



Naveed Qamar, PPP finance team hold meeting with IMF country representative

Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on Friday held crucial meeting with Ester Perez Luis, the country representative of IMF. In a significant development for Pakistan's economic landscape, Ester Perez Luis, the IMF's resident representative, met with the finance team of the PPP. (Details on Page 7)



Justice Musarrat Hilali takes oath as second woman SC judge

Justice Musarrat Hilali on Friday took oath as Supreme Court of Pakistan judge, becoming the second woman to make it to the country's apex court. Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial administered the oath to Justice Hilali at a ceremony attended by other judges of the apex court, lawyers and officials. Last month, the JCP approved the elevation of PHC Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Musarrat Hilali to the Supreme Court. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Addressed

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing the launching ceremony of Benazir Social Protection Account on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM launches 'Benazir Social Protection Account'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday launched the "Benazir Social Protection Account" under the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) here along with Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and BISP Chairperson ShaziaMarri.

Addressing the ceremony, the prime minister directed the BISP authorities to place a condition for the Programme beneficiaries to get their children enrolled in schools to promote the education culture in the country.

It must be ensured that after a certain period the beneficiaries would get stipends only in case their children were attending

schools, he reaffirmed.

The government, he said, should not go for promoting the 'flocks of beggars' in anyway, rather it must promote the ones who were 'doers' in the real sense, with both mental and physical capacity to build Pakistan.

The time would come soon when the country would be standing on its own feet and generating resources itself, he added.

The launch ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation Faisal Kareem Kundi, members of diplomatic community and BISP beneficiaries.

Briefing about the salient features of the Account, Shazia-Marri said under the new system,

beneficiary women would have the option to select the bank of their choice, and they would receive the payments directly in their accounts which they could withdraw at their convenience.

Four banks namely National Bank of Pakistan, Bank Alfalah, JS Bank Limited and United Bank Limited had been initially selected through a competitive process for the new payment model, she added.

PM Shehbaz appreciated Minister ShaziaMarri for her hard work to expand the Programme, particularly introduction of the Benazir Social Protection Account which would help the beneficiaries to receive the stipends without any hassle, besides ensuring transparency in the system.

He recalled that last summer

when the government was facing an intense economic crisis, massive floods caused heavy destruction in most parts of the country.

Through the BISP, the Federal Government distributed Rs 70 billion among the affectees in all the provinces in the most transparent manner, he said, adding the amount was apart from the aid money sent by the friendly countries, and local and international donor agencies.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said former prime minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, who had a great vision of poverty alleviation, introduced the Programme which was successfully continuing.

With regards to standby loan arrangements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he thanked all the friendly countries

who helped Pakistan get through with the IMF and sign a staff-level agreement.

He expresses the hope that the programme would successfully complete and Pakistan would be able to bring in reforms and restructure its economy in the nine months period.

ShaziaMarri said the BISP had achieved a significant milestone today with the formal launch of Benazir Social Protection Accounts under the esteemed patronage of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

She also acknowledged the visionary role played by Shaheed-Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who had dreamt the social protection programme, and former president Asif Ali Zardari, who established it in 2008.

Young people shining stars of successful Youth Programme of PML-N: Marriyum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Friday that several young people had become shining stars of the Youth Programme of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif.

In a tweet sharing a video clip of an icon of the programme, she said this was not only the success story of the enviable and proud Muhammad Mohsin Ali,

but also an excellent example of success of the inspiring vision and thinking of bringing change in the lives of the youth and society through education.

This capable and hard-working young man Mohsin Ali of Mian Rahima village of Hafizabad, who won five gold medals, has explained the secret of success of Pakistan's youth.

The minister said as Chief Minister of Punjab, Shehbaz Sharif mentored hundreds of intelligent but poor young boys and girls like Mohsin Ali.

"Shehbaz Sharif encouraged and patronized them by giving educational scholarships and opportunities to pursue higher education abroad", said Marriyum Aurangzeb.

The minister said these young people were witnessing the success of the vision of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif.

She said today Mohsin Ali presently had been serving as a lecturer in the same MAO College, Lahore near which he was earning livelihood for his family by working on a "landoor".

Pakistan observes 'Sanctity of Quran Day' today



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is observing Yaum-e-Taqaddus-e-Quran today (Friday) across the country to lodge a protest against the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

The day was announced during a meeting held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

In this regard, peaceful protest demonstrations will be staged all over the country during which people belonging to different walks of life will take part to express their resentment over the desecration of holy Quran in Sweden.

Ulema belonging to different schools of thought will throw light on the sanctity of Holy Quran during their

sermons of Friday prayers. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the entire nation would protest across the country under the title of Holy Quran Day today.

He said after Friday prayers all Pakistani Muslims will raise the flag of the Holy Quran and record their peaceful protest. "Quran is in our hearts", he said adding that the entire Muslim Ummah is worried about the tragedy in Sweden.

"In order to express our feelings and emotions about the desecration of the Holy Quran at the hands of an ill-fated person, we will all protest nationwide today under the title of Holy Quran Day," he said in a tweet.

"Quran is not only a reciting book for us but it gives us the guidelines to live."

At least 50 dead in monsoon-related incidents across Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: At least 50 people, including eight children, have been killed by floods and landslides triggered by monsoon rains that have lashed Pakistan since last month, officials said Friday.

The summer monsoon brings South Asia 70-80 percent of its annual rainfall between June and September every year.

It is vital for the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security in a region of around two billion people — but it also brings landslides and floods.

"Fifty deaths have been reported in different rain-related incidents all over Pakistan since the start of the monsoon on June 25," a national disaster management official told AFP, adding that 87 people were injured during this

period. The majority of the deaths were in eastern Punjab province, and were mainly due to electrocution and building collapses, official data showed.

In northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the bodies of eight children were recovered from a landslide in the Shangla district on Thursday, according to the emergency service Rescue 1122's spokesman Bilal Ahmed Faizi.



He said rescuers were still searching for other children trapped in the debris.

Officials in Lahore, Pakistan's

second-largest city, said it had received record-breaking rainfall on Wednesday, turning roads into rivers.

Punjab, Islamabad LG polls: ECP summons key session

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned a key session on July 10 for the Punjab and Islamabad local government (LG) polls.

The chief election commissioner (CEC) will chair an important session on July 10 to hold consultations for the Punjab and Islamabad LG polls.

In March, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had disposed of intra-court appeals filed against the local government (LG) polls in the federal capital.

Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates 200kv solar PV system

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Friday inaugurated the installation of a 200kv solar PV system at the ministry to promote environment-friendly electricity.

The ceremony was held at the Ministry's auditorium which was attended by the Secretary, Ministry of Planning Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Additional Secretary (AS) and officials of the ministry, said a press release issued here.

Speaking at the occasion, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said,



"The provision of affordable, reliable and clean energy has always remained a priority of the government."

"Pillar IV of Vision 2025 outlines the approach towards achieving energy, water, and food security," the minister said.

"The recent 5E framework

provides a short to medium-term strategy to achieve economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability in the coming years," he remarked.

"The recently launched 5Es framework and energy is one of the important E, he highlighted.

"Plan House will be established soon."

He said, "This generation will also reduce the annual energy bill for the Ministry from Rs 26.746m per annum to Rs14.09m resulting in annual savings of Rs 12.66m. At the existing prices, the project is expected to recover its capital cost within four years."

A delegation of Lahore Bar called on caretaker CM

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A delegation of Lahore Bar Association led by President Rana Intizar Hussain met with the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at CM Office. The delegation apprised the CM about problems being faced by the lawyers community. Mohsin Naqvi assured them to get their problems resolved on priority basis. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that Punjab government would provide all possible assistance for the well-being of lawyers community.

IHC instructs for recovery of Ali Nawaz's brother

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Friday ordered the authorities to ensure recovery of missing a citizen Umar Nawaz Awan, the brother of PTT's leader Ali Nawaz Awan, within three days.

The court instructed the Chief Commissioner ICT and Inspector General of Police (IGP) to appear before court in personal if the missing person was not recovered within the said time.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case regarding the matter where in the police officials also appeared before the bench.

The wife of the missing citizen shared the evidences regarding the lifting Umar Nawaz with the police officials in USB.

At the outset of hearing, Justice Jahangiri expressed annoyance with the police and said that the Safe City Cameras' system should be closed down if it was not helpful in such matters.

The court noted that the family members of the citizen did not even know whether the victim alive or not.

Petitioner's lawyer Dr. Baber Awan said that the two vehicles had chased the victim and lifted him before his wife and four daughter, but the police expressed anonymous about

Inauguration

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with COAS, Federal Ministers, Ambassadors and other dignitaries at the inauguration of the Land Information & Management System - Centre of Excellence (LIMS - COE) on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz inaugurates LIMS aimed at enhancing food security, agri exports

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has inaugurated the Land Information and Management System (LIMS) - Center of Excellence aimed at enhancing food security, agri exports, as well as transforming millions of acres of uncultivated and low yield land across Pakistan. "The objective of the establishment of Land Information and Management

System (LIMS) is to increase food security and agricultural exports and reduce the burden on the national exchequer by reducing imports," said a statement issued by the government.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir was also present at the occasion. The ceremony was also attended by ministers of finance, defence, planning development & special initiative, national food security & research,

information, chief secretaries of provincial governments, agricultural experts and senior army officials.

This state-of-the-art System will help optimise agricultural production through innovative technologies and sustainable precision agricultural practices based on agro-ecological potential of land, while ensuring well-being of rural communities and preservation of environment.

The GIS based LIMS will

greatly improve the national agri yield by systemising digitisation of agriculture, providing real time information to local farmers about soil, crops, weather, water resource and pest monitoring through remote sensing and geospatial technologies as well as minimising the role of middlemen through efficient marketing system.

According to the world food programme, 36.9 percent of Pakistanis are food insecure

and 18.3 percent face severe food crises.

Several projects are partnered with Saudi Arabia, China, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain, which will definitely increase Pakistan's agriculture exports.

Similarly, new canals will be built to store flood water besides the latest irrigation techniques like modular drip irrigation, sprinkler and pivot irrigation will be implemented.

Caretaker CM inspects Social Security Hospitals at Multan Road & Ferozpur Road

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi conducted visits to the Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital at Multan Road and the Social Security Hospital at Ferozpur Road.

During his visits, the CM thoroughly inspected various wards and assessed the medical facilities provided to the patients. He interacted with the patients, inquiring about their well-being and the quality of medical services they were receiving. The patients and their attendants expressed their satisfaction with the facilities available at the Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital, highlighting the

availability of doctors and the provision of free medications.

The CM announced the government's decision to open 22 social security hospitals, across the province, to the public to cater to their healthcare needs. He stated that an agreement would be reached between the government and the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution to facilitate this initiative. Furthermore, he revealed plans for the establishment of a rehabilitation center for disabled industrial workers, the installation of an MRI machine, and the creation of a burn unit at the Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital. He also mentioned that the Rehmatul-lil-Alameen Institute of Cardiol-



gy (RAIC) would extend its services to the general public in addition to industrial workers. As part of the ongoing improvements, 50 additional beds will also be added to the hospital.

The CM instructed the development of a new lodging facility outside the RAIC

waiting area, designed in line with the standards of Jinnah Hospital, to provide enhanced amenities for patients' attendants. He also emphasized the replacement of old wheelchairs with new ones and stressed the availability of life-saving injections during emergencies.

Commissioner PESSI provided a briefing to the CM regarding the facilities offered at the Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital. Provincial Ministers Mansoor Qadir, Dr Jawad Akram, Amir Mir, health secretary, and MS Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital were also present.

During his visits, the chief minister thoroughly examined the emergency department, X-ray unit, CT scan room, physiotherapy section, record room, and surgical unit.

He also toured the Orthopedic Ward, Pediatric Ward, Dialysis Unit, and RAIC, where he interacted with attendants in the waiting areas to address any concerns they might have.

Commissioner PESSI provided a briefing to the CM regarding the facilities offered at the Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital. Provincial Ministers Mansoor Qadir, Dr Jawad Akram, Amir Mir, health secretary, and MS Nawaz Sharif Social Security Hospital were also present.

Switzerland FM arrives in Islamabad



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Switzerland Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis arrived in Islamabad on a three-day official visit on Friday. According to Foreign Office, he met Acting Foreign Secretary Dr Syrus Sajjad Qazi.

A high level delegation comprising members of Swiss Parliament and senior officials is also accompanying the Swiss Foreign Minister.

He will call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman.

The Swiss foreign minister will also visit the National Disaster Management Authority where the two sides will discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in disaster management.

CTD foils 133 terrorism attempts in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab has released its annual performance report, claiming to foil at least 133 attempts of terror attacks and arresting 177 suspects.

According to a Punjab Police spokesperson, the department conducted 901 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in various districts, including Lahore, resulting in the arrest of 177 individuals involved in terrorist activities and anti-state activities. Moreover, 142 FIRs were registered.

The spokesperson further stated that among the arrested individuals, three highly wanted terrorists included in the Red Book



were also arrested. They were affiliated with the banned organisations. A large quantity of explosive materials such as suicide jackets, rockets, hand grenades, detonators, IEDs, and explosive substances were recovered from the possession of terrorists.

Furthermore, pistols, ball bearings, bullets, safety fuses, laptops, mobile phones, banned books,

magazines, pamphlets, and other controversial materials were also seized from the terrorists.

The Punjab Police spokesperson mentioned that CTD had foiled 133 terrorist plots through IBOs and arrested the conspirators.

Speaking on the occasion, Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr Usman Anwar said that the CTD was

actively engaged in countering terrorism, extremism, and other criminal activities, and successfully eliminated 114 networks involved in terrorism facilitation, planning and collaboration through their timely actions.

He commended the "excellent" performance of the CTD and directed the Additional IG CTD to increase the intensity of IBOs to ensure complete eradication of terrorism from the province through effective information sharing.

Anwar further emphasized that all terrorists, facilitators, financiers, and criminals should be brought to justice and receive appropriate punishment within the ambit of law.

IMF to seek assurances from political parties on bailout deal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is seeking the support of major political parties, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), for a recently announced \$3 billion bailout programme, the lender said on Friday.

The IMF's resident representative Esther Perez Ruiz said in a statement that the meetings with political parties were to "seek assurances of their support for the key objectives and policies under a new IMF-supported program ahead of the approaching national elections."

The new bailout program, a nine-month stand-by arrangement, is going to be taken up by the lender's board on July 12.

Senior PTI leader and former finance minister Hammad Azhar confirmed that party's economic team has been approached by the IMF to solicit its support for the loan agreement and its broad objectives.

"An IMF team will call on party



Chairman Imran Khan at Zaman Park this afternoon," he tweeted.

Azhar said that both PTI's economic team and the IMF team will join, in person and virtually, to take part in the discussions.

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have recently struck a staff-level agreement for the provision of \$3 billion for nine months as a bailout package under a stand-by arrangement (SBA). The agreement replaced the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) which Pakistan entered in 2019 and which was expired on June 30.

The SBA is a bail-out package for offering emergency relief to strengthen Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves.

Justice Musarrat Hilali takes oath as second woman SC judge

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Musarrat Hilali on Friday took oath as Supreme Court of Pakistan judge, becoming the second woman to make it to the country's apex court.

Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial administered the oath to Justice Hilali at a ceremony attended by other judges of the apex court, lawyers and officials.

Last month, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) approved the elevation of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Musarrat Hilali to the Supreme Court.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court,



had asked for an immediate meeting of JCP and suggested the names of chief justices of Sindh and Peshawar high courts to fill two vacancies of SC judges.

In a letter sent to all commission members, Justice Isa suggested that the vacancies should be filled immediately, and the names of the judges to be nominated should be recommended before time while considering the principle of seniority.

Pakistan Ulema Council urges int'l action against Quran desecration in Sweden

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council, in a strong response to the recent incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden, observed Quran Sanctity Day on Friday, calling for swift international action against blasphemous act.

The Council's Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, condemned the desecration and emphasized that disrespecting any religious site, sacred book, or prophet should not be considered freedom of expression.

He highlighted the core beliefs of Islam, stating, "For us, the Oneness of Allah Almighty, the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), the greatness and truthfulness of the Holy Quran, and the sanctity of Haramain Al-Sharifeen and Al-Aqsa are like the red line."

He further emphasized that the desecration of the Holy Quran and the honor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him could not be justified as freedom of speech.

The Pakistan Ulema Council unequivocally expressed that the desecration of holy books, prophets, and heavenly scriptures was unacceptable to Muslims worldwide.

Drug smuggling foiled as drone carrying heroin crashes in Lahore

Bureau Report

LAHORE: An attempt to smuggle drugs worth millions of rupees was foiled on Friday in Halloki area of Lahore's Kahna Town.

Reports said a drone, carrying drugs worth millions of rupees, crashed in the fields of Rasoolpura village.

Police and Rangers reached the spot keeping in view the sensitivity of the issue. Station House Officer (SHO) Abdul Wahid said a drone of a large size was carrying six kilograms of heroin when it crashed into the fields of a landlord in the village. Police took the drone and drugs into custody.

A number of locals also gathered around the drone right after the crash. Police said the drone and drugs had been handed over to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for further investigation. It will be investigated from where the drone was operated and what was its destination.

A similar incident happened earlier this year in Narowal. Police had arrested five suspects allegedly involved in cross-border heroin smuggling through drones.

During the investigation, police also recovered a control device, eight batteries and automatic weapons.

Shortage of Climate resources holding Pakistan back, says Sherry Rehman

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday said Climate Finance was uncharted territory for many developing countries due to a significant knowledge and capacity gap on this critical issue.

Pakistan faces dual challenges of limited accessibility to climate finance and a lack of technical capacity, impeding its progress in achieving crucial climate adaptation and mitigation goals.

The minister was delivering her key note address at the launch event of the Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) organized by the UK Government, where she emphasized the significant role that programs like CFA could play in knowledge-creating, building capacity and new pathways within both the public and private sectors, a news release said.

She underlined the challenge of prioritizing climate change in both sectors and highlighted the potential of such initiatives to elevate the government's narrative on climate finance.

3 Days Mango Festival Started in Multan

Mango Festival will help in the Int'l Marketing of Pakistani Mangoes: Balighur ur Rehman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman inaugurated the 7th Mango Festival at DHA Multan. The three-day Mango Festival 2023 has been organized in collaboration with Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University, DHA Multan and Mango Research Institute. On this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman also visited the mango stalls and showed interest in different varieties of mangoes, seen from Vice Chancellor Mohammad Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University Rao Asif Ali informed about the varieties and productivity of mangoes.



Speaking to the media on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that the economy of any country depends on agriculture and industry. Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with many blessings. Mango has a special importance in the agriculture of South Punjab. More steps will be taken to increase the export of mangoes. Marketing of mangoes will be done

in a better way. He further said that organizing the Mango Festival by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University, DHA Multan, Mango Research Institute and all other stakeholders is a good initiative. Mango production can be further improved by promoting research. Governor Punjab further said that Pakistan has come out of the economic crisis to a great extent. The stock exchange is improving. This year the wheat crop has been very good. The government fixed the support price of wheat in time, which benefited the farmers. On this occasion, Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Attil, Project Director DHA Brigadier Shoaib Kayani, Director Mango Research Center Abdul Ghaffar Grewal, Vice Chancellor Emerson University Profes-

or Dr Muhammad Ramzan, former MPA Shaukat Bosan, and dignitaries were also present. So that we can market our mangoes all over the world. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman further said that we should also create sweetness in ourselves like mangoes. Vice Chancellor Mohammad Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University Rao Asif Ali, Project Director DHA Brigadier Shoaib Kayani, Director Mango Research Center Abdul Ghaffar Grewal also addressed the opening ceremony and expressed their views regarding mango production and marketing at the international level. Later, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman laid the foundation stone of the 4-acre Mango Museum and Botanical Garden at DHA Multan.

Started cleaning operations and repair work on routes of imam bargahs: Ms Seemal Mushtaq



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The district administration of Multan has started cleaning operations and repair work on routes and imam bargahs in view of Muharram. A special task has been set up. On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, Assistant Commissioner City Simal Mushtaq along with the district departments inspected the routes of the mourning procession in different urban areas and took a briefing. On this occasion, procession organizers and license holders were also present. Simal Mushtaq said that arrangements have been started for Muharram Haram on the instructions of the Punjab government and there is ideal coordination between the police and the relevant institutions.

Message of Holy Quran is a Source of Growth and Guidance: Dr Safdar Hashmi



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The sanctity of the Quran and the honor of Mustafa will not be allowed to damage. Europe is threatened by the teachings of the Quran and Islam due to which it has lost its senses. Dr. Safdar Hashmi. Under the auspices of Jamaat-e-Islami Labor Wing, a rally was taken out from Eidgah Chowk to Kachari Chowk in which a large number of laborers, rickshaw drivers and others participated. Addressing the participants of the rally, Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Dr Safdar Hashmi said that the message of the Holy Quran is a source of growth and guidance. Europe is threatened by Islam and the teachings of the Holy Quran. Quran is currently the most read book in Europe which few European terrorists are afraid of. He said that the way Quran was insulted on the court order in Sweden. This is regrettable. In the name of freedom of expression, the sanctities of Muslims are insulted, which is a slap in the face of the followers of freedom of expression and Europe. Dr. Safdar Hashmi said that on Sunday, the Grand Holy Quran Caravan will be organized. In which a large number of guardians, scholars and, workers, traders, students and people from other sectors will participate. Aqil Qureshi, Abdul Rahman Qureshi and other labor leaders also participated in the rally.

Federal Ombudsman has ensured the payments of 5- million as wages to the MEPCO labourers

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Multan; Federal Ombudsman office Multan while mediating quickly has ensured the payments of 5- Million as wages to the MEPCO labourers. According to the details, more than 100 daily wage labourers working under Multan Electric Supply Company (MEPCO) were provided five months' salary by their contractor due to the timely intervention and mediation of Mr. Muhammad Zahid Senior Investigation Officer (IRD) of Wafaqi Mohtasib Office, Multan. Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan a daily wage labourer along with 33 others lodged the complaint against "Ali Azam Enterprises", a contractor of MEPCO, wherein they claimed that the said contractor had failed in paying their daily wages for the last five months and they were living miserably. The Complaint was processed under the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) through mediation and conciliation between the representative of MEPCO and the contractor, Mr Riaz Ahmad, under Wafaqi Mohtasib IRD Mechanism. The said contractor admitted the fact about non-payment of wages and undertook that payment of wages to all the laborers of D. G Khan, Kot Chuttra and Rajanpur MEPCO Division would be made till June, 26th, 2023. According to the sources, on 27th June, the representative of "Ali Azam Enterprises" appraised the Wafaqi Mohtasib Office that pending wages of more than 100 labourers amounting to Rs Five million has been paid and their rightful grievance have been redressed through mediation and conciliation. Mr. Zeeshan, the representative of the complainants also endorsed version of the agency to the extent that their wages have been paid before Eid-ul-Azha and extended gratitude to the Ombudsman office for the quick redressal of their grievances.

13 Police Khidmat Centers in govt hospitals issued 12,749 medico legal certificates this year: CCPO

News Desk

LAHORE: Thirteen Police Khidmat Centers, operating in government hospitals of the provincial capital, are serving as vital service points for citizens, providing round-the-clock assistance and issuing a total of 12,749 medicolegal certificates, this year, to facilitate legal proceedings. In a statement released today, Capital City Police Officer Bilal Siddique Kamryana disclosed the distribution of certificates among various hospitals. The Police Khidmat Counter at General Hospital has issued 2,448 certificates, followed by Jinnah Hospital with 1,969, Services Hospital with 1,525, Mian Munshi Hospital with 1,398, Kot Khawaja Saeed Hospital with 1,048, Mayo Hospital with 624, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital with 461, and Nawaz Sharif Hospital with 361 medicolegal certificates. Similarly, rural health centers in Barki have issued 648 certificates, Awan Dhaywala with 856, Manga Mandi with 496, Raiwind Rural Health Center with 516, and Chung Rural Health Center with 398 medicolegal certificates. Overall, a total of 3,067 police officials and their families have also benefited from the facilities provided through Police Khidmat Centers this year, he added. He emphasized that the timely issuance of medicolegal certificates has significantly aided citizens in their legal affairs. Moreover, the Police Khidmat Centers have played a crucial role in providing support and assistance during medical and legal procedures for victims of accidents and other incidents.

Alert

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand guard to counter any unexpected situation during the rallies of Youm-e-Taquadus in Federal Capital against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Allama Tahir-ul Hassan expressed his great sorrows on Sweden incident

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: There is a dire need to take concrete steps immediately to deal with Islamophobia incidents and the world will have to analyze and evaluate the facts & stop the circumstances pulling the world towards anarchy & hurts. Muslim countries must play their key role in making the world to believe about the majesty of the Qur'an and the whole world should boycott Sweden's products so that peace can be established in the world. According to the details, a Holy Quran rally was held from the center of Osmania Jamia, Raza Abad, led by Allama Tahir-ul Hassan, Central Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan Ulama Council. While addressing the rally, Allama Tahir-ul Hassan expressed his great sorrows on Sweden's illicit ways &



and take effective action against those countries that are engaged in heinous conspiracies against Islam and the Quran. The sentiments were hurt and the name of freedom of expression in such sensitive matters is out of understanding decided by the Swedish Court. He said, insulting the sacred things of Islam will not be tolerated at all. He further said that the West should avoid its double standards where Sweden has openly conspired to incite Muslim-Christian riots and such measures will only harm badly to Sweden. He suggested that, timely accounting of such countries and individuals will be beneficial for all the societies of the whole world seriously. He clarified that, as Muslims, it is our first and last duty is to rein in those who use hand tools against Islam.

Muslim countries should celebrate the majesty of the Quran at the global level to disclose the prestige of Quran & Islam. He elaborated that, an effective action against Islamophobia must be taken by the UNO at any cost to save the world. Actions should be taken in such a way by the United Nations in which to raise its voice to respect all religions

District admin banned the petrol supply to motorcycle riders without helmets

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Multan Umar Jahangir has banned the supply of petrol to motorcycle riders without helmets in Multan district like the entire Punjab province in order to save the loss of human lives in traffic accidents and prevent physical and mental disabilities in traffic accidents. The said order will come into effect from July 15. The Deputy Commissioner has issued an order to the petrol pump owners to prevent the increasing number of accidents. Under which only motorcycle riders wearing helmets will be able to get petrol across the district. The Deputy Commissioner has also formed special checking teams under the leadership of Assistant Commissioners. Petrol pumps should be sealed and heavily fined for violating government orders.

Quran's prestige & dignity makes permanent successes!

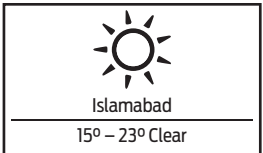
Mian Rashid Asghar.

The Protest across the country in each city and at every street is a demonstrative message to the Sweden which is sharpening fatal tools for its own self, said Naseer Yousaf Vohra President Cloth Board Ittehad Pakistan. Vohra noticed that, where an application was made in the Swedish court to allow freedom of expression so that these cursed people are allowed to burn the inspired book of Islam? The court allowed the red disputes. Then there the day of Eid was also chosen because the big gathering of

the religion of Islam is held everywhere on Eid. The place was also chosen as a mosque because religious and religious people were in abundance in the mosque. And then the word of Allah was burnt in order that no one has the power to change even the most powerful. A Muslim who tried to stop the burner that moment but he was arrested by the police as this is a crime in Swedish courts. But God's curse on Sweden's courts and law enforcement agencies who don't know the supremacy of Allah' balance!

PTI's, JI, TLP in their rallies demanded to boycott with Sweden in all corners. They raised voices that now it is necessary to think and understand that the intention was of burning the Holy Quran in which no one has power to change the point, which is the Book itself is of the greatest power & here Swedish was to insult the glory of Allah Almighty or His Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him) or was it also intended to test someone else in it? Whether the Muslims were to be reminded of their current reality that they have become weak and cowardly? Allama Tahir-ul- Hassan Deputy Secretary Ulama Council further

mentioned some verses of the Quranic Surah Fater; Shehzad Ali Khurana, President of Anjuman Tajran Registered Tandlianwala & Chairman Ameer Mushtaq Ahmed and others while leading a huge rally against Quran burning in Sweden expressed that, It is a natural principle that where there are honest and soft-hearted rulers in the world's societies, there even the desert does not leave the desert there & there is more progress and prosperity more than one's expectations vice versa the countries rich in lush green and natural minerals will be defaulted also seeing scandals based on immorality.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:21 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:22 pm
Isha 9:04 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation 9209224

World Bank approves \$46 million to increase access to Child Healthcare Services in selected districts of KPK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved on Thursday US\$46 million in financing for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Citizen Centered Service Delivery Project, which will support both supply and demand side interventions to improve health service delivery in the province, as well as the operations of citizen-centric administrative facilitation centers in the Newly Merged Districts.

"The Project will support the Government in expanding the provision of Child Wellness Grants targeted at mothers, provided they attend health awareness sessions", said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "It will also help improve access to quality child health-related services."

Nearly 300,000 children under the age of two will benefit from Child Welfare Grants (CWGs). To mitigate the financial barriers associated with the use of these services, families of these children will receive PKR 12,500 (approximately US\$45), spread over five visits, for attending the health awareness sessions and growth monitoring of their child.

First ever Russian truck crossing into Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mehmood had carved out the Road Transportation Agreement with the Russian transport Minister Mr. Vitaly Savelyev, on his maiden visit to Moscow in November, 2022. The agreement was signed in-line with the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, to boost trade with the neighboring countries.

Since the beginning of our diplomatic relations with Russia in 1948, this is the first time that trade route through roads has been established. Russia is the fourth largest LNG exporting country in the world and Pakistan has a huge potential of exporting fruits, garments, surgical instruments, and agricultural products making them both potentially strong trade partners.

The transport of goods will be carried out under TIR Carnet under which road transport permits are issued in order to



simplify procedures at custom borders. On this occasion, Minister Asad Mehmood stated that under the current geo-economic scenario this agreement will prove to be a real booster to our economy and pave way for larger influx of trade.

Protest

ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran hold protest rally at Aabpara Chowk to commemorate Youm-e-Taqadus against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Holds great potential for enhancing the livestock sector: Chairman PARC

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Republic of Korea have embarked on collaborative efforts in various research projects, focusing on the development of technologies for potato seed, chili, and fodder crop production. These initiatives are being implemented through the joint efforts of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and the Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA). The successful outcomes of these projects are anticipated to significantly enhance both the quantity and quality of these crops. PARC expresses deep appreciation for the invaluable cooperation extended by the Government of Korea in this regard, as highlighted by Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman of PARC. Dr. Ali further emphasized the potential extension of



this cooperation to the livestock sector and the application of sex Semen technology. Dr. Cho Gyoungrae, Director of the KOPIA-Pakistan Center, delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting both the current achievements and the future roadmap of the center. He provided the committee with a detailed update on the progress of various ongoing projects, emphasizing their positive outcomes. Notably, he announced that the project titled "Pakistan-Korea Joint Program on Certi-

fied Seed Potato Production System" is set to yield an impressive production of 160,000 tons of certified seed potato. Furthermore, Dr. Cho expressed a firm commitment to extending cooperation in the livestock sector, ensuring its continued growth and development.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Hwang Myeng Hwan, Counselor at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, emphasized the immense importance of Pakistan as a valued partner in the field of agriculture. He

reaffirmed the commitment of the Korean government to extend its unwavering support through the KOPIA-Pakistan Center.

The Project Coordinator, Dr. Aish Muhammad unveiled three new groundbreaking initiatives during his presentation. The projects encompassed crucial areas such as Breed Improvement through the implementation of Efficient Artificial Insemination services, utilizing Korean Friesian sexed semen in cattle; the Dissemination of improved technology for fodder production; and the Enhancement of chili export technologies through the production of high-quality chilies. The esteemed Project Steering Committee wholeheartedly approved these innovative projects, paving the way for their subsequent submission to the Rural Development Authority in Korea.

DG RDA chaired a meeting for completing the Peri-Urban Structure Plan

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: On the direction of the Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa a meeting was held in the RDA conference room about the new determination of urban limits and completing the Peri-Urban Structure Plan and Side Development Zone, Rawalpindi, RDA spokesman said. The meeting was chaired by the DG RDA.

He said that in the meeting, the consultant of Mott Macdonald Pakistan Company gave a detailed presentation about the proposals of Peri-Urban Structure. He told about the new urban limits and restrictions in Peri-Urban Structure Plan.

The Director General Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa has directed that the general public should be requested in the newspapers that if there are objections or suggestions related to three tehsils Kallar Syedan, Taxila and Kahota's Peri Urban, it can be submitted to the office of the Director Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE), RDA Muhammad Tahir Meo within the next seven days so that the objections and suggestions can be included in it. He said for more information in this regard, Director MP&TE can be contacted during office hours on this phone number.

In this regard, he added that keeping in mind the transparency, the peri-urban structure plan of four tehsils of Rawalpindi, Gujjar Khan, Kallar Syedan, Taxila and Kahota has been completed as soon as possible. It has been uploaded on the RDA website.

He said the Chief Planner RDA Jamshaid Aftab, Assistant Commissioner Gujjar Khan, Director Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering RDA, Muhammad Tahir Meo, Director Land RDA Malik Ghazanfar Ali Awan, Deputy Director Planning Samiullah Niazi, Department of Agriculture, Mott MacDonald Pakistan Company team along with others officers participated in the meeting.

Sindh Bank selects PTCL for deployment of SD-WAN



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and Sindh Bank have signed an agreement for deployment of SD-WAN at 200 branches of Sindh Bank.

Zarrar Hasham Khan, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G and Syed Ata Hussain Jaffri, EVP Head of IT, Sindh Bank, signed the agreement at a ceremony recently held at Sindh Bank Head Office in Karachi. The ceremony was witnessed by Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO PTCL, Imran Samad President & CEO Sindh Bank and their teams.

PTCL is providing Sindh Bank with its state-of-the-art infrastructure and platform solutions that are equipped with latest technology & managed security.

Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, expressed his satisfaction during the signing ceremony regarding the agreement with Sindh Bank, emphasizing PTCL Group's commitment to assisting the bank in meeting its digital connectivity requirements. As a national carrier, PTCL is at the forefront of driving digitalization throughout the nation.

Imran Samad, President & CEO of Sindh Bank, stated, "We are pleased to partner with PTCL for infrastructure platform solutions, as we focus on adopting state-of-the-art and secure technology for connectivity and digitalization."

PTCL and Sindh Bank place the highest level of commitment to provide best-in-class services to their customers across various industries in Pakistan. This agreement is part of the growth momentum in the diverse areas of ICT and Security Solutions, which is key to a digital banking eco-system in Pakistan.

FPCCI, business bodies welcome direct link with Kazakhstan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and other business bodies on Friday welcomed commencing of direct air link between Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Saturday as it would help enhance bilateral economic cooperation.

It would prove to be a milestone in forging mutual business and economic integration with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states, FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Malik said while talking to APP.

He said the direct flights would increase the possibilities of economic cooperation between the two countries. Two flights in a week from Almaty, the industrial hub of Kazakhstan, to Lahore, would help enhance economic activities.

Irfan Malik said Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yezzan Kistafin, deserved appreciation for playing an important role in the launch of a direct air link between the two brotherly countries. Karachi Chamber of Commerce (KCCI) President Muhammad Tariq Yousaf said with the start of direct flights, the economic relations between the two countries would improve further.

He said the business community of Karachi considered that the step would have positive impact on trade relations with Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kashif Anwar said Kazakhstan was an important country in Central Asia and the direct flights between Lahore and Almaty would strengthen business relations between the two countries and all the credit in that regard went Ambassador Yezzan Kistafin.

President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr Khurram Tariq said besides trade relations, the direct flight link would also help in enhancing tourism and cultural ties between the two countries.

He said his chamber hailed the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Islamabad for commencing of direct flights between Lahore and Almaty and also including its national airline Scat in the operation.

President of Quetta Chamber of Commerce Wali Muhammad Nozai termed the commencing of Lahore-Almaty direct flights an important development.



US and China Urged to Forge Cooperation in the Face of Emerging Global Challenges: Speakers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: There is a pressing need for collaboration and cooperation between the United States and China to tackle emerging global challenges, including traditional and nontraditional security threats. Speakers and experts emphasized the critical importance of building bridges and fostering dialogue between these two influential nations to address the complex issues facing the world today. It is stressed that in an increasingly interconnected world, collaboration and joint efforts between the two nations are paramount to effectively tackle complex global issues such as climate change, public health crises, technologi-



cal advancements, and economic stability. Speakers echoed these sentiments at the highly anticipated webinar "China-US Relations: Emerging Trends and Future Perspectives", organized by the Centre for BRI and China Studies at the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies. Distinguished academics and experts from China and Pakistan shared their views and understandings about the ongoing challenges in US-China relations. During this webinar, speakers shared an in-depth analysis of the latest developments in US-China relations. Dr. Farhat Asif, Founder and President Institute of Peace

and Diplomatic Studies, in her opening remarks, shared the reason for hosting this important webinar and shared the vision and mission of the Centre and Institute. She said that in these times when the lines are blurred, there is a need to indulge in a dialogue to understand the ongoing US-China relations. Prof Cheng Xizhong, Senior Fellow of the Charhar Institute, Visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law, and Director of the Chinese Association for South Asian Studies, explained China's firm stance on the issues and challenges between US and China, especially the growing military provocation from the US in the region. Dr. Munawar Hussain, Assis-

tant Professor, Area Study Centre for Africa, North, and South America, Quaid I Azam University Islamabad, adopted an academic stance of expressing insights by comparative analysis of the work of Chinese and American scholars. Prof. Zhou Rong, Senior Fellow of Chongyang Institute for Financial Study of Renmin University, China, highlighted that owing to the economic interdependence between China and US, war is unlikely between the two nations but the prospects for a cold war are high. He has further enlightened the participants with the fact that the US-China decoupling is not of a traditional economy but of a neo-economy based on technology.

Dr. Munawar Hussain, Assis-

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 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

‘Gas Infrastructure: Key to Resolving Pakistan’s Energy Crunch’

Shoaib Aijaz / Amna Khan

Pakistan, heavily reliant on natural gas as a primary energy source, finds itself entangled in a severe gas shortage crisis that has had far-reaching consequences on its economy and the daily lives of its citizens. Accounting for nearly half of the country’s total primary energy supply, natural gas serves as the principal fuel for power generation, industrial activities, and household use. It contributes to over 60% of Pakistan’s electricity generation, with a combined capacity exceeding 12,000 megawatts.

Notably, natural gas holds immense significance as a domestic fuel in Pakistan, where it is utilized in more than 9 million households for cooking and heating. It has become an integral part of everyday life for millions of Pakistanis. Additionally, natural gas plays a crucial role in various industrial sectors, including fertilizer, cement, textile, and food processing. Compared to traditional fuels like wood and coal, natural gas is cleaner and more efficient, resulting in lower air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The acute gas shortages experienced by Pakistan in recent years can be attributed to the rapid growth in population, urbanization, and industrialization. These factors have strained the country’s gas infrastructure, leading to frequent power outages, disruptions in the industrial sector, and financial losses for companies. Several key factors have contributed to the crisis, including declining domestic gas reserves, insufficient investments in gas infrastructure, and inadequate transmission and distribution systems.

Pakistan has explored various solutions to address the gas shortage situation, including pipeline imports and the establishment of LNG terminals. Efforts have also focused on enhancing the overall efficiency of the gas sector. However, a long-term and strategic approach is essential to tackle the underlying causes of the crisis and ensure a sustainable solution.

The gas shortage crisis in Pakistan is a complex issue influenced by multiple factors, including declining domestic gas reserves, insufficient investment in gas infrastructure, mismanagement, and inefficiencies within the gas sector, limited import capacity, reliance on gas-fired power plants, and population growth leading to increased energy demand. These factors have collectively result-

ed in a shortfall in domestic natural gas supplies, causing losses and disruptions in gas supply.

The consequences of Pakistan’s gas scarcity have had a profound impact on the economy and the people. The power outages and load shedding have disrupted industries, caused economic losses, and driven up energy prices. The reliance on imported fuels, such as LNG, has strained foreign exchange reserves and contributed to the growing trade deficit. Additionally, social welfare concerns have arisen, with the closure of educational institutions and hospitals, emphasizing the need for a long-term solution to address underlying issues in the gas sector and improve energy infrastructure to meet the escalating demand.

In comparison to other Asian countries, Pakistan’s gas shortage crisis is more severe than India’s but less severe than Bangladesh and China. Limited domestic gas production, coupled with inefficient infrastructure and mismanagement, has exacerbated the severity of the crisis. The urgency of addressing the gas shortage crisis in Pakistan highlights the need to rectify underlying issues within the gas sector and enhance infrastructure to meet the growing demand for natural gas.

To alleviate the gas shortage situation, Pakistan can adopt a combination

of short-term and long-term solutions. These include diversifying energy sources, expanding domestic gas output, promoting energy efficiency, improving gas infrastructure, and addressing governance and regulatory challenges. Augmenting the domestic gas supply through pipeline imports or LNG terminals can play a crucial role. However, implementing these solutions necessitates significant investments and time. Therefore, a comprehensive and coordinated approach is essential to address the gas shortage crisis and ensure sustainable economic development in Pakistan.

As Pakistan endeavors to overcome its gas shortage crisis, a strategic focus on improving infrastructure, promoting energy diversification, and addressing systemic issues in the gas sector will be pivotal. By prioritizing these initiatives and implementing effective policies, Pakistan can pave the way for a more resilient and energy-abundant future, benefiting both the economy and the well-being of its people.

Authors

Shoaib Aijaz: Research Assistant and Mphil scholar Economics and Finance (PIDE)
Amna Khan: Mphil scholar in Economics and Finance (PIDE)

Chinese enterprises invited to invest in Pakistan’s NEV industry

Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, Hussain Haider has invited Chinese businesses and enterprises to invest in Pakistan’s New Energy Vehicle (NEV) industry, which was one of the most promising areas of bilateral cooperation, and to take benefits from a large and growing market and the incentives provided by the government.

Welcoming the participants at China-Pakistan New Energy Vehicle (Electric Vehicle) Industry Cooperation Seminar in Shanghai, he highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation in the NEV sector.

As part of the celebrations of the Decade of the CPEC and the efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation under BRI and CPEC, the Mission, in coordination with ICT Belt & Road Union Shanghai, organized the seminar.

During the seminar, the experts and representatives of companies in the NEV industry and government officials shared their insights on China’s systematic advantages in EV and potential and opportunities for bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in view of its large market and key needs.

Over 100 representatives from China and Pakistan in the new energy, technology, and transportation industries, industrial chain parts, manufacturers’ associations, and leading design and manufacturing enterprises, participated in the forum through on-site and video connections.

China Economic Net (CEN) adds: In her opening remarks, Zhao Baige, Vice Chair of the 12th NPC Foreign Affairs Committee of the People’s Republic of China, noted that new energy vehicle technology has become an essential track for the fourth industrial revolution.

She stated that the growth of the new energy vehicle industry requires supportive policies and production.

Zhao shared that China has been the world’s largest producer and seller of new energy vehicles for eight consecutive years, with sales increasing over a thousand-fold from less than 6,000 in 2011 to 6.887 million in 2022.

After over a decade of development, China has established policy systems to support the rapid development of new energy vehicles in areas like development planning, consumption subsidies, hedging policies, research investment, government procurement, and standard formulation.

Usman Ali, Manager (Policy), Engineering Development Board (EDB), Ministry of Industries & Production, Pakistan, presented on the incentives for electric vehicles in Pakistan under the Auto Industry Development & Export Policy (AIDEP).

He stated that the policy includes incentives for electric vehicles such as 2-3 wheelers, cars, SUVs, buses, trucks, etc.

To promote EV manufacturing in Pakistan, the import of charging infrastructure attracts a 0% customs duty, and there is a 1% custom duty on EV-specific parts. The government also subsidizes registration fees for electric vehicles in all provinces.

Usman noted that Chinese brands such as Chery, MG, BAIC, DFSK, Chang’an, GWM, FAW, Foton, and others are already operating in Pakistan and are popular among the masses.

China is leading the development of key technologies for electric vehicles, and Pakistan welcomes the investment of Chinese electric vehicle enterprises, as well as accelerating the roll-out of China-Pakistan new energy vehicle industry cooperation.



Rasmi

Amjad Rasmi

Children’s Urdu Magazines in Pakistan

Today, MA, M Phil, and PhD level articles are being written on Urdu literature. Muhammad

Tariq Khan, former editor-in-chief of the children’s magazine ‘Sathce’ and author known by the pen name Azam Tariq Kohistani, has completed his MA on ‘Children’s Urdu Journals in Pakistan from 1971 to 2000’ under the supervision of Dr. Khalid Amin at the University of Karachi. The subject of his article starts from 1971 because Mahmoodur Rahman had already worked on literature until 1970.

Azam Tariq Kohistani divided his article into five chapters, the first of which is titled ‘Children’s Literature: Nature and Development, from the Beginning to 1971’. An attempt has been made to answer the question of what children’s literature is at the beginning of the article. The author has stated several important points in this regard that are necessary for any writing to be considered as children’s literature. For example, it is said that the songs that are sung to calm and lull children, such as lullabies, are also children’s literature. The writings that are written for adults but are more popular among children, such as Henry Esmond’s book ‘The Adventures of Tom Sawyer’, will also be counted as children’s literature. It has also been mentioned as a sign of children’s literature that when a child picks up a

book, they do not get bored and put it back. When there is music in poetry and it evokes emotions, it becomes more interesting for children.

The article criticizes the use of difficult vocabulary in writing for children, stating that children’s literature should contain everything that children can read, listen to, and understand with enthusiasm. The use of overly complicated words or an excessive focus on teaching new vocabulary can make children bored and uninterested in reading.

The article also discusses the characteristics of children’s literature, stating that children’s minds are not always logical, and they may not follow the same rules of logic as adults. Therefore, when writing for children, authors often use anthropomorphic language, converse with them through toys and objects, and avoid logical inconsistencies.

The second part of the first chapter delves into the history of children’s literature in the Urdu language. The researchers trace the beginning of Urdu literature for children to the era of Emperor Alamgir, when the first formal books for children were written. These books were mainly written to teach and educate children, and to introduce them to new vocabulary.

During this time, well-known poets such as Hali, Iqbal, Nazir Akbarabadi, Ismail Merthi, etc. wrote countless poems and literary works for children. Later, in

the beginning of the 20th century, the first children’s newspaper, ‘Bachon Ka Akhbar’, was launched. This was followed by the launch of other periodicals such as ‘Haft Roza Phool,’ ‘Ataleeq,’ ‘Adib ul-Atfal,’ ‘Ghuncha,’ ‘Nunehaal,’ etc.

The first chapter ends by highlighting the most important and best aspect of the article, which is the reference to Urdu literary magazines for children. A total of 383 magazines have been identified, which serve as a symbol of



Obaid Raza

the rich literary history of Urdu for children.

In the second chapter, the author has reviewed the period from 1971 to 2000 and presented a list of 173 research papers published from Pakistan during or after 1971. The research work started in 1971, as mentioned in the article, when Mahmoodul-Rahman wrote an article on children’s literature until 1970. Some research papers have been continuously published for several decades, such as Taleem-o-Tarbiat, Hamdard Naunehal, and Sathce, published in 1941, 1953, and 1977, respectively. The author has analyzed in detail the

three mentioned research papers and the popular and famous research papers published from 1986 to 1997, in the article.

After reviewing each of the four research papers, the author has analyzed the language, themes, quality, illustrations, cover page, cartoons, sketches, etc. of the stories and poems in the research papers. An exhaustive list of the best stories and poems is also included in each research paper’s analysis, along with other details such as editors, important contributors, changes in the research paper’s size, increase or decrease in the number of pages, special issues, awards, and other regular features.

This chapter presents various examples of stories and poems that have been quoted and excerpted. During research, the author searched for a travelogue that was published in ‘Taleem-o-Tarbiat’ and found one that predates Masood Ahmed Barkati and Hakim Saeed’s travelogues. Khalid Bazmi’s travelogue was published in 1977 in ‘Taleem-o-Tarbiat’, while Barkati’s was published in 1982. (Prior to both of these, a travelogue was also published in ‘Peyam-e-Taleem’ in 1943.)

The second section of the article is the main part upon which a lot of time and effort has been spent, and undoubtedly, this research will serve as a guide for those researching children’s literature in the future.

The third section focuses on important poets and authors

from 1971 to 2000, featuring 20 authors. In prose, Mirza Adeb, Hakim Saeed, Ay Hamid, Ishtiaq Ahmed, Masood Barkati, Shafiq-ur-Rahman, Saeed Lakht, Saleem Maghul, Ibn-e-As Muhammad, and Naeem Ahmed Baloch, among others, are included. We can say that an attempt has been made to dam the river in a pot. Mirza Adeb wrote stories, but he excelled in writing plays for children. (He left writing plays at the suggestion of Syed Qasim Mahmood later on.)

Hakim Muhammad Saeed did a great job of publishing and translating books for children, including ‘Hamdard Naunehal’ for children. However, he himself wrote the most travelogues for children.

Ay Hamid wrote many fantasy series, including ‘Amber Nag Maria’, ‘Eyewear Wala Jin’, and many others. Thus, he is a representative writer in Urdu literature for children’s fantasy writing.

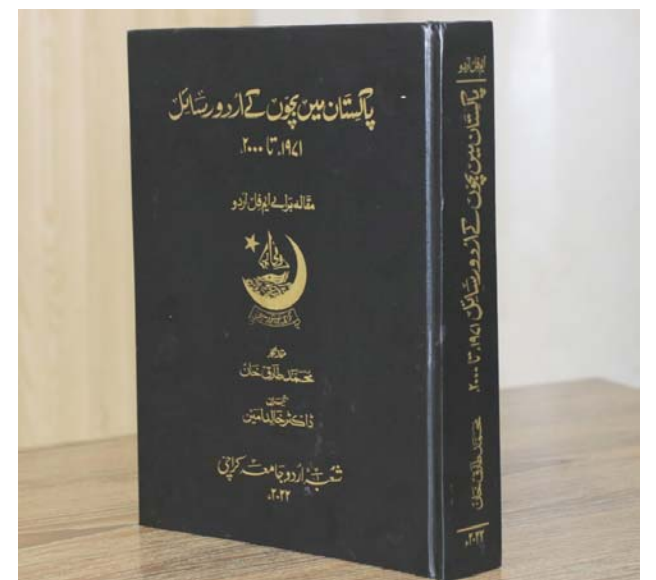
Ahmed’s enthusiasm led him to write spy stories for children, while Islamic literature includes Talib Hashmi, Kalim Chughtai, Ibn-e-As Muhammad, and Naeem Ahmed Baloch in collections of stories and novels.

Talking about humorous literature, Saeed Lakht (Hafeez Jalandhari) and Idris Qureshi (Chacha Hameed) became famous for writing quality humor for children. In the field of novel writing, Munir Ahmed Rashid’s Commando series is still read

today, while Begum Saeqa Rahimuddin and Seema Siddiqui contribute to commentary and articles on women’s issues.

Ten personalities are included in the poets’ category. The poetry of Sufi Tabassum, Ibn-e-Insha,

to complete different aspects of children’s personality in society, which is highlighted in this chapter through four fundamental points. It is a complex issue to determine which good habits and morals children acquire from



Qayyum Nazar, Inayat Ali Khan, Tanveer Phool, and Ahmad Hafeez Siddiqui, among others, is discussed in relation to their services to Urdu literature for children. Both prose and poetry adaptations are included in this section.

The fourth chapter discusses the impact of children’s literature on the society of children. Children’s lives and habits cannot be improved without standard literature. The diversity of literature and its various topics help

stories in their childhood. However, according to human psychology, even those children who are deprived of books and literature in their childhood or are limited to only prescribe textbooks can still compare the impact of literature in their daily lives.

The author praises Azam Tariq Kohistani for his critical study of forty years of four Urdu literary magazines, which involved sifting through vast amounts of material and finding gems among the rubble.

Political Aspects of Constitutional Reform

Measures to implement the renewed Constitution discussed

On May 8, 2023, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a meeting with the heads of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, political parties, judicial and executive authorities, and members of the public. The results of the referendum held on April 30 this year on the renewed Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan were considered. The Head of state noted that the interests of all segments of the population are taken into account in the renewed Constitution of the country, the active participation of citizens in its development, as well as its adoption by referendum, indicate that our people are the real author of the renewed Constitution. "Millions of our citizens actively participated in the nationwide discussion of the draft Constitution, which was held for the entire period before its adoption. Therefore, we have every reason to assert that our people are the real author of the renewed Constitution. Most importantly, we will never deviate from the path of reforms. We will move forward and only forward based on the new system "person – society – state", President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

be only the interests of our people, our Motherland", the Head of state said. In the renewed Constitution, Uzbekistan proclaimed itself a social state. The social obligations of the state are increased by three times. "It's easy to say, but we have to work hard to put it into practice. For these purposes, allocating an additional 30-40 trillion UZS from the State budget annually is necessary. Due to this, every year, we will have to build hundreds of new kindergartens, schools, and hospitals. As a priority task, we will also use new opportunities to raise youth policy, development of education and upbringing, science, culture, and sports to a new level. We will regularly increase wages, pensions, allowances, and stipends. We will further expand the range of social services for our veterans, lonely elderly people, people with disabilities, and citizens in need of special attention and care", the President said. In the renewed Constitution, Uzbekistan is defined as a state of law. The number of norms on human rights guarantees has also increased three. It is determined that without a court decision, a person cannot be detained for more than 48 hours. A provision was fixed that restriction of freedom is possible only based on a court decision. For the first time, it was separately established that the accused has the right not to testify against himself. That is, he has the right to remain silent. The principle "In the name of



human honor and dignity" has become the main criterion in the Constitution, laws, and the activities of state agencies. It has been established that human honor and dignity are inviolable, and nothing can be the basis for their humiliation. "This means that, first of all, the rule of law in all spheres will be ensured. From now on, all ambiguities in the laws will be interpreted in favor of the person. Most importantly, the criterion for the activity of each member of society, especially officials, should be the approach: "The law is sacred. Justice must prevail under any circumstances!", the Head of state said. The renewed Constitution also consolidated the status of Uzbekistan as a democratic state to build a state that cares about the people, to move firmly along the path of democratic development. A large-scale administrative reform has been launched, the

activities of the government and ministries have been optimized, and their work methods have been changed to introduce a compact and efficient management system that eases the burden of people and businesses. "My biggest dream is to create a people's system in which the mahalla independently solves the problems concerning people. In this regard, it is planned to transfer at least 30 percent of powers of finance, taxes, and employment bodies to the mahalla", the President said. The renewed Constitution also provides for several significant changes in the activities of the Parliament. To ensure the effective operation of the system of checks and balances in the system of state power, the powers of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis have been revised, and the number of exclusive powers of the Legislative Chamber has been increased

from the current 5 to 12, and the Senate – from 14 to 18. "At the same time, the time has come for our deputies to focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of laws and work closely with the government to organize their implementation effectively. It is advisable to direct the activities of the Senate to resolve issues related to the regions in connection with the reform of local Councils, to provide them with comprehensive assistance, hold field sessions in industries and regions, ensure the implementation of laws, especially in mahallas", Shavkat Mirziyoyev said. The renewed Constitution also secured the status of Uzbekistan as a secular state to ensure interethnic and interfaith peace and harmony. Our people decided in a referendum that Uzbekistan is a secular state and will continue to be secular. It was noted that by the requirements of the

renewed Constitution, the policy of ensuring harmony and respect between representatives of different nations and confessions in the country will continue, and no manifestations of radicalism in society will ever be allowed. At the meeting, tasks were defined to ensure the implementation of the renewed Constitution. It was noted that a corresponding decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was signed. "To turn every provision, every article of the Basic Law into the norm of life in our society, especially the younger generation, it is necessary to create curricula, textbooks, and manuals, and train young people based on the effective system. It is necessary to organize work aimed at a deep study of the Constitution in every educational institution, organization, agency, enterprise, and mahalla", Shavkat Mirziyoyev said. The Head of state announced early presidential elections by Article 128 of the renewed Constitution. The President explained the need for this decision and the reason for the refusal of his initiative from the remaining three and a half years of the presidential term: first, all links of power are being reformed, relations and the balance between them are seriously changing; second, the renewed Constitution puts before the President, parliament, government, ministers, and hokims urgent new political and socio-economic tasks; third, the people are waiting for

significant and urgent transformations and reforms in all areas; fourth, when complex processes are taking place in the world and our region, tension is growing, and the search for and implementation of the correct and effective development path is becoming the most acute and urgent issue. For the successful implementation of such large-scale tasks, it is advisable that in the renewed system of state power, our people give a mandate to a leader they trust. The meeting participants noted that this initiative is the embodiment of the deep respect and devotion of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Uzbekistan people and democratic principles. At the same time, at the meeting, it was emphasized that holding early presidential elections will ensure the functioning of state power by the requirements of the renewed Constitution and the full implementation of the principle of democracy. The leaders of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, political parties, and the Constitutional Court also addressed the meeting. They supported the proposals and initiatives put forward by the President. Following the meeting, it was noted that no matter how high and difficult the planned milestones are, there is every opportunity to achieve them. The legacy of great ancestors, creative power, intellectual and spiritual potential, entrepreneurial spirit, and diligence of our people will become for us a source of strength and energy on this path.

Uzbekistan's Presidential Elections: An important stage in the election campaign

Omon Mukhamedjanov

Seven years ago, Uzbekistan embarked on a new stage of development. During this period, a large number of cardinal reforms have been carried out in all spheres of the socio-political and economic life of the society. Meanwhile, the most important areas included democratic reforms aimed at ensuring a wide range of human rights and freedoms, liberalisation of public and political life, and freedom of the media, as reflected in the new version of the Constitution. These reforms have also enabled the national electoral legislation to be updated, which facilitates the holding of elections at a new level. As is well known, the main stages of the electoral process are regulated by legal acts: appointment of elections, formation of the organizational and technical basis, nomination and registration of candidates, campaigning, voting, determination of the results and their legitimation.

The Right to Nominate a Candidate: How It Is Exercised According to Article 37 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, political parties shall have the right to nominate a presidential candidate. In accordance with Article 62, a political party has the right to nominate candidates upon registration by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan no later than four months before the date of the announcement of the election campaign. At present, there are five active political parties officially registered in Uzbekistan: the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Adolat Social Democratic Party, the Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan. The Election Code specifies the list of documents that political parties must submit in order to run for the Presidency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Hence, a political party must submit the following documents to the Central Election Commission in order to stand for election pursuant to Article 63:

an application for participation in the election signed by the leader of the party; a certificate from the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan containing information on the registration of the political party; information on a potential candidate for the post of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. On the basis of the submitted documents, the CEC makes a final decision on the party's admission to the elections within five days and issues a certificate of registration and standard forms of the signature lists to the authorized representative of the political party. The list of parties participating in the elections is published in the central press in the order of receipt of applications. The nomination of candidates for the presidency of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be made by the supreme bodies of political parties. A political party shall be entitled to nominate a presidential candidate only from among its members or from a non-party person. A protocol shall be drawn up for the nomination of a candidate for the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The leader of a political party submits

Registration of Signature Lists According to Article 34 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a political party that nominates a presidential candidate, shall have the right to appoint an authorized representative to participate in the meetings of election commission, submit documents, check the accuracy of signature lists, and count votes. Standard forms of signature lists shall be issued by the CEC after the announcement of the start of election campaign. According to Article 38 of the Code, voters shall have the right to put signature on a signature lists in support of one or more political parties. The CEC's placement of political party logos on the signature sheets serves to better inform voters about political parties. This helps to ensure that voters have an accurate idea of which party they are supporting and which political party collected

the signatures. The collection of signatures of voters shall be carried out at the place of work, service, study, residence, at election events, as well as in other places where campaigning and collecting signatures are not prohibited by law. Any form of coercion and bribery of voters by the person collecting signatures shall entail liability established by law. A signature list shall be signed by the person who collected signatures, indicating his surname, first name, and patronymic, and certified by the head of the district or city structure of the respective political party and the seal. Voters may sign in support of one or more political parties or candidates. These data shall be entered in handwritten form. The accuracy of signature lists submitted by political parties shall be checked by the CEC within five days. At least 15 % of the required number of voter signatures and relevant information about the voters who have put signatures on the signature sheets are subject to verification. The CEC may establish

an expert group to verify the correctness of signature lists. It is composed of experts of internal affairs bodies, justice, and representatives of civil society institutions. They check that the forms have been filled in correctly, that corrections have been made, who filled them in and whether there are identical signatures. Authorized representatives of political parties shall also take part in the verification process. If a visual inspection reveals a violation of the law, these signature sheets are returned to the authorized representative of the political party, and they are given two days to fill in the gaps. Based on the results of the inspection, the expert group draws up a conclusion for each political party. This is the basis for the CEC's decision to grant or deny a political party the right to participate in elections. In general, the process of filling in the signature sheets by the political parties is important to increase the social activity of the electoral corps. *Writer is Professor at Tashkent State University of Law, Doctor of Juridical Science*

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The renewed Constitution of Uzbekistan ensures the accountability of public officials and social protection of citizens

Eldor Tulyakov

On April 30, 2023 Uzbekistan has held a referendum on adopting the new version of the Constitution by nationwide voting. An important political event attracted millions of Uzbek citizens, which resulted in the participation of 84.51 per cent of the population who had the right to vote. According to official data released by Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the new version of the Constitution was supported by 90.21% of votes. Both local and international observers observed the whole process. A total of 383 international observers, in particular, 184 individuals from international organisations and 199 international observers from 45 countries, directly observed the preparation and holding of the referendum. They expressed their opinions about the activeness of

the population, the organisation of the entire process and, very importantly, the New Constitution of Uzbekistan. Here we would like to provide some grounds for updating the Constitution. Firstly, the constitutional reforms underway in the country are significant in that they are aimed at enshrining the principle of "person-society-state" as a constitutional norm. This is an important principle considering the overall change of accountability of the state bodies in front of the population. Implementation of the principle into practice should serve to change the longtime paradigm. One of the core principles followed here is "Public bodies should serve the people, not the people to the public bodies." Secondly, ensuring the irreversibility of reforms is one of the main goals of constitutional reforms. Because building a people-friendly state, and ensuring human rights, interests, and dignity, require creating a new constitutional and legal space to

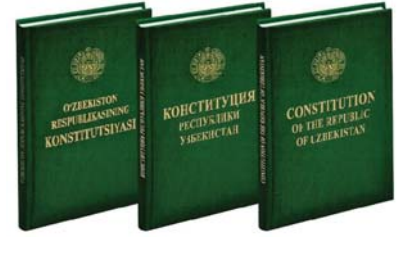
guarantee further reforms in the country. One should note that almost all previous amendments and additions to the Constitution were mainly related to public administration and administrative reforms. At the same time, more than half of the norms included in the new Constitution aim to strengthen the guarantees and mechanisms for protecting human rights and freedoms. In particular, if we touch on the most important of them, the concept of the social state is being introduced in the newly revised Constitution. Such a state model is aimed at the fair distribution of material wealth per the principles of social justice to achieve decent living standards for every citizen, reduce social inequalities, and help people in need. To implement this concept into practice, Uzbekistan has already launched several important initiatives which need further constitutional guarantees. For example, poverty reduction

was defined as the most priority policy of the state, payment of full pension amount to all working pensioners was resumed, and the activity of "Monocenters" was established. Additionally, the systems of the "Iron Register", "Women's Register", and "Youth Register" were implemented to create a list of the most vulnerable people who are in need and organise social protection more systematically. Moreover, the number of higher education institutions has more than doubled. As such, the coverage rate with higher education increased from 9 per cent to 40 per cent within the last six years. Private medical organisations have increased from 3,800

to 6,500. In this regard, the newly revised Constitution includes several articles based on social justice and solidarity. For example, norms such as pension amount, allowances and other types of social assistance defined by the Law cannot exceed the officially designated minimum consumption expenditures. No one can be deprived of housing without a court decision. In addition, the Basic Law stipulates that the state should create conditions for the full use of social, economic and cultural facilities and services by persons with disabilities, assist them in their employment and education, and provide them with the opportunity to obtain the necessary information without hindrance. Also, introducing norms to strengthen the guarantees of labour rights of citizens is vital in ensuring that citizens' wages are worthy of their labour, as well as in raising the population's living

standards and providing the principle of social justice in the country. Very importantly, from now on, it will be forbidden to refuse to hire women, fire them, and reduce their wages because they are pregnant or have a child. Prohibiting the discrimination of women's rights in the field of labour in our Basic Law is the basis for making changes and additions to the relevant laws aimed at implementing the constitutional norm. Enshrining the prohibition of forced labour at the level of the Constitution serves as a legal basis for improving the working conditions of all workers and, most importantly, makes it possible to legalise informal labour relations. After all, many citizens working in informal labour relations are forced to work in conditions of exploitation without having paid time off. In this respect, these norms should improve Uzbekistan's image in international rankings. Also, the Basic Law will contain the norms on ensuring access to

education, health care and cultural values. Uzbekistan's citizens' right to receive the guaranteed volume of medical care at the state's expense is being strengthened. This norm is essential because the state supports coverage of its citizens with guaranteed free medical care, regardless of their financial status. This means the state does not stop caring for the population's health, especially in financial hardship. A separate article on the status and place of the teacher in society is being introduced. This will create an opportunity to strengthen the social position of more than 685 thousand pedagogues working in the country, strengthen their state support and ensure their professional growth. Overall, we believe changes to the new Constitution of Uzbekistan should further support the social well-being of persons and increase the accountability of state bodies. *The writer is Executive Director, Development Strategy Centre of Uzbekistan*



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
44,207.31	44,178.85	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
44,293.51	44,086.74	
Index Value	Change	
6,951,907,177	+28.46	
Percentage	Time	
+0.06%	7 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,256.94	-23.56	
Percentage	Time	
-0.32%	7 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
34,024.72	+102.46	
Percentage	Time	
+0.30%	7 Jul, 1:44 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
32,388.42	-384.60	
Percentage	Time	
-1.17%	7 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195	198
Bahrain Dinar	736.73	744.73
Canadian Dollar	213	216
China Yuan	38.36	38.76
Danish Krone	40.56	40.96
Euro	304	307
Hong Kong Dollar	36.53	36.88
Indian Rupee	3.38	3.49
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	901.27	910.27
Malaysian Ringgit	59.42	60.02
New Zealand \$	170.36	72.36
Norwegians Krone	26.08	26.38
Omani Riyal	719.48	727.48
Qatari Riyal	76.38	77.08
Saudi Riyal	73.5	74.4
Singapore Dollar	205	207
Swedish Korona	25.52	25.82
Swiss Franc	308.92	311.42
Thai Bhat	7.95	8.1
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	353	358
US Dollar	279.5	283

Naveed Qamar, PPP finance team hold meeting with IMF country representative

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on Friday held crucial meeting with Ester Perez Luis, the country representative of International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a significant development for Pakistan's economic landscape, Ester Perez Luis, the International Monetary Fund's resident representative, met with the finance team of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), including Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce, and Saleem Mandviwala.

The meeting, held at minister's enclave, was aimed at discussing the possibility of a standby agreement with Pakistan, which would have a profound impact on the

nation's financial stability, said a press release issued by Ministry of Commerce.

The PPP team expressed its willingness to support the IMF programme, citing larger national interests as the driving force behind their decision.

Syed Naveed Qamar, representing the PPP finance team, acknowledged the significance of the standby agreement in addressing Pakistan's economic concerns.

He reiterated the PPP's commitment to working in harmony with the IMF to ensure the successful implementation of the programme.

The discussion between the IMF representative and the PPP finance team is seen as a positive step towards economic reform and stability in the country.



As coal decline, electricity and cement should become more affordable: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday after the staff level agreement with the IMF, the uncertainty is ending quickly.

The public and investors have breathed a sigh of relief and the situation will improve further with Pakistan getting \$1.1 billion after the deal is ratified by the board of the lender, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that taking advantage of the respite from this agreement, all the necessary reforms should be implemented without delay to correct the direction of the economy.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that reforms have become necessary as the debt burden of the country has increased greatly and inflation is also high, which has troubled the people.



The business leader said that the financial condition of the government is improving and IPPs have been paid 140 billion rupees, which has reduced the concerns of investors in this sector and improved the overall situation.

Meanwhile, coal is becoming cheaper in the global market, which is reducing the production cost of all coal-us-

ing sectors, including power plants and cement manufacturers.

The industries using coal should pass on benefit of reduced prices to the masses without any delay, he said, adding that the prices of coal has come down by 77 percent since March 2022.

He noted that reducing power tariff will provide relief to the masses and business community, while cheaper cement will activate the construction sector.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to the reduction in foreign loans, the government has decided to borrow 11 trillion rupees locally during July, August, and September in order to run the country.

This will increase the debt burden and increase the cost of debt servicing from 7000 billion rupees to 9000 billion rupees.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is an urgent need to privatize failed government institutions, increase the tax base and eliminate power losses to save Pakistan from economic collapse.

EIGHTEEN begins handing over of villas and the initiation of its community



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: EIGHTEEN, a modern, luxurious sustainable residential project, developed by Ora developers in partnership with Saif Group and Kohistan Builders has now commenced the handover process for homeowners who purchased villas in the project.

A colorful handover ceremony of the first villa at EIGHTEEN was held in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Commercial Officer and inaugural client. The handover process for all the villas of this Cluster, Dandelion, will be completed by June 2024. With gorgeous designs, spacious layouts, excellent amenities and sustainable technology, properties in EIGHTEEN offer the best of both worlds – an attractive and future-proof investment that also offers an eco-friendly way of living and a high-quality of life.

Mastercard partners with JazzCash to revolutionize digital payments in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mastercard has announced a collaboration with JazzCash, the largest digital wallet provider in Pakistan serving over 43 million accounts, to revolutionize digital payments by introducing affordable acceptance solutions in the country.

The partners are launching QR code payments, Pay by Link, and Tap on Phone solutions to facilitate cost-effective and widespread acceptance for merchants at the bottom of the economic pyramid. These solutions will enable fast-growing segments, such as freelancers and gig workers, to accept digital payments, in addition to catering to underserved segments, like micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Pakistan is home to over 5.2 million MSMEs, 50% of which are owned by women. The country currently has only 220,000 payment acceptance locations, which account for fewer than 1,000 locations per million people.

"At Mastercard, we have pledged to connect 50 million MSMEs worldwide to the digital economy by 2025, with a special focus on 25 million women-owned businesses. Building on our common goal of promoting financial inclusion, our partnership with JazzCash seeks to empower over five million such enterprises to future-proof their businesses. We look forward to continuing our contribution to the development of a robust, safe, and competitive digital payment ecosystem in Pakistan through our locally relevant solutions and services," said Dimitrios Dosis, President, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, Mastercard.

"Narrowing the financial inclusion divide in the country by means of easing a common Pakistani's, especially women's, access to financial services has been a top priority for us at JazzCash. Collaborations like these bring us closer to our goals and help us address the needs of previously underserved market segments, enabling businesses and individuals to participate in the digital economy," said Aamir Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer, Jazz.

ICCI International Tourism Summit started

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD/GILGIT: 3-day International Tourism Summit organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has started in Skardu. On Friday, on the first day of the summit, under the leadership of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, ambassadors from several countries including Turkey, Malaysia, Iran, Somalia, Bangladesh reached Skardu to participate. Foreign ambassadors and participants visited different tourist spots of Skardu, the ambassadors described the summit as the best effort of Islamabad Chamber. On arrival at Skardah Airport, the delegation was welcomed by Commissioner Skardu Alam Zeb Khan, DIG Farrukh Rasheed, Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, former Vice President FPCCI Khalid Tawab and senior officials of the police and administration.

The first ICCI International Tourism Summit for the promotion of tourism in the northern regions of Pakistan started in Skardu. The summit will be held on July 7, 8 and 9. A delegation of foreign ambassadors arrived at Skardu Airport on Friday to participate in the summit. The delegation



included ambassadors of many countries including Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria. While a delegation of 120 people from the business community of the country including Islamabad is also participating in the summit. On the first day of the conference, foreign ambassadors and other participants in the delegation visited different areas of Skardu. The ambassadors praised the beauty of the area and termed the summit as a means of promoting tourism.

The foreign ambassadors included in the

delegation said that they had heard a lot about the beauty of the northern regions of Pakistan and got the opportunity to see these regions closely through the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce summit. They said that these areas have great potential to bring tourists from all over the world. Such a conference will not only promote tourism but also increase local industry and employment here. Islamabad Chamber has tried its best and this should be continued. They also appreciated the other arrangements of the summit including security.

Schneider COMSATS University signs LoI to drive microgrid solutions in Pakistan

News Desk

KARACHI: Schneider Electric, the leader in digital transformation of energy management and automation, and Pakistan's leading Centre for energy research and development Energy Research Centre (ERC) COMSATS University, signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to optimize energy performance, reduce consumption, and train young energy specialists to accelerate sustainable energy transition under "Access to Energy Program" in Pakistan.

Schneider Electric's Country

President for Pakistan, Humayun Akhlaq said, "We are excited to extend our collaboration with Energy Research Centre COMSATS University this LoI will move us forward in realizing our shared vision of a country that is decarbonized, digitized, and decentralized. Our technology and industry expertise will unlock new opportunities to accelerate the energy transition and contribute to Pakistan's sustainability goals – and empower remote communities to help lead the energy transition. I am proud of this collaboration and excited

to see a more sustainable future for all."

COMSATS University's Additional Registrar, Dr. Rashid A. Khan, said, "We are so pleased to join hands with Schneider Electric, recognized as a leader for microgrid technology and sustainability to better respond to the country's energy needs, under this partnership we will provide studies regarding base-load power solutions to the areas of the country with the greatest need. Our partnership is guided by the combined philosophy and belief in clean energy, innovation, and sustainability – these

values are exemplified through our LoI with Schneider Electric."

The LoI builds on the successful partnership between Schneider Electric and ERC COMSATS University to modernize the energy grid in Pakistan. Schneider Electric is providing the microgrid controller solution to improve the efficiency and reliability of the system.

Microgrids are self-contained electrical networks which integrate on-site energy sources such as solar, allowing hosts to generate electricity on-site and use it as and when need-



ed, independent of the status of the country's utility grid. Organizations of all kinds are turning towards microgrids and distributed energy resources for financial and sustainability benefits.

PTCL Group's Summer Spark Internship Program 2023



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading telecommunications and integrated digital services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has launched its highly anticipated 'SummerSpark' internship program at a vibrant opening ceremony held at PTCL Group Tower in Islamabad.

The 6-week internship program, 'SummerSpark' received an overwhelming response upon opening the registration process, with over 15,475 young graduates

from top universities eagerly vying for a spot. After a rigorous selection process, the top 30 candidates with exceptional competencies and potential were selected to participate in the program. These future leaders will enjoy valuable hands-on work experience on various business projects under expert mentorship at PTCL & Ufone 4G offices in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi that will facilitate them to set the stage for the successful commencement of their professional careers ahead.

Twitter suspends Zaka Ashraf's fake account after PCB's request

A Sports

LAHORE: Cricket Board (PCB) management committee Zaka Ashraf, was taken down after the cricket board's request.

The fake Twitter handle @IZakaAshraf had gathered

more than 8,000 followers on the social media platform.

The impersonator got the account verified in June 2023 and used the identity of Zaka Ashraf and has "Chairman @TheRealPCB" written in the bio alongside the hashtag "#ZakaAshraf".

The impersonators shared 55 tweets since the inception of the account in February 2021. However, it has been now taken down.

After a series of cryptic tweets from the impersonator, using the identity of Zaka Ashraf, the PCB took to Twitter to clarify

that the account was fake and was reported to Twitter.

"Mr Zaka Ashraf does not have an account on [Twitter]. This is a fake account and has been reported to [Twitter]" by

the PCB," wrote PCB.

It is understood that the impersonator must have paid for Twitter's subscription-based verification service, Twitter Blue.



Pak cricket squad for IBSA World Games announced

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) on Friday announced a 20-member squad for the 2023 IBSA World Games, taking place from August 17 to 27 August in Birmingham, UK.

According to a statement issued here, Syed Sultan Shah, PBCC Chairman, has approved the team and also deputed the following team officials.

Zafar Iqbal (B1), Riasat Khan (B1), Muhammad Shahzaib (B1), Fakhar Abbas (B1), Muhammad Salman (B1), Muhammad Asif (B1), Nisar Ali (Captain), (B2) Badar Munir (V. Captain) (B2).

Shahzeb Haider (B2), Anees Javed (B2), Moain Aslam (B2), Naimat Ullah (B2), Matiullah (B2), Mohsin Khan (B3), Kamran Akhter (B3), Akmal Hayyat (B3), Israr Hassan (B3).

Team Officials:
Muhammad Jameel



(Head Coach), Maher Muhammad Yousaf Haroon (Coach), Tahir Mehmood Butt (Trainer/Umpire).

Syed Sultan Shah will tour with the team in the capacity of President World Blind Cricket and the head of Pakistan blind cricket delegation.

Besides Pakistan, teams from Australia, England and

India are featuring in cricket events of the games.

The 2023 World Games is the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment, with more than 1250 competitors from 70 nations. The games staged every four years are the pinnacle of the international sporting calendar outside the Paralympic Games.

The sports taking place during the 2023 World Games include archery, chess, cricket, blind football, partially sighted football, women's football, goalball, judo, powerlifting, showdown, tenpin bowling and tennis.

Pakistan test team to depart for Sri Lanka tomorrow

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's Test team will leave for Sri Lanka tomorrow (July 08) to play two-match test series, which is Pakistan's first assignment in the third cycle of the ICC World Test Championship.

The first match is scheduled to take place on July 16 at Galle International Cricket Stadium while the second Test will be held at Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo from July 24 to 28.

The test team has been engaged in the pre-series training camp at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre in from July 04.

Pakistan, ranked sixth in the ICC Men's Test Team Rankings, previously toured Sri Lanka in July 2022 with



the two-Test series drawn 1-1.

They played their last Test series against New Zealand at home from December 26, 2022 to January 6, 2023

with both matches drawn.

On July 09 Pakistan team will land in Colombo. To play the Warm-up game on July 11 and 12 and July 16-20-

The first Test at Galle International Cricket Stadium 24-28 July - Second Test at Sinhalese Sports Club, Colombo.

Sports Board Punjab Summer Camps

Thousands of male and female athletes are getting top class training in different games

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Sports Board Punjab (SBP) Summer Camps are underway in all divisions of the province in which thousands of male and female athletes are getting top class training in different games under the supervision of expert coaches and trainers.

SBP's expert coaches imparted training to male and female athletes in four games-table tennis, badminton, taekwondo and karate in Faisalabad On Friday. Similarly, the summer camps of table tennis, badminton and karate were conducted in Bahawalpur and DG Khan divisions, table tennis, badminton and taekwondo in Multan, badminton and taekwondo in Rawalpindi and summer camp of gymnastic was conducted in



Sahiwal division.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, in a statement said that the mega summer camp activity is being organized with an aim to trace fresh sports talent at grassroots level from all divisions. "The holding of summer camps in dozens of games is the best way to incline our talented youth towards healthy sports activities during their free time of

summer vacations".

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that it is the best usage of this free time and we are quite upbeat that thousands of young boys and girls will not only polish their sports skills but also learn valuable games techniques from qualified coaches. "Besides this, the healthy activity of summer camps will play a key role in the promotion of sports

culture among the younger generation of the province".

Sports Board Punjab, on the directions of Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, is organising summer camps of 14 games-Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, Self-Defense, Taekwondo, Wushu and Karate, Gymnastics and Swimming.

Tamim Iqbal takes back retirement after meeting Bangladesh PM



A Sports

LAHORE: Opening batter Tamim Iqbal withdrew his retirement from international cricket following his meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said.

The reversal came just two days after Tamim Iqbal broke down in tears while announcing a shocking retirement decision with immediate effect briefly after leading Bangladesh in a 17-run defeat in the first ODI of the three-match home series against Afghanistan.

The turning point occurred on Friday afternoon, when former Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza, now a member of parliament, initiated the process by requesting the Bangladesh PM about intervening in this scenario.

Consequently, a meeting was held at Sheikh Hasina's residence in Dhaka which was attended by Tamim, alongside his wife, Mashrafe Mortaza and BCB president Nazmul Hassan.

Briefly, after the meeting, BCB director Jalal Yunus revealed that Tamim Iqbal has a change of heart and has decided to withdraw his retirement.

"Tamim Iqbal has withdrawn his retirement decision," Yunus said. "However he will take a six-week rest to regain fitness. He has been under physical and mental pressure in the past six months, which affected his performance."

Tamim's emotional press conference on Thursday did not go well with BCB president Hassan, who questioned the batter's professionalism for playing the match while admitting he wasn't fully fit.

It is worth mentioning here that the BCB, earlier today, named wicketkeeper Litton Das as the interim captain to lead Bangladesh in the remaining two ODIs against Afghanistan.

Despite taking back his retirement from international cricket, Tamim Iqbal is still unlikely to lead Bangladesh in the ongoing series as the left-handed batter will take a month-long rest to regain his fitness.

It is pertinent to mention that Tamim Iqbal has thus far accumulated 15,205 runs in international cricket with the help of 25 centuries.

Pakistan wins gold, 2 bronze medals in SA Bodybuilding C'ship



Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Pakistan claimed one gold and two bronze medals in the South Asian Bodybuilding Championship in Male, Maldives on Friday.

Shahzad Qureshi of Pakistan won the gold medal in the 80 kg category and handed an upsetting defeat to two strong Indian bodybuilders.

Pakistan's National Anthem and Green Flag fly high in the Maldives when Shehzad gets his much-deserving gold medal.

Shahzad Qureshi had also won the gold medal in the previous event. It was his second gold medal for Pakistan in the South Asian Bodybuilding Championship.

Ibrahim Khan of Pakistan won the bronze medal in the 75 kg category of the junior category. Shahidullah of Pakistan won the bronze medal in the 75 kg category.

Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation Secretary Sohail Anwar congratulated the three bodybuilders for showing their excellent performances. The High Commissioner of Pakistan in Maldives and Sports Minister of Maldives were also present on the occasion of the event.

Sri Lanka Tests-bound players unlikely to attend Haris Rauf's reception

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan squad for the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka is likely to miss Haris Rauf's reception, scheduled to be held in Rawalpindi tonight.

According to the details, the national cricketers did not get a green signal from the management to attend their fellow cricketer Haris Rauf's reception due to bad weather.

The Sri Lanka-Test bound players are currently in Karachi where they are partaking in the training camp for Pakistan's first assignment of the third cycle of the World Test Championship (WTC).

The players will only engage in one training session at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre at National Bank Stadium today. The training camp will conclude today and the contingent will then depart for Sri Lanka on July 8.

The players were supposed to go to Rawalpindi from Karachi this evening and return in the afternoon on Saturday, according to the initial plan.

However, due to poor weather and rain forecast in the country, the team management has opted not to take any risks.

Consequently, Pakistan players recorded a video message to congratulate Haris Rauf on his wedding.

In a video shared by Shaheen Shah Afridi on Twitter, Pakistan captain Babar Azam alongside his teammates congratulated the right-arm speedster.

"Harry, congratulations on your wedding," the players cheered. "Live long my friend," Afridi added.

Messi may reunite with Barca teammates Busquets, Alba at Inter Miami

World Cup winner Lionel Messi and Spaniard Sergio Busquets may reunite with former Barcelona teammate Jordi Alba as Major League Soccer (MLS) club Inter Miami are close to signing the left back, reported The Athletic.

Alba, 34, is now a free agent after leaving Barca this year after spending 11 years and appearing in 459 matches throughout his career at the La Liga club.

The veteran left-back also won 16 major titles, including five La Liga, five Copa del Rey and the UEFA Champions League.

Alba and Busquets represented the Spanish national team for more than nine years until the latter announced his retirement from international football last year.

Dominant Sri Lanka thump West Indies in CWC Qualifier

A Sports

HARARE: Maheesh Theekshana's astonishing figures of 4/34, followed by Pathum Nissanka's century powered Sri Lanka to crush West Indies by eight wickets in the Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier.

Set to chase a modest 244-run target, Pathum Nissanka's anchoring century knock paved the way for Sri Lanka to complete the pursuit for the loss of just two wickets with 34 balls to spare.

Sri Lankan openers Nissanka and Dimuth Karunaratne scripted a solid start to the run chase with a sensible 193-run partnership which lasted with the latter's dismissal in the 34th over.

Nissanka struck 14 boundaries on his way to a 113-ball 104.

Karunaratne soon followed his opening partner's footsteps in the 37th over when he also walked back to the pavilion when Sri Lanka needed 40 more runs.

He scored 83 off 92 deliveries with the help of seven boundaries.

With both openers back in the pavilion, wicketkeeper batter Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama made sure there were no more hiccups in the run chase and put on an unbeaten partnership.

Mendis scored 34 not out off 43 deliv-



eries, hitting three boundaries while Samarawickrama scored an unbeaten 17. Kevin Sinclair and Akeal Hosein could pick a wicket apiece for West Indies.

Put into bat first in their last CWC Qualifier fixture, the West Indies batting lineup once again faltered and thus the two-time champions, already knocked out of the World Cup qualification race, could only pile 243 runs on the scoreboard.

The Caribbean side after a cautious start, kept losing wickets at an alarming rate before eventually bowling out for a meagre total.

Their partnership came for the ninth wicket when Keacy Carty and Kevin Sinclair added 63 runs to the total.

Carty waged a lone battle for West Indies amid their dismal show with the bat with a gutsy 87-run knock from 96 deliveries, hitting six boundaries and a six.

Opening batter Johnson Charles (39), Romario Shepherd (25) and Sinclair (25) were the other significant contributors for the West Indies.

Maheesh Theekshana spearheaded Sri Lanka's bowling attack with 4/35, followed by debutant Dushan Hemantha's 2/49.