



Present gov makes state broadcasters financially viable: Marriyum

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the present government during its 14-month rule had taken several steps to transform the Pakistan Television Corporation and the Radio Pakistan into financially viable organizations. (Details on Page 3)



Govt mulling Hajj through road, ferry service: Talha Mehmood

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood on Thursday said Hajj through ferry service and by road was under the government's consideration in order to provide maximum relief to the Pakistani pilgrims. He said it was first time that the Religious Ministry had returned an amount of Rs 4.5 billion to the Hajj pilgrims this year and was in the process to return over Rs 2 billion more. (Details on Page 8)

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Address

MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing the PM's Youth Laptop and Youth Loans Scheme distribution ceremony at Bahauddin Zakaria University on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Rana Sanaullah inaugurates women's police station



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior, Rana Sana Ullah on Thursday inaugurated a Women's Police Station in the federal capital in order to empower and cater needs of women by providing state-of-the-art facilities. "The government has completed all the demands of Islamabad police by the establishing women's police station, increasing salaries and paying due allowances. Now, it is the responsibility of the police to ensure the safety of the citizen," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony.

The minister said that Islamabad was the face of the country as a huge diplomatic community lived here and analyzed the social setting of the country through the infrastructure and intuitions of Islamabad. "Therefore, every institution of the federal capital should be a role model, particularly the police department as it deals the public mostly," he added. Stressing the need of maintaining discipline in the force, Rana Sanaullah said a well-disciplined police department in the federal capital would help create a positive image of the country across the globe.

PM Shehbaz says 'power to be handed over to caretaker set-up in August'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that the incumbent government will hand over power to the caretaker set-up in August 2023.

PM Shehbaz Sharif addressed the nation in which he would highlight the economic and political developments including International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement and upcoming general elections.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that he assumed the prime minister's office in April 2022 and power will be handed over to the caretaker set-up in August 2023.

The premier said that the incumbent government fended off 'landmines' laid by the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) besides ending Pakistan's isolation on the economic and foreign-level fronts.

He termed his government the 'beginning of a new era' from economic destruction to the initiation of economic stability. He

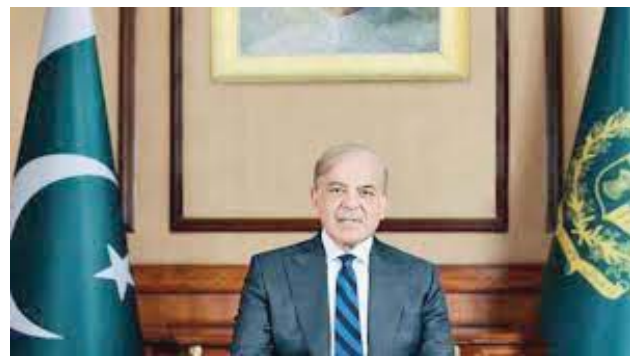
also claimed that the incumbent government culminated worst corruption and conspiracies of the previous government.

He added that the government starts the journey from unemployment to the provision of employment, as well as the freedom of the press and speech.

"The coalition government was established for a short period in which it made maximum and intelligent efforts for addressing the issues. We sacrificed our politics to save the state."

He criticised that the previous government signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on tough conditions and later it violated the terms. PM Sharif said that the incumbent government made tireless efforts to revive the IMF agreement.

PM Sharif said that friendly and brotherly countries cooperated with Pakistan. On behalf of the nation, PM Sharif thanked friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) for their



financial support to Pakistan.

He said that they are grateful to the leadership of the friendly countries for providing timely financial assistance to Pakistan.

The premier also praised Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's efforts on the diplomatic front. He also praised Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir's efforts.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that the time has arrived to regain the lost ground. He highlighted that a comprehensive national plan has

been devised for economic stability and a special investment council was formed and made functional.

The premier said that the government is paving the path to receiving big investments from the Gulf countries. He vowed that the plan will be executed with tireless efforts. PM Sharif said that global institutions are predicting further improvement in Pakistan's rankings.

"The investors expressed their full confidence in the stock exchange after the announce-

ment of the IMF agreement. The stock exchange crossed the 45,000 points mark and the value of the Pakistani rupee is gradually increasing."

"The incumbent government gave Rs2,000 billion Kissan Package. Easy loan schemes were launched to promote agriculture, IT and other sectors besides awarding laptops to the students. The initiation of new projects are glimpses of the successful economic journey of Pakistan."

PM Sharif said that there is only one way to cope with the challenges which is becoming a self-sufficient state. He added that the entire nation is focused to get rid of the loans.

He prayed that the country would never see a black day like May 9 riots in future. The premier said that Nawaz Sharif will bring the country to the path of development and prosperity once again.

PM Shehbaz Sharif called for national unity by spreading peace and love and eliminating hatred.

Antony Blinken welcomes Pakistan-IMF agreement

News Desk



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has welcomed the loan agreement between Pakistan and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Antony Blinken said in a tweet, "We stand by the Pakistani people during these hard times and welcome the International Monetary Fund's approval of a program to support Pakistan."

"We urge Pakistan to continue working with @IMFNews toward macroeconomic reforms and sustainable economic recovery," he concluded.

Govt firm for providing enabling environment to young innovators: Ahsan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiative Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday reiterated the firm resolve of the government to provide an enabling environment to every youth of the country in order to get the maximum dividend from the existing bulge of the young population.

He stated this while addressing the young innovators and entrepreneurs during the award ceremony of the Pakistan Innovation Fund (PIF), which formally awarded a grant ranging from Rs5-20 million to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

The minister termed the project a 'great success' which was on the paper a few months



back but today the first round has been implemented successfully. He also highlighted the project and said that Pakistan has a youth bulge, which must be given the right direction by giving them such opportunities so that they can contribute to the country's development.

"Through initiatives like the PIF, we are fueling a culture of entrepreneurship and enabling visionary individuals to bring their ideas to life," he remarked.

He urged the youth to utilize their capabilities for the country's

development through innovative ideas, besides promoting the culture of entrepreneurship to create more employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled workforce in the country.

In April last year, the Planning Ministry, under the direction of Ahsan Iqbal launched the Rs10 billion PIF under Public Sector Development Program (PDSP) over the period of five years to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

It is noted that since the govt came into power, 15 youth development initiatives including 60,000 internships, technical and vocational trainings for 100,000 youth, 100,000 laptops, 5,000 scholarships for students of Balochistan and former FATA and 1,000 PhD scholarships at the top 100 universities in the US were provided.

PTI chief could face disqualification for hiding Toshakhana gifts

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob claimed on Thursday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief could face five-year disqualification for hiding Toshakhana gifts.

While talking to the ARY News programme 'Bakhbar Savera', PILDAT President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob said that it is legal to receive gifts from Toshakhana but the PTI chief kept the gifts with him after amending the law.

"It cannot be legally justified to hide gifts. India has a similar method [regarding Toshakhana gifts] to Pakistan while the value of the gifts is quite low in the developed countries."

Haji Gulbar Khan elected new GB chief minister

Bureau Report

GILGIT: Haji Gulbar Khan of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) 'forward bloc' was elected as new Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan.

According to GB Assembly Speaker Nazir Ahmed Advocate, Haq received the support of 19 lawmakers, including from the PTI forward bloc, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

In the 32-member house, PTI had 19 members, PPP four, PML-N three, Muttahida Wahdat-i-Muslimeen three, Islam Tehreek Pakistan one, JUI-F one, and one independent candidate. Former CM had nominated Raja Azam Khan for the coveted position with the approval of PTI chief.

GB CM turns out to be declared absconder Yesterday, it emerged that GB cm candidate Gulbar Khan candidate turned out to be a



declared absconder as he was wanted by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police.

In July 2015, a case of fake cheque was registered against CM GB candidate Gulbar Khan and the court in Mardan also issued his arrest warrants as well.

The accused tried to cash Rs 2.2 million which was fake and Senator Faisal Kareem from Mardan took the matter to court.

It is pertinent to mention here that the GB assembly elected new CM after Khalid Khurshid was disqualified by the regional court.

The Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court had disqualified chief minister Khalid Khurshid Khan in a fake degree case.

Credentials

ISLAMABAD: The newly-appointed envoys of the Philippines, Iran, and Rwanda presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: PID

President for expanding ties with the Philippines, Iran, Rwanda

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wants to expand bilateral ties with the Philippines, Iran, and Rwanda in the fields of trade, economy, investment, culture, and people-to-people contacts.

The president made these remarks while talking to the Ambassadors-designates of the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the non-resident High-Commissioner-designate of the Republic of Rwanda, who presented their diplomatic credentials to the

President and made separate calls on him, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for expanding ties with the Philippines, Iran, Rwanda

The Ambassador-designate of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan, Ms Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, presenting her diplomatic credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 13-07-2023.

Talking to the Ambassador-designate of the Philippines, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, the president said that Pakistan was keen to expand bilateral relations

with the Philippines across all areas of cooperation and expressed the need to explore new avenues of cooperation to further diversify bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Speaking to the Iranian Ambassador-designate to Pakistan, Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam, the president highlighted the need to promote economic engagement and mutually beneficial economic exchanges between the two countries through the established institutional mechanisms and private-sector collaborations. He called for further expanding economic ties by

strengthening the existing institutional mechanisms, besides making the Border Sustenance Marketplaces functional.

President for expanding ties with the Philippines, Iran, Rwanda

The High Commissioner-designate of the Republic of Rwanda to Pakistan, Mr James Kimonyo, presenting his diplomatic credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 13-07-2023.

Talking to the High Commissioner-designate of Rwanda to Pakistan, James Kimonyo, the presi-

dent emphasized the need to further strengthen trade and economic relations, adding that the business communities of the two countries need to exchange visits to boost bilateral trade.

He remarked that Rwandan businessmen should explore the Pakistani market, especially for the import of rice, textile products, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, and sports goods.

The president felicitated the envoys on their appointments and expressed the hope that they would play their role to further increase bilateral cooperation with Pakistan.

India buying 26 Rafale jets, three Scorpene submarines for navy

Reuters

DEHLI: India's defence ministry has given initial approval to purchase 26 Rafale fighter jets for its navy and three Scorpene class submarines, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival in France, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.

Modi began a two-day visit to Paris on Thursday to deepen ties with New Delhi's oldest strategic partner in the West, with a slew of high-profile defence deals expected and a new joint plan to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific.

The Singh-led Defence Acquisition Council, the apex body for military capital procurements, granted the approvals earlier in the day.

The deal will cover the purchase of 26 Dassault Aviation Rafale fighter jets, including four trainers, and three Scorpene class submarines to be built by India's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and France's Naval Group, two sources familiar with the details told Reuters.

The total value of the purchases is expected to be around 800 billion rupees (\$9.75 billion), according to one of the sources. The government did not provide any cost figures, saying the prices are yet to be negotiated.

In the past few years, Modi has ramped up spending to modernise the military, while underlining his government's commitment to boosting domestic production to supply forces deployed along two contentious borders with Pakistan and China.



Earlier this year, the government proposed a 13% hike in defence spending to 5.94 trillion rupees for the 2023-24 financial year.

The ageing fleet of India's Russian-made platforms, Moscow's inability to perform maintenance work, and delays in India's indigenous manufacturing plans for parallel platforms have necessitated the two new defence deals.

The marine version of Dassault's Rafale jets, intended for India's first indigenous aircraft carrier commissioned last year, outperformed the American Superhornet F18s in tests last year for Indian requirements.

Singh said in a tweet that the "price and other terms of purchase will be negotiated with the French Government after taking into account all relevant aspects, including comparative procurement price of similar aircraft by other countries".

India has relied on French fighter jets for four decades now. Much before buying Rafale in 2015, India bought Mirage jets in 1980s, which still comprise two squadrons of the air force.

In 2005, India bought six Scorpene-class diesel submarines from France for 188 billion rupees (\$2.29 billion), the last of which will be commissioned next year.

Pakistan among first countries to recognize Algerian govt after revolution: Ambassador Brahim Romani



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Algerian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Brahim Romani on Thursday said Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize the interim government of the Algerian Revolution, declared on September 19, 1958 and opened its representative office in the capital, Karachi, at that time.

Pakistan, he said, also granted diplomatic passports to some leaders of the revolution, including Ahmed Ben Bella, who became the first President of the Algerian Republic from 1962 to 1965, after the regaining of independence.

Pakistan also supported the positions of the Algerian Revolution in the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement since its establishment in 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, he remarked.

He was speaking at a function hosted by Pervez Hoodbhoy to honour Dr. Eqbal Ahmad, a renowned thinker, researcher, journalist, poet, and supporter of the Algerian Revolution.

The ambassador said the Algerian

government established the 'International Association Friends of the Algerian Revolution to honour those, including Dr Eqbal Ahmad, who had fought, sacrificed, extended solidarity and supported the Algerian Revolution of 1954-1962 in all forms of assistance.

He said the founding General Assembly of the association was held under the patronage of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on July 3, on the occasion of the celebration of the 61st anniversary of the national independence.

Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy, a nuclear physicist scientist and close family member of Dr Eqbal Ahmad, who passed away in 1999, participated in the founding assembly and received the award presented by the Ministry of Mujahideen Affairs of Algeria on behalf of Dr Eqbal Ahmad.

The ambassador said Dr Eqbal was known to have been acquainted with some leaders of the Algerian revolution during his stay in Tunisia between 1962-1964, while preparing his doctoral dissertation on labour organizations in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

Govt mulling Hajj through road, ferry service: Talha Mehmood



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood on Thursday said Hajj through ferry service and by road was under the government's consideration in order to provide maximum relief to the Pakistani pilgrims.

He said it was first time that the Religious Ministry had returned an amount of Rs 4.5 billion to the Hajj pilgrims this year and was in the process to return over Rs 2 billion more.

The minister was addressing the convention of All Pakistan Newspapers Employees Confederation (APNEC).

The participants of the convention viewed that the Hajj 2023 was a trans-

parent and scandal-free Hajj in the country's history.

The minister assured that the services in the next Hajj programme would be better and efforts would be made to minimize the expenses.

"I performed Hajj as a common man and keenly observed the problems faced by the pilgrims, and I will try to resolve the same with the blessings of the Almighty," he added.

Journalists and media workers should also be included in the Hajj quota system like other organizations, he said, assuring that he would take tangible actions in that regard.

"Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman truly loves Pakistan. I found him very emotional about Pakistan," the minister added.

He congratulated the newly elected APNEC Chairman Muhammad Siddique Sanghar, Secretary General Dara Zafar and all other members.

President of Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors Khushnood Ali Khan, on the occasion, said the minister had set a remarkable example by performing Hajj as a common man without any protocol.

ECP extends deadline for voter registration, transfer

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has extended the deadline for voter registration, correction and transfer by July 20.

The election commission's spokesperson said that the nationals can acquire their details by sending their computerised national identity card (CNIC) numbers via SMS to 8300.

It added that the individuals can register their votes on a permanent or temporary residence.

The commission directed to use Form No 21 for the registration or transfer of the vote. It added that Form No 22 will be used for filing a complaint or cancellation of vote and Form No 23 will be used for the correction of the records.

READ: Bill banning candidates from running for multiple seats passed

The spokesperson said that the forms can be received from any district election commissioner's office.

Earlier in the month, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) continued its preparations for the general elections and decided to conduct strict scrutiny of the returning officers (ROs).



The ECP expanded the scope of scrutiny of the ROs and sought informal reports from the concerned institutions and officers. The commission completed compilation of lists of the ROs for the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies.

Read: I-voting, EVMs facilities cannot be provided in elections: ECP

The scrutiny process of the ROs for the National Assembly (NA), Sindh and Balochistan assemblies is underway. The commission will depute the ROs for completing the scrutiny process which could delay the deputations, sources said. As per the law, the commission is bound to depute ROs two months before announcing the schedule of the general elections. The ECP decided to expedite the deputation of the District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs).

Mango diplomacy: PM Hasina sends gifts to her Pakistan counterpart Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD: The Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad handed over 1,500 kg of mangoes to Pakistan foreign ministry.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sent fresh seasonal mangoes as gifts to his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif.

High Commissioner Md Ruhul Alam Siddiqui said this gift of the Prime Minister will add "a new dimension to the diplomatic relations between the two brotherly countries and will further accelerate the development of mutual bilateral relations."



MQM London workers re-arrested after being released

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Forty workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement London (MQM-L) have been rearrested after being released from jail.

Forty MQM London workers have been sent to jail again after being released on bail. The arrests of the MQM-L workers were made for 30 days under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

The activists were taken into custody under MPO on the recommendation of the Inspector General (IG) Sindh. A few days ago, the Sindh government and the security institutions had decided to intensify the crackdown on Muttahida Qaumi Movement London (MQM-L) after a public rally in the Korangi area of Karachi.

The higher authorities had



decided to intensify crackdowns on MQM-L after a public rally in the Korangi area of Karachi. The arrests of MQM-L workers commenced after the public rally.

Police and Rangers conducted raids in Korangi and Landhi to arrest the MQM-L workers who had

attended the public rally. The senior officers told the media that MQM-L was involved in anti-state activities. They added that a group having connections with the Indian secret agency RAW will not be allowed to hold activities in the country.

PM asserts non-politicization of public welfare projects

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed completion of public welfare projects on priority basis and stressed that such programmes should not be politicized in the best interest of people.

Speaking during his visit to the under-construction 500-bed Nishtar Hospital II, he said the public welfare projects suffered a major setback during the tenure of previous government.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over the ongoing pace of construction work at the hospital, however regretted that the work on phase II of Nishtar Hospital was stopped during the government of Imran Khan.

He said the non-implementation of the development work affected the large population of patients in the city and adjoining areas.

He expressed confidence that under the supervision of Interim Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the expansion of hospital would be completed by September 30. Also, the import of modern machinery will help ensure effective implementation of the work,



he added.

PM Sharif also lauded the efforts of the Commissioner of Multan, the Health Secretary and other officials concerned in carrying out the hospital

project effectively.

He proposed the idea of establishing a Medical City in the area to facilitate the locals with state-of-the-art medical facilities.

Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman, Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Mairiyum Aurangzeb and senior provincial government officials were present.

Tribute to Officials of Insaf Lawyers Wing: Shah Mehmood Qureshi

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Consultative meeting of officials of Insaf Lawyers Wing presided over by Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, instructed to speed up steps for the release of detained workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf Multan. Vice Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that the officials of Insaf Lawyers Wing should conduct legal consultation for the release of Tehreek-e-Insaf workers imprisoned in jails and take steps for their release as soon as possible.



He said that teams consisting of lawyers have been formed for the release of Tehreek-e-Insaf activists detained in jails, who will take steps for their immediate release after legal consultation. He expressed these views yesterday while addressing a consultative meeting involving officials of Tehreek-e-Insaf Lawyers Wing at Bab Al-Quraish Secretariat, Multan. This meeting was convened by Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at his residence yesterday in which consultations were held for the release of Tehreek-e-Insaf workers detained in jails.

And the lawyers were instructed to speed up efforts for the release of detained and imprisoned workers. He instructed the lawyers that the cases of the arrested Tehreek-e-Insaf workers should be presented in the courts after consultation with their families. And all possible legal assistance should be provided to the detained workers. He said that the lawyers wing is the first unit of Tehreek-e-Insaf. Lawyer's wing is of immense service to the party. He paid tribute to the officials of Insaf Lawyers Wing for the release of PTI leaders and workers from jails.

And appreciated their efforts. The delegation included Maher Zamir Hussain Sandhal, Khushbakht Shujaat Khan, Bilal Shahbaz Baloch, Chaudhry Shakeel Akhtar Sindhu, Abdul Rauf Khan Niazi, Syed Abbas Haider Zaidi, Malik Kashif Hussain Zowar, Akash Hussain Kheda, Sheikh Muhammad Arshad, Malik Ashfaq Hussain Arain, Muhammad Azam, Maher Abid Saleem Ahir, Maher Asif Saleem Sandhal, Ehtishamul Haque Khan, Malik Shabbir Ahmad Khokhar, Abdul Sattar Arain, Shabbir Ahmad Shahid, Chaudhry Akhtar were included.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik presiding over a meeting with Save the Children Representatives at NDMA Headquarters on Thursday.



Railway, Rescue 1122 conduct awareness seminar on short circuit of electricity



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Under the direction of DS Railway Multan Hamad Hasan Mirza, Multan Division organized an awareness seminar regarding fire and electrocution due to short circuit of electricity, in which the team of Rescue 1122 also participated. On the direction of Hasan Mirza, an awareness seminar was held in Railway Multan Division regarding short circuit and electric shock, in which the team of Rescue 1122 and railway employees participated. On this occasion, Rescue 1122 provided regular practical training.

While in the seminar, awareness was organized about the electric devices used in vehicles and stations, in which the employees of different departments of the railways participated. Zahid and Imran, officers of Rescue Department 1122 informed that those who get electrocuted. How to provide first aid to the people while keeping the nerves under control instead of getting worried in case of fire due to short circuit and how to save the life and other staff and control the fire. Bilateral officers in the seminar. Besides, railway employees participated in large numbers

Health and hygiene awareness campaign for flood affected people continues

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Floods in 2022 have badly affected many districts in Pakistan. Dera Ismail Khan is one of the most affected districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this regards, Tameer e KHALAQ foundation with support of International Organization for Migration (IOM - UN Migration) and in collaboration with District Administration and PDMA implemented various activities under the project "Provision of basic WASH support to village Kohawar, D. I. Khan". The project activities included awareness and information through Health and Hygiene sessions, for which social mobilization process was adopted, distribution of Health & Hygiene Kits among the male communities, and Dignity kits among the female communities of Village Kohawar, Tehsil Draban, D. I. Khan. The ultimate objective of the intervention was to make a resilient community as the village is vulnerable to floods in the future and to enhance the community awareness regarding Health, clean drinking water, and sanitation in emergencies.

To achieve the project objectives, a mass cleanliness campaign was launched in the village Kohawar in the form of Cash for Work activity, which provided cash assistance for livelihood improvement on one hand, and on the other hand, streets, channels, and communal places were made free of garbage contributing to environmental hygiene.

Under the activity, 100 paid Community Volunteers from Mohalla DirKhan, Mohalla Pathan, Mohalla Baloch, and Mohalla Main Kohawar (25 from each Mohalla) were identified and selected. Looking into the covered area and population of Mohallas, the Community Volunteers from Pathan, Baloch, and DirKhan were engaged for three days while the Community Volunteers (25 number) from Mohalla main Pathan (is this main Pathan or main Kohawar?) were engaged for five days. The objectives of the activity were to engage the Community Volunteers from the flood-affected community to assist in their livelihood, to clean the streets, channels, ponds, and communal places of garbage to contributing to environmental hygiene and to improve the sense of ownership, belonging and team work contributing to the flood/disaster resilient community.

Identifying the volunteers for Cash for Work Assistance, Village committees, community elders, and youth were taken on board and these volunteers were selected. The activity and approach were appreciated by the community elders, youth, and district administration and they are recommending for longer-term engagement to build a flood-resilient society in Kohawar. They are also requesting assistance in the construction of the Flood Protection Wall around the village to save the village from future disasters.

WASA sewage system failed

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: If timely action is not taken, certainly the plazas situated at Vakilan Wali Gali# 4, 5, 6, 7 will be submerged due to complete failure of WASA sewage system. Hence WASA should play its role immediately to save the heavy losses. This was stated by Alhaj Naseer Yousaf Vohra;

According to the details, WASA sewage system failed the evacuation & water has entered the basement of the plazas. Further Haji Abdullah Nawaz Vohra Senior Deputy Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan

Faisalabad expressed that, due to the poor policies & operational methods



of WASA, the sewage system of Vakilan Wali Street No. 4, 5, 6, 7 has become clogged, due to which water has entered the basement of the plazas, which may cause a major incident due to WASA negligence & blunder.

It was also highlighted by the Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj

Naseer Vohra, while talking to the media said that he was along with Director Operation Hamad Fazal and SDO Owais Ali & visited the streets of Kachhari Bazar's lawyers and pointed out that the water of the sewage system was present in the basement of the plazas. On which the director of WASA issued him the

authority to collect sewage water with machinery in the morning. The leadership of Anjuman Tajran Cloth Board in which Malik Gulzar, Sheikh Usman, Rana Imran, Saad Naseer Yusuf Wahra, Rana Abid, Sajjad Khan Nadeem Wahra and others participated in this visit. Senior leader Muslim League candidate MNA Dr. Manwar Fayyaz Sunny was also present on this occasion. All the offices of the textile industry are located in these streets of Kachhari Bazar. At the end of the visit, Vohra has told the director WASA that they will hold a meeting again on an emergency basis in eight markets and in the whole city where there is an issue of WASA, we will always be there.

AC Wana visits Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In Lower South Waziristan District, Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi visited Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana on Thursday, Assistant Commissioner Wana was welcomed by the staff of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana on reaching the office.

Yasir Salman Kundi inspected the studio, transmitter room and other sections of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana.

On this occasion Deputy Officer Adam Khan Wazir gave a detailed briefing to Assistant Commissioner Wana regarding the broadcast of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana.

Yasir Salman Kundi expressed his satisfaction with the broadcasting and performance of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana and called it the best platform for the people of Lower South Waziristan to solve their problems.

He said that Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana is the easiest means to keep the people of South Waziristan Lower informed about government activities.

He further said that according to the instructions of Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Muhammad Nasir Khan, the problems of Pakhtunkhwa Radio will be solved on priority basis.

The staff of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Wana thanked Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi for coming to the radio.

AKU Workshop addresses cervical cancer burden in Pakistan

News Desk

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University in collaboration with the Centre for Women and Child Health at AKU and Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) Hyderabad, held a workshop on the "Burden of Cervical Cancer" at Civil Hospital, Hyderabad. The aim was to raise awareness and promote prevention strategies for cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is a significant concern globally, ranking as the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women. However, developing, and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)

including Pakistan, bear a disproportionately higher burden of cervical cancer cases and deaths.

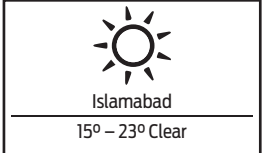
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cervical cancer mortality in LMICs is 18 times higher than in high-income countries. A recent study by the CITRIC Health Data Science Centre at AKU found that the incidence rate of cervical cancer among women in Pakistan is 7.6 per 100,000. This rate is higher than WHO's target rate of 4 per 100,000 for cervical cancer elimination. These statistics call for national-level policy implementation and focused on prevention and elimination strategies.

The primary cause of cervical cancer is persistent infection with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Fortunately, HPV vaccines are available, making cervical cancer largely preventable. "Cervical cancer is the only gynaecological cancer that can be prevented by vaccination and can be treated in its pre-invasive stage through regular screening. Early detection preserves not only the uterus but also fertility," said Dr Uzma Chishiti, Assistant Professor and Associate CMO, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the seminar.

HPV vaccines were first introduced in 2006. WHO now recommends the use of

a single-dose HPV vaccine, which is as effective as the previously used two or three-dose regimen. While high-income countries have successfully integrated HPV vaccination into their health systems, low-middle-income countries like Pakistan lag far behind due to limited resources and insufficient data.

During his remarks, the Chief Guest Dr Muhammad Arif Khan, Deputy Director General of the Director's Office in Hyderabad, emphasized the alarming incidence of cervical cancer witnessed in Pakistan halfway through 2023. The workshop concluded with Dr Arshad Chandio,



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:26 am
Zohr	12:13 pm
Asr	5:12 pm
Maghrib	7:20 pm
Isha	9:01 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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883

Law and Justice Commission to host National Conference on Population and Resources in 2023

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) in collaboration with the Population Program Wing (PPW) of the Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (M/o NHSR&C) is organizing a National Conference 'Resilient Pakistan: Calibrating Population and Resources' on 14th-15th July, 2023 at the Supreme Court of Pakistan Auditorium Islamabad.

The Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court, High Courts, Supreme Court and High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Supreme Appellate and Chief Court of Gilgit-Baltistan, eminent national and international experts, members from academia, population and public policy professionals, and legal fraternity will attend the Conference. The event will provide a forum for sharing experiences, best practices and evolving strategies to address the population challenge, and creating a dialogue by bringing together national and international speakers and participants to make the event meaningful and interactive for a progressive Pakistan.

Present govt makes state broadcasters financially viable: Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the present government during its 14-month rule had taken several steps to transform the Pakistan Television Corporation and the Radio Pakistan into financially viable organizations.

Apprising the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting about the reforms carried out in the state broadcasters, the minister said the former government had planned to auction the national assets, including Radio Pakistan and PTV.

The committee meeting chaired by Javaria Zafar Aahir, was attended by its members Zaib Jafar, Kiran Imran Dar, Zulfiqar Ali, Naz Baloch, Dr Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Nasir Khan Musazai and Asiya Azeem.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mubasher Hassan, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Chairman Saleem Baig and other officers



of the Ministry of Information also attended the meeting.

The minister said now both the Radio Pakistan and the PTV were now on moving path of self-reliance and due to the prudent policies of the present regime, the latter had earned a record profit worth Rs 5.5 billion during the current year.

The government, she added, had regularized all contract employees of the PTV during its performance.

She informed the panel that the PTV Peshawar Center had started 24-hour transmission of its programmes in regional languages, including Pashto, while Multan and Karachi centres were airing round-the-clock their programmes in Saraiki and Sindhi languages respectively.

All studios of the PTV Lahore had been upgraded, she said, adding a virtual studio was set up in the PTV Islamabad Center.

Marriyum said for the promotion of filmmaking, the PTV Film Division had been established, besides setting up the Film Production Institute at the PTV Academy.

She said now film production and media related courses were being started in the PTV Academy.

Cinemas were being established on the premises of the Radio Pakistan Lahore and Peshawar, and their foundation stones had been laid, she added.

The minister said 12 new studios were established in the Radio Pakistan Islamabad, while the work of digitizing the entire archive of Radio Pakistan had started.

"On May 9, the building of Radio Pakistan Peshawar was burnt down, but we have started a project for its restoration," she informed the committee.

The minister recalled the then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government had introduced the first film policy in 2017-18, and now money had been allocated for the purpose in the current year's budget.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas and Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan Andrea Wicke cuts the ribbon to inaugurate the event entitled "Celebrating 70 Years of the First Ascent of Nanga Parbat by a German-Austrian Expedition 1953" at Austrian residence, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Mushaal vows Kashmiris to take martyrs' mission to logical end

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation, Mushaal Hussein Mullick paid glowing tributes to the martyrs of July 13, 1931 on their martyrdom anniversary and urged the world to take tangible and practical steps to resolve Kashmir dispute because it was a constant threat to the regional and world peace.

Mushaal, a wife of incarcerated hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, expressed this view in a statement on the occasion of Kashmir Martyrs' Day, known as Youm-e-Shuhada-



e-Kashmir, observed on both sides of the line of control on Thursday to commemorate and honor the martyrdom of 22 Kashmiris who sacrificed their lives in 1931 while fighting against the oppressive rule of the Dogra rulers in an effort to liberate Kashmir.

The chairperson said that brave Kashmiri people faced the state terrorism of despotic Dogra authority then and now they were facing the fascism of tyrant Narendra Modi in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

However, she vowed that the brutal tactics could not break the resolve of Kashmiri people in their fight for the birth and just right of right to self-determination.

Mushaal highlighted that the supreme sacrifices rendered by 22 Kashmiris against the Dogra regime would always be written with

the golden words.

The hurriyat leader blasted the notorious RSS-inspired government for imposing restrictions in Srinagar to prevent people from paying tributes to their heroes.

Mushaal urged the international community and UN bodies to play proactive role to settle Kashmir dispute before it was too late. She expressed alarm that the unresolved Kashmir dispute could trigger third war between Pakistan and India, which would not be conventional but nuclear one, risking regional and international peace and security.



Shah Mehmood Qureshi paid Tribute to officials of Insaaf Lawyers Wing for the release of PTI leaders and workers.

Rupees over 67bn disbursed among 7.4mn beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme is disbursing 4th quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafaalat for the Financial Year-2022-23 and so far, more than rupees 67 billion has been disbursed among over 7.4 million beneficiary women.

Under Benazir Kafaalat, 90 lakh registered beneficiary families are entitled to a quarterly instalment of Rs 9,000 per household. Benazir Income Support Programme has already released over rupees 81 billion to its partner banks, that is, Bank Alfalah and Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for disbursement among the beneficiaries through their retail distribution network.

Along with Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir educational scholarships are also being given out to the children of registered families, however, 70% attendance in the school is mandatory to receive educational scholarships, said the spokesman of the programme.

In case of any complaint, beneficiaries can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil Offices or call on toll-free helpline number 080026477 of Benazir Income Support Program. The BISP spokesman reiterated that any messages from Benazir Income Support Program is sent only from 8171 and message from any other number should not be trusted

PM issue the order for urgent treatment of sister of the prominent journalist

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Shahbaz Sharif, while issuing orders for the urgent treatment of the sister of prominent journalist and CEO Pak Media Center UK Europe, said that the government believes in giving the people their basic rights so that Pakistan becomes a welfare country could condition Journalists like Waqar Malik are the country's asset. The problems of the nation will always be solved, Waqar Malik's sister should be treated immediately and a medical board should be formed. Meanwhile, Director of Chief Minister's Office Lahore, Muhammad Zulfikar, contacted the local MS and issued orders to provide proper treatment. PM Secretary Murad Khan assured Waqar Malik that his sister's treatment would be better in Pakistan and The best treatment is possible journalist Waqar Malik praised Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's humanitarianism and thanked him for his interest in the treatment of his sister.

Housing sector is the backbone of the country's economy: Co-Founder, Mega City

RAWALPINDI: The housing sector is the backbone of the country's economy, said Pir of Golra Sharif Syed Ghulam Qutb-ul-Haq Shah Geelani during inauguration of the Mega City site office. On this occasion, sales partners, property dealers, developers, political and social personalities including the dignitaries of the area participated the event. While talking to the media, Co-Founder Mubasher Hayat says the inauguration of our site office at Gujjar Khan is proof of our unwavering commitment and our vision to build a world class housing society in Pakistan. With the completion of the housing project in Gujjar Khan, the dream of the people of Potohar region to have a house equipped with modern facilities will come true very soon adding that the mega city is committed to provide safe investment opportunities to the stakeholders. CEO mega City Sheikh Tayyab Zahid expressed his views on the event and said that the opening of the site office in Gujjar Khan is a proud moment for us. We are grateful for the support we have received and we are committed to complete the projects on time. Country Head Jawad Amin also made many announcements while addressing the event, he said, Mega City will fulfill all its promises on time. He further said that the establishment of a housing society in Gujjar Khan was the need of the hour. The purpose of the establishment of this society was to provide proper living standards to the people of Potohar along with education, health, sports and all other needs.

AIOU to announce admissions

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing admissions in semester autumn 2023 from tomorrow (Saturday, July 15) across the country. To provide facilities to the students near to their residences, AIOU has set up more than 100 prospectus sale points other than 54 regional offices of the university. According to the direction of the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof'Dr. Nasir Mahmood, information counters and facilitation centers are set up in regional offices to guide students.

The programs offered in the first phase include Matric (General), Matric (Dars e Nizami), Matric (Open Courses), FA (General), FA (Dars e Nizami), FA (Open Courses), I. Com, middle tech, certificate courses BS, MBA, MPhil/MS, and PhD programs. It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU is the only university in the country which provides free matriculation education to the students of Balochistan, merged districts and Gilgit-Baltistan. The last date for admission in Matric, FA, Middle Tech and Certificate courses is September 5, while the last date for admission in BS, MS, MPhil and PhD programs is August 15.

Admission to BS (face to face), MS/MPhil and Ph. D programs can only be applied online at <https://fmbp.aiou.edu.pk>. Admission forms for matriculation and intermediate are available on the website and prospectus sale points, and these forms can be submitted manually and via online mode. In case of online submission of admission forms, the candidates are not required to dispatch printed application form to the university.



Ahmed Shah, aspires to have an Arts Council in every

Role of mothers in prevention of heart and related diseases

Hussna Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Diet plays a very important role in heart and related diseases. Excessive consumption of sugar in the diet is one of the major causes of these diseases. Sugary drinks are the major source of free sugar which contain 7 to 9 teaspoons of sugar in a small glass (250 ml). Consumption of sugary drinks is one of the major causes of heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, obesity, various types of cancer and other non-communicable diseases. The role of mothers is very important to protect their children from consuming these harmful drinks to protect them from non-communicable diseases. This was said by the health experts while talking to a program organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) organized at a local hotel in Islamabad regarding the role of mothers to protect their children from sugary drinks. Parliamentary



Secretary for Health Dr. Shazia Subia Aslam Soomro was the chief guest of the occasion. Among the guests were Zahra Wadood Fatmi MNA, Consultant of Global Health Advocacy Incubator Mr. Munawar Hussain, Professor Col. Shakeel Ahmed Mirza, Miss Rubina from Act International, Dr. Afshan Tehseen Bajwa, Chairperson National Commission of the Rights of the Child (NCRC), Principal Punjab colleges Madam Asifa, civil society representatives, mothers, teachers and journalists. The event was hosted by PANAHA Secretary General Sanaullah Ghumman.

Col. Shakeel Ahmed Mirza said that one of the main reasons for the increase in heart and other non-communicable diseases is our careless attitude towards food. These include high consumption of fried foods, salt and sugar.

Dr. Shazia Soomro said that public health is one of the top priorities of the government. PANAHA along with the government is doing valuable services for the future of our country i.e. children's health. Parents and especially mothers have to protect their children from sugary drinks and other unhealthy foods.

Zahra wadood Fatmi said that it is

my responsibility as a parliamentarian and as a mother to give awareness on this important topic of public health. She appreciated the struggle of PANAHA for this noble cause

Afshan Tehseen Bajwa said that healthy food is the basic right of children. Carelessness can lead to many diseases in children, so choosing the right food for their children should be the first priority of parents.

Sanaullah Ghumman said that since last 40 years Panah has been trying in every forum to save his countrymen from heart and related diseases. We are working with policy makers to develop policies that reduce the use of these hazardous substances. PANAHA believes in working in coalition to solve any problem. Therefore Panah works closely with the government, civil society, media, scholars, youth and teachers.

Other speakers also emphasized the importance of mother's role in preventing diseases.

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Is there a nexus between Israel and PTI? - I

During the review of the United Nations Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) Universal Periodic Report (UPR), which was finally adopted on July 10, 2023, Israel submitted various recommendations criticizing Pakistan's human rights record. It objected to Pakistan's reluctance to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that addresses discrimination, demanded the end of widespread use of the death penalty, particularly against children and people with disabilities, urged Pakistan to take all appropriate steps to prevent arbitrary arrest, torture, and other ill-treatment, and bring those responsible for such acts to justice. On July 12, the Pakistani Foreign Office sternly rejected Israel's recommendations, calling it "politically motivated" and "fundamentally at odds" with the positive tone of the UNHRC session, and stating that, despite Israel's "long history of oppression" of Palestinians, Pakistan "can certainly do without its advice on protecting Human Rights." Meanwhile, all political parties took advantage of this incredible opportunity to question the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf party for Israeli support and used all of their ammunition to construct an awesome nexus between Israel and the PTI.

However, Israel was not alone in making such proposals; in fact, these recommendations, which were eventually endorsed by the UNHRC on July 10, 2023, were among the 340 made by other member nations. Pakistan accepted 70% of the 340 recommendations, totaling 253, while noting 84

and rejecting only three based on politically driven accusations, including Israel's proposals.

Pakistan's pragmatic, positive, and forthright response astounded the member nations, who praised and thanked Pakistan for having the bravery to accept the bulk of the recommendations, indicating its commitment to the promotion and preservation of human rights. The member states lauded the government's efforts to improve legislation to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups, as well as moves to increase women's participation in society. The member acknowledged that Pakistani women's political participation was among the highest in the area and lauded the government's efforts to reach the SDGs, as well as initiatives to make the country more robust to the harmful effects of climate change.

This praise was won by the pragmatic and charismatic leadership of Pakistan's delegation's head, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar who tactfully and forcefully highlighted many measures taken by Pakistan's parliament and government over the last five years, coincidentally during the PTI's tenure in power, to improve the legal environment for the protection of human rights in the country and strengthen its compliance enforcement mechanism. She made a persuasive argument to defend Pakistan's

human rights record and reacted to the various committees, groups, and member nations' suggestions. These proposals, for the most part, fall into eight broad categories, including gender discrimination, religious discrimination, arbitrary and summary executions, military courts, enforced disappearances, the Antiterrorism Act of 2017, and torture and inhumane treatment of inmates.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women expressed worry about Pakistan's refusal to remove its declaration issued upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and encouraged Pakistan to ratify the Convention and advised Pakistan to ensure that women human rights defenders and political activists can exercise their political rights and are effectively safeguarded from intimidation, reprisals, and violence, and that those guilty are tried and punished. It also stressed the removal of prejudice against disabled people.

In her response, Hina Rabbani Khar stated that Pakistan had enacted several progressive pieces of legislation in the last five years in accordance with its international human rights obligations, focusing on the fundamental rights and liberties of the most vulnerable and marginalized people including but not limited to Pakistan amendment in the 2010 Protection of Women

in the Workplace Act in 2022 to broaden the definition of employees to include non-traditional workplaces and to broaden the term of workplace harassment, parliament passed the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act of 2021 to reinforce legal deterrents against the threat of rape, the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act of 2020 and acts depriving women of their property rights, setting up to helplines across Pakistan, and support desks manned only by female police officers were set up in a number of police stations, Zainab Alert Response and Recovery (Amendment) Act, 2020 was passed, and an alert system for reporting missing children was set up. She also mentioned a 2018 law that protected the fundamental rights of transgender people, including inheritance, education, decent employment, property ownership, and participation in public affairs. Notable is the fact that in her argument, she invoked the authority of legislation and initiatives enacted by the PTI government.

Four mandate holders for the special procedure addressed issues pertaining to arbitrary and summary executions, safeguards pertaining to fair trial and due process, the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and the protection of juvenile offenders' rights by the government under the application of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997. The Human Rights Committee acknowledged that military courts ceased to exist in March 2019, but regrets that 59 prisoners were executed based on military court sentences.

To be Continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Kashmiris observe 92nd Kashmir Martyrs Day

Kashmiris living on both sides of the Line of Control, besides the rest of the world, observed the 92nd Kashmir Martyrs Day on Thursday with the renewal of the pledge to continue the grand mission of the Kashmiri martyrs through continuing the freedom struggle, with full vigour, for the achievement of the birthright of self-determination.

They paid glorious tributes to the martyrs of Jammu & Kashmir including 22 valiant sons of the soil for laying down the supreme sacrifices.

About 92 years ago on this day (July 13) in 1931 in front of Central Jail Srinagar raised mutiny by laying the foundation stone of the movement for the liberation of the motherland from the despotic Dogra Maharajah's rule.

Special prayer meetings and symposiums were the hallmark of the Kashmir Martyrs Day across AJK as well as at various places in the strife-torn Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and the rest of the world to observe the day.

It was on this day in 1931 when the Dogra troops shot dead 23 Kashmiris in front of the Central Jail Srinagar. A large number of people had gathered outside the jail protesting against the trial of a young man – Abdul Qadeer for treason inside the prison located in the high-security zone.

In AJK, it was a state holiday to facilitate the people to participate in the events of the day from all over the liberated territory.

This year too, the Kashmir Martyrs Day was flanked by a sign of new hope, that if India agrees to the ground realities without any reservations and learns a lesson from the historical facts that she (New Delhi) cannot rule Kashmiris at gunpoint, may help bring lasting peace and prosperity in the region through the early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue in line with the aspirations of the people of entire internationally-acknowledged Jammu & Kashmir state.

In IIOJK State, a complete shutter down strike was observed against the forced and illegal Indian occupation of bulk part of the Jammu Kashmir State.

People visited the graveyards of the Shuhada in Srinagar and other places and offered Fateha – besides holding special prayer meetings for the upholding of the status of the martyrs in heaven.

Special Kashmir Martyrs Day meetings were held at almost all the district and tehsil headquarters including Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bagh, Rawalakot, Sudhanoti, Neelam Valley, Haveli, Hattian and Bhimbher and all other small and major towns and cities under the spirit of various social, political and religious Kashmiri outfits besides the civil society belonging to all spheres of life including the business community, lawyers and the media groups in various parts of the state.

Speakers on the sideline of a special prayer meeting to mark the Kashmir Martyrs Day held in Mirpur strongly condemned the continual reign of state terrorism and violence unleashed by the Indian occupational forces in Srinagar and the rest of the bleeding-occupied valley since last six years where hundreds of innocent Kashmiris including the young Commander of Hisb ul Mujahideen Burhan Muzaffar Wani were martyred since July 8 in 2016 for raising voice for the liberation of the motherland from Indian clutches.

Speakers paid glorious tributes shaheed Burhan and other Kashmiri martyrs for laying down the supreme sacrifices of their lives for the noble cause of freedom from the forcible Indian bondages.

Another Kashmir Martyrs Day ceremony was hosted by the management of the local Urdu Daily "Shaheen" to pay rich tributes to the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir for giving supreme sacrifices of their precious lives.



BZU Institute of Media Studies toward decline

Bahauddin Zakariya University is the most important institution in the public sector of South Punjab, it has several faculties and institutes. The Institute of Media and Communication Studies has an exceptional importance. In the nineties, famous journalists have been born from here, which are currently performing their professional services in the dimensions of the country. We are all know that media persons demand has increased over the past two decades, as media (electronic and print) has emerged as an influential and powerful tool in the society. There has been an impression in the society that unless the problems of the people are highlighted in the media, even the legitimate complaints of the citizens cannot be addressed. Due to this perception, our youth are becoming more interested in pursuing mass communication or journalism education or skills.

According to the black and white documents Zakariya University's Institute of Media and Communication Studies strives for academic cultivation and better professional training of its students. Hundreds of student post-graduate from here every year with Master's degree in Journalism/Mass Communication. The institute publishes two types of newspapers and magazines, in which "Communication Times" is published monthly and "UNI-MAG" is published on annual basis. The purpose of these newspapers is to train and acquire skills of writing and learning in future journalists. The institute has its own FM 104.6 radio station. So that students can get practical training along with broadcasting education, the institute has its own TV. There is also a production house, which is equipped with modern equipment. The heads of the institution claims that the producers of these programs are students. There is also an IT

lab, which is in tune with modern requirements and needs. Media lab, advertising lab and the department also has its own magnificent library. However, the institution has been in decline and losing his identity for the past several years.

The facts of the ground are quite different from these figures. When we met with final year students of Media and Communication Studies, revealed that the ability in their subject was zero, the students said that we have made a big mistake by enrolling here. Students expressed their grief the facilities for the students here are only for show, we are not allowed to do any program on FM radio and entry into the TV production studio is prohibited. As far as media institute magazine or newspaper is concerned, our writers get very little space. A few writings are published; the students said in frustration that for a long time these newspapers have not been published for a long time. The students said that our parents paid our fees by selling animals and ornaments, but here we are not being provided with the required standard of education. Hence, in the last two decades graduate or master degree holder could not become a reliable journalist of well-known newspaper or TV channel.

The traditional functions of universities are teaching and research. In their teaching activities, universities provide vocational training for higher level jobs as well as necessary education for personality development. It has been seen that BZU Media institute has almost fail to inculcate professionalism in media students. The main reason is that teaching staff has lack practical training in the field of journalism. Our new generation of journalists often deals with

many social issues, especially in literature and historical sense; their teachers are completely unable to fill this deficiency. Journalism is not an academic subject, it's a trade, and a young person who is interested in looking at social facts in a critical manner should study journalism". In the practical field of journalism, it is important to master languages like Urdu and English. Mass communication professors should advise them to acquire specialized knowledge and skills in wide-ranging fields like literature, political and economics to become successful journalists. Blind dependence on the internet, especially sites like Wikipedia, can't fulfill our journalistic needs, but the ability of the writer is lost. This career is a profession that requires deep dedication because there are no holidays in news and news no sleeps. That's why the journalist should also stay awake all the time in search of news. Keep in mind that it takes courage to report the truth and be the voice of the oppressed. Here is a piece of advice for you, if you are a new journalist in the media industry, learn the business side of media properly. The sooner you understand it; better opportunities will be waiting for you. The main purpose of journalism is to make people aware of the latest situation of events and situations happening in the world and around, to create the ability to think in the people. The people's thoughts and Feelings have to be interpreted; the good and bad of the society are revealed through journalism. The mental training of readers and listeners is also included in the objectives of journalism.

Are these aspects of students being guided in our institutions? We do not think so.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

After passing 16 years education today the reporters and editors of most newspapers and TV channels Anchors are relying on blackmailing, lying and publishing fake news. Our institutions have failed to play their role in eradicating the trend of yellow journalism and blackmailing.

There is a sign of lack of grip the articles or columns of the media study teachers here are not published in any national newspapers. Students can become good journalists only under the guidance of writing teachers. Thinking like a journalist requires you to be constantly on the lookout for information about what has not happened before. In addition to academic qualification and degree, a journalist must have mastery of language, social relations, memory and power of observation as well as sense of responsibility.

Finally, we appeal to our VC BZU Professor Dr. M. Ali Shah and the Chairman of the Department of Mass Communication, Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali, in the better image of the institution and in the better interest of the students. Doing favors, solve the problems of Media Studies students on a priority basis, to develop the skills of the students for the purpose of which they entered here. Students should be given access to the studios of FM radio and TV Studio room, newspaper and magazine departments should be activated, communication time and "Uni-Mag" should be sent to libraries and public offices at least it should be sent to Press Club so that the new experiences of students can be used by citizens and working journalists are also benefited. Media students should be given expertise in subjects like linguistics. So that the students who study from here will be the pride of the university and their teachers. In the current situation, the educational status of the institution is on the decline there is a plea, its reputation should be restored.

Emotional Students

We are living in the age of critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance. This is the age of skills, only man of action can survive in the 21st century. Ultimately, this century demands some uniqueness. So at any cost, we have to be rational rather than emotional. Emotional people are thoughtless.

Unfortunately, we are growing up in a senseless society. Where we are not of ourselves, we take with ourselves the thoughts of others. This is only because of a lack of critical thinking. Unsurprisingly, we are instructed under traditional methods where we are focused to memorizing rather than analyzing.

Historically, it is viewed that being emotional is the sign of weakness. However, It is sad to say that today's youth are overcharged with emotional feedback by their illiterate siblings and relatives. They became soul-stirring after seeing officers' protocols. Still and all, they do not examine their capability and past performances. They just consider themselves high ranking officers. Even they are unable to know the ABCs about competitive exam criteria. On the other hand, their unlettered parents are totally impotent to know the educational system. They just support them financially after sacrificing everything for the sake of a brighter future for their child. But their child is practicing emotional avoidance and considering it a positive mindset.

Decisively, we need to change our mindset. In fact, rational and logical thinking encourages little minds to observe, think, and question intelligently. It is quite simply balanced. In sum, critical thinking enables individuals to diagnose problems as well as produce solutions.

(Tajdar Munir is Student of Sindh university in the English department.)

122 million more people pushed into hunger since 2019

Spokesman Report

ROME/NEW YORK/GENEVA: Over 122 million more people are facing hunger in the world since 2019 due to the pandemic and repeated weather shocks and conflicts, including the war in Ukraine, according to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report published today jointly by five United Nations specialized agencies.

If trends remain as they are, the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030 will not be reached, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warn.

A wake-up call for the fight against hunger

The 2023 edition of the report reveals that between 691 and 783 million people faced hunger in 2022, with a mid-range of 735 million. This represents an increase of 122 million people compared to 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

While global hunger numbers have stalled between 2021 and 2022, there are many places in the world facing deepening food crises. Progress in hunger reduction was observed in Asia and Latin America, but hunger was still on the rise in Western Asia, the Caribbean and throughout all subregions of Africa in 2022. Africa remains the worst-affected region with one in five people facing hunger on the continent,

more than twice the global average.

"There are rays of hope, some regions are on track to achieve some 2030 nutrition targets. But overall, we need an intense and immediate global effort to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. We must build resilience against the crises and shocks that drive food insecurity—from conflict to climate," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres through a video message during the launch of the report at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The heads of the five UN agencies, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu; IFAD President Alvaro Lario; UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell; WFP's Executive Director Cindy McCain; and WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus write in the report's Foreword: "No doubt, achieving the Sustainable Development Goal target of Zero Hunger by 2030 poses a daunting challenge. Indeed, it is projected that almost 600 million people will still be facing hunger in 2030. The major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition are our "new normal", and we have no option but to redouble our efforts to transform agrifood systems and leverage them towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) targets."

Beyond hunger

The food security and nutrition situation remained grim in 2022. The report finds that approximately 29.6 percent of the global population, equivalent to 2.4 billion people, did not have constant access to food, as measured by the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity. Among them, around

900 million individuals faced severe food insecurity.

Meanwhile, the capacity of people to access healthy diets has deteriorated across the world: more than 3.1 billion people in the world – or 42 percent – were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021. This represents an overall increase of 134 million people compared to 2019.

Millions of children under five continue to suffer from malnutrition: in 2022, 148 million children under five years of age (22.3 percent) were stunted, 45 million (6.8 percent) were wasted, and 37 million (5.6 percent) were overweight.

Progress has been seen in exclusive breastfeeding with 48 percent of infants under 6-months of age benefiting from this practice, close to the 2025 target. However, more concerted efforts will be required to meet the 2030 malnutrition targets.

New evidence: Urbanization is driving changes in agrifood systems

The report also looks at increased urbanization as a 'megatrend' affecting how and what people eat. With almost seven in ten people projected to live in cities by 2050, governments and others working to tackle hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition must seek to understand these urbanization trends and account for them in their policymaking.

In particular, the simple rural and urban divide concept is no longer sufficient to understand the ways in which urbanization is shaping agrifood systems. A more complex rural-urban continuum perspective is needed considering both the degree of connect-



tivity that people have and types of connections that exist between urban and rural areas.

For the first time, this evolution is documented systematically across eleven countries. The report illustrates that food purchases are significant not only among urban households but also across the rural-urban continuum, including those residing far from urban centers. The new findings also show how consumption of highly processed foods is also increasing

in peri-urban and rural areas of some countries.

Unfortunately, spatial inequalities remain. Food insecurity affects more people living in rural areas. Moderate or severe food insecurity affected 33 percent of adults living in rural areas and 26 pe in urban areas.

Children's malnutrition also displays urban and rural specificities: the prevalence of child stunting is higher in rural areas (35.8 percent) than in urban areas (22.4 percent). Wasting is high-

er in rural areas (10.5 percent) than in urban areas (7.7 percent), while overweight is slightly more prevalent in urban areas (5.4 percent) compared to rural areas (3.5 percent).

The report recommends that to effectively promote food security and nutrition, policy interventions, actions and investments must be guided by a comprehensive understanding of the complex and changing relationship between the rural-urban continuum and agrifood systems.

Palestinian foreign ministry hails European Parliament report

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, expresses its profound appreciation to the European Parliament for the recent adoption of their report; we commend the European Parliament's unwavering support for the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders and the call for recognition of Palestinian statehood.

This action stands as a strong reaffirmation of the representative of peoples of Europe, and EU's commitment to upholding international law and human rights, acknowledging the urgency of the Palestinian cause, and the necessity of acting in accordance with international consensus. The alignment of this report with the 2014 Council conclusions demonstrates an encouraging and substantial shift towards justice and peace.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine greatly appreciates the resolution's clear stance in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, as well as the clear stance in support of International Criminal Court's (ICC) work, its impartiality, and neutrality. We value the call on the EU to assist the ICC and its Prosecutor in

advancing the investigation and prosecution of ongoing violations. This is a significant commitment to uphold accountability and promote justice, the cornerstones of lasting peace.

We welcome the Parliament's call for targeted EU measures against Israeli settlements and the call on Israel, the occupying power to withdraw terrorist



designations of Palestinian NGOs is also an important step towards enhancing civil society engagement and maintaining the integrity of humanitarian and human rights work.

As we move forward, the State of Palestine is deeply motivated by the report's recommendations and appreciates the EU's unflinching commitment to the principles of justice, peace, and human rights. We remain hopeful that these calls will not remain in the realm

of rhetoric but lead to decisive actions, catalyzing a new era of peace, stability, and prosperity for Palestinians.

Our gratitude extends to all those who have tirelessly worked towards producing this ground-breaking report. Together, we reaffirm our determination to translate these words into reality, for a just and peaceful future where the rights of all are respected and upheld.

We call upon all MEPs to advocate for human rights, and to stand steadfast in the pursuit of justice. We are not equal sides in a conflict, but rather, we are an occupied people seeking freedom, justice, and self-determination from an occupying power, therefore; it is imperative to recognize the systemic injustices imposed on our people, the attacks on our children and institutions, and the deprivation of our fundamental rights.

We earnestly urge right-wing MEPs to understand and acknowledge the nature of this reality. We are not equal sides in a conflict, but rather, we are an occupied

In conclusion, we hope that every MEP, regardless of their political leaning, will be moved to support a just and peaceful resolution that respects the rights, dignity, and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

NAPA applauds Sindh Govt's support in developing music in schools



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Syed Jawaaid Iqbal, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA), has applauded Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh, and Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Minister for Education and Literacy, Culture, Heritage, and Antiquities Government of Sindh, for their dedicated efforts in promoting

performing arts education in Sindh and integrating arts into mainstream school education, as promised. This commendable initiative taken by them should serve as an inspiration for other provinces and the Federal Capital to follow suit and make music a mandatory subject in schools.

"The recognition of NAPA's diploma/certification in Music by the Government of Sindh is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team at NAPA initiated by the legendary Zia Mohyeddin. We are grateful to the School Education

and Literacy Department for understanding the importance of music education in fostering creativity and holistic development among students. This step will undoubtedly strengthen the education system in Sindh," said Syed Jawaaid Iqbal.

"NAPA will continue providing quality education in the field of performing arts and will continue to collaborate closely with the Government of Sindh to implement its vision of integrating performing arts into mainstream school curricula." He added

Explore Dubai's action-packed calendar of events for a spectacular experience

Spokesman Report

DUBAI, UAE: Dubai Calendar, the official listing platform for events in the city, has announced a spectacular line-up of live music, culture and sport events which will take place throughout the city between July and September 2023.

From citywide activities like Dubai Summer Surprises to captivating cultural events such as The Laughter Factory, musical spectacles including the incredible Beat The Heat festival, to family fun with Peppa Pig live in concert, there is truly something for everyone to enjoy in Dubai.

Here are Dubai Calendar's top picks of upcoming and ongoing events between July and September:

Marvelous Musical Events

This summer, gear up for a line-up like no other. Taking over the stage at The Agenda, Dubai Media City, catch the region's top artists perform at six exciting concerts as part of Beat The Heat 2023. Starting from 15 July, rap along with Egyptian trap artist WEGZ and DizzyTooSkinny followed by the beats of the Egyptian band Cairokee and Palestinian Jordanian rapper, El Far3i on 22 July.

Get ready to groove to the captivating beats and electrifying



performances by these renowned artists. It doesn't stop there, save up some energy as the trio Afroto, Balti and Soulja are set to light up the stage on 29 July.

Catch a beat with the two UAE-based music bands, Sharmoofers and Autostrad on 12 August, we promise you won't be disappointed. Here's one for all the Modi Al Shamrani fans, catch Modi Al Shamrani and DJ Aseel on 19 August as they gear up to set the stage on fire.

Prepare yourself to sing along

with the Egyptian musical duo Disco Mir and rock band Massar Egbari on 1 September, as they are all set to rock the night away. Be prepared to be swept away by the energetic rhythms and infectious melodies of these talented musicians.

Immerse yourself in a mesmerizing live performance by Farhan Akhtar at the Coca-Cola Arena on 1 September. Witness the versatility and charisma of this acclaimed singer, songwriter, and actor as he

delivers an unforgettable show filled with soulful melodies and powerful vocals.

Secure your seats at the earliest for unbridled hilarity as Irish stand-up comedian, Joanne McNally is set to perform at The Agenda, Dubai Media City on 2 September. From podcasts to TV programmes and amusing documentaries, this talented comic has done it all while amassing thousands of fans along the way.

Iconic Indian playback sing-



er, Asha Bhosle is set for her special performance at Dubai's Coca-Cola Arena on 8 September. Known as the greatest playback singer in Bollywood, Bhosle will be taking to the stage to sing a number of her most loved hits from her seven-decade career. Don't miss a unique opportunity to see the singer and television personality live in Dubai as she performs her top tunes.

Get ready for an incredible musical evening with the Fantastic 4 Indian Idols live in Dubai

at The Agenda on 9 September. Be captivated by the enchanting voices and captivating performances of these four renowned Indian idols as they showcase their talent on the grand stage.

Relive the '90s nostalgia with a live performance by A1 and 911 at The Agenda on September 22. Take a trip down memory lane as these iconic British boy bands serenade you with their greatest hits and timeless pop classics. Get ready to sing along and dance to the infectious tunes that

defined an era. Captivating Culture

Prepare to laugh your heart out with hilarious performances at various locations in Dubai. Catch the shows at Movenpick JBR Dubai on 21 and 22 July, Hyde Hotel, Business Bay on 27 July, and Dukes The Palm, A Royal Hide Away Hotel on 29 July. Indulge in an evening of laughter as talented comedians tickle your funny bone with their witty observations and side-splitting humor.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
45,266.96	45,514.95
Day's High	Day's Low:
45,970.99	45,255.58
Index Value	Change
11,360,686,244	-247.99
Percentage	Time
-0.54%	13 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,440.21	+24.10
Percentage	Time
+0.32%	13 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,392.29	+44.86
Percentage	Time
+0.13%	13 Jul, 2:00 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,419.33	+475.40
Percentage	Time
+1.49%	13 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	191	195
Bahrain Dinar	741.93	749.93
Canadian Dollar	214	216
China Yuan	38.7	39.1
Danish Krone	41.14	41.54
Euro	302	305
Hong Kong Dollar	35.72	36.07
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.34	917.34
Malaysian Ringgit	59.87	60.47
New Zealand \$	173.56	175.56
Norwegians Krone	26.61	26.91
Omani Riyal	724.56	732.56
Qatari Riyal	76.81	77.51
Saudi Riyal	73.2	74
Singapore Dollar	205	207
Swedish Korona	25.91	26.21
Swiss Franc	315.27	317.77
Thai Bhat	7.96	8.11
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	355	361
US Dollar	278	281

USF awards contract worth Rs6.78bln to Ufone for broadband services

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Universal Service Fund (USF) has awarded contract worth approximately PKR 6.78 billion to Ufone for providing High Speed Mobile Broadband services in Sibbi district of Balochistan province and Motorway M-8.

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque and Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch witnessed the contract signing ceremony and launch of Research Impact Assessment Study in Islamabad on Thursday.

The contracts were signed by Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, CEO of USF with Hatem Bamatraf, President, and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G. The Secretary for IT & Telecommunication and Chairman USF Board, Navid Ahmed Shaikh, Member Telecom, Muhammad Omar Malik were also present at the ceremony.

While addressing the ceremony, the Chief Guest, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque said, "We are gathered here today to commemorate the signing ceremony of two new projects that targets provision of uninterrupted voice and 4G broadband data services in Balochistan. One of these projects is worth PKR. 1.96 billion that aim to empower around 34,000 individuals residing in 47 Mauzas of Sibbi district. Additionally, another project worth PKR. 4.82 billion has been initiated to ensure voice and 4G coverage on



478 kms of previously unserved road segments along the M-8 motorway. One of the salient features of this project is that national roaming will be enabled for commuters for uninterrupted services. These road segments pass through various districts including Gwadar, Kech, Awaran, Khuzdar, and Jhal Magsi in Balochistan Province, as well as Kambar Shahdad Kot and Larkana in Sindh Province.

While addressing the ceremony, the Guest of Honor, Federal Minister, Agha Hassan

Baloch expressed his gratitude towards Federal Minister, Syed Amin Ul Haque, for his initiation of development projects in Balochistan. He emphasized that the Ministry of Science and Technology is committed to providing full assistance and support for the advancement of the IT industry. He also commended the dedicated teams of USF and Ufone for their outstanding efforts, acknowledging their potential to bring about transformative change in the lives and livelihoods of individuals. By connecting people

to the digital world and creating avenues for growth and development, these initiatives hold the promise of unlocking new opportunities for a brighter future.

Sharing his thoughts at the ceremony, CEO of USF, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary said: "I am delighted to witness the contract signing ceremony of Sibbi and M-8 projects for Balochistan with Ufone and thrilled to announce the launch of the Research Impact Assessment Study. This event marks another milestone in our journey towards enhancing connectivity in rural areas.

Sharing his views on the occasion, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Hatem Bamatraf said, "As a crucial player in the telecommunications industry, Ufone 4G plays a pivotal role in shaping connectivity nationwide. We firmly believe that connectivity is the cornerstone of socio-economic development, enabling individuals to access vital services, education, healthcare and employment opportunities. By actively contributing to the nation's progress, we strive to make a lasting impact on the lives of millions of Pakistanis.

Sharing her view at the ceremony, CEO of Agahi, Purnesh Chaudhary said: "It is an honor to witness the positive impact of USF efforts through the launch of Research Impact Assessment study, which sheds light on the remarkable influence on USF initiatives and the impact it has had on the lives of rural communities across Pakistan. This study provides valuable insights into the transformative power of bridging the digital divide.

Pakistan- Indonesia Business Council

Jakarta: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Chairman Indonesia's Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Arshad Rasjid inaugurated the Pakistan- Indonesia Business Council in Jakarta today at the Kadin HQs. Speaking on the occasion, FS called it a momentous occasion & offered the government of Pakistan's full support to make it a success.



Pakistan and Iran should take advantage of the changes happening in the region, Iranian ambassador



Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the leadership of President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari met with the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam. In the meeting held at the Iranian Embassy, issues of mutual interest were discussed. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries, barter trade, energy projects and other issues were also discussed.

Speaking on this occasion, Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam said that the new changes taking place in the region are a great opportunity for Pakistan and Iran. With the improvement in Iran-Saudi relations, a new era of peace, development and prosperity is beginning in the region. Pakistan and Iran need to take advantage of these opportunities together. He said that he came to Pakistan specially on the instructions of Iranian Supreme Leader syed ayatollah khameneii. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries is his priority. Trade between Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Russia in local currencies will benefit all regional countries. He said that the current trade volume between Iran and Pakistan can be increased through the exchange of rice, meat, sports goods, surgical instruments, fruits, dry fruits, agricultural imple-

ments, energy and other commodities.

He said that direct flights should be started between Islamabad and Tehran so that the large population of the two countries consisting of more than 30 crore people can benefit from the opportunities in each other's countries. There is a need to innovate the road and rail system between Iran and Pakistan to reduce the cost of transporting goods. He said that Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is in the interest of both countries.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iran have not only share border, but both countries are connected by mutual historical and cultural ties. Both the countries have actively supported each other in every difficult time. The warmth of existing relations needs to be used to promote trade and business. The development and prosperity of Pakistan and Iran are interlinked. Direct air connectivity, rail and road systems should be improved on a priority basis.

Speaking on the occasion, Group Leader Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that despite being neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran could not benefit from each other's capabilities. Now is the time for Pakistan and Iran to increase their dependence on each other and take steps to promote mutual trade.

Zong 4G's Iran Roaming Bundle makes it Easier for Pilgrims to Stay Connected during Ziyarat

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, the leading network provider in Pakistan, launches the most economical international roaming bundle for pilgrims traveling to Iran. Recognizing the importance of staying connected, Zong 4G is committed to delivering unparalleled convenience and affordable solutions that cater to the diverse needs of travelers.

Whether customers are traveling to Iran for Ziyarat during the sacred month of Muharram or for business, Zong 4G's affordable bundles will ensure that they are connected with their loved ones back at home.

The offer provides an exclusive calling bundle, enabling travelers to remain in



touch. By paying just PKR 1000 plus tax, prepaid customers can enjoy 60 minutes of uninterrupted calls for 30 days. For those who have a longer stay in Iran, Zong 4G also offers 200 minutes of talk time for PKR 3000 plus tax, with a validity of 60 days. Subscribers can avail the bundles by dialing *4225* from their mobile phones, or by visiting the Zong online shop at <https://www.zong.com.pk/onlineshop/ir-bundles> or through the My Zong App.

The official spokesperson of Zong 4G shared his thoughts on the promotion, "Zong 4G has always timely recognized the needs of its customers and created solutions accordingly. This offer enables users to perform Ziyarat while staying connected with their loved ones back at home without worry."

The bundle is Zong 4G's dedication to enhancing the overall travel experience in its relentless pursuit of innovation and customer-centric services. As a frontrunner in revolutionizing travel connectivity, the company is cognizant of the importance of providing reliable and affordable means for customers to stay connected while they travel.

CCP'S study recommends measures to enhance SMES' economic efficiency

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has concluded an extensive study titled "Enhancing Economic Efficiency of SMEs in Pakistan", identifying barriers to competition, and providing recommendations for improving the economic efficiency of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The study is based on data from 50 Financial Institutions (FIs), 18 focused group discussions, and 362 SMEs across 11 cities and a seminar conducted by CCP on women entre-

preneurs. The study recommends reviewing the definition of SMEs in comparison to other regional countries, as the current National SME Policy, 2021 excludes micro-enterprises, which overlooks an important segment of the policy focus. Additionally, startups are addressed in the policy, but their unique characteristics warrant separate treatment in line with international best practices. A comparison of definitions across the Companies Act, SME Policy, and Income Tax Ordinance reveals varying thresholds for

revenue, innovation, and age, indicating the need for rationalization. Moreover, establishing a clear and transparent legal framework for startups is emphasized to define the rights and obligations of all stakeholders operating within the startup ecosystem.

Access to finance is a significant barrier to SME growth, as highlighted in the study. Despite policy measures to increase financing to 17%, the SME sector in Pakistan only receives 6-7%

of private sector financing. In comparison, SMEs in Bangladesh receive 25% financing, and in India, it's 18%. Data from financial institutions reveals that Medium Enterprises receive over 80% of the financing, and only 2 FIs achieved the SME lending targets set by the State Bank of Pakistan during 2018-2020.

The study also identifies issues with the SME definition based on annual turnover criteria. The lack of differentiation between Small Enterprises

(SE) and micro enterprises' annual turnover, along with the wide benchmark for Medium Enterprises (ME), creates challenges. These thresholds can hinder access to finance for SMEs. To enhance access to finance, it is recommended to rationalize the SME definition by considering the annual turnovers more effectively.

In response to CCP's questionnaire, it was concluded that 93% of SMEs found it cumbersome to avail of financing facilities from banks, and 80% had not availed of bank financing. It is recommended that SBP may consider

allocating separate SE and ME lending targets for FIs, set sector-specific targets, set separate financing facilities (for poor districts) and introduce standardized pricing of insurance and evaluation reports. In line with international practices, public sector commercial banks should be encouraged to take the lead in SME financing. To increase SE lending the top-tier banks may be given mandatory credit targets. In addition, a framework also needs to be developed by the SBP for greater engagement of small chambers of commerce.

Business community welcomes IMF deal

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that Pakistan's business, industry and trade community have had a sigh of relief after the approval of IMF's Standby Agreement (SBA) for a period of 9 months after a long-drawn-out period of economic uncertainty and volatility.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh hailed efforts of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif; federal minister for finance & revenue, Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Dar and economic team of the government in this regard. Securing IMF program was indispensable at this critical juncture of country's economic history and the entire economy was on a standstill due to non-materialization of the same, he added.

IMF agreement will stabilize rupee against the dollar: RCCI

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: The agreement with the IMF is a welcome and positive development for Pakistan's economy. The agreement will not only send a positive message to investors, but will pave the way for aid funds for the rehabilitation of friendly countries, foreign financial institutions and flood-affected areas, Acting President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Faisal Shahzad remarked in a TV interview. This would further boost the foreign exchange reserves and support the rupee to stabilise around the current value, he added.

He said that the agreement will help increase exports and promote industrialization in the country. He said that the confidence of local and foreign investors will be restored. Faisal Shahzad further added that the business community is hopeful that the government will take stakeholders on board to implement the industry reforms introduced in the budget.

Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023 pushed to September

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The second edition of the Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023 has been pushed to September due to the expected heavy rains in Nepal during the ongoing month, the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council (PWCC) said on Thursday.

The event, being hosted by Pakistan at the neutral venue of Kathmandu, Nepal, was earlier scheduled to take place during the ongoing month.

"The month of July is considered a rainy season in Kathmandu. Hence, we have decided to move the tournament to September," PWCC President Rookhsana Rajpoot told to media on Thursday.

Earlier, the PWCC had said that it was all set to host the event in Pakistan but due to some issues, it was decided to shift it to Nepal.

Rookhsana said every effort would be made to make the event a real success.



"We will try to ensure fans enjoy exciting contests during the event," she added.

The matches will be played at the two grounds in Kathmandu. Teams from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan will participate

in the Asia Cup.

Meanwhile, a PWCC delegation met Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House. Member of the National Assembly Kishwar Zahra of Muttahida Qaumi Movement was also

present on the occasion, said a press release.

The PWCC delegation was comprised of captain Muhammad Zeeshan, vice-captain Syed Arslan Ahmed, Sajid Ali Abbasi, Imran Amin and Warseemuddin Sheikh.

Promotion of wheelchair cricket, holding of tournaments at the regional level, encouragement of wheelchair cricketers and other issues were discussed in the meeting.

The Sindh governor said the PWCC's efforts for the promotion of wheelchair cricket were commendable. He assured all-possible support for the development of wheelchair cricket. He said the preparation of world-class players was the need of the hour.

Rookhsana told him that Pakistan was the reigning Asian champion as it won the inaugural edition of the tournament in 2019. "We are confident our team will repeat their past feat to retain the title," she added.

Wahab Riaz visits Summer Camps, reviews facilities



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Adviser to the Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz visited Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall to witness Sports Board Punjab's Summer Camps of six games on Thursday.

Wahab Riaz visited badminton, wushu, taekwondo, self-defence, karate and gymnastics training camps and played wushu and badminton with young camp participants. He said that it was very pleasant feeling to play wushu and badminton with young players.

Wahab Riaz watched young camp participants taking part in training camps under the supervision of expert coaches and had group photographs with them. He also praised the training techniques of expert coaches and keen involvement of young participants.

Besides this, he has chit chat Advise with young male and female camp probables and their parents and enquired about the standard of training and facilities being provided to them during Summer Camps.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the mega Summer Camp is being organized to provide an opportunity to young players to keep themselves busy in healthy sports activities during their summer vacations.

He expressed his hope that several talented players would emerge from different games in this Summer Camp.

Wahab Riaz said the prime objective of Summer Camps is to engage maximum school-going children in sports activities and provide them an opportunity to play multiple games under one roof. "This healthy practice will definitely develop the interest and passion of sports among the young generation" he added.

He said "Holding of Summer Camps is a useful development and we will try to continue this activity even after the resumption of academic activities in schools". Sports Board Punjab is providing best facilities to all players at Summer Camps, he said and added that the coaches are imparting top level training to young camp trainees.

The parents of the young school-going children lauded the facilities being provided to them during Summer Camp.

They opined that this healthy activity should also continue after summer vacations.

Two Pak cyclists, one coach to attend training camp in Korea: PCF

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's two promising cyclists Syed Aqib Ali Shah and Mohsin Khan will proceed to South Korea along with national coach Sarmad Shahab to attend a one-month training camp at the World Cycling Centre (WCC), Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) said on Thursday.

"The camp being funded by International Cycling Federation (UCI) and the Korea Cycling Federation will be held from July 23 to August 24. The camp is aimed at educating the potential riders from Asian countries about the basics of cycling," PCF President Syed Azhar Ali Shah told to media

"The WCC Korea is one of the world's best cycling training centres wherein top quality UCI instructors give professional coaching lectures and training to riders on the advanced scientific lines.

He said the camp at WCC offered a big opportunity for Pakistani riders and coaches to gain the latest knowledge and race experience. "We are thankful to the UCI and Korea Cycling Federation for accommodating our cyclists and coaches," he added.

Sarmad, who is a level 2 road coach, will be doing the level 2 track coaching course and if he successfully completes it he will be the third Pakistani after Haroon General and Sardar Nazakat, who will be having level 2 coaching certification in both tracks and road cycling.

"The certificate will qualify him to independently plan, deliver and evaluate cycling activity sessions for aspiring cyclists," he said.

According to Shah, the PCF is making an all-out effort to promote cycling in the country and every year sends two to three riders and coaches for training in Korea.

"Recently our young woman cyclist Sumaira has returned after attending the training camp at WCC.

"We only send those riders and coaches, who are well educated and efficient in English as lectures at WCC are given in it [English]," he informed.

He said due to the PCF efforts the country could hold any level of a cycling event as there were a number of UCI qualified coaches and commissaries.

"We also have over dozen level 1 coaches, including women coaches now, who can impart training, enabling our cyclists to excel at the national and international stage.

Pak Shaheens to face Nepal on Friday

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defending champions Pakistan Shaheens were all set to open their campaign in the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup when they take on Nepal at the Colombo Cricket Club Ground in Sri Lanka on Friday.

The eight teams in the 50-over tournament are divided into two pools. Afghanistan A, Bangladesh A, Oman A and Sri Lanka A are a part of Group A, while Pakistan Shaheens along with India A, Nepal and UAE A are in Group B.

After taking on Nepal, Mohammad Haris-led Shaheens would take on UAE A on July 17 at the P Saravanamuttu Stadium, while their last group match will be against India A on July 19 at the R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals which will be played on July 21. The final of the tournament will take place on July 23.

Before arriving in Colombo on Tuesday night, Shaheens were involved in a six-day training camp at Lahore's National Cricket Academy. They also underwent two-day training sessions in Colombo under the coaching panel led by Mohammad Masroor.

The previous edition of the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup was held in Bangladesh from 14 to 23 November 2019. Pakistan Shaheens won the 2019 iteration of the tournament beating hosts Bangladesh in the final by 77 runs at the Shere Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

In the first semi-final of that competition, they defeated India Emerging Team in a thriller by three runs at the Shere Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. In that match Omair Bin Yousuf and Amad Butt - the only two players part



of the current Shaheens squad for the forthcoming tournament - contributed significantly to the team's win. Opening batter Omair scored 66, while right-arm fast Amad took one for 43 including a brilliant death overs spell to help his side reach the final.

On the eve of Shaheens' opening match, Omair and Amad shed light on the team's preparations as they looked forward to the tournament. Amad said, "We have prepared well for this event and are excited to be in action.

"This is a very important tournament for each one of us. This presents a comeback opportunity for me and I will strive to utilise it in order to gain a spot in the national side."

Omair said, "I am eager to repeat the same performance that I have produced

in Shaheens recent tour to Zimbabwe. I will try to execute my plans on the match day that I have practiced in the nets here.

"We will focus on executing our plans effectively and making every effort to emerge victorious.

"This tournament provides a great opportunity for any youngster to perform and get a chance to represent the national team, so I will too try to grab it with both hands by giving good performances."

Squad includes Mohammad Haris (captain, wicketkeeper) (Peshawar), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain) (Karachi), Amad Butt (Sialkot), Arshad Iqbal (Swabi), Haseebullah (Quetta), Kamran Ghulam (Peshawar), Mehran Mumtaz (Rawalpindi), Mubasir Khan (Islamabad), Mohammad Wasim Jnr (North Waziristan), Qasim Akram (Lahore),

Sahibzada Farhan (Charsadda), Saim Ayub (Karachi), Shah Nawaz Dahani (Larkana), Sufiyan Muqem (AJK) and Tayyab Tahir (Gujrat).

Non-traveling reserves - Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Junaid and Rohail Nazir.

Player support personnel: Shahid Aslam (manager), Mohammad Masroor (head coach), Hanif Malik (batting/fielding coach), Umar Rashid (bowling coach) and Imtiaz Ahmed (physiotherapist).

Pakistan's fixtures in ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup: Group B: v Nepal- July 14, Colombo Cricket Club Ground (10am local time); v UAE A- July 17, P Saravanamuttu Stadium (10am local time); v India A- July 19, R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (2pm local time).

FIFA offers 20,000 free tickets for Women's World Cup in NZ

FIFA has announced that it will provide 20,000 complimentary tickets for Women's World Cup matches held in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Dunedin.

This decision comes in response to concerns over sluggish ticket sales in New Zealand. While co-hosts Australia have secured the majority of the 1 million tickets sold so far, with their national team, the 'Matildas,' considered strong contenders for the title, New Zealand has seen slower sales due to soccer's lower profile in the country and



the 'Football Ferns' yet to secure a win in their five previous World Cup appearances.

Sarai Bareman, FIFA's chief women's football officer, acknowledged the challenges of

attracting fans to soccer stadiums in New Zealand due to the sport's lesser prominence. To further promote attendance, Xero, the official partner of this year's event, is offering an additional 5,000 complimentary tickets for matches in the four host cities of New Zealand.

Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has also taken to social media to generate interest in the tournament. In an Instagram post, she expressed her excitement about hosting such a significant event and encouraged fans, whether

casual enthusiasts or experts, to take advantage of the available tickets and join in the excitement.

New Zealand's national team, the Football Ferns, will kick off their Women's World Cup campaign against former champions Norway in Auckland on July 20. The provision of free tickets aims to attract a larger audience and create a vibrant atmosphere in the stadiums throughout the tournament, showcasing the talent and passion of women's football on a global stage.

Shaheen Afridi eyes 100th Test wicket

Asim Tanveer

COLOMBO: When Shaheen Shah Afridi opened the bowling for Pakistan on Tuesday in a two-day warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka Cricket Board XI at Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium, it was almost after a year that he had donned whites for his country after injuring his knee in the first of the two Tests at Galle last year.

The proceedings had similar beginning - searing pace, lethal swing and the ball hitting precise lengths. He took three wickets for 36 runs in 12 overs, three of which were maidens, as Pakistan bowled out the opposition for 196 before tea in the first innings. On the last day, he returned 4-2-2-1 as the hosts could only manage 88 for four after Pakistan, at the back of half-centuries by Shan

Masood, Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel, put 342.

I am very excited to be making my Test comeback in the country where I was injured," Shaheen told PCB Digital in Hambantota. "Injuries are part of an athlete's life, but it is good to be back. I enjoy red-ball cricket a lot and I am one wicket away from a century of Test wickets, which would be a big achievement for me.

The nature of injury demanded his return to be gradual and systematic, and he has not played a first-class match since the fourth morning of the first Test at Galle when he landed awkwardly at boundary trying to stop the ball. He made his international return in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia in October last year, but twisted his knee in the final, which saw him miss

the home series against England (Tests) and New Zealand (Tests and ODIs). He finally returned earlier this year for Lahore Qalandars to help them retain the HBL Pakistan Super League title before featuring in April's 10-match limited overs series against New Zealand.

Prior to being named in the Test side for these two Tests, which are Pakistan's first in the third cycle of the ICC World Test Championship, Shaheen was turning out for Nottinghamshire, where he ensured he met the desired workload levels to get in the rhythm.

It takes time to get used to red-ball cricket after playing white-ball," he said, adding: "But the Karachi camp proved beneficial for me. Test cricket demands patience and you have to work in partnerships with fellow bowl-

ers. Over the last year, I have played more white-ball matches, but when I was playing in the United Kingdom, I bowled extra overs after matches - even with the red ball - to meet the desired workload.

It seems like yesterday when I was injured. I will be making my Test return at the same ground where I was injured. I was talking to our physiotherapist about it. It is a matter of pride to represent Pakistan in any format and I enjoy playing for Pakistan. I hope we will have a good beginning to this cycle of the World Test Championship and we will qualify for the final, something we have missed on in the last two iterations."

What makes this return more exciting is the milestone in line. He is just one wicket away to become 11th pacer from Paki-



stan to record a century of wickets in the format. "There is a lot of excitement [for that 100th wicket

But, it has been a long wait. I was only one wicket away and the new ball was about to be available," he said while recall-

ing the first Test against Galle 12 months ago. "I was planning to utilise the new ball to reach that milestone, but I got injured before we got the new ball. So, I have had to wait a lot. It is very tough to be away from cricket, but time has helped me learn a

lot, which will help me perform well for Pakistan across formats. His 99 wickets have come in just 25 matches at an average of 24.86. He also has four five-wicket hauls and one 10-for in the match. Shaheen, however, has added another dimension to his game by strengthening his batting during rehabilitation.

His smoking 44 not out off just 15 balls set up Lahore Qalandars' thrilling win over Multan Sultans in the HBL PSL 8 final and he let his slogging abilities known in international arena when he smashed New Zealand's Blair Tuckner for 22 (three sixes and a four) in the last over of the fourth One-Day International in Karachi to lift Pakistan to 334.

I am a bowler first," he laughed. "But, whenever I will get a chance to make an impact with the bat for my country, I would do so.