUJRAT: A few more things to learn before stumbling upon your dream job, especially if you are an IT graduate and feel it's always been a near-miss in your case, advised the experts at a seminar here at Hafiz Hayat Campus of the University of Gujrat (UoG) on Friday.

Titled "Enhancing Employability of IT Professionals," the seminar was aimed at helping IT students succeed in their job hunt. Increase chances of getting a opportunities to IT students in their job hunting by acquiring latest skills through state-of-the-art facilities, a seminar, titled was held.

Prof. Dr Sohail Naqvi, CEO of Knowledge Streams, was the chief guest of the seminar organized by the Student Services Centre of the varsity. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Shabbar Atiq presided over the seminar. Vice Chancellor PUET Prof. Dr Rauf Azam, Project Manager HEC Social Sciences Consortium Murtaza Noor and Mohammad



Jamal Qureshi were among the guests of honour.

Earlier, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the UoG and Knowledge Streams Lahore to provide the latest training opportunities to the students of Information Technology. The MoU was signed by Prof. Dr Shabbar Atiq and Prof. Dr Sohail Naqvi with a view to further expanding the scope of IT by promoting practical approach among students.

Another MoU was signed between the UoG and Elite Sports. The MoU, which was signed by Director SSC Ghafar Mohiuddin and Mohammad Jamal Qureshi, seeks to promote sports among the students.

Dr Sohail Naqvi in his address highlighted the importance of sustainable employment in a student's career.

"Information Technology has changed the concepts of development and employment to a great extent," Dr

Naqvi said, urging the students to adopt international standards to be successful. He underscored the need for them to develop and improve their communication skills, critical thinking and teamwork.

Dr Shabbar Atiq said that the collaboration of universities with industrial and commercial organizations will pave the way for the graduating students in securing their dream job. He linked the bright future of the youth with the practical education and training, saying the practical approach in the higher education and training of our youth will go a long way towards achieving the goal of national progress and development.

Dr Rauf Azam stressed the need for updating universities' courses and programs to meet the requirements of the world job market. "Our technology and science teachers should establish a strong rapport with the local industrial and commercial tycoons that the graduating students looking for a job could also benefit from," Dr Rauf Azam said.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:43 am
Zohr 12:05 pm
Asr 4:54 pm
Maghrib 6:54 pm
Isha 8:27 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343
Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316

SOFTEC'23, the largest IT event in Pakistan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: SOFTEC'23, the largest IT event in Pakistan, is all set to take place at FAST-NUCES in Lahore today. With a prize money pool of 15 million and 18 competitions covering a wide range of IT-related fields, the event promises to be a fantastic opportunity for IT enthusiasts to showcase their skills and innovative ideas.

The presence of distinguished chief guests at SOFTEC'23, including Kashif Manzoor, the Service Delivery Head of Systems Limited, Dr. Sohail Naqvi, the CEO of Knowledge Streams and Executive Director of HEC, and guest of honor Patrick Brown, the Mayor of Brampton, Canada, running a global program to grow startups, reflects the event's significance and value for the IT industry.

The event offers a platform for participants to connect with industry experts, share their experiences, and learn from the best in the business. The diverse range of competitions, including App Development, Web Development, Programming, and Artificial Intelligence, allows participants to explore and showcase their skills in various areas of IT.

Ahsan Iqbal calls for promoting peace in society

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said hatred, extremism and intolerance are major obstacles in the way of peace, national unity and sustainable economic development in the country.

He was addressing an international Islamic peace conference on national accord for peace, inclusive education, social reconstruction and sustainable economic development organized by the Islamic Research Institute (IRI) of the International Islamic University (IIU) held here at Faisal Masjid.

He said that after escaping a terrorist attack I decided to save the youth from hatred and terrorism. He said that the virus of hatred in the human mind destroys intelligence and its ability to think in a positive way.

Ahsan Iqbal said that the base of conflict and violence is prejudice and intolerance as it leads to extremism. The federal minister said that the success of any nation depends on the utilization of collective capacity. He further said that polarization is the biggest enemy of national unity. He said investment must be continuously provided with a favorable environment.

Referring to the terrorism's impact on the country he said Pakistan has lost thou-



sands of lives and billions of dollars due to extremism. Ahsan Iqbal said development and progress is impossible without peace and stability. "Eradicating hatred has become a social challenge" he said.

Addressing the conference, MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik said social cohesion with ample access to opportunities is imperative. She opined Pakistan has one of the most strategic and important geographic settings across the world, it has abundance of natural resources, all such opportunities must be used as we have all the potential to shine.

Director General IRI Dr. Muhammad Zia ul Haq in his welcome address apprised

of the details of the conference. He said this conference and accord is an initiative of honorable Minister Ahsan Iqbal and IRI that is indeed a new step to take Pakistan to a new destination. He elaborated that the conference is based on themes of Pakistan's challenges, Pakistan's response towards challenges and way forward. He thanked Ahsan Iqbal, guests and speakers for his continuous support.

Abdul Quddous Sohaib, Director Islamic Research Centre, Bahauddin Zakriya University, Multan highlighted the aims and objectives of the conference. He said this mission of IRI to disseminate peace is to reconstruct society.

Preparation for summer

ISLAMABAD: A vender displays plastic summing pools and other stuff along the Jinnah Avenue to attract customers, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Farooq Yousaf, hosted a dinner

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Chairman Cloth Board Faisalabad Dr. Mahmood Yousaf, Chairman for Standing Committee FCCI Farooq Yousaf, hosted a dinner in the honor of the executive members of the Central Cloth Board on their return from Umrah in which Central President Cloth Board and Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousaf Vohra, the Former Provincial Member Khawaja Islam, Haji Saifullah Khalid Ranjha, Haji Sheikh Ehsan, Haji Zaheer Ahmed, Haji Qadir, Malik Gulzar Sheikh Usman Haji Imran, Haji Tayyab Haji Shafiq, Haji Shehzad Sheikh Imran, Haji Ahmed, Haji Zaheer Qadri and other executive members participated on this event. They all



prayed for the improvement and desired for the integrity, prosperity & peace for Pakistan. They expressed that there is

dire need for a ruler who would serve Pakistan in better way where each and every citizen could be facilitated. They elaborated that a

human being always consider about the humanitarianism & it is the obligation of every one to support the poor who are unable to earn their bread

Youth are the drivers of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations, envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Youth play a critical role in building bridges and fostering relationships amongst countries and groups and focusing on youth including engaging them in meaningful conversations and inviting them to share latest ideas may help Pakistan and Kazakhstan to reach the phenomenal highest of cooperation. These were the remarks by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin said while speaking to the winners and recipients of the certificate of the essay competition "Knowing Kazakhstan" jointly organized by the Embassy of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, in collaboration with the Centre for Central Asia and Eurasian Studies- Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, recently organized an essay competition entitled "Knowing Kazakhstan". The competition aimed to promote a deeper under-



standing and stronger bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, especially among young students. The Ambassador shared insights about the Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations and the latest updates and developments during the ceremony. The essay competition was organized in the backdrop of the 30th Anniversary celebrations of relations

between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. During the Prize and Certificate Distribution ceremony held at the Embassy of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, spoke about the importance of engaging the youth in meaningful conversations and inviting them to share their latest ideas. He emphasized that the youth

play a critical role in building bridges and fostering relationships among countries and groups.

The competition received entries from across Pakistan, and students contributed meaningfully in understanding the insight about the relations. The winner of the competition was Zulqarnain Khan from Bahira University Islamabad, who received the return air ticket. Umm e Salma from the University of Sargodha, who secured the second position, received a smart phone, while Taj Mir Khan from the University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, who came in third place, received a tablet. Certificates were also distributed amongst the participants of the essay competition. The competition successfully achieved its goal of promoting a deeper understanding and building stronger bilateral cooperation, especially among young students who are the future leaders of both countries.

Great initiative by the Prime Minister to save Pakistani youth by increasing tobacco tax



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Health activists have appreciated government's stance on increased tobacco taxes. During an event organized by Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), health activists stated that this decision will help Pakistan's economy provided that the government remains steadfast by not falling to tobacco industry's misinformation campaign.

Malik Imran, Country Head, Campaign for tobacco-free kids (CTFK), mentioned that Tobacco is the largest silent killer in Pakistan as above 170,000 people die due to tobacco use each year. This pandemic also causes an annual economic burden of 615 billion which is 1.6% of Pakistan's GDP. The industry claims to be the biggest major tax payers but the revenue generated from the tobacco industry is only 120 billion.

Malik Imran also mentioned that since deadly products of tobacco industry are snatching people's precious resources, it is only fair that the industry is made to pay for the damages it is causing.

Dr. Ziauddin Islam, Former Technical Head, Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health, mentioned that increased prices remain the most effective tool in keeping these killer products away from spending power of children and low-income groups. He thanked the Prime Minister for increasing FED in February and added that this good step shouldn't remain a onetime activity.

Khalil Ahmed Dogar, Program Manager SPARC said that the children of Pakistan are being targeted by the tobacco industry so that "replacement smokers" could be recruited. Around 1200 Pakistani children between ages of 6-15 years start smoking every day. The sale of cigarettes to minors and near educational institutions remains a constant worry in the country. Khalil added that there shouldn't be any politics on child rights.

Spotify and VELO Sound Station Season 2 have joined forces to amplify Pakistan's latest beloved soundtracks

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The highly anticipated second season of VELO Sound Station is set to launch, and it promises to be even more impressive than the first, thanks to the collaboration with Pakistan's favourite music streaming service Spotify. This exciting music partnership will enable VELO Sound Station listeners to stream and enjoy the platform's music anytime, anywhere.

In just one season, VELO Sound Station has become a game-changer in the music arena, making waves in the entertainment industry with its fresh take on pop music that combines sound, dance, and fashion to create an unforgettable experience. This year's Season 2 promises to be even bolder, with a richer visual canvas, a mix of superstars and upcoming artists, and, of course, Velo's signature edgy fashion style.

With the tracks from the second season now available on Spotify, the artists and songs are set to appear on a global stage. As the most downloaded music streaming service in Pakistan, Spotify is available to 515 million users in 183 countries. The collaboration between these two music culture powerhouses brings users the content they love and makes it easier than ever to listen to the freshest beats from the emerging format of music that is reimagined with modern touches.

Executive producer Rohail Hyatt is captaining the ship this time and visual wizards Zeeshan Parwez and Kamal have created a directorial marvel. There's an eclectic line up of more than a dozen artists including big names like Atif Aslam and Meesha Shafi and some highly anticipated featured stars like Mahira Khan. Velo Sound Station is also throwing a spotlight on upcoming popular artists like Rozco and Maanu, packing in some powerful performances. However, what really stands the platform out this time, is the release of all original compositions with no covers.

According to Ali Abdullah, Head of Consumer Experience at BAT, "VELO Sound Station is committed to providing an immersive and unforgettable experience for our listeners, and our partnership with Spotify will enable us to reach a wider audience than ever before."

Demand ICCI representation in FBR Board to resolve tax issues

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Abpara Market President Ajmal Baloch, G-9 Markaz President Raja Javed Iqbal, F-8 Markaz President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, F-10 Markaz President Ahmed Khan, F-7 Jinnah Supermarket President Asad Aziz, F-6 Markaz Super Market President Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Blue Area President Raja Hasan Akhtar, G-8 Markaz President Muhammad Abid Abbasi, I-8 Markaz President Raja Fayyaz Gul, G-8/1 Market President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Tarnool Traders Association President Wajid Ayub, Goods Transport Association President Muhammad Shabbir, Fruit & Vegetable Market Committee Chairman Sajid Abbasi, G-11 Markaz President Chaudhry Aftab Gujjar, G-7 Markaz President Syed Altaf Hussain Shah, G-10 Markaz President Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, E-11 Markaz President Zahir Abbasi, G-7/1 Market President Raja Safer Ahmed, D-12 Markaz President Muhammad Nauman, Gulberg Green President Najeeb Elahi Malik, Melody Market President Azhar Iqbal, G-8 Markaz President Raja Khurram Niaz, Traders Action Committee Secretary Khalid Chaudhry, Muslim League Traders Wing Islamabad President Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, PWD Traders Association President Chaudhry Riasat Ali, Bara Kahu President Raja Zahid Mahmood Dhaniyal, G-10/4 Market President Zafar Iqbal Gujjar and Presidents of other markets in a joint statement hailed the historic business-friendly decisions announced by the Chairman CDA Captain (Retd) Noor ul Amin Mengal during his recent address to the business community at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and said that these decisions have created a new ray of hope in the business community.

They lauded Chairman CDA for announcing to replace the old sewerage system in the markets and the city with new one and to solve the parking issue by constructing new parking plazas in cooperation with the private sector. They said that the Chairman CDA announced to provide plots to ICCI for Expo Center, school & hospital as well as sports ground which is very encouraging.

The Presidents of markets thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICCI for inviting the Chairman CDA to the Chamber and assured their cooperation to ICCI and CDA in addressing the issue of encroachments in markets. They said that Ahsan Bakhtawari is actively working for the betterment of the business community, which is laudable.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
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 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
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 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
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Long live Pak China friendship

The history of friendship between Pakistan and China is very old, which has been established between the two countries for a long time. There have been many historical, cultural and commercial relations between the two countries in all ages. The friendship between China and Pakistan is based on the governmental cooperation between the two countries. China has declared Pakistan as its most important friend. This is the reason why both China and Pakistan help each other in various projects of both countries. When the People's Republic of China appeared on the map of the World in 1949, Pakistan was the first Islamic country to recognize the new government of China. Later in 1951, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. Rather, Pakistan was the first country among the Islamic countries to recognize the People's Republic of China.

The support of highway, electricity, road, train, and other projects for the development of Pakistan which is commendable. In addition, both China and Pakistan cooperate in defense. Recently Pakistan's military The leadership's visit to China is an example of defense cooperation between the two countries. The two countries have a stable relationship of military cooperation, which helps in maintaining peace and order between the two countries. Regardless of the two countries' relations with China, India and Russia, and Pakistan's tension with India and relations with the United States, the friendship between the two countries has always remained.

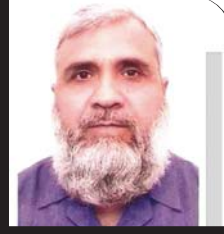
China's economic power and Pakistan's geographical location are important for both countries. And their mutual cooperation is the guarantee of development for both Pakistan and China in the coming time. Cooperation between the two countries. Based on this, China has given billions of dollars in loans to Pakistan to be part of major construction projects. One project that is very important is known as CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), which is the backbone for the development and construction of Pakistan. This project was implemented in April 2015 during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan.

The friendship between China and Pakistan is very strong and its stability is important for both countries. There are examples of projects in commercial, economic and political cooperation between the two countries over the years. China has made Pakistan a part of its "Belt and Road Initiative" project, under which large-scale infrastructure projects are underway between China and Pakistan from Gwadar Port to Khaman Jubal Port. Similarly, free trade agreements were also made on occasion to increase trade relations between China and Pakistan. Apart from friendship, political, economic and defense cooperation is also done between the two countries. Due to the joint cooperation efforts between Pakistan and China, China is considered as a sure friend of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

As CPEC is an important partner in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the foundation of major projects, which pass through the northern regions of Pakistan and reach the Chinese city of Guangxi. Soon the road bus service from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, to the city of Tashguran in China is expected to further promote the tourism, trade and cooperation between the people of Pakistan and China. Apart from this, the two countries also have agreements regard-

ing high technology, penetrating trade, contractual arrangements, and defense cooperation. An important part of the friendship between the two countries is mutual support for the maintenance of their domestic interests, is supported by The friendship between China and Pakistan is based on mutual trust and respect. Recently, China has been making efforts to establish peace in the Middle East for years, China has been moving forward to mediate between the two countries to resolve the unresolved conflict between Palestine and Israel. The progress in the peace talks promises to help end the tension between Palestine and Israel for many years. China's efforts to establish peace in the Middle East After the peace agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, peace in Palestine and Israel. Trying to negotiate. China is a member of the BRICS countries. Argentina and Brazil have also agreed to trade with China in yuan to create an alternative route for global trade. China's currency has replaced the US dollar in Russia. China The currency of Yuan, which will be used for cross-border trade. At the invitation of Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, China's State Councillor and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang visit to Pakistan is very important because the country is facing internal and external disturbances and economic and financial difficulties. It is also hoped that China will try to resolve the occupied Kashmir issue as well in between Pakistan and India.

Analysis



Javed Ullah Raja

Pakistani entrepreneurs bridging trade relations with world at Canton Fair

Pakistani entrepreneurs are exhibiting various home-made products for Chinese buyers as well as the whole world at China Import and Export Fair held in Guangzhou, China.

"When I heard that there will be an international booth here and a lot of international visitors will be participating, I feel like it's a must to come here to find out the possibility of doing business with China as well as the whole world," Rana Javed Akhtar, Chief Executive, M.K. Sons (Pvt.) Ltd., told China Economic Net while attending the fair.

The 133rd China Import and Export Fair – known as Canton Fair – kicked off on the morning of April 15, and entered its third and final phase in Guangzhou, China on May 1.

Held in three phases through May 5, it is also the largest in history, with a record number of exhibition areas and exhibitors. Its offline exhibitors rose to more than 34,000 this year, with more than 9,000 new exhibitors, and online exhibition enterprises reached 39,281.

"It's our first time to be here," Akhtar said, adding that he was hoping for the best. "I was really impressed – the fair is well organized; we got good services from the constructor and from the Cantonese people. I bring the best textile products here. I would like to see how I can explore the market and how to start a business with the Chinese buyers."

Safdar Fayyaz, Chief Manager Exports, Piano Exports FZCO, who also attended the fair as an exhibitor for the first time, expressed his excitement over the event. "China is our big partner. We heard that it is one of the largest fairs in China, so we are eager to come here, and hopefully more coordination will be seen in the future," he pinpointed.

As one of the largest manufacturers of writing instruments and stationery items and one of the leading exporters to the globe, Piano Exports FZCO showcased its dazzling products to international visitors.

Though it was the very first time being here, Fayyaz was quite confident about the future performance of products coming from an old brand established in 1965.

As Pakistani entrepreneurs see it, their Made-in-Pakistan products can make their way into the Chinese market, and even beyond it.

"Pakistani textile products have their own edges here," Akhtar told China Economic Net. As China is a fast-developing country, Pakistan with its specialization in making certain textile goods will be able to break into this market with retailers. "There should be more visits and exchanges between both countries," he suggested.

"One of the best things we are doing right away is colouring pencils. We have some unique coloured pencils that might interest Chinese buyers," Fayyaz noted. He observed that e-commerce was very important when exploring the Chinese market, "so we will definitely develop it very soon."



Amjad Rasmi

ISPR Spreading Truth and Facts-II

Regarding the provision of military personnel for the election in Punjab, he said that the deployment of the troops was done by the federal government under Article 245 of the Constitution. "The position that the Ministry of Defence had told the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Supreme Court [in this matter] is based on the facts on the ground, the chief military spokesperson told reporters. When asked about the current army chief's statement in parliament wherein he stated, "We should talk about our Pakistan instead of Naya or Purana Pakistan", the DG ISPR explained that, the army chief had said that to deal with the challenges, all the stakeholders of the country should establish a consensus. When asked if Imran Khan had become a security risk and was there going to be an emergency or martial law in the country after Eidul Fitr, Gen Chaudhry replied that propaganda against the military authorities was being carried out on social media through anonymous accounts. "Now it is up to you how you see it."

The ISPR chief was also asked whether Gen (R) Qamar Javed Bajwa and Lt-Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hameed should be court-martialed as there was perception that both ex-generals exceeded their mandate and were responsible for the current mess. Maj-Gen Chaudhry replied that for any news related to the army, "keep your eyes only on the press release of the ISPR" as those were the only source. "Many fake accounts of ISPR are active on social media ... keep an eye on authentic accounts only. In this way, you will not go to anxiety-type questions and assumptions." He emphasised that the army had its own detailed system. "If there is any criticism, it is dealt with, but the system is based on facts and due process. Its aim is to provide justice to all parties. Its purpose is not to act on the basis of rumours."

The ISPR DG further said that there was a difference between the defence bud-

gets of Pakistan and India as the budgets of the neighbouring country had been higher for decades, but every single soldier of the Pakistani army was dedicated to the spirit. He said that India's aggressive ambitions and baseless allegations could not change the history. "Kashmir's officially recognised disputed status cannot be changed. Kashmir has never been an integral part of India, nor will it ever be."

The army chief made the first visit to the Line of Control (LoC) and conveyed the message that the Pakistani Army is capable of defence, and if necessary, the battle can be taken to the enemy's territory, he said: adding: "Any adventure will be met with strong response."

In Pulwama, the Indian authorities launched an attack with their own planning," the ISPR DG said, while briefing the media about security-related matters. He particularly condemned 56 ceasefire violations by India along the LoC.

Maj-Gen Chaudhry maintained that those violations by the neighbouring country included 22 cases of speculative fire incidents, three airspace violations, six minor incidents of ceasefire violations and 25 technical air violations. In the meanwhile, Pakistan shot down six Indian spy quadcopters.

The DG ISPR stressed that Pakistan was forever prepared to fully counter such aggressions by India. "India's oppressive ambitions [in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir], baseless allegations and false claims cannot change historical facts," he said.

"After taking office, the army chief made his first visit to the LoC and sent a clear message that Pakistan's forces are prepared to defend every corner of the country," he said. "If need be, then we can take this battle into the enemy's territory. We are a battle-hard-

ened army and are forces which are led from the front by the officers," he stressed.

India had a properly planned effort in February 2019 in Pulwama, as verified by their own governor Satya Pal Malik and ex-army chief," the DG ISPR said, underscoring that it was the Pakistani forces' "operational preparedness" that defeated their efforts.

During his press conference, the ISPR DG also lauded the security forces for their counter-terrorism efforts. He stressed that terrorists, plotters and facilitators involved in the incidents of terrorism were also exposed and arrested.

He paid tribute to the 137 officers and men who were martyred and 117 officers and men injured during the operations since January.

"The entire nation pays tribute to these brave sons and their families, who sacrificed their precious lives for the peace and security of the country," he said.

"No one should doubt the resolve, commitment and capabilities of the Pakistan Army, law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) and intelligence agencies to eradicate terrorism," he said. "Our successful war against terrorism will continue till the end of the last terrorist."

In the war against terrorism, General Chaudhry stated, "scholars and media have also played their full role, which is commendable" as they had collectively "rejected the false narrative of the TTP [Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan]". "No individual or armed group can be allowed to take the law into their own hands," he said. "Societies develop only with the supremacy and observance of the law."

In the present year, 219 events of terrorist activity have been reported in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), followed by 206 in Balochistan, six in Sindh and five in Punjab.

General Chaudhry also revealed that a total of 8,269 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) have been conducted as a result of which 1,535 terrorists had been killed or apprehended. Of these, 4,040 IBOs were conducted in Balochistan, another 3,591 in K-P, 119 in Punjab and 519 operations were conducted in Sindh. On average, over 70 IBOs were being conducted daily by the army, police and LEAs since January, he continued.

He said that the successful IBOs against terrorist networks led to the identification of the suicide attacker in the February 11 bombing at Mari Petroleum Company in North Waziristan. Speaking about the January 23 attack in the Police Lines in Peshawar, the ISPR DG said that the suicide bomber had belonged to the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar [and the attack was carried out] in collaboration with the TTP. Gen Chaudhry spoke about the February 23 Karachi Police Office Building attack. All the three of attackers were killed. "Three masterminds of this attack were also arrested afterward," he said, noting that explosives and other ammunition were also retrieved from them.

The ISPR DG told the reporters that most of the work on border fencing had been completed along a total of 3,141 kilometres in an effort to curtail terrorist activity. "Under border management, more than 98% of work on the 2,611 kms Pak-Afghan border has been completed, while more than 85% of the work on the Pakistan-Iran border has been completed," he said. "Eighty-five per cent of the forts have been completed to prevent the movement of terrorists on the Pak-Afghan border," he continued, "while 33% of the forts on the Pak-Iran border have been completed and the work on the rest of the forts is going on rapidly." Through a dedicated effort, the ISPR DG said, "the Pakistan Army has completed demining in 65% of the tribal areas in K-P"

To be continued

Letter to the Editor

'The Road Not Taken'

Tajdar Munir

Few days ago, I came across by universally read poem by an American poet namely Robert Frost under the guidance of most literary teacher of my tenure. The starting lines has lead on my attention to dive deeper in each and every line. Literally, the message of the poem is making the right decision at the right time. Also, it suggests an intense understanding of decision making in life and that is most confusing part of today's youth. Undoubtedly, this poem is impartial. So, every reader can give it his own meaning by his understanding.

From my perspective, this poem is accurately matchable to the current situation of our youth. Today's youth is puzzled, disorganized, and mentally nervous from various aspects of life. He cannot make proper decision even after completing purposeful time at University. There can be many reason of this. For instance, the very youth age of child at home, when his parent ask him to bring something from market, and his parent

provide him every details about that item. At that time, he is not supposed to use his own mind.

He is completely unable to decide which stall is good/bad, which product is of good brand and whatsoever. Now, it is clear that, a child is not grooming in such a critical environment. His parent never trained him to be critical about everything.

However, this type of environment take in such a confused practice. Also, lack of counseling is key reason for having untidy grooming. Resultantly, we pass our life not by own but with others thinking. So, considerably, this society will produce such a dull minded majority.

For that reason, a number of problems take birth and make barriers to the future of youth. At every step of life, every individual should use his observation before taking any decision. It only happens when you give time yourself, think deeper about everything related to your future, and be rational. Accurately, once you make decision, now, you are the only responsible of your situation.

Writer is Student of Sindh University.

IS Bangladesh independence and National Day celebrated

Bangladesh takes pride for marvelous social & economic growth, says envoy



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: To celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the independence and National Day of Bangladesh, High Commissioner H.E. Mr. Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique & Mrs. Shamshad Ara Khanam hosted a reception here at a hotel in Islamabad. The event was attended in large numbers by diplomats, officers from the armed forces of the diplomatic corps as well as Pakistan, Bangladeshis residing in the country and Pakistanis from different walks of life.

Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood was the Chief Guest and Guest of honor. Federal Minister for Energy & Power Engr. Khuram Dastagir Khan, Convener, Parliamentary Friendship Group for Bangladesh in Senate of Pakistan, Senator Taj Haider, Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk, Convener, Parliamentary Friendship Group for Bangladesh in National Assembly of Pakistan and Ms. Shazia Jannat Marri, Federal Minister for Benazir Income Support Programme and The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Atajan Movlamov was also present on the occasion.

The guest of honor and other persons, including envoys of the SAARC region were also invited to share the stage.

Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood on behalf of the Pakistan government, offered his heartfelt congratulations to the people and government of Bangladesh.

Addressing the event, he said Pakistan and Bangladesh share a common history, culture and geography, which play an important role in shaping the deep ties between both countries.

"We have always valued the bond of brotherhood that unites our people, and we are determined to take it to new heights," he added.

Senator Talha said it was gratifying that there had been significant improvement in the mutual relations between the two countries in recent years. "We should continue working to further improve our relations in the future," he said.

He stressed there were immense possibilities of cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh in various fields including trade, culture, and people-to-people contact.

He said, "We must use all avenues to strengthen the ties and enhance cooperation for the mutual benefit of people."

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh H. E. Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique spoke of his country's progress - the fast-



est growing economy; bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh and the interaction that takes place between the two countries on different levels.

In his response the chief guest wished the government of Bangladesh and its people on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan and also mentioned the bilateral and cultural ties between the two countries which continue to improve.

In his speech, he said "In the early hours of 26 March 1971, the greatest Bengali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangab-

andhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence of a new nation called Bangladesh. On this auspicious occasion, I recall him with great reverence and profound respect. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifice by embracing martyrdom in the War of Liberation in 1971. I also humbly recall all Bangalee men and women who made huge sacrifices and endured endless miseries during the War".

Excellency further said that This year, we celebrating the 52nd Anniversary of the Inde-

pendence of Bangladesh. Celebrations of the independence of Bangladesh during the last couple of years were especially significant as we celebrated three major occasions. We celebrated the 100th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh and we celebrated the confirmation of Bangladesh's graduation from a least developed country to a developing country.

About the journey of Bangladesh, he said until now it was not a smooth sail as you are aware,

Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation after a nine-month devastating War. The amount of losses due to the War were enormous in public capital assets, agriculture, trade etc. Additionally, the loss due to the death of humans, destruction of private houses and psychological trauma was immeasurable. As such, I would say, the beginning of the journey of Bangladesh was not started from zero but from minus.

The High Commissioner said that faced with huge odds, obstacles and challenges, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh

middle income country. During the last fifty-year per capita income increased 30 times from merely 94 US Dollars in 1972 to 2824 US Dollars, foreign currency reserves rose to 35 billion US dollars from almost zero in 1972 and life expectancy increased to 72 years from 47 years after independence. During the last 14 years, Bangladesh has registered around 7 percent GDP growth. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, GDP growth was 6.94% during last year. We have achieved self-sufficiency in food grain. Bangladesh has made laudable achievements in women

empowerment, access to education, maternal and child health, application of information technology and tackling the risks of climate change. It has achieved almost all the Millennium Development Goals and is on the right track in meeting the targets of Sustainable Development Goals.

He said at this moment, when the world economy is in downturn, Bangladesh is marching ahead to achieve the next goal "Vision 2041" that is a "Smart Bangladesh", a high income country with smart citizens, smart economy, smart government and smart society by 2041.

He added Bangladesh has also set an example of humanity by allowing to enter into and hosting over 1.2 million forcibly displaced distressed Myanmar nationals, the Rohingyas inside its territory. I take this opportunity to call upon the people and the government of Pakistan as well as the world community to come forward for the resolution of the humanitarian crisis through convincing the Myanmar authorities to create conducive conditions in Rakhaine State for the voluntary return of these people to their homes.

The High Commissioner said that the cardinal principle of Bangladesh Foreign Policy "Friendship with all and malice towards none" was enunciated by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Guided by this principle, Bangladesh continues to play its role in global peace, security and stability. Bangladesh is an important country in the peacekeeping and peace building initiatives of the United Nations. As part of this role, Bangladesh has been one of the top peace-keeper contributing countries in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations for the last three decades.

Excellency said Bangladesh and Pakistan enjoy a unique relationship based on shared history and commonality of faith and culture. The relationship is rooted in the common desire for realizing the goals of regional peace, stability and socio-economic progress of the peoples of the two countries. I am happy to share that during FY2021-22, the bilateral trade between the two countries has grown over 45 percent. Although this trend has slowed down during this Fiscal year ending June 2023 due to the global economic downturn, I am hopeful that it will soon revert back to its upward trend. This has been encouraging development and I hope that this trend in the bilateral trade between the two countries will continue in the days ahead.

He concluded the speech by wishing the peoples of Bangladesh and Pakistan continued peace, progress and prosperity. Long live Bangladesh Pakistan Friendship, Joy Bangla

Before dinner, a cake cutting ceremony was also held. Dinner with some Bangladeshi specialties was served for participants. As someone remarked, it is people to people contacts which make good relations between countries even better and such events make real difference.

Photos by Raja Farid

14th Korean speech contest held at NUML

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : 14th Korean Language speech contest was held at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on Thursday. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo was the Chief Guest of the ceremony while Direct General NUML Brig Syed Nadir Ali, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, representatives of Korean companies, faculty members and large number of students also attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo after listening all the speeches by the participants said that students spoke Korean language so well and he appreciated the role of NUML in promoting Korean language and culture in the country. Ambassador said that Korea and Pakistan are celebrating 40th anniversary of bilateral relations and there are so many



Brig Syed Nadir Ali, Pro-Rector Resource/DG NUML presenting a shield to Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea on the occasion of "14th Korean Speech Contest" at NUML.

Korean companies working in Pakistan to further enhance the relations.

Director General NUML Brig

Syed Nadir Ali in his address highlighted the importance of Korean language and its acceptance in Pakistani society through Korean Dramas.

He said that NUML has started the Korean language in its campuses at Lahore, Faisalabad,

and Karachi, and soon the same will be started in other campuses. He said that Pakistan and Korea have strong bilateral

relations and NUML is playing key role to promoting relations between two countries.

Earlier, 15 students took part

in 14th Korean Speech Contest and winners were rewarded with Certificates and Cash Prizes.



Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Brig Syed Nadir Ali, Pro-Rector Resource/DG NUML along with others posing a group photo on the occasion of "14th Korean Speech Contest" at NUML.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
42,241.98	42,093.80
Day's High	Day's Low:
42,323.29	41,962.90
Index Value	Change
4,931,591,060	+148.18
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	5 May, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,778.38	+75.74
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	5 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,504.75	+377.01
Percentage	Time
+1.14%	5 May, 12:09 pm GMT-4

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	189	191
Bahrain Dinar	754.8	762.8
Canadian Dollar	211	214
China Yuan	41.06	41.46
Danish Krone	41.93	42.33
Euro	314	316.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.16	36.51
Indian Rupee	3.47	3.58
Japanese Yen	2	2.05
Kuwaiti Dinar	926.72	935.72
Malaysian Ringgit	63.62	64.22
New Zealand \$	175.01	177.01
Norwegians Krone	26.41	26.71
Omani Riyal	737.24	745.24
Qatari Riyal	77.95	78.65
Saudi Riyal	75.5	76.2
Singapore Dollar	213	215
Swedish Korona	27.47	27.77
Swiss Franc	320.25	322.75
Thai Bhat	8.4	8.55
U.A.E Dirham	77.4	78.2
UK Pound Sterling	358	361
US Dollar	285.5	287.5

Completion of Thar-Matiari transmission line in record time

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engr. Khuram Dastgir Khan has said that as per the instructions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) has completed the construction of 220 km long 500 kV Thar-Matiari transmission line in record time. It is the most important project for Pakistan's future energy needs through which coal-fired power generation in Thar will be integrated to the National Grid.

Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engr. Khuram Dastgir Khan expressed these views in a press conference along with Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan at NTDC Headquarters WAPDA House, Lahore.

Engr. Khuram Dastgir Khan said that the present government has resumed the journey of development, under which the foundation stone of 765 kV Manshra grid station was laid and work on the transmission line for the evacuation of electricity generated from Suki Kinari was also started.

The Federal Minister said that the present government has added 3,000 MW of cheap electricity to the national grid this year, 2,000 MW from Thar coal and 1,100 MW from K3 nuclear power plant. With the increase in power



generation, power supply situation this summer will be much better than last year.

In response to a question, he said that in the present government, a permanent MD has been appointed in NTDC from within the company after 11 years under a regular procedure. He said that the report on the January 23 blackout has been prepared, I have discussed future steps

with the NTDC officials also and establishing a reliable power generation plant in the central region of the country is need of the hour. He said that the system of NTDC is outdated, the entire transmission system has to be modernized.

In response to a question, MD NTDC said that the company which raised objections regarding the Dasu-Manshra transmission

line contract has lost its case in the Lahore High Court. On this occasion, Federal Minister said that land acquisition and other matters are a difficult and continuous process. If there are any problems in it, we will play our role.

Earlier in the day, Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engr. Khuram Dastgir Khan visited NTDC headquarters at WAPDA House Lahore. On this occasion, Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan briefed the Federal Minister about the recently completed 220 km long 500 kV transmission line project from Shanghai Electric Power Plant located in Thar to Matiari, Sindh and other completed, ongoing and new projects of NTDC.

During the briefing, it was informed that NTDC has recently completed one of its 02 most important projects including 500 kV Thar-Matiari transmission line and Polan-Jiwani transmission line. Apart from this, 51 other major projects are also under execution.

Federal Minister, Engr. Khuram Dastgir Khan congratulated the Managing Director NTDC and the entire team on the completion of important projects and said that the completion of projects in the shortest period is a landmark achievement not only for NTDC but also for Power Division. The Federal Minister also assured to remove obstacles in the way of importing materials for the ongoing projects of NTDC.

Phalsa Juice

KARACHI: A street vender is preparing natural "Phalsa Juice" for customers at Orangi Town as people like such beverages during high temperature in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Bank Alfalah marks breakthrough with Equity Investment and Embedded Finance Partnership with QistBazaar

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah, one of the largest commercial banks in Pakistan, has made a significant entry into the venture capital ecosystem as it has signed an agreement to acquire a 7.2% equity stake worth PKR 140 million in QistBazaar, a fast-growing, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) licensed Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) non-bank financial company (NBFCs) platform.

The acquisition marks a breakthrough in the country's fintech landscape, as it is the first time a commercial bank has taken an equity stake in a BNPL fintech. With this collaboration, the Bank aims to transform the BNPL landscape in Pakistan and pave the way for more collaboration between commercial banks and fintech.

In addition to the equity agreement, Bank Alfalah and QistBazaar have signed an embedded financing agreement in Shariah Compliant mode for up to PKR 350 million, subject to terms and conditions.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior leadership from the Bank, includ-



ing Atif Bajwa, President and CEO; Asim Wajid Jawad, Group Head of Strategy, Transformation, Customer Experience and Venture Capital Investments and Yahya Khan, Group Head of Digital Banking. From QistBazaar, CoFounders Arif Lakhani and Karim Gilani, along with other executives, graced the event.

Atif Bajwa, President and CEO, said, "Bank Alfalah is committed to working with partners to address the needs of customers with limited access to credit and lower purchasing power. Our collaboration with QistBazaar through an equity investment and Islamic-embedded financing deal marks

a significant step forward. This partnership aims to provide inventive financial solutions, creating new opportunities for growth and support for these underserved customers."

Arif Lakhani, CEO QistBazaar, commented, "QistBazaar has been on a mission to democratize purchasing power, and in the first 18 months of our existence, over 17,000 Pakistanis that we have served, most of them do not have bank accounts, nor could they have purchased what they did without going through us. With Bank Alfalah coming in as equity and embedded financing partner and their guidance and experience, our work will become much easier."

Pakistan between devil and the deep blue sea over IMF conditions

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said Pakistan is between the devil and the deep blue sea over stringent IMF conditions.

One reason for delay is release of loan tranche by IMF is lack of confidence, which will hit the budget making exercise.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the ninth review of the IMF and the staff level agreement should have been completed last year, but the previous regime violated the agreement with the international organization due to which the ninth review was stalled.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that people are constantly being told that all the new conditions of the IMF have been fulfilled, and that the agreement will be concluded in a few days, but the IMF is changing the goalposts very frequently.

IMF is adding new demands to its list and asking Pakistan continuously to do more, he observed.

Among the reasons for the unnecessary harshness on the part of the IMF is the fear of this institution that after receiving the loan, affairs in Pakistan will continue to be run irresponsibly and the expenditure will not be controlled, which will result in the country's bankruptcy. Mian Zahid Hussain

further said that the IMF is also worried that billions of rupees will be wasted to please the voters before the elections, which will further weaken the country's faltering economy and it will result in disrepute of the lender if Pakistan defaults.

The business leader said that China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have assured loans to Pakistan.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that economic instability is increasing rapidly due to continuous delay in payment



of loan instalments by the IMF. The current agreement with the IMF was signed in 2019 and expires next month.

According to the agreement, Pakistan was supposed to get a loan of six and a half billion dollars, but so far only 3.9 billion dollars have been received. The government has already accepted all IMF conditions on exchange rate, tax rate, energy price, subsidy reduction and interest rate hike but could not convince IMF to release funds.

In this most difficult economic situation, if the nation unites and implements the emergency program of import substitution and privatization of failed government institutions, then this vortex can be exited, he said.

Uncontrolled elites are making Pakistan a failed state

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former president of Islamabad Chamber Shahid Rashid Butt on Friday said elites exist in every country of the world. Countries where they are kept under control prosper and the countries where they are left unchecked become beggars.



The elites of developed countries take cheap loans and concessions to increase production and exports, while the majority of our incompetent elites have nothing in focus but lucrative property business.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the privileged class of businessmen in developed countries competes with other countries in the global market while our elites hate competition and keep licking the country's resources like termites.

Pakistan will not be able to develop and will always be in need of loans until the property sector is properly taxed.

How can a country prosper where the labour earns more foreign exchange than exporters who get billions of dollars of subsidies, he questioned.

10th African Islamic Finance Summit successfully concluded in the Gambia

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: 10th African Islamic Finance Summit (AIFS) successfully held in The Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Center, The Gambia on May 03, 2023. The purpose for this event was to explore the untapped African financial market for Socio-Economic Benefits of the region. The summit was a platform for African think-tank to discuss innovative financial inclusion strategies for more development in Africa. In a welcoming address Mr. Muhammad Zubair Chief Executive Officer of AlHuda CIBE said that West Africa is an emerging region for Islamic finance industry and it is growing very fast. AlHuda CIBE is the only consultancy who has worked in more than 30 African countries for Islamic Development Bank, World Bank and for many other multilateral organizations. AlHuda CIBE is very dedicated to the devel-

opment of Islamic finance all over the region and very optimistic for the future.

In the inaugural session H.E. Demba Sabally, Minister of Agriculture shared a very future oriented speech for the Islamic Banking and Finance in West Africa particularly in The Gambia. Mr. Ismail Adam, Deputy Director-Banking Supervision Department, Bank of Ghana, on behalf of His Excellency Governor Central Bank of Ghana. H.E. Seyaka Sonko, Minister of Interior presented his opinion that Islamic finance is not only limited to the Muslim countries rather it is an alternative sustainable financial solution for the mankind. The advancements in Islamic finance industry are emerging. The Chief Guest H.E. Seedy Keita, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, on behalf of His Excellency Adama Barrow, President of Republic of the Gambia presented a very optimistic opinion about Islamic finance, its sustainabil-

ity for socio-economic goals and financial inclusion from micro to advanced level. H.E. Baboucar Bouy, Minister of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination and Delivery, Dr. Paul J. Mendy, Second Deputy Governor, Central Bank of Gambia and Mrs. Sarata Conateh, Chief Executive Officer, Gambia Chamber of Commerce also participated as a guest of honor in the inauguration session to address the challenges of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

AlHuda CIBE hosted delegates from different countries and distinguished guest Speakers were well-known names of the Gambia financial industry and outside the Gambia for the development of Islamic banking. The first technical session for Islamic Banking, Finance & Financial Inclusion was addressed by Mr. Ismail Adam, Mr. Mamud Njie, Mr. Pa Aliou Sillah whereas the session was chaired by Mr. Siaka Bah from



Central Bank of The Gambia. Mr. Ibrahim Ali Alkali, Mr. Fafanding S Fatajo, Mr. Momodou Joof, were the panelist in the panel discussion titled Development of Islamic Microfinance in West Africa which is moderated by Mr. Muhammad Zubair Chief Executive Officer of AlHuda CIBE-UAE. The third session addressed the Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Finance Industry in Africa. The guest speakers Professor Dr. M. Kabir Ul Hassan, Mr. Suleiman Fode Drame, Mr. Sonko Fatajo throw

the light on the subject matter whereas the session chair was Mr. Mamud Njie. The fourth session was about investment opportunities in Africa and the honorable guest speakers were Mr. Lamine Kone, Mr. Ba Lamin Darboe. The session was chaired by Deputy Director of The Bank of Ghana, Mr. Ismail Adam. The sponsors for this event was Agib Bank Ltd the pioneer and only Islamic Bank in the Gambia, and Forward Enterprises which is eager to fulfill social responsibilities and APS Islamic Micro-

finance Co., The supporting partners for this event was Heeno International, Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Association of Cooperative Credit Union Gambia, Egyptian Islamic Finance Association, National Insurance Authority Somaliland, Islamic Finance Research Institute Ghana and Nigerian Insurers Association. The Media Partners for this event were The Standard Newspaper, Micro Capital, IFING Media, Financial Nigeria and International Business Magazine.

President of Uzbekistan proposed holding major FIFA events in our country

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN :The issues of popularizing football in our country and joint holding of major events were considered during the meeting of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev with the head of the International Football Federation, Gianni Infantino, held on 5 May.

The head of an authoritative global sports organization highly appreciated and fully supported the ongoing reforms in our country to develop football, broadly involve young people and girls in it, educate talents, create an accessible and modern infrastructure, and train qualified coaches and industry specialists.

He sincerely congratulated the leader of Uzbekistan on the recent victory of the youth national team in the Asian Cup,



which, according to him, was another confirmation of the effectiveness of ongoing practical work in this direction.

During the meeting, with particular satisfaction, the highest level of close and fruitful cooperation between the Uzbekistan Football Association and FIFA was noted, within the framework of which measures are currently being taken to create a modern football cluster in our country.

Particular attention was paid to the preparation and holding of world sports events and championships in Uzbekistan, the expansion of technical assistance in the preparation of the national team, the development of infrastructure and capacity building of our Association, as well as the development of a mechanism for selecting talented football players.

PAK vs NZ: Babar stars as Pakistan thump New Zealand to top rankings

A Sports

KARACHI: Pakistan's all-format captain Babar Azam's magnificent century bolstered the home side to breeze past New Zealand in the fourth PAK vs NZ ODI and claimed the top spot in the ICC ODI Team Rankings.

The fourth PAK vs NZ ODI of the five-match series was played here at the National Bank Cricket Arena here on Friday.

New Zealand captain Tom Latham opted to bowl first after the coin flipped in his favour. Pakistan, in response, piled up a massive total on the scoreboard on the back of a brilliant century by their captain Babar Azam.

Babar smashed 10 boundaries on his way to top score for Pakistan with a 117-ball 107.

Besides him, Salman Ali



Agha was the other notable run-getter for the hosts as he smashed his second half-century in the format. Agha played a brisk 58-run knock in just 46 deliveries with the help of

four boundaries and two sixes. The target set by the green shirts turned out to be too much for New Zealand as they succumbed to their fourth straight defeat in the

ongoing five-match series despite a brilliant half-century by their skipper Latham. Latham remained the top scorer for the touring side with a 76-ball 60, which featured five boundaries.

PAK vs NZ: Babar Azam becomes fastest to score 5000 ODI runs



A Sports

KARACHI: Pakistan all-format skipper Babar Azam on Friday broke another world record as he became the fastest batter to score 5000 runs in One-Day international cricket during the ongoing PAK vs NZ ODI.

Watch PAK vs NZ 4th ODI Live Match Streaming in HD

Babar surpassed South Africa's legendary batter Hashim Amla to reach the landmark in the fewest number of innings.

The 28-year-old took just 97 innings to amass 5000 ODI runs, four innings fewer than the previous record of 101 innings held by Amla.

WATCH: Rashid Khan surprises fans, plays cricket with them on streets

Afghanistan all-rounder Rashid Khan recently surprised his fans by joining them during a match on the streets in India.

The cricketer is currently playing as an all-rounder in the Indian Premier League (IPL) team Gujarat Titans.

Apart from leaving fans and admirers amazed by his talent with the bat, the Afghan cricketer showed his incredibly humble gesture as he played with them on the streets.

In a video, which has gone viral on social media, the 24-year-old cricketer is seen smashing a delivery with his bat.

He is surrounded by young fans around him who, to their surprise, were joined by him on the streets as he held the bat all set to play his signature shots with cheers in the background.

Shared by a Twitter user named Mufaddal Vohra, the 26-second clip is from Gandhinagar city in India's Gujrat state in which the young street cricketers were seen lauding the star cricketer and making videos.

"Rashid Khan playing street cricket with the Indian fans. One of the most humble characters of the game!" Vohra wrote in his tweet.

Sevilla snatch late victory to deepen Espanyol's La Liga relegation woes

A Sports

SEVILLE: Pape Gueye scored the late winner as Sevilla piled up misery on relegation-threatened Espanyol with a 3-2 victory in La Liga at Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Thursday.

Bryan Gill and Lucas Ocampos also netted for the hosts as Espanyol battled to contain the precise passing and movement of the Andalusian side.

Javi Puado took Espanyol on a 2-1 lead at halftime after Karim Rekik's own goal opened the account for the visitors in the 22nd



minute. Sevilla, however, rebounded in the second half and levelled 2-2 in the 69th with Ocampos scoring from the penalty area. Pape Gueye struck two

minutes before time to wrap up the game and took his side three points clear of Mallorca at the 11th position in La Liga standings. Espanyol sit in the elimination zone and only above

rock-bottom Elche with 31 points from 33 matches. Leaders Barcelona, who are 13 points ahead of second-placed Atletico, will have the chance to clinch their 27th La Liga title with a win in their next game against city rivals Espanyol on May 14.

Later on Thursday, Rayo Vallecano defeated Valladolid 2-1 to go ahead of Osasuna and on to the ninth in the standings.

Also, sixth-placed Real Betis beat 10-man Athletic Club 1-0 and moved to 52 points thanks to William Jose's early strike in the sixth minute of the game.

Napoli win Serie A for first time in 33 years to spark street party

The city of Naples was transformed into an epic street party.

Roads were filled with people singing, dancing and hugging one another, while children played football around them. People jumped in fountains in jubilation, while others waved huge Napoli flags as they darted about on their scooters.

The reason? On Thursday, Napoli became the champions of Italy.

As soon as the final whistle was blown in their game at Udinese, with Napoli's 1-1 draw enough to clinch the Serie A title, hundreds of people crammed together in piazzas, singing of their joy.

"We have one dream in our heart. For Naples to become champions again!" rang round the city, for that dream has now come true.

"I have been crying. This is a historic moment," Edoardo Nappa says.

The 13-year-old is part of a new generation too young to remember the glory

days of Diego Maradona—the legendary maverick who delivered two Serie A titles to the city when he was Napoli captain.

"To be able to experience this, to live this myself for the first time... it's magical. It's a historic moment for Naples."

It wasn't only locals who were partying; people from all over Italy and countries including France, Spain and the UK travelled to Naples to soak up the spectacle.

Naples lives and breathes football. The whole city has been decorated in readiness for the party: blue and white flags and festoons hang above the narrow streets. Life-size cardboard cutouts have popped up in the city centre. There are cakes, pastries, drinks, ice creams dedicated to the players.

"It feels like the world has stopped here," says Anita Bufi, a university student who travelled from Rome to celebrate the victory.

"This party is going to go on for at

least a month. It's going to last through the summer. It's an amazing feeling: Neapolitans put love in everything they do, including football."

A party planned for three decades

This is a party 33 years in the making. The last time Napoli won the Serie A title was 1990—when Maradona was captain.

The Argentine's influence can still be felt in the city. His face is painted on bar windows, bumper stickers and billboards. A giant mural of him towers above a shrine dedicated to him. And above it is a sign that says 'Dios'—the Spanish word for God.

Many have this week been gathering around his shrine to lay flowers and light candles. Some have had tears in their eyes.

For Neapolitans, football is almost a religious experience.

"It goes even beyond religion," says Bufi. "What we are doing here is like a ritual. We are praying for Diego Mar-

dona, as if he were a saint. It's crazy and I love it."

Maradona, who died in 2020, gave Neapolitans a great sense of belonging. "He was a man that was full of vices but at the same time poetic and majestic in what he did best," says European football expert Mina Rzuouki.

"And that is very much something that resonates with Neapolitans."

Memories of glory days were fading

After Maradona delivered his second title for Napoli more than three decades ago, the team could not sustain the success. They had financial struggles, went bankrupt and were demoted to Serie C—the lowest league of the professional divisions.

The turning point came in 2004: film producer Aurelio de Laurentis bought the club.

"He created a team that is wonderful to watch," Rzuouki says.

"He knew he could depend on the

Pakistan to feature in Davis Cup Juniors Asia Oceania final qualifying event

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan 16 & Under will participate in the Davis Cup Juniors Asia Oceania final qualifying event, to be held from 8th to 13th May in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

The team comprises the following Noman ul Haq (captain), Nadir Reza Mirza (player), Hamza Roman (player) and Abubakar Talha (player), said a news release issued here.

Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, President of Pakistan Tennis Federation has expressed his best wishes for the team. He also stated that hard work, dedication and passion for tennis are always rewarded. He emphasized that the development of juniors and their participation in international events was one of the priorities of PTF, despite financial constraints

Peshawar region win U13 Inter-Region Tournament



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Leg-spinner Shoaib Khalid's six-fer led Peshawar Region to a six-wicket win over Lahore Region in the rain-shortened final of the Inter-Region U13 Tournament 2022-23 at the Jawad Club in Faisalabad on Friday.

Persistent rain and a wet outfield caused a delayed start as the match was reduced to 12 over per side.

Opting to bat first, Lahore Region were bundled out for 50 in the final over. Only opening batter Inshal Chaudhary (16, 21b, 2x4s) managed to score into double figures.

For Peshawar Region, 12-year-old Shoaib bagged six wickets for seven runs in three overs.

In return, Peshawar Region achieved the target in the 10th over losing four wickets to lift the trophy and also pocketed PKR 350,000 as the winning prize. Lahore Region had to settle for a PKR 250,000 runners-up cash prize.

For Lahore Region, captain Mohammad Yaqoob Khan was the most successful bowler with match figures of three for 21 from three overs.

Dera Murad Jamali's Shees Qadir was named best player of the tournament for scoring 170 runs and 10 wickets in the tournament. He was awarded a trophy and cash prize of PKR 30,000.

Scores in brief:

Peshawar Region beat Lahore Region by six wickets Lahore Region 50 all out, 11.5 overs (Inshal Chaudhry 16; Sohaib Khalid 6-7)

Peshawar Region 54-4, 10 overs (Mohammad Saad 17 not out; Mohammad Yaqoob Khan 3-21)

Player of the match – Sohaib Khalid (Peshawar Region) Player of the Tournament – Shees Qadir (DM Jamali Region); 170 runs and 10 wickets

Best Batter of the Tournament – Abdullah Javed (Karachi Region); 348 runs

Best Bowler of the Tournament – Aliyan Shah (Peshawar Region); 15 wickets

Best Wicketkeeper of the Tournament – Sufiyan Kamran (Karachi Region); 11 dismissals

Best Fielder of the Tournament – Sudais Ahmed (Abbottabad Region); seven catches

German lucky loser creates history at Madrid Open

Jan-Lennard Struff made an upset victory against world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas at the Madrid Open on Thursday.

The German player, who was a lucky loser in the tournament, won 7-6 (7/5), 5-7, 6-3 in a thrilling encounter. With this victory, he became only the third lucky loser to reach the semi-finals of an ATP Masters event.

Struff had lost in the qualifying round before being given a place in the main draw. However, he proved to be a formidable opponent and gave a tough time to Tsitsipas throughout the match. The victory earned him a spot in the semi-finals, where he will face Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev on Friday.

The other semi-final will be contested between defending champion Carlos Alcaraz and Borna Coric of Croatia. Alcaraz, who is currently ranked as the world number two, will be celebrating his 20th birthday on the same day. It is expected to be a tough encounter as both players have been in good form throughout the tournament.

Struff's victory is a significant achievement for him, as he is ranked at 65 in the world. He joins Thomas Johansson, who made it to the Toronto semi-finals in 2004, and Lucas Pouille, who reached the semi-finals in Rome in 2016, as a lucky loser to reach an ATP Masters semi-final. The Madrid Open has witnessed some thrilling matches and unexpected results this year. With some of the top players eliminated from the tournament, it has provided an opportunity for the lesser-known players to make their mark.



unconditional love of an entire city, on a fan base that is so devoted. So under him, Napoli grew."

And yet, Napoli couldn't replicate the success of 1990 and win the title.

"The deep pressure of playing in a city that lives football to a degree that is so unimaginable... it can be a lot. It can become suffocating to be in a city that is so devoted to their success," says Rzuouki.