

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
عبداللہ بن عمر رضی اللہ عنہما نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ جس دن لوگ دونوں جہان کے اپنے والے کے سامنے حساب دینے کے لیے کھڑے ہوں گے تو ان کی لوٹکے پینڈے میں ڈوب جائیں گے
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 4938)

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PM views Saudi leadership's generous support instrumental in securing IMF deal

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday thanked the Saudi leadership for their generous and unwavering support for Pakistan, which, he said, was particularly instrumental in securing the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). (Details on Page 8)



PM Laptop Scheme to empower youth: Muqam

Adviser to the PM, Engr Amir Muqam here on Tuesday said the prime minister's national laptop scheme to socioeconomically and educational empower the youth of Pakistan. Addressing the laptop distribution ceremony graced by the prime minister here at Governor House today, Engr Amir Muqam said that the launching of a free laptop scheme for talented students of KP and inauguration of Fata University Phase-I completed... (Details on Page 8)

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Gandhara Symposium

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of venerated monks, who are attending the International Gandhara Symposium 2023 on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM for creation of enabling equal opportunities for women empowerment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed upon provision of equal opportunities to the womenfolk as they consisted of half of the country's population and were playing varying roles at different strata of society. He was addressing the launching ceremony of the 'Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment' which is being initiated at a total cost of Rs 10.4 billion. The prime minister said that the country's womenfolk were an effective and energetic segment, playing effective roles in families and society as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. He observed that in the last 75 years, the required opportunities for the women empowerment were not sufficient and stressed upon making of further efforts for securing women rights, including the inheritance rights and creation of opportunities in a conducive environment, so that they could contribute meaningfully and productively in society.



"Look around the Muslims world and the West, the women have played their due role for the progress and prosperity of their respective nations," he added.

Lauding different prominent women personalities of the country, he said that they had served as great ambassadors of Pakistan in different capacities. The prime minister said that there was no dearth of talent in Pakistan as they were blessed with great minds, but there was a need to harness the true potential with creation of opportunities. Commending the rural women, he said that the ratio of the rural area women in the national building capacity was immense as they had been working on fields along side with the men. About the creation of Shuhada Fund initiative, he said it was their duty as the martyrs had sacrificed their lives for the protection of the motherland and saved generations. There could be no other precedent of bravery and valour than their sacrifice, he said, adding their bereaved families deserved honour and support. The ceremony was attended by a large number of women belonging to all walks of life, besides ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of women organizations and relevant authorities. Referring to the current day challenges, he expressed his gratitude to the brotherly country of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for extending financial support in form of \$2 billion deposit with the State Bank of Pakistan. The prime minister questioned that as a nation for how long they would continue to depend upon foreign loans. "It is the pricking question," he added. He said a neighbouring country of Pakistan in the year 1991 sought the last IMF programme and then did not require any other financial programme. The prime minister underscored the need that they had to streamline their affairs by learning lessons from the past and "like an active nation have to move ahead". For a year, he said, he had never faced such severe financial issues, triggered further by the last year's floods, global inflation and Ukraine war which posed a huge challenge for the country's economy.

Pakistan offers huge potential for Gandhara tourism: President

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said Pakistan offered the world a valuable window to Gandhara civilization with its unique blend of ancient history, and the Buddha's message of peace and compassion. "In today's world where hatred is on the rise and increasing polarization is fueling conflicts, it's time to rediscover the role of cultural diplomacy to promote dialogue among civilizations," he said in his address here at the three-day Gandhara Symposium 2023. The symposium titled 'Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan' was organized by Prime Minister's Task Force on Gandhara Tourism, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), and the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event gathered monks and inter-faith experts from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, China, Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam with an objective to explore Pakistan's rich Buddhist legacy and create

an enabling environment for Gandhara tourism. President Alvi said Buddha's quest rekindles the spirit of inner reflection with a precept to abstain from taking lives of the living beings and caring for the environment. He highlighted that the Gandhara civilization, which thrived in Pakistan centuries ago, could serve as an informative place for the visitors from across the globe to explore exquisite Buddhist sites. He urged collaborative efforts to raise awareness about the inclusive and multicultural nature of Gandhara civilization and help the society to absorb diversity of cultures. The president welcomed the Buddhist monks in the country, hoping that their presence would relay a message of peace and cross-cultural harmony. Director General ISSI Sohail Mahmood in his welcome address said Gandhara civilization, situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, served as a melting pot of diverse cultures and civilizations. He said preserving and promoting the Buddhist Gandhara heritage was of paramount importance for Pakistan.

World must stand united against hatred, discrimination, intolerance: Bilawal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday called upon the world to stand united against hatred, discrimination, intolerance, and promote mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance.



Virtually addressing a session of an urgent debate held by Human Rights Council on acts of religious hatred including the incident of the desecration of the Holy Quran, the foreign minister said unfortunately, the deliberate desecration of the Holy Quran had continued under government sanction and with the sense of impunity. Increasingly, he said these acts were designed to maximize propagating hate. "We must see this incitement to hatred, discrimination and attempts to provoke violence. We must join hands in condemning it, we must isolate those who stroke hatred," he said. He said three months ago the first international day to combat Islamophobia was observed where the first ever session was held to mark the occasion at the UN General Assembly. The minister said the Holy Quran was a spiritual anchor for two billion Muslims. "It is important to understand the deep hurt that at public and premeditated act of Quran's desecration causes to Muslims," he remarked.

DG IB presents annual performance report to PM Shehbaz Sharif

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Director General of Intelligence Bureau (DG IB) Fawad Asadullah Khan has met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and presented him the annual performance report of the organization. PM Shehbaz Sharif commended Intelligence Bureau's (IB) role in Pakistan's security, and sovereignty, and in thwarting internal and external threats to the country. Expressing satisfaction with IB's performance, PM Sharif said IB successfully fulfilled all the additional tasks, he had assigned to the organization to protect national interests. He said the Intelligence Bureau played a pivotal role in the elimination of criminal activities and terrorism in the country.

PTI-Israel alliance now stands exposed, says Sherry Rehman

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Climate Change of Pakistan Sherry Rehman said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Israel alliance has been exposed now. While addressing a press conference along with the SAPM Ata Tarar, Federal Minister Sherry Rehman said that the elements behind who benefited from the May 9 violence have been exposed now. She lambasted the PTI chairman and termed him an Israeli agent saying that the anti-state elements are coming out in support of the PTI chief. Israel is lecturing about human rights and issuing statements in support of PTI. Sherry Rehman said that PTI likes the aggressive attitude of Israel and they have hired foreign lobbyists for anti-state activities. The former prime minister has never condemned the terrorists.

Marriyum terms news item published about Azam Chaudhry as false, baseless

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that the news item published in Friday Times about Azam Chaudhry was false and baseless. In a tweet, she said that Azam Chaudhry was not a Pakistan Television Corporation employee and had never been a PTV employee. She said that he has only been a member of an issues-based analyst pool for PTV. He has not been removed from the pool and has not been asked to leave. She clarified that nothing of the sort has been communicated to him and he is part of the PTV Lahore analysts pool as she was writing this tweet. She said that the views and opinions of the said journalist were known to the government at the time he was invited to the press conference. "If the government wanted to suppress his voice or questions, he would not have been invited and given an opportunity to ask his questions. The Prime Minister answered his questions in detail," she said.

Ahsan Iqbal holds meetings with Chinese companies' representatives



Spokesman Report

BELJING: Chen Diming, Chairman of China Apollo Holding Group, Chen Diming and senior representative of China Ocean Engineering Construction Company, Xu Hao called on Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in Beijing. The minister appreciated the companies' longstanding

partnership with Pakistan and their interest in solar power sector in Pakistan. He underscored the importance of energy projects which have enabled Pakistan to overcome its energy shortages and urged them to invest in solar power generation and establishment of solar manufacturing plants in Pakistan to achieve better efficiency and wider distribution of cheaper electricity.

ECNEC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

ECNEC Okays six projects including solarization of agriculture tube wells

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Tuesday approved six projects including "Prime Minister's National Programme for Solarization of Agriculture Tube Wells" aimed at facilitating the farming community and achieving food security in the country.

The ECNEC meeting, chaired by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, accorded the approval for tube wells solarization in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan at a cost of Rs 377,236.275 million in three years.

"Phase-I of the project will have Rs 90 billion including Rs 30 billion of PSDP and equivalent share by provincial governments as well as beneficiary farmers for the financial year 2023-24. This

project is to enhance agricultural productivity through clean and green energy by converting the existing 100,000 tube wells into solar PV system," a news release said.

The project is to be executed by the Ministry of National Food Security through the Federal Water Management Cell (FWMC) and Provincial Departments of Agriculture.

The ECNEC also considered and approved a project titled "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Industrial Support Project (RIISP)" to be executed by the KP government in District Bajur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, North Waziristan, Orakzai, South Waziristan and erstwhile Frontier Regions at a cost of Rs 110.700 million including IDA (International Development Association) loan of \$300 million from World Bank with provincial government share of Rs 29,700 million (in kind). The project would be

completed in two phases with a six-year period each completing in 2023-2029 and 2029-2031.

The ECNEC also considered a revised PC-I of an ongoing project of the Sindh government titled "Sindh Solar Energy Project (SSEP)" executed in the province by its Energy Department at a revised cost of Rs 27,418.13 million including FEC (Foreign Exchange Component) of Rs 24,265.57 million.

The project is to be financed through World Bank (WB) loan i.e. IDA credit of \$100 million (95.2%) and \$5 million by Govt. of Sindh (4.7%). "This ongoing project will improve energy security and fulfill Pakistan's international commitments on climate change," it added.

The ECNEC further considered and approved a project of Ministry of Energy (Power Division) titled "Evacuation of Power from 800 MW Mohmand Dam HPP to the

National Grid (PC-I)" at a rationalized cost of Rs 14,319.18 million including FEC of Rs 6,318.38 million.

The financing source of the project is Asian Development Bank (ADB) which would be executed by National Transmission & Despatch Company (NTDC) in districts Nowshera, Peshawar and Mohmand of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Besides, the ECNEC okayed a project of Ministry of Communications titled "Construction of Lahore Bypass from Kalashah Kaku Exit to KLM to Multan Road near Radio Station (40km approx)" at a rationalized cost of Rs 34,446.585 million without FEC.

The project would be executed by National Highway Authority (NHA) in districts Lahore and Sheikhpura of Punjab Province, financed by the federal government under the Public Sector Development

Programme (PSDP).

The ECNEC also approved a revised project to be executed by Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and provincial health departments in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) titled "Emergency Plan for Polio Eradication" at a cumulative cost of \$1,784.90 million, for polio eradication and making Pakistan free of the crippling disease.

Among others, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Senator Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, KP Finance Advisor Himayatullah Khan, federal secretaries and senior officers from federal and provincial departments attended the meeting.

PM views Saudi leadership's generous support instrumental in securing IMF deal



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday thanked the Saudi leadership for their generous and unwavering support for Pakistan, which, he said, was particularly instrumental in securing the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister asked the ambassador to convey his special gratitude to Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman for the deposit of \$2 billion dollars with the State Bank of Pakistan.

He also apprised ambassador Nawaf about the formation of Special Invest-

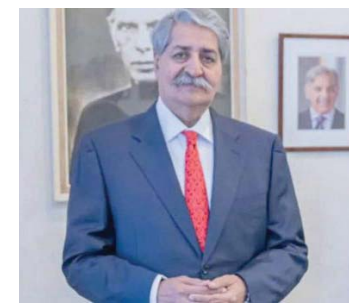
ment Facilitation Council (SFIC) to facilitate and fast-track potential investments from GCC member states, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He emphasized that mutually rewarding Pakistan-Saudi cooperation in key areas including IT, energy, infrastructure and labour must be fast-tracked and augmented.

Ambassador Nawaf, while expressing satisfaction on the current trajectory of bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, noted that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were bound in a fraternal relationship marked by mutual trust and understanding, close cooperation, and an abiding tradition of supporting each other through thick and thin.

The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan eagerly looked forward to the visit of the crown prince and prime minister to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

Foreign companies, factories move to Special Economic Zone: Naveed Qamar



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Many foreign companies and factories from different countries are likely to be shifted to Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, said Special Assistant to the Sindh Chief Minister for Investment and Public Private Partnership Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar.

The expected arrival of factories and companies from China, Turkey and Gulf countries will create their cluster in Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar expressed these views while talking to a delegation of local businessmen in his office here on Tuesday.

Qasim Naveed said that Dhabiji Special Economic Zone is an economic zone with a lot of incentives for investment companies in terms of its prime location and availability of the cheap labour.

He said that the Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, located just a few kilometres away from Port Qasim, Karachi Port, Karachi Airport, Main Railway Line and National Highway, will connect its industries and production units not only to all regions of Pakistan but also to countries around the world.

PM Laptop Scheme to empower youth: Muqam

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam here on Tuesday said the prime minister's national laptop scheme to socioeconomically and educationally empower the youth of Pakistan.

Addressing the laptop distribution ceremony graced by the prime minister here at Governor House today, Engr Amir Muqam said that the launching of a free laptop scheme for talented students of KP and inauguration of Fata University Phase-I completed at a cost of Rs1.5 billion was a gift of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including merged tribal districts. The foundation stone of Fata University was laid during PMLN's previous Government.

He said that whether it was floods, earthquakes,



TDPs rehabilitation, terrorism or militancy besides dengue issues, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has always come for help and rescue of the people of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa reflected his immense love and affection for its youth.

He said that Prime Minister took all the coalition partners along during his government

and put the country back on the road to progress and development.

Shaza Fatima, special assistant to the prime minister for youth affairs said that the free

laptop scheme was launched by Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the capacity of then Chief Minister Punjab for talented students of the province and later former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif extended it to the entire country due to its significance.

He said when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assumed office directed for restarting of the laptop scheme and this year one lakh laptops would be distributed among talented students of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor praised the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and hoped that the students would use these laptops for excelling in education and research work.

He said the doors of the Governor House were opened for the general public and the entire nation was united to defeat the menace of terrorism.

ECP issues non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chief, Fawad in contempt case

City Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chairman and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry in the contempt case.

The ECP had initiated contempt proceedings against the PTI chief, Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry for issuing

offensive statements against the electoral body and the chief election commissioner.

A four-member ECP bench headed by member Nisar Durraani issued the arrest warrants after they failed to appear before it despite issuances of summons for several times.

During today's hearing, Mr Umar's lawyer informed the bench that his client was unable to appear today due to his appoint-

ment with a doctor for medical checkup. At which, the bench directed him to submit an exemption plea, which was filed later.

However, Mr Chaudhry skipped the hearing as his lawyer told that the former minister was currently in Lahore.

After hearing arguments, the bench issued arrest warrants for the PTI chief and Fawad Chaudhry, and adjourned the hearing till July 25.

PPP wants assemblies dissolved by Aug 8

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Monday advised the government to dissolve assemblies by Aug 8.

Federal Minister for Commerce Naveed Qamar, while speaking in Parliament House, stated that it was the federal government's domain to dissolve the assemblies. The PPP, he said, wanted electoral reforms before the elections.

Mr Qamar emphasised that the caretaker setup should not exceed the constitutional period under any circumstances. He said his party would not back down from its principled stand on the subject. The federal minister stated that consensus among political parties was essential for electoral reforms, as were issues like the RTS system.

Court grants bail to Parvez Elahi in money laundering case

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A banking court on Tuesday granted bail to former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi in money laundering case.

Judge Aslam Gondal announced the verdict.

The court ordered Elahi to submit bonds worth Rs500,000. Judge remarked that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) did not cooperate as it did not present the record



despite the court's order.

The FIA had taken Elahi into custody in a money laundering case after he was released from jail.

Petroleum dealers threaten nationwide strike

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The petroleum dealers have threatened to observe countrywide strike for demanding a hike in the commission from the government, ARY News reported on Tuesday.

The petroleum dealers threatened to shut petrol pumps across the country and demanded the government to restore 5% margin. Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) Chairman Abdul Sami Khan said that they cannot continue sale of petroleum products with the current dealers' margin.

He announced that an emergency session of the dealers is summoned in Lahore on July 12 (tomorrow). Khan claimed that the sale of petroleum products was dropped by 40% due to smuggled petrol and diesel in the country.

Last year, the dealers had demanded to fix the dealer's margin



at 6% and threatened to observe a countrywide strike.

Earlier, the oil marketing companies (OMCs) had written a letter to the Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC) to the federal government, demanding to set OMC's margin petrol and for high-speed diesel (HSD) at Rs12 per litre.

It was learnt that the dealers' commission had been increased by more than 25% to Rs7 per litre in 2022, witnessing a hike in OMC's margins from Rs3 and Rs3.68 per litre on petrol and HSD to Rs6 per litre in November 2022.

Govt approved direct flights from Multan to Iran, Iraq and Syria during Muharram: Gillani

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: On the demand of former Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, the government approved direct flights from Multan to Iran, Iraq and Syria during Muharram. According to the details, Senator Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani and former member of the National Assembly Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani had demanded from the Federal Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafiq that during Muharram, Safar and Rabiul Awwal, millions of people from southern Punjab should make pilgrimages to Iran, Iraq and Syria. There was no flight from Multan for this.

Due to which thousands of people had to travel to Lahore, Karachi and



Islamabad. Federal Minister of Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafiq immediately approved their demand and announced the start of flights from Multan during Ayam Azza.

It should be remembered that the people of South Punjab have been demanding from the government for a long time to start direct flights from Multan to Iran, Iraq and Syria. In view of this, the approval of the flight from Multan has been taken from the government. After that, the representative people of South Punjab thanked Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani and Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani and said that the decision of the government will save valuable capital on the one hand and on the other hand. There will be no waste of time.

Protest

HYDERABAD: Women and children belonging to Oadh tribe hold a protest against demolishing their makeshifts during an anti-encroachment drive on Autobahn road in City.



Photo: Online

Increase the prices of petrol and diesel created a new mountain for people: Khawaja Suliman Siddiqui

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The central chairman of the central organization Tajran Pakistan, Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui, has said that the increase in electricity prices, increase in the price of diesel and interest rates have created a new mountain of difficulties for the people and businessmen, which opened new doors of difficulties for the people and businessmen. The rulers took loans for their luxury.

And 80 percent of the traders' organizations across the country are standing by the side of the central organiza-

tion of traders. On July 13, there will be a meeting of the central organization of traders of Pakistan South Punjab and Multan in Multan, in which the traders of Multan, including southern Punjab, will participate and the traders community will participate. The future plan of action will be announced in relation to the solution of the problems faced, he expressed these views on the occasion of the fourth annual foundation day of the Central Organization of Tajran Pakistan at Masoom Shah Road at the residence of the Vice President of the Central Organization of

Tajran South Punjab, Zeeshan Zafar.

In which the officials of the Central Organization of Traders, Central Senior Vice Chairman Sheikh Akram Hakeem, Central Senior Vice President Haji Babar Ali Qureshi, South Punjab President Sheikh Javed Akhtar, District President Syed Jafar Ali Shah, Multan President Khalid Mehmood Qureshi, General Secretary Multan Mirza, Naeem Baig, Chairman South Punjab Javed Akhtar Khan, General Secretary South Punjab Zeeshan Siddiqui, Additional General Secretary Rao Liaquat Ali, Chair-

man Multan Kashif Rafique, Vice President Punjab Malik Imran Qayyum Bhatta, Rana Owais, Chaudhry Abdul Hameed Jutt, Chairman Supreme Council Khawaja Ahmad Faraz Siddiqui, Nasir Mehmood Chaudhary, Nadeem Sheikh, Malik Kamran Bhatta, Haji Abdul Ghafoor, Hakim Ali Qureshi, Chaudhry Irshad, Younis Qureshi, Sheikh Shafiq, Tanveer Gujjar, Ishfaq Ansari, Muhammad Ashraf, Muhammad Shehzad, Bilal Gondal, Hasan Raza, Muhammad Asif, Khawaja. Anees, Syed Manzoor Shah and others participated.

Muharamul Haram all arrangements are completed: Amir Khattak



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The Punjab government wants the cooperation of Religious scholars of all Sect of thought for peace. The Punjab government has assigned full powers to the district administration 4 for peace. These views were expressed by Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak while presiding over the Divisional Peace Committee meeting. Commissioner Aamir Khattak said that The Municipal Corporation has been entrusted with the task of repairing Muharram processions. Installation of street lights on the routes of the processions has been directed for the convenience of the mourners

RPO Multan Region Captain R. Sohail Chaudhry said that in the first 10 days of Muharram, 910 processions and 3182 congregations will be held. A comprehensive security plan has been prepared for peace and order during Muharram. More than 10,000 soldiers will be on duty in the division. Qari Hanif Jalandhri said that Muharram teaches us tolerance, patience and brotherhood.

Syed Mazhar Gillani said that we all have to play a key role in maintaining the atmosphere of peace. Alain Raza Gardazi said that along with the elimination of religious extremism, political extremism should be eliminated. Allama Farooq Khan Saeedi said on social media. Content based on religious hatred should be processed without investigation. The inter-divisional peace committee members vowed to play an active role for the establishment of peace. Makhdoom Syed Zahoor Shamsi, Anayatullah Rehmani, Maulana Zubair Ahmed Siddiqui, Allama Abdul Haq, Anwar Haq, DCs, DPOs, scholars were present on the video link. At the end of the meeting, prayers were offered for the establishment of peace and development in the beloved country.

Rule of law are part & parcel of live societies: Federal Ombudsman

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) addresses international seminar on the role of Ombudsman in promoting the fair administration, good governance and the rule of law (11 July 2023 Bangkok).

Ombudsmanship has taken firm roots in Pakistan & Ombudsman institutions are functioning in Pakistan with the full support of its citizenry as well as the government.

According to the details, the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi addressed an international seminar in Bangkok on the role of the Asian Ombudsman as a mechanism for promoting



fair administration, good governance and the rule of law. The seminar was held as part of the Asian Regional Meeting 2023 hosted by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) which is a global ombudsman body with over 200 members form across the globe. In his address to the seminar, Mr. Qureshi emphasized that the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib was playing its due role in dispensation of administrative justice, thereby complementing efforts of the supreme judiciary in providing justice to all citizens.

Mr. Qureshi added that the steps taken by the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution to check against the maladministration and administrative excesses of government agencies, in fact, contribute

towards promoting good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Highlighting the growth of the institution as an effective mechanism for speedy and inexpensive justice, Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi further stated that it has perfected its complaints handling mechanism over the last 40 years. The incidence of complaints has touched an all time high figure of 164,173 during 2022 and the disposal of 157,798 complaints has been unprecedented. During the first six months of the current year, it has received 90,660 complaints and disposed of 92,387 complaints including the backlog which is reflective of the public confidence in the institution.

Main reasons for Pakistan's problems is the enormous increase in population

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Director of Hajj, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Government of Pakistan Malik Rehan Abbas Khokhar has said that one of the main reasons for Pakistan's problems is the enormous increase in population. For the fair distribution of the country's resources, population control is necessary. Consuming a balanced diet protects us from many diseases.

He expressed these views yesterday on the occasion of World Population Day on human nutrition and nutrition under the auspices of Young Pakistanis Organization (YPO) and Royal Institute of Medical Sciences Rams College Multan. On the occasion of the inauguration of the one-day mega camp organized for the practical exhibition of the students' work, nutritionists Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas Shah Bukhari and a team of doctors conducted the following body fat tests of more than fifty students and staff in this camp. Composition, Visible Body Fat, BMI (Body Mass Index), BMD (Bone Mineral Density Test) All tests done absolutely free.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas Shah Bukhari said that Pak Nutrition Services has so far informed the youth about the correct use of food through dozens of camps across the country and this process is continuing. Education expert Professor Asif Ali Zawish, Wali Khan, Muhammad Talha and others were also present.

South Punjab irrigation dept fully vigilant of flood session: Ijaz Khalique Razaqi



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Secretary Irrigation Department South Punjab Ijaz Khalique Razaqi visited various Flood protection Baands in Multan zone. Chief Engineer Multan gave a briefing about Akbar Flood Dam, Head Muhammadwala Breaching Section, Sher Shah Railway Breaching and Muhammadwala Bridge. During the Inspection Secretary Anhar South Punjab reviewed the safety measures taken in view of possible floods

Secretary Irrigation South Punjab has issued instructions to the officers of the department that all resources should be utilized for safety measures. He also issued instructions to the concerned authorities and staff to monitor the water level in the rivers during the day and night in view of possible floods.

No fuel for motorcyclists without helmet after July 15: DC

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: The District administration of Multan has decided to completely stop the supply of petrol to motorcycle riders without helmets after July 15. For the convenience of the public, helmets are being sold at cheap prices at key pumps. Motorcyclists can buy helmets from stalls at Chowk Kumharanwala, SSP Chowk, Ghanta Ghar, Chongi No. 9 and Syedanwala Bypass.

On the order of the Deputy Commissioner, strict legal action will be taken against 5 motorcycle riders without helmets after July 15, while strict action will be taken against pump owners who supply petrol without helmets.

Railway team punished ticketless passengers: Hamad Hasan Mirza

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Under the direction of Divisional Superintendent of Railways Multan Hamad Mirza, the Divisional Commercial Officer Railway Multan Division Adnan Marwat along with his team raided the Pakistan Express train and raided 20 ticketless passengers. 61 thousand 120 rupees were collected from the people who did the fare and fine and deposited in the railway treasury, while also inspecting the Bahawalpur railway station. During checking in the raided train, 61 thousand 120 rupees were collected from 20 ticketless passengers as fare and fine and deposited in the railway treasury.

And also listened to the complaints of the passengers in the train and resolved them on the spot. Later, on reaching Bahawalpur station, during the inspection, checked the stalls and restaurants. Checked the income and expenses of the station including ticket fares, commercial staff at the station who were in uniform.

Questions and answers were also asked from all these commercial staff, it has been informed that following the instructions of DS Multan Hamad Hasan Mirza regarding safe train operation, inspection has been done by DCO Railway while this series Will be continued.

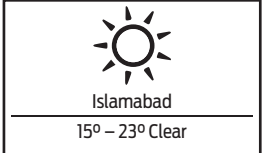
MCCI organized a one-day awareness session on Islamic banking

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Members participated in Islamic Banking and Finance awareness seminar at Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, in which the introduction of Islamic banking products and Shariah issues were discussed. In this regard, Habib Metropolitan Bank organized a one-day awareness session on the subject of Islamic banking at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan. On this occasion, Mian Rashid Iqbal, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, while speaking, said that to avoid usury, Islamic banking provides an excellent opportunity to put home capital to work

Islamic banking is also increasing in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia. Habib Metro is trading 18% of Pakistan, which he is converting to Islamic. Habib Metro has started Islamic banking in the name of Sirat in Pakistan Mufi Khawaja Noorul Hasan said that 22 institutions of Pakistan are doing Islamic banking.

In 22, 16 banks are conventional Islamic, while 6 are doing full Islamic banking, while Habib Metro is doing Islamic banking in 5 countries of the world. There is no evil in Islamic banking, work is being done on explicit Shariah principles., Muhammad Shafiq and others participated



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:24 am
Zohr	12:13 pm
Asr	5:12 pm
Maghrib	7:21 pm
Isha	9:02 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Newly appointed DPO SW Lower introductory meeting with tribal elders & SHOs



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Newly appointed District Police Officer South Waziristan Lower Farman Ullah held separate introductory meetings with tribal elders and SHOs in his office.

In the meeting, the DPO directed all the SHOs to behave well towards the people and solve their problems in a timely manner. If public problems of any police station reach my office, it will be considered as weakness and incompetence of the concerned SHO and departmental action will be taken against him.

The DPO further clarified that criminals and drug peddlers should be dealt with strictly and with iron hands and other police officers were also directed to perform their duty with dedication and honesty.

Later, the DPO also met the tribal elders in his office, the DPO appealed to tribal elders to work together for the betterment of the area and to cooperate with the police, so that crimes can be stopped in time. The DPO vowed to make the area a cradle of peace.

On this occasion, the tribal elders pledged to cooperate in all possible ways and stood side by side with the police force.

Once desperate for cipher's investigation, PTI chief now opposing probe into his own cases: Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said once desperate for probe into the purported cipher related to the regime change, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was now vehemently opposing investigations into multiple cases, including the Toshakhana theft, foreign funding, and Al-Qadir Trust case.

Addressing a news conference, the minister said the PTI chairman created a fake narrative by waving the so-called cipher during his last address to a public gathering in Islamabad as prime minister just to give an impression that he was ousted from power as the result

of a regime change operation. Ironically, he was the only prime minister in the country's history who was removed from his office through a no-confidence motion, she added.

She said he created hype of the so-called conspiracy, based on the cipher, and and blamed the former army chief for that at first place and eventually shifted its to acting Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

"Today, this person is pleading before the courts to halt the trial in the prohibited funding case and asserting that he did not know what was inside the closed envelop which had 190 million pounds and brought up before his cabinet for approval," she remarked.

The minister said the PTI chief

was opposing investigations into the Toshakhana theft and wanted his military secretary at that time to answer before the court.

"He received the gifts from the Toshakhana and sold them then why the military secretary should be held accountable?" the minister questioned.

On the other hand, she said, the three times prime minister (Nawaz Sharif) had faced the courts courageously and proved all the allegations against him wrong.

The people knew that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had done nothing wrong and had answers against all the allegations hurled against them by the PTI chief, she added.



Talking to media

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Jamaat-e-Islami Punjab Mian Muhammad Aslam talking to media persons after hearing at Election Commission in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

AJK PM urges for legal fraternity's vibrant role to highlight Kashmir issue

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq Tuesday said the legal fraternity must come forward in a big way and play its much-needed role in highlighting the Kashmir issue.

He said this while talking to a representative delegation of lawyers led by President Supreme Court Bar Mohammad Zubair Raja Advocate and President High Court Bar Association Sardar Hamid Raza Advocate and Mirpur Bar delegation that called on him at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM, while referring to the world community's indifference towards the Kashmir issue, said that the international organization has failed to resolve this long pending dispute that has been pending on the agenda of the United Nations for the last several decades.

The prime minister said that his government was determined to play its role in highlighting the issue of Kashmir



both at the national and international levels. About the dire human rights situation in the region, he said that the Indian occupation forces have turned Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) into a killing field where innocent civilians were being killed in fake encounters day in and day out.

He said that the Indian army deployed in length and breadth of IIOJK has been committing serious violations of human rights.

He said that international organiza-

tions, particularly the United Nations, should take notice of serious violations of human rights in IIOJK and play an important role in granting Kashmiris their right of self-determination guaranteed to them under the UNSC resolutions.

Stressing the need for the establishment of the rule of law in the state, the PM said that no society can flourish without implementing the rule of law.

Reiterating his commitment to serving the masses, the prime minister said that he wouldn't spare a moment in serving his people so long as he was in power. "Without a strong system of check and balance, the government cannot move forward", he said.

He said that arbitrary interpretation of the law has corrupted the entire system. The lawyers should lend their support to help the government to ensure full implementation of the rule of law and improve governance in the region, he added.

The Mirpur Bar delegation, on the occasion, extended an invitation to the prime minister requesting him to address the bar association, which he accepted.

AJK President urges int'l community play its role to resolve Kashmir conflict

Abdul Majeed Tahir



MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the international community should play its due role to resolve the lingering Kashmir conflict in line with the wishes

and will of the Kashmiri people.

The AJK president said this while speaking at a dinner party hosted by him in honour of foreign diplomats and ambassadors posted in the federal metropolis Monday night.

Referring to the worsening political and human rights situation in the Indian-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), the president told foreign diplomats that the situation in the IOJK had worsened to an alarming level since the Modi government revoked articles 370 and 35 A of the Indian constitution that guaranteed special status to the Indian occupied territory of J&K.

Kashmiris at this crucial point in time, he said, were desperately looking for urgent intervention and support from the international community.

He said that given the dire human rights situation in the region, it was high time that the world community should play its role in granting the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination to help resolve the Kashmir issue which happens to be the oldest unresolved issue pending on the UN agenda.

The dinner ceremony was attended, by the ambassadors of Norway, Turkey, Austria, Japan, Kyrgyzstan and the High Commissioners of Malaysia, Kenya, the Acting High Commissioner of Great Britain, the Political Consul of the American Embassy and several others.

Azad Awam Tehreek not supporting any political candidate in general elections

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Azad Awam Tehreek has not decided to support party and independent candidates in the general elections. The support will be done through consultation in view of mutual electoral interests. The people of Islamabad are unhappy with the elected representatives of political parties. The people of Islamabad have chosen alternatives. Pin hopes on independent political leaders. Chairman Azad Awam Tehreek, former independent candidate NA 53, Javed Intizar, talks with different sections of the public at Satara Market, said that the people should use the fruit buying formula in the general elections. In which the rotten and spoiled fruit is thrown out. If this formula is applied to the candidate's choice, clear and transparent leadership will emerge.

Book titled 'Sada Bahar Chehray' & 'Khak kay Aas Pas' launching ceremony held at PAC

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The launch ceremony of Rubab Ayesha's two books "Sada Bahar Chehray" and "Khaak Ke Aas Pas" was held in Punjab Arts Council. It was presided over by the famous writer Mr. Hameed Shahid. Naheed Manzoor and Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed participated in the event as chief guests. Naseem-e-Sahar, Farkhunda Shamim and Dr. Sher participated in the event as guests of honor. Hamid Shahid said that in both the books, Ms. Rabab Ayesha has written sketches about those relatives in her domestic, journalistic and literary fields who had well in them and who were a torch for people. Some of these names are well-known in one way or another and some are only related to their caste, he added.

Commenting on the book, Naheed Manzoor said that people are both good and bad. The certificate of goodness is given to those with whom the matter is good, and the same people with whom they deal with evil, then those people are called evil. But Allah has placed so much goodness in some people that they relate only goodness to God's creation.

The level of goodness within them is so extraordinary that they cannot harm even their mortal enemy. Talking about her books, Ms. Rubab Ayesha said that the name of the book is so close to the truth that no one can deny its importance that we are as thin as dust, and we are molded from dust and one day we will turn into dust.

Love of soil is in our nature, she added. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that Ms. Rabab's sketches on Ayesha's parents are very unique. Everyone's parents are good, but those parents who are rich in consciousness and principled, shower their compassion and love on the children of others as well as on their own children, they become an example for the world.

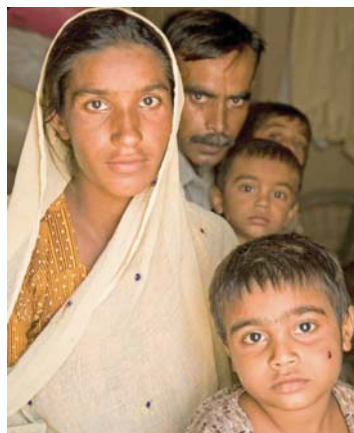
Rabab Ayesha is lucky to have parents who love knowledge and literature and whose personality influence can be seen in Rabab's writing. Farkhunda Shamim, Dr. Sher Ali, Tariq Chaudhry, Rana Qaiser, Humira Ashfaq, Mazhar Shehzad Khan, Ahmed Mehsud, Professor Fozia Maqbool, Saima Qamar, Tajur Shakeel, and Gul Arbab read articles and paid tribute to the author. A large number of people from the root cities participated in the event.

Sakinah Care Marks World Population Day by Advocating for Reproductive Health and Empowering Women

Aysha Shiekh

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN: Sakinah Care, a prominent healthcare organization dedicated to improving reproductive health and empowering women, joins the global community in observing World Population Day 2023. This significant occasion serves as a reminder of the challenges and possibilities associated with global population and reproductive health.

With an unwavering commitment to enhancing maternal, newborn, and infant health for Pakistan's most vulnerable population, Sakinah Care strives to ensure that every woman has access to the necessary resources and support to make informed decisions about their reproductive well-being. Through comprehensive initiatives and advocacy, the organization aims



to create a healthier future by eliminating barriers related to affordability and accessibility. Aligned with this year's World Popu-

lation Day theme centered on Gender Equality, Sakinah Care underscores the significance of reproductive rights, education, and support for women. By championing these fundamental principles, the organization strives to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every child is given the opportunity to thrive.

Dr. Asif Sukhera, CEO of Sakinah Care, highlights the importance of this day, stating, "On World Population Day, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering women and improving reproductive health outcomes. By delivering accessible healthcare services for safe motherhood and advocating for healthy spacing and timing, we can establish a world where every woman can exercise informed choices about herself and her family." Sakinah Care's comprehensive

approach encompasses antenatal and postnatal care, delivery assistance, family planning services, and education emphasizing the significance of birth spacing.

On this momentous occasion, Sakinah Care urges individuals, organizations, and policymakers to prioritize reproductive health and collaborate in establishing a supportive environment for women. By fostering partnerships and mobilizing collective action, we can ensure that women possess the essential tools and support needed to lead healthy, empowered lives.

Join Sakinah Care in commemorating World Population Day as we champion reproductive health, empower women, and lay the foundation for a brighter future for generations to come.

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Civil-Military collaboration for agri revolution and food security-II

A thriving agriculture sector ensures the production of sufficient food to meet the domestic demand, reducing reliance on imports and enhancing the country's self-sufficiency. It helps in overcoming food shortages, maintaining food prices at affordable levels, and reducing the risk of food insecurity in times of natural disasters or global economic crises. Food security is not only essential for the health and well-being of the population but also for the social and political stability of the country. Furthermore, agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy. The majority of Pakistan's population resides in rural areas, and their livelihoods are dependent on agriculture-related activities. By investing in the sector, the government can improve agricultural infrastructure, enhance access to credit, provide better irrigation facilities, and promote modern farming techniques. These measures will boost agricultural productivity, increase farmers' incomes, and drive rural development. A thriving agriculture sector will not only improve the standard of living in rural areas but will also reduce the urban-rural migration rate and alleviate pressure on urban infrastructure and services. The agriculture sector in Pakistan holds immense importance for the country's economy, population, and overall development. It is the largest employer, contributes significantly to GDP, ensures food security, and drives rural development. Recognizing the crucial role of agriculture, the government should invest in its sustainability,

promote modern farming techniques, improve infrastructure, and provide necessary support to farmers. By prioritizing the agriculture sector, Pakistan can achieve economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve the well-being of its population. It's very good news for Pakistan and especially for the agriculture sector of the country that the Government and Pak Army plan to revolutionize agriculture in the country by bringing modern technology and monitoring systems in agriculture through the investment council. Then reliable sources further say that the Flagship project of Green Pakistan Initiative has been started and the 2nd Agricultural Revolution is on its way. Now Pakistan has a Unique and Advanced AI based Agri Land system which is developed and deployed by the Pakistan Army. Land Information & Management System, Center of Excellence is an initiative under SIFC. LIMS is a Satellite based IT centered Agricultural Monitoring Analysis and Data driven solution providing platform. It covers Monitoring of crops from start till harvest, Analysis and monitoring of soil, Cutting edge weather forecast, Monitor and predict weather change etc. Focus Areas under this project are; Monitoring water stress, detection of pesticide attack, recommending fertilizer requirements, detecting weeds and providing solutions.

It will bring revolution in the agriculture sector of Pakistan. It is the First of its kind system in Pakistan and the region. Monitoring and Analysis will be carried out through satellites. The country's civil and military leaders recently inaugurated the Land Information and Management System – Centre of Excellence (LIMS-COE) to address the pressing issues of food insecurity, malnutrition, and soaring import costs in the agriculture sector. The inauguration of a groundbreaking solution of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, aims to transform unproductive acres, ensure food security, boost agricultural exports, and lighten the load on the national economy. Besides the Prime Minister, the COAS, ministers of finance, defence, planning and information chief secretaries of the provincial governments, agricultural experts, senior army officials and several other key officials of the other countries were also present on the occasion. "Establishment of LIMS is the first exceptional initiative, aimed at enhancing food security and improving agri exports thus reducing import burden on the national exchequer," read the official statement issued by the PM Office, adding that the initiative would help transform millions of acres of uncultivated or low yield land within the country.

"This state-of-the-art system will help optimise the agricultural production through innovative technologies and sustainable precision agricultural practices based on the agroecological potential of land," the statement added, saying the system would ensure the well-being of rural communities and the preservation of the environment. According to the World Food Programme, 36.9 percent of Pakistanis are food insecure and 18.3 percent of these are facing a severe food crisis. Cognisant of the prevailing food insecurity, the statement continued, mass malnutrition and widening import bill of agri-related products vis-à-vis projected population growth and future domestic food needs, "the national political, economic and military leadership has decided to undertake the decisive and meaningful steps to address this critical issue." The GIS-based LIMS will greatly improve the national agri yield by systemising digitisation of agriculture, it said, 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. LIMS has been already operational in Pakistan which is a very good sign for the agriculture sector of Pakistan. Pak Army assistance and support to the agriculture sector is highly appreciated by the people of Pakistan. The day is not far when the country will achieve the desired goals in the agriculture sector through remarkable civil and military collaboration.



Analysis
Abdul Basit Alvi

Pak-China cooperation on natural disaster monitoring

In a move to enhance collaboration on natural disaster monitoring, China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences will set up a natural disaster observation and research centre in the Karakoram Mountains together with Karakoram International University. This was stated by Hong Tianhua, Executive Director and Researcher of the Joint Research Center at a panel meeting with China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center and the All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association (APCEA) recently held online.

"The research centre in Pakistan, to be completed in Passu, GB within 3 years, will monitor glacial lake outbursts, glacier debris flow, and landslides by analyzing the data of glaciers, snow cover, meteorology, hydrology and soil", Hong Tianhua added.

China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences, established by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, serves as a bridge for bilateral cooperation on such areas as natural disasters, ecological environment, resource development and sustainable development of CPEC, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday.

Last year, in the fight against the floods, the CPEC multi-factor database and data management and information service system of the Joint Research Center played an indispensable role by sharing 26 data sets regarding the deluge.

Building on it, the Joint Research Center will also set up a Digital CPEC platform this year, Mr. Hong Tianhua told the audience.

"The Digital CPEC platform will support the acquisition, preservation, sharing and utilization of data on ecological environment and disaster prevention and reduction of CPEC", he added.

Geological cooperation is incorporated in the China-Pakistan Joint Statement signed in Nov. 2022. Against the backdrop of evolving climate change, it is becoming ever more imperative for countries to join hands in geological research. For China and Pakistan, the momentum is pacing up.

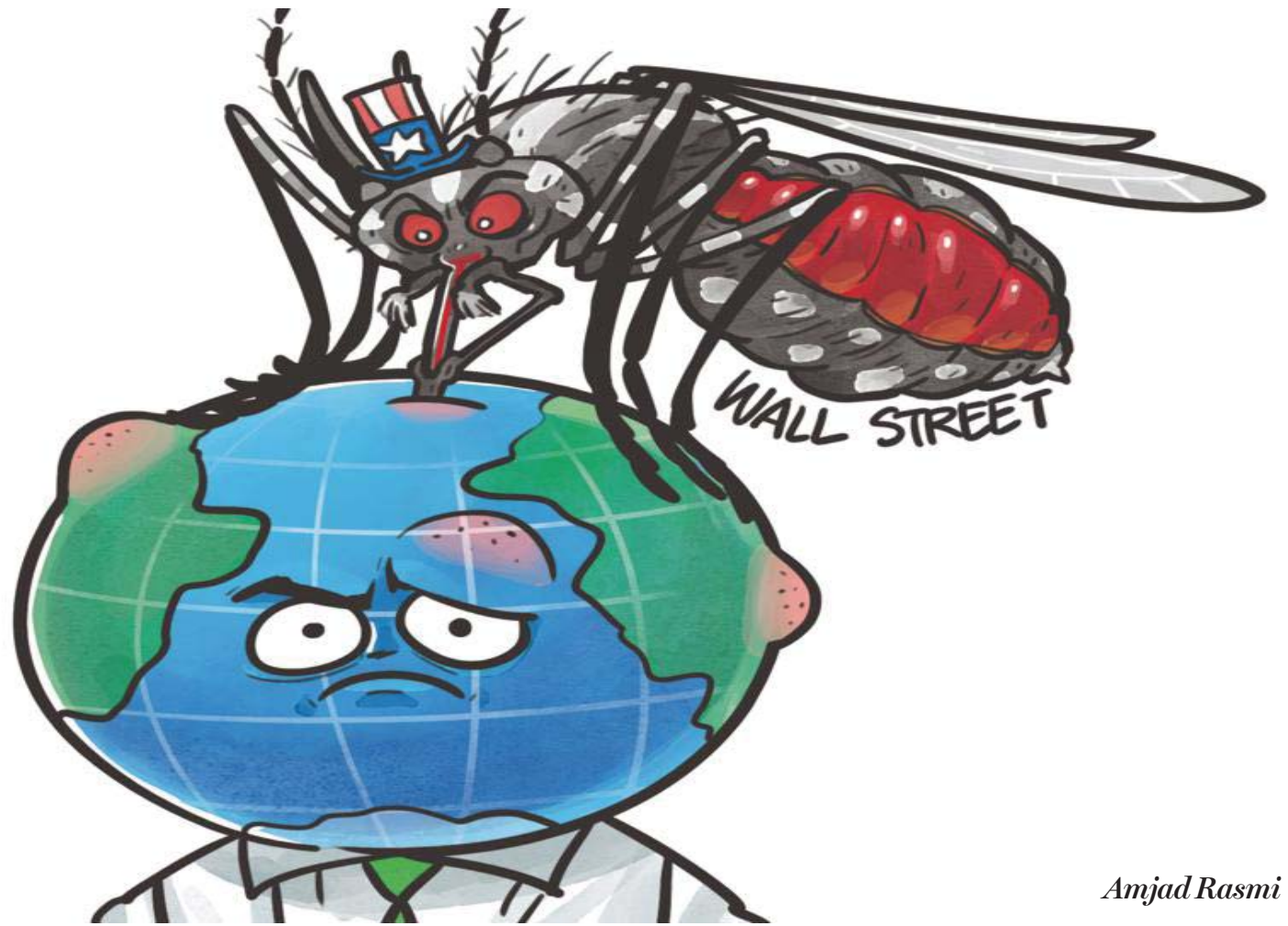
Permanent Secretary He Zhixin of China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center said that the Center has signed five agreements with Pakistan and carried out cooperation in terms of comparative studies of basic geology, construction and sharing of geological database for environmental geology and hydrogeology, geological sample analysis techniques and other areas of mutual interest.

More than 100 young technicians have been trained through various forms such as technical training courses, jointly implemented projects, academic education and visiting scholar programs, he shared.

"In the next step, we will work together with China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences to deepen practical cooperation with Pakistan in the field of geoscience", he said.

At the meeting, China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center and China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences donated a book entitled Pakistan in the Eyes of Geologists to APCEA.

According to APCEA chairman, Yang Jianduo, the book, published in January 2023, allows readers to gain deeper insights into Pakistan by taking them from the south all the way to the north of Pakistan along with the geological investigators. The book will also be translated into English and Urdu to enable more readers to have a better understanding of the resource-rich land.



Amjad Rasmi

Why are KSA, UAE investing in agri-livestock? - I

A renowned anchor of Pakistan in one of his highly rated program disclosed that the army chief soon after assuming the baton, has been meeting with businessmen, agriculturists, economists and imminent persons from many other important sectors to bring in some semblance in the way the country is being handled and to overcome its economic and financial woes. But perhaps the listener did not pay much attention to it at the time, until the news of the formation of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) with the Army Chief as a member and center stage was announced, and we all know that when the mighty speak, the others only listen.

Soon after its formation, various sessions were held wherein many important decisions which could otherwise have taken years to mature were finalized in a jiffy. In a matter of hours, the four terminals of Karachi ports were sold to a Dubai-based company for a lease of more than 30 years. The file of sale, once started, continued to move at breakneck speed, possibly without requiring the customary and legendary oiling of the wheels to speed up the process, as perhaps the Army Chief's baton was enough to do the rest. SIFC's second decision was to auction Pakistan Steel Mills, which is expected to be completed before the next government takes office. The army chief brought his

third ready-to-launch project, the Livestock and Dairy Modernization and Improvement Support (LIMS) Program, which aims to introduce modern agro-farming to increase the profitability and productivity of Pakistan's livestock and dairy industries. Only two days after the launch of LIMS, the army chief introduced its fourth prefabricated initiative, "the Green Pakistan initiative," which was launched today (10th July, 2023) by the Prime Minister in the presence of all federal ministers and Chief Ministers to provide it with much needed legitimacy. This gathering of all political forces was a replay of the gathering of all political parties following the APS incident in Peshawar, but this time Imran Khan was conveniently not invited, as if he has no relevance in the country's current and future political setup.

While speaking at the prestigious ceremony, the Prime Minister thanked the Army Chief for bringing in the green initiative and hoped that this project, like a magic wand, would change the fate of Pakistan in no time by bringing in billions of dollars in investment in Pakistan in months, if not days. I believe that, like many other leaders, our Prime Minister is good at convincing people that Pakistan is

a prosperous country and that they are the richest people on the planet. This dream, however, has always been dashed when the new government declares Pakistan on the verge of collapse, and then we wait for another such speech from the new prime minister. Let us hope and believe in the words of the army chief who said that despair is irreligious and true Muslims should thank Allah for His bounties and show patience and pray for the return of better times during times of trial and retribution. Is this initiative new or old, was it introduced in the past but, refreshed and reintroduced, and why the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and United Arab Emirates are specifically interested in our agriculture and livestock sectors, were a few questions which needed answers.

Some headlines piqued my interest while I was looking for answers. The headline in Arab News on September 19, 2019 read, "Pakistan seeks Saudi, UAE partnership in agriculture." "Saudi Conglomerate Al Tamimi Group Eyes Investment Opportunities in Pakistan's Agriculture Sector," Arab News, December 26, 2019. "UAE investors acquire land in Pakistan for food production," National News, October 26, 2008. The Express

Tribune, 23.06.2022, "Saudi investors interested in agriculture in Pakistan", Financial Times, "UAE investors buy Pakistan farmland". And the list goes on.

Investment in Pakistan's agriculture and livestock markets appears to be seen as the most viable, cost-effective, and secure way for Saudi Arabia and the UAE to ensure their people's food security.

According to a study published in the Journal of the Saudi Society of Agriculture Science in October 2018, Saudi Arabia will import all of its food by 2050. The Kingdom also panicked after its experiments to promote agriculture in the country by using underground fresh water, importing water from other countries, or artificially creating water from sea water initially generated headlines, but later plummeted, compelling the Kingdom to reverse its policy due to compelling reasons such as unjust use of nonrenewable natural resources was not a viable practice and it depleted much of the country's scarce aquifer water supplies which rendered the program ineffective. As a result, by 2016, Saudi Arabia was primarily reliant on imported wheat, prompting the Kingdom to turn to Pakistan due to its large expanse of land that had gone unutilized or underutilized as a result of its legendary incompetence, lack of political will and obsolete work processes.

To be continued



Analysis
Qamar Bashir

Wearing Helmet and ban on fuel

Once again, the government has showed his love for their people's. An order to wear helmets to motorcyclists in Punjab was issued for saving their lives. Under the guise of the order, the district administration directed to pump petrol owners that motorcyclists who did not have helmets should not sell fuel/petrol. In this regard "No helmet no fuel" orders have been issued. All of this is being done at a time when the summer and heat is on its rise and inflation. In this way citizens' lives have been put in trouble to impose this restriction. Poor and hopeless motorcyclist buy flour, sugar, pulses, milk or helmets? On the other hand for establishing the writ of Govt. and enforcing the orders of DIG Traffic, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Multan like other district officers banned to give petrol to motorcycle riders not wearing helmets. An order has issued with subject "No Helmet No fuel" by ADC General Multan. The reality is that administration is unknowingly violation the fundamental rights of the people. In the past such illegal practice has been stopped by Apex Court (SC) when this restriction imposed in 2021.

On January 27, 2021, The Supreme Court has set aside the Lahore High Court's order on putting a ban on the sale of fuel to motorcycles or two wheelers without safety helmets. A three-judge bench, comprising Justice Manzoor Ahmad Malik, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aminuddin Khan, has been hearing the appeal against a notification of the deputy commissioner banning the sale of petrol to motorcyclists or bikers without helmet. The deputy commissioner, Lahore, Mudarris Riaz and CTO Lahore, Syed Hammad, also appeared before the court. Advocate Nasarullah Babar appeared on behalf of a petrol pump owner Irfan Bashir, arguing that the

LHC's order and a subsequent notification by DC Lahore, had no value in the eyes of the law, as there was no law in the country that put ban on the sale of fuel to motorcyclists conditionalizing them to wear helmets.

Wearing a helmet is important because it keeps us safe. The majority of fatalities in accidents related to bicycle and motorcycles are because of injuries to the head. By wearing a helmet, if we were ever to be involved in a motorcycle or bicycle accident, it can reduce the severity of the head injury because of the accident. Although we wearing a helmet do not completely prevent a head injury, if you have a helmet on, it will provide a cushion for the blow. Wearing a helmet on our motorcycle or bicycle can also help our vision as well by providing protection from the sun's rays or the rain or snow.

In the better interest of the public, the administration should show leniency with students, hospitalized patients and mass that following court cases in city, because the speed limit of the motorcycle in the urban limits is not more than 25 or 30 km/hr. While on the long route, the helmet should be declared necessary for the motorcycle rider.

In the past campaigns of implementing traffic laws and order to wear helmet had failed, now to triumph this effort traffic police should go to educate people in markets, schools, universities, and other areas so they understand that the traffic police are concerned for their safety. With regard to substandard helmets, the citizen was of the view that there was a need to enforce a uniform standard for helmets through the Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority. "It is true that no one is inquiring about the sale of substandard helmets. Only a good helmet can help bikers avoid any brain injuries if they ever meet with an accident."



Analysis
Zain ul Abideen Abid

Why green pursuit in China's mountain region matters to world



Guo Yuqi

GUIYANG, CHINA: South of the Yangtze River, southwest China's Guizhou Province is a realm of biodiversity, karst landscape and natural heritage. In the province's capital city Guiyang, a two-day global forum on ecological civilization just concluded.

As a national-level global forum themed on ecological civilization, the Eco Forum Global Guiyang 2023, which attracted over 3,200 participants, provided a platform for international discussion on ecological civilization and green development.

Fighting Challenges

Guizhou, a mountainous region, has overcome ecological degradation and severe economic distress to become what it is today.

At the forum, participants were welcome to taste the locally-produced Roxburgh rose juice. This small and sweet fruit has a remarkable history of fighting against rocky desertification.

Rocky desertification, also known as "the earth cancer," refers to land degradation where vegetation is destroyed, bedrock is exposed and the surface resembles a desert landscape. Local people would say, "Rocks come to light, no plants survive."

In Guizhou, areas of rocky desertification are often located in impoverished regions. People discovered that Roxburgh roses are relatively cold-resis-

tant, shade-tolerant and have well-developed root systems, making them naturally appropriate for combating rocky desertification.

With government support, local people in areas of rocky desertification areas such as Liupanshui City, Bouyei-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Qian-nan, Anshun City and Bijie City started to grow Roxburgh roses in stone cracks and make products out of its fruits, which not only improved natural conditions but also helped people find a path to wealth.

Ibrahim Thiaw, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, once visited the Roxburgh rose planting areas in central Guizhou. He underscored that this solution for combating rocky desertification has economic value and inspires the world.

This is just one example of the numerous instances where Guizhou showcases the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature. Through years of dedicated efforts toward building a more eco-friendly society, Guizhou was designated the country's ecological civilization pilot zone in 2016.

Thorjorn Larssen, deputy managing director of the Norwegian Institute for Water Research, came to China for the first time in 1993. He recalled that when he first came to Guiyang 30 years ago, the air pollution in the city was quite severe. "It's very impressive to see how

the air quality has improved and how fast measures are taken."

According to the professor, poverty reduction and environmental improvement must go hand in hand. Ecological civilization entails incorporating environmental considerations into all forms of social progress.

Common Goals

The pursuit of ecological civilization in China matters to the world because no country or continent can manage environmental issues alone.

In his congratulatory letter to the Eco Forum Global Annual Conference Guiyang 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "ecological conservation concerns the future of humankind, and it's the common goal of all nations to build a green home."

Examples such as the commitment to achieving carbon peak and carbon neutrality, as well as the promotion of initiatives like the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, demonstrate that China is dedicated to building a beautiful China and shouldering global responsibilities.

"We face roughly the same issues worldwide," said Tamas Hajba, senior advisor for China with Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). "It's very important that we measure biodiversity loss and exchange information and data with each other, and this is the way how we improve our own policies," he added.



Furthermore, China's experience, accumulated over generations and in diverse geographical conditions, is valuable for those facing similar challenges.

Solutions in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goals provide a global roadmap that protects the planet but also reduces poverty and leaves no one behind, James George, deputy resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme in China, told Xinhua.

"We are working closely together with China and all partners globally to develop new innovative development actions. Let us utilize this opportunity to share the best practices and new innovative approaches in China that we can share with the rest of the world for mutual exchange and learning for a better planet for everyone," he said.

Michia Moncho, a full-time national community member of the Young Communist League of South Africa responsible for international relations, was impressed by what she saw in China. Besides theorizing "development," what matters is to work with people and show them that ecological civilization is not only going to benefit us for now but for generations to come, she noted during the eco forum.

"I'll take home what I saw here, how China is implementing measures with Chinese characteristics, and we, as South Africans, can implement them with our characteristics," she said.

Leading Role

In recent years, China has been leading in addressing climate change, protecting biodiversity and promoting a green transformation. The green technologies developed in China have benefited other parts of the world.

In his written statement for the World Leaders Summit at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2021, Xi said it is vital to harness innovations in science and technology to transform and upgrade the energy and resources sectors as well as the industrial structure and consumption pattern.

"We will foster a green, low-carbon and circular economic system at a faster pace, press ahead with industrial structure adjustment, and rein in the irrational development of energy-intensive and high-emission projects," he said.

Erik Solheim, former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, told the eco forum that according to his observation, several Chinese companies are leading the way in future green industries, some even being established in third-tier small cities.

"These companies, such as those in the electric vehicle industry, brought jobs, prosperity, and profits in China, while at the same time, it is very good for global environmental progress," Solheim said.

A few days earlier in Camacari, Brazil,

Chinese automaker BYD announced the construction of a production base complex comprising three factories, which is expected to create over 5,000 new jobs in the local area. In addition to producing electric vehicles, the complex will process lithium-iron phosphate batteries.

Filipe Porto, a researcher at the Federal University of ABC and a member of the Brazilian Foreign Policy Observatory, believes China is becoming an essential partner for Brazil to meet its decarbonization and energy needs.

In Africa, China has been working with countries to meet their green targets.

"China has been the leading partner in the continent's desired to switch to solar and wind energy," said Cavince Adhere, a Kenya-based international relations scholar.

The expert told Xinhua that with China's help, Kenya is now home to the largest grid-connected solar power plant in East and Central Africa. The Garissa China-built 50MW solar power plant is proving benefits to the country as Kenya now taps over 2 percent of the national energy source from the facility.

Adhere said that through targeted technology transfers, Kenyans in the northern part of the country are now reaping the benefits of Chinese technology with improved access to power.

A Story of Xinhua Writer

Larry Nassar, doctor who sexually abused US gymnasts, is stabbed

News Desk

Larry Nassar, the disgraced doctor of USA Gymnastics who was convicted of sexually abusing young female gymnasts, has been stabbed multiple times by another inmate in prison and was in stable condition on Monday, U. S. media reported.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed that an inmate at the U. S. Penitentiary Coleman in Florida was assaulted on Sunday afternoon, but declined to identify the prisoner over privacy and security concerns.

"Responding staff immediately initiated life-saving measures," bureau spokesperson Benjamin O'Conne said in a statement. "The inmate was transported by (emer-

gency personnel) to a local hospital for further treatment and evaluation."

The FBI was notified of the incident, and an internal investigation is ongoing, O'Conne added. No other staff or inmates were injured, he said.

Nassar, who is serving a decades-long sentence following his 2018 conviction, was stabbed 10 times - twice in the neck, twice in the back, and six times in the chest - Joe Rojas, president of the local correction officers' union, told CNN.

According to the Associated Press, which was first to report the assault, Nassar was in stable condition.

Larry Nassar was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison for sexually abusing young female gymnasts who were entrusted to his care, including



Olympic gold medalists Simone Biles, Aly Raisman and McKayla Maroney.

His sentencing followed an extraordinary week-long hearing in which 160 of his victims, most of whom were minors at the time they were abused, unflinchingly told their stories.

Since the Nassar scandal, USA Gymnastics has overhauled its leadership and filed for bankruptcy, saying at the time it was staggering under the weight of lawsuits filed by hundreds of women who were sexually abused by the former team doctor.

Nassar's former employer, Michigan State University, agreed to a \$500 million settlement with the hundreds of women who were sexually abused by him. USA Gymnastics and the U. S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee reached a \$380 million

settlement.

A July 2021 report by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz uncovered widespread and dire errors by the FBI that allowed Nassar to continue to abuse at least 70 more victims before he was finally arrested.

In September 2021, Biles and Maroney were among the high profile Olympic gymnasts who gave heart-wrenching testimony before a U. S. Senate panel about the sexual abuse they endured for years under Nassar's care.

At that hearing, the gymnasts blasted the FBI for its mishandling of the investigation, with Biles accusing the bureau of turning a blind eye to all of Larry Nassar's victims.

Legendary tales of the victorious war and 70 years later

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: July 27, 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the victory of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the Fatherland Liberation War (1950-1953). The victory is etched in the world history of war.

Legendary Tales of the Victorious War
In 1950 the Korean war, the fiercest war since the Second World War, broke out.

At that time no one ever thought that the DPRK, founded two years before, would defeat the United States, which had been boasting of being the "strongest" in the world with a history of victory in 110 wars since its founding.

As the world media described, the war was a confrontation between rifle and atomic bomb.

But the result of the war turned out to be the opposite. The DPRK, a small country in the East, created a miracle by defeating the multinational forces, which pounced upon a country in the name of the United Nations for the first time in the world.

After switching over to an immediate counteroffensive, the Korean People's Army drove the enemy to the end of south Korea within a little over a month.

On the other hand, the United

States hurled into the Korean front its forces armed with the latest weapons - one-third of its ground force, one-fifth of its air force, most of its Pacific Fleet as well as the troops of 15 of its vassal states, south Korean puppet army and even the remnants of the former Japanese army; the military budget during the war totalled USD164 billion. This notwithstanding, it sustained a loss nearly 2.3 times greater than that it had suffered in the four-year war in the Pacific, and signed an armistice agreement.

By defeating the enemy, who were superior in terms of number of troops and technical equipment, by dint of their ideological and spiritual, strategic and tactical superiority, the Korean people defended the freedom and independence of their country and frustrated the US attempt to dominate the world with the Korean peninsula as a springboard, defending global peace and security.

Mark Clark, commander of the US Far East Command who had signed the armistice agreement, said that the north Korean army could win victory thanks to outstanding command of General Kim Il Sung, who had achieved great exploits in the resistance of many years against the Japanese army until the defeat of Japan in the Second World War.

70 Years Later

Seventy years have elapsed since ceasefire was achieved on the Korean peninsula. But the peninsula still remains as one of the hottest spots in the world.

After the armistice agreement was reached, the United States implement-



ed none of the items of the agreement and tenaciously pursued a hostile policy against the DPRK, driving the situation on the peninsula to the brink of war. It deployed nukes in south Korea, imposing undisguised and direct nuclear threat on the DPRK.

Entering the 21st century, it has put the DPRK on the list of targets of its

preemptive nuclear strike, and staged nuclear war games every year in the areas near the country by mobilizing large forces including its strategic nuclear assets.

A country without an effective self-defence capability will inevitably be at the mercy of external military

threats and, worse still, be unable to safeguard the existence of its own and of its people. This is an immutable law shown by the human history.

Over the past 70 years after the war, the DPRK had to overcome manifold difficulties in developing its economy and improving the living standards of its people because of the long-drawn-

out military threat, sanctions and blockade.

The best option for the DPRK for both durable peace and further acceleration of building itself into a powerful socialist country was the line of simultaneously promoting economic construction and building up its nuclear forces.

The line of simultaneously promoting the two fronts was put forward at the March 2013 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea.

True to the new strategic line, the defence scientists displayed their indomitable will in developing strategic weapon systems of their own style. Within a few years the DPRK manufactured innovative versions of ICBM, thus making its military strength irreversible.

In April last ICBM of Hwasongpho-18 type made its appearance, demonstrating the level of development of the country's strategic forces. Display of military equipment at military parades held every year in the country is a proof of its military strength which the others could not belittle.

With this, the DPRK could frustrate the machinations of the hostile forces, who were trying to drag it to their arms race by aggravating the situation on the Korean peninsula, and speed up

its economic construction.

This can be testified by the demonstration of the potential of its self-supporting economy, like setting up structures that reflect its people's dreams and ideals and opening a new era of rural rejuvenation amidst severe difficulties like harsh sanctions, global healthcare crisis and successive natural disasters.

In the present world, where confrontation of strength is the order of the day, the country's sovereignty and dignity and genuine peace can be assured only by an overwhelming defence capability - this is the creed of Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs of the DPRK.

In April last year in the speech at the military parade held in celebration of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army, Kim Jong Un said: We should continuously grow stronger; there is no satisfaction or accomplishment in cultivating strength for defending ourselves, and, whoever we confront, our military supremacy should be more secure.

The 70-year-long postwar history of the DPRK, in which it defended its sovereignty and dignity and the safety and happiness of its people, further highlights the meaning of the 70th anniversary of victory in the war in the 1950s.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
45,155.79	44,585.12
Day's High	Day's Low:
45,250.48	44,691.46
Index Value	Change
12,087,631,378	+570.67
Percentage	Time
+1.28%	11 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,282.52	+8.73
Percentage	Time
+0.12%	11 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,171.75	+227.35
Percentage	Time
+0.67%	11 Jul, 1:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,203.57	+13.84
Percentage	Time
+0.043%	11 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	197.5	200
Bahrain Dinar	743.62	751.62
Canadian Dollar	216	218
China Yuan	38.68	39.08
Danish Krone	41.25	41.65
Euro	309	312
Hong Kong Dollar	35.72	36.07
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	910.68	919.67
Malaysian Ringgit	59.87	60.47
New Zealand \$	173.56	175.56
Norwegians Krone	26.61	26.91
Omani Riyal	726.67	734.67
Qatari Riyal	76.81	77.51
Saudi Riyal	74.5	75
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	25.91	26.21
Swiss Franc	315.27	317.77
Thai Bhat	7.96	8.11
U.A.E Dirham	77.6	78.5
UK Pound Sterling	362	367
US Dollar	282	284.5

COAS's commitment to revive struggling economy admirable

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Hanif Mughal, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Tuesday that the determination of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir to develop the falling economy is commendable. COAS is giving special attention to industry and agriculture, which will soon improve the economic affairs of the country. Despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan is exporting billions of dollars worth of commodities and other products. A little attention can not only make Pakistan self-sufficient but also result in exports of agriculture commodities, he said. Dr. Hanif Mughal said that Pakistan is all set to become a major exporter of agricul-



tural products if the policies are modified a bit, which will also revive the dwindling textile sector. The textile sector is the mainstay of the economy, which is in ruins and merits full attention, he underlined. He said that Pakistan's textile sector has been stagnant for a decade; its exports are falling while those of rival countries are continuously increasing. In the recently ended fiscal year, Pakistan's exports decreased by four billion dollars, or twelve percent, compared to the previous year, and they have not even reached 28 billion dollars. On the other hand, Bangladesh's exports have registered 6 percent growth to hit the mark of 55 billion dollars despite financial

difficulties and the global recession. Ready-made garments have played an important role in Bangladesh's exports, accounting for a share of 84 percent in total exports, while Pakistan's textile sector is going down due to the cost of doing business and other reasons. One of the main reasons for the decline in Pakistan's exports is the ban on imports due to the payment crisis. The sector could not import essential dyes, chemicals, raw materials, and machinery, resulting in a downturn. He said that Pakistan is constantly retreating from the international market while other countries are gaining space, and Bangladesh has become the second-largest textile exporter in the world.

ICCI Tourism Summit will have positive impact on tourism and business: Ambassadors

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Nepal have said that the ICCI International Tourism Summit 2023 is a very successful effort to promote tourism. Joint efforts are needed to promote tourism in the entire South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The northern regions of Pakistan are not only exemplary in their beauty, but their importance increases further with the vast business opportunities. They expressed these views while expressing their views regarding the ICCI International Summit. Bangladesh High Commissioner Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique has said that I congratulate the President Islamabad Chamber and his entire team for the successful organization of the "First ICCI Tourism Summit Skardu 2023". The initiative taken by the Islamabad Chamber to provide an opportunity to see the natural beauty of the northern regions has not only had a positive impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan but also improved the cordial relationship between the Islamabad Chamber and the High Commission. Regarding the summit, Tapas Adhikari, Nepal's ambassador to Pakistan, said that Pakistan has a rich tourism heritage which can create tremendous economic opportunities, boost employment and increase



income. Islamabad Chamber's initiatives to expand the beautiful tourist destinations of Pakistan for economic activities and promote tourism are commendable. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawarisaid that I am extremely grateful to the foreign ambassadors for participating in the ICCI International Tourism Summit. Without their participation, we can not hold this summit successfully. I am happy that we have been able to present this best region of Pakistan to the world. The ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Maldives and other countries participating in the summit reviewed

the beauty of the northern region and business opportunities. I hope the results of this concerted effort of the Islamabad Chamber will come out soon. He said that the success of Skardu as a tourist destination is not only dependent on government policies and infrastructure but also requires collective efforts of all of us. As ambassadors, government officials and civil society members, we have a shared responsibility to promote Skardu as a model for sustainable tourism. He said that tourism is not only an industry that promotes economic growth and development, but is a bridge that connects different cultures.

Mobilink Bank's H1 2023 Financial Results Highlight a 232% Growth in Profit Before Tax

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank exhibited an impressive growth trajectory in its financial performance during the first half of 2023, reflecting its unwavering dedication to excellence, as per the unaudited/unreviewed financial statements. With a 57% increase in total revenue, the Bank showcased its

37% increase in the average ticket size, reaching PKR 299K, as compared to the same period last year. This growth translated into a substantial 57% increase in total revenue, amounting to PKR 17.3 billion. The core banking revenue saw a significant boost of 48%, reaching PKR 8.8 billion, while branchless banking revenue increased



proficiency in both attracting and retaining customers, effectively adapting to the ever-evolving financial landscape. The Bank's Profit Before Tax (PBT) experienced a 232% growth in H1 2023 compared to the corresponding period in 2022. The H1 2023 results further solidify Mobilink Bank's position as a leading digital microfinance institution. Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives, creating opportunities for greater digital inclusion, and driving economic growth across countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population. Despite uncertainties arising from high inflation, Mobilink Bank experienced impressive growth across all verticals. In H1 2023, the Bank achieved a

by 66% to PKR 8.5 billion during the same period. Mobilink Bank has also showcased its exceptional prowess in financial management during H1 2023, delivering outstanding performance. With a 22.35% Return on Equity (ROE) and 1.6% Return on Assets (ROA), the Bank has demonstrated its expertise and strategic approach. These returns affirm the Bank's ability to generate profits. Commending the Bank's performance, Ghazanfar Azzam, President & CEO Mobilink Bank said, "The synergy within Mobilink Bank's team has been the driving force behind its success, helping us promote our goal of promoting financial inclusion for all. Taimoor Farid, Acting Chief Finance Officer Mobilink Bank said: "The Bank's strong financial results validate our focus on agile business models and customer-centric offerings, driving strategic value creation."

Gas load shedding

RAWALPINDI: Women are carrying fruit crates on their way at Double Road to use them as domestic firewood as the gas load shedding in the city in increased manifold.



Photo: Online

Promoting religious tourism can help in earning foreign exchange: RCCI

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Evacuee Trust Property Board Punjab have agreed to put joint efforts and cooperation with all available resources to promote religious tourism to earn foreign exchange. Pakistan contains numerous sacred sites of different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism that can easily be transformed into tourist destinations. These views were expressed by Acting President RCCI Faisal Shahzad with Secretary Evacuee Trust Property Board Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif in a meeting at chamber house. A largely unexplored avenue of tourism in Pakistan is religious tourism mainly Sikh and Buddhist tourism which can potentially generate over millions of dollars for Pakistan, and create over 100,000 jobs, said Faisal Shahzad.

CCP'S enquiry uncovers prima facie price fixing by urea producers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: An enquiry committee of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has concluded its enquiry and recommended the initiation of proceeding under Section 30 of the Competition Act, 2010 against urea manufacturers and the Fertilizers Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC). This enquiry recommendation is based on a prima facie violation of Section 4 'Prohibited Agreements' of the Competition Act, 2010, by manufacturers and FMPAC by announcing the 'Maximum Retail Price' of urea at Rs 1768 per 50 KG Bag. The enquiry was initiated following an advertisement published by FMPAC and its members on 26th November 2021, announcing a 'Maximum Retail Price of Urea' during a period of rising urea prices and reported shortages. According to the Fertilizer Policy of 2001, urea prices were deregulated, and respective provincial agriculture departments notified urea prices from time to time as it is considered an essential item. These prices, as already fixed by the Compa-

nies, are notified by the Agriculture department to use as a reference to check on any profiteering. It was noted that the companies issue their price lists, which are then notified by the respective Deputy Director of Agriculture (Extension) under the authority of the Punjab Essential Articles (Control) Act, 1973. To obtain copies of these price notifications and the underlying company price lists for the years 2021 and 2022, the enquiry committee contacted the Agriculture Department of Punjab. The department provided notifications from 22 districts, as detailed in Table 14 (copies of the notifications have been provided). As per the finding of the enquiry report, the pricing pattern of different fertilizer manufacturers in the urea industry exhibit price parallelism (uniform pricing) pointing towards possible collusion in the industry. Specifically, the prices of Engro, FFC, Fatima, and Agritech show a parallel movement, with minor differences between them. For instance, in Rawalpindi, between February 2021 and June 2022, the prices increased by Rs. 232 for Engro, Rs. 233 for FFC and Fatima, and Rs. 230 for Agritech. Interestingly, all companies



reduced their prices to Rs. 1850 in May 2022, only to increase them again to Rs. 1950 in June 2022. In Layyah district, from January 2021 to November 2021, Engro, FFC, and Fatima (excluding Agritech) experienced an increase in prices by Rs. 482 per bag or 27.26% between February 2022 and November 2022. These findings highlight the trend of price similarity and the common pricing practices within the urea industry. The enquiry concluded that the advertisement by FMPAC and its members constituted a prima facie decision by an association, specifying the selling rate for urea fertilizer. Further-

more, it was observed that the announced price was implemented by urea companies, raising concerns about whether this pricing consistency was coincidental or a result of collusive/coordinated activities. The urea sector in Pakistan comprises six companies. FFC dominates the market with a 39% share, followed by Engro at 36%. Fatima Fertilizer holds a market share of 13%, while Agritech accounts for 4%. It is worth noting that urea producers received subsidized feedstock gas from the government. Considering the variations in cost structures and subsidies received by manufacturers, the similarity or uniformity in prices raises questions. Pakistan's agriculture sector, contributing 22.7% to the GDP, relies heavily on fertilizers with an average usage of 207 kg per hectare. Recent price hikes by FMPAC and its members resulted in gains of Rs. 1.8 billion during the Rabi season. Major fertilizer companies like FFC, Engro, and Fatima Fertilizer saw significant profits in 2021, except for Agritech. FFC's profit before tax in 2021 was Rs.30.3 billion, Engro's Rs.29.8 billion, and

Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited Rs.28.2 billion. However, these gains increased costs for farmers and consumers. The sector's subsidized gas, costing Rs. 156 billion, raises concerns about fairness. The advertisement by FMPAC (Fertilizer Manufacturers and Suppliers Association) and its members, in which they collectively announce the price of urea in the relevant market, appears to constitute a decision according to the Act. This decision is a prima facie violation of Section 4(1) read with Section 4(2)(a) of the Act as the announcement of prices is considered a purely commercial decision that falls outside the permissible activities of an association. Associations should not engage in activities that have an adverse effect on competition. As the prices of urea fertilizer are deregulated, both the association and the urea manufacturers have committed a prima facie violation of Section 4(2)(a) of the Act. They are collectively fixing the price of urea instead of independently intimating their respective prices to the government, which goes against fair competition principles.

1,500 athletes taking part in SBP summer camps of 14 games

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail on Tuesday said that Sports Board Punjab's mega Summer Camp programme was underway quite successfully at various sports venues here at Nishtar Park Sports Complex.

Dr Asif Tufail said that 1,500 athletes are taking part in the summer camps of 14 games such as Swimming, Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, Self-Defence, Taekwondo, Wushu, Karate and Gymnastics. "Around 500 young male and female swimmers are being imparted training by Sports Board Punjab's expert coaches in swimming summer camp," he added.

Dr Asif Tufail said that swimming is one of the most popular sports among the younger generation.

"We are quite upbeat that the swimming summer camp will help a lot in further nurturing the potential of young camp probables."

He further said that young male and female swimmers are keenly taking part in Swimming Summer Camp. "The coaches have been advised to teach young swimmers about the basics of swimming during the camp training," he informed.



He said that holding of Summer Camp is a valuable step of Sports Board Punjab and young swimmers must avail this golden opportunity and polish their skills under the guidance of qualified coaches.

Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan visited Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall and witnessed the summer camps of table tennis and badminton.

He appreciated the keen involvement of table tennis and badminton players and advised the SBP coaches to impart true professional training to young players.

Bowlers, Litton aid Bangladesh avoid Afghanistan whitewash

A Sports

CHITTAGONG: Shoriful Islam-led bowling attack decimated Afghanistan's batting lineup before Litton Das's half-century lifted Bangladesh to avoid the clean sweep.

Set to chase a modest 127-run target, Bangladesh comfortably raced to 129/3 in 23.3 overs to claim a consolation victory in the three-match ODI series, won by Afghanistan 2-1.

Bangladesh's stand-in captain Litton Das led from the front with a sensible match-winning knock and top-scored with 53 off 60 deliveries.

The home side had a dismal start to the run chase as opener Mohammad Naim fell for an eight-ball duck in the third over.

Bangladesh sustained another blow to their expedition when Fazalhaq Farooqi castled Najmul Hossain Shanto (11), forcing the hosts to slip to 28/2 in seven overs.

Following the back-to-back blows, Das anchored the run chase with veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan.

The pair shared a 61-run stand for the third wicket and put their side in control.

Shakib fell victim to Mohammad Nabi in the 18th over after scoring a run-a-ball 39, laced with five bound-



aries. Meanwhile, Das, who hit three fours and two sixes in his important knock, carried his bat all the way through and steered Bangladesh home in the 24th over.

Towhid Hridoy, who scored the match-winning boundary for Bangladesh, remained unbeaten on 22.

Opting to bat first, Afghanistan's batting lineup failed completely and could only accumulate 126 runs before being bundled out in the 46th over.

All-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai

waged a lone battle for Afghanistan and top-scored with 56, his maiden ODI fifty.

He struck one boundary and three sixes and conceded 71 deliveries.

Besides him, skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi offered resistance with a cautious 22-run knock from 54 deliveries.

Shoriful Islam led the bowling attack for Bangladesh with 4/21 followed by two wickets each by Taskin Ahmed and Tajiul Islam. Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraz, on the other hand, made one scalp each.

The Ashes: England stick with unchanged squad for fourth Test at Old Trafford

England has announced an unchanged 14-player squad for the upcoming fourth Ashes Test at Old Trafford with Surrey wicketkeeper Ben Foakes once again missing out, as Jonny Bairstow to retain the wicketkeeping duties. Ollie Pope will be absent from the squad due to a shoulder injury sustained during the second Test at Lord's, ruling him out for the remainder of the summer.

England managed to secure a three-wicket victory in the third Test, narrowing the series gap to 2-1 in favour of Australia, with two Tests left to play. The fourth Test is scheduled to commence on Wednesday, July 19.

James Anderson, the seam bowler, was rested for the third Test but could potentially make a comeback at his home ground. The 40-year-old may replace Ollie Robinson, who suffered a back spasm during Australia's first innings in the previous match and subsequently did not bowl for the remainder of the game. Another contender for a recall is Josh Tongue, who showcased an impressive performance during the second Test at Lord's.

However, Mark Wood and Chris Woakes both made significant contributions in their first Test appearances of the summer, with Wood being named the player-of-the-match after claiming seven wickets. Woakes, on the other hand, took six wickets and played an instrumental unbeaten knock of 32 runs in England's second innings to guide them to victory.

Wanindu Hasaranga named ICC Men's Player of the Month for June

A Sports

Star Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga got the reward of his sensational Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier campaign as he claimed the ICC Player of the Month award for June 2023.

Wanindu Hasaranga beat out strong opposition from Australia batter Travis Head and Zimbabwe opener Sean Williams for the coveted award on the back of his superb performances for the island nation at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier.

"I am extremely happy with this award, and it comes at an important moment for Sri Lanka Cricket, after we made it to the

Cricket World Cup in India. I am privileged and honoured to have been chosen as the ICC Men's Player of the Month," said Hasaranga.

The all-rounder collected 26 wickets at an average of 10 during the month, with the majority of those scalps helping Sri Lanka qualify for the 50-over World Cup at the end of the year.

Wanindu Hasaranga was the leading wicket-taker at the Qualifier event, with the 25-year-old also becoming just the second player in the history of ODI cricket to claim three consecutive five-wicket hauls.

Pakistan great Waqar Younis managed the feat way back in 1990 and Hasaran-



ga matched the exploits of the dynamic quick by following up the impressive figures of 6/24 against the UAE with a pair of five-wicket hauls against Oman and Ireland.

If Wanindu Hasaranga's efforts with the ball weren't enough, the right-hander

also managed to score 91 runs with the bat during the month of June to show his versatility in all facets of the game.

It is pertinent to mention that Wanindu Hasaranga played a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's perfect campaign in the recently-concluded CWC Qualifier.

The former champions remained unbeaten in the tournament to book their spot in this year's ICC Men's World Cup in India, scheduled to commence on October 5.

Meanwhile, Australia's Ashleigh Gardner edged out Ashes rival Tammy Beaumont and West Indies captain Hayley Matthews to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for June 2023.

Bowlers star as Pakistan book SLC President XI on 196



A Sports

HAMBANTOTA: Pakistan bowlers put on a dominant show and bundled Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) President XI for a meagre 196-run total despite Oshada Fernando's century.

Put into bat first, the SLC President XI struggled against the ruthless Pakistan bowling attack and could only pile a modest 196 runs on the scoreboard.

Opening batter Oshada Fernando waged a lone battle for Sri Lanka with a gutsy century and played a marathon fighting knock.

The right-handed batter smashed 14 boundaries on his way to a 128-ball 109 before young pacer Aamer Jamal got rid of him.

Besides Fernando, no other SLC President XI batter could make a notable contribution. Kamindu Mendis (22) was the second top-scorer for the side while six of their batters failed to make it into the double figures.

Pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Hasan Ali led the bowling attack for Pakistan with three wickets each while Aamer Jamal and Abrar Ahmed bagged two each.

The two-day tour match will serve as an opportunity for Pakistan to get used to the Sri Lankan conditions and is currently underway at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium.

Following the conclusion of the tour match, Pakistan will take on Sri Lanka in a two-match Test series, their first assignment in the newly-started World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 cycle.

The first Test of the series will take place from July 16 to 20 at Galle International Cricket Stadium while the second Test will be held from July 24 to 28 in Colombo.

The national contingent, which flew off from Karachi on Saturday night, reached Colombo on Sunday via Dubai.

Former South Africa pacer and current Pakistan men's team's bowling coach Morne Morkel had also joined the squad in Dubai. Notably, the former speedster was unable to join the team's training camp in Karachi due to visa issues.

Pakistan squad: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan, Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Huraiera, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Afridi and Shan Masood.

SLC President XI Squad: Niroshan Dickwella (WK), Oshada Fernando, Sandun Weerakkody, Kamindu Mendis - Captain, Ahan Wickremasinghe, Nipun Dhananjaya, Nuwanidu Fernando, Lakshitha Marnasinghe, Praveen Jayawickrama, Shashika Dulshan, Kavishka Anjula, Milan Ratnayake, Asanka Manoj, Mohammed Shiraz.

Ahsan Ramzan departs for IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker Championships

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan snooker prodigy Ahsan Ramzan on Tuesday, left for Saudi Arabia to partake in the IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker Championship.

In a statement released by the Pakistan Billiards and Snooker Association (PBSA), the Pakistan contingent, comprised of Ahsan Ramzan and Muhammad Hamza Ilyas will represent the nation in the global event.

The IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker Championship commenced on July 7 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and will conclude on July 16.

To participate in the event, Ahsan Ramzan alongside Muhammad Hamza Ilyas flew off from Jinnah International Airport, Karachi by Saudi Arabian Airlines via flight no. SV 701 which took off at 10:05 PST.

It is important to note that Ahsan Ramzan also participated in the U21 Asian Snooker Championship in Iran last month where he put on a dominant run before getting his hands on the prestigious silverware. He continued his rich vein of form in the continental event and remained unbeaten.

In the final of the event, Ahsan Ramzan outclassed Iranian opponent Milad Pourali Darehchi with a score of 5-2 (48-46, 70-5(41), 61-6(52), 62-29, 30-71, 55-67, 101-27) to get his hands on the silverware.

Despite making his nation proud, the young cueist received no welcome upon his arrival to the country, alongside fellow cueist Haris Tahir, via Jinnah International Airport here.

"It is not a pity that no one came to welcome me," said Ahsan Ramzan.



Batters cement Pakistan's domination over SLC President XI

A Sports

HAMBANTOTA: Pakistan batters capitalized on the strong foundation laid by their bowlers to put the touring side in complete command on the opening day of the tour match against Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) President XI.

At the stumps on Day 1, Pakistan were three down for 160 with a meagre and were 36 runs behind.

Pakistan openers Imam-ul-Haq and Abdullah Shafique displayed dominance and scripted a decent start for the touring side with a 43-run partnership for the first wicket.

The pair looked in complete control until Kavishka Anjula got rid of Shafique in the 14th over, who could score 25 off 44 deliveries, hitting three boundaries.

Shan Masood then joined Imam in the middle and put Paki-

stan in control with a brisk 92-run partnership for the second wicket which lasted when the latter fell in the 29th over.

The left-handed opener scored a cautious 36 from 75 balls with the help of five boundaries.

Shan Masood was the star with the bat for Pakistan, courtesy of his quickfire 83-run knock in just 67 deliveries, laced up with nine boundaries and three sixes. His sensational knock ended just two overs prior to the closure of play.

At the stumps, Pakistan captain Babar Azam was unbeaten with a 33-ball 14 with Salman Ali Agha on nought.

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