



Govt has no plan to impose new taxes on agri, real estate sectors, Dar tells NA

The coalition government has no plan of imposing new taxes on agriculture and real estate sectors, says Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. Speaking on the floor of the NA on Friday, he said he wanted to make it clear in letter and spirit that "no new tax" would be imposed... (Details on Page 8)



Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab calls cabinet meeting today

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has scheduled a meeting of the provincial cabinet for tomorrow, July 22. The meeting will take place at the Chief Minister's Office and will focus on crucial matters concerning the province. It is set to be attended by provincial ministers, advisors, the chief secretary, IG police, and others.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing the 2nd meeting of Apex Committee of SIFC on Friday.



Photo: PID

SIFC approves projects for attracting investments from friendly countries

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Apex Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on Friday approved the projects for attracting investments from friendly countries in agricultural, livestock, minerals, mining, information technology, and energy sectors.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, chairing the second meeting of the Apex Committee, directed to extend impeccable facilitation to the investors, interested in undertaking

and actualising the projects.

The meeting, which was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, chief ministers, federal and provincial Ministers and high-level government officials, reviewed various projects presented by ministries for broaching with investors under the umbrella of SIFC.

The Apex Committee expressed satisfaction on functioning of the SIFC and its strategy to outreach the potential investors through conduct of seminars and project inaugurations.

President urges society, family role to address disability, rehabilitation issues



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized that society and the family system would have to play their due role to facilitate the lives of disabled persons as well as those needing rehabilitative care.

The president, addressing the concluding ceremony of a course held by the Global Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, said the community welfare had been the basis for all religions including Islam, Christianity and Judaism, citing the examples of holy prophets, Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

He said at a time when the world lacked morality and humanity in its affairs, it was the society that would have to play its part, particularly for

the welfare of persons with disabilities and those who could benefit from rehabilitation.

Citing a research study, the president told the gathering that around 24 percent of Pakistan's population suffered mental stress including 60-70 percent of the students.

He said the situation could not be addressed at a time when the country had just 600 psychiatrists and 1200 psychologists. In such a case, the family system could prove to be a good anchor to extend its support in the form of group therapy and stress sharing.

President Alvi said without depending on the state, the family system would have to come up to play its part as in Islamic societies where the communities always promulgated laws.

SC rejects plea to stay civilians' trial in military courts

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday declined to stay civilians' trial in the military courts.

A six-member bench headed by CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik is hearing the pleas against military courts.

In today's hearing the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan continued his arguments before the court in the case.

Awan in his arguments said that civilians can be tried in the military courts in special conditions

and added staff hearing the cases in the military courts take oath before hearing. He said that he had spoken about the "organised" plan behind the violent events of May 9.

"From the video clips shown in court, it is evident that a lot of people were involved in the events of May 9," he said. "Despite the large number, after exercising caution, 102 people were pinpointed for court-martial," he said.

At one point, Justice Naqvi asked how it was decided who would be tried in military courts and who wouldn't. Awan said that offenses under Section 2(1)(d) of the Army Act would be tried in military courts.

Awan argued that there was mention of the Army Act being applicable to civilians even before



the 21st Amendment, saying that the basic human rights were not applicable on the Army Act.

Upon being asked by CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial about the right to appeal by the accused in the military courts, the AGP sought said this is a 'crucial' matter and sought a one-month time for consultation.

At this, former CJP Justice (retired) Jawad S. Khawaja, one of the petitioners said they don't have any objection if the government needs time for legislation

but pleaded with the government to issue a stay order against military courts.

The plea was turned down by the SC bench. "When the trials of civilians are yet to start, who can a stay order be issued," CJP remarked.

In the month of May, the government decided to try the suspects accused of attacking military installations on May 9 under army laws.

Violent clashes broke out across Pakistan after the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was arrested from the premises of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on May 9.

Army installations, Corps Commander's house in Lahore and General Headquarters

(GHQ) in Rawalpindi came under attack during a protest by PTI workers.

Following the arrests made in connection with the violent riots that erupted across the country on May 9, the government announced its decision to hold military court trials of those found guilty of damaging and attacking military instalments — a move both the government and the army considered a low blow.

In light of this decision, PTI Chairman Imran Khan, former chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja, legal expert Aitzaz Ahsan, and five civil society members, including Piler Executive Director Karamat Ali, requested the apex court to declare the military trials "unconstitutional".

Pakistan strongly condemns another act of Holy Quran's desecration in Sweden

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday condemned in the "strongest possible terms" yet another Islamophobic act of public desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

"Permission to carry out premeditated and provocative acts of religious hatred cannot be justified under the guise of freedom of expression, opinion and protest," the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson said that international law categorically obliged states to prevent and prohibit deliberate incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief.

She reiterated Pakistan's call on the international community to unequivocally condemn these Islamophobic acts.

"We expect the Swedish authorities to take all measures necessary to stop such acts of hatred and incitement. Pakistan's concerns about the latest incident are being conveyed to the Swedish authorities," the FO spokesperson added.

US urge upholding of basic democratic principles as Pakistan moves towards elections

News Desk

WASHINGTON: As Pakistan prepares for the general elections, the United States has called for upholding the basic democratic principles in the South Asian country.

"I will make clear that we support the peaceful upholding of fundamental democratic principles such as free media, free speech, freedom assembly," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told his daily press briefing on Thursday.

"We champion the rule of law, not just in Pakistan but around the



world. These principles are the foundations for democratic elections," he said in response to a question from the correspondent of a private Pakistani television channel.

"I have spoken to this both with respect to Pakistan specifically and

of course, as it relates to other countries on numerous occasions," Miller added.

Replying to a question about the increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in Pakistan, the spokesperson said, "We will continue to urge the Taliban to fulfill their promises (to the international community)."

At the same time, he said the U. S. has the ability to conduct its own operations in the region to "ensure that, regardless of any promises that the Taliban makes and regardless of their relative ability or willingness to uphold them, that we retain the right to protect American interests."

Nazrana Online Website will be created for charity and donations: Mohsin Naqvi

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has given his approval in principle for the creation of an online platform named Nazrana Online. This platform aims to facilitate online offerings and donations at significant shrines throughout the province. Dedicated websites will be established for revered places like Darbar Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, Hazrat Baba Bullay Shah, Hazrat Baba Farid Ganj Shukar, and other important shrines.

The responsibility of developing this website has been entrusted to the Punjab Information Technology Board. Through this user-friendly platform, people will have the convenience of making donations and contributions online.

Moreover, individuals residing abroad will also be able to actively participate in the almsgiving process and witness the live distribution of alms.

Marriyum grieved over demise of senior journalist Sanaullah's brother

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of the brother of senior journalist Sanaullah Khan.

In a condolence message, the



minister expressed her heartfelt condolences to Sanaullah and his bereaved family.

The minister sharing her thoughts prayed for the rest of the departed soul in eternal peace and grant of courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

NA body unanimously approves PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting on Friday unanimously approved the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Amendment Bill 2023.

The committee, which met at the Radio Pakistan with Javaria Zafar Aheer in the chair, termed the Bill a historic initiative for the welfare of journalists and appreciated all the efforts of all stakeholders, including the government, in that regard.

Besides The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill 2023, the committee also discussed The Press Council of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill 2023.

Minister of Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, briefing the committee, said amending the PEMRA law was the need of the



hour as the entire scenario of the media had changed.

She said the PEMRA Ordinance, which was promulgated in 2002, was being amended first time. Its nine clauses were amended while five new ones were added.

The minister said under the amended law, for the first time media workers were being given the right to file complaints in the Council of Complaints, whereas in the past they were sacked even for demanding salaries.

Under the new bill, a three-member committee would now have the powers to close down a channel instead of the PEMRA chairman, she added.

Group Photo

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan in a group photo with Inspector General Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan during the inauguration of Dolphin force on Friday.



Photo: PID

Govt has no plan to impose new taxes on agri, real estate sectors, Dar tells NA

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: The coalition government has no plan of imposing new taxes on agriculture and real estate sectors, says Finance Minister Ishaq Dar.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly on Friday, he said he wanted to make it clear in letter and spirit that "no new tax" would be imposed on agriculture or real estate as the government had already endured much pain in fulfilling the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The global lender approved a \$3 billion bailout programme for Pakistan, out of which \$1.2bn was immediately disbursed to help save the ailing economy.

According to some media reports, the international lender had asked the government for a plan to impose taxes on the real estate and agricultur-

al sectors before release of the remaining amount.

The finance minister told the lower house that the people representing the agriculture sector—for which the government expanded the loan volume from Rs1,800 billion to Rs2,250 billion in the budget—had showed concerns over the reports.

He said the government would pass no further burden on the masses as all the commitments made with the IMF were on the finance ministry's website, adding all prior actions laid down by the lender had been completed.

Dar reasserted that the agreement with the IMF was done in a "transparent" manner.

"It is our effort to bring down the inflation. He said that according to State Bank of Pakistan, the inflation will come down to 7 percent in two years' time if the consistency in



policies continued."

On the occasion, the Finance Minister also placed before the House the documents pertaining to the standby agreement reached with the IMF.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have deposited \$3bn in Pakistan's central bank in the last two days. China has rolled over \$5bn in loans in the last three months to save the country from default.

On Thursday, the FinMin said the total liquid foreign

reserves of the country clocked in at \$14.06bn dollars. In a tweet, he said the State Bank of Pakistan's reserve position was also highest since October last year.

— Islamabad Airport to be outsourced for 15 years —

The National Assembly (NA) was informed today that Islamabad International Airport will be outsourced for fifteen years after a competitive bidding process.

Responding to a calling attention notice, Minister

for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique told the House that about twelve companies have shown their interest in the operations of the Islamabad International Airport. He said the outsourcing process of Islamabad International Airport will be completed in next two and a half month.

The Minister said airports of Lahore and Karachi will also be outsourced, stressing that best international practices will be emulated at our airports. He assured that employees will not be laid-off.

Expressing concerns of huge deficit of Pakistan International Airline, the Minister emphasized for its restructuring, assuring that rights of the employees will be protected. He said that PIA's flight operation to UK will resume in the next three months which will be followed by resumption of flights to European Union and US.

Dolphin Force launched in Islamabad to curb street crime

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The inauguration of the Islamabad Police Dolphin Emergency Response Unit took place here Friday, signalling a significant stride in curbing street crime and bolstering citizen protection in the capital city.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Minister for Interior, Rana Sanaullah Khan, who marked the occasion by officially initiating the operational activities of the Dolphin Unit of Islamabad Police.

The minister appreciated the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan for establishing this unit in a short time to ensure public safety.

Addressing the personnel of the Dolphin Force, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan emphasised the noble duty entrusted to them, stating, "Your duty is the protection of the citizens, which is a form of worship." He expressed the hope that they would diligently safeguard the lives and property of the citizens. The minister lauded the estab-

lishment of the Dolphin Force and commended the entire team especially, ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan for their commitment to ensuring public safety and security. He highlighted the importance of the Force in controlling street crime and bringing perpetrators to justice.

Rana Sanaullah expressed the confidence in the capabilities of the force and their ability to significantly reduce street crime in the capital city.

The force will also play a vital role in securing religious places and processions, ensuring a safe and peaceful environment for citizens during religious events. To commence the operations, the Dolphin Force has been equipped with 40 vehicles and 200 motorbikes, facilitating their rapid response to incidents across the city.

As the Dolphin Emergency Response Unit takes charge, citizens of Islamabad can look forward to enhanced security measures, reinforcing the efforts of law enforcement agencies to combat street crime and maintain public safety.

National Stakeholder Consultation on Energy Efficiency & Conservation in Pakistan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) organized a national level consultation on "Energy Efficiency and Conservation Action Plan 2023-30, Energy Conservation Building Codes (ECBC)- 2023 and Pakistan Energy Labels Regulations" on 21st July, 2023, in Islamabad. The consultation was attended by stakeholders from Public Departments, Chamber of Commerce & Industries, Industrial Associations, Academia, Media, and Representatives from Civil Society.

Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch, Federal Minister for Science & Technology graced the event with his opening remarks. He highlighted the need for energy conservation and its impact on the national economy.

Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Federal Minister for Defence shared his valuable insights being the head of high-level committee on energy conservation. He stressed the need for conservation of water in parallel to energy.

At the end, he talked about the

changes in behaviors and stressed the need to educate the new generation especially at elementary level. He appreciated the NEECA team for their efforts to make energy efficiency a workable agenda and presentation of content in an impressive manner. Mr. Khawaja also inaugurated the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Behavior Change Campaign launched by NEECA and requested the media to play their role in dissemination of public service messages by setting aside their personal and business interests for national cause.

During the session, Directors from NEECA present key features of National Action Plan 2023-30 and Energy Conservation Building Codes 2023. In last session, Pakistan Energy Labels regulations and Standards for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure were presented.

At the end of the session, Dr. Sardar Mohazzam- Managing Director, NEECA thanked all the participants and expressed his gratitude to all the government departments, ministries, industrial associations, and civil society for their continuous support to NEECA.

Over 200 guests enjoy Pakistani embassy's annual Mango Festival

News Desk

WASHINGTON: More than 200 distinguished guests attended the annual barbecue reception and the Mango Festival at the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui from Pakistan and the Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Michael McCaul, from United States were the guests of honour at the event, which was

hosted by Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan.

Among the participants were the Deputy Administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Dilwar Syed, State Representative in Connecticut State House, Maryam Khan, ambassadors, diplomats, Congressional staff, members of the think-tank community, media and diaspora community leaders, according to a press release of the Pakistani embassy here.



Senator Hidayatullah and Member National Assem-

bly of Pakistan Ms. Shakeela Khalid Luqman also attended the reception.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui addressed the gathering in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, highlighting the attributes of mango, the king of fruits.

He congratulated Ambassador Khan on the 'Mango diplomacy' which, he said, could contribute in bringing the two countries closer to each other.

Pakistan urges India to end protracted imprisonment of Kashmiri political leaders, activists

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday asked India to put an end to the protracted imprisonment of Shabbir Shah and thousands of other Kashmiri political leaders and activists, whose "basic crime" was to demand their inalienable right to self-determination.

Founder and President of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party Shabbir Ahmad Shah, "who completed six years of his continued detention this month, must be released along with other Kashmiri political leaders and activists, and acquitted of the fabricated charges against them", Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing.

She said incarcerated currently in New Delhi's infamous Tihar Jail, Shabbir Shah had spent 36 years in prison for his political views. "The total period of his confinement exceeds



half of his life. He is rightly called by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience."

With respect to the Greek boat tragedy, the spokesperson said two separate flights carrying the mortal remains of four Pakistanis, who perished in the disaster, had arrived in Lahore and Islamabad, and were handed over to their families in Gujarat and Gujranwala districts.

"Our Mission in Greece has made plans for the transportation of the remaining dead bodies within the next

few days. We also remain in contact with the Greek authorities for identification of the victims," she added.

Condemning in the strongest possible terms the repeated Islamophobic acts of public desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, she said such disturbing acts were both legally and morally reprehensible.

"Permission to carry out premeditated and provocative acts of religious hatred cannot be justified under the guise of freedom of expression, opinion and protest."

She said Pakistan's concerns about the latest incident were being conveyed to the Swedish authorities.

Replying to a question, she said the issue of terrorism was a matter of serious concern to Pakistan, and had been raised with the Afghan interim authorities on multiple occasions and at every important engagement that took place between the two sides.

"We have discussed the threat of

terrorism emanating from the Afghan soil."

Replying to another query, she said Iran was a very close neighbour and friend of Pakistan. "We have extensive historical ties with Iran. These relations are multifaceted; they are in the economic domain, political domain, connectivity, science and technology, education, culture, and defence and security as well."

Replying to another question, she said Pakistan also had a close relationship with the Russian Federation as there had been a flurry of visits exchanged between two countries. The Senate chairman recently visited Russia where bilateral cooperation was discussed. "Our engagement with Russia will continue."

With respect to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), she said the 10-year celebrations of CPEC were taking place not just in Pakistan but also in China.

Petroleum dealers defer strike for two days



Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Friday deferred fuel strike across country for two days.

The moves comes as State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik arrived in Karachi to convince the PPDA to call off the strike.

The association would hold another round of negotiations with the government after two days, the PPDA said.

Fuel pump operators across Pakistan had announced a nationwide

strike on July 22 (Saturday) in a bid to secure larger margins amid an inflation crisis, the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association said on Thursday.

"We will shut down all petrol pumps across Pakistan on July 22 at 6pm," said the association. It says it has more than 10,000 members.

In a statement, it said interest rates and inflation had hit operators' businesses and called for the dealership margin to be increased. It said sales had slumped by 30% due to Iranian fuel being smuggled into the country.

Jamaat-e-Islami demands caretaker government to be neutral during elections

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq has said that it is the duty of the caretaker government to be established after August 12 to remain neutral and fully cooperate with the Election Commission in conducting the elections. The Election Commission should start discussions with political stakeholders to make the national elections transparent. A strong government is the most important need of the country. The nation has been living in the darkness of corruption, inflation, poverty and unemployment for decades. If PDM, PPP and PTI remain dominant in the future, prosperity and development will not come.

Jamaat-e-Islami is the only option for improvement. He was addressing the Harmat Sood seminar in Multan. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Punjab South Rao Zafar and Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Safdar Hashmi were also present on the occasion. Siraj-ul-Haq said that Jamaat-e-Islami can improve



the entire nation, while the leaders of the ruling parties are only concerned about their children, some want to see their sons and some want to see their daughters as prime ministers, only a democratic party can bring real democracy. The status quo has been established for 75 years, it will have to be broken, the farmer will be represented in the parliament by the farmer and the laborer's worker, only then will the

rights of millions of farmers and laborers of the country be protected.

Cruel landlords and corrupt capitalists are sitting in the Houses who want the continuation of the usurious system, usury is a war against Allah and His Messenger, the Constitution of Pakistan and the Islamic Ideological Council have spoken of the end of the usurious economy, the Federal Sharia Court has a categorical decision

against riba. A young man committed suicide in Islamabad due to usury, the rulers are responsible for his death, an FIR should be registered against them. Millions of people of the country are affected by usury, poverty, inflation and unemployment are due to usury. He said that Jamaat-e-Islami won the legal battle against usury, organized demonstrations and rallies to end it.

Conferences were held in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar on the prohibition of usury, but the rulers of the Islamic country are determined to continue it, the usurers are not expected to abolish usury. The nation is appealed to bring Jamaat-e-Islami to power for the implementation of Islamic economic system. He said that as the former finance minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he ended usurious banking, made the province free of interest and debt, today KP owes more than 1000 billion. The ruler has loaded the country with a Himalayan amount of debt, children are in debt, there was a celebration for getting a loan from the IMF.

US and Pakistan explore economic opportunities including agri-business: CG

Asim Tanveer



HAFIZABAD: US Consul General William K. Makaneole visited Hafizabad as part of the US Consulate efforts to visit all 36 districts in Punjab. He toured the rice fields, which the district Hafizabad is famous for, and praised the efforts of the local farmers and business community. These visits aim to strengthen people-to-people ties between the United States and Pakistan and explore economic opportunities outside Lahore, including agri-business. During his visit, Mr. Makaneole also visited the Nishat Dairy Private Limited, MH Sufi Foundation School, and the Al-Muqadas Garment Factory to promote economic development in Pakistan.

Business community strongly protesting for various taxes on electricity bills: Kharwaja

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Secretary General of Central Trade Association Cantt Moazzam Waheed Khawaja, Chief Coordinator Ghazanfar Malik, Clube Abid Khan, Khawaja Dilshad while speaking during the protest demonstration against cruel tariff and FPA, tax collection of electricity bills by the government at Quaid-e-Azam shopping center said that putting the entire burden of government expenditure and electricity theft on the white-clad and poor citizens is the worst economic exploitation. It has been done, the ruler should take the fingernails of the conscience and be fed with the curses and curses of the nation. He said The business community has been strongly protesting the government's imposition of various taxes on electricity bills.

Punjab Govt ordered control the prices of food items: Amir Khattak

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: As soon as the Punjab government ordered the divisional administration to control the prices of food items, Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak started taking strict measures. He presided over a meeting to review the performance of price control magistrates and said that all price control magistrates should be seen in the field to eliminate exaggeration and maintain transparency. The price control mechanism should be implemented strictly for the relief of consumers.

he said Every shopkeeper should be obliged to display the rate list in a prominent place—Later, the commissioner also presided over a meeting to review the speed of work on government collections and development projects—He said in the meeting that the officers should increase the speed of asset recoveries and crack down on big defaulters.

He said that the administrations of the districts were proactive about flood and Muharram Al Haram arrangements. In case of rains, the concerned departments are immediately seen in the field. Additional Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmed and officers of related departments were present.

Anti-dengue and Anti-encroachment action start: Simal Mushtaq

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, Assistant Commissioner City Simal Mushtaq took anti-dengue, anti-encroachment action. In this regard, 2 tire shops were sealed when dengue larvae were found. In the anti-encroachment operation, 2 trucks of goods were seized from outside the Children's Hospital and from different routes of Muharram. While the routes of Muharram processions are also being cleared on a daily basis for the mourners.



Water fall

MUZZAFFERABAD: Tourists are crossing the river in cable car to reach Kashmir Water Fall during their visit of Kashmir to enjoy the summer break in the Capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Photo: Online

Our responsibility to improve the customer services: Jamal Laghari

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman of Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) Board of Directors Sardar Jamal Khan Laghari has said that it is our responsibility to improve the customer services of the company for the convenience of customers in South Punjab and steps are being taken for this. They are creating convenience for customers by providing maximum facilities. He expressed these views while addressing the 202nd meeting held at Mepco headquarters. He approved the establishment of transformers reclamation workshop and posts of MEPCO in Rahim Yar Khan city for immediate and local repair of burnt and damaged distribution transformers. The Board of Directors appointed

Athar Ali Mazari Chief Executive Officer Mepco Engineer Mehrullah Yar Bharwana presented various agendas which were unanimously approved by the Board of Directors. Extension of daily wages for one more year, recruitment of disabled persons on 2% quota, long term advance for MEPCO employees, recruitment of four vacancies in basic scale 17 in Mirad department of MEPCO.

The selection committee for the recruitment of Director General Mirad Mepco presented the cases of approval of the annual procurement plan for the financial year 2023-24, the pay package of the officers appointed on lump sum salary equal to BPS 17, payment of SAP software annual support, maintenance fee, which were unanimously



approved by the board of directors. The board approved various agenda items including purchase of power transformers of 31.5/40 MVA and 20/26 MVA, 31 thousand kg of new copper wire, 32 thousand 500 kg of paper core copper strips and one lakh 79 thousand 250 single phase meters, increasing

capacity from 66 KV Dajal grid station to 132 KV Dajal grid station.

Board Director Engineer Fazlullah Durrani, Mian Shahid Iqbal, Khurram Mushtaq, Rana Yasir Rauf, Jam Muhammad Jaber Lad, Mian Muhammad Ali, Athar Ali Mazari, Hussain Ahmad Fazal participated in the meeting. On this occasion, Finance Director Mian Ansar Mehmood, Director General HR & Admin Liaquat Ali Memon, General Manager Technical Rana Muhammad Ayub Khan, General Manager Operations Nasir Ayaz Garmani, Chief Engineer Customer Services Jam Gul Muhammad Zahid, Chief Engineer Development Muhammad Arshad Dharala, Director HRM Muhammad Wajahat Bucha and Company Secretary Sajid Yaqub Ansari were also present.

Steps should be taken to build Nishtar Model Pharmacy: Dr Javed Akram

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The 13th meeting of the Syndicate of Nishtar Medical University was held under the chairmanship of the Caretaker Provincial Health Minister / Pro-Chancellor Dr. Javed Akram, in which Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Prof. Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed, Syndicate members Jalaluddin Rumi, Vice Chancellor of MNS University Prof. Dr. Rao Asif Ali, Divisional Director LFA Shahswar, Professor of Surgery Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Khan, Former Principal Nishtar Medical College Prof. Dr. Sami Akhtar, Professor of Medicine Prof. Dr. Ijaz Hussain Malik, Talat Javed., Muhammad Waqas Khalid, Rehman Naseem, Professor of Gynecology Professor Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani Medical Superintendent Nishtar



Hospital Dr. Rao Amjad Ali, Principal College of Nursing Rukhsana Parveen, Registrar Nishtar Medical University Prof. Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Principal Nishtar Medical College Prof. Dr. Rashid Qamar Rao were also present. In the meeting, various important

decisions were taken regarding Nishtar Medical University. In the syndicate meeting, it was decided to adopt the statue of Nishtar Medical University soon. The vision and mission statements of the university were taken into consideration. New Members Syndi-

cate and Members Board of Advanced Studies and Research and Nomination of new members for Selection Board were also approved.

policies were reviewed. Approved to start PharmD program in Nishtar Medical University. Syllabus of nursing degree program was also approved in the meeting. It was also decided to create resources for the university. Application of fees for degrees, certificates and other documents was given. The renovation of the hall, staff club and syndicate room of Nishtar Medical University and the purchase of a vehicle for the Vice Chancellor of Nishtar Medical University were approved. In the meeting, the financial matters of Nishtar Medical University were also reviewed and permission was given to form committees for various approved tasks.

Women University active and effective links with all major universities: Dr Uzma



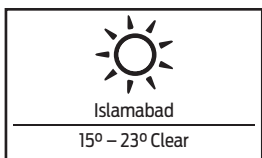
Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Under the auspices of the US Pakistan Universities Partnerships Grants Program project, a workshop was organized in collaboration with the Center of Professional Development of Women University Multan and Kinnaird College Lahore, titled "Leadership in the Field of Education", Curriculum Preparation, Promotion of Education. Dr. Malika Liaquat speaking on the occasion said that Dr. Uzma Qureshi said that this workshop is very important with such activities where something new will be learned.

It will also help in increasing coop-

eration between universities. Women University wants to have active and effective links with all the major universities of the country. The faculty members involved in workshop are expected to use their energies.

That they will utilize their energies. Our university is keen to promote the culture of research. Resource persons will provide researchers with better opportunities for research. Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum said that for the promotion of education, there must be a leadership element among the heads of educational institutions. This workshop is an effort to highlight the leadership skills of teachers in which they will be informed.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings	
Fajr	3:33 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	5:10 pm
Maghrib	7:16 pm
Isha	8:55 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
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AIOU announces scholarships for deserving students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has commenced the admissions for matric to PhD programs in the autumn semester 2023. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood wishes that not a single student should be deprived of higher and quality education due to lack of financial resources. For this purpose, AIOU is providing scholarships, fee concessions, and financial assistance schemes to poor and deserving students.

To utilize these schemes, deserving candidates are required to contact their respective regional offices of AIOU established in all four provinces of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The financial assistance committee of AIOU will assess the needs of the students and will make recommendations. This initiative will play a key role in eradicating illiteracy in the country.

It is pertinent to mention here that the university is playing its due role in the process of national progress and development as well as bringing the out-of-school children into the educational network by providing free matriculation education to the people of Baluchistan, merged districts (former FATA) and GB. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the concerned regional directors have been instructed to spread this message of the university door to door in these regions so that not a single student is deprived of this facility of AIOU.

Spotlights Pakistan's progress on sustainable development goals at HLPF 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development side witnessed an insightful address by Shazia Marri, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety of Pakistan. The topic of discussion was the crucial role of Parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In her speech, Hon. Shazia Marri highlighted the significant contribution of the National Assembly of Pakistan in supporting the aspirations of Agenda

2030. Pakistan became the first country to adopt the SDGs as its national development goals in 2016 through a resolution passed by the National Assembly. The establishment of a state-of-the-art parliamentary SDGs secretariat and taskforces at the national and provincial levels has been instrumental in closely monitoring progress on the SDGs. The Parliament has passed essential legislations related to quality education, decent work and economic growth, peace, justice, and strong institutions, as well as laws concerning the protection of children and women.

The Federal Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Young Parliamentarians



Forum, SDGs Taskforce, and Parliamentary Child Rights Caucus have played

vital roles in strengthening public-private partnerships and addressing specific areas of concern. The National Assembly's initiatives have spurred the Government of Pakistan to prioritize the SDGs agenda, leading to the implementation of various programs aimed at ending poverty and promoting inclusive development.

Despite challenges such as limited fiscal capacity, data collection and availability, and climate change impacts, Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment to the SDGs by submitting two Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and releasing its first SDGs Status Report in 2021.

Hon. Shazia Marri emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges and opportunities for Parliaments and Governments to focus on resilient and sustainable development. She highlighted the importance of embedding accountability mechanisms within legal frameworks, promoting digital transformation, and supporting skill development and entrepreneurship.

The HLPF discussions were aimed to foster global collaboration and commitment towards achieving the SDGs, with Pakistan's initiatives serving as an inspiration for other nations to address poverty, ensure healthy lives, and promote wellbeing for all.

Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: German Artist Dagmar Rauwald is briefing visitors about his paintings during exhibition entitled "Invention VS Convention" at Comsats Art Gallery in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

President IIUI visits newly established academic block with Saudi funding

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University (IIU) visited the new academic block and the Students Facilitation Centre established in the light of his vision to facilitate students under one roof on priority and with the use of modern and digitized approach.

A new academic block has been established with Saudi Funding, whereas a center for the facilitation of students has also been set up within the block as per guidelines of HEC. The academic block shall be inaugurated soon, while Worthy IIUI President was briefed by the Director Academics and Incharge Admission about all the shifting and allied new arrangements in the directorate of Academics and Students Facilitations Centre. The IIUI President directed the formed committee for SOPs and guidelines of the block to complete the tasks within given deadline. During the visit, respective Incharges of all the sections



apprised the President IIUI about the nature of work and new approach. Visiting the cafeterias, Worthy President IIUI directed to further improve with best arrangements and added that vending machines must be installed in the building. He opined that there would be zero tolerance policy for the officials who do not adopt professionalism. The IIUI President also directed that a proper mechanism for the maintenance of the block be prepared and implemented at earliest.

H. E. Dr. Hathal reviewed the process of shifting, allocation of offices, operationalization of the official work and use of modern technology for the facilitation of the students. He passed direction that students must not face any issue regarding the academics related affairs and this must be ensured that they will not visit any other office for their matters. "All the issues must be solved within this facility and it must be a one stop approach without delays" he added. He showed satisfac-

tion on the speedy completion of the arrangements made for the new academic block and the students' facilitation center.

He advised the staff to be friendly with the students and utilize the advanced gadgets and new system for the students' facilitation with energy. Worthy IIUI President said that this facilitation center and the new set up in the block must be an exquisite place that should address the issues of students with the help of courteous officials and modern use of technology.

Bhambar district admin announces normal traffic in three tehsils after rains

Spokesman Report

BHAMBAR: During the rains in Bhambar Samahni and Barnala tehsils, landslides and other obstacles have been removed from the road and the roads have been restored for normal traffic. They are monitoring the ongoing rehabilitation work in the three tehsils.

Exion High ways Tahir Mahmood Butt along with SDO Raja Imad Khalid and three other SDOs and sub-engineers used heavy machinery for road maintenance and obstacles have been removed, the administration has requested tourists, travelers and public to be careful. Motorcyclists should be more careful. Action will be taken against trolley and tractor drivers who do not cooperate with the administration and throw garbage on the roads, SSP Raja Muhammad. Akmal Khan has instructed the traffic police to keep an eye strictly on such drives.



6th all Pakistan bilingual dialogue and Punjabi Natara held



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The 6th All Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah Bilingual Dialogue and Waris Shah Punjabi Natara 2023 was jointly organized by the "Jinnah Debating Society" and Directorate of Students Affairs at Government College University Faisalabad.

Under the management of Dr. Sana Haroon.

This event in the recollections of the founder of Pakistan witnessed the enthusiastic participation of more than forty teams. The event comprised of the distinguished judges, including Ahsan Bhatti, Ajmal Bhatti, Osman Pasha, Laiba Fatima and others who evaluated the debators' performances. In this competition the trophy winner was the University of Lahore. Furthermore, Asim Bilal from Jamia Rash-eed Karachi was awarded the medal as an excellent speaker.

The esteemed Chief Guest, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Amin addressed the audiences. Dr. Sofia Anwar Dean of Economics and Management Sciences, Dr. Farhat Jabir Dean of Life Sciences, Dr. Rizwan Ullah Kokab also graced the event. At the end of ceremony, certificates and shields were presented to the successful contestants by the Chief Guest, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Amin, Director of Students Affairs Dr. Nadeem Sohail, and In-charge of Jinnah Debating Society Dr. Sana Haroon.

Vohra end to 'perverted' rule of Pakistani rulers

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Alhaj Naseer Yousaf Vohra expressed while talking to media, We wish! If our politics was related to public pains feeling men, then Pakistan would not have any kind of economic problem today, where the additional taxes of 170 billion rupees have been imposed on the nation in such a way that even the back bone has been broken.



The ruling style of the rulers has left the country and the nation into disastrous sea, from where should those who run a house on collecting ten/ten rupees till evening & pay tax? said Haji Abdullah Nawaz Vohra Senior Vice President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan.

According to the details, the poor people are already suffering from severe problems due to the sharp increase in the prices of medicines and further trials have become their destiny on more levy.

These views were expressed by the Central President of Cloth Board Ittehad Pakistan, Alhaj Naseer Yousaf Vohra while talking to the media. He further said that there was no room left for the government to bombard the nation by imposing an additional tax of 170 billion rupees because the people were already not able to rise in the first place presently.

Moreover, Abdullah Nawaz Vohra expressed that the rulers have brought the country to ruin, while the fate of those who exploit the people and loot the national wealth is very near.

Further, Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group of Pakistan has said that finally the current government has bombed the people by imposing additional taxes of billions of rupees on the request of the IMF. Federal excise duty on laptop, computer, LED, TV, electronic machinery, edible oil, biscuits, jam, jelly, noodles, cigarette, cement and beverages while other grocery items have also been limitless increased. More destruction is to come from the way the imported rulers have treated the country's imports and exports? and from the nationwide petrol pump strike, no one can imagine the devastation that is unfolding in coming days.

Spotify reveals how 'Desi Music' is captivating listeners across the globe

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: From July 18 to August 17, South Asians celebrate their culture, heritage, and traditions in month-long festivities regarded as 'South Asian Heritage Month'. And once again, Spotify is honoring one of the strongest cultural elements of the region; music, in its distinct and personal flavor. The audio streaming giant has revealed some interesting insights on South Asian music consumption within the region and across the globe.

According to Spotify, 'Desi' music continues to be a popular genre for listeners all around the globe. USA,



UK, and Canada remain the leading countries that stream desi music, followed by Australia and Germany.

'Desi' music is growing rapidly in UAE, Australia and Canada and shows the largest increase in streams of the South Asian music genre, recording year-on-

year growth of 72%, 54% and 50% respectively.

Over the past year, streams of the Desi Hits playlist on Spotify have increased by 55%. Of the total volume the playlist has been streamed, 40% have emerged from outside South Asia. For Desi Lofi, 42% of listen-

ers are from beyond South Asia, 40% for Desi Hip Hop and 38% for Desi Indie. The South Asian Sufi playlist has by far been the biggest musical export with 66% streams from countries far and wide.

Speaking for the occasion, Rutaba Yaqub, Spotify Senior Editor in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh said, "With Spotify significantly strengthening its position in South Asian markets, we are able to connect artists to their fans and communities across the globe, and have witnessed a growing love for South Asian artists and desi music that reflects in the exponential growth of streams of our desi playlists".

"Spotify is celebrating

South Asian Heritage Month this year by building a strong cultural connection between desi music and its listeners through our South Asian Music Hub where listeners can find and enjoy popular desi playlists and more," she added.

As part of the celebrations around South Asian Heritage Month, selected South Asian creators, including 'Pasoori' famed Ali Sethi and renowned influencer, Irfan Junejo, have also been featured under Spotify's Spotlight series. Among featured playlists of each creator, fans can now discover the favourite South Asian tracks of Ali Sethi and Irfan Junejo among others.

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 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: **Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.**
 Karachi office: **Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.**
Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: **7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.**
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

People says, Multan Police ‘involved in extrajudicial killings’

The responsibility of the police is to protect the life and property of the citizens as well as to protect their honor and dignity. But for three decades, another face of the police department has emerged. Some employees of this department have been involved in serious activities like torture and extrajudicial killings. Due to these illegal activities, the good, admirable and excellent work of the police is also ignored by the people.

Instead of praise, the police department is under constant criticism. Police are responsible for custodial torture and other serious human rights violations, a new report by Human Rights Watch has said.

The report comes amid growing allegations of rights abuses by Police. The document released detailed “Public surveys and reports of government accountability and redress institutions show that the police are one of the most widely feared, complained against, and least trusted government institutions in Pakistan.” There were several reported cases of police killing criminal suspects outside the legal system, torturing detainees for confession and harassing and demanding money from individuals wanting to file criminal cases. Fake encounters or extrajudicial killings and torture have become a symbol of Punjab police.

Scolding by the officers has made the policemen angry and greedy. To relieve their anger and get rid of it, these policemen use illegal tactics like violence against the common people. Two days ago in the Lodhi Colony area, Dolphin policemen

Waseem, Majid, Faraz and Abid fired shots at unarmed youths at night, as a result of which a MEPCO employee Rana Hammad Asghar was shot in the stomach, who went to Nishtar Hospital and died. His uncle said that the deceased Hammad Asghar was the sole sponsor of his family. He was a noble citizen and an employee of Mapco.

He was not a professional accused or fugitive from court. The relatives of the victim say that Hammad was not alone at this time, he had two more friends with him who are missing. Hammad shows his identification employee card to dolphin force men but they shot him. They said Multan police are raiding and ransacking the houses of Hammad's friends and stealing valuables from here. Hammad's relatives and Mepeco union officials are demanding that justice be served to them. They proclaim “they will cut off electricity supply to Multan. On the other hand, as usual, the police published a list of cases against the deceased and the officers issued a statement to protect the killers under them. It has been released that the victim was shot by his peers.

Last year in the month of July After killing Faheem, the police registered a false case 460/22 Alpa police station, which was revealed as a police encounter. Then on January 18, a cross version has been filed in the Alpa police station on a false case, this case was filed against the former

SHO (Sub-Inspector) Alpa police station Shamoan Joiya, a driver and constables.

The police officer and employees opened fire on Muhammad Fahim and his friend, as a result of which Muhammad Fahim died and Muhammad Azam was seriously injured. Their parents and relatives appeared before the senior police officers for justice, but the Multan police officers failed to provide justice on merit.

Police bureaucracy succeed to save their subordinates' skin by creating a story that they were criminals and Faheem dead by the fire of his colleagues and several false cases were registered against the relatives of the deceased under section terrorism and other serious provisions. No action was taken till time against the sub-inspector involved in said murder.

This year on April 22, the second day of Eid ul Fitar, 2 youths were killed in a police firing incident in the limits of Multan's Shah Rukn e Alam police station. It has been claimed by the police that the officers stopped the youths on the bridge last night they did not stop and police opened fire considering them as suspicious for not stopping. CM Muhsin Naqvi came to the house of the victims and announced an aid of Rs 10 lac.

The case was registered (FIR # 988/23 PS Shah Rukn e Alam) against the accused policemen Bilal and Yasir with provisions of murder, the family members were

assured of justice. But the main accused is still absconding.

The deceased Sami was celebrating Eid with his friend Irfan Usman. There is no criminal record of the youth who died in the firing. When we talked to a Police Officer on this critical issue, he said that maintaining law and order was an arduous task in the country, considering threats posed by armed extremist groups, local drug wars and land-grabbing. Insufficient infrastructure, lack of financial resources and interference from external sources contributed to the force's performance. “Elite elements within Pakistani society—be they politicians, landowners or members of civil and police bureaucracy—exercised outsized and improper control over law enforcement,” the police officer explained his compulsion.

He says in the police department appointments to important positions were also made on the basis of “political” links. If the officials involved in the fake police encounters of Multan basis had been punished, there would not have been mourning at Hammad's house. The government introduced effective systems to ensure police accountability and redress people's grievances.

The government also needed to remove laws that increased the police's tendency towards impunity. The people of this era are very conscious. Police will also have to change their story that “the victim was shot by his colleagues.” The IG Punjab Police and senior officers have to dispel the perception in the society that “police are involved in extra-judicial killing.”



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Tencent’s ‘weixin pay’ enhances mobile payment experience for overseas users visiting China

Tencent is deepening its collaboration with international card organizations including Visa, Discover Global Network (including Diners Club), JCB, and Mastercard in order to further improve overseas users’ digital payment experience in China.

The move coincides with the full resumption of travel and international business to China and major international events in the country.

The latest development fully opens Weixin Pay’s merchant network in China to international card organizations in gradual steps.

In 2019, Weixin Pay began supporting overseas users in linking their international credit cards for use with various pilot services, said a press statement issued here on Friday.

The expanded merchant network includes categories such as dining, transportation, shopping, hotel accommodation and more. Users can enjoy multiple payment methods such as scanning QR codes, presenting payment codes, Weixin Mini Programs and in-app payments, enhancing users’ payment experience both online and offline.

After linking an international card, overseas users will be able to conveniently access over tens of millions of merchants, including small and medium-sized merchants. Transaction fees are waived for single transactions of less than or equal to 200 RMB to fulfill users’ small-amount and high-frequency payment needs, subject to the details specified on the payment page.

People entering the Chinese Mainland can use their passports, Mainland Travel Permit and Mainland Residence Permit for Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, and Taiwan residents, or Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card to set up their Weixin Pay, link an international credit card or debit card, and start enjoying mobile payments across the country.

Previously, Chinese regulators encouraged the refinement of mobile payment solutions for visitors to improve their payment experience. Domestic payment service providers are also encouraged to partner with overseas card issuers to provide mobile payment to overseas visitors in accordance with rules and regulations.

With the upcoming international sporting events such as the FISU World University Games in Chengdu and the Asian Games in Hangzhou, the number of incoming overseas tourists continues to rise. Tencent strives to improve mobile payment experience and offer more convenience for overseas users, through initiatives such as supporting international cards on Weixin Pay and connecting overseas local wallets with the Mainland of China.



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

Stunning architecture dazzles in Chengdu

Noureen Chaudhry

In a few days from the writing of this article, the Chengdu 2021 FISU World University Games will begin. The focus of the event is obviously sport, but while people are in Chengdu they'll be dazzled by the incredible architecture that is omnipresent in this Sichuan Province capital city of 20 million. The combination of unique shapes, materials, and colours make this a city that will draw the attention of visitors and viewers.

A prominent set of facilities to be used for the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games is the Dong'an Lake Sports Park. Located in Chengdu's Longquan District and designed by gmp Architects (von Gerken, Marg, and Partners), this futuristic set of three cuboidal blocks will host swimming and artistic gymnastics. Outdoor green spaces connect the three venues which are also tied together by spiraling corridors that link them to the Dong'an Lake Sports Park Stadium, host to the opening ceremony on 28 July. The futuristic aluminum enveloping the venues helps set them as 'artifacts in nature', as described by the designer, while the nearby Torch Tower brings another standout element to the area.

The Fenghuangshan Sports Park features two beautiful new venues in Chengdu - the gymnasium and football stadium. The former is an 18,000 seat venue built to National Basketball Association standards which will serve as a competition venue for basketball at

the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games. Designed by HKS, its inspiration is from a tea infusion set called

allows people to see the stadium as a bowl, the plaza surrounding it as the saucer, and the gymnasium as the lid that goes on top. This ties to the strong tea house culture that exists in Chengdu. The exterior of the venues is based on Shu Jin, or Imperial Embroidery, which originated in Chengdu, and the surface



gives the impression of silk threads that attract and reflect light uniquely throughout the day.

It's not just the sport venues that marvel visitors to Chengdu. If people land in the city's new airport they will see another great example of its unique architecture. Chengdu Tianfu International Airport opened midway through 2021 and will serve as the primary international airport for the city, with Shuangliu International Airport shifting focus to domestic flights. The design (by the China Southwest

Architectural Design and Research Institute, China Airport Construction Group Corporation, and French firm ADP Ingénierie) features building space equal to 46 football fields. The mythical sunbird, representing the city of Chengdu, is referenced in the design with the two terminals built to be distinct while sharing the same architecture.

Once visitors have landed and are in the city, and when time permits away from all the great sporting events of the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games, they will want to go and check out the Chengdu Museum of Natural History. The designer, Pelli Clarke & Partners, wanted to bring into the building's features some of the region's landscape. The form of the building evokes the process of rock breaking, emblematic of the tectonic plates coming together and the volcanic activity that formed the nearby mountains. The sky bridges and passageways inside the museum mirror the traditional cliff trails found in the Chengdu region.

Modern architecture has been the focus of this article, but traditional design also plays a significant role in the feel people get living in or visiting Chengdu. The Wuhou Shrine Museum, Tazishan Park, and the Du Fu Thatched Cottage Museum are all great examples of the traditional architecture that dots the Chengdu landscape.

Chengdu is a feast for the eyes. Modern and traditional architecture, of which just a few examples are listed here, lend greatly to what will be an incredible experience for all those coming to, or watching from around the world, the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games.

A rail link to reshape the region - II

The signing of the contract occurs at an important time. The somewhat shaky peace in Afghanistan may have been a major factor in the other two countries' decision to move forward with the project, despite the fact that other nations of the world may view it with skepticism due to the unrecognized status of the interim Afghan government and its deliberate refusal to adhere to the Doha Agreement. Nonetheless, the region is presently experiencing a period of relative peace and stability, which has made the signing of this and other high-value projects such as CASA 1000 and TAPI gas pipeline possible. The success of these essential initiatives will establish a regional ecosystem to promote economic industrial, trade and investments.

The success of the project will also depend on the strong political will of the states and should not be affected by the change of governments in the respective countries, the allocation of sufficient and timely resources to it, and the hiring of credible, experienced, and resourceful contractors who have the ability, expertise, and resources to adhere to the project's timelines in letter and spirit.

Importantly, the success of the project would largely depend on the security and safety of the entire region, the eradication of terrorism from all countries, the destruction of terrorist safe havens, especially in Afghanistan, and the creation of a law and order situation that ensures the safe, secure, and effortless movement of goods along the route and to its destinations.

The security situation in Afghanistan will be the most difficult barrier for this project.

Contrary to the Doha Agreement, Afghanistan is providing safe havens to over 6000 fully armed and trained Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists who are carrying out terrorist attacks all along the border, putting the lives and properties of people living in border areas in great danger and in constant state of fear. They have also martyred scores of civilians and security personnel in recent days, prompting the Army Chief to warn Afghanistan to eliminate these terrorist groups which have ransomed the security and stability of the entire region. These terrorist groups pose a significant risk to all such projects traveling through Afghanistan, necessitating the Afghan government's efforts to rid the country of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

The donor agencies' commitment of huge funds will also be contingent on the security and safety and establishment of law and order in Afghanistan, in the absence of which the donor agencies will naturally shy away from making any commitment for provision of funds, and one does not need rocket science to understand that cash starved Afghanistan and Pakistan are unable to fund this initiative with their own funds. With Afghanistan's security issues resolved, the project makes a lot of economic sense.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

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)

Turkmenistan presented its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the SDGs

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On July 19, 2023, Turkmenistan's delegation, led by the Minister of Finance and Economy, Mr. Serdar Jorayev, during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development presented the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Turkmenistan on the progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

During the presentation, the delegation shared Turkmenistan's socio-economic development achievements and main indicators since the first VNR in 2019. They also highlighted the successful implementation of medium-term and long-term national programs and strategies dedicated to sustainable development. The accompanying video material showcased the country's efforts in adapting SDG indicators at the national level,

emphasizing initiatives for sustainable development at both regional and global scales. Notably, particular focus was given to key areas like transport, energy, and ecology.

The main focus of the Voluntary National Review are as follows:

1. Expanding the Scope: In addition to reporting on the UN's recommended goals, the report included six additional SDGs that reflect the country's key strategic priorities for development. These goals covered areas like healthcare, quality and inclusive education, food security, gender equality, improving people's well-being, and environmental protection;
2. Handling the Pandemic: The Review showcased Turkmenistan's experience in countering the pandemic, enabling the country to maintain its economic growth and even improve main macroeconomic indicators;
3. Strengthening Institutional

Framework: Progress was demonstrated in enhancing the institutional framework to effectively implement SDGs. This, in turn, created favourable conditions for digitalization, entrepreneurship, and the use of innovative and eco-friendly technologies across all sectors of the national economy;

4. Integration of SDGs: Strategic policy documents were evaluated to assess the integration of SDGs. The results revealed a high level of adaptation (85%) of the 2030 Agenda objectives to national strategies, programs, and action plans, ensuring the continued implementation of SDGs in both completed and newly adopted country programs.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Bashimova, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics Ms. Annaniyazova, and young SDG Ambassadors Ms. Achilova and Mr. Gurbannmyradov formed



the delegation of Turkmenistan and took part in the presentation of the VNR.

A detailed version of the Review is available on the official pages of the United Nations and the High-Level Political Forum at the following link: <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/>

turkmenistan/voluntary-national-reviews-2023.

In the final part of the Report presentation, an interactive dialogue took place, where delegations of UN Member States and representatives of non-governmental organizations had the opportunity to inquire about

Turkmenistan's progress and provide comments on the national presentation.

Looking ahead, we can anticipate the next VNR to be released in 2025, further highlighting Turkmenistan's continuous efforts towards achieving the SDGs.

Turkmenistan's ministerial delegation starts its visit to the UN headquarters

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The delegation of Turkmenistan led by the Minister of Finance and Economy, Mr. Serdar Jorayev, arrived in New York to take part in the events within the High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme: "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels".

During the plenary session of the Forum on the same day, Minister delivered his statement and highlighted the priority areas of national sustainable development initiatives, and activities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level and in the international format. In



his speech, the high degree of integration of global development goals into medium-term and long-term national socio-economic programs and strategies was noted.

Minister elaborated on Turkmen-

istan's commitment to improving the standard of living for its population, promoting a healthy lifestyle, ensuring inclusive and high-quality education, fostering environmental sustainability, and driving innovations

across all economic sectors. He also underlined that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Turkmenistan managed to maintain the stability of economic development without stopping the growth of key industries.

HSY Joins LRBT as Global Ambassador

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust (LRBT), Pakistan's largest provider of eye care, proudly welcomes the celebrated fashion icon and philanthropist, Hassan Shehryar Yasin (HSY), as its Global Brand and Goodwill Ambassador. The Chairman of LRBT, Mr. Najmus Saquib Hameed, presented HSY with a Certificate of Appointment during a ceremony held at LRBT Korangi, where he also shared the life-transforming contributions of LRBT in Pakistan.

LRBT's mission is: "No man, woman or child should go blind just because they cannot access or afford the treatment." To further this mission, LRBT has, since its inception 37 years ago,



built 19 eye hospitals and 60 clinics, offering free-of-cost quality eye care services for the poor. Since start of operations in 1985, LRBT has treated over 53 million patients, transforming lives and offering hope to countless families.

During the event, HSY expressed his personal attachment to LRBT's cause, more significant because of

his early-life brush with blindness. "The gift of sight is one we often take for granted, but through organizations like LRBT, lives are transformed. I am humbled to be the brand ambassador and stand alongside LRBT in their mission to bring light to those living in darkness," he said.

Mr. Najmus Saquib Hameed, Chairman of

LRBT, welcomed HSY as the LRBT global brand and goodwill ambassador and thanked him for lending his time and energy to the transformative cause. "HSY's compassion and dedication to social causes make him a perfect fit for LRBT. We are confident that his involvement will raise greater awareness about our mission, enabling us to reach more individuals in need," he remarked.

HSY's appointment as brand ambassador will help realize LRBT's vision of creating a better Pakistan by preventing the suffering caused by blindness and other eye ailments. Together, LRBT and HSY will continue to champion the cause of restoring sight and empowering those battling vision loss.

PSA puts rumors to rest: No change in Peak and Off-Peak hour electricity timings

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) has been inundated with inquiries from member companies and stakeholders within the Pakistan solar industry concerning purported changes to the Time of Use Tariff for customers of DISCOs (Distribution Companies).

After weeks of speculation fueled by incorrect news items circulating on social media and unofficial sources, the PSA takes this opportunity to clarify that there have been no alterations to the timings for peak and off-peak hours.

Upon consultation with relevant authorities at the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and DISCOs, the PSA confirms that there have been no adjustments to the existing timing for Peak hours and there are no plans to do so.

Pak-Iran Relations



ISLAMABAD: The new Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam met the Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on Friday.

Foreign Secretary congratulated Amb. Moghaddam on his appointment and said he looked forward to working with him towards further strengthening - coop in all areas of important incl. trade, investment, energy, and security

NUST holds 19th annual National Engineering Robotics Contest



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The last two decades have seen tremendous activity in the field of Robotics. As part of its efforts to promote Robotics in Pakistan, NUST College of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering (CEME) has been holding the National Engineering Robotics Contest (NERC) since 2003.

Over 200 teams from all over the country took part in the 19th annual edition of this prestigious competition held in the second and third week of July. NUST CEME organised the event in collaboration with STEM Careers Program and HEC. The five-day event was split into nine categories, including Indigenous Robots, Modular Robots for Schools and Universities, Robovars, Aero, etc. What set the competition apart was the demographic diversity it entailed. A special award "Akhtar Nawaz Prize" was dedicated for those teams that came from far-flung areas of Pakistan. The event sponsors included MRS Technologies, Graana, Headstart School, Sapient Hall School, Robotics World Pvt. Ltd., Education Resource Network and Buraaq Tractors.

Dr Rizwan Riaz, NUST Pro-Rector Research, Innovation and Commercialisation, was the chief guest. He complimented the efforts of NUST CEME towards the promotion of Robotics in Pakistan, especially amongst the youth.

Maroof Cardiovascular Center culminates Int'l Men's Health Awareness Week 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Maroof Cardiovascular Center in collaboration with ICCI organized Men's Health Awareness Session to conclude "Int'l Men's Health Week" observed from 12-18 June. It was pointed out that 1/8 men suffer from depression and 1/5 men suffer from anxiety at some point in their life. Parallel to the session, Maroof Int'l Hospital's medical camp conducted free Spirometry Test, in addition to BP, Sugar, Weight Check, Diet Plans and free Consultations. President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari & SVP ICCI Faad Waheed were also present on the occasion.

Asim Rauf CEO DRAP was the Chief guest. He applauded the organizers for addressing the need for awareness around men's health in Pakistan, an



often-overlooked area in the country.

Talking on the occasion Dr. Sohail Naseem, HOD Maroof Sleep Disorder Centre, highlighted that most common lung diseases such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma are self-inflicted or caused by

environmental factors, such as pollution, dust, pollens, smoke etc. About 5-7% male population suffers from sleep apnea and disturbed sleep. Sleep disorders can be diagnosed and treated with polysomnography (sleep study), which is now available at Maroof Sleep

Disorder Center, Dr. Sohail added.

Haroon Naseer, the CEO MIH said that 51.46% of Pakistan's population comprises of male. Unfortunately, there is hardly any heed paid to men's health. He went on saying that under the guidelines of WHO,



we support the community by engaging in partnership activities to raise awareness about men's need to seek regular checkups & to educate them about health issues that affect men such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, gout, and osteoporosis, fami-

ly health, workplace accidents, and men's higher likelihood of suicide and/or being a victim of homicide.

Dr. Mir Abdul Waheed Medical Director MIH emphasized to promote and support the health and well being of men and boys in our communities. He added

if detected early, many health conditions and diseases that men face can be prevented or treated. It is imperative for men to understand their risk factors and how they can improve their overall health.

During panel discussion Dr. Omar Idriss Mufti HOD Maroof Cardiovascular Center said it is a reminder for men to take steps to be healthier. Ms. Zubia Zubair (Resident Psychologist/Psychotherapist MIH) wooed to "be the change you want to see" by practicing these changes at home. These include eating healthy, practicing healthy coping techniques and managing emotions in a productive manner.

Dr. Rashid Ali Khan; HOD Psychiatry Dept. & Dr. Yasir Rehman Consultant Oncologist/Hematologist, were also part of the panel discussion.

