

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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 (بخاری ص 53)

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COAS on two-day visit to Iran for discussion on bilateral matters

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir is on a two-day official visit to Islamic Republic of Iran. The Army Chief will meet Iranian Military and Civilian leadership during his visit to Iran, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. During the visit, the COAS will discuss bilateral matters, related to defence and security cooperation.



NA Speaker pays rich tribute to Martyrs of Turkiye to keep alive democracy

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that sacrifices rendered by people of Turkiye on 15th July 2016 to keep alive the flame of democracy is unmatched in annals of political history. He said that the resolve and bravery manifested by common people in Turkiye to save democracy is indicative to reality that it is people's will which ultimately decide the fate of nation. (Details on Page 3)

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Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveiling a plaque to mark the ground breaking of the main campus of National University of Technology (NUTECH) on Friday.



Photo: PID

COAS General Syed Asim Munir visits Quetta Garrison

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has visited Quetta Garrison and inquired about the health of wounded soldiers in the Zhob terrorist attack.

COAS General Syed Asim Munir paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the Pakistan Army. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the army chief was briefing on the recent terrorist attacks.

The armed forces expressed serious concerns over the terror activities of the banned outfit, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) being operated from Afghanistan.

The officials briefed that TTP hideouts are present in Afghanistan and expressed hopes that the Afghan government will not allow its land to be used against other countries.

The spokesperson of the military's media wing urged that the Afghan interim administration to ensure the implementation of the Doha agreement. The armed forces also expressed concerns over the involvement of Afghan citizens in the terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

Yesterday, it was learnt that five terrorists were killed in a clearance operation in northern Balochistan after militants attacked launched a "dastardly attack" on the Zhob garrison, while nine Pakistan soldiers were martyred in the process.

According to the Inter-Ser-



Public Relations (ISPR), the clearance operation underway at Zhob garrison has been completed.

"In total, five terrorists were killed during the operation," the ISPR said. However, it added, at least nine security personnel embraced martyrdom in the exchange of fire.

The military's media wing had earlier put the death toll to four, stating that five soldiers were critically injured. Later in the evening, it said that the injured soldiers succumbed to their wounds and embraced martyrdom.

"Initial attempt of terrorists to sneak into the facility was checked by soldiers on duty," the ISPR said, adding that the terrorists were soon after cornered in a small area near the boundary following a heavy exchange of fire.

"Security forces and the nation remain resilient and determined to thwart all such dastardly attempts of the enemy aimed at destroying peace of Balochistan and Pakistan," the statement added.

Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Quetta Corps.

PM for promoting skilled-based vocational training to improve balance of payment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the government was promoting the skilled-based vocational training to expand foreign remittances that would ultimately help improving the current account deficit of the country.

In his address after laying the foundation stone of the central campus of National University of Technology (NUTECH) here, the prime minister said the new campus would help producing thousands of skilled-based human resource every year who would play their key role in the country's development.

PM for promoting skilled-based vocational training to improve balance of payment

The prime minister, pledging to make the vocational education as the government's number one priority, said skilled human resource earn more than the raw labour, hence increasing the country's foreign remittances.

He said vocational training was key to prosperity and development in today's era as nations get prosperous only at the back of these skilled-based people.

He hoped that after completion, the campus would play key role in promoting technical and industrial education in the country.

He recalled that he for the first time in 1997, put his full force to promote vocational training in the country when there was no comprehensive institution to look after this important area of the education sector.

Similarly, he said the Punjab government led by him established Punjab Education Endowment Fund (PEEF) for which Rs 2 billion annual funding was allocated to provide scholarships to the talented and deserving students on merit base. He said this great project under Dr Amjad Saqib brought educational revolution in the province.

Likewise, he said Danish Schools' project was also his brain-

child which helped bridging the gap between rich and poor. "Until there is no discrimination of rich and poor especially in the education sector, the Quid-e-Azam's vision of educational right for all can not be fulfilled."

He said only one month had left for this government and he was still making efforts to provide maximum relief to the people.

PM Shehbaz also distributed certificates among the high achiever youth in various fields. Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanvir Hussain said that the coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with its untiring struggle brought the country out

of deep crisis and set it on the right path. Therefore, he hoped that the people would vote for PML-N in the next general election.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima said vocational education was as important as it was the formal education. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his previous tenures as Chief Minister Punjab worked really hard to promote technical and vocational education in the province.

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb were also present on the occasion.

IMF loan helps Pakistan unlock another \$5.6 billion in funding

Reuters

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to draw in \$5.6 billion in additional financing after securing a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a move seen as helping the South Asian nation avoid a default and boosting its foreign-exchange reserves.

The new funding includes \$3.7 billion of commitments from bilateral partners including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Nathan Porter - the IMF's mission chief for Pakistan - said in an emailed response to Bloomberg News.

On Wednesday, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) received \$1.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the first tranche of a \$3 billion bailout to stabilise the economy.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar - in a televised statement - said the remaining \$1.8 would be released after two reviews, meaning that there would be two instalments.

Pakistan's foreign reserves had jumped by \$4.2 billion during the last four days, he said - in a reference to \$2bn deposit made by Saudi Arabia and another \$1bn received from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP rose to \$8.4 billion. Dar said: "Our foreign exchange reserves will close at around \$13-\$14 billion on July 14".

Govt set to hike power tariff by Rs4.96 per unit

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) is set to increase electricity base tariff for the ongoing financial year 2023-24 in response to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) disbursement of \$1.2 billion under the recently approved \$3 billion bailout deal.

Sources privy to the matter told ARY News that the regulator will jack up electricity base tariff by Rs4.96 per unit. "The power regulatory authority will forward its decision to federal cabinet today," they say, adding that the final decision on the increase in power tariff would be taken by cabinet.

Previously, NEPRA had developed three possibilities for a new base tariff: below Rs. 8 per unit, below Rs. 7 per unit, and below Rs. 6 per unit. Earlier, it determined the base tariff increase of up to Rs. 5 per unit.

Pakistan is likely to introduce a mini-budget as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has sought a plan for 'better tax' collection from property and agriculture sectors.

The international lender has sought a plan of better tax collection for the second review of the Stand-By-Arrangement (SBA) of \$3 billion.

Sources having knowledge of the matter said that IMF is pushing Pakistan for better tax collection from property and agriculture sectors after increasing the ratio of tax.

The decision to slap tax on property and agriculture sectors will be taken by the new government, the sources said and a mini-budget is likely to be introduced if the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) approves the IMF's plan.

Sugar prices shoot up to Rs150 per kilo

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Sugar prices spiked to a record high of up to Rs160 per kilo in retail markets in different parts of Pakistan amid rising inflation.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported that the sugar prices at retail level have surged to Rs150 in different parts of the country - such as Karachi, Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Meanwhile, the sweetener in Lahore and Quetta was available at Rs145 per kilo and Rs142 per kilo, respectively.

The bureau further stated that the commodity's price in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Multan and Bannu is settled at Rs140, while its price in Hyderabad has reached Rs138 per kilo.

A day earlier, it was reported that the weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), increased by 0.33 pc on a year-on-year basis for the week ending on July 13.

The short-term inflation rose by an all-time high of 48.35pc for the period that ended on May 4.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 258.63 points as compared to 257.79 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 21 (41.17%) items increased, 11 (21.58%) items decreased and 19 (37.25%) items remained stable.

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included sugar (5.22%), wheat flour (4.23%), gur (3.68%), salt powdered (2.17%) and eggs (1.34%).

Alvi felicitates Macron on national day of France

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday extended warmest felicitations to President of France Emmanuel Macron on his country's national day.

In his letter to President Macron, Alvi wrote that Pakistan and France enjoyed cordial relations marked by mutual trust, commonality of views, and close cooperation in multilateral fora.

Referring to the Roadmap for Bilateral Cooperation signed in February this year, the president said it would

help strengthen the multi-faceted cooperation in areas such as trade, people-to-people contacts, education, climate change, and energy transition.

The president expressed confidence that under President Macron's dynamic leadership, France would take the bilateral relationship with Pakistan to a higher level for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

"I avail myself of this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your good health and happiness, and continued progress and prosperity of the people of the French Republic", President Alvi concluded.

Pakistan likely to introduce mini budget for second review

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is likely to introduce a mini-budget as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has sought a plan for 'better tax' collection from property and agriculture sectors.

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and a mini-budget is likely to be introduced if the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) approves the IMF's plan.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is also demanding to make provinces 'active' for the betterment of taxable income from the agriculture sector.

Pakistan on Thursday received the first tranche of \$1.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund under the SBA programme.

Dar said the remaining \$1.8 would be released after two reviews, meaning that there would be two instalments. The IMF on Wednesday night approved a \$3 billion loan for Pakistan after signing the staff-level agreement last month.

Inaugural session

Islamabad: The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Umar Ata Bandial delivering the Keynote Address during the inaugural session of the National Conference Resilient Pakistan Calibrating Population and Resources at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.



Two-day National Conference on Population starts

Moot addresses population challenges in Pakistan

ABC

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

Pakistan is the 5th most populous country of the world with a population almost 240 million people. It has one of the highest population growth rate and total fertility rate in the region; and a low contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) of around 35%. The Population and Housing Census 2017 revealed numerous challenges, including 40% of the population living below the poverty line, 22.8 million children out of school, 9.5 million (38%) stunted children and around 10,000 maternal deaths per

year. Moreover, rapidly growing population has posed many environmental challenges such as the scarcity and depletion of natural resources such as water, forests, green gases, clean air etc. It is also impacting the social and development sectors including education, employment, national savings and finances.

Recognizing the consequences of rapid population growth, the Supreme Court of Pakistan took Suo Moto Notice and established a National Task Force on Population & Family Planning. The Task Force developed a set of recommendations which were endorsed by the Supreme Court and approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI). These recommendations aim to increase the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) to 50% by 2024 and 60% by 2030, lower the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to 2.8 and 2.2 by 2024 and 2030 respectively, and reduce the Population Growth Rate (PG) to 1.5% by 2024 and 1.1% by 2030.

Based on these recommendations, a National Action Plan (2019-24) was launched, incorporating the best practices practiced by our neighboring countries such as Bangladesh, Turkey and Iran. Resultantly, the government has taken strategic actions, including the establishment of the Federal Task Force and Provincial Task Forces, the creation of the Pakistan Population Fund, the formulation of a National Narrative on Population/Family Planning, and the establishment of a Parliamentary Forum for Population. The provincial governments have also initiated integration of family planning in healthcare, expansion of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) for enhanced outreach, expansion of contraceptive choices, steps towards contraceptive commodity security, pre-marital counseling, and discouragement of child marriages.

The purpose of this conference is to take stock of the achievements, identify the difficulties faced, preempt

the emerging challenges, and deliberate upon as to how best we can address population and development agenda in Pakistan and as to how we can achieve the targets of National Population Action Plan, Pakistan's Commitments at ICPD25 Nairobi Summit, Pakistan's Commitments for FP2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Conference will assemble the relevant national and provincial political leadership, national and provincial program managers and the implementing partners in the public and private sector, legal fraternity, development partners, diplomats, academia, religious scholars, population champions in the civil society, youth leadership, women champions and media, among others.

The Conference will provide a forum to advocate population issue as a matter of human rights. It will create an opportunity to sensitize the stakeholders on the gravity of the situation and its logical conse-

quence. Previously, out of the three main determinants of the rapid population growth, operational dimension has been emphasized. The Conference will focus on the 'social determinants' and reforms in the policies of relevant sectors that are linked with the population. The Conference will provide a platform to the implementing partners to highlight their achievements and come up with new vigor that could create a momentum for an accelerated implementation of the Action Plan. It will allow the policy makers and planners to collect experts' opinion to sharpen the national vision on population and introduce changes in the Action Plan. It would be a call upon national and provincial political leadership, national and provincial program managers and the implementing partners in the public and private sector, and international development partners to come up and commit their best to address Pakistan's fundamental issue of rapidly growing population.

Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund draft law finalized



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here Friday chaired a meeting on the establishment of Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund.

The meeting deliberated upon technicalities involved, finalized the draft law and decided to send it to Ministry of Law and Justice for legal opinion and further necessary action, said a press statement issued by the finance ministry.

The establishment of the fund is authorized under the Public Finance Management Act- 2019, the statement added.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Finance, Tariq Bajwa, Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Akif Saeed and senior officers from Finance Division and SECP attended the meeting, according to press statement issued by the finance ministry.

As announced by the Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in his budget 2023-24 speech in the Parliament, the meeting reviewed the draft bill for the establishment of Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund.

It would facilitate optimal leveraging and better management of government assets in the country in line with international standards, policies and practices.

Toshakhana case: Islamabad court adjourns hearing at ECP's request



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad adjourned the hearing of the Toshakhana criminal case against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman at the request of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Judge Humayun Dilawar presided over the trial court proceedings. Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, represented Imran Khan, while the ECP's counsel made a request to adjourn the hearing.

ECP counsel Saad Hasan informed the court that Advocate Amjad Parvez was to argue the case but due to

"personal commitments" he could not appear the court. He requested the judge to adjourn the hearing for tomorrow.

To this, the judge turned towards PTI chairman's lawyer Gohar Ali Khan and told him that the ECP lawyer was "very busy today" and sought adjournment.

Advocate Gohar replied that case would be heard in new court in new atmosphere.

Later, the sessions court judge declared that he would hear the case on Monday in the new court building.

Consequently, the court granted the request and adjourned the hearing until Monday.

LHC bars Pervaiz Elahi's arrest in 'unknown cases'

Bureau Chief

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday barred the authorities from arresting former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president Pervaiz Elahi in 'unknown cases'.

According to details, the LHC announced the reserved judgement on the petition filed by former Punjab Chief Minister regarding his arrest in different cases.



LHC Judge Justice Muhammad Amjad Rafiq announced the verdict, barring the author-

ities from arresting Pervaiz Elahi in 'unknown cases', including inquiries of National

Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Meanwhile, the PTI president also secured pre-arrest bail in a case registered at Ghalib Market police station. The court also directed Elahi to refer to the relevant court in this regard.

Earlier on July 11, a banking court granted bail to former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Pervaiz Elahi

in suspicious transactions case.

The banking court approved Pervaiz Elahi's bail in the case lodged by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The PTI president has been directed to submit surety bonds worth Rs500,000.

READ: Chaudhry Shujaat meets Pervaiz Elahi in jail again

The former CM was immediately taken into custody by FIA after he secured bail in a corruption case on June 26.

PTI chief summoned by NAB again

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief once again in connection with a probe into the alleged misuse of power and the sale of Toshakhana gifts, ARY News reported on Friday.

The NAB Rawalpindi chapter summoned the PTI chief on July 17 in connection with a probe into the



alleged misuse of power and the sale of Toshakhana gifts.

The call-up notice stated that the NAB's inquiry has entered into investigation phase.

European Parliament adopts joint resolution on India's human rights breaches

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The European Parliament has strongly urged India to take necessary measures to promptly halt the ongoing ethnic and religious violence, protect all religious minorities such as Manipur's Christian community, and pre-empt any further escalation.

The joint resolution was adopted on Thursday following recent violent clashes in the state of Manipur, India since May 2023 that left at least 120 people dead, 50,000 displaced, and over 1,700 houses and 250 churches destroyed.

The resolution noted that intolerance towards minority communities had contributed to the current violence and there were concerns about the politically motivated, divisive policies that promote Hindu majoritarianism in the area.

The Manipur state government has shut down internet connections and severely hindered reporting by the media, while security forces have been implicated in the recent killings, something that has further increased distrust in the authorities.

The Members of the European Parliament called on the Indian authorities to

allow independent investigations to look into the violence, tackle impunity and lift the internet ban.

They also urged all conflicting sides to cease making inflammatory statements, re-establish trust and play an impartial role to mediate the tensions.



The Parliament reiterated its call for human rights to be integrated into all areas of the EU-India partnership, including trade.

The MEPs also advocated the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue to be reinforced and encouraged the EU and its member states to systematically and publicly raise human rights concerns, notably on freedom of expression, religion, and the shrinking space for civil society, with the Indian side at the highest level.

On behalf of the European People's Party Group (EPP), the MEPs who adopted the resolution include Željka Zovko, Sven

Simon, Tomáš Zdechovský, Ivan Štefánek, Janina Ochojska, Michaela Šojdrová, Vladimír Bilčík, David Lega, Jiří Pospíšil, Andrey Kovatchev, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Inese Vaidere and Seán Kelly.

Pedro Marques and Pierre Larrourou adopted the resolution on behalf of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group.

On behalf of Renew Group, the MEPs who endorsed the resolution are Urmas Paet, Petras Auštrevičius, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Olivier Chastel, Klemen Grošelj, Svenja Hahn, Moritz Körner, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Karen Melchior, Dragoș Pîslaru, Frédérique Ries, Maria Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Ramona Strugariu, Dragoș Tudorache and Hilde Vautmans.

Alviina Alametsä adopted the resolution on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, while on behalf of the ECR Group European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the members who endorsed are Karol Karski, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Adam Bielan, Waldemar Tomaszewski, Eugen Jurzyca, Dominik Tarczyński, Assita Kanko, Anna Zalewska and Carlo Fidanza.

Rescue and relief operation accelerated in flood-affected areas: Relief Commissioner

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Relief Commissioner Punjab Nabeel Javed has announced that rescue and relief efforts have been intensified in the districts near the Sutlej River. 8 relief camps have been set up in Okara with 66 rescuers and two ambulances are actively participating in the rescue operations, and the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has provided 15 boats, 376 life jackets, 75 life rings, and other equipment to the rescue teams. So far, 437 people have been rescued in Okara district, and 2,481 individuals have been relocated to safe areas. Additionally, 62 animals have also been rescued.

In Kasur district, the rescue operation has been completed, with the dedicated efforts of 271 rescuers, 3 ambulances, and officers from various organizations who worked tirelessly day and night to ensure timely rescue

operations. PDMA provided 83 boats, 478 life jackets, 95 life rings, 34 wireless sets, and other equipment to aid the rescue operations in Kasur. A total of 3,430 people have been rescued, 11,990 individuals have been safely relocated, and 518 animals have also been rescued. On special instructions from the chief minister, the number of relief camps in Kasur has been increased from 11 to 16, he added.

In Pakpattan district, he said that 12 relief camps have been established. So far, 43 people have been rescued, and 2,906 individuals have been relocated to safe places. PDMA has provided 7 boats and 70 life jackets, along with 26 life rings, 6 wireless sets, and other equipment to assist the rescue teams, he noted.

In Bahawalnagar district, 8 relief camps have been set up, and 60 rescuers, along with an ambulance, are engaged in rescue and

relief activities. PDMA has provided 8 boats, 145 life jackets, 16 life rings, 16 wireless sets, and other equipment to support the rescue teams. Thus far, 12 people have been rescued, and 159 individuals have been relocated to safe areas in Bahawalnagar, he stated.

Regarding the Vehari district, a total of 5 relief camps have been established, and 50 rescuers have been deployed. They have access to 70 life jackets, 25 life rings, 9 wireless sets, and other equipment, he conveyed. Although there is currently no flood situation in Vehari district, the rescue teams have been instructed to remain alert in case of any emergency. PDMA was continuously monitoring the situation, and DG PDMA Imran Qureshi was leading the efforts to assist flood victims. Vaccination of animals belonging to the affected individuals is also underway to prevent diseases.

PM breaks ground Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-5

Asim Tanveer

CHASHMA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday broke ground on the 1200 MW Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5) here which is likely to be completed in seven to eight years at a cost of around US\$3.48 billion.

On June 30, 2023 the prime minister witnessed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the C-5 project between China National Nuclear Corporation Overseas Ltd (CNOS) and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC).

Addressing the ground breaking ceremony here at Chashma, the prime minister said keeping in mind the country's requirements of clean and cheap energy sources, the project should be completed before the given schedule.

Terming it a huge milestone and a symbol of cooperation between the two great friends China and Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif said the project would help the country promoting clean, efficient and comparatively cheaper energy.

He said after a pause of many years, the China Pakistan Economic Corri-



dor (CPEC) was going again in full swing. He gave the credit of concluding the agreement of C-5 to the coalition government and the SPD for their hard efforts.

"Our detractors had been fabricating rumours all around that Pakistan was going to default on its sovereign commitments but we crossed all turbulent waters in just 15 months," he added.

However, he said the risk of potential default had been completely averted

through team effort of the government.

The prime minister said a couple of days ago, there was an approval of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and within 48 hours around \$4.5 billion were transferred by the Pakistan's brotherly countries Saudi Arabia and UAE besides another \$1.2 billion from the IMF.

About 4 months ago, he said the Chinese government and commercial banks rolled over amounts back to Paki-

stan to the tune of \$5 billion.

He paid his tributes to the the Chinese President XI Jinping, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for their support in need of hour.

Charge D'Affaires of the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, Pang Chunxue said C5 would help Pakistan building low carbon, clean and cheap energy which would also produce local jobs and would engage the local industries to contribute in the project.

Chairman of China National Nuclear Cooperation Yu Jianfeng said cooperation between Pakistan and China in nuclear energy had become an integral part of the all weather strategic cooperative partnership.

He said the C5 project was a significant milestone in the HPR 1000 development global journey. Hualong One (HPR 1000) is the 3rd-generation nuclear power brand to which China has exclusive intellectual property rights.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Energy Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan, and Chairman PAEC Dr Raja Ali Raza were also present on the occasion.

Saraiki people continue to struggle until the achievement of Saraikistan Province: Dharija



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chairman Saraikistan National Council Sain Zahoor Ahmed Dharija said Saraikistan People of Saraiki Wasib will continue to struggle until the achievement of Saraikistan province.

He said youth of Wasaib do not need a laptop. The Prime Minister's visit to Multan was disappointing. The Prime Minister did not give any development package for Multan. Didn't happen. These views were expressed by Saraikistan National Council Chairman Zahoor Dharija while talking to the youth in the consultative meeting held at Multan Press Club on Friday July 14, Saraiki poets Arif Gulshan, Sabir Khan Ghalo in the meeting.

Mujahid Kheda, Chairman of Saraiki Students Council, Bahauddin Zakaria University, Malik Zubair Vance and others were present. Zahoor Dharija said that the Prime Minister's visit has made it clear that the government's priorities do not include Saraiki province or the development of Wasaib. No, Mian Shahbaz Sharif came to Multan years later but did not call any meeting or meeting regarding Wasaib's issues. He said that Wasaib is being treated like a stepmother.

Zahoor Dharija said that we demand from Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb that like PTV Peshawar, PTV Multan should also be allowed to continue regional broadcasting for 24 hours.

Before Peshawar, PTV Bolan Quetta has this facility. Minister of Information should stop the behavior of Saraiki as a stepmother, that Saraiki is the largest language of Pakistan and is spoken in all four provinces. He also said that the agricultural program in the name of Green Revolution is a program to occupy the lands of the subjugated. 44 lakh acres of land should be given to local farmers, the program of taking over the lands of Saraiki and Wasaib should be ended and the province of Saraikistan should be created.

Chief Minister Punjab approved the upgradation of Nawabpur Road: Aamir Khattak

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi approved the upgradation of Nawabpur Road on the suggestion of Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak. In his recent visit to Multan, Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak, while giving a briefing on the projects, said that special funds will be provided for the rehabilitation of Nawabpur Road. Upgradation of Multan Vehari Road is also indispensable to give relief to the people. Besides, the Chief Minister Punjab also issued an order for immediate repair of Vehari Road.



Commissioner Multan Engineer Aamir Khattak said that Chief Minister Punjab has a personal interest in the development of this region. Punjab government has also approved the project of flyover in Shujaabad Chak RS in public interest.

Jamaat-e-Islami continues great struggle for people: Dr Safdar Hashmi

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Amere Jamate Islami Multan Dr Safdar Hashmi Said Jamaat-e-Islami Continue Great Struggle For People. The fund for the construction of Nawabpur Road was approved through the efforts of Jamaat-e-Islami. Commissioner Multan is grateful to Aamir Khattak, who placed the case of this road before the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Ameer Dr. Safdar Hashmi Naib Ameer and PP-214 candidate Mian Asif Akhwani has said that for a year Jamaat-e-Islami was knocking the doors of all institutions for the construction of this road. A letter was written, a writ was filed in the High Court, people were contacted and a dharna was held.



Donated wheelchairs for disabled railway passengers: Hamad Hasan Mirza

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Renowned social personality Dr. Affan Qaiser donated two wheelchairs for disabled passengers at Multan Cantt Railway Station yesterday to ease the difficulties faced by disabled passengers in boarding the train. On this occasion, DS Railway Multan Division Hamad Hasan Mirza thanked Dr. Affan Qaiser for donating wheelchairs for the passengers.

And appreciated his passion for serving humanity. DS Railway Multan Hamad Hasan Mirza along with DCO Railway Adnan Marwat, SP Railway Shahid Nawaz and Dr Abdul Sami were also present on this occasion.

Catholic Church and Christian Community strongly condemns quran pak burning in Sweden: Bishop Yusuf Sohan

Kiran Asim



MULTAN: Catholic Bishop of Multan, Bishop Yusuf Sohan, Chairman Interfaith Dialogue Pakistan, has said that the Catholic Church and Christian Community strongly condemns Quran Pak Burning incident in Sweden and requests the international organizations to deal with the people responsible for this type of incident with iron hands and Regular legislation should be enacted to avoid such incidents in the future. He expressed these views while addressing the condemnation meeting held in Bishop House Multan yesterday in connection with the Sweden incident. Multan Diocese Reverend Father Asif Malik, Samuel Clement Diocese Director of Interfaith Dialogue, Pir Masood Qasim Qasmi

Prof. Abdul Majid Wattoo Allama Dr. Arshad Ali Baloch, Allama Abu Bakr Usman Al-Azhari, Allama Syed Mujahid Abbas Gardizi and others spoke on this occasion. The people involved in the incident in Sweden may not belong to any religion. Of course, events have other purposes.

Additional Chief Secretary visited flooded river belt of South Punjab

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar visited various places of the riverine belt of river Sutlej in district Bahawalnagar. He visited boating point Aukaka, Flood Relied Camp and BHU Qasimka. Secretary Irrigation South Punjab Ejaz Khaliq Razaqi.

Deputy Commissioner Bahawalnagar Zulfiqar Bhawan and DPO Ali Raza were also accompanied with him. Additional Chief Secretary Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar inspected rescue posts and reviewed the relief activities and goods and medicines for the flood victims. Speaking on this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab said

the government of Punjab stands with the flood victims in this difficult time. He said relief activities for the flood effected peopl of riverine area will remain continued without any interruption. He said the flood situation was under control of the administration. Secretary Irrigation South Punjab Ejaz Khaliq Razaqi, while briefing, said the water flow in the



rivers in the entire south Punjab was being continuously monitored and the embankments are being watched day and night. Deputy Commissioner

Bahalngar Zulfiqar Bhon briefed that district administration was fully alert to deal with the flood situation. He said relief and rescue camps have been set

up by the police, rescue 1122 and the health department. He added that the administration has all the required medicines.

Best leadership comes to power for benefit of the nation and people: Khawaja Suliman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Central Chairman of Tajran Pakistan Central Organization Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui has said that if the best leadership comes to power for the benefit of the nation, then the business community across the country should pay off the country's debt on the call of Tajran Pakistan Central Organization. Pakistan army saved the country, this is the reason why the whole nation is standing by the side of Pakistan army. They pay billions of rupees in tax annually, but unfortunately, more than 80 lakh small businessmen across the country are not being given relief equal to salt in flour.

In the meeting, businessmen representatives across the country, including Multan, were asked to participate in the general elections, to make a telephone directory containing the officials and members of the Central



Organization of Trademen Pakistan, to publish a three-monthly magazine on business issues, to set up an office in Multan city for businessmen were also presented, on which Central Chairman Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui, in consultation with officials, formed a committee on business leaders to consider and resolve all issues, while in the meeting Central Senior Vice President Babar Ali Qureshi, South Punjab President Sheikh Javed Akhtar, District President Syed Jafar Ali Shah, Multan President Khalid Mehmood Qureshi,

Senior Vice President South Punjab Haji Nadeem Qureshi, General Secretary South Punjab Zeeshan Siddiqui, General Secretary Multan Mirza Naem Baig, Chairman South Punjab Javed Akhtar Khan addressed while Malik Imran Qayyum Bhatta, Rao Liaqat Ali, Akmal Khan Baloch, Fahad Ishaq Sangi, Mudassar Raja, Nasir Mahmood Chauhan, Rana Muhammad Owais Ali, Chaudhry Abdul Hameed Jutt, Sheikh Muhammad Shafiq, Malik Qaiser Iqbal Kambh, Khawaja Talal Siddiqui, Mian Saif Saeed Qureshi, Shahid Mahmood Ansari, Nadeem Sheikh, Rana Muhammad Hasham, Haq Ali Qureshi, Chaudhry Tanveer Gujjar, Chaudhry Muhammad Shehbaz, Malik Shahzad, Kamran Bhatta, Haji Abdul Ghafoor, Rana Muhammad Akbar, Qamar-ul-Zaman Khan, Muhammad Ejaz Bhatti, Muhammad Tahir, Khawaja Subhan Siddiqui.

Chaudhry Irshad, Khawaja Ahmad Faraz Siddiqui, Ishtiaq Ansari, Muhammad Yunus Qureshi, Sheikh Muzamil Qureshi, Tanveer Ashraf, Mukhtar Qureshi, Osama Haider Qureshi, Muhammad Faziyun Nadeem Qureshi, Muhammad Ashraf, Malik Khalid Bhatta, Muhammad Tariq, Abid Qureshi, Hafiz Shahzad, Muhammad Bilal and other traders participated in large numbers. Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui further said that his doors are always open to solve the problems of the traders community and it is a matter of greatest honor for us that all the tradesmen's organization Officials are elected not only in the elections held in markets and bazaars

Rather, he is honest, educated and capable, who is always ready to solve the problems of the business community, while compared to them, the so-called business leaders do not even have their own markets and markets.

Rotary Club Midtown providing social welfare services in cities of South Punjab: Ch Altaf Shahid

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The newly elected President of Rotary Club Multan Midtown Chaudhry Altaf Shahid has said that Rotary Club Midtown has been providing social welfare services in various cities of South Punjab including Multan for 32 years. Free medical dispensary in Qasim Bela which is providing free medical facilities and medicine to the local people while working on free English speaking course, computer skills, orphan care children in collaboration with Millat Foundation. Ten houses have also been constructed in Qasim Bela

He expressed these views while speaking at the first guest speaker meeting of Rotary Club Midtown at the beginning of the Rotary year. In

the meeting, Inspector Traffic Police Multan Muhammad Sohail was the guest speaker while Secretary Hina Babar, Saleem Nasir, Mirza Shahid, Haji. Umar Bhatta, Malik Amjad, Kashif Khalil, Asif Nawaz, Farah Rehman, Javed Musrat, Muhammad Kashif, Ehtishamul Haq, Rao Asif Akhlaq, Sheikh Faheem Sattar, Waqas Hafeez, Shahbaz Chatta, Muhammad Moazzam, Shakeel Bukhari, Adeel Akhtar participated. Prof. Dr. Masood Bhatta spoke about heart diseases and explained preventive measures while Prof. Azam gave a detailed briefing on Rotary International's introduction services.

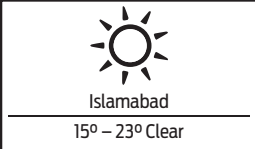
Speaking, Chaudhry Altaf Shahid said that our aim is to serve humanity and we do it together and by promoting mutual relations, we

create convenience for the people on the occasion of the recent floods, the flood victims of Hajipur and Fazilpur. With the help of 20 lakhs worth of money, through the efforts of Rotary Midtown, a child suffering from a hole in the heart underwent free surgery from India and in the context of higher education, deserving students were sent abroad for higher education. Traffic Inspector Muhammad Sohail In his address, while appreciating the social welfare services of the Rotary Midtown, he expressed himself with reference to the traffic

And said that accidents can be avoided by obeying the traffic rules. Tell the children about the traffic rules and if they follow them, the accidents can be reduced. Parents

are responsible for road safety to save the lives of their loved ones. Work He said that road side accidents are the cause of 13 lakh deaths annually in the world while 40 people lose their lives every month in Pakistan.

Newly elected President Chaudhry Altaf Shahid, Guest Speaker Inspector Muhammad Sohail, Dr. Masood Bhatta, Hina Babar, Prof. Azam and Prof. Adeel are addressing the meeting of Rotary Club Midtown. Salim Nasir, Mirza Shahid, Haji Umar Bhatta, Malik Amjad, Kashif Khalil, Asif Nawaz, Farah Rehman, Javed Musrat, Muhammad Kashif, Ehtishamul Haq, Rao Asif Akhlaq, Sheikh Faheem Sattar, Waqas Hafeez, Shahbaz Chatta, Muhammad Moazzam, Shakeel Bukhari are participating.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:27 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:20 pm
Isha 9:00 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Holy Family 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

Marriyum grieved over demise of Colonel (ret'd) Raja Waseem



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of Colonel (ret'd) Raja Waseem, terming it a "great loss" for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). She, in a tweet, said the whole party was deeply saddened by hearing news of Colonel (ret'd) Raja Waseem's demise. The minister acknowledged his role in promoting the party's ideology and paid tribute to him for the services he rendered for the country, nation, democracy, and the PML-N.

She recalled that late Raja Waseem defended the party and its Quaid Nawaz Sharif's stance always, especially in difficult times. He never compromised on his ideals and principles, the minister added.

She prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

Türkiye Embassy remembers martyrs killed in FETÖ's

NA Speaker pays rich tribute Martyrs of Türkiye to keep alive democracy



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that sacrifices rendered by people of Türkiye on 15th July 2016 to keep alive the flame of democracy is unmatched in annals of political history. He said that the resolve and bravery manifested by common people in Türkiye to save democracy is indicative to reality that it is people's will which ultimately decide the fate of nation. He also said that both Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy strong bilateral relations deeply rooted in centuries old traditions and values. He expressed these views while addressing the event of commemoration of 7th anniversary of Democracy and National Unity Day at Turkish Embassy Islamabad. The day was celebrated as Victory of Democracy.

The Speaker Raja Pervez

Ashraf has said that the People of Pakistan took pride to stand with Turkish Brethren always. He also paid special honour to the sacrifice of over 250 martyrs who paid the ultimate sacrifice for revival of democracy. He also said that Both houses of Pakistan's Parliament passed unanimous resolution expressing solidarity with Türkiye and its people.

Speaker also said that Pakistan and Türkiye's always stands with each other in difficult times specially during natural disasters, both extended their support to each other wholeheartedly. The Speaker also expressed belief that Türkiye would continue to develop under the leadership of President Mr. Tayyip Erodogan. He also said that enhancing Parliamentary contacts between both Pakistan and Türkiye pivotal for regional prosperity.

The Dr Mehmet Picaci Türkiye Ambassador in Pakistan

expressed gratitude to Speaker for gracing this event. He said, "Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy close relations deeply rooted in centuries old values and traditions." He also said that this day reminded to world about sacrifices offered by common people in Türkiye to save democracy in Türkiye.

Ambassador said that in his speech "today we commemorate the seventh anniversary of the thwarted coup attempt carried out by the FETO terrorist organization in Türkiye on July 16, 2018.

He said after 2016, every year the day is now for us "15 July Democracy and National Unity and Martyrs' in order to remember our martyrs and pray for them and also to celebrate the victory that our courageous people won for the sake of our country, democracy and identity. The evening and night of the 15th of July was a night of unprecedented betrayal in Türkiye, as

well as a night of unprecedented heroism, until dawn.

He said the night of July 15 was long night and it was the night when Turkish democracy was protected by the firm will of the people of Türkiye. And that night was the one when Türkiye's territorial integrity, demographic integrity and cultural integrity in every sense were protected by its own citizen's under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

July 15 was planned at a time when the government was preparing to dismiss so called FETO supporters of all ranks from the military. Because then the true intentions of the members of the FETO cult had been exposed, and since 2013, the process of cleansing them from the institutions had been initiated by the government.

He said July 15, 2016 was FETO's desperate last-move to



stop this process and to seize and control the state as a whole. After this heinous failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, FETO-linked individuals and companies, particularly government agencies and the military, as well as the public and private sectors, began to be decisively eliminated many leading conspirators had been arrested. There have been members of the organization who fled the country cowardly and took refuge in foreign countries.

For years, the Turkish judiciary has been demanding the return of the leader of the organization from the USA and the FETO members from European countries of Türkiye. Unfortunately, these demands have not yet been fulfilled.

The perpetrators of the treacherous coup attempt on July 15 in Türkiye continue to be brought to justice on the basis of the rule of

law and fundamental rights and freedoms.

Therefore, the nature and scope of Türkiye's fight against FETO is not different from the struggle of other countries against organizations that terrorize civil servants and civilians, and jeopardize democratic values, fundamental rights and freedoms.

On the other hand, an increasing numbers of governments in other parts of the world understand that this terrorist organization poses a danger to them and take the necessary steps

Pakistan has been the country that has seen this threat since the earliest and prudently cleared this organization from its country. The Supreme Courts of Pakistan declared FETO as a proscribed organization with its decision on December 29, 2018. Türkiye and the Turkish nation are grateful to brotherly Pakistan.

Religious tourism to help promote country's soft image: Ramesh

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force for Gandhara Tourism Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani says religious tourism in Pakistan will help promote the country's soft image.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said the international "Gandhara Symposium" was successful and it will promote peace, interfaith harmony and friendly atmosphere for the tourists in the country.

He said a draft of "Takshashila Declaration" was shared with monks which aims at exploring windows to promote Gandhara art and tourism.

Dr Ramesh Kumar said a web portal www.gandhara.gov.pk has been established to facilitate tourists desiring to



visit Gandhara archeological sites in Pakistan. He said this portal will help tourists to expedite the visa process.

He said the Chairman Higher Education Commission has

been tasked to urge students of different universities to write thesis on the Gandhara art.

Chairperson CPWB inaugurates new child protection unit building in Kasur

News Desk

LAHORE: The inauguration of the Child Protection Unit building in Kasur was marked by the presence of Chairperson Child Protection & Welfare Bureau Sarah Ahmad, along with Director General Aftab Ahmed Khan, representatives from the Building Department, and others.

During her speech at the event, Sarah Ahmad highlighted that the construction of the Child Protection Unit in Kasur commenced in November 2021 at Kutchery Road. She mentioned that the child protection office has been operating in Kasur since 2019, providing assistance and protection to children in need. Sarah Ahmad expressed her

gratitude to the chief secretary, ACS (Home) and line departments for their cooperation in the endeavor. She further noted that the construction of the Child Protection Unit in Kasur was completed within a year and a half, at a total cost of 34 million rupees. Additionally, she mentioned that similar units have been established in 25 districts, with the construction of their offices nearing completion.

Sarah Ahmad emphasized the CPWB's commitment to extending the scope of its services to all districts, ensuring effective protection of children's rights across the 36 districts. This expansion aims to create a safe social environment that safeguards children from exploitation, she concluded.



Lahore: Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah is addressing a press conference. Sardar Owais Lahari and Chaudhary Sarfraz Afzal were also present

Malik Shah Jahan Mehsud was killed after being abducted by unknown armed men

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: According to the information received, last evening in Tehsil Makin of Latha sub-division of Upper South Waziristan, some unknown armed men abducted the leading tribal Malik/Elder Shah Jahan Mehsud from a vehicle at Dashaka area of Old Makin and took him to an unknown location were taken and his body was recovered early yesterday morning from a nearby wasteland, his funeral prayer was performed at Jamia Masjid Makin.

Thousands of local people including Brigade Commander Brigadier Talha and Colonel Shakir participated in the funeral prayer and Later he was buried in the ancestral cemetery.

NPO to organize webinar on 'Problem-Solving Skill, Convert into Opportunities'

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will organize a webinar on "Problem-Solving Skill, Convert into Opportunities" on July 21 (Friday).

Problem-solving includes three main parts includes identifying the problem, analyzing possible solutions, and deciding on the best course of action, according to an NPO document.

Chinese Cemetery Memorial Denure Commemorates Karakoram Highway Workers

Khizar Zaman Malik

ISLAMABAD: In the heart of the small town of Denure, adjacent to the majestic Karakoram Highway near Gilgit City, a solemn memorial rises, marking an exceptional chapter in history.

Meticulously constructed by the renowned China Bridge and Road Corporation, this tribute stands as a symbol of profound respect and gratitude for the over 140 valiant Chinese workers who made the ultimate sacrifice between 1966 and 1978.

Their unwavering dedication during the construction of the Karakoram Highway played a pivotal role in connecting the remote region of Gilgit-Baltistan to both China and Pakistan, fostering sustainable development for both nations.

This remarkable memorial embodies



the indomitable spirit and unwavering resolve of these brave individuals, who selflessly gave their all for a cause greater than themselves.

It serves as a poignant reminder of their unparalleled sacrifices and the indelible mark they left on the history of both nations.

Nestled amidst breathtaking natural

beauty, overlooking the magnificent Karakoram Highway, the memorial stands tall, a testament to the triumphs and struggles endured during the construction of this great marvel.

Its design captures the essence of their courageous efforts, meticulously crafted to inspire reverence and contemplation.



Approaching this awe-inspiring structure, visitors are greeted by a sight that leaves them in awe.

The meticulously erected memorial exudes strength and resilience, reflecting the unwavering determination of the workers.

Symbolic elements and intricate carvings pay homage to their valour,

encapsulating the profound impact they had on the development of both China and Pakistan.

Engraved plaques tell the stories of these unsung heroes, recounting their arduous journey and ultimate sacrifice.

Visitors can explore exhibits that vividly document the hardships faced by the workers, the extraordinary feats

they accomplished, and the enduring legacy they left behind.

Standing upon this hallowed ground, one cannot help but contemplate the remarkable achievements made possible by the unwavering spirit of collaboration between China and Pakistan.

The memorial serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring bond forged between these two nations, united in their pursuit of progress and prosperity.

More than just a structure, the memorial of over 140 valiant Chinese workers stands as a testament to the power of sacrifice, determination, and friendship.

As the wind whispers through the surrounding mountains, the memories of these extraordinary individuals live on, forever etched in the hearts and minds of those who visit this remarkable site.

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Is there a nexus between Israel and PTI? - II

Diverse holders of mandates for special procedures expressed concern over the consistent rise in enforced disappearances and reaffirmed their recommendation that Pakistan criminalize enforced disappearance. The Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment expressed grave concern regarding the lack of legislation for the prevention and punishment of torture and urged Pakistan to enact legislation defining and criminalizing torture in accordance with international law. Diverse mandate holders for special procedures reaffirmed their concern that the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Pakistan Protection Ordinance appear to permit forms of arbitrary detention that facilitate prolonged incommunicado detention, torture, and enforced disappearances, which frequently result in the extrajudicial execution of the victim. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advised Pakistan to amend its existing laws, including the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 and the Citizen Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules of 2020. Additionally, UNESCO urged Pakistan to continue investigating cases involving the assassination of journalists and to report voluntarily to UNESCO on the status of judicial follow-up.

Hina Rabbani while forcefully defending the country argued that the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022 was enacted to combat torture and preserve fair trial and due process rights and a Juvenile Justice System Act, which mandated the handling of juvenile cases in accordance with human rights principles, was passed in 2018. While responding to the question of death penalties she argued that Pakistan had imposed a moratorium on the death penalty for several years. However, the moratorium

had been lifted after the horrendous terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014. The Minister highlighted that the death penalty was applied only for the most severe crimes, in full compliance with due process, under a final judgment rendered by a competent court and with the right to seek pardon or appeal for commutation, and that there had been no executions in Pakistan since December 2019. She also referred to the Railway Act which had been amended in October 2022, to reduce the provision for capital punishment to a life sentence for acts of sabotage targeting railway networks. While responding to the observations of harassment of journalists, she said that the landmark Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021 had been enacted, reflecting the high importance Pakistan attached to the freedom of opinion and expression.

While fortifying her defense, she referred to the National Education Policy Framework 2018 which had been formulated to accelerate the pace of universal and equal access to quality education by all, update of the National Action Plan for Human Rights in 2020 to make it more comprehensive and address any previous gaps. An Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in 2021 to ensure that human rights due diligence was conducted in the business sector, human rights awareness programme 2020 launched to educate, and raise awareness among the public and office bearers about international human rights commitments and follow-up actions, a human rights information management system had been established at the federal and provincial levels in 2021 for the collection of data on human rights indicators, the National Commission for Human Rights had launched policy guidelines 2018 on the protection of human rights defenders to ensure the

safety of defenders and to the National Commission on Rights of the Child, established in 2020, monitored child rights situations and addressed victims' grievances. Again all legal instruments which provided foundations of her arguments were passed during PTI's tenure. All these acts which provided the foundation of the Minister's arguments were passed during the tenure of PTI in power.

Some speakers said it was concerning that a law was passed in 2023 which tightened blasphemy laws, which were often used to persecute minority groups. The Government lacked the political will to protect the rights of religious minorities and had rejected multiple recommendations which called for the repeal of blasphemy laws. There had been concerning incidents when mobs targeted those accused of committing blasphemous crimes, often resulting in their deaths. A number of speakers called on Pakistan to repeal the laws, which were incompatible with the country's international obligations. It was also regretful that Pakistan had not adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination law which allowed religious minorities to effectively challenge the State and other actors.

Khar said Pakistan was taking due care of the rights of minorities in the country. "Individuals belonging to various religions are equal citizens of Pakistan and as a responsible state, we are fully committed to protecting and promoting their fundamental rights and freedoms, and added that Pakistan has taken safeguards against the misuse of the blasphemy law in the country, citing Section 211 of the Pakistan Penal Code which calls for action against any person who falsely accuses another person of blasphemy.

In its concluding remarks, the UNHRC praised Pakistan for accepting most of the recommendations and acknowledged that

it had paid particular attention to the rights of women and children, as well as education and health, among others. Pakistan was also mindful of the recommendations made in other areas, such as minorities, media, and law enforcement; it had viewed them on merit and they would remain part of the overall human rights agenda in the days ahead which it added would help in furthering respect and protections for all its people, especially in the field of economic, social and cultural rights. It appreciated Pakistan's consistently demonstrated strong political will to promote and protect all human rights of everyone and to enact wide-ranging legislative, policy, and institutional steps taken across the spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in line with its international human rights obligations, focusing on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the vulnerable and the marginalized. It applauded Pakistan's resolve to take further meaningful steps to implement the accepted recommendations, especially pertaining to sustainable development, women's empowerment, protection of the child, poverty alleviation, social protection schemes, and protecting rights of persons with disabilities, among others.

Hina Rabbani Khar was able to defend most of the critical recommendations and save face because of the legislations enacted and administrative and enforcement steps taken during 2018 to 2022 and win praise and appreciations of UNHRC members, which was incidentally the period of PTI in power; therefore it is only fair that while creating an evil nexus between PTI and Israel, proper acknowledgement of PTI's legislative and administrative efforts may also be made.

Concluded
 The author is the former Press Secretary of the President of Pakistan, the former Press Minister of the Embassy of Pakistan in France and also has been the former MD / CEO Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company (SRBC)



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan urges boosting rescue mechanisms for distressed people at sea

Pakistan has raised at the U. N. last month's tragic sinking of an overloaded boat off the Greek coast where 700 people, including Pakistanis, were killed while calling for scaling up rescue operations to save lives.

"Mediterranean Sea crossings have become increasingly treacherous," Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told UN Security Council's "Arria-Formula" meeting on 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers crossing borders on Land and At Sea: New Wave of Crisis'.

Russia convened the 15-member Council meeting under the format of Arria formula, which is named after a former Venezuelan UN ambassador, Diego Arriva. It is a very informal consultation process which affords the Council the opportunity to hear persons in a confidential, informal setting.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy highlighted the deadly migrant shipwreck that occurred on June 22, 2023, as he underscored the need for developing mechanisms for people in distress at sea.

"As responsible members of the international community, it is incumbent on us all to ensure the safety and security of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, uphold international law including maritime law, and enforce the prompt rescue of individuals in distress at sea, regardless of their nationality or circumstances," he said. There were news reports at the time that Greek coastguards were slow in reacting to the distress call from people aboard the sinking ship.

"One life lost is one too many," Ambassador Aamir Khan said, adding, "As civilized nations, it is our responsibility to ensure that no life is lost at anytime, anywhere and under all circumstances.

"We must undertake all efforts including by developing a transparent, safe and predictable disembarkation mechanisms for people in distress at sea, while complying with international obligations and without obstructing humanitarian efforts."

Referring to the deepening humanitarian crisis, the Pakistani envoy said that the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) provided a good framework by outlining key objectives to ease pressure on hosting countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand third-country solutions, and support safe and dignified returns.

At the same time, he said the recent GCR Indicator Report called for burden-sharing and strengthen efforts, as ten countries bear the weight of hosting over three-quarters of the world's refugees, with developing nations accommodating 80% of displaced individuals.

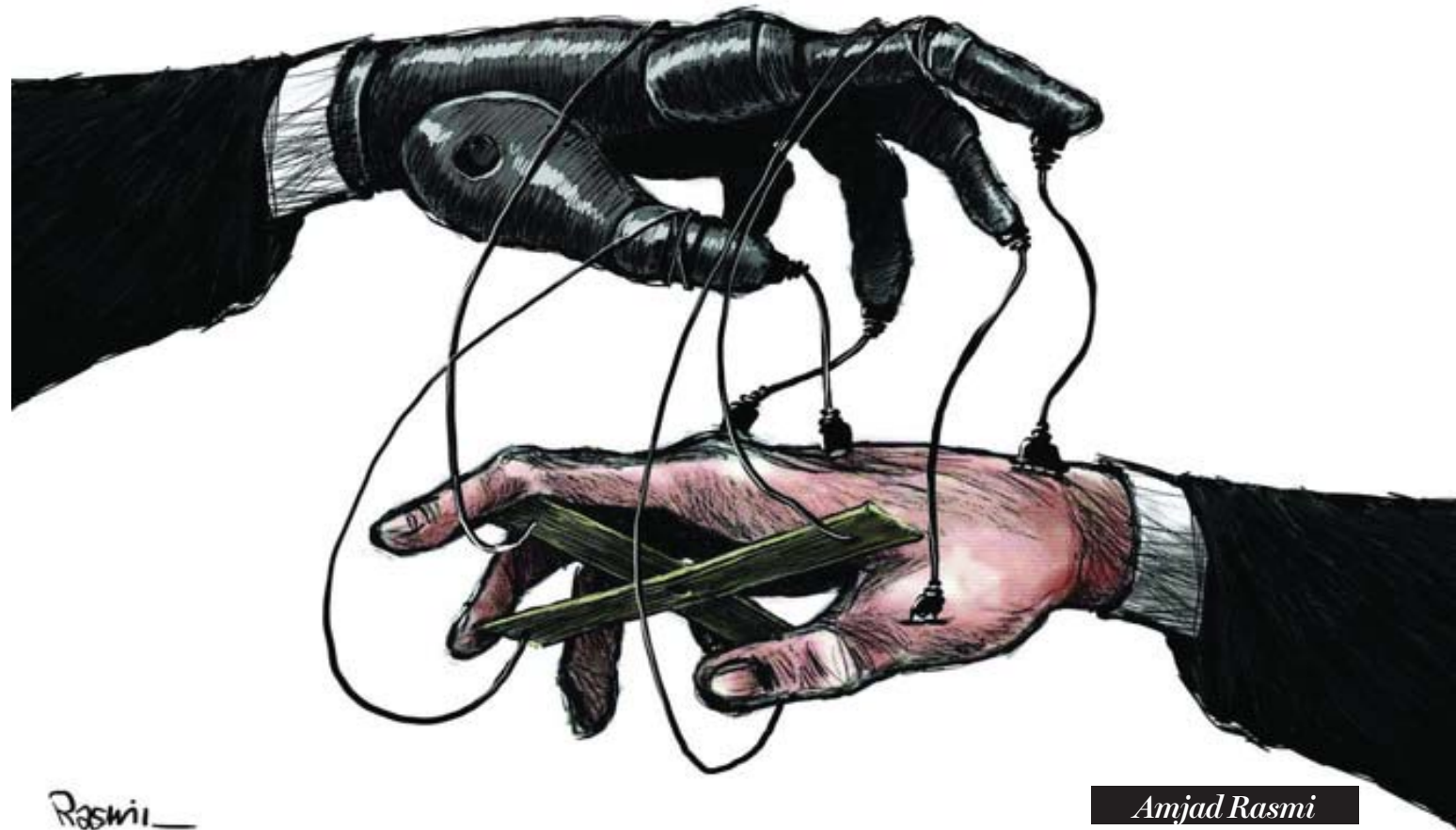
"This is unfair and unequal and cannot be rectified by a business-as-usual approach," Aamir Khan said.

"We will have to do more ... if we want to prevent already desperate situations from becoming catastrophic."

On its part, he said Pakistan is hosting 3.5 million registered and unregistered Afghan refugees for four decades, despite not being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

"The humanitarian and economic crisis in Afghanistan necessitates swift international assistance to prevent the prospect of the influx of millions of desperate Afghans seeking refuge from hunger and starvation," Aamir Khan said, pointing out that Pakistan cannot shoulder any new influx.

"We must help Afghan people. We must not neglect Afghanistan and divert attention away to other emergencies," he added.



Rasmi

Amjad Rasmi

Multan Museum: Peeping through annals of history, culture

Iftikhar Ahmed

Preserving history and artifacts at museums keeps future generations of any motherland abreast of knowledge and past glory where a few racks bearing memorable heritage reveal the saga of ages.

It is very plausible when people entering a museum join a world of criss-cross timelines of history with the relics and artifacts displayed over there telling untold stories and unrecognized memories of quaint times.

"Don't go to a museum with a destination. Museums are wormholes to other worlds. They are ecstasy machines. Follow your eyes to wherever they lead you...and the world should begin to change for you," once said the Pulitzer prize winner American art critic Jerry Saltz.

Therefore, the museums are not the graves of past but archives of history and culture whereby every single object resuscitates and pulsates life. Such a 'wormhole to the other worlds' is the "Multan Museum."

"Likely to be ready by December this year, the Multan Museum would unfold the history of ancient Multan and ethnic and geographical saga of Mooltani culture and politics," said Muhammad Hassan, Deputy Director Archaeology South Punjab.

"It would be yet another feather in the cap of Multani culture revealing ancient times to younger generation and art and history lovers," he said.

The project carrying a tentative cost of Rs 80 million was approved in 2021-22 after a decade long struggle and aspirations of the students, intellectuals and academia of South Punjab.

After its approval almost a decade back, it had remained under execution for quite some time but was then shelved declaring it unsuit-

able due to noise and dust pollution and for security reasons.

The then DCO Multan Naseem Sadiq dismantled its parking space in 2012 for expansion of city's main artery passing through the traffic-and-trade-busy Ghanta Ghar cross-section.

"The Punjab government had approved in year 2012 to convert a century old Victorian era clock tower located in the heart of city, into a museum at an estimated cost of Rs 40 million," recalled Malik Ghulam Muhammad, the then Incharge Archaeology Department Multan.

"It was our long desire to have a museum in Multan and we continued struggle for it despite all odds," he stated and revealed how he persuaded the then Secretary Tourism Punjab, Ehsaan Bhutta and Member Board of Revenue Babar Hayat Tarar to get approved 10 kanal land for the museum.

He said Wapda wanted this six-Kanal Nazool land to build a grid station but after their proposal failed, we moved forward to have a museum on this land.

"Multanites are finally having a museum right in front of archaeology office Multan - at the feet of historical Qasim fort mound and just a few hundred yards far from previous site of clock tower," he said joyously.

Coming from the ancient Greek and Roman mythologies, the word "museion" - "the Seat of Muses" mentions to each of nine goddesses, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who preside over the arts and sciences and was used as a philosophical institution or a place for contemplation. The origin shows that the museums we see now-a-days are developed in a way to serve as centers of learning, knowledge, especially for students and researchers.

Being constructed with an aim of depicting our history and culture the Multan museum houses four galleries, a library-cum-meeting

hall, laboratory, cafeteria, vast parking space, boundary wall with gates and a breast wall against the slope of Qasim Fort.

Around 80 per cent of the work is completed with signs of Mughal era Muslim architecture - a visible main dome is curved but slightly flat at the centre of roof and 16 domelets, eight above the front and four each on left and right sides. Facade of the museum is decorated with Multani glazed tiles in traditional shades of blue depicting geometrical designs.

"Multan has 5000 years old history that qualified it to have a museum," remarked columnist, comic writer and Secretary General Multan Tea House, Khalid Masud Khan. "It could have been done much earlier. But, it is still heartening to know that Multanites are finally going to have this facility later this year."

Recalling his childhood, Khalid Masud said, decades back he had seen many articles of historical significance like 8-10 Maunds heavy stone inscribed with lines in Arabic and Persian languages at 'Nigar Khana', a shop selling traditional and novelty items at Qasim fort.

"Such artifacts and those kept in stores of archaeology department and the collection of some traditional families of South Punjab should be displayed at Multan museum," he said. "People should be requested to decorate the museum with whatever articles of historical significance they have."

Renowned columnist Shakir Hussain Shakir also opined that remains and articles discovered during excavation of Multan sites by archaeologists Mirza Ibn-e-Hanif and Zubair Shafi Ghauri, presently placed at Seraiki Research Centre of BZU can also be brought to Multan museum.

"Once we have a museum, it is time to display here our preserved artifacts and heritage to reveal the ancient Mooltan to our younger generation," he stated. "Let us do it together to preserve our ancient assets."

Rekindling a bygone custom for healthy, cheaper living

Muhammad Shafique

At a time when health standards are falling due to sedentary lifestyle a man in his mid 70s is promoting a fun way to get fit through cycling - an active way of commuting.

Zaheerudin Khawaja, who celebrated his 74th birthday last Sunday along with dozens of his admirers, strongly believes cycling still an appreciable mode of exercise to keep oneself healthy.

"Unfortunately, we have turned into a vehicles-dependent society. There's a fairly large number of single occupancy vehicles, plying on our city arteries adding to carbon footprint and polluting our environment," the cycling freak said.

"The changes are already evident. Today the earth is warmer than a century ago and besides other factors, transport is a major contributor. I believe by using nonmotorised vehicles we can reduce carbon emissions as well as save money," he added.

Also keeping an eye on fuel prices, Khawaja says given the current fuel prices, if anyone drives his vehicle from five to seven kilometers, it may cost around Rs 300 to Rs 400 depending on the type of vehicle one is driving.

"Cycling is a very cost-efficient mode of transport for short journeys. Imagine how much we can save every month if we switch short drives to a bicycle," he said.

If any proper research is conducted to tally economic benefits of cycling in our country, we will come to know how much money could be saved by promoting this single habit.

"We can reap its benefits individually and as a nation once we shift to this active mode of commuting at least for short trips," he stated. "By saying this I do not mean for people to

totally replace their cars with bicycles. I am not asking them to outrightly ditch their cars for every journey. I want them to make small changes by incorporating cycling in their daily lives."

Health experts and researchers all over the world continue to link cycling with improved fitness and lower risks of certain conditions. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that adults perform at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity, such as cycling, every week.

"When you are in doubt peddle it out," Khawaja said emphasizing to turn to cycling when they start experiencing some health problems.

"As you grow older, especially when you reach the middle age several health issues - such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, depression and anxiety begin to crop up. But cycling on regular basis can stave off these health hazards," he added.

Khawaja urged a proper infrastructure to make people feel comfortable and confident that they would be safer while driving on roads even during rushes.

Obviously, Pakistan will have to go a long way to match the European countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany but lessons can be learnt from them as how to improve the safety, comfort of cycling and convenience.

Better traffic management and separate tracks should be designated for cycling to ensure that those desiring to opt for this mode of communication reach their destinations safely.

Then there is also a challenge of changing our mindset as we always show off air of magnificence due to classes division, seeing anybody riding a cycle with scorn. Therefore, it is direly needed that the elected representatives, affluent, top ranking government officials, academia and jurists must come forward to revive this culture.

World Bank approves \$100 million for universal access to Quality Family Planning Services in Punjab Province

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved on Wednesday US\$100 million for the Punjab Family Planning Program to increase the utilization of family planning services in Pakistan's Punjab province, which is home to more than half of the country's population.

"This important program aims to achieve universal access to reproductive healthcare and to raise the usage of family planning methods in Punjab to 60 percent by 2030," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "This is critical for Pakistan's development, as excessive population growth rates hampers development, slows the accumulation of human capital, and contributes to keeping families in poverty."



The Punjab Family Planning Program will provide timely access to quality family planning services free of charge. It will also institutionalize quality of care across the family planning services delivery system. It will support public

information and advocacy campaigns so that more families are made aware of the benefits of family planning.

The program will scale up innovations, such as clinical franchising, voucher schemes, and family planning counseling through community leaders, which have been piloted in different districts of Punjab and have shown improvements in family planning outcomes. Through an extensive network of Lady Health Workers, Family Welfare Workers and Community Health Workers that are linked to health facilities, family health clinics and family welfare centers, the program will reach areas and communities that have limited or no access to family planning services. The program will scale up the voucher incentive scheme, social marketing, male and community leaders' engagement and youth platforms for increasing utilization of family planning services.

It will also improve the interpersonal communication skills of family planning service providers.

"Family planning enables couples to make informed choices about the number of children they want to have, and when they want to have them," said Manav Bhattarai, Team Leader for the program. "Enabling individuals to plan their families helps prevent unplanned or unintended pregnancies, ultimately leading to a decrease in overall fertility rates."

The program will be implemented in all districts through the service delivery networks of the Population Welfare Department and the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department, the two project implementing agencies. The program uses the Program-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument which links disbursement of funds directly to the achievement of specific program results.

'Skilling teachers, trainers and youth for a transformative future'

UNITED NATION: In every corner of the world, young people face a whirlwind of change — technological advancements, a rapidly changing job market, demographic shifts, climate challenges, and learning losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Day reminds us that teachers stand at the forefront of this great global effort.

Equipping young people with quality education, training and skills is essential. This World Youth Skills

We must ensure that teachers gain the education and professional development opportunities they need as

they help young people make the transition from school to the workplace. I recently launched the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession to provide recommendations to help achieve this.

And we need to dramatically scale-up investment in education and training systems and technologies worldwide so teachers can provide inclusive and flexible learning opportunities for young people no matter where they live.

Humanity's future depends on the boundless energy, ideas and contributions of young people. On this day, and every day, let's stand with teachers as they, in turn, help young people gain the education and skills required to shape a better, more sustainable future for us all.

GRASP signs LOIs with 23 lead firms to benefit SMEs for better market connectivity

News Desk

KARACHI: International Trade Centre's Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) project, funded by the European Union, has successfully signed Letters of Intent (LOIs) with 23 Lead firms in Sindh, aiming to enhance market connectivity for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across 12 districts in the province. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in the promotion of private sector development and the achievement of sustainable economic growth in line with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The LOIs signed between ITC and the Lead firms under GRASP signify the commitment to mutually beneficial cooperation, taking into account each organization's respective mandates and capacities. The signatories recognize the vital role of promoting private sector development, particularly among SMEs involving farming communities, in eradicating poverty and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Under the terms of the LOIs, the signatories have agreed to collaborate and complement each other's activities in various ways. The firms will work closely with ITC GRASP in Sindh to enhance the capacity of growers by providing technical expertise and promoting best practices among producers in the region. Additionally, they will facilitate orientation and



exposure visits for farmers marketing collectives (FMCs) and agribusinesses supported by ITC GRASP, fostering knowledge sharing and promoting direct selling of produce to them.

Al Rahim, Anjum Asif & Co, Bake Parlor, EasyFresh Technologies, Fazal Foods, Iftekhar Ahmed & Co, Intiaz Enterprises, Indus Acres, Jan Foods, Kevlaar, LQ Foods, Multi Foods Industries, Nadeem Traders, Farmdaar, New Lal Shahbaz Traders, Roshan Enterprises, Shah Traders, SixB Food Industries, SPAR, Sprout Pakistan, United King Foods, Vital Group, Naymat Collateral, Nadeem Dates, and Q&N Foods are among the Lead firms that have signed LOIs with GRASP. Each of these firms will contribute its technical expertise, extend capacity-building support, and promote direct selling of specific agricultural produce to enhance the quality and yield capacity of the GRASP-supported producers

and SMEs.

ITC Chief for Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness, Mr Robert Skidmore said: We are delighted to be partnering with 23 of the leading companies in Pakistan to build SME competitiveness. The connection we are building with lead firms will enable SMEs to access vital resources, expertise, and markets. In turn, the lead firms benefit from the agility, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit of the SMEs. Together, they form a powerful ecosystem that drives job creation and fosters inclusive economic participation.

GRASP's partnership with these Lead firms will significantly contribute to the empowerment and growth of SMEs in Sindh. By leveraging the expertise, resources, and market connectivity of these firms, GRASP aims to foster economic prosperity, uplift farming communities, and promote sustainable development in the region.

Appreciation

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NAB Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed presenting memento to Mr. Kashif Zaman, out-going Director (Media) at NAB Headquarters on Friday.



IIL inauguration of first vessel & transmission products distributor in Sukkur

Commerce Desk

SUKKUR: Pakistan, the country's leading pipe manufacturing company, marked a significant milestone today with the inauguration of its first Vessel & Transmission products distributor in Sukkur namely Rehman Manufacturer and Trader. The momentous event was attended by esteemed guests, including Mr. Abdul Shakoor Sheikh and Mr. Abdul Latif Sheikh from Rehman Manufacturer and Trader, along with representatives from IIL: Mr. Samar Abbas (Chief Marketing Sales Officer), Mr. Usman Ali (National Sales Manager), Mr. Zahid Abbas (Regional Sales Manager), and Mr. Waqas Ahmed (Product Marketing Lead).



The inauguration ceremony drew a distinguished audience comprising local retailers, who gathered to witness the latest development in the region's pipe industry. IIL Pakistan took this opportunity to showcase its diverse range of high-quality products and outline the strategic significance of establishing a distribution network in Sukkur.

During the event, Samar Abbas, Chief Marketing &

National Sales Manager, discussed the importance of the Sukkur market and emphasized the company's commitment to serving the local community. He elaborated on IIL Pakistan's Vessel & Transmission products, showcasing their superior performance, cutting-edge technology, and their ability to meet the specific requirements of various industries.

Mr. Abdul Shakoor Sheikh and Mr. Abdul Latif Sheikh from Rehman Manufacturer and Traders further emphasized the positive impact of the new distributorship on the Sukkur market, stating, "With the establishment of IIL's distribution network in Sukkur, retailers and traders will have easier access to the widest range of high-quality pipes.

News Desk

KARACHI: Qaisar Shams Ghucha, Chairman, Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA), has emphasized the importance of political stability for economic growth. He stated that Pakistan should take measures to control fluctuations in the value of the dollar, and both exporters and industries should be granted subsidies in energy. Ghucha made these remarks during his visit to the central secretariat in Karachi, where he attended a meeting of the PYMA executive committee to discuss various significant issues faced by its members.

Sohail Nisar, Sr. Vice Chairman, Javed Khanani, Vice Chairman PYMA, M. Usman, Khurshid A. Shaikh, Saqib Goodluck, Salim Adaya, Junaid Teli,



Khurram Bharara, Mumtaz ul Haq, Ashraf A. Sattar and Waheed also attended the meeting.

The PYMA chairman urged the need for government departments to take responsibility for implementing policy measures and initiatives for the general public, while also highlighting the need for improvement in their performance. "Ghucha suggested that the government should facilitate the provision of solar panels

under favorable conditions to meet the country's power demands, thereby stabilizing the agriculture sector."

He also urged the government to provide support and facilities to the small & medium enterprise (SMEs) sector and power looms. Ghucha expressed concern over the issuance of illegal notices by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to industries, resulting in large-scale industry closures. He emphasized the urgent need

for steps to improve the situation.

Furthermore, the PYMA Chairman commended the efforts made by Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Gen. Asim Munir to revive the economy, expressing his belief that these measures would lead to progress. He predicted an increase in exports and foreign exchange deposits, which would have a positive impact on the general public.

Social organization awards Kashmiri journalists in Muzaffarabad

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Award distribution reception was held at Burhan Wani Shaheed Press Club, Muzaffarabad by prominent social organization Youth Power Nations Karachi here in Muzaffarabad. According to the details, the chairperson of the Karachi social organization Power Youth Nation Pakistan Ms. Sarah Ashfaq visited Burhan Wani Shaheed

press Club Muzaffarabad. On behalf of the social organization, the award distributed among the journalists and other people who have performed the best services. While 5 guests gifted shawl Sindh Ajrak. In the ceremony, Sara Ashfaq was honoured and dressed in a Kashmiri shawl by Burhan Wani Press Club Muzaffarabad. The senior leader of the former assembly candidate Shaukat Javed Mir, head of

the social organization Ms. Sara Ashfaq, senior journalist Gulshad Ahmed Butt, Syed Barkat Hussain Shah, Abdul Majeed Tahir, Qazi Saeed, Raja Shehzad, and others spoke on this occasion. Burhan Wani Shaheed Press Club assured all possible support for the journalists of Muzaffarabad in the future and announced to give furniture and computers, provide all kinds of facilities to the journalists to make recreational trips

to different provinces of Pakistan to highlight the issue of Kashmir. Gulshad Ahmed Butt, bureau chief of daily Jarat, Abdul Majeed Tahir, Bureau Chief of daily The Spokesman, columnist Syed Barkat Hussain Shah, senior journalist, resident editor of daily Shiyat Karachi edition Qazi Saeed, Iftikhar K. Abbasi, Raja Muhammad Shahzad Khan Correspondent Daily Shamal and Shamal News Muzaffarabad, Saqia Awan

of Shadab Daily, Salim Qureshi News Editor of Shamal, Rana Muhammad Ilyas of Tum News, Irshad Abbasi of Jarat Daily, Javed Mir of Jammu Kashmir Times, Khabarnama. K Naeem Khan Hamdard News Chaudhry Mishkooor, Basheerullah Inglabani, news editor Pervez Durrani were awarded to 16 people, while special guests Shaukat Javed Mir, Shaukat Kashmiri, Sajid Hameed Butt, Zeeshan Mahmood, Qari Tufail were given gifts of Sindh Ajrak in the ceremony. On behalf of Burhan Wani Shaheed Press Club Muzaffarabad, chief guest Sara Ashfaq gifted a Kashmiri shawl.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
45,067.98	45,266.96
Day's High	Day's Low:
45,488.45	45,043.17
Index Value	Change
5,005,038,417	-198.98
Percentage	Time
-0.44%	14 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,434.57	-5.64
Percentage	Time
-0.076%	14 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,488.69	+93.55
Percentage	Time
+0.27%	14 Jul, 1:06 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,391.26	-28.07
Percentage	Time
-0.087%	14 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193	196
Bahrain Dinar	732.7	740.7
Canadian Dollar	210	212
China Yuan	38.7	39.1
Danish Krone	41.14	41.54
Euro	307	312
Hong Kong Dollar	35.72	36.07
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	898.65	907.65
Malaysian Ringgit	59.87	60.47
New Zealand \$	175.54	177.48
Norwegians Krone	26.61	26.91
Omani Riyal	715.54	723.54
Qatari Riyal	76.81	77.51
Saudi Riyal	73.7	74.5
Singapore Dollar	205	207
Swedish Korona	25.91	26.21
Swiss Franc	320.45	322.95
Thai Bhat	7.96	8.11
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.4
UK Pound Sterling	361	367.5
US Dollar	280	283

A delay in reforms will jeopardise the next instalment: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the approval of the loan by the IMF and the issuance of the first tranche of 1.2 billion dollars have proved a respite for the public and businessmen.

The decision of the lender will ease the ongoing uncertainty and stop hoarding of dollars which will stabilise the economy, increase the value of the rupee and improve the confidence of investors, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the hike in prices of petroleum products, electricity, and gas as a result of the IMF agreement will increase the cost of doing business, but it is better than bankruptcy, so we support it.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Pakistan has to repay loans of about 25 billion dollars every year for the next three years, for which it is very important for Pakistan to get more loans.

After the agreement with the IMF, Pakistan will be able to get more cheap loans from other international institutions, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the IMF's main conditions include ending electricity subsidies, keeping debt within serviceable limits, keeping the value of the dollar in line with the market, improving governance, increasing revenue, ending corruption, reforming the energy sector, and making the country resilient to climate change.

The next installment will be possible only after a quarterly review of operational progress on these issues. The IMF's conditions indicate fundamental flaws in the country's economy, but these will be extremely difficult



to address in the short term.

Climate change has also been mentioned in the terms, which will lead to further tight-

ening of environmental laws. The monsoon and flood season has started in the region, and India has released water to Pakistan as usual, while last year Pakistan suffered a loss of 30 billion dollars due to floods, he said.

On the other hand, the implementation of aid pledges by the international community for Pakistan to deal with the flood damage last year will also be relatively easy after the IMF programme.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that if the quarterly review of the current programme is successfully completed, it will be possible to take the next instalment from the IMF, without which it is impossible to run the country.

He further said that the current and incoming caretaker governments should take advantage of this opportunity to start the implementation of fundamental reforms; otherwise, we will have to pay a heavy price for inaction.

Visit

LAHORE: Provincial Information and Tourism Minister Aamir Mir visiting Iran-Pak Heritage Exchange at Hamra Arts Council.



Photo: APP

Fly Jinnah launches new route connecting Quetta and Islamabad

Commerce Report

ISLAMABAD: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's leading low-cost airline, today announced the launch of a new route between Quetta and Islamabad starting July 23, 2023, connecting both cities with five weekly flights.

The new route will offer Fly Jinnah's customers a new option to travel between both cities while benefiting from the carrier's affordable and value-driven travel deals allowing more passengers to travel more conveniently.



Fly Jinnah remains committed to providing reliable and comfortable travel at competitive prices while prioritizing passenger experience by offering quality service, efficient operations, and more connectivity. At present, Fly Jinnah connects five major cities of Pakistan including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta.

Chinese companies keen to set up joint ventures in Pakistan



Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Chinese companies led by Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiangeng Hi-Tech Electric Co. visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and showed keen interest to set up joint ventures in Pakistan in various fields including machinery manufacturing, electric vehicles, equipment industry, drilling, magnetic wire manufacturing, commercial concrete, equipment installation and department store sales. The delegation exchanged views with the business community to explore areas of mutual collaboration and business partnerships.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) briefed the Chinese delegation about the potential areas of joint ventures and investment in various sectors of Pakistan's economy. He said that CPEC has started a new era of development and long-term busi-

ness partnerships between Pakistan and China. He said that Pakistan was establishing many special economic zones under CPEC and it was a good opportunity for Chinese companies to transfer technology to Pakistan and set up joint ventures in areas of interest.

Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiangeng Hi-Tech Electric Co. of China said that their delegation has come to Pakistan to interact with the Pakistani counterparts and explore areas of business cooperation.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that construction is a growing industry in Pakistan and it was the right time for the Chinese companies to enhance their presence in Pakistan in the construction sector to achieve lucrative outcomes.

Both sides exchanged views on promoting business cooperation in various fields to achieve mutually beneficial results for the economies of Pakistan and China.

Emirates celebrates 25 years of Uniting Peshawar with the World

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Emirates today marks 25 years of successful operations in Peshawar, Pakistan's sixth largest city. Since the inaugural flight on July 14, 1998, Emirates has carried over 1.8 million passengers between Dubai and Peshawar and lifted more than 25,000 tonnes of cargo, supporting travel and trade through the export of commodities.

In 1998, the inaugural flight landed at Bacha Khan International Airport, becoming the second Pakistani city served by the airline and, since then, the airline has ensured seamless travel connectivity between Pakistan's North Western city of Peshawar and Emirates' network, including its hub city of Dubai.

Emirates currently offers five weekly flights to passengers from Peshawar operated with a Boeing 777-300ER wide-body aircraft, capable of carrying up to 428 passengers and 20 tonnes of cargo in the bellyhold.

Jeddah has emerged as the most popular destination for passengers traveling from and to Peshawar. Hajj and Umrah travel to Medina was also very frequent over the years while the UK (Manchester, London and Birmingham), Turkey, Germany and France were popular amongst leisure travellers and students pursuing higher education abroad. Business and corporate travellers frequent popular points in China, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand. Top Middle East destinations and points of origin include Dammam,



Kuwait City, Baghdad, Tehran, Doha and Istanbul, while the US, Canada, South Africa and Egypt are also amongst the top destinations for travellers from Peshawar.

On the occasion of the airline's 25th anniversary of operations in Peshawar, Mohammed Alhashmi, Emirates' Vice President for Pakistan said "As one of the longest-serving international carriers in Peshawar, Emirates has continuously strived to provide exceptional services, unparalleled connectivity, and a seamless travel experience to its valued passengers. Over the past 25 years, Emirates has witnessed significant growth, firmly establishing itself as a trusted and preferred airline for both business and leisure trav-

ellers. We take great pride in being a catalyst for economic growth, tourism, and cultural exchange, and we are excited to further strengthen our relationship with the wonderful people of Peshawar. We would also like to thank all our partners and key stakeholders for their continued support which has made our successful operations possible."

Total kilometres clocked by Emirates' aircrafts travelling in and out of Peshawar since operations began is 13.8 million kilometres - enough to travel the world roughly around 370 times. Over the same period Emirates operated close to 7,500 flights to and from the city.

More money lost in remittances than what we will receive from IMF

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Friday demanded steps to restore the confidence of the expatriates.

He also demanded action against those involved in hundi business who are offering higher exchange rates for profit, which is damaging the economy.

Resolving problems and restoring the confidence of expats is necessary as the country lost over \$4 billion in FY23 as it received a total of \$27,024 billion against a record \$31.278 billion in FY22, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President ICCI and Chair-

man PVMA said in a statement issued here today that we lost four billion dollars in remittances, which is much higher than the amount the government struggled to secure from the IMF.

The country received a total of \$27,024 billion in remittances during FY23, compared to a record \$31.278 billion in FY22, a decline of 13.6 percent or 4,254 billion.

The central bank did not offer any reason for the decline of the remittances, but analysts said the government's effort to keep the dollar at lower than actual rates hit the inflows through banking channels.

The government tried to maintain the dollar-rupee parity at Rs220 in the



first half of FY23, which proved counterproductive. The USD grossly appreciated in the open market, and resul-

tantly a grey or black market emerged that started offering Rs20 to Rs25 per dollar higher rates, badly hitting remittances, he informed.

The business leader said that under pressure from the IMF, the government uncapped the exchange rate on February 26, and the dollar immediately jumped to Rs269.

With fluctuations in subsequent months, the USD reached Rs299 in the interbank on May 11 but remained in the range of Rs280-290.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said that during the entire fiscal year FY23, the country remained under the grip of severe political and economic uncertainties, which practically weakened both the economy and the currency.

He informed that the highest remittance inflow was from Saudi Arabia, but it fell by 16.9 percent to \$6.445 billion in FY23. In percentage terms, remittances from the UAE witnessed a contraction of 20.5 percent to \$4.468 billion.

Remittances from all important destinations noted a decline except the US, which recorded a slight growth of 0.1 percent to \$3.090 billion in FY23. The inflows from the UK dipped 9.7 percent to \$4.056 billion, he said.

The inflows from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and European Union (EU) countries fell by 12 percent and 7 percent to \$3.191 billion and USD 3.12 billion, respectively, during the outgoing fiscal year.

Jazz team ensures uninterrupted connectivity for flood victims

News Desk

KASUR: Rapid response of Jazz team in the flood stricken areas of Kasur kept the locals connected during high floods.

According to details, Jazz's Dhoop Sari tower is the only mobile tower in the area providing connectivity to Dhoop Sari and its neighboring areas including Chanda Sang, Pakhu Wand, Mahi Wala, and more.

The tower had been running on generator as power was out for two days. With fuel running out, the generator was soon to stop working which would disconnect the only mobile tower in the area.

Jazz team, with the support of rescue workers, acted swiftly to supply fuel to the tower and keep the services running uninterrupted.

It's important to note that any disruption in connectivity would render the locals trapped in high floods unable to communicate with rescue teams for their safety.

PRGMEA inks MoU with LUMS

News Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with LUMS and GC University Lahore to join hands for sustainable textile industry growth through fortifying industry-academia linkages, keeping the local industry competitive in the international market by establishing missing links and identifying weaknesses and strengths.

The MoU with GC University was signed for Carbon Forestry Project, marking the beginning of the true industry-academia partnership aimed at fostering growth and innovation in the garment industry of Pakistan.

Both sides stressed the need for putting in place effective measures to fill the industry-academia linkage gap.

Lee Drew named head of World Squash Officiating

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Professional Squash Association (PSA) Refereeing Director Lee Drew has been appointed as the Head of World Squash Officiating (WSO), an organisation dedicated to the regulation and development of squash officiating worldwide.

WSO – established in a partnership between the World Squash Federation (WSF) and PSA in 2019 – was created to professionalize and standardize squash officiating across the globe, said a press release.

Drew, a former World Tour player and England Junior National Coach who became Refereeing Director for the PSA in 2014, will spearhead WSO's efforts to improve officiating standards across



the sport, strengthen the organisation's operational team, and hire the sport's first full-time professional referees.

"The opportunity of evolving WSO is exciting because it can have a huge

impact on officiating and the way the game is played and portrayed," he said.

WSO needs to move forward as a high-performing entity that offers world-class products and delivery.

"A major goal for WSO is to introduce more people to the rules and officiating as early on in their experience of squash as possible. To achieve this, it is crucial that we get our messaging and content circulating worldwide with the support from as many squash stakeholders as possible," he added.

WSF Chief Executive William Louis-Marie said, "We are confident that WSO will greatly contribute to the growth of the refereeing community in a more diverse and inclusive way in keeping with the universality of our sport and offer more opportunities for

the international referees to officiate at all major events around the world. Lee's input has already been visible with the recent addition of new educational courses aimed at giving all our players a better understanding of the rules of the sport."

PSA Chief Executive Alex Gough said, "In his nine years as PSA Refereeing Director, Lee has played an important role in overseeing the development of refereeing within the professional game, and I am confident he will be a valuable asset to the WSO. We want squash to be an entertaining and free-flowing sport and the WSO will play a crucial role in developing referees and educating our athletes to ensure that the sport remains an engaging spectacle at the highest level."

Wahab Riaz visited Nishtar Park Sports Complex

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Adviser to 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.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs 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 nice feeling to play wushu and badminton with young players.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz was accompanied by Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan, Assistant Director Youth Affairs Nazish Noor, Assistant Director M Sajid, Senior Provincial Coach Zareena Waqar, Raees ur Rehman, Administrator NPSC Gymnasium Hall, SBP PRO Abdul Rauf Roofi and other officials during his visit.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz witnessed 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, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz also talked to 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.

Talking to media, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz 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 will emerge from

different games in this Summer Camp.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs 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."

Dahani's five-fer leads Shaheens to four-wicket win

Sports Desk

COLOMBO: Shahnawaz Dahani's five-wicket haul led defending champions Pakistan Shaheens to a four-wicket win over Nepal in their first match of the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2023 at the Colombo Cricket Ground in Sri Lanka on Friday.

After opting to bat first, Nepal were bundled out for 179 in 37 overs. Right-arm pacers Dahani and Mohammad Wasim Jnr headlined the stellar bowling display as they scalped nine of the 10 wickets to fall. Dahani took five wickets for 38 from 10 overs, while Wasim managed four wickets 51 in his allotted 10 overs.

Earlier, the losing team were reeling at 72 for eight in 15.4 overs before Sompal Kami and Pratis GC (26, 24b, 1x4, 2x6s) got together and added 58 runs for the ninth wicket. After the departure of Pratis, Kami knitted a 49-run partnership for the 10th wicket. Kami was the last batter to return back to the hut after scoring 75 off 101, which included nine fours and two sixes.

Chasing 180 to win, Tayyab Tahir's



51 off 67 balls which included six fours led Shaheens to victory inside 33 overs. Omair Bin Yousuf (36, 40b, 4x4s) and Kamran Ghulam (31, 26b, 1x4, 2x6s) were other contributors with the bat. Shaheens will now face UAE A on 17 July at the P Saravanamuttu Stadium

in Colombo.

Scores in brief:

Pakistan Shaheens beat Nepal by four wickets

Nepal 179 all out, 37 overs (Sompal Kami 75, Pratis GC 26; Shahnawaz Dahani 5-38, Mohammad Wasim Jnr

4-51)

Pakistan Shaheens 181-6, 32.5 overs (Tayyab Tahir 51, Omair Bin Yousuf 36, Kamran Ghulam 31; Lalit Narayan Rajbanshi 3-50)

Player of the match – Shahnawaz Dahani (Pakistan Shaheens)

PFF organizes Safeguarding Workshop in Lahore

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has organized an important safeguarding workshop at the Young Ravi Football Club in Lahore, with Safeguarding Officer Arooj Sohail overseeing the event on Thursday.

The workshop focused on crucial topics such as child protection, neglect, and exploitation, aiming to equip participants with knowledge and strategies to effectively address and overcome these challenging situations. Throughout the session, the attendees had the opportunity to raise questions and receive valuable insights from the workshop facilitators.

Emphasizing the significance of safeguarding, Arooj Sohail expressed his views, stating that safeguarding measures and raising awareness about them are of utmost importance, particularly for underage players. "Such workshops are designed to make our players aware of the basic and necessary things, they ought to learn and act upon. Hopefully, we will continue to make them aware with such workshops in the future."

Djokovic defeats Sinner, reaches ninth Wimbledon final

Novak Djokovic defeated Italian Jannik Sinner 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) and reached his ninth Wimbledon final on Friday.

The Serbian tennis sensation, chasing a record-equalling eighth title at the All England Club and 24th career major, defeated Sinner on Centre Court.

Djokovic reached record 35th at the Grand Slams, setting up a potential blockbuster championship showdown with Carlos Alcaraz. The victory came tinged with controversy when Djokovic was penalised for hindrance and warned for slow play in the same game during the second set.

World number one Alcaraz faces mercurial Daniil Medvedev later Friday as the 20-year-old US Open winner eyes a place in his first Wimbledon final.

Djokovic, playing in his 12th Wimbledon semi-final, fought off three break points in the first set while only needing one of his own in the second game to secure the opener.

The 36-year-old Serb had declared himself favourite for the title on the eve of the semi-final and he backed up that confidence with another break of the Italian for a 2-1 lead in the second set.

Seven-time champion Djokovic stretched to a 3-1 lead in a bizarre fourth game.

Firstly, he was docked a point for hindrance following a loud grunt which accompanied a down-the-line backhand.

Umpire Richard Haigh then handed him a code violation for taking too long between points.

"The hindrance early on in the match could have changed the course of the match. I felt nervous after that call, but I managed to re-group," said Djokovic, the first player, man or woman, to reach 35 finals at the Slams. "It's probably the first time it's happened to me, I don't normally have extended grunts. Maybe it was an echo in the roof. It was a call that I have to respect."

Despite that double blow, Djokovic still claimed the set courtesy of his seventh ace of the contest against a player who took a two-sets lead against him in the quarter-finals last year before the champion pulled through in five.

Djokovic squandered three break points in the third game of the third set, then saved two set points in the 10th game.

Djokovic turned on his tormentors in the crowd, who were loudly supporting Sinner, by feigning mock tears after he dashed their hopes of a breakthrough for the Italian.

He then dominated the tie-break to rack up victory and close in on Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slam titles.

Djokovic was very much the senior citizen of the semi-finals — nine years older than Medvedev, 15 years the senior of Sinner and with a 16-year head-start on Alcaraz.

Barcelona, Manchester United fined over breaking fair play rules

Barcelona and Manchester United have been fined by UEFA for breaching the Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations, said the European soccer's governing body on Friday.

Barcelona are handed a fine of €500,000 by the UEFA Club Financial Control Body (CFCB) for wrongly reporting profits from the disposal of intangible assets in 2022.

On the other hand, Man United was fined €300,000 for reporting minor break-even deficits on football-related business which includes player transfers, wages and other issues.

Cypriot club APOEL FC and Turkish club Konyaspor's offence were similar to the one of United's and thus, the two clubs were fined €100,000 each. Riga FC (LVA), NK Olimpija Ljubljana (SVN) and ŠK Slovan Bratislava (SVK) were all imposed a fine of €10,000 for failing to submit complete and accurate break-even information by the required deadline.

FC Porto (POR) and RSC Anderlecht (BEL) had been previously imposed conditional sanctions by the CFCB.

While FC Porto met the target, RSC Anderlecht did not meet the target and was imposed a fine of €100,000.

Big clubs like AC Milan, Inter Milan and Paris Saint Germain — who were fined by UEFA in September 2022 for breaking FFP rules, all met their strict financial targets for the last season. Despite completing the targets, they will still be monitored by UEFA for the upcoming season.

Saud Shakeel gears up for his first away Test

ISLAMABAD: A year after witnessing the two Tests between Pakistan and Sri Lanka from the sidelines in Galle, Saud Shakeel enters the upcoming series on Sunday as one of the mainstays of Pakistan batting after an impressive Test home season.

He was one of the four players to make a debut in the first Test against England in Rawalpindi on 1 December and the left-hander was quick to make an impression with a fourth-innings 76.

He scored a gallantry 214-ball 94 in Multan to take Pakistan in the touching distance of the 355-run target before being declared caught behind down the leg by the third umpire.

He scored another second innings half-century in the next Test in Karachi with a 53 and when New Zealand arrived in Karachi for the two Tests, he registered his maiden Test century with a 341-ball 125 not out in the second Test at the same venue where he had brought up his

maiden first-class ton.

Saud has scored, at least, 50 or more in the six of his 10 innings. The next few weeks, however, will present Saud, who has made 4,844 runs at an average of 52.08 in 65 first-class matches, a different set of challenges, as he will play his first away Tests. The 27-year-old has made the most of the preparatory camps in Lahore and Karachi to make sure he has all the necessary tools to counter them.

"We have had good preparations leading into this series with camps in Lahore and Karachi," Saud told PCB Digital.

"I've focused on enhancing my skills and adding a few more shots in the repertoire. There was a specific focus on spin during the camp in Lahore, which gave me good practice to counter spin on the turning tracks here.

"I've also focused on how I can score runs in Sri Lanka conditions, because at the end it is the runs that matter. I play sweep

shot well, so I further improved it. Playing the sweep helps me derail the line and length of a bowler. I have also worked to improve my reverse sweep and footwork to tackle spin here."

Saud has a variety of sweeps – paddle sweep, a full-fledge sweep behind or in front of squad and a slog sweep – in his arsenal and has deployed them with great effect over his career.

Does he premeditate when it comes to working the ball square by getting on his left knee? "I do," he said. "Sweep shot is my strength. Some players improvise it, but I premeditate it, as I want it to be perfect by reaching the pitch of the ball and having my head in the right position."

Pakistan famously squared the two-match series last year by recording the highest-ever pursuit in Galle by chasing down 342 at the back of Abdullah Shafique's 160 not out. Another youngster, Salman Ali Agha,

made his Test debut in that series and Saud, ahead of his maiden away Test, is gathering as much knowledge as he can by speaking to those who played in those Tests.

"We [the players] do talk about the game and share knowledge," he said. "I talk to Abdullah [Shafique] a lot because we are together mostly. When I was here with the team last year, I saw that the spinners do get help from the surfaces, but if you keep on countering them by playing attacking shots regularly and keep ticking the scoreboard, you shift the pressure on the opposition."

"We chased 350 [342] in Galle last year, which looked an impossible task, but our plan was to go for runs and it put the opposition under pressure."

Though, this might be his first Test away from home soil, Saud comes with plenty of domestic experience that he believes helped him graduate smoothly to Test cricket. He captained



Shaheens when they toured Dambulla to play Sri Lanka 'A' in two unofficial Tests and three List-A games in 2021. Pakistan batted only twice in the unofficial Test series and Saud made 118 in one of them.

"The experience of playing domestic cricket and for country's 'A' side helps a cricketer a lot. It has helped me a great deal too. I've played a lot of domestic cricket in my career. I toured here with Pakistan Shaheens in 2021, though we played in a different

city, it gave me an idea of how conditions are here."

Having a cool and calm head has also helped. "International cricket is all about handling pressure, so if you stay calm on the wicket you can make better decisions. Off the field, as well, I am calm, and it helps me in making better decisions."

Saud made the most of the off-season by turning out for Yorkshire this County Championship. The stint helped him understand how to further develop

his game and ready himself for the challenges ahead. "It has been a healthy break for me," he reflected. "There was not much four-day cricket in Pakistan in the last six months so I went to the United Kingdom to play county cricket, which gave me a different experience. This off period also helped me to re-evaluate my game and understand how I can further enhance my skills and fitness, which will help me perform in this series."

Saud has had a strong start to his Test career, putting 580 runs at a scintillating average of 72.50. With five half-centuries and a century in 10 innings, which does he rate the best?

"My first century in international cricket in Karachi is quite dear to me and it is almost my favourite," he said. "I regret not being able to finish the match in Multan [against England] when I got out on 96 [94]. Had I finished it for my team, it would have been my favourite."