



Pakistan, China reaffirm resolve to strengthen ties, robustly implement CPEC projects

Pakistan and China Saturday here reaffirmed resolve to further strengthen their time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership through continued close consultations at the leadership level, enhanced practical cooperation and robust implementation of the CPEC projects. (Details on Page 3)



Pakistan considers Uzbekistan key partner in Central Asian Regions: Amir Muqam

Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam has said that Pakistan considers Uzbekistan a key partner in Central Asian Regions, with central location, vibrant population right mix of policies, Uzbekistan is the hub of Central Asia. He was addressing the III Bakhshi International Festival, being convened in beautiful city of Gulistan, Uzbekistan. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Coronations

LONDON: Britain's King Charles III wearing the Imperial state Crown, and Britain's Queen Camilla wearing a modified version of Queen Mary's Crown wave from the Buckingham Palace balcony after viewing the Royal Air Force fly-past in central London on May 6, 2023, after their coronations.



Charles and Camilla crowned in historic Coronation celebrations

Spokesman Report

LONDON: King Charles III has been crowned at London's Westminster Abbey in Britain's biggest ceremonial event for seven decades. Charles looked serious as he swore oaths to govern justly and uphold the Church of England - of which he is the titular head. He was then hidden from watching eyes by a screen for the most sacred part of the ceremony when he was anointed on his hands, head and breast by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby with holy oil consecrated in Jerusalem. After being presented with symbolic regalia, Welby placed the St Edward's Crown - which was made for Charles II in 1661 - on his head and the congregation cried out "God save the King". His eldest son William, 40, then knelt before his father to pledge his loyalty as his "liege man of life and limb", both moments greeted by cheers from crowds outside. Camilla, Charles's second wife, was crowned Queen during the

2-hour ceremony which, while rooted in history, attempted to present a forward-looking monarchy. Tens of thousands of people ignored rain to line the streets of London to watch the royal procession. "No other country could put on such a dazzling display - the processions, the pageantry, the ceremonies, and street parties," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had said in the lead-up to the coronation. Despite Mr Sunak's enthusiasm, the coronation is taking

place amid a cost-of-living crisis and public scepticism, particularly among the young, about the role and relevance of the monarchy. Earlier, Charles and Camilla made their way in the Diamond Jubilee State Coach as part of the procession from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and Whitehall and on to the abbey. Key points: Tens of thousands of people gathered around London for King Charles's coronation. Charles became the oldest British monarch to be crowned

Police say they made 52 arrests during their operation for the coronation. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, slowly placed the 360-year-old St Edward's Crown on top of the King's head. Prince William, heir to the throne, pledged his allegiance to his father. King Charles succeeded his mother Queen Elizabeth when she died last September and at 74, became the oldest British monarch to be crowned as he sat upon a 14th-century throne at Westminster Abbey.

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Talha makes Hajj training mandatory for all pilgrims



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Saturday said Hajj training was mandatory for all intending pilgrims and all the participants would be awarded certificates. Addressing a press conference here at the Haji Camp Islamabad, he warned that if anyone did not attend the training session as per schedule, it would create issues for the intending pilgrims at the airport while proceeding to Saudi Arabia to perform the sacred obligation. Shedding light on the significance of these training sessions designed for the intending pilgrims, the minister said it would help them in performing the Hajj rites in a more appropriate manner. He said it was also necessary to be acquainted with the local rules and regulations of the host country so that they could have a peaceful and memorable journey to the holy land.

PM joins world leaders to witness coronation of King Charles III

Spokesman Report

LONDON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday joined a galaxy of foreign royals, officials and heads of the states and governments, at the coronation of King Charles III - a symbolic ceremony combining religious service and royal pageantry. The prime minister arrived the Westminster Abbey along with other foreign dignitaries to witness the coronation of 74-year-old King, who was crowned along with Camilla, the Queen Consort. King Charles III, became the 40th reigning monarch crowned there since 1066. The ceremony marked the pomp and formality featuring the centuries old traditions. The coronation was the first occasion in 70 years that a British monarch ascended the throne. Over 400 VVIPs including 100 heads of the states and governments attended the event. Dating back to the 11th century, the British monarchy is amongst



the oldest political institutions in the Western Europe. Before the arrival of the King, there were processions in the Abbey involving faith leaders and representatives, and representatives from some Commonwealth countries, carrying the flags and accompanied by the governor generals and the prime ministers.

PM Shehbaz Sharif meets world leaders

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Saturday met different world leaders on the occasion of coronation of King Charles III. The prime minister met with President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of Sri Lanka Wickremesinghe, President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of

Zambia Hakainde Hichilema, President of Mauritius Prithvirajsing, President of Malta George William Vella, Secretary General of Commonwealth Patricia Scotland and Minister of State United Kingdom Andrew Mitchell. They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

Difficult time is over, best people running the country: Rana Tanvir

News Desk

LAHORE: Federal Education Minister Rana Tanvir Hussain said on Saturday that the most difficult times of the country were over now, and the best people were running it at the moment. He was addressing a ceremony held for distribution of wheelchairs among special students under the Prime Minister's Electric Wheelchair Scheme, organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) at the Punjab University here. He urged the universities to improve their quality of education and making money should not be the purpose of their establishment. He said that the initiative of electric wheelchairs for physically challenged students was launched in 2018, and so far more than 600 such young people had received the chairs from the HEC. He said that special persons were precious assets to society, and it was a responsibility of the government to provide opportunities to them to help them achieve their desired goals. He said the incumbent government was trying to fulfill its responsibilities on this front as well.

Imran should not worry about next budget: Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Aurangzeb said on Saturday that Imran Khan should not worry about next fiscal year's budget as "the facility of getting selected was no more available and the facilitators had also gone". In a statement in reaction to Imran Khan's remarks, she said that Result Transmission System now has been fixed in the country. The government which destroyed the economy, and caused unprecedented inflation and unemployment for four years will never come to power again, she maintained. The minister said the government which isolated the country on the foreign front, closed the CPEC, and stopped the country's development process will not come to power again. "Now the budget will be prepared only for the people and not for Farah Gogi and Bushra Begum", she said. Marriyum Aurangzeb said now flour, sugar, electricity and gas will not become the budget of the mafia, it will be the budget of the people. Elections will be held, but the foreign agent, Toshakhana watch thief and Tyrian's father will cry and shout on

the streets, she said. Castigating Imran she said, he was claiming to stand with Supreme Court because he wanted to escape punishment in Toshakhana, foreign funding, and Tyrian's paternity case. She said Imran played with the constitution for the sake of power and violated it for the sake of power. The minister said Imran insulted the representatives of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the sake of power and made a conspiracy of cipher for the sake of power. She said it was strange that Imran was talking about IMF who violated the deal with IMF signed by himself. She said that Imran stole watches, grabbed land, received illegal foreign funding, and raised the price of flour, sugar and electricity tariffs. Taking a jibe on Imran, she said he prepared the budget for Farah Gogi and Bushra Bibi, and borrowed over 20,000 billion and he made a huge budget worth £190 million pounds received from the UK. Imran made a lot of budgets which hit the country with inflation and made people hungry and unemployed, she said. The minister stated that elections will be held simultaneously in the country on completion of the constitutional term.

Peace, stability in Afghanistan key to regional socio-economic development: FM



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday reiterated that peace and stability in Afghanistan remained vital for the socio-economic development, connectivity and prosperity of the region. Addressing a joint press conference with the visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang after holding the 4th Pakistan China Strategic Dialogue, he said "We will continue to work together with all stakeholders for peaceful, stable, prosperous and united Afghanistan." While referring to the long-standing and time-tested friendly ties between Pakistan and China, he said the two countries, like in the past, would continue to support each other in the decades to come. The minister reiterated Pakistan's firm support for China "on all its core issues, including One-China policy, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and the South China Sea." "We are committed to remaining engaged with China to promote south-south cooperation, especially in light of emerging global concerns

like human-induced climate change," he added. The minister further termed Pakistan-China friendship as irreversible, 'a historic reality and a consensus choice of the two nations'. Bilawal also expressed gratitude to the Chinese leadership for its generous and timely assistance as their country was facing the meltdown effects of the global economy. About China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Bilawal termed it 'a win-win economic initiative, open to all investors around the world'. He reiterated Pakistan's abiding commitment to its high-quality development, adding the CPEC remained a shining example of the Belt and Road cooperation, which spurred the socio-economic development, job creation and improvement in the livelihoods of the people of Pakistan. Bilawal appreciated China's "principled and just stance" on the issue of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The foreign minister said that the two countries were celebrating the 72 years of friendship. During their delegation-level

Food Festival

ISLAMABAD: First Lady begum Samina Alvi inaugurating an international food festival, at a local hotel on Saturday.



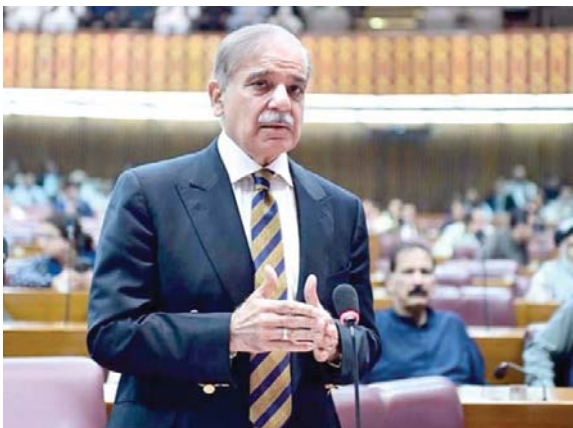
Photo: Online

Nawaz Sharif disqualified on basis of false, baseless allegations: PM

Spokesman Report

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday said former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified on the basis of false and baseless allegations and Imran Niazi was imposed on the country in 2018 through a conspiracy. Talking to media here, he said an incompetent person Imran Niazi severely damaged the economy and the country and Pakistan was put in danger while removing Nawaz Sharif from the political scene.

He said Saqib Nisar led



the campaign to get Nawaz Sharif disqualified on the basis of false and baseless allegations.

Saqib Nisar was using the power of suo moto not in the public interest but to make Imran Niazi successful, he said adding Saqib Nisar was working not as chief justice of Pakistan but as an agent of Imran Niazi and his sole aim was to defeat Nawaz Sharif and secure win for Imran.

Shehbaz said the audio leaks had unmasked all the characters who were part of the conspiracy. After surfacing of the audio leak of Saqib Nisar, there was no doubt that there was a conspiracy and collusion to bring Imran Niazi to power by any

means. He said the National Assembly had taken up the issue of audio leak for a probe against Saqib Nisar and his son.

The prime minister said elections of National Assembly and provincial assemblies should be held on the same day according to the constitution. "It is not possible to hold elections in provinces on different dates as it will affect electoral results."

The Parliament's right to legislate cannot be taken away as it was the constitutional and legal right of the legislative body, he added.

Bill clipping CJP's powers: Govt moves Supreme Court for full bench

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The coalition government has moved Supreme Court (SC) for the formation of a full court bench to hear the case related to Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, aimed at curtailing the suo motu powers of office of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP).

According to details, the federal government filed a separate petition in Supreme Court for the formation of a full court bench to hear the case related to bill curtailing suo motu powers of office of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP).

In the petition, the govern-

ment has requested that the petitions be heard by all the judges of the court due to the paramount importance of the constitutional questions involved and the fact that it is a case of first impression.

"The Parliament passed the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Bill, 2023, in exercise of its powers under the Constitution while fully cognizant of the principles of separation of power and constitutional command to secure independence of the judiciary," the petition stated.

It said that the full court is the most appropriate forum to hear the petitions, as the Supreme Court Rules, 1980,

have vested the power of formation of benches upon senior judges of the Supreme Court.

The petition stated that it is all the more reasonable and appropriate that the issue be resolved by the full court as it concern every judge of the honourable court and the people of Pakistan.

According to the petition, the respondents hoped the full court will be able to resolve the issue in the fairest and most transparent manner possible, in the interest of upholding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

Last hearing: An eight-member larger bench of the apex court headed by CJP Umar Ata

Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed is hearing the petitions against the controversial bill.

In the last hearing, the Supreme Court sought the record of parliamentary proceedings regarding the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023.

At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that the case they are hearing is of a 'different' type. We have constituted a larger bench to hear the

matter in a transparent way, the CJP added.

CJP further said that the independent judiciary and federation are important components of the constitution. "Independence of judiciary is a basic right."

The SC summoned Parliamentary record regarding the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure Bill) along with the minutes of the discussion in the standing committee.

SC also directed all parties in the case to submit written arguments in the case. The hearing has been adjourned till May 8.

Pakistan strongly condemns the statement of Indian FM after the departure of Bilawal Bhutto

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Former Foreign Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that he strongly condemns the statement of Indian Foreign Minister Jaisankar after the departure of Bilawal. Although I have a hundred differences with Bilawal, but I am talking about the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. Bilawal Bhutto went there on the invitation of the Indian Foreign Minister. And Pakistan is a member of this forum. Bilawal was his guest but he mocked the Pakistani foreign minister. His behavior was against diplomatic etiquette. He linked Pakistan with terrorism.

What justification did you have to link Pakistan with terrorism and call yourself a victim. There was no justification for it. This may be their own thinking but it is not so. Not only Paki-

stan but Kashmiris condemned the statement of Indian Foreign Minister. Bilawal went there because of SCO and Iran also participated for the first time. Before Bilawal goes to India, there is a debate whether he should go there or not. There is Hindutva thinking there, so it is useless to go there. While the second thought was that we are members and should go there for better relations, we went there.

Our experienced diplomats should have given the Bilawal Award that what would be his reaction if they would raise bilateral issues on the platform of SCO. If PML-N has decided to sacrifice Shehbaz Sharif, what can we do? Respect the court's decision and hold elections and don't sacrifice before Eid-ul-Adha. The government committed corruption of 20 billion rupees in the distribution of flour, but it does not have 20 billion rupees to conduct elections.



Former Foreign Minister and Vice Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf Shah Mehmood Qureshi said while addressing a press conference at his residence in Multan. As a result of terrorism, we have lost more than 80 thousand deaths and billions of dollars. Before pointing a finger at Pakistan, you have to look within yourself. You have to look at your neck. He said that the conditions of Occupied Kashmir are getting worse. The situation of Occupied Kashmir should be seen in the context of August 5, 2020. This was

an unconstitutional and illegal move.

In response to a question regarding the case against Parvez Elahi, he said that the federal government has declared indifference to the attack on Parvez Elahi's house. Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, IG Punjab, Chief Secretary Punjab and other top officials were not in the country. At least the responsibility should be determined. On the call of Imran Khan, at half past five, they are marching peacefully to express solidarity with the Chief Justice. In Lahore, Khan is leading the rally himself.

Rallies will also be held in KPK. Despite the permission of the court regarding the rally in Islamabad, section 144 has been implemented. We will go to contempt of court against it. People everywhere in South Punjab, including Multan, will do their part to show solidarity with the court and judges.

Imran Khan announces to hit the streets from Monday



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has announced to hold public gatherings from Monday (May 8) following the government's 'reluctance' to hold elections on May 14 despite orders from Supreme Court (SC).

The former premier made the announcement while addressing the party workers and supporters, who participated in the Lahore rally held in a show of support and solidarity with the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial.

Addressing the participants, Imran Khan said that his party would hold public gatherings from Monday (May 8) to Sunday May (May 14) - the date Supreme Court (SC) announced for holding of elections in Punjab.

He also warned the ruling coalition that if they defer elections in Punjab till after the federal budget, they will resort to street until "the Constitution and the rule of law are restored".

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held rallies in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and other cities on Saturday evening simultaneously.

In a video message issued on Twitter today, PTI chief Imran Khan called on the people to venture forth from 5: 30pm to 6: 30pm to show their solidarity with the Supreme Court and CJP Umar Ata Bandial.

He said that the country is currently at a decisive phase of its history. "Today, Pakistan is going through record inflation and unemployment and a mafia is seizing it. The incumbent government is afraid of facing defeat in the elections."

Imran Khan blamed the government for deliberately taking steps for destroying the Constitution and the Supreme Court (SC). "A mafia is running propaganda against the CJP and SC judges. I am appealing to the nation to come out for showing their solidarity with the CJP on Saturday evening."

FM upheld Pakistan's stance on Indian soil: Sherry Rehman

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Saturday said that the Foreign Minister upheld Pakistan's stance on Kashmir during his recent visit to India.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that the Foreign Minister's decision to attend the SCO summit in India was a courageous move and it was made after thorough consultation with all stakeholders, including the Parliament.

Minister further said that despite India's actions, Pakistan cannot afford to withdraw from the membership of regional forums because they could play a vital role in safeguarding national interests.

During the meetings of these forums, Pakistan got a chance to consistently articulate its national position and conveys its stance on various issues affecting the region, she asserted.

Responding to a question, she said that it appears that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was attempting to monopolize every issue for its own self-interest, disregarding the broader implications.

To another query, she made



it clear that terrorism knows no boundaries and poses a common threat to all nations. Therefore, it is crucial to address this issue whenever an opportunity arises for open dialogue.

On the question of political instability in the country, she said that the political landscape is deeply fragmented, with political parties experiencing significant divisions and rifts.

The primary cause of this instability can be attributed to the negative and self-centered politics pursued by Imran Khan, she criticized.

Moreover, this uncertain situation has created obstacles in finalizing the IMF agreement that increase the economic instability in the country, she asserted.

Minister urged all stakeholders to come together and work for the welfare of the people.

سوئی ناردرن گیس
Sui Northern Gas
SNGPL Official Helpline: 1199

حکومت پاکستان کے توانائی پلان کے مطابق
اوگرا نے گیزر میں
گیس سیورکون
کی تنصیب لازمی قرار دے دی*

اوگرا کے احکامات کے تحت
سوئی ناردرن کی گیزر نے گیس سیورکون
کی گھر گھر تنصیب کا آغاز کر دیا ہے

یاد رکھیں!
سیورکون نصب نہ کرنے کی صورت میں
گیس فراہمی میں دشواری ممکن ہے

آزاد گیس کی سیورکون 1199 پر کال کریں
بل کے ذریعے 12 ماہ کی آسان اقساط میں ادائیگی

PID/L3205-D

AJK PM calls on Finance Minister, discusses development schemes

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq has thanked the federal government for the release of funds worth 9.7 billion rupees to the government of Azad Kashmir in terms of annual development program. During his meeting with Federal Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, the PM said that the amount would be instrumental in spinning the wheel of development that had stopped owing to shortage of development funds. "With the release of this money, the wheel of development in the state which had stopped earlier will start again", he said, adding that the release of funds would lead to a positive change in the infrastructure and economy of Azad Kashmir. Prime Minister Anwar-ul-



Haq also discussed the financial problems of Azad Jammu and Kashmir with the Federal Minister and apprised him of his government's efforts being made to increase the revenue at the local level. Referring to the earlier assurance given by the Federal Government at the time of budgeting, the PM urged the Federal Minister to release the funds, so that the government would be able to meet the non-development

expenditures which it had spent on account of the salaries and pensions of state employees. It may be recalled here that out of 28 billion rupees allocated for the annual development program, only 11 billion rupees were released before the incumbent prime minister, Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq, assumed the charge of government in Azad Kashmir. The credit for this achievement certainly goes to Prime

Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq who worked day and night to solve the financial problems. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar while welcoming Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, assured the full support of the federal government for the construction and development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the development of the people of Azad Jammu and

Kashmir was the first priority of the federal government. The Federal Minister, while sharing an overview of the country's economic hardships, said that despite many challenges, the coalition government in the center was determined to stabilize the financial condition of the country. During the meeting, the AJK premier was accompanied by senior minister Colonel (retd) Waqar Noor, Government Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Dr. Muhammad Usman Chachar, and Secretary Finance Ismatullah Shah, whereas the Federal Minister was assisted by Special Assistant Finance Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman CBR and other senior officers of the Federal Ministry of Finance.

ANF foils drug trafficking attempts, arrests five

News Desk

KARACHI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Saturday arrested five suspects during operations in different cities.

According to ANF spokesperson, a drug smuggling attempt from Islamabad was foiled and 65 capsules filled with heroin were recovered from a suspect who is said to be a resident of Rawalpindi. Besides that 59 capsules filled with ice and 10 capsules filled with heroin were also recovered from a woman. Both the suspects along with the facilitator were arrested.

The ANF spokesman said the suspects were travelling to Bahrain by flight number F789.

He further said 1200 pills of drugs were recovered from a suspect in an operation near Canal Road in Peshawar, while 900 grams of heroin, 300 grams of opium and a pistol were recovered from another suspect near Rahim Wala Chowk in Multan.

Spokesman added that legal action has been initiated against the arrested suspects under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

Youth Office SW arranged the annual 'Manrey Gul' poetry at GDC, Wana



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: South Waziristan Youth Affairs Department arranged the annual "Manrey Gul" poetry at Government Degree College Wana last evening with the colaboaration of district administration.

District Youth Officer South Waziristan Sardar Ali Wazir attended as Chief Guest. In addition to local poets of Wana like Nisar Lala and Farooq Jan, a total of 53 poets from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in this poetry function.

On this occasion, President of Wana "Pashto Literary Society" Amin Jan, famous writer Nisar Lala and Umar Shah Koti said that the annual night "Manrey Gul poetry" is giving the message of peace to the world and people of the whole country that we are peaceful people, we want development and prosperity.

Many districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Sawabi, Bannu, Karak, Lakki Marwat, Tank participated in a large number of poets, But Apart from Javed Shah darman, Manirwal from Swabi, Qayyum Mastana from Gomal, Ghulam Farid Khan from Norung, Farid Bettani from Jandola also participated and entertained the people with their beautiful poetry. Local people of Wana participated in large numbers, the main purpose of the poetry was to convey to the world that the people of Waziristan who believe in peace, brotherhood, and love.

On this occasion, the poets expressed their views and said that such poetry will have a great impact on our society, which is already suffering from social oppression and difficulties.

In this regard, District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir said that the Youth Office will organize positive activities in this way in the future so that people in the area enjoy positive activities.

It should be noted that the poetry started at 8: 00 am and ended at 2: 00 pm. In this regard, local people praised the District Youth Office and the organizers for organizing a well-organized poetry.

But locals hoped that the poet's will continue the same positive activities in the future as well.

There is a poem in Pashto.
Where is the instrument or the song?
It is not a matter of life there.

CTD Operation in Punjab: 11 terrorists arrested

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) claimed on Saturday to have arrested 11 terrorists in several cities in Intelligence-Based Operations (IBOs) across Punjab.

According to a CTD spokesman, operations are being conducted in order to eliminate the menace of terrorism or foil any terror activity in the province.

The spokesman said the arrested terrorists belonged to banned organisations, adding that explosives, hand grenades, detonators, pamphlets and other items had been recovered from them.

He further said 10 cases had been registered against the suspects in Lahore, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Sahiwal.

He said 76 FIRs had been registered after arresting 100 suspects during the combing operation this week.

Arrangements for the Hajj Operation 2023 have been started

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Dr. Umar Jahangir said that arrangements for the Hajj operation 2023 have been started on the instructions of the Punjab government. He expressed this yesterday while presiding over the meeting of the Department of Religious Affairs and District Officers. In the meeting, Director Hajj Rehan Abbas Khokhar gave a briefing regarding the Hajj operation. Special camps will be established for vaccination and training of pilgrims.

Umar Jahangir said that guidance and training will be provided to 15 thousand pilgrims in Haji Camp Qila Kahna while all banks and departments will set up their counters in Haji Camp. Umar Jahangir directed that WASA, Waste Management Company, Municipal All institutions including Corporation, Mapco will issue duty roster. Addressing the meeting, Hajj Director Rehan Abbas Khokhar said that they will serve the pilgrims as a religious duty. With the support of the district administration, they will also provide full security and guidance to the pilgrims. Later, all the departments also gave a briefing on the arrangements regarding the Hajj operation.

The citizen injured the robber

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: A robber was injured in the firing of a citizen in the jurisdiction of police station Mansurabad in Faisalabad.

According to the sources, two bandits stopped and robbed a citizen near Sant Singh Gate. In an attempt of robbers to escape from the spot, the citizen took out his pistol and fired at the robbers.

Meanwhile a robber got injured & the citizen who courageously fired on the robbers ran away to save his life after injuring the robber.

The CCT footage of the shooting between the postmen and the citizen was received where this incident took place & In the footage, the dacoits could be seen robbing the citizens and firing.

Constructions

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their work during the construction of Bharakao Interchange as the construction is causing trouble to nearest residences because of its delay, which needs the attention of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Group 20 meeting violates the Charter of the UN: Mehrun-Nisa

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Speaker of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, and Secretary General of Muslim Conference, Ms. Mehrun-Nisa has said that Occupied Kashmir is a disputed territory by the United Nations, where the Indian initiative to hold the Group 20 meeting violates the Charter of the United Nations and international law. India wants to hold a G20 meeting to prove its forced sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir and to cover up war crimes.

After August 5, 2019, Narendra Modi has turned the entire state into a prison



and now the Indian government is plotting to use the G20 meeting as a shield to consolidate the imperialist occupation of

the state against public opinion to cover up its war crimes. Is. She appealed to the people of Kashmir to play their role to save the unity and identity of the state.

The so called meeting in the disputed area is a deep conspiracy to mislead the international community about the real situation of Jammu and Kashmir. She expressed these views while talking to the media group regarding the G20 conference here today. She said that India is trying to hide its crimes in the region from the eyes of the world by organizing such so called events in Kashmir.

She said that the Modi government also wants to give an impression to the world through the said meeting that the

situation in the occupied area is normal.

The holding of the Group 20 meeting in the occupied valley is just an illusion through which the Modi government wants to reinforce its baseless narrative that the situation in the occupied territory is all normal and It is under legal occupation, which is a disputed area according to the UN resolutions, so no, it should refuse to participate in this meeting.

She said that India has deployed around one million forces in the occupied area and the region has now become the world's largest military deployment region. The Group of 20 countries should ask India why it has deployed half of its army in Kashmir she added.

CBD Punjab made history Kalma Underpass and CBD Punjab Boulevard completed in 5 months

News Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) also known as the Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) has made history by completing the Kalma Chowk Underpass and CBD Punjab Boulevard project in just five months. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all those involved, from the CBD Punjab team to various institutions and stakeholders who cooperated to bring this project to fruition.

The project was completed by the given deadline as per the directive of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, to provide relief to the daily commuters from traffic congestion in the area and provide a smoother flow of traffic



expressed his gratitude to all those involved in making this project a success, including the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Caretaker Minister Housing Urban Development Punjab, Syed Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir, Caretaker Minister C&W Punjab, Bilal Afzal, Commissioner Lahore, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, Rafia Haider, Chief Secretary Punjab, Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Housing and Urban Development

Punjab, Captain. (R) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Secretary Planning Punjab, Muhammad Sohail Anwar Choudhary, as well as institutions such as WASA, LESCO, Traffic Police, PHA, NLC, and Nespak, and Habib Construction for their cooperation and support throughout the project.

The people of Lahore also played a critical role in the success of this project. Their cooperation and patience during the construction phase were instrumental in ensuring that the project

was completed within the designated timeframe.

The completion of the Kalma Underpass and CBD Punjab Boulevard project is a significant milestone for CBD Punjab and a testament to the organization's commitment to delivering high-quality infrastructure projects that benefit the communities it serves. The inauguration of the project is eagerly awaited, and it is expected to be a proud moment for everyone involved in this remarkable achievement.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:42 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	4:55 pm
Maghrib	6:54 pm
Isha	8:28 pm

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Women among several PTI workers arrested in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police arrested several workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) including women from the rally in solidarity with the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Pakistan.

As per details, heavy number of police personnel along with the prisoner van was deployed at F9 Park Islamabad.

As the rally approached the F9 park the Islamabad police started arresting the PTI workers and arrested four PTI workers including two women. The police vacated has vacated Jinnah Avenue from the PTI workers.

Earlier today, PTI held rallies across the country in a show of solidarity with the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial amid a stand-off between the judiciary and the government over the elections date.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held rallies in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and other cities on Saturday evening simultaneously.

CPEC projects

Pakistan, China reaffirm resolve to strengthen ties, robustly implement CPEC projects

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China Saturday here reaffirmed resolve to further strengthen their time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership through continued close consultations at the leadership level, enhanced practical cooperation and robust implementation of the CPEC projects.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Qin Gang made the commitment during the 4th round of the Foreign Minister-level Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue co-chaired by them. The Chinese foreign minister was on his first official visit to Pakistan from 5 to 6 May.

During the dialogue, the entire range of bilateral relations and cooperation, including in political, strategic, economic, defence, security, education and cultural domains was reviewed. Regional and global issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan congratulated the Chinese

leadership on the successful holding of the "Two Sessions". He wished China's people and the new leadership greater success in building a strong, prosperous and modern socialist country. He also expressed his resolve to work together with State Councilor Qin Gang to further fortify the Pakistan-China relationship.

Recalling the consensus reached between the leadership of the two countries during the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Beijing in November 2022, the two sides agreed to further strengthen Pakistan-China strategic relations amidst profound regional and international changes. The ministers expressed satisfaction at the growing momentum in high-level exchanges between Pakistan and China while reaffirming the need for convening important bilateral sectoral engagements.

The ministers underlined that Pakistan-China friendship was a historic reality and a conscious choice of the two nations. As 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners', Pakistan and China

enjoy complete mutual trust, and their iron-clad friendship enjoys complete consensus in both countries.

Both sides agreed on continuing their enduring support on issues concerning each other's core national interests. Reaffirming Pakistan's special place in China's neighbourhood diplomacy, the Chinese side reiterated its firm support for Pakistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as its unity, stability, and economic prosperity. The Pakistani side reiterated its commitment to the "One China" policy as well as its firm support to China on all core issues of its national interest, including Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and South China Sea.

Welcoming the completion of a decade of CPEC in 2023, the two sides hailed CPEC as a shining example of Belt and Road cooperation which has accelerated socio-economic development, job creation and improvement of people's livelihoods in Pakistan. Reaffirming their commitment to the high-quality development



of CPEC, both sides noted with satisfaction the steady progress of CPEC projects. The two sides reiterated the key significance of ML-1 project under the CPEC framework and agreed to advance its earliest implementation. They also agreed to actively advance the Karachi Circular Railway alongside key areas of cooperation including agriculture, science and technology, IT, and renewable energy.

The two sides reviewed the progress of various projects in Gwadar, including the Friendship Hospital and New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA). Both sides reiterated their resolve to make Gwadar a high-quality port and a hub for

regional trade and connectivity.

Acknowledging industrialization as highly conducive to long-term sustainable economic growth and development, they also agreed to work together in the guidance of the Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation to actively advance industrial cooperation. Both sides reiterated that CPEC is an open and inclusive platform for win-win cooperation and invited third parties to maximize benefits from CPEC.

The Pakistani side expressed gratitude to the Chinese side for its economic and financial support, and its generous assistance package for post-floods reconstruction

and rehabilitation.

The two sides reiterated their firm resolve to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Acknowledging the endeavours and sacrifices made by Pakistan in fight against terrorism and extremism, the Chinese side appreciated the measures taken by Pakistan to ensure enhanced security of Chinese projects, personnel and institutions in Pakistan, as well as the steps taken to apprehend and bring to justice the perpetrators targeting Chinese nationals in Dasu, Karachi and other attacks. The two sides agreed to further build on the cooperation in security and counter-terrorism domains.

Election in Türkiye

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Paçacı casting his vote at polling booth at Türkiye Embassy during The Presidential and 28th Term Parliamentary Elections as the voting is taking place in Pakistan for the first time, which has already started in European Countries.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

PTI brings out rallies in solidarity with supreme court, CJP

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has held rallies across the country in a show of solidarity with the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial amid stand-off between judiciary and the government over elections date, ARY News reported on Saturday.

In a video message issued on Twitter today, PTI chief Imran Khan called on the people to venture forth from 5: 30pm to 6: 30pm to show their solidarity with the Supreme Court and CJP Umar Ata Bandial.

He said that the country is

currently at a decisive phase of the history. "Today, Pakistan is going through record inflation and unemployment and a mafia is seizing it. The incumbent government is afraid of facing defeat in the elections."

Imran Khan blamed the government for deliberately taking steps for destroying the Constitution and the Supreme Court (SC). "A mafia is running propaganda against the CJP and SC judges. I am appealing to the nation to come out for showing their solidarity with the CJP on Saturday evening."

"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."

Rallies across the country

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held rallies in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and other cities on Saturday evening simultaneously.

The rally in Lahore – which was led by party chairman Imran Khan – ended at Lakshmi Chowk. The PTI's Twitter account shared foot-

age of Imran's vehicle leading the rally in Lahore.

The PTI also shared footage of the Rawalpindi rally showing large numbers of party supporters on the streets.

Meanwhile, a rally – which was led by Aftab Siddiqui and others – was held in Karachi from Shahre Faisal to Numaisah.

On the other hand, PTI workers and supporters have started gathering at F-9 Park in Islamabad to express solidarity with Supreme Court and CJP Bandial.

However, the police have imposed Section 144 in the federal capital and closed the Mehran Gate of F-9 Park.

Two Chinese traditional medicines complete clinical trials in Pakistan

News desk

ISLAMABAD: The clinical trials of two traditional Chinese medicines, Houtou Jianwei tablets and Fuke qianjin capsules have been completed in Pakistan, according to the results announced by a Pakistani clinical research body. In this regard, the test conclusion report of the randomized double-blind human clinical trials was presented at a ceremony held at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), China Economic Net reported on Saturday.

The two clinical trials were conducted by the International Joint Laboratory of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ethnic Medicine of Hunan University of Chinese Medicine (HUCM) and Sino-Pakistan TCM Clinic Research Center of ICCBS in Karachi.

This is another breakthrough after HUCM promoted Yinhuang Qing-fei Capsule to become the first Chinese patent medicine entering Pakistan in 2019.

A delegation of 16 Chinese researchers and industrialists from central China's Hunan Province visited Pakistan and participated in the event. They also participated in the dialogue for collaboration in the fields of traditional medicine, biotechnology and public health between China and members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Dai Aiguo, President of HUCM, said that the acceptance of Chinese medicine in Pakistan is increasing, and the cooperation between the two countries' traditional medicines is gaining momentum. "In future, the two sides will carry out exchange and cooperation in a greater scope, wider field and deeper level", Dai said.

During the visit to the University of Karachi, the HUCM and ICCBS discussed and exchanged views on the construction of Sino-Pakistan TCM Research Center, the Atta-ur-Rahman Academician Workstation and three other platforms.

ICT admin rejects PTI's application about public rally

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has rejected the application about the permission of peaceful public rally from Zero Point to Fatima Jinnah Park (F-9) here on Saturday.

The application was moved by Ali Nawaz Awan, President, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chapter to the District Magistrate.

According to the documents issue by the ICT Administration here Saturday, it is stated that Section 144 Cr.PC. is imposed on all kind of public gatherings in Federal Capital by this office vide order dated 23rd March, 2023.

However, in Constitutional Petition No. 2 of 2022, the Honorable Supreme Court has directed that a mechanism may be worked out with the political parties regarding conduct of rallies and the days and venue thereof.

Moreover, the Honorable Islamabad High Court in Writ Petition No. 1082/2022 observed that political

parties are expected to strictly comply with the regulations and restrictions prescribed in the interest of maintaining public order and imposition of reasonable restriction in the context of regulating/exercising the right guaranteed under Article 16 of the Constitution is within exclusive domain of executive authorities' vis a vis Article 15 of the Constitution.

The Honorable Islamabad High Court in W.P.No 1515 of 2023 directed the undersigned to grant hearing to the petitioner and decide the application in accordance with law through reasoned order given that it involves fundamental rights of the petitioner and members of the petitioner guaranteed under Articles 15, 16, 17 and 19 of the Constitution."

It was also stated, with grave concern that in the past, the terms and conditions of NOCs issued to you were never completely complied with and violations were committed despite submission of affidavits which created law and order situation and caused damage to public properties.

Thus, this office cannot rule out the possibility of violation of the agreed terms and conditions.

In view of above, the instant application has been examined and the permission for holding public rally from Zero Point to Fatima Jinnah Park (F-9), Islamabad on 6th May is hereby "Regretted".

CM congratulates Pakistani cricket team for becoming top ODI team in world

News Desk

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has congratulated the management and the players for the Pakistani cricket team getting the first position in the world ODI ranking.

In his congratulatory messages, the chief minister said on Saturday that the continuous hard work of the national cricket team has made Pakistan the number one team in the ICC ranking.

He also congratulated skipper Babar Azam for scoring the fastest 5000 runs and the fastest 18th century.

"The people of Balochistan have a special love for sports and especially cricket," the CM said adding that the talented players of Balochistan are also performing well in national level competitions.

Golootlo introduces HOTEL FLASH SALES in partnership with Ascendant

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Golootlo, in partnership with Pakistan's largest hospitality technology company - Ascendant, has launched a hotel booking platform for its 40 million customers that enables them to conveniently book hotels online through their mobile app.

Golootlo discount platform now offers discounts and rebates on up to 1600+ hotels and guest houses in 50 cities across Pakistan. Golootlo is Pakistan's leading discount platform which also features amazing deals such as buy one, get one free Zinger deal for all its users. The partnership is set to elevate the travel experience for Golootlo app users by offering the best prices across all hotels in Pakistan, including exclusive discounted deal of the week.



Speaking on the occasion of the launch ceremony, Mr. Ahsan Aslam, Managing Director Golootlo said: "We are thrilled to collaborate with Ascendant, which shares our commitment to providing excellent value to our customers. This partnership will enable Golootlo users to enjoy hotels

and resorts at discounted prices, making their travel experience even more memorable across Pakistan."

CEO of Ascendant, Mr. Andre Privateer said: "As the only hospitality tech provider able to offer real time rates and availability at more than 80% of Pakistan's hotels, we serve

the tourism sector by making the online booking experience better for the consumer. Through this strategic alliance with Golootlo, their customers can now book and pay with ease through their mobile app. Golootlo is one of the biggest platforms for discount deals in Pakistan and we are committed towards giving them even bigger discounts at national and international hotels."

Golootlo is Pakistan's first and largest QR and debit card-based discount app and platform. It enables users to get industry-leading discounts at over 27,000 merchants across 170 cities in Pakistan. With its platform integrated within several of the country's leading apps and debit cards issued with various top banks, Golootlo has created an expansive ecosystem of over 15 million users.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
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 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 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.**
Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: **7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.**
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Online Games: Fun or a matter of worries

Muhammad Farooq

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the world by diverting people from physical interaction to online activities. Now people prefer online shopping and e-education, likewise youngsters are indulging more in online gaming instead of outdoor activities. The latest Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) are gaining popularity due to intensive social interaction through video, voice, text, etc. and are being considered as a source of entertainment, establishing virtual communities to interact with others in accomplishing common tasks, etc. However, besides being a source of entertainment and fun, it has some negative impacts for which every guardian needs to be updated about the pros and cons of online gaming so as to better tackle the situation to protect our future generation.

In Pakistan, multiple incidents of suicides by teenagers, killing others in aggression by online gamers have been reported in the media. The issue of violence and anti-social behavior arises due to excessive online game playing, as different researchers have concluded. Mr.

Arthur Cassidy, an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society, says that growing attachment to gaming devices among children leads to suicide or self-harm. Many other research studies have shown that children's excessive involvement in online gaming deprives them from physical activities; therefore, they face problems like isolation, introversion, misbehaving with other family members, sleeping disorders, anxiety, depression, etc.

Online gaming addiction mainly occurs due to less attention from parents. The kids who suffer loneliness get instant relief by playing online games. It takes them away from reality to a fantasy and imaginary world where everything seems to be controlled by their thoughts and imagination. Resultantly, they get frustrated which leads them to violence self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts. Besides, chances of getting blackmailed, being bullied by others (both offline and online), and having personal information stolen also increase while playing online games with online predators. Online activities certainly have the

potential to improve children's activity engagement because of their greater accessibility and opportunities for learning and use in context. That is why, instead of depriving children of its benefits, parents need to be extremely conscious of their kids' online activities by opting for the following workable measures:

- Always spare time for your kids and get involved in their social activities.
- Prove yourself as a best friend so that kids may inform you promptly in case they encounter any online danger.
- Always encourage and arrange physical activities for your kids, prefer schools with facilities for outdoor activities.
- Keep watch on your kids' friends, especially there, activities and behaviors, etc.
- Alert your children to never add strangers to their friend list. This is a simple and safe way to positively live in the online world.
- Before purchasing online games, parents need to check the rating

- of the games from the concerned department, like the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board), and then accordingly select age and content appropriate games for kid.
- Initially, parents should also play online games with the children so as to understand the content of the game as well as reaction of the children while playing game.
- For better eye on kids' online activities, computers should be placed in common areas, avoiding laptops and smartphones in their bedrooms.
- Instead of giving a new mobile on permanent basis to your kids, it is better to give them your own mobile solely for that particular purpose on temporary basis. This will ensure a direct check on their activities.
- Teach your kids not to share personal information like passwords, bank information, and pictures with anyone else.
- While using gadgets, children should ensure not to use technology to hurt anyone else through bullying or gossip.
- Learn and implement parental control features in the apps to implement time limits, website restrictions, and safe content for kids.



CPEC – A decade long saga of undeterred cooperation

As China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project matures to decade-long affable cooperation between Pakistan and China, both nations are celebrating this initiative as part of the Belt and Road Initiative.

It was almost ten years back when China signed a multibillion-dollar CPEC Framework Agreement with Pakistan under its remarkable Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that remained central to Pakistan's economic growth and greater regional connectivity.

The meeting reaffirmed the firm resolve of the present government for the successful implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Minister during his Beijing visit conveyed this resolve to Chinese authorities.

"The year 2023 marks the Decade of CPEC and the strong partnership between the Planning Division and China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)," he said recalling the CPEC Framework Agreement signed in Beijing on July 5, 2013, in the presence of the leadership of the two countries.

"The government of Pakistan is planning to hold special events to mark this milestone," he said and invited Chinese leadership to attend the events.

During meeting with the Minister for the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Ji-chao, Ahsan Iqbal admired role of CPEC in the peaceful rise and economic development in China.

The IDCPC Minister, in response appreciated Planning Minister's role in furthering the CPEC projects during current and earlier tenures.

Senior Chinese leadership including Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong, Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Li Chunlin spoke highly of Ahsan Iqbal terming him "Mr CPEC" and 'key role player' in making CPEC a success.

After an unpleasant era of Pak-China bilateral ties during the PTI government, both China and Pakistan are once again on way to maintain momentum of overall economic cooperation.

The CPEC's next phase envisages industrial cooperation and Business to Business links. As 2023 is year of CPEC's decade, a delegation of Chinese scholars will be invited to Pakistan to observe progress on CPEC.

Recently, almost 11 sessions of CPEC's top forum, Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) have been held including the April 10 most important and latest 'progress review' during Ahsan Iqbal's meeting with Vice Chairman NDRC, Li Chunlin.

The meeting resolved, "As year 2023 marks the Decade of CPEC and the strong partnership between Pakistan and China, both Pakistan and China are celebrating 10 Years of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC on July 5, 2023 whereby high-level Chinese delegations are scheduled to visit Pakistan to witness achievements made since the inception of CPEC."

ISPR Spreading Truth and Facts-III

He also highlighted the ongoing socio-economic uplift project to ensure stability and perpetual peace in the region, particularly, in the tribal areas of K-P. "A total of 3,654 developmental projects were launched in K-P at a cost of Rs162 billion," he said. "About 85% of projects, including the construction and rehabilitation of markets, educational institutions, hospitals and communication infrastructure have been completed. Apart from this, 95% of the affected population has also returned to their homes," he continued.

"The peace and order situation in Balochistan has improved compared to earlier," he said, stressing that "the security of CPEC and other projects is being ensured by the Pakistani forces and other law-enforcement agencies by making great sacrifices."

He also revealed that the Pakistan Army, after a detailed review of its operational and especially non-operational expenses in view of the current economic conditions, has decided that all types of expenses will be reduced for the betterment of the economy. "In this regard, along with the reduction in petroleum, ration, construction, non-operational procurement, training and non-operational movement, simulator training and online meetings are being conducted using modern technology to reduce costs in this area as well," he said.

Responding to a journalist's query on former army chief Gen (ret'd) Qamar Jawed Bajwa's continued influence on the military, the ISPR DG maintained that while "everyone was entitled to their opinion", the centre of "real power" was the nation.

Readers, This was Gen

Chaudhry's first press conference since taking the office of the ISPR DG in December, when he replaced Lt-Gen Babar Iftikhar. He maintained that the army was focused on rooting out terrorism from the country and respects all political parties. He showed his professionalism and full dedication during the press conference. He conveyed the detailed information and done his job very effectively. He proved himself as the justified and suitable replacement of his predecessors.

ISPR have been professionally and clearly conveying the message of Army Chief to the nation and entire world. Recent speech of Army Chief showed his great enthusiasm, dedication and commitment with Army, country and Kashmir. According to ISPR, Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir has said loyalty to Pakistan and commitment to the constitutional role is the foremost priority of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Addressing the Passing-out parade of 147th PMA Long Course in Kakul recently, he said armed forces of Pakistan have the will and capability to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the motherland. He said to us, nothing is more sacred than the safety and security of our people and no duty is more binding than the defence of our motherland. The COAS once again announced it clearly that our efforts for peace should never be taken as a sign of weakness. He assured the people of Pakistan that we would never hesitate in rendering any and every sacrifice necessary for the defence of our sacred moth-

erland. Syed Asim Munir said there is a dire need to identify the exposed and hidden enemies. He said in this regard, there must be a difference between reality and deception. He said our enemies are hell-bent upon driving a wedge between its people and Armed Forces. He said we will ensure that the bond between Armed Forces and People of Pakistan is preserved and further solidified. Talking about the efforts taken by Pakistan for peace in Afghanistan, the army chief said stability, security and peace in Afghanistan remain fundamental to our security.

The Army Chief said we will continue to provide political, moral and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brothers. He said Pakistan firmly stands with its Kashmiri brethren in their historic struggle for basic human rights and their legitimate quest for the right to self-determination. The Army Chief stressed that the international community must realize that without a just and peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue, regional peace will forever remain elusive. Passing Out parade of cadets of 147th PMA Long Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul recently.

According to ISPR, cadets from 13th Mujahid Course, 66th Integrated Course, 6th Basic Military Training Course and 21st Lady Cadet Course also passed out the day. Cadets from Palestine, Bahrain, Iraq, Qatar and Sri Lanka were also among those passed out. Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir, who was the chief guest on the occasion, reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished

cadets. The Army Chief congratulated the passing-out cadets and their parents on the successful completion of their training.

Along with interacting with media, ISPR is also doing a big job and portraying & propagating the good image of Pakistan and Pak Army by songs, movies and dramas. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces is playing an active role in the mass entertainment sector by getting involved in the production of television dramas, patriotic songs, film festivals and even reality shows. Many of their songs and dramas touched the hallmark of popularity and played a key role to awaken the patriotism. Dramas like Nishan-e-Haider, Alfa Bravo Charlie, Sinf-e-Ahan, Ahde Wafa etc are everlasting and popular. I can't forget the wave of enthusiasm, motivation and patriotism while watching ISPR's Songs and Dramas.

Readers, the role of ISPR have been remarkable in portraying true picture and presenting authentic information. ISPR is working with true spirit of serving the nation and Pak Army. The notable role of ISPR is really appreciable and the institution is propagating the real voice of the country and Army with full responsibility and honesty. Few contents of this article of mine were published few months ago as well but because of the importance of the subject and also to pay tribute to the heroes of the nation, I have reproduced it with few additions. The subject and the content represent the true voice and feelings of the nation which firmly says that the whole country stands on the back of Pak Army and this prestigious institution of ISPR.

Concluded



Analysis
Abdul Basit Alvi

Analysis
Kiran Asim

Roundtable on the Implementation of the Torture and Custodial Death

Justice Project Pakistan and Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights organized a roundtable on the Implementation of the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act 2022.

The roundtable gathered experts from both sides of the aisle of the parliament, diplomats, lawyers, journalists and civil society to discuss and raise awareness about the new Act, and to formulate a plan of action to ensure the implementation of this crucial piece of legislation by all relevant stakeholders.

In October 2022, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act 2022, a piece of legislation that defines and criminalizes torture and includes safeguards against torture, including protections for women, an appellate procedure, and special protections for witnesses.

Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights Senator Walid Iqbal, Senator Dr. Humayun Mohmand and Senator Fawzia Arshad were part of the roundtable. Dr. Mahreen Bhutto, Chairperson of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights was also present. The parliamentarians highlighted their resolve to implement and further improve this key piece of legislation.

Adil Aziz Qazi of the Islamabad Bar Council spoke about a case he had filed under this Act, highlighting, "There is no awareness of this Act in the Courts and among the legal community, 6 months after it was passed. We need trainings at judicial academies and bar councils for sensitization."

Former Parliamentarian Kashmala Khan stressed, "This issue is bigger than the individuals who head the FIA or NCHR, there needs to be an oversight committee, similar to the Anti Rape Act 2021, which constantly monitors implementation of the investigation powers of the FIA and

NCHR. This way, all complaints will be equally considered and not at the discretion of the person in charge of the institution."

Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights Walid Iqbal said, "We need to ensure that there are proper rules in place and sufficient awareness among both the people of Pakistan and all those involved in the implementation of this Act." "There are several changes in the legislation needed, including the addition of mental torture in the Act's scope, criminalisation of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and standalone penalties for torture that do not rely on the PPC," he added.

Torture by police and other law enforcement agencies pervades every facet of the criminal justice system in Pakistan. Due to procedural and legal loopholes, lack of independent oversight, and impunity enjoyed by perpetrators, torture by police remains widespread. Pakistan is a signatory to both the United

Nations Convention Against Torture and Cruel Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (UNCAT) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which makes the enactment and implementation of comprehensive legislation criminalizing torture, specifying punishments and establishing an independent investigation mechanism to inquire into allegations mandatory upon us.

Pakistan must follow through on its international legal obligations and maintain the current momentum of reform by ensuring the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act 2022 is implemented in both letter and spirit. The roundtable was well-attended, with key national stakeholders expressing their firm resolve to follow through on the implementation of this Act through a joint statement that called for spreading awareness, amending the legislative gaps, drafting investigation/sentencing guidelines, and pushing for adequate training for law enforcement, the judiciary, prison officials and lawyers.

IS Pak-Uzbek Relations

Pakistan considers Uzbekistan key partner in Central Asian Regions: Amir Muqam

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam has said that Pakistan considers Uzbekistan a key partner in Central Asian Regions, with central location, vibrant population right mix of policies, Uzbekistan is the hub of Central Asia.

Addressing the III Bakhshi International Festival, being convened in beautiful city of Gulistan, Uzbekistan, he said that he was honoured to represent Pakistan at the III Bakhshi International Festival.

Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Uzbekistan Nazarbekov Ozodbek Akhmadovich, government officials and artists were also present on the occasion.

Adviser to Prime Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that both countries are reviving their old bonds by enhancing connec-

tivity through initiatives like trans-Afghan Railway project.

Engr Amir Muqam said that both countries are having frequent high-level interactions including the visit of President of Uzbekistan to Pakistan in March 2022 and visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Samarqand for the SCO Summit.

He said that Pakistan-Uzbekistan bilateral relations are developing fast and they are based on solid institutional foundations.

He said that in the last three years, a Preferential Trade Agreement & Transit Trade Agreement (via Afghanistan) have been signed and as a result, Uzbekistan trucks can drive straight through to the ports of Karachi & Gwadar.

Engr Amir Muqam said that the trans-Afghan Railway will revolutionize trade and connectivity between Pakistan & Uzbekistan.

"People to people connectivity is crucial



as the two countries share a common cultural heritage and history and religion" he added.

"My presence in the Bakhshi Arts Festival is testimony to our close friendship and our people share heroes like Zaheeruddin Babar & Amir Taimur," he added.

his deep gratitude to the government of Uzbekistan, for the generous hospitality and the immaculate arrangements made for this event.

Engr Amir Muqam congratulated the people of the Uzbekistan on the achievements of important milestone of the constitutional reforms.

He said that it is an expression of faith by the people of Uzbekistan in the leadership of Uzbekistan President H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev and his vision of new Uzbekistan.

Adviser to PM Engr Amir Muqam said that both Pakistan and Uzbekistan are bonded by centuries old cultural, historical, religious and commercial ties.

"Our two countries share a common past: be it the statesmen like Amir Temur and Babur or the Sufi saints of Samarqand and Bukhara, they all symbolize our common heritage and provide a solid foundation for our relationship," said Adviser to PM Engr Amir Muqam.

He said that the people of both countries share customs, food, art, architecture and language, adding that even the time zone is the same in both countries.

Engr Amir Muqam said that guided by these deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, it became a natural bonding between the people of both nations.

He said that since the first Bukhshi Art International Festival was organized in Termez in April 2019, it has become an important cultural event aimed at safeguarding folk epic and traditions of storytelling, promoting intercultural communication, appreciating the diversity of the unique Uzbek art Bukhshi Narrators and its transmission to posterity.

Engr Amir Muqam said that the art of storytelling in both Pakistan and Uzbekistan share number of features including thematic unity.

"I feel happiness that Uzbekistan is taking a lead in preserving the art of storytelling," he added.

People throng Hyde Park to watch coronation event on big screen

News Desk

LONDON: Apart from the Westminster Abbey where the coronation ceremony of King Charles III was observed, hundreds of people gathered at the Hyde Park to witness the spectacular event on a huge screen, televising the ceremony live.

Last time, the ceremony of coronation was observed in 1953.

Perhaps, that was the reason people were eager to ensure their presence in the coronation.



People from all age groups gathered at the Hyde Park, holding the national flag and braving the rain.

The police force, both male and female, and volunteers were deployed on the roads, guiding the people towards the venue and politely requesting them to be on the pavements.

Resultantly, the long queues of the people peacefully ended up in the Hyde Park.

Most of them, especially the elderly audience, were enthusiastic to watch the ceremony, fearing that they may not be able to watch the next coronation in their lives.

Parents with their children ensured their presence so that they can tell their grandchildren to have witnessed this historic event.

Some of the people interviewed by APP, showed their profound respect to the royal legacy.

"This event is actually an over a thousand years old tradition," said Nick Amey.

Responding to a question regarding expenses incurred on maintaining the symbolic monarchy, he said "such events bring us massive reve-

nue from across the world, as tourists from all over the world come to see them."

His wife, Caroline Amey, seconds him. She says that the coronation-like events support small businesses.

According to her, it is a show of unity for people from different cultures, languages and regions who came here to express their love with the King.

Attired in a dress made of the UK flag, 70-something Linda Mayo came to watch the ceremony along with her spouse and son from Norwich—around 120 miles from London.

The event was "very traditional and very moving" for her. We needed to be here to see this historic event in person and this event is something we don't see in our lives."

She said that the newly-crowned king is modern and "he is for everyone, including for people from all nationalities and different religions."

Recalling the memories relating to former Princess of Wales Diana, Kate Morley, who hails from Derby, she said that she remembers the day Lady Diana died in a road accident. "She was a national icon."

She left us a very big legacy," Nevertheless, she said that the new queen, Camilla, have also different good qualities.

A tourist from Colombia, Anita, said that the coronation was so interesting and significant for the nation which was "a whole show." She termed it a proud moment for the UK nationals as well as for the tourists.

"It is how we can learn about the transformation of hundreds of years old ruling system".

Farewell message of Syed Mohammad Ali Hosseini

News desk

ISLAMABAD: In a farewell message Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that "As my family and I are leaving your beautiful country, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the warmth and hospitality in Pakistan. Pray for the prosperity, peace, welfare and security of Pakistan. I will miss you and your memories will always be with me.

THAI expands fleet, adding 18 planes for better passenger experience

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Thai Airways International is set to expand its fleet by adding 18 aircraft, with the aim of enhancing passenger experience and reaching new destinations. Currently, the airline boasts a fleet of 41 aircraft, but with the planned additions, it will increase to a total of 58.

The investment in its fleet will involve the refurbishment of eight Airbus A330 planes and one Boeing 777-200ER plane, providing a more modern and comfortable flying experience for passengers. Additionally, Thai Airways International will lease six new Airbus A350 aircraft and three other wide-bodied planes to offer state-of-the-art technology and comfort on its longest and most popular routes.

As a result of the expansion, Thai Airways International will operate with a total of 78 planes, including its subsidiary Thai Smile Airways' fleet of 20 aircraft.

The airline is recognized as one of the leading airlines in the industry and operates flights to various destinations worldwide. It has received several accolades for its exceptional service and unwavering commitment to safety.

Through its fleet expansion, Thai Airways International aims to provide passengers with an even more enjoyable flying experience and to expand its reach to new destinations. The airline's emphasis on safety and premium service will continue to position it as a top-tier airline within the industry for years to come.

Leyla Aliyeva joins environmental tree-planting campaign in Lankaran



News Desk

LANKARAN: On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, a large-scale tree planting campaign was held in the Lankaran district.

Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, founder and head of IDEA Public Union Leyla Aliyeva, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev took part in the campaign.

The campaign with the participation of young volunteers saw the planting of argan trees listed in the Azerbaijan's Red Book.

It was followed by a symbolic marking of the ecotourism trail in Hirkan National Park using the "Czech model" to facilitate movement for hikers.

Lastly, seven crested porcupines – an important local species – provided by the Baku Zoological Park were released into the wild.

Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan meets with Chairman of the Royal Mining Group



News Desk

TASHKENT: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhromjon Aloyev received the Chairman of the Royal Mining Group (Kuwait) Iad Al-Salih.

The parties considered opportunities for establishing cooperation between Uzbekistan and Royal Mining Group. They paid special attention to attracting Kuwait investments to the economy of our country.

Preliminary agreements have been reached on working out the issue of implementing joint projects in the fields of mining, medicine, pharmaceuticals, and the production of building materials.

Called on

Islamabad: DG NIMA Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed HI (M) called on Norwegian Ambassador H E Per Albert Ilsaas.



Experts at a conference explore relationship between faith and economy

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The capital city of AJK witnessed a momentous event as renowned intellectuals, economists, and scholars from various corners of the globe convened to engage in insightful discussions on the "Role of Religion, Spirituality, Ethics, and Values in Economy and Society."

The third International Divine Economics Conference, organized by the Islamic Social Sciences Forum (ISF) of Hadi Foundation in collaboration with esteemed universities and AJK Medical College, commenced with great enthusiasm on Saturday.

The conference aimed at to question traditional economic paradigms and delve into the profound influence of religion,

ethics, values, and spirituality on the economy and society. Anticipation ran high as distinguished speakers and participants geared up to challenge established norms and explore novel perspectives on the interplay between economic systems and the realm of faith.

The inaugural session, held at a local hotel on Saturday morning, set the tone for the momentous event. Presided over by the Former Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice Chaudhary Muhammad Ibrahim Zia, the session featured addresses by notable figures such as Prof. Christopher Hodshire from the United States and Dr. Redek Tadeusz E. Biernacki from Chile, who joined remotely. Renowned economist Dr. Faheem Khan, Chair-

man of the Hadi Foundation, and Conference Chair Prof. Dr. Nisar Hussain Hamdani, along with other distinguished guests, also delivered thought-provoking speeches.

In his address, Former Chief Justice, Justice (R) Chaudhary Muhammad Ibrahim Zia emphasized that Islam encompasses all facets of life, including the economic dimension. He applauded the conference as an excellent opportunity to deliberate on the economic challenges posed by conventional systems and make rational decisions. Justice Zia stressed that isolating the economy from religion, values, and the social fabric would be counterproductive, highlighting the inherent interconnectedness of these elements.

Prof. Dr. Nisar Hussain Hamdani, Chairman of the Hadi Foundation, provided an overview of Divine Economics and shed light on the latest developments in research within this field. He expressed hope that the conference would serve as a unique platform for stimulating discussions and debates on integrating religion, ethics, and values into the economy. Prof. Christopher Hodshire from the United States, who discussed divine economic justice and ongoing collaborations between religious institutions and their impact on poverty at both local and national levels. Prof. Hodshire also highlighted the shortcomings and pitfalls of capi-



talism and government policies, providing valuable insights for the participants.

The conference comprised several parallel sessions on Satur-

day, each chaired by esteemed individuals in their respective fields. Dr. Tariq Majeed chaired a session dedicated to the theme of well-being, Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR), and Human Capital, which included engaging discussions on research papers and abstract presentations. Another session, led by Dr. Zafar Siddiqui, explored the subjects of education, human development, and innovation through thought-provoking papers and abstract presentations.

Mufti S. Umer Amad ud Din, a distinguished Sharia Scholar and Internal Sharia Audit Expert at Eman (Silk Islamic Bank), chaired a session focused on Islamic Banking and Economy. Co-chaired by Mr. Moghees Shoukat, this session witnessed stimulating discussions revolving around research papers and abstract presentations pertaining to the theme.

Indonesian premium electronic brands for home appliances will be present in Pakistan market



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Embassy has facilitated business visit by MODENA, an Indonesian premium brand for home and kitchen appliances, to Lahore. During their maiden visit to Pakistan, VP of MODENA, Mr. Michael Jizhar met with several potential partners and introduced the line of productions of MODENA and offered his keen interest to invest in Pakistan with local partners here.

"Pakistan huge market provides a broad opportunity for MODENA to introduce the most popular brand of Indonesia's home appliances technology", said Mr. Michael Jizhar. Pakistan is growing rapidly in the home appliances industry, and this industry has set an output value of \$ 1.1 Billion and it has still a big room for growth. MODENA which occupied 71 percent of market in Indonesia will suit to Pakistan market which shared a lot of similarities with Indonesia, by setting up a high quality and competitive price of products to fill the gap, added Michael.

Ambassador Tugio commended MODENA decision to expand their global presence to South Asia by building investment with local partners in Pakistan, and underscored the important of geoeconomics Pakistan as gateway to the wider region in Centra Asia and beyond. "As the two most populous Muslim countries, Indonesia and Pakistan share many communalities in cultural aspects especially similarities in some cuisines due to the preferences of using spices in cooking", said the envoy.

MODENA was founded in 1960, and became one of the most prominent producers of freestanding cookers in Italy. Nowadays MODENA has spread its wings in many countries, including UAE and China, by providing profound and unique products, including the world's strongest freezer and isothermal super alloy burner.

JazzCash, CBA join hands to promote digital financial services



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a recent development, JazzCash and CBA (Community business agent) have formed a partnership to provide Cash-In and Cash-Out services to JazzCash customers through CBA's retail network. This collaboration is expected to have a significant impact on the digital financial services industry in Pakistan, making it more convenient and accessible for customers.

JazzCash is a leading mobile wallet and branchless banking services provider with a significant market share in mobile money activity in Pakistan.jazzcash.com.pk

Meanwhile, CBA is the country's largest digital distribution platform, promoting micro-entrepreneurship in the country. cba.com.pk

The CEO of CBA, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, emphasized the company's commitment to elevating micro-entrepreneurship and helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to scale upwards and achieve financial sustainability. He underscored CBA's dedication to continuous improvement, innovation, and collaboration to play a more significant and impactful role in the industry.

This partnership is a significant step towards promoting financial inclusion in Pakistan. By joining forces, these two leading companies are making it easier for people to access and use digital financial services, which will positively impact their lives.

Mr. Murtaza Ali, the Head of JazzCash, speaking at the occasion highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships in building new verticals and avenues that will result in building an ecosystem for payments. This partnership will provide access and ease of payments for JazzCash customers, contributing significantly to digital financial inclusion in the country.

We are excited to witness the impact of this partnership on the industry and anticipate more collaborations that will bring greater financial empowerment to people across Pakistan."

Nigeria wants US\$ 3 billion bilateral trade with Pakistan

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Nigeria wants to increase bilateral trade with Pakistan to at least US\$ 3 billion as both countries have the potential to achieve this target. This was said by Hadi Sirika, Minister for Aviation of Nigeria while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Capt. Nuhu Musa Director General Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Capt. Modibo Alkali Rector Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Bolaji Alkali Director Trade and Investment Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, H.E Muhammad Bello Abio High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan and others also accompanied him on the occasion.

The Nigerian Aviation Minister said that his country enjoys bilateral trade of around US\$ 15 billion with India and over US\$ 4 billion with Indonesia and it wants to further increase trade with Pakistan as both countries are a huge market of nearly half a billion people. He said that Nigeria is working for direct flights with Pakistan that would help improve people to people and business to business relations between the two countries. He said that Nigeria



is also interested in strengthening cooperation with Pakistan in transportation, tourism, trade & commerce, industry and other sectors. He said that Pakistani investors should invest in Nigeria to take advantage of its tax holidays and free economic zones.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that

the bilateral trade of around US\$ 114 million between Pakistan and Nigeria is quite negligible as compared to the actual potential of both countries. He stressed that Pakistan and Nigeria should make efforts to increase their bilateral trade to at least US\$ 3 billion in the next few years as both countries have potential to achieve this target. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Nigeria and

other African countries including textiles, rice, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, electrical appliances, processed food, cosmetic & beauty products, leather goods, IT products, financial services. He said that both countries should encourage regular exchange of business delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation and said that ICCI would consider taking a delegation to Nigeria in future. He hoped that the start of direct flights between Pakistan and Nigeria would help increase bilateral trade volume and urged that both governments should put this project on fast track to achieve its beneficial results.

Capt. Nuhu Musa Director General Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Capt. Bolaji Alkali Director Trade and Investment Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and H.E Muhammad Bello Abio High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan also spoke at the occasion and stressed for increasing trade and investment cooperation with Pakistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan and Nigeria are facing some common issues including terrorism, bad press and stressed that they should develop close cooperation to tackle these common issues.

Water melon juice

KARACHI: People are drinking traditional water melon juice at Federal B area during the high temperature of summers. People like such nutritious drinks, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Bloodbath in Export-Oriented Industries: Irfan Sheikh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his shock that, as per latest trade statistics of Pakistan, exports have declined by 26.68 percent in April 2023 on YoY basis; and, this is the direct, inevitable and forewarned result of the sudden, harshest withdrawal of gas & power subsidies for the five zero-rated, leather, surgical and sports goods—and, all of these have posted tremendous deceleration in their exports in general and textiles in particular; which has plunged 29 percent on YoY basis in April 2023. What else the government needed to record to ascertain that their policy was destructive and futile for the trade & industry, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh explained that the concessional tariffs were effective only for the five zero-rated sectors; namely, textile, jute, leather, surgical and sports goods—and, all of these have posted tremendous deceleration in their exports in general and textiles in particular; which has plunged 29 percent on YoY basis in April 2023. What else the government needed to record to ascertain that their policy was destructive and futile for the trade & industry, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh highlighted the fact that Pakistan's exports during July-April FY23 were recorded at \$23.174 billion against the exports of \$26.247 billion in July-April FY22; with most drastic decline registered in April 2023 as exports were recorded

at \$ 2.124 billion in April 2023 against the exports of \$ 2.897 billion in April 2022—a 26.68 percent decline.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh recalled that, as President FPCCI, he has issued 6 policy statements in no-uncertain-terms on the issue in the past 2 months—but, the government and its economic team couldn't see the storm that was building.

To put the exports performance in perspective vis-a-vis Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves (FER) and yearning for the release of merely one billion dollar tranche from IMF, the country has witnessed a loss of \$3.073 billion in its exports alone so far in FY23—and, it all happened in the failed and wasted process to appease the IMF. Where is that priced, elusive IMF deal, even after implementing all the harsh decisions that made no economic sense, Mr. Sheikh asked!

FPCCI Chief has categorically demanded the resumption & effective implementation of Regionally Competitive Energy Tariffs (RCET) for electricity, gas and RLNG for the export-oriented industries for remainder of the outgoing fiscal year and for upcoming FY24 to salvage the exports, industry, employment, revenues and balance of payments. Otherwise, there will be no industry left in the country, he added.

Pakistan and Canada need to promote more investment, Canadian Mayor Patrick Brown



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas, the delegation including Nasir Shah of Shah Consultant, Faad Waheed, Amin-u-Rehman, Shamreez Iqbal, Fahad Barlas, Mohammad Fayyaz Awan of J7 Icon, along with CEO Express Group Ijaz ul Haq met Patrick Brown Mayor Brampton Canada at a local hotel.

In the meeting, Patrick Brown discussed

the overall global situation, bilateral relations and promoting cooperation in various fields including trade, investment and tourism. On this occasion, Patrick Brown highlighted the deep friendly relations between Pakistan and Canada. That the two countries have very cordial relations which need to be further promoted in the areas of investment and trade.

Chairman Khurshid Barlas said that there are vast investment opportunities for Canadian investors in Pakistan. This

can be further increased between the two countries with the cooperation of the private sector.

In this regard, export of textiles, leather goods, sports products, chemicals, carpets and medical equipment can also be benefited.

During the conversation, Patrick Brown also invited Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Chairman Khurshid Barlas to visit Canada for the promotion of bilateral trade.

Lahore-bound PIA flight narrowly escapes accident

News Desk

LAHORE: A passenger aircraft of Pakistan International Airline (PIA) narrowly escaped an accident after the tire burst during landing at Lahore Airport.

As per details, the tire of the PIA flight PK 248 burst when it was landing at Lahore airport from Dammam last night.

The PIA plane captain refused to take off the flight as the tires were not in good condition. The flight to Riyadh was also delayed today because of the damaged tires and the passengers were shifted back to the hotels.

According to sources, the damaged tires will be replaced by new tires which are being shifted to Lahore from Karachi.

Possible to get 3 billion dollars in foreign exchange by implementing Cotton Action Plan 24-2023

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Implementation of the Cotton Action Plan 2023-24 will make it possible to earn 3 billion dollars in foreign exchange. Cultivation of cotton on a large area is a challenging task for which the district administration, agriculture department and other stakeholders are working together. These views were expressed by Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu while presiding over the review meeting held on cotton cultivation in Commissioner's Office Dera Ghazi Khan.

Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Division Dr. Nasir Mahmood Bashir, Deputy Commissioner DG Khan, Leh, Muzaffargarh and Rajanpur, Director General Agriculture Extension Punjab Dr. Anjum Ali, Director General Agriculture Pest Warning Rana Faqir Ahmed, Department from DG Khan Division. Agriculture extension and pest warning directors and deputy directors including progressive farmers and officers of other relevant departments participated. Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu further said that this year in Dera Ghazi Khan division 9 lakh 71 thousand acres area

is being brought under cotton cultivation for which The district administration is providing full support to the field staff of the Agriculture Department

So that the desired results of cotton cultivation and production goals can be achieved. On this occasion, Secretary Agriculture Punjab gave instructions and said that the Inhar Department should ensure the availability of canal water during cotton cultivation. In this regard, in Dera Ghazi Khan Division. Blockage of canal water should be removed immediately so that cotton sowing can be completed on time. He said

that the staff of the Department of Agriculture Extension and Pest Warning should provide technical guidance and support to the farmers by going to the field and compiling the data of all the farmers. He further said that this year many practical steps have been taken by the Punjab government under the historical package of cotton revival, which will prove profitable for the farmers.

This year, cotton production competitions 2023 are being organized to encourage the farmers by establishing facility centers at the tehsil level, according to which

the farmers who get significant production will be given cash prizes of crores of rupees at the provincial and district level. Punjab Agriculture Secretary also directed to counter-check cotton cultivation data with revenue department. He said that Cotton Committees headed by Deputy Commissioners should hold regular weekly meetings at the district level and the problems faced in cotton cultivation should be urgently addressed. Resolve. In addition, students of training institutes should be deputed to meet the shortage of field staff during the cotton season.

Zalmi Foundation awards Rs1m to Arshad Nadeem for Commonwealth Games feat

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zalmi Foundation on Saturday awarded javelin-thrower Arshad Nadeem one million rupees as a token of appreciation for his last year's historic feat in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK.

The prize money was awarded to Arshad by Pakistan Super League franchise Peshawar Zalmi's Director Cricketing Affairs, Muhammad Akram on behalf of franchise chairman Javed Afridi and Zalmi Foundation.

"Today, we were pleased to welcome Arshad Nadeem to the Zalmi Head-



quarters to present him with the well-deserved cheque by the Director Cricketing Affairs Peshawar Zalmi, Muhammad Akram.

Zalmi takes pride in recognizing and celebrating the achievements of our national heroes, and encourages the youth from all walks of life to strive for excellence and make our country proud," a statement issued by Zalmi said.

The 26-year-old Arshad claimed the gold medal in the javelin throw event of the Commonwealth Games with a massive throw of 90.18m at Alexander Stadium, Birmingham in August, last year.

What importance does May 5 hold in Babar Azam's decorated career?

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's all-format captain Babar Azam's journey is nothing short of an inspiration as the star batter on Friday became the only captain to lead the national team to the top of the ICC Men's ODI Rankings.

Babar Azam, who made his debut for Pakistan in ODIs against Zimbabwe, made hard yards on his way to becoming one of the most prominent figures for Pakistan in the sport.

He served as a ball boy when South Africa toured Pakistan in 2007 for a five-match ODI series and also as a net bowler and bowled against legendary players like Inzamam-ul-Haq.

After making his ODI debut, Babar soon emerged as the top batter for Pakistan and has been ruling the white-ball formats since then, especially ODIs.

Babar Azam's astonishingly consistent run in the ODIs lifted him to dethrone his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli as the top-ranked ODI



batter in April 2021 and was also named the ODI player of the year for two consecutive years.

Meanwhile, on Friday (May 5), Babar smashed two more ODI records - fastest to 5000 runs and to 18 centuries - amid Pakistan's dominating 102-run victory over New Zealand which propelled them to the top of ODI rankings for the first time.

Following the remarkable achievement of the national team, a nine-year-old tweet from Babar Azam has been circulating on social media in which the current Pakistan captain expressed his gratitude for being selected for Pakistan's conditional camp.

Coincidentally, the tweet was published on May 5 2014, exactly nine years

before Pakistan, under the leadership of Babar Azam, rose to the top of the ODI rankings.

It is worth mentioning here that Babar will add another feather to his cap on Sunday as he is all set to play his 100th ODI match as Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the fifth PAK vs NZ ODI here at National Bank Cricket Arena.

Ahead of World Cup, Najam Sethi to meet ICC, ACC officials in Dubai

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Najam Sethi will embark on a visit to Dubai on Sunday (tomorrow), where he is expected to hold important meetings with the officials of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and Asian Cricket Council (ACC) ahead of the upcoming World Cup - scheduled to be played in October this year in India.

It must be noted that in October last year, Pakistani cricket authorities hinted they may pull out of next year's World Cup in India after officials of the Board of Control for Cricket in India said they would not send a team to the Asia Cup 2023 in Pakistan.

The PCB's top official will present Pakistan's point of view on the upcoming events, including the Asia Cup, ICC World Cup and Champions Trophy, sources said.

After staying in Dubai for three days, Sethi will then travel to England where his meetings are already scheduled, the sources said. Over there, Sethi will be visiting the Biomechanics lab at the Loughborough University.

PCB is likely to sign an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the University of Loughborough.

The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad is set to host the much-anticipated India vs Pakistan match in the ICC 50-over World Cup this October-November.

This will be the first time the two arch-rivals face each other on Indian soil since 2016. With a seating capacity of 100,000, the stadium is the largest in India and has been selected in anticipation of a large number of fans expected to travel from abroad for the fixture.

Lionel Messi says 'sorry' for Saudi trip after being suspended by PSG



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Lionel Messi on Friday apologised for going on an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia that led to Argentina's World Cup-winning captain being suspended by his club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG).

"I want to apologise obviously to my teammates and to the club," Messi said in a video posted on Instagram to his 458 million followers.

He was suspended by the Qatar-owned club after failing to turn up for training on Monday, a day after their 3-1 home defeat by Lorient in Ligue 1.

Instead, the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner travelled to Saudi Arabia without PSG's permission to fulfil commitments as part of a contract with the country's tourist office.

"I honestly thought we were going to have the day off after the match as had happened in the previous weeks," he said.

"I had organised this trip to Saudi Arabia having cancelled it previously. This time I couldn't cancel it. I am sorry for what I did and I wait to see what the club decides to do."

The affair has made it increasingly unlikely that Messi will remain at PSG beyond this season, when his two-year contract with the club expires. A source with knowledge of the disciplinary procedure told AFP that Messi would be sidelined for "several days", and he is therefore set to play no part in PSG's match against Troyes this weekend in Ligue 1.

Various media in France said he would be suspended for two weeks, although AFP has not been able to confirm those reports.

PSG, who are five points clear at the top of Ligue 1, will have just four more matches remaining this season following their game against Troyes.

"We will see when Leo comes back. We will see what happens. Obviously there will be discussions with the club as a whole but also with Leo because this concerns him first and foremost," PSG coach Christophe Galtier said on Friday when asked if Messi would play for the team again.

Galtier also said that the decision to suspend the 35-year-old Lionel Messi was not his to take in the first place.

"It wasn't my decision to take. I was informed of the decision and I defer to it," he insisted.

PSG fans angry at the way the club has been run in recent seasons under Qatari ownership this week protested in front of their offices and even gathered outside Neymar's home in the Paris suburb of Boulogne to voice their discontent. The club has boosted security at their training ground and at the homes of Messi and Neymar as a result. Lionel Messi has spent less than two years at the club since his high-profile move from Barcelona.

He has scored 31 goals in 71 appearances for the French champions and won the Ligue 1 title last season.

Lionel Messi has netted 90 goals in all competitions this season and is the leading assist provider in Ligue 1, with 15.

However, his form since leading Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar has declined along with that of most of the PSG team.

Maanum secures victory for Arsenal women against Leicester

Frida Maanum's stunning long-range goal secured Arsenal's win over Leicester City in the Women's Super League.

The Gunners bounced back after their Champions League heartbreak, as the Norwegian midfielder curled the ball in the net. Arsenal manager Jonas Eidevall found humour in the fact that he enjoys both the Emirates and Meadow Park environments, just as he enjoys both fine dining and greasy food with cold beer.

The game could have been a disaster for Arsenal as they played in front of a smaller crowd of 3,982 in Meadow Park, just four days after losing in the Champions League in front of a record crowd of 60,063. However, Arsenal's coach pointed out that his team could have scored more goals in the match, but Katie McCabe's first-half penalty was saved by Leicester goalkeeper Janina Leitzig.

As the match approached the hour mark with no goals, the possibility of Arsenal missing Champions League contention loomed. However, Maanum's goal lifted the spirits of the Arsenal team and fans alike. Leicester's goalkeeper Leitzig denied Maanum's subsequent shots, preventing her from earning a hat-trick of long-range strikes.

Leicester's manager, Willie Kirk, praised his goalkeeper, calling her the "best keeper in the WSL" and the "best signing of the January window." He also acknowledged the journey his team has been through, stating that while they did not earn any points, they earned respect and pride. Leicester had previously lost all three WSL games against Arsenal by four goals or more.

The second one-day of the five-match series will be played at the same venue on 8 May

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A five-wicket haul from Amir Hassan and half-centuries by Shahzaib Khan and Azan Awaiz led Pakistan U19 to a nine-wicket win over Bangladesh U19 in the first one-day at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Saturday. The second one-day of the five-match series will be played at the same venue on 8 May.

Chasing a modest 166-run target, Pakistan U19 got off to a great start with the opening pair of Shahzaib Khan and Azan Awaiz providing a solid 148-run stand for the first wicket. Left-handed Shahzaib, who was named player of the match in the solitary four-day match held last week, got



out after making 83 off 116 deliveries. His innings included seven fours and three sixes. Left-handed Azan returned undefeated on 69 off 99 balls, hitting six fours and a six as the touring side achieved the target in the 38th over.

Earlier, after being put into bat by Pakistan U19 captain Saad Baig, the hosts' batters had no reply to a great spell of fast bowling from Rawalpindi-born Amir Hassan. Amir, who picked up four wickets in the first innings of Bangladesh U19

in the four-day match, bagged five wickets today. He ended with match figures of 10-2-24-5 as Bangladesh U19 scored 165 for nine in their 50 overs. For Bangladesh U19, Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby was the notable run-getter with 70 not out off 100 balls, which included eight fours and two sixes.

Scores in brief:

Pakistan U19 beat Bangladesh U19 by nine wickets

Bangladesh U19 165-9, 50 overs (Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby 70 not out; Amir Hassan 5-24)

Pakistan U19 166-1, 37.2 overs (Shahzaib Khan 83, Azan Awaiz 69 not out)

Player of the match - Amir Hassan (Pakistan U19)

Babar Azam reflects on his ODI career as he prepares for his 100th match

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has had an illustrious career since he made his debut for Pakistan in a One-Day International against Zimbabwe in Lahore almost eight years ago. The prolific batter has transformed himself into one of the most successful batters in recent history. He has been the number-one batter on the ICC ODI Rankings since 2 April 2022 and currently holds the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year and ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year award, the last being his second in as many years.

When Pakistan and New Zealand will walk out for their final meeting of the five-match ODI series at the National Bank Stadium on Sunday afternoon, Babar, the fastest batter to 5,000 runs, will complete the century of matches in the format.

Ahead of the landmark match, the 28-year-old exqui-

site stroke-maker, spoke to the PCB Digital at the team hotel in Karachi on his ODI journey. His interview makes the 46th edition of the PCB Podcast a special one and is available here for viewing and free downloading for editorial purposes only.

Over the years, Babar has become synonymous to discipline, solid technique, consistency and level-headedness, and the right-handed batter revealed this is because of the sheer hard work he has put in since his first exposure to official cricket at the under-15 regional level.

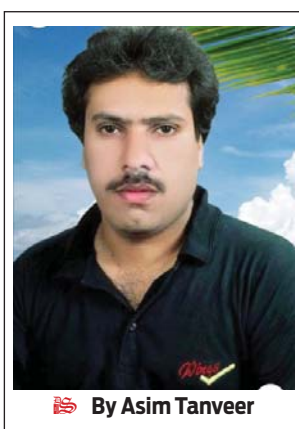
Recalling the moment when he was first called up for the national side, Babar said: "It was a different feeling altogether. There was some talk about me being selected, but when I got the call, there was a lot of excitement. I was sitting with my family and it made them happy. When I entered the Gaddafi Stadium as a Pakistan player, I reminisced my journey of how I used to come here

as a ball picker and how I had come here before Inzamam-ul-Haq's final Test match, which was against South Africa, as a net bowler.

I was not selected for the national academy for top performers after my first season as an U15 regional player as my performances were not up to the mark. That is when I started to set goals for myself and my first goal was to become a part of it and for that, I worked hard day and night. I trained to leave my house for training at 11am and stay in the ground till sunset."

The road to becoming an international cricketer was full of sacrifices. The Pakistan captain shared how at the poignant moments in his life, he was away from his family and how their support helped him reach the apex level.

I was very close to my paternal uncle and when he passed away, I was on a tour with Pakistan U19 in South Africa. He always used to take care of my bats and



By Asim Tanveer

repair them for me. I lost my paternal grandmother when I was playing a match in Islamabad. I could not make in time for the final rituals, as I could not find a bus to Lahore.

My journey has had its fair share of sacrifices. But, I am glad that I have a family that supports me. My mother bought me my first-ever cricket bat and gear, and I used that bat for good two to three years. My dad has

been a great influence in my life. He tells me to be never complacent and that keeps me hungry and focused. My brothers always lend me support in tough times."

Babar said it was his three consecutive centuries in the United Arab Emirates against the West Indies that turned around his career and gave him the confidence.

Speaking about the 2016 series, he said though his start to international cricket was a good one as he scored five half-centuries in the first 15 ODIs, he was unable to convert the starts into big scores. The presence of Mickey Arthur, the then head coach and now team director, helped him evolve into a reliable stroke-maker.

I want to mention Mickey as he played an integral role in my transformation. As a cricketer, there's a feeling that if you are not up to the mark, you might get dropped from the side, but he gave me the confidence. He asked me to give my best to

the side and not worry about getting axed from the side and that helped me a great deal. He did not only do it with me but with every player in the side and that is why we have eight to nine players in the side currently from that lot."

Babar took the reins of the national side in 2019 and the added responsibility has brought the best out of him. While staying at the top of his game, he has also been able to get performances out of the team. At the time of the interview, Babar had the best ODI average of 73.72 for players who have captained their countries in at least 20 ODIs. The mantra behind that is clear communication to players and embracing the responsibility.

"The first year was a little overwhelming as there were a lot of things to deal with simultaneously as a Pakistan captain. But, I learned how to manage that. I also learned a lot from how Saifi bhai [Sarfaraz Ahmed]

managed the team. I used to see his demeanour on and off the field and used to ask him questions that helped me.

The most crucial bit in leading a team is to provide clarity to each and every player and have honest and open communication with the players. This breeds positivity in the team environment and brings everyone together as a team. As a captain, you have a kind of a dual responsibility because as a non-captain, you only focus on your field and batting, but now you also have to run a team. I enjoy taking responsibility and it brings the best out of me."

For a player who is already regarded as one of the best the country has produced and who has earned tones of accolades over his already legendary career, what is the next goal that he has set himself?

(Writer is former international test scorer of Pakistan cricket team)