

Govt to resolve issues of exporters: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the formulation of a policy for the establishment of one-window facilitation centers for resolving issues of exporters.



Provision of NFC share imperative for economic development of Balochistan: Zubaida Jalal

Member of the National Assembly, Zubaida Jalal has said that the provision of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award is imperative for the economic development of the province and to bring it up to the level of other provinces.

PM youth programme

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing cheques among the recipients of Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme on Sunday.



Photo: PID

COAS Asim Munir concludes two-day visit to Islamic Republic of Iran



ISLAMABAD: COAS General Syed Asim Munir concluded his two days successful visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran. During his visit, COAS had detailed meetings with the Military leadership of Iran including Chief of General Staff of Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri.

Nawaz to make Pakistan 'great' if voted into power again: Shehbaz

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Sunday that former premier Nawaz Sharif would turn Pakistan into a progressive state if his party gets another chance to rule the country.

lauding the statesmanship qualities of his elder brother, regretted that former prime minister and his leader Nawaz Sharif was ousted from power despite the fact that he had ended hours long crippling load shedding, provided laptops and loans to youth, brought multi-billions China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CEPC) power and road infrastructure projects during 2015.

the corruption charges during his four years' tenure but did not prove them, adding that when he was removed from power corridors had always been a precious asset for any country, and the provision of opportunities to them was a must.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman said that young segments had always been a precious asset for any country, and the provision of opportunities to them was a must.

ment which bridged the digital divide and enabled the youth to earn their livelihood with the use of the laptop scheme.

Railways minister calls on PM; briefs on reforms

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and apprised him of the progress over reforms in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and outsourcing process aimed at provision of better services at airports.

Govt aims to bring out-of-school children in educational network: Rana Tanveer

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Education has always been our priority, it is the mission of the government to bring 20 million out-of-school children into the educational network, and under the dynamic leadership of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) can play a vital role to make this mission successful," said Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the academic block of Sheikhupura Regional Campus of AIU.

Gilgit: Passenger van hurtles into ditch, leaves six dead

City Desk

GILGIT: A passenger van hurtled into a ditch leaving six people dead and 11 others injured at Thalechi area near here.

Cabinet approves Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023: Amin ul Haque

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecom Syed Amin ul Haque has said that move to strengthen the country's cybersecurity posture, the Federal Cabinet of Pakistan has given its approval to the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023.

PPP's Aseefa Bhutto to contest next general elections

Bureau Report

KARA-CHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has decided to field Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, daughter of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, in the upcoming general elections.

PTI gov't wrong economic policies weakened national economy: Kh Asif

Bureau Report

SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said on Sunday the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government weakened national economy by introducing wrong policies.



ly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was brought into power in 2018 through a rigged elections, and those who supported Imran Khan, the performance of Imran Khan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was in front of them.

Iran, Pakistan confer on expanding defense, security ties

Tehran, IRNA: Commander of Air Force of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi and Pakistani Army chief General Syed Asim Munir have conferred on expanding bilateral interactions as well as military, educational, defense, and security ties.



Photo: IRNA

Muslim leaders praise Saudi Arabia for successful Hajj season

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Leaders of the Muslim world and heads of Islamic organizations have commended Saudi Arabia and its leadership for the successful completion of this year's Hajj pilgrimage.

The Muslim World League (MWL) extended its congratulations to the Kingdom under the guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, praising the great efforts in serving the Two Holy Mosques and the pilgrims.

MWL Secretary-General, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Isa, emphasized that the success of the Hajj season was a result of meticulous planning, efficient operations, and the dedication of the Saudi government to ensure the best services for the pilgrims.

The league also applauded the continuous improvements in service



es and facilities to facilitate the sacred journey.

In Cairo, the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al Tayeb, extended his congratulations to the Saudi leadership and people for the successful Hajj season, emphasizing the vital role played by Saudi Arabia in providing services for pilgrims from around the world.

Kuwait's Emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah congratulated King Salman on the outstanding success of the Hajj season.

They praised the Kingdom's efforts and modernization of services, aimed at enhancing the pilgrimage experience.

Leaders from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), including President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Vice President Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, sent heartfelt cables of congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, expressing gratitude for the exceptional care and safety provided to the pilgrims.

In Jeddah, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) praised the Kingdom's services and hospitality towards pilgrims from OIC member states and countries with Muslim minorities. OIC Secretary-General Hussein Ibrahim Taha appreciated the dedicated efforts of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in maintaining the sanctity and importance of the Two Holy Mosques.

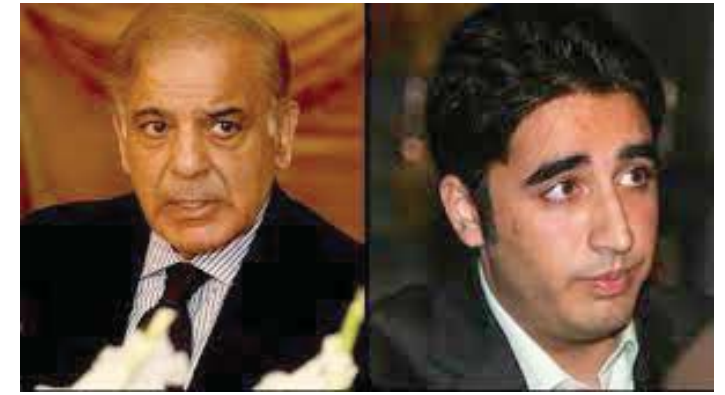
Arab Parliament Speaker Adel

Al-Asoomi commended the intensive efforts of the Saudi government in serving pilgrims and ensuring the success of the Hajj. He highlighted the high-quality services provided and congratulated Saudi Arabia and the Islamic world on the triumph of this year's Hajj season.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, acknowledged Saudi Arabia's efforts in serving the pilgrims and providing them with a safe and spiritual experience. He praised the coordination and partnership between state agencies and the introduction of modern projects that enhanced the organization of this year's Hajj.

These leaders lauded the Kingdom's commitment to serving the Two Holy Mosques, recognizing it as a significant responsibility and an honour. They also expressed gratitude to all workers involved in organizing the Hajj for their humanitarian initiatives and dedication to Islamic values.

PM, FM grieved over loss of lives in Karakoram highway bus incident



News Desk

LAHORE/KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over loss of lives in an unfortunate tourists' bus accident at Karakoram Highway in Thalichi area of Diamer district.

The prime minister expressed his sympathies and condolences with the bereaved families. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He prayed for the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude.

The prime minister ordered an inquiry to ascertain the facts causing

the fatal accident.

Meanwhile: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a Karakoram highway bus incident here on Sunday.

He said, 'I am saddened to hear the news about the incident of a tourist bus.'

He condoled with the bereaved families of bus passengers, who lost their lives in the incident.

Bilawal also prayed for the early recovery of the injured persons and stressed the need for preparing a strategy to avert such incidents in the future.

Provision of NFC share imperative for economic development of Balochistan: Zubaida Jalal



Bureau Report

QUETTA: Member of the National Assembly, Zubaida Jalal has said that the provision of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award is imperative for the economic development of the province and to bring it up to the level of other provinces.

Talking to members of the business community here on Sunday, she expressed that the federal government has acknowledged Balochistan's backwardness but failed to effectively address the issues and lift the people out of poverty, said a news release.

The main reason for the poverty and backwardness of Balochistan is the lack of funds and not enough share in the NFC Award, despite the

fact that Balochistan constitutes half of Pakistan," she explained.

She said that the provision of security for half of Pakistan is a huge challenge, and the province spends 40 per cent of its resources on maintaining law and order.

"We are asserting our rights in accordance with the law and the Constitution while remaining within our means. We ought not to be found in some unacceptable light said Jalal and added, "We are also demanding our right, and every province demands its right."

She said that the Iranian diesel and petroleum exchange at the boundary is being facilitated to guarantee the continuation of individuals' jobs, empowering them to keep their ovens consuming in their homes. This action was taken to try not to deny our kin of work until we can give them elective wellsprings of occupation.

She said there were few government jobs and no industries in Balochistan. If people remain unemployed, they may fall prey to the propaganda of anti-state elements.

PM urges women to ramp up role in economic progress

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday urged women to come forward and ramp up their vital roles in different fields of life and make contributions to the progress of the economy.

Addressing a ceremony to distribute laptops under PM's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023 at Government College Women University here, he said Rs 5 billion were allocated for projects related to the empowerment of women. "No nation can make progress if women are not made productive part of society."

He said in the past his government had spent a substantial amount on the



medical education of female students and the investment in women's education would continue. He said next month his government would complete its tenure and a caretaker government

would be formed.

If people would give chance to them in the next election, our government would bring revolution in the field of education and a large number of students would be

given laptops, he remarked. He said the laptops were given as recognition of the hard work and talent of the students. The laptops were distributed on the basis of merit in the past as well, he added.

As Khadim e Aala Punjab, he said he always wanted to share the resources with other provinces as the progress and prosperity of the country depended upon shared development.

He said 100,000 laptops had already been distributed while in the current year, another 100,000 laptops would be awarded.

The people should decide in the general elections after evaluating what had

happened in the country in the last five years, he asserted.

He thanked Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for ensuring the allocation of funds for the import of laptops for students.

He said students would be given more laptops and scholarships and laboratories and research institutes would be set up in educational institutions.

Shehbaz Sharif said Muslims were left behind in different fields of education while the West moved ahead and it was time for reflection and action in the right direction. He called on students to work hard and show humility and Allah will help them in their efforts.

Karachiites forced to buy 'most expensive' flour



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Flour prices in Karachi have scaled a new peak of Rs3200 per 20-kilogramme bag, ARY News reported on Sunday, quoting data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 1kg of flour in Karachi now costs Rs320, more than the price of the commodity in Islamabad and Punjab.

The data shows that in the last week, Karachi has witnessed a surge of Rs200 in the price of a 20kg bag of flour, increasing the rates to Rs3,200.

Imamia Council organizes Paigham-e-Karbala Conference

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Imamia Council for the Unity of the Muslims (Rejection of Sectarianism) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with Qoumi Aman Jirga organized 'Paigham e Karbala Conference' here the other day, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Director General (DG), Iranian Cultural Centre, Peshawar Asghar Khusro Abadi attended the conference as the chief guest.

Addressing the participants of the conference, Asghar Khusro Abadi said that the message of Karbala was offering timely and early prayers, which could not be forgotten due to engagements relating to customs, traditions and other routine matters.



Chairman, Qoumi Aman Jirga, Iqbal Haidri highlighted the significant events organized in Muharram ul Haram and other holy Islamic months underlining their importance in Islamic history and stressed for highlighting these golden chapters. He further stressed for creation of awareness amongst the youth about Islamic calendar.

Allama Syed Zafar Naqvi highlighted the responsibility of masajid and emphasized presentation of the importance of Muharram-ul-Haram in true sense.

Allama Abid Hussain Shakri, the Principal of Madrasa Arif Hussain Al-Hussaini Shaheed, shed light on the unwavering commitment of Imam Aali-e-Maqam, emphasizing the visible and hidden aspects of martyrdom.

Custodians of numerous

Imam Bargahs, Taiziadars, founders of Majalis, Salars of Matami Sangats and their representatives from Peshawar turned over to the conference.

The unique event successfully brought together Shia and Sunni Muslims under one roof, promoting unity, understanding, and brotherhood.

The speakers at the conference highlighted commonalities, values, tolerance and brotherhood, with a particular focus on strengthening the bonds of Islamic brotherhood through a deeper understanding of Karbala.

By emphasizing shared aspects rather than differences, the aim was to thwart the ambitions of those who perpetuate sectarian tensions and conspiracies against Islam.



Ministry Of Religious Affairs And Interfaith Harmony

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The unsung heroes of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony deserve accolades for accomplishing a remarkable and enchanting feat in successfully organizing the Hajj arrangements, despite facing personal challenges, time limitations, and inadequate support from the local Pak Hajj mission.

Under the guidance of Director Moavineen Sajjad Haider Yaldrum, a team of over 1,800 Seasonal Duty Staff (SDS), Moavineen diligently fulfilled their responsibilities in different departments such as transportation, accommodation, lost and found, wheelchair assistance, help centre, and monitoring at the main control office in Makkah and Madinah. Additionally, the ministry ensured that the pilgrims received extensive medical support throughout their journey.

Over 50 accomplished Pakistani women, with diverse professional backgrounds, diligently supported and served Pakistani hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia as part of the contingent of Moavineen. Their efforts showcased the increasing empowerment and recognition of Pakistani women in significant roles, contributing to a stronger representation of the nation in Hajj affairs.

A committed team of more than 137 doctors and paramedics provided quality medical services to pilgrims.

The Ministry staff collaborated closely with Saudi authorities and hotel establishments to allocate accommodations that effectively meet the diverse requirements and preferences of the pilgrims.

Their unwavering commitment, supported by personnel from departments like the Pakistan Army, police, and high-ranking government officers, played a crucial role in providing comfort to pilgrims.

Serving as Moavineen and Haram guides, they navigated the challenges of scorching heat, efficiently managing transportation, meals, and accommodation while offering comprehensive support to Pakistani pilgrims.

Through their endeavours, pilgrims were able to embark on a profoundly significant pilgrimage journey. An impressive 63 per cent of the pilgrims experienced the advantages of the streamlined shuttle train service, while the remaining 37 per cent were transported to Mina, Muzdalifah, and Arafat using buses.

KP takes lead by completing first CPEC originated project

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), a public sector company of the KP government, has taken the lead by completing the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) flag-bearer Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ), at District Nowshera.



given an edge to the province over other provinces of the country.

So far, an investment to the tune of Rs.85 billion has already been made in the zone and besides, Chinese several domestic big industrial groups are also investing in it, he said.

The investors are going to set up units for manufacturing Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) a raw material for the pharmaceutical industrial units while another investor has also shown interest in establishing a vaccine manufacturing unit in the zone while Pakistan Oxygen, a largest oxygen manufacturing unit has already invested in the Zone.

The current innovative management of company has initiated construc-

tion work on 9 new economic zones including two special economic zones of Hattar and Rashakai. 90 percent infrastructure development work at Hattar Special Economic Zone has been completed and now colonization is also in progress in the facility.

During the current management, the total assets of the company by the end of the year 2022 have increased to Rs.15.8 billion as compared to Rs.13 billion in 2021.

The company has posted a surplus of Rs. 29 million (Rs 35 million in 2021) with total income of Rs.1025 million in 2022 (Rs 926.5 million in 2021).

Javed Iqbal Khattak said the Board of Directors (BoD) has appreciated the financial performance of the company for the period ending June 30, 2022. The company's income and the total assets have also shown a steady increase over the past year, which is a testament to the company's strong management and commitment to excellence.

During 2022, the company had generated funds around Rs 3.1 billion including Rs 541 million received

in the shape of the annual development programme (ADP). It has also launched new zones including Special Economic Zone D. I. Khan and Chitral Economic Zones last year, he expressed.

The company has also contributed Rs.93 million to the government treasury in the form of duties and taxes during the year. It has now obtained Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) Certification inevitable for NPO status under Income Tax Ordinance, 2001.

During the current financial year, the company is going to launch two sector specific projects including Buner Marble City and Salt and Gypsum City, Karak to make value addition to the mineral sector products of the province.

On completion only, the Rashakai SEZ will generate over 2,50,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local population while other ongoing projects will also create over nearly the same number of employment opportunities for industrial workers and the change the socio-economic conditions of the people of the province.

PML-N saves country from default: Muqam



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam here Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League-N President and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have saved the country from default after a successful agreement with IMF besides taking bold economic and fiscal decisions for Pakistan.

Addressing a big public gathering here where ANP leader Sher Rehman along with thousands of supporters joined PML-N, Engr Amir Muqam said that PML-N was the only party that could take the country out of all existing challenges.

He said that PML-N has strong roots in masses in all provinces and would form the next government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Engr Amir Muqam said that PTI has disappointed the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and completely failed to deliver despite its nine years long rule in the province.

He accused the PTI chief of destabilizing the country and destroying the national economy.

Amir Muqam said the entire nation had seen attacks on national institutions and defense installations during May 9 vandalism.

He said that people knew that one party had made a deep conspiracy against Pakistan on May 9 by attacking state institutions while Pakistan Muslim League-N had frustrated the evil designs of the attackers.

Amir Muqam said that PTI's chief politics was irrelevant now and PTI has been shattered in groups due to the negative politics of Niazi.

He said Nawaz Sharif had completed Pakistan after the merger of erstwhile Fata in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The PML-N leader said that the people of Pakistan were looking towards Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif as they have all the abilities to take the country out of existing challenges.

He said PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif will soon visit Peshawar to address a big public gathering here.

He assured to address the electricity, gas and others problems of the area.

Former Member National Assembly, Shah G Gul Afridi was also addressed.

Ombudsman Punjab facilitates 18 individuals in securing government jobs

Bureau Report

LAHORE: In the latest development, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab has successfully interceded on public complaints to ensure that provincial government departments provide permanent jobs to 18 applicants of different districts under Rule 17-A of the Punjab Civil Servants (Appointment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1974.

While giving details, the spokesman for the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab reported that Talha Tariq has been appointed as a junior clerk in Attock, Muhammad Ilyas of TT Singh as a gardener and Omar Daraz of Jhang as a watchman. Additionally, Amina Bibi from Vehari has been recruited as bulawi, Abrara Sadia and Chaand Hamza Goraya have been posted as naib qasid in Faisalabad and DG Khan respectively by the education department after the involvement of the ombudsman office.

Furthermore, the health department has recruited Muhammad Waqas Bashir of Jaranwala as a ward boy, Rawalpindi's Sultan Muhammad as a sentry patrol and Muhammad Hamad Ali of TT Singh as a junior clerk in BPS-11.

Similarly, the Superintending Engineer of the Lower Chenab Canal East Circle Sheikhpura has provided Asif Ali with the position of a junior clerk after the ombudsman office interceded to protect the legal right of the applicant, the spokesman added.

Trash Bee, an inspiring start up promoting plastic waste recycling in environment friendly manner

PESHAWAR: Trash Bee, a small production unit set up with the idea of promoting reuse of plastic waste through environmentally sustainable mode of recycling has been serving as an inspiring model for appraising the young generation about much needed green skills to drive environmental change in the country.

Launched by a young engineer, Arsalan Ayaz, the Trash Bee's main objective is promoting practice of recycling of plastic waste in an environment friendly and holistic manner.

"Most of the recycling units in the country are carrying routine practice of recycling plastic along with contaminants which pollutes air and environments and creates health problems for humans," observed Arsalan while talking to a group of journalist during a field trip arranged by Institute of Urbanization.

At Trash Bee, he added, the focus is given on promotion of green skills to drive environmental change and create a sustainable world.

Entry test

KARACHI: Aspiring candidates taking an entry test for Information Technology (IT) courses at Governor House.



Photo: APP

83rd Syndicate meeting of Islamia University held

Spokesman Report

BAHAWALPUR: The 83rd Syndicate meeting of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur was held yesterday at Abbasia Campus under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob. The meeting approved the budget for the financial year 2023-24.

The total budget has been estimated Rs. 12930 million, the ongoing expenditure estimated Rs. 10687 million, and the development budget worth Rs. 2242 million. In the meeting, the recommendations of the previous selection board meetings were approved.

In the meeting, the establishment of Seerah Garden and Centre for Women in STEM was approved. The members of the Syndicate approved the recom-



mendations of the Standing Committee for Discipline.

Registrar Prof. Dr. Moazzam Jamil presented a review report on the implementation of the decisions taken in the 81st and 82nd meetings of the Syndicate. Apart from this, other administrative, financial, and teaching matters were taken into consideration.

Earlier, after the recitation of the

Holy Quran, fatiha was recited in the meeting for Malik Habibullah Bhutta, while paying tribute to his educational and social services, the Vice Chancellor said that his services will be recognised by awarding honorary PhD in the upcoming convocation.

In the meeting, Pro Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Prof. Dr. Akram Chaudhry, former Vice Chan-

cellor Sargodha University, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Amjad, Dean Faculty of Engineering, Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences, Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum, Dean Faculty of Chemical and Biological Sciences, were present in the meeting.

Prof. Dr. Moazzam Jamil Registrar, Rizwan Majeed, Treasurer, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rauf, Director Institute of Chemistry, Dr. Mughes Amin, Dr. Samina Durrani, Director Finance Higher Education Commission, Shah Sawar, representative Finance Department, Tariq Mehmood, representative Higher Education Department, Bushra Mehboob, Principal Govt. Women College Khanpur, Dr. Muhammad Rafay, Associate Professor, Dr. Samar Fahad, Assistant Professor, and Muhammad Zaman, Lecturer participated.

Over population: A call to Action for a better tomorrow

Wajeaha Ashfaq

Despite being among the poorest countries of the world and stuck in the worst economic turmoil, Pakistan has been declared as the 5th largest country in the world in terms of population by United Nations Report of 2022. The census of 2021 revealed the population bloom to hit 231.4 million which is an alarming situation for a country which is already drowned in a number of serious issues, political and economic instability being the major causes leading to other grave issues as well. The issue doesn't end here as with the fertility rate of more than 3, Pakistan's population is expected to increase by 56% in

2050 as per UN report. What's wrong with overpopulation? For a country like Pakistan where resources are scarce, the growing population serves as a poison for depleting assets. These disturbing statistics need immediate attention and solution before there effects start haunting the state at a greater level.

Among various other reasons for such explosion, religious and cultural issues top the list. The orthodox clerics provide religious grounds for producing more than average children and the concept is deeply rooted among the population which considers it as some sort of religious compulsion to produce children. Moreover, our cultural restraints consider open sexual teachings as a taboo. Majority of the population have zero knowledge of family plan-

ning and isn't even considered necessary. Researches show that only 34% population of the country use contraceptives while 17% showed their willingness to use but do not have accessibility to it. Moreover, sons are considered as a symbol of pride in our rotten social setting so parents usually do not stop producing kids until they have a son.

Another factor that contributes to overpopulation in Pakistan is child labor. Due to rising inflation, one person's earning cannot be relied on which results in child labor. Producing more children for the sake of earning has become a trend in Pakistan. In addition, repeated migrations from Afghanistan since 1979 have also contributed to the population boom in Pakistan, exerting pressure over

already-depleting resources of the country. Food insecurity and water insecurity are among the most dangerous causes of over population. Although, Pakistan is an agricultural country but even this cannot serve as a savior in such a case. Moreover, it becomes difficult for state to provide housing, medical, education, health and housing facilities as population increases more and more. Furthermore, more population results in degradation of environment contributing to pollution and ultimately, all these factors combined compromise the overall quality of life.

It's about time this danger must be encountered with a serious approach by the state. Awareness regarding family planning must be promoted through different platforms such

as maternity centers in hospitals may prove to be the best choice for this. In addition, age appropriate knowledge regarding sexual teachings must be provided in schools, colleges and universities rather than treating it as a sort of prohibition. Access to contraceptives must be made easy through reduction in prices and encouraging population for its usage in order to control population. Child labor must be banned completely so that producing children does not equalize having assets for earning more money as the greater number of kids are more linked to greater ratio of poverty as compared to higher class. Moreover, humans must be treated as resources and efforts should be made to develop them and provide them with better facilities. The strain on resource-

es may be reduced if we think towards using renewable sources for energy including wind and sunlight. These factors can be worked upon if our state leadership focuses more on issues at the grass root level rather than boasting a 4 million Rupees flag on independence day which clearly reveals where our leadership stands in terms of priorities.

To recapitulate, the problem of overpopulation is complex and urgent, and it demands our attention and action. Population growth is at an all-time high, putting huge demand on our planet's resources, ecosystems, and social institutions. To properly address this issue, we must take a multidimensional approach and must foster a mindset that values responsible consumption and equita-

ble resource distribution. Issues at the minute level must be addressed in order to avoid greater loss in near future for which serious concerns and efforts from the leadership as well as changed mindsets of the general population are required. This can be achieved through mutual efforts of educated people as well as officials who can join hands to educate and spread awareness among masses. We can work together to create a future in which population growth is balanced with our capacity, ensuring a sustainable and thriving environment for future generations.

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Pakistan's shifting Afghan Policy - I

In recent statements, the army chief has shifted from an appeasement policy with the Afghan Interim Government to an aggressive policy, warning it to rein in the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant umbrella group, which has been using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan, adding that Pakistan has "serious concerns about the safe havens and freedom of action available to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan militant group." He made these remarks after two militant strikes in recent days killed 12 Pakistani soldiers on the Pakistan-Afghan border in Balochistan, when on July 12, TTP attacked a military base in the Zhob area, resulting in the Army's biggest single-day death toll in several months. Three soldiers were martyred in a separate attack on the same day when gunmen targeted an army convoy in Sui, infuriating the Army chief, who warned, "Such attacks are intolerable and will provoke a robust response from Pakistan's security forces." He also expressed his concern about Afghan nationals being involved in terrorist acts in Pakistan.

This is not the first time such heinous and abhorrent actions have been carried out from Afghanistan. TTP has been continuing its attacks with complete impunity since canceling a ceasefire agreement in late 2022, and even earlier. TTP attacks were in full swing across Pakistan between 2007 and 2014, killing 80,000 Pakistanis, including women, children, and security officers. After the TTP assaulted the Peshawar Army Public School and massacred 150 people, including 130 schoolchildren, the Pakistan army launched Zarb-e-Azb operation in December 2014 which drove the

leaders and fighters of TTP to Afghanistan, where they reorganized themselves started re-launching their attack with tacit approval of the Afghan Government.

The Army chief who is fully aware of the seriousness of the TTP presence in the safe havens in Afghanistan, did not mince his words when he warned the Afghan Government to abide by the Doha agreement signed on February 29, 2020. The agreement which was aimed at ending the war contained the commitment by the Taliban to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State but did not specifically say the same thing about TTP and since there was no guarantor of the agreement therefore, soon as US troops withdrew in haste behind war spoils which were looted and paraded by the Taliban, and fleeing of Afghan Government with suitcases stuffed with dollars, the Doha agreement had died then and there. Taliban have been refusing to comply with any of its provisions including education to women and respecting human rights. In fact, the guarantors of the Doha Agreement were Taliban themselves who now have amazing assets in their hands, the terrorist groups of Pakistani, Indian, Russian, Chinese and Central Asian Republic origins, which they use as trump card to get favorable deals but point blank refusing to take actions against them or banish them to the coun-

try of their origin. They keep these assets close to their hearts and only either slow down or increase their activities when and where it suits them.

With Pakistan, too, they play the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) card most effectively. They keep the Pakistani government under constant pressure without taking the blame of blatant attacks into Pakistan, directly, while simultaneously providing safe havens for TTP and the freedom to attack inside Pakistan with total impunity. As soon as Pakistan refuses to capitulate to their demands, they employ TTP to accomplish their objectives. TTP according to a report by the United Nations Security Council are 6,000 trained and armed fighters in Afghanistan who have been targeting Pakistani security forces, Chinese nationals, and Chinese enterprises in Pakistan.

Ironically, there has never been a constant and persistent policy pursued by Pakistan with Afghanistan. Since 1990, Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban in Afghanistan has undergone several shifts due to changing geopolitical dynamics and regional security concerns. In 1990 Pakistan supported the Taliban to establish a friendly government in Afghanistan to counter the influence of its rival, India. After 9/11, from 2001 to 2010, Pakistan shifted its policy and joined the U.S.-led global coalition against terrorism. It pursued a policy of supporting reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan from 2010 to 2014. Prompted by the APS attack, from

2014 to 2020 Pakistan's focus shifted towards combating domestic terrorism, and from 2020 to July, 2023, Pakistan intensified its efforts to facilitate talks between Taliban and USA and its allies and in the later period to pursue the policy of engagement and dialogue.

The Army Chief's statement during his visit to Balochistan was indicative of the failure of the prior government's and former army chief's policy of "engagement and dialogue" which was an attempt to forge a fresh path forward in the Afghan peace process, with the underlying assumption that the Taliban could be persuaded to come to the negotiating table and agree to a political settlement. It held several meetings with the TTP, some open and others not, and released Taliban prisoners, including some considered high-level commanders, granted amnesty to TTP members who agreed to adhere to the Pakistani Constitution, and allowed the TTP to live in Afghanistan in exchange for the TTP ceasing its terrorist activity against Pakistan. This approach opposed the notion that the Taliban are merely terrorists who should be ignored or forcefully defeated. Instead of achieving the set objectives, this appeasement policy emboldened TTP even more, and as a result, they renewed their attacks inside Pakistan with ferocity, violated and damaged the barbed wire security fence on many points across the entire length of the Pakistan-Afghan border, caused unrest in Swat, Dir, and northern areas, and escalated their attacks against civilians, security forces, and the army inside Pakistan.

To be Continued



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

India- An Emerging Failed State - I

India claims to be so called a champion of democracy and a secular state. The ground realities are totally opposite to their claims. India also claims to be a successful nation which is totally wrong. It's perfect time to show the real face of India to the world.

Talking about environment, it's a fact that India is one of the most polluted countries of the world. According to the 2021 World Air Quality Report, India is home to 63 of the 100 most polluted cities, with New Delhi named the capital with the worst air quality in the world. The study also found that PM2.5 concentrations – tiny particles in the air that are 2.5 micrometres or smaller in length – in 48% of the country's cities are more than 10 times higher than the 2021 WHO air quality guideline level.

Freedom of speech is not ensured in India. Media is not allowed to show the real picture of what is going on in Indian Occupied Kashmir, Punjab, Assam etc. It's a slap on a country which claims to be a secular country.

India is based on Lies and false propaganda. It's not a far incident where 40 Indian paramilitary soldiers were killed in a suicide attack in Pulwama district. India had accused Pakistan of orchestrating the attack which brought the two nuclear powers to the brink of another war. But the Pakistani government denied its involvement in the attack. Satya Pal Malik, who was the governor of Indian-administered Kashmir at the time of the attack, told India's The Wire news

website in an interview that he "realised that all the onus of the attack will be put on Pakistan" to reap electoral benefits. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi had repeatedly cited the Pulwama attack to mobilise voters in the 2019 general elections, in which he returned to power with a larger majority in parliament. In his interview, Malik, the former governor, blamed Pakistan for the attack but added that it happened due to the "incompetence" and "carelessness" of Modi's government. Malik claimed that Modi told him to "stay quiet" about the security lapses he allegedly raised with the government. He added that India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval had also told him to remain silent over the alleged lapses. India should look into the voices coming out from within their countries which clearly shows the lies from their leadership.

According to an article published in times of India, Being a woman is not easy and that too when you live in India. Because in India at every 20 minutes a girl is raped. And if we talked about the current scenario, India is not safe for women not even in this 21st century. This country has been ranked as the world most dangerous place for women.

Remember that heinous crime that occurs in the national capital of India, Delhi at Munirka on 16 December 2012 (Nirbhaya case). That leaves everyone in trauma and left a dark stain on women safety and security. She was a physiotherapy intern who had gone to watch a movie with her male friend and has been assaulted on her way back home. She had been Raped on a bus by six people in which she was travelling with her male friend. These monsters had crossed all the limits of brutality. This case got national as well as international coverage, but nothing had made a big change in the speed of justice of Nirbhaya case as this high profile case had taken 7 years to conclude.

The judicial system of India is somewhere responsible for the rising numbers in the rape case in India On the same day of Nirbhaya, there was one more gang-raped happened in Meghalaya where a girl went to the Winter festival at William Nagar with her friends and on her way back she was hit with bricks on her head and raped by 16 people.

According to author, Nirbhaya was not the sole rape case in 2012, as per NCRB report it was one of the 24,923 recorded cases and even the report stated that in the same year more than 68 girls raped every day. He gave some examples of rape cases in India from 2012 to 2020: 16 Dec 2012, Nirbhaya Gang rape by 6 people including a juvenile, 22. Aug.2013 Shakti Mills Gang rape by 5

people including a juvenile, 27. May.2014 Badaun Gang rape by up to 7 people, July 2015 Shivgangai minor girl rape case Accused a police officer, 29. March.2016 Delta Meghwal rape case 17yrs old girl accused her hostel teacher, 04. Jun.2017 Unnao rape case A minor girl raped, Jan.2018 Kathua Rape Case Minor girl raped by 7 people, Dec.2019 6-year old girl raped on her way back home from school, 23. April.2020 6-year old girl raped.

Now come to the situation of law & order and treatment with minorities in India. Recently, a former member of India's Parliament, was shot dead on live TV along with his brother while in police custody in the northern city of Prayagraj, raising questions about rule of law in the state of Uttar Pradesh. According to Al Jazeera report, The gunmen, who appeared to have posed as journalists, fired multiple shots at Atiq Ahmed and former state legislator Ashraf Ahmed on Saturday as they were being taken in handcuffs to hospital by police for a medical checkup, authorities said. Three suspects quickly surrendered to the police after the shooting with at least one of them chanting, "Jai Shri Ram," or "Hail Lord Ram," a slogan that has become a battle cry for Hindu nationalists in their campaign against Muslims. The two victims were from India's Muslim minority.

Investigative, scientific minds certainly come to the conclusions because there the matters are seen impartially & honestly. Let's concentrate on the four elements mentioned in Quranic Surah Al-Asr, which guarantees for your success in all respect;

[With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful. (I swear) by the Time, man is in a state of loss indeed, except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and exhorted each other to follow the truth, and exhorted each other to observe patience.] Further the virtue of [Studying] Surah al-Asr! Sayyidna Ubaidullah Ibn Hisn (RA) reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Surah

Defacto Shortfalls saving with 4- Real Elements

The Motherland is an identical state like mother & undoubtedly Mother always sacrifices to grow & prosper its individuals not leaving alone her children in all circumstances. If the untoward time comes to a mother, she should be left alone' and with whose help? More than 1- Million people departing from the homeland is not the demonstration of loyalty to the homeland. In civilized societies of the world, untoward situations are faced and dealt with to stabilize & scale up the motherland instead of seeing off.

Taking a bird eye view? What tactics did the American surah Al-Asr + NATO forces use for a long term in Afghanistan? Did those people say goodbye to their homeland? Never! They faced & fought in hard situations and the Allies finally had to bid farewell, this was the loyalty where we sacrifice even our own self & families' lives. We think & calculate, If the situation was worse like this, then PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his associates should have been the first to leave and run off.

Investigative, scientific minds certainly come to the conclusions because there the matters are seen impartially & honestly. Let's concentrate on the four elements mentioned in Quranic Surah Al-Asr, which guarantees for your success in all respect;

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Al-Asr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Tabarni]. Imam Shafi' (RA) says that if people thought about Surah Al-Asr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Surah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Surah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur'anic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four elements.

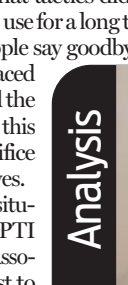
The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathir].

Relationship between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject' The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality – all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly; spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically: "Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."



Analysis Abdul Basit Alvi



Analysis MA Rashid

WHO report reaffirms safety of aspartame

Spokesman Report

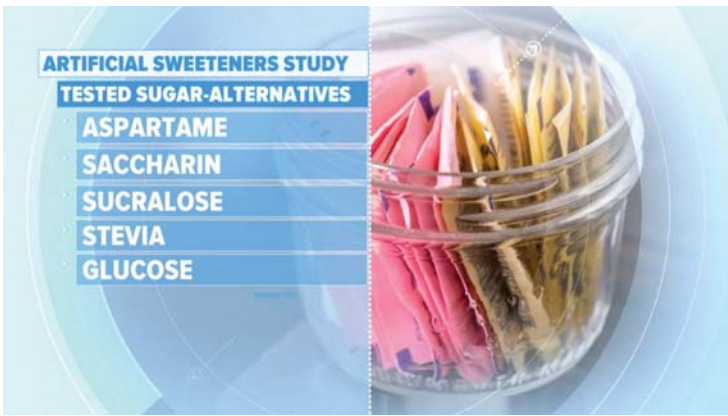
LAHORE: After a comprehensive review, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Food & Agriculture Organization's Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) have once again concluded that aspartame is a safe ingredient in foods and beverages.

Consequently, the WHO has made no change to the current Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) levels of aspartame.

The rigorous review concluded that there was "no sufficient reason" to change the previously established ADI levels. They "therefore reaffirmed that it is safe for a person to consume within this limit per day."

This robust conclusion from the WHO supporting the safety of aspartame is based on a foundation of extensive scientific evidence, with more than 40 years and over 100 studies supporting the safety of aspartame. Furthermore, the WHO's safety decision is aligned with more than 90 food safety authorities around the world, including the US FDA, the European Food Safety Authority, the UK Food Standards Authority, Health Canada and Food Standards Australia New Zealand, among others.

Since JECFA is global equivalent of



regulators such as food safety agencies such as EFSA and the US FDA, it is the appropriate body to make an informed public health decision about the use of aspartame. It considered the totality of evidence for all potential health outcomes, assessed the risk to human health and gave appropriate weight to high-quality evidence.

The IARC carried out a comprehensive and overlapping review on the safety of aspartame, although its review was a more limited "hazard identification". The IARC classified aspartame as a level "2B" carcinogen, in other words "possibly carcinogenic to humans", and this falls in the same category as aloe vera and pickled vegetables.

International Council of Beverage

Associations (ICBA) President Kate Loatman applauded the WHO and FAO finding:

"This definitive conclusion by the world's leading health and food safety experts once again affirms that aspartame is safe. After rigorous review, this landmark WHO and FAO finding further strengthens confidence in the safety of aspartame and will play a vital role in informing consumers as they consider all options to reduce sugar and calories in their diets. JECFA's comprehensive conclusion that aspartame is safe builds on the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence for more than four decades, as well as positive determinations by food safety authorities in more than 90 countries."

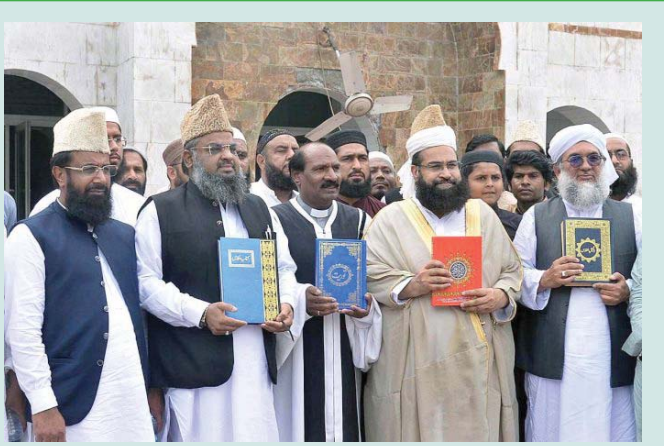
International Sweeteners Association Secretary-General Frances Hunt-Wood applauded the WHO's reaffirmation of aspartame's safety by its leading scientific body responsible for evaluating the safety of food additives:

"JECFA has once again reaffirmed aspartame's safety after conducting a thorough, comprehensive and scientifically rigorous review. Aspartame, like all low/no calorie sweeteners, when used as part of a balanced diet, provides consumers with choice to reduce sugar intake, a critical public health objective."

President of the US-based Calorie Control Council Robert Rankin welcomed the ruling:

"The JECFA ruling not only confirms the four decades of science concluding aspartame is safe but also provides real-life context around the safe consumption of this ingredient. In order to reach JECFA's conservative ADI estimates, the average 150 lb. person would need to consume about 14 12-oz cans of diet beverages or about 74 packets of aspartame-containing tabletop sweetener every day over the course of their life to raise any safety concern. Obviously, that level of consumption is not realistic, recommended, nor is it aligned with the intended use of these ingredients."

Consumers can have confidence that their foods and beverages are safe.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi expressing solidarity with holy books at Jamia Manzoorul Islamia. APP

Tribal elders/labours/watchers demand release of funds

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Tribal elders, Labours and Watchers issued a joint statement saying that under the mega project Ten Billion Tree Tsunami under the supervision of South Waziristan Forest Division, many development works like Block Plantations, Avenue Plantations Raising of Nurseries and Enclosures have been completed. But despite the passage of a long time, the laborers, watchers and closure watchmen of these development works could not get their wages/liabilities, the main reason is non-release of funds by the Government.

The tribal elders strongly demanded the Provincial Minister of Forests and the Secretary of Forests to use their special efforts to ensure the provision of funds for the South Waziristan Forest Division, So that it is possible to pay the liabilities of poor and indigent labourers, watchers and closure watchmen as they have not received funds for many months.

On the other hand, the closure watchers told the media that in this era of inflation, the stoves of our homes have become cold, it has become difficult to feed our children, therefore, the caretaker forest minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and secretary forest KPK should take notice of this basic problem of ours and release the fund so that the stopped wheel of life can continue.

The closure watchers threatened and said that if the provincial government does not release funds for us, we will be forced to protest in Peshawar.

Rwp Safe City Project to prove highly effective in combating crime: Secretary HUDP

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Punjab, (HUDP) Sajid Zafar Dall has said that Safe City Project would prove to be highly effective in combating crime in Rawalpindi City.

According to a district administration spokesman, the secretary along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali here the other day visited different city areas including Kutchery Chowk, Peshawar Road, IGP Road, Pirwadhai and Liaquat Bagh and reviewed Safe City project.

The Secretary was briefed that the security situation of Rawalpindi city would be improved further through Safe City project.

The project would increase the sense of security among the citizens, he added.

The use of technology to improve security had become indispensable, the Commissioner said adding, the Safe City project was being launched in Rawalpindi and Murree.

The project would improve the law and order situation as it was a project to ensure public safety, the Commissioner said.

The administration was fully mobilized regarding the Safe City

15-Member delegation visiting China

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Upon invitation from Fudan University, Shanghai, a 15-member composite delegation from Pakistan including diplomats, senior academics, researchers and media persons, will depart for China today on a week-long visit. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, shall lead the delegation.

The other members include: Prof. Dr. Engr. Attaullah Shah, Vice Chancellor, University of Karakoram; Dr. Ayesha Alam, University of Hazara; Prof. Dr. Ayesha Sohail, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Amb. Babar Amin, Former Ambassador; Mr. Dost Mohammad Barrech, University of Balochistan; Dr. Fouzia Hadi Ali, University of Punjab; Prof. Dr. Kausar Takrim, University of Peshawar; Mr. Muhammad Ali Baig, Research Fellow, ISSI; Dr. Mukesh Khatwani, University of Sindh; Mr. Shaikat Piracha, Senior Anchor, Aaj News; Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, COMSATS University, Islamabad; Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Paki-



stan Study Centre (CPSC), ISSI; Mr. Tanveer Hashmi, Jang Group and Ms. Misbah Mukhtar, Research Associate, ISSI.

The delegation members come from all provinces of Pakistan as well as from Azad Jammu and Kash-

mir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. As practitioners and academics, they have long-standing experience of China studies, regional and global matters, Pakistan-China relations, and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The delegates will participate in a Seminar hosted by Fudan University in Shanghai and the 3rd Pakistan-China Think Tank Forum hosted by the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in Beijing. Besides, a visit to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs also scheduled. The delegation shall also visit various academic and commercial facilities and receive briefings for first-hand information.

The delegation's visit would serve to further promote academic and people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and China. Interaction with Chinese academicians, scholars and government officials would help identify opportunities for enhanced cooperation in diverse sectors including trade, technology, and infrastructure development.

The delegation's members would also be keen to foster academic collaboration, facilitate knowledge exchange, and enhance mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation in the field of education and beyond.

The delegation will return to Islamabad on July 23, 2023.

Trade facilitation to Afghanistan vital: CEO TDAP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP) Muhammad Zubair Motiwala said that Pakistan always attached highest importance to its trade facilitation for Afghanistan.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of Imam Abu Hanifa Exhibition held Sunday in Kabul.

Motiwala shared that Pakistan was the largest trading partner of Afghanistan. In this context, he thanked the Afghan government for providing such business opportunities to Pakistani exhibitors which will further widen the business-to-business relations between the two fraternal neighbors. He further shared that more than 25 leading Pakistani manufacturers are participating in the exhibition, making Pakistan's the



largest participation in the fair.

He emphasized that traders and businessmen of both sides should benefit from the opportunities presented by this exhibition. He stated that Pakistan

always supports such bold steps which could generate conducive environment for business communities of the region.

Motiwala stated that Pakistan is also playing all possible facilitation for Afghanistan's smooth global trade through transit facility provided by Pakistan. He shared with the audience that Pakistan has granted massive tariff concession on all Afghan fruits and vegetables export to Pakistan.

He expressed his views that the Afghan government should make business friendly investment policies to attract investment from the bilateral investors.

He also stressed the improvement of supply chain management by Afghan government so that Afghanistan's business community could receive goods on time. At the end, he along with the head of mission visited Pakistani stalls.

Misery deepens for Sudanese civilians, as conflict hits 3-month mark: UN relief chief

UNITED NATIONS: The U. N. top humanitarian official has called on warring factions in Sudan to respect international law, protect civilians, and stop targeting relief and aid workers, as the conflict reached its three-month mark.

"For three months now, the people of Sudan have endured unspeakable suffering amid violence that is tearing their country apart," Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said in a statement released on Saturday.

"As the conflict enters its fourth month, the battle lines are hardening, making it ever more difficult to reach the millions of people who need urgent humanitarian assistance," he added.

More than 3 million people have been displaced due to the conflict both within Sudan and across its borders; the fighting, which broke out in mid-April

has reportedly claimed the lives of more than 1,100 people and injured over 12,000, according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Health workers and facilities have also been attacked, severely limiting access for those in need, and with the onset of the rainy season, there is an increased risk of outbreaks of water- and vector-borne diseases, compounded by challenges in waste management and shortages of supplies.

Children are among the worst affected, with an estimated 13.6 million – roughly half the number remaining in Sudan – in urgent need of assistance.

Describing Sudan as "one of the world's most difficult places for humanitarian workers to operate," Griffiths emphasized the collaborative efforts of local organizations and international aid groups in delivering life-saving supplies.

However, that work cannot be carried out when relief workers themselves, are at risk.

"But we cannot work under the barrel of a gun. We cannot replenish stores of food, water and medicine if brazen looting of these stocks continues. We cannot deliver if our staff are prevented from reaching people in need."

He underlined that ultimately, the suffering of Sudanese people will end only when the fighting stops, and called on the parties to the conflict to abide by the Declaration of Commitments they signed in Jeddah to protect civilians and respect international humanitarian law.

Each day the fighting continues, the misery deepens for Sudanese civilians

Drawing attention to the recent discovery of mass graves in West Darfur, Mr. Griffiths highlighted the fear of resurgence of ethnic killings in the region.

EU urged to probe Mediterranean shipwreck killing 700, including Pakistanis

News Desk

NEW YORK: Nearly a month after the sinking of an overloaded boat off the Greek coast where 700 people, including Pakistanis, were killed, a prominent global humanitarian body has called on the European Union (EU) to ensure a "full, transparent" investigation into the tragedy.

"So far, there have been no moves to launch such an investigation into the shipwreck – one of the deadliest on record in the Mediterranean Sea – despite calls to do so from NGOs and members of the European Parliament," the New York-based International Rescue Committee (IRC) said in a statement on Saturday.

The IRC stressed the need for the EU and its member states to urgently expand safe, regular routes for people on the move, including committing to resettle at least 44,000 refugees in 2024.

"The EU and its states must shift their focus from deterring people from reaching Europe, to safeguarding them along their journeys – this includes strengthening search and rescue, providing information to people on the move, and upholding the legal right", the humanitarian body said.

At the United Nations, Pakistan stepped up pressure for the investigation into huge loss of lives, amid media reports that the Greek Coastguards were slow in responding the distress calls from

the doomed ship.

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

The Pakistani envoy highlighted last month's deadly migrant shipwreck, as he underscored the need for developing mechanisms for people in distress at sea.

"As responsible members of 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," Aamir Khan said.

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

In its statement, IRC added, "We're concerned that disasters

like this horrific shipwreck are becoming increasingly normalized. In the month since this disaster, there have been at least 22 other incidents in the Central Mediterranean (including bodies washing ashore the Libyan coast)

with more than 50 people dead or missing, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

"At the same time, in the absence of internal agreement on how to better share responsibility for new arrivals, European leaders are pursuing new migration agreements with non-EU countries.

"These deals are disproportionately focused on deterring refugees and other migrants from Europe, rather than supporting vulnerable people on the move and addressing the root causes behind their displacement. They risk further undermining people's rights, exposing them to abuse and exploitation, and driving them to risk their lives on even more dangerous routes."

Need stressed to unlock potential of regional economic cooperation:
Iftikhar Malik



Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry's former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday stressed the urgent need of unlocking the potential of regional economic cooperation and integration to boost trade among SAARC member countries, especially with Afghanistan at this critical juncture.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Muslim Khan Buner, he said inter-regional trade in South Asia is less than one-third of its potential which indicates 67 percent of trade is not being fully exploited, said. News release.

He said the role of Afghanistan as a connector and as a land bridge between Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia needs to be reviewed in the prevailing scenario to primarily focus on the promotion of trade and investment.

He said even today, Afghanistan is seen as a viable doorway to South Asian countries for direct access to oil and gas from the republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and others.

He said better trade ties will help promote economic growth and to do away with abject poverty in the region especially in Afghanistan thus enhancing its cross-border and transit trade with neighbouring countries.

He said poor trade facilitation at borders and the prevalence of a variety of non-tariff barriers are major hurdles in further enhancing mutual trade manifolds with Afghanistan.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said at the moment what we need is total up gradation and strengthening of existing facilitation, handling and clearance of transport and trade at the Pak-Afghan land borders besides consolidation of initiatives taken by the new regime of Taliban.

He said Pakistan after Iran and China is the third largest trading partner of Afghanistan which exports cement, pharmaceuticals products, sulphur, stone, plaster, peel of citrus fruit, melon, vegetable fats, edible fruits and oil etc.

He said Afghanistan's main exports are carpets and rugs 45 percent of the total exports dried fruits constitute 31 percent and medicinal plants 12 percent.

He said the main export partner is Pakistan 48 percent, India 19 percent and Russia 9 percent other including Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

Base power tariff hike of Rs5/unit to be dangerous for economy:
BMP

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Anjum Nisar says burden of power theft, mismanagement should not be shifted to trade, industry

As the government has increased electricity tariff by almost Rs5, taking base tariff up to Rs 29.78 under the IMF condition, the Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the FPCCI has condemned the move, stating the burden of power theft, mismanagement, and inefficiencies should not be shifted to the trade and industry consumers, as it would prove to be dangerous for overall economy.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that in 2022, the previous government raised base tariff by almost Rs8 per unit in three phases due to which base tariff jumped to around Rs25 per unit from Rs17 per unit. After the IMF Board approval of the US \$3 billion stand-by arrangement, it asked the Pakistan authorities urgently need to strengthen energy sector viability by aligning tariffs with costs, reducing the sectors cost base, and better-targeting power subsidies.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that Pakistan's industry had been harmed by the high cost of doing business, which discouraged investment in capacity and capability and called for easing the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

Government to resolve issues of exporters: Prime Minister

Faisal Butt

SIALKOT: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the formulation of a policy for the establishment of one-window facilitation centers for resolving issues of exporters.

He was talking to a delegation comprising members of Parliament and office bearers of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here.

The delegation paid tribute to the prime minister on the final approval of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund and the revival of the country's economy.

The prime minister thanked members of the delegation for standing shoulder to shoulder during the hard decisions taken in the interest of the country.

The PM was briefed about the issues faced by the chamber.

He directed the administration in Sialkot for



the construction of highways and their maintenance and restoration.

Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif, Advisor to Prime Minister Ahad Cheema, Special Assistants Jehanzeb Khan, Tariq Bajwa, Rana Shameem Ahmed Khan, former member National Assembly Nielson Azeem, former members provincial assembly Arshad Warraich, Rana Liaquat, Arif Iqbal, Rana Afzaal, Abdul Sattar, Chaudhry Ikram Mansha But, Mrs Shehzad Gulnar, Zeeshan Rafiq, President Pakistan Muslim League (N) Sialkot Muhammad Rafique Mughal, and former chairman Sialkot Airport Khawaja Maqsood Akhtar attended the meeting.

Office bearers of SCCI including its President Abdul Ghafoor, Senior Vice President Wahab-Jehangir, Vice President Amir Majeed Shaikh, President Women Chamber Dr Maryam Nauman, Sohail Barlas and Sarfraz Bhatti were also present in the meeting.

Economic turmoil, IWCCI proposes a technocratic structure

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, founder president of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) said on Sunday that the current government should be succeeded by a technocrat setup which will be able to take necessary measures imperative for the survival of the country.

Usually, an interim government comes for a short period of time to hold general elections, but it will also be able to steer the country out of problems that is facing an economic freefall, she said.

Talking to the business community, she emphasised the need for a caretaker technocratic government as soon as the tenure of the present National Assembly comes to an end.

Samina Fazil said that while the recent financial support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has improved the country's financial condition to some extent and minimised the risk of default, a lot still has to be done.

Handing over power to technocrats is



essential for steering the country out of its economic problems, she said, adding that the appointment of technocrats based on their expertise, particularly in vital areas such as finance, commerce, industry, investment, water and power, and women's empowerment, will help change the situation for the better.

Explaining further, Samina Fazil stated that technocrats do not run for office in elections. In certain countries, the Prime

Ministers are both economists and technocrats. Sometimes a technocratic setup is introduced when political parties fail to deliver.

Samina Fazil acknowledged that technocratic governments are known for making tough decisions that political governments often shy away from, fearing a loss of support.

In some instances, a technocratic government is formed through consensus among all parliamentary parties when a regular government cannot be established. She added that Pakistan has witnessed technocratic governments in the past, during the eras of General Zia and General Pervez Musharraf.

Highlighting the current state of Pakistan's economy, Samina Fazil expressed concern that the nation has fallen behind other developing countries, making the survival of its economy a difficult task.

She emphasized the need to bolster the confidence of the business community, promote exports, and encourage Pakistani expatriates by providing additional incentives.

Sugar mafia drives prices to the highest point in nation's history

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Sunday that the influential sugar mafia has pushed the price of sugar to the highest level in the country's history.

If the sugar exports are not stopped, the price will exceed two hundred rupees per kg in the open market, he said.

In a statement issued here today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that allowing exports despite the decline in production is an injustice to the people which benefits the sugar mafia.

Sugar will become scarce in the country before the next crushing season if exports continue at this pace, he warned.

He informed that now sugar is fetching 150 to 160 rupees per kg in different parts of the country, and its price is continuously increasing.

If the export of sugar is not immediately banned, it will exceed two hundred rupees per kg, which will be unaffordable for the majority.

He said that the people's interests have been put aside to benefit the sugar mafia, and they have been allowed to export the commodi-

ty while sugar smuggling is also on the rise.

The price of sugar in the wholesale market has increased by Rs19 in twenty days, but the authorities are not paying attention to this, which is encouraging hoarders.

In the present circumstances, the price of sugar will rise further, adding to the



Reading habit

KARACHI: People are busy buying old books from a stall at Frere Hall in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Theft, free electricity to the favoured ought to be halted

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the new increase in the price of electricity is condemnable.

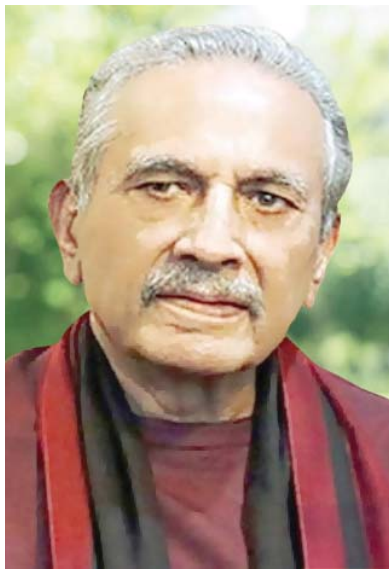
The public and businesses already reeling under unprecedented inflation and other problems cannot afford the new price of electricity, he said.

The decision to revise the power tariff will open floodgates for inflation in the country, because of which poverty and unemployment will increase, he added.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that instead of making electricity more expensive, theft should be controlled, private power plants should not be given massive profits, and the facility of free electricity should be withdrawn from the privileged classes.

The business leader said that per unit price of electricity has been increased by 4 rupees and 96 paise, which will burden the public by billions of rupees.

Now people will get per unit electricity for more than 50 rupees, which



will further increase their problems, he observed.

According to NEPRA, the reasons for increasing the price of electricity include rupee depreciation, inflation, heavy interest rates, interest payments on loans, and

payments to IPPs, but these government agencies have never been concerned about power theft worth billions of rupees per day or the provision of free electricity to privileged people.

He noted that the IMF has never asked to increase electricity rates but has always said that electricity should not be sold at a loss so that the circular debt does not increase.

Government officers and officials are responsible for the losses in the electricity sector and not the public; therefore, they should be made to pay for it.

He said that people are already braving the high price of flour, sugar, pulses, vegetables, fruits, ghee, eggs, milk, and other essential items, and the burden on them is being increased by continuously increasing the electricity and gas tariffs, which is sad.

He said that the government is preparing to increase the price of gas after electricity, which will increase the burden on the public. In these circumstances, the rulers are trying to appease the people by threatening a crackdown on hoarders, but this roar is not having any effect on the profiteers and smugglers.

Incentives for industry can put economy on sustainable growth: PIAF

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF), stressing the need for putting the economy on a sustainable growth trajectory by providing incentives to the industry, lamented that the economy is facing multiple challenges of falling exports, high inflation, and low growth, with fiscal accounts under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman said that the low growth shows the government is finding it difficult to achieve the industrial growth and export target, leading to more pressure on foreign exchange reserves of the country. He asked the government to address the underlying structural vulnerabilities through smooth energy supply at competitive rates, as country's overall export proceeds continued to shrink.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the government has increased the gas and electricity tariffs and, at the same time, also the subsidy has been phased out, which will further increase the cost of production. Month on month increase-



es in consumer prices may be countered by a further mean reverting international commodity prices and some exchange rate stability due to decreased pace of depreciation. The overall money supply growth remains compatible with a return to low and stable inflation.

