

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے عبد اللہ بن یوسف نے بیان کیا کہ ہم کو لاکھوں سالوں سے جبری، انہیں ابو ابراہیم نے، انہیں اعراب نے اور انہیں ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا جو شخص اپنا ہنر فروکے اور اسے غیبتا سے، اللہ تعالیٰ تباہت کے دن اس کی طرف دیکھے گا نہیں۔
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 5788)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Govt taking measures to facilitate special persons: President Alvi

President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday said the government was taking measures to make persons with disabilities productive citizens of the society. In a video message for special persons with disabilities, he said in Pakistan 10 to 12 persons were disabled who needed to be facilitated by society. (Details on Page 8)



Bilawal commends Turkey's role in securing grain deal

Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Saturday commended Turkey's role in achieving the landmark Black Sea Grain Corridor agreement in 2022 which has played a significant role in stabilizing global food prices, especially in developing countries and for poorest of the poor. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said "Spoke to my brother FM of Turkey Hakan Fidan today. (Details on Page 8)

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Inauguration ceremony

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveils a plaque during the groundbreaking of extension of PKM start point to Saggian Road and Main Ravi Bridge, Shraaqpur on Saturday.



Photo: PID

No new taxes on agri, construction sectors, reiterates Ishaq Dar



Ishaq Dar claimed the explanatory statement was being misinterpreted.

He reiterated that the tax measures mentioned in the Letter of Intent are those that have already been imposed in the country till June 30. Apart from this, he said no new tax is being imposed, he added.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday reiterated that the government had not imposed new taxes on agriculture and construction sectors and would not do so in future as well following the \$3 billion loan deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Taking to Twitter, the finance minister noted that he recently gave an explanatory statement in the National Assembly, which was meant to dispel the impression that the government is imposing new taxes on the agriculture and construction sectors.

Moreover, Ishaq Dar said no federal tax has been imposed or will be imposed on agricultural income.

A day earlier, Ishaq Dar – speaking on NA floor – said no new tax is being imposed on agriculture and the construction sectors on the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand.

The government has already delivered on IMF's prior actions and announced taxation measures of Rs215 billion rupees, Ishaq Dar said while presenting the details of the agreement with the IMF.

PM wants public to compare PML-N, PTI govts' performance before upcoming polls

Spokesman Report

SHARQPUR: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday urged the people to compare the performance of the "corruption-tainted" government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with that of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) before voting in the upcoming general elections.

The prime minister made these remarks while addressing a ceremony after stone laying of different significant development projects which included 19Kms long Lahore bypass linking Kala Shah Kaku with Lahore-Karachi Motorway at a cost of Rs35 billion.

The prime minister also broke ground for expansion of Lahore-Karachi Motorway

Saggian road and main Ravi bridge. Later, he laid foundation stones of Esaan (Sharqpur) interchange at Abdul Hakeem Motorway and the establishment of Quaid Azam University campus and soft launch of construction of a scout college.

PM Shehbaz said they would accept public mandate in the upcoming general elections and if the PML-N under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif got another opportunity to serve the country, they would restore the real image of Pakistan.

Declaring former prime minister Nawaz Sharif as "a builder of Pakistan, man behind ending loadshedding, launching of multi dollars China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and a

builder of a vast network of roads and putting the country on path of rapid progress", he said his brother aspired to transform the country into 'an Asian tiger'.

Unfortunately, his rule was ended in 2018 through a huge conspiracy hatched against Pakistan, the prime minister regretted. If the PML-N was in the government during the four years of PTI's rule, the country would have a different destiny, he claimed.

The prime minister said during the years 2013 to 2018, the country was making progress by leaps and bounds, but afterwards in the PTI's government, the country was pushed into chaos.

The premier said with a change in the regime, all the opposition leadership was sent to jails on

basis of fake cases, false allegations of thefts and corruption were levelled, even sisters and daughters were sent behind bars during the PTI's rule.

"The development pace spurred by PML-N government was halted," he regretted. PM Shehbaz also questioned PTI chief Imran Khan's claims of returning back \$300 billion stashed outside Pakistan within ninety days, saying that the PTI's government did not get any single penny during the four years of its rule.

Referring to Rs50 billion amount recovery scandal, he said, the UK National Crime Agency (NCA) had investigated the issue and after out of court settlement with the other party, decided to return the amount to

the government exchequer but it did not go to State Bank of Pakistan rather went to the Supreme Court where Niazi's government became a party.

A closed envelop was presented before the cabinet in this regard without showing or discussing it with the members and approval was accorded, he added.

"It was a huge crime as to how the national exchequer was plundered," he said, adding the BRT Peshawar, Toshakhana, Malam Jabba, sugar scams etc were the other major corruption cases of PTI.

The prime minister said the UK crime agency had also carried out investigation against him for two years over false allegations and at the request of PTI's government but later, gave him clean chit.

Lahore DIG Shariq Jamal found dead at his residence

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Lahore's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Shariq Jamal was found dead at his residence in the DHA area.

According to police, the body of DIG Shariq Jamal Khan was found in a private flat 104/A and was shifted to National Hospital. However, it was later moved to Jinnah Hospital for post-mortem examination. Authorities have launched an immediate inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his untimely demise. Upon receiving the news, a team of police officers rushed to the hospital to oversee the investigation personally.

Reportedly, the deceased DIG resides in phase-4, the area falls under the jurisdiction of Defence-A police station. Whereas the flat comes under the jurisdiction of Nishtar police station. A case was also registered on the complaint of the deceased DIG's wife.

The DIG was currently serving as Officer on Special Duty (OSD). He has also served as DIG traffic and DIG railways.

The deceased recently returned home after passing departmental course for promotion in Grade-21.

Caretaker CM pays a visit to different areas of Lahore in rain

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited various parts of Lahore city in rain today. Mohsin Naqvi inspected Gaddafi Stadium, Liberty, Main Boulevard Gulberg, Garden Town, Model Town, Islampura, Walled City, Circular Road and other areas.

Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the situation arising due to rain and water drainage work. Mohsin Naqvi issued directions to the administration and WASA officials to expeditiously complete water drainage work.

Mohsin Naqvi asserted that all resources should be utilized for water drainage and the number of dewatering pumps should be increased. Mohsin Naqvi directed that the officers should themselves remain in the field to redress the difficulties of citizens.

CM Mohsin Naqvi while issuing directions to the Chief Traffic Officer to remain in the field stated that all essential measures should



be taken to maintain traffic flow. Mohsin Naqvi directed that the Traffic Wardens should perform their duties in a proactive manner in the field so as to properly assist the citizens.

He directed to immediately evacuate vehicles stranded in rain water and no stone should be left unturned to help the citizens. CM reviewed water drainage work in Islampura, Walled City, Circular Road and other areas.

Mohsin Naqvi shook hands with the WASA staff members and commended them on completing water drainage work. Mohsin Naqvi acknowledged that Commissioner Lahore division, Deputy Commissioner Lahore and MD WASA worked with great dedication for water drainage.

PTI chief granted pre-arrest bail in May 9 cases

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Saturday granted pre-arrest bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in two cases related to May 9 events – wherein military installations including General Headquarters (GHQ) came under attack, ARY News reported.

According to details, the session's court granted bail to PTI chief in two cases registered against him at the Shehzad Town Police Station. A four-page written order on the pre-arrest bail has been issued in both cases.

Additional Sessions Judge Farrukh Farid – in his written judgment – ruled that the prosecution must prove that the accused, Imran Khan, instigated the violence – which erupted after the latter was arrested in 190 million rupees case. According to the prosecution, the written order added that Khan's video statement was the only evidence while that statement was not related to the incident.

There was "nothing" in the statement of PTI chief to incite the public, it said and added that the prosecution also presented several tweets of the former prime minister as evidence. The judge said pointed out that the provision concerning incitement or conspiracy has been subject to misinterpretation. The written order added that it was necessary to "establish a link" between the act of incitement and the commission of the offence. It was necessary to prove that the offence was committed as a result of the incitement.

Govt okays massive hike in power tariff on IMF demand

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a late-night move, the federal cabinet approved a massive hike in electricity base tariff through circulation summary as Pakistan is moving ahead to meet the IMF conditions.

Sources privy to the development told ARY News that the federal government has increased the basic power tariff by Rs3 to Rs7.5 per unit for several consumers.

The cabinet approved hike in power tariff on the recommendation of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA).

According to the proposal, the government recommended an increase of Rs3 per unit for the non-protected residential consumers using 1 to 100 units which will take the current per unit cost from Rs 13.48/unit to Rs 16.48/unit.

Similarly, for the residential consumers using above 700 units, the government



proposed a hike of Rs 7.5/unit from the existing Rs35.22/unit to Rs 42.72/unit.

Sources say the government has sent the matter to the NEPRA to increase the tariff and the regulator will hold a public hearing to decide the matter before releasing a final notification.

If approved, the new tariff will take effect from July 1. NEPRA on July 14 allowed the federal government an increase of Rs 4.96/unit in base electricity tariff.

The move comes as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had reassured IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva that he would not tolerate an iota of violation of the agreement reached with the global lender.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Air Vice Marshal Mr. Muhammad Aamir Hayat, CEO, PIAC called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, at Finance Division on Saturday.



Photo: Online

Govt taking measures to facilitate special persons: President Alvi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday said the government was taking measures to make persons with disabilities productive citizens of the society.

In a video message for special persons with disabilities, he said in Pakistan 10 to 12 persons were disabled who needed to be facilitated by society.

He said those with mental and physical deficiencies and those who could not see, hear and speak should be given admission in regular schools where they could be not denied admission legally.

He said legislation had been enacted at the federal and provincial levels to provide special persons job opportunities in public and private sectors so that these people could become self-sufficient and take benefit from their skills.

He said National Vocational and Technical Training Commission and Technical and Vocational Training Authority were arranging for training of persons with disabilities in 140 fields so that they could improve their skills and get suitable jobs.

It should be determined that the persons with disabilities could get what kind of jobs



in different institutions and companies so that they could get facilitated in finding employment.

He said these special persons were also getting free educa-

tion in universities, medical facilities and relaxation in fares for travelling.

The disabled persons needed certificate and identity card from the National Database

and Registration Authority (NADRA) to avail these facilities, he said adding NADRA was issuing a certificate to youth aged 9 to 18, in which his disability was mentioned.

The President said the certificate from NADRA would help special persons in getting jobs, loans from banks and facilities available in the public sector.

He appealed to the business community to follow the law and provide job opportunities to people with disabilities.

Ramps should be made for special persons in buildings and on roads so that they were able to move around easily and better play their role in society, he concluded.

Country's economy needs political stability: Senator Siddiqui

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfanul-Haque Siddique has said that economic stability was among the challenges faced by Pakistan which required political steadiness and continuation of economic policies.

During a discussion with leaders of Pakistani community at Pakistan Embassy, Washington DC, the PML-N stalwart and senator maintained that unreliability and disruption in the policies could prove fatal for the economy.

Irfan Siddique said that it was a matter of satisfaction that the political leadership, institutions and other stakeholders of the country were very well cognizant that the past mistakes should not be repeated.

He opined that the PML-N leadership had put the country on the path of progress, the growth rate increased to



over 6 percent and eliminated scourge of terrorism, but the incidents of 2017 had inflicted huge damage to that journey of progress and prosperity, a press release on Saturday said.

The senator further said that 9th May incidents had hurt the sentiments of every patriotic Pakistani, adding vandalism at installations of armed forces and disrespect to Shuhada of the country, who

had sacrificed their lives for the motherland, were unacceptable to all Pakistanis.

He observed that throughout the civilized societies, the miscreants were being made to face the law of the land, but now attempts were being made by raising human rights issues and to create hurdles in the legal way of bringing these elements involved in the abhorrent 9th May incidents

to accountability.

In this regard, different resources were being used abroad, he added.

The delegation included prominent business leaders and community leaders including Mussadiq Chughtai, Muhammad Khushegi, Senator Akbar Khawaja, Dr Javaid Manzoor and Kashmir leader and Advisor to President Azad Jammu and Kash-

mir Sardar Zareef.

Senator Siddique further said that the history of the two major political parties of the country was full of strenuous efforts, ordeals and sacrifices, adding that leadership of these parties preferred to sacrifice their lives and accepted exiles but never had been a part of any conspiracy against the country and its institutions by brain washing the people to damage the national solidarity and prestige.

Lauding role of the overseas Pakistanis in the economic prosperity of their country, he said that they were well aware and wanted stability and economic uplift of Pakistan.

Any plot to create fissures among the overseas Pakistanis would not succeed, he added.

The senator further said that despite economic difficulties, the defence requirements of the country could not be neglected.

PTI vehemently rejects PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rejected the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Amendment Bill 2023 and vowed that all attempts to arrest and undermine the media freedom would be thwarted come what may.

The PTI spokesperson on Saturday strongly reacted to the PEMRA Amendment Bill and said that the puppet government held in abeyance the constitution for the last 15 months and unleashed a reign of terror to silence the dissenting voices in the country.

He said that the PTI being the only federal and the largest political party in the country would resist any such efforts to curtail freedom of expression and would raise voice in support of press freedom in the country at all fora.

The spokesperson stated that imposing censorship to control the media and free speech was unacceptable, adding that the puppet government proved to be the worst exploitative and anti-constitutional government in history of the country.

He went on to say that in the absence of the largest representative political force of Pakistan, the legislation by the puppet government had no value.

Faisal Kundi terms in-time elections as only way to ensure political stability

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi

Saturday termed in-time elections as the only way to ensure political stability in the country.

Addressing a news conference here, Faisal Kundi said that Pakistan People's Party had a very clear stance that assemblies should complete their tenure and the caretaker government and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should conduct elections within 60 days.

The SAPM said, "60 days are enough for an election campaign, however, if

coalition political parties want 90 days for the campaign, PPP is ready for that."

The SAPM said, "The provincial government will provide a total of 2,00,000 to the women head of family."

He said although the flood had affected many parts of the country, the way the Sindh government had responded to this calamity in terms of providing relief to those affected was exemplary.

"The PPP government will replicate the same model of providing houses to its people in the other provinces too in the future", he said.

About the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), the federal minister highlighted that the first-ever dynamic National Socio-Economic Survey was being carried out successfully across the country.

CEO PIA calls on Finance Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here on Saturday expressed the firm commitment of the government to provide maximum support to Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) for the improvement of its services in order to make it a profit-oriented entity for the country.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PIA Air Vice Marshal Muham-

mad Amir Hayat met with Finance Minister and discussed matters related to PIA, besides requesting further financial support from the government.

The Finance Minister expressed his commitment to provide maximum support for the improvement of PIA and also indicated full support from Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique to improve PIA's performance and start PIA flights to Europe as soon as possible.

Bilawal commends Turkey's role in securing grain deal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Saturday commended Turkey's role in achieving the landmark Black Sea Grain Corridor agreement in 2022 which has played a significant role in stabilizing global food prices, especially in developing countries and for poorest of the poor.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said "Spoke to my brother FM of Turkey Hakan Fidan today. Commended Turkey's role in achieving the landmark Black Sea Grain Corridor agreement in 2022 which has played a significant role in stabilizing global food prices, especially in



developing countries and for poorest of the poor."

"Extended Pakistan's full support to international efforts in reviving the agreement. Also expressed strongest condemnation of acts of desecration of the Holy Quran in several European cities and resolved to work with Turkey and other Islamic states to prevent such incidents," he added.

Curative review reference against Justice Isa dismissed

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Friday approved the incumbent government's petition seeking withdrawal of a curative review reference filed against Senior Puisne Judge of Supreme Court (SC) Qazi Faez Isa.

CJP Umar Ata Bandial - in its written verdict - wrote the "instant Civil Misc. Applications filed by the appellants are accordingly allowed and their curative review petitions are dismissed as withdrawn".

"Under normal circumstances, the matter is sent to the court when the curatorial review is admissible," the SC verdict stated, adding that the law allows applicants to withdraw their applications.

CJP Bandial had reserved the verdict on the federal government's plea earlier in April this year.

It is pertinent to mention here that the reference was filed against Justice Isa by the PTI government in May 2019, alleging that he acquired three properties in London on lease in the name of his wife and children between 2011 and 2015, but did not disclose them in his wealth returns.

Justice Isa contested the allegation, saying he is not a beneficial owner of the flats - neither directly nor indirectly.

Earlier in March, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed law ministry to withdraw the curative review reference filed against Supreme Court's senior judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

In a statement, the prime minister has directed Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar to withdraw the curative review reference against Supreme Court Justice Qazi Faez Isa as it was "politically motivated".

Jl to write to PM Shehbaz over Census 2023 results

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) on Saturday announced to write to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif over delay in notifying the results of Census 2023.

Talking to media, JI Karachi chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman opposed the incumbent government's decision to hold elections on the basis of Census 2017.

Hafiz Naemur demanded the government should hold general elections after notifying the results of Census 2023 and carrying out fresh delimitation of constituencies.

"Interior Minister" Rana Sanaulah had refused to notify the results of newly-held census, JI Karachi chief said, lambasting the government for not 'completing the process' for over

two years.

In response to a question, Hafiz noted that national and provincial seats in Karachi would be increased if Karachiites are counted in full.

Earlier, it was reported that general elections are likely to be delayed for three to four months as the federal government started mulling to approve and notify new census results.

The federal government started mulling to approve and notify 2023 census results which would delay the organisation of general elections for three to four months.

Sources told ARY News that the federal government is deliberating on approving the new census results in the Council of Common Interests (CCI) session. The next CCI session is expected to be summoned on July 25.

ECP inquires into caretaker minister's public meeting address

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has sought a report from the Election Commissioner of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding the participation and speech of caretaker minister Shahid Khattak in a public meeting.

In a statement, a representative of the ECP said the purpose of the report is to assess the situation and decide if any legal action is necessary.

The spokesperson emphasized that it is essential for all incumbent governments to adhere to the law and provide complete cooperation to the commission in order to ensure fair, transparent, and unbiased elections.

The commission cannot grant permission to any incumbent government or minister to participate in any electoral campaign.

In case of violation, legal action will be taken, concluded the spokesperson.

Housing society's crush the mango gardens of Sariki Wasaib: Zahoor Dharija

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The farmers of Sariki Belt are being destroyed by not giving export facilities to the farmers, they will not remain silent on the injustices caused by Wasaib, the province of Saraikistan should be established so that the people of Wasaib can solve their own problems. These views were expressed by Saraikistani leaders Zahoor Dharija, Malikullah Nawaz Vance, Saleem Darbari, Aamir Shelzad Siddiqui and others at the Saraikistani Mango Conference organized by the Saraikistani National Council on International Mango Day. On this occasion, Barkhdoom Akbar Hashmi, Sajjad Malik, Taj Multani,

Prof. Parvez Qadir Khan, Mazhar Javed Syal, Rana Irfan, Hashim Khan Chaman Ahmadani, Thawbia Malik, Abdul Razzaq Zahid, Haji Eid Ahmed Dharija.

Waseem Shahzad, Shabbir Baloch, Tahir Dharija, Afzal Butt, Mushtaq Gul, Baba Mumtaz Ahmed, Malik Zubair Vance and others were present. Speaking at the event, Chairman Saraikistan National Council Zahoor Dharija said that no event was organized by the government on the occasion of International Mango Day, the agriculture department also showed indifference, it shows that the development of agriculture in Saraiki Wasaib is not among the government's priorities. He has demanded that mango tree

should be given the status of national tree in Pakistan like Bangladesh. He said that International Mango Day is celebrated in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and other countries in South Asia.

Governments of other countries celebrate it as a festival but our country Pakistan is indifferent. He said that agricultural based industry should be established in Saraiki Wasaib, tax free industrial zones should be established. The central president of Pakistan Saraiki Party, Malikullah Nawaz Vance, said that 70% of the country's total production of mangoes is produced in the Saraiki region.

He said that mango juice factories should be established in Wasaib, sending mango gifts to friends and feed-

ing mangoes is an ancient tradition of Saraiki Wasaib, Saraiki Wasaib is the original homeland of mangoes. Salim Darbari said that since ancient times, the center of mangoes is Saraiki Wasaib and from here mangoes reached other cities of India and then went to the whole world, but unfortunately, the mango producing region has been suffering from problems for centuries. Aamir Shahzad Siddiqui said that there are huge mango orchards in Multan, but the owners of the orchards do not have access to export and other facilities due to which the mango orchards are falling apart. He said that in a few years, 15 to 20 thousand acres of existing mango plantations have been exhausted.

Medico-Legal is the Main Part of Any Police Investigation Case

Quratul Ain Asim



MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Multan Umar Jahangir, City Police Officer Multan Mansoor ul Haq Rana chaired the meeting of the Medico-Legal Committee. DC Multan said that the Medico-Legal is the main part of any investigation Case.

CPO Multan Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana said that increasing the efficiency of medico-legal investigation officers is inevitable. Problems are faced in the second shift of Nishtar Hospital. Records of medico-legal cases and special cases are kept as per legal requirements. CO Health and hospital doctors were present in the meeting.

Bhimber district magistrate imposed Section 144



Bureau Report

BHIMBAR: Deputy Commissioner Bhimbar Mirza Arshad Mahmood has imposed Section 144 to prevent encroachment on canals and government land in Bhimbar. District Magistrate Mirza Arshad Mahmood Jaral has given orders for implementation in this regard. It is feared that there will be conflicts between the people in the village, besides damage to the common interests, and there is a fear of obstructing the flow of natural water in the canals, which must be rectified. Therefore, Mirza Arshad Mahmood Jaral District Magistrate, Bhimbar, in exercise of his powers under section 144 of the Criminal Code, order that any person/persons within the limits of Bambar district, common interests, area including villages, distribution of land, except for transfer under the provisions of the Code. All types of government areas such as Khalsa government area, cemetery, leased canals, forests, will not construct or develop on the awarded area and will not encourage any other person/persons to do so.

PMAJK demands urgent action on Indian state terrorism in occupied Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: While voicing his serious concern over the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), the Prime Minister, Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, has urged the international community to take effective cognisance of the Indian state terrorism in the Occupied Kashmir.

The AJK premier said that the continued bloodshed and violence in the restive region merits the urgent attention of the world community. He said that the Indian occupation forces deployed in length and breadth of the region have been grossly involved in the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Kashmiris.

He said that the United Nations and other international organizations should take notice of the matter and help stop the bloodbath of innocent Kashmiris who were being ruthlessly killed, day in and day out, by the Indian forces.

Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq said that India's apartheid regime had broken all records of barbarism and brutality in occupied Kashmir.

He said that after stripping occupied Jammu and Kashmir of its special status on August 5, 2019, India was now trying to change the region's demography by issuing fake domiciles to ex-servicemen and other non-state residents.

Terming it as a flagrant violation of the UN Security Council resolutions and international laws, the PM said that issuing domiciles to non-Kashmiris was a deep-rooted conspiracy intended to convert the region's Muslim majority into a minority.

More than 26,000 Pakistanis from Punjab working in US Consular

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD:

More than 26,000 Pakistanis from Punjab who have been working in America and Lahore US Consulate is going to provide them the best facilities; however, the new visas are being issued from the US Embassy in Islamabad, said Mr. Richard T. Phillips, Consular Officer, U. S. Consulate General Lahore office. He was addressing an awareness session about visas in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He said informing that different categories of visas are being issued including tourism, business, education and emergency visas, however, the visa process may be delayed due to the contradictory information provided by the applicants.

He further said adding that the commercial and economic sections also give due weightage to the genuine and bonafide applicants. Responding to a question, he said that the US government is working with the Pakistani government and has no intention to involve itself in local politics. He also said that different US states have different rules and regulations which also result in delay and visa refusal. Earlier this, the President FCCI Dr. Khurram Tariq welcomed the US team and said that a large number of Pakistanis are working in America. He particularly mentioned the Pakistani diaspora in North America where Pakistani physicians have a strong identity. He also said that communication gap is also one of the main reasons for visa refusal and in this connection, we must enhance our contacts with the US Consulate. He appreciated the efforts of Mr. Mohsin Chaudhary and Mr. Waheed to bridge the gap and said that a separate meeting could be arranged with them to resolve the individual issues. Senior Vice President Dr. Sajjad Arshad, Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli VP, Rana Fayyaz Ahmad, Madam Nighat Shahid, Sanaullah Niazi, Muhammad Yousaf, Chaudhary Muhammad Azhar and Mr. Abdul Rehman participated in the question answer session while President Dr. Khurram Tariq presented FCCI memento to Mr. Richard T. Phillips.

Hard working

KARACHI: Workers are busy in repairing a ceiling fan at their shop on Nashtar Road in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

100 Heart Operations Successfully Completed: Dr Yasir

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: An awareness seminar on prevention and preventive measures of heart diseases was organized under the auspices of Friends of Cardiology. The special guest of the seminar was the caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram. Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed, Chairman Board Institute of Cardiology Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi took special part in the seminar.

Seminar Organizer Assistant Professor of Cardiac Surgery Institute of Cardiology Dr. Muhammad Yasir Khan Khakwani were in the seminar, experts gave



detailed lectures on the prevention and preventive measures of heart diseases. The caretaker provincial health minister Prof. Dr. Javed Akram gave a special lecture on the subject of heart disease and diabetes. Provincial Minister Dr. Javed Akram further said that it is very important to take preventive measures to prevent heart diseases.

Preventive Department of Cardiology will be established in all Institutes of Cardiology. Doctors should do their best to serve the patients

The support of Friends of Cardiology is appreciated. Vice-Chancellor Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed while addressing the seminar said that there is a need to spread awareness to avoid

heart diseases. By taking preventive measures, the costs of heart diseases can be avoided. Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi said that he will work for the improvement of Nishtar Hospital and Institute of Cardiology. We will continue to work together for the welfare and health of the people

Assistant Professor of Cardiac Surgery Institute of Cardiology Heart Transplant Surgeon Dr. Muhammad Yasir Khan Khakwani told about the new method of bypass treatment "Whole Heart Surgery". Assistant Professor Dr. Muhammad Yasir Khan Khakwani said that more than 100 successful operations of "whole heart surgery" have been done so far.

Bahawalpur Museum is a Mirror of Region: Nabeel Javed



Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: Senior Member Board of Revenue Punjab Nabeel Javed has said that Bahawalpur Museum is a mirror of the region and a wonderful combination of history, culture and art. The Archeology Gallery of Bahawalpur Museum is the best reflection of human collective evolution. He expressed these views on the occasion of a visit to Bahawalpur Museum along with Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa. Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani and Deputy Director Rashid Ahmad Arshad were also present on this occasion.

Muharram security review to be held soon: Chief Secretary

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Muhammad Usman Chachar, to review the arrangements for Muharram.

In the meeting, Secretary Health Department Major General Zaheer Akhtar, Secretary Law and Local Government Irshad Ahmed Qureshi, Secretary Information and Electronic Media Ansar Yaqoob Khan, Secretary State Disaster Management Authority Dr. Liaquat, Additional IG Police Tahir Mehmood Qureshi, Special Secretary Interior Khalid Mehmood, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Adnan Khurshid, DIG Police Irfan Masood Kashfi, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad



Tahir Mumtaz while the commissioners of Mirpur and Poonch, the deputies and commissioners of all districts. SSPs participated in the meeting through video link.

In the meeting, the Divisional Commissioners briefed the Chief Secretary about the security and other arrangements during Muharram. Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary Dr. Muhammad Usman Chachar directed that all possible measures

should be taken to maintain the atmosphere of religious harmony during Muharram, fool-proof security arrangements should be made by ensuring the fixed routes and timings for meetings and processions. He directed that the administration should provide full support to the police for security arrangements, a plan should be prepared to deal with any emergency situation. The Chief Secretary said that effective monitoring of social media

should also be done during Muharram and if the miscreants try to spread religious hatred on social media, immediate action should be taken against them.

Less load shedding should be done so that the participants of the Majlis can get convenience. The chief secretary directed the health secretary to ensure the availability of ambulance and medical personnel during the gatherings and processions.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:34 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:10 pm
Maghrib 7:16 pm
Isha 8:54 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

PFC delegation visit Turkiye to explore opportunities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation Saturday left for Turkey on a 10-day visit to explore investment avenues, boost exports, and seeking joint ventures.

Talking to a delegation of furniture manufacturers led by Nabeel Ahmad here today prior to departure CEO PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the visit would have significant benefits for the furniture industry in Pakistan. Such visits often serve as a platform for businesses to showcase their products, network with potential partners, and gain valuable insights into international markets, he added.

He said during their trip, the delegation will engage in various activities, including attending business meetings with Turkish companies, participating in trade shows or exhibitions, visiting furniture retailers and manufacturers, and meeting with government officials to discuss trade and investment opportunities.

He said the delegation's goals likely include expanding their market reach, building partnerships with Turkey-based companies, and exploring opportunities for collaboration in the furniture sector. The trip could also lead to an increase in foreign investment in Pakistan's furniture industry and facilitate the export of Pakistani furniture products to the Turkish market.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said overall, this visit will represent a strategic move to promote Pakistan's furniture industry on a global scale and strengthen economic ties between Pakistan and the Turkish.

During PTI's era, media faced gag, says Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Saturday restrictions were imposed on the media due to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) order, during the PTI's era, they tried to bring the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority black law, which was opposed by all political parties and media organizations.

"PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023 is the bill not of the government, this is a bill of Pakistan, the people of Pakistan, the media and journalists, in which the rights of journalists are protected. It includes the representation of journalistic organizations, and they are empowered to make decisions", the minister said while addressing a press conference here.

She said that there were 140 channels licensed by PEMRA in Pakistan, among them 35 were news and current affairs channels, 52 entertainment channels, 25 regional channels, 6 non-commercial and education channels,

5 sports channels, 7 health and agro channels, and 10 education commercial channels.

The minister said that PEMRA Ordinance was promulgated in 2002 and now in 2023, the media landscape had changed and it became so diverse.

"We are all going through a new era of social media where new platforms have been introduced to express opinions, all these channels are present on cyberspace and social media", she added.

Marriyum said that during the last four years of PTI, there was censorship on the media and the former Prime Minister Imran Khan got the title of "media predator", adding the title was not given to him by his political rivals or any organization of Pakistan, but by international journalistic organizations keeping in view the freedom of expression in Pakistan.

At that time, the programs running at that time were stopped, journalists and news channels were banned, she added.

She said that in the past, firing was done on journalists, they were kidnapped and tortured, their

programs were stopped and they were sent to jails.

Citing the example of Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman, she said that he was arrested in a case in which everyone had now been acquitted.

By sending him to jail in the NAB case, Imran Khan gave a message that if he could go to jail, then other media house owners and journalists could also be prosecuted, she opined.

The minister said during PTI's tenure, the then information minister used to slap journalists, he used to threaten journalists and media organizations to support the draconian PMDA law.

Marriyum said that last year, when she was appointed Minister of Information, she held first meeting with the Joint Action Committee on 23rd April 2022.

Representatives of PBA, APNS, CPNE, AMEND and PFUJ were included in the joint action committee.

The minister said that the laws regarding the rights of journalists, ethical media, media responsibilities and fake news within the regulatory bodies in many countries of



the world were reviewed.

She said she was thankful to all these organizations that assisted her in preparing the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023.

She said they guided her how to take steps to protect the rights of media workers and establish a responsible media.

Marriyum said that the Joint Action Committee held several meetings over the course of 11 months for consultations with all stakeholders on the bill.

The minister said that the existing laws regarding the rights

of journalists, ethical media, responsibilities of the media and fake news within the regulatory bodies in many countries of the world were reviewed, and PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023 contained international best practices.

She said that for the first time the definition of disinformation and misinformation had been included in the PEMRA law with the support of all media organizations.

"We clarified the difference between misinformation and

disinformation in the bill", she said.

Marriyum said that Implementation Tribal for Newspaper Employees existed for print media, but there was no forum to protect the rights of electronic media employee who were dismissed from jobs on political grounds.

She said that all stakeholders joined hands to protect the rights of journalists and media workers.

The minister said that the PEMRA amendment bill was made in light of the resolutions approved by the United Nations Human Rights Committee and in consultation with journalists and clauses were added in this bill considering the existing media laws in the countries of Great Britain, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, France, India, Brazil, Russia, European Union, and Australia.

She said that the bill was prepared according to the resolutions of the UN Human Rights Committee.

"Today some people are worried how this bill was finalized in consultation with media," she added.

Pleasant weather

ISLAMABAD: Families are enjoying at a public park during pleasant weather after rain in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Pakistan to sign 'historic' LNG agreement with Azerbaijan on July 24

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik on Saturday announced that Pakistan will sign a 'historic' liquefied natural gas (LNG) purchase agreement with Azerbaijan on July 24.

Speaking to journalists in Karachi, the state minister pointed out that the country will procure one spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargo from Azerbaijan every month.

"The government will also purchase 12 LNG cargo ships from Azerbaijan," Musadik Malik noted, adding that the government will purchase natural gas at cheaper price than the market rate.

In addition to the LNG contract, Malik revealed that \$14 billion investment agreement with Saudi Arabia in refinery sector will be signed before the incumbent government completes its term.

The minister also expressed his opposi-



tion to providing cheap gas to the fertiliser sector. He proposed the removal of subsidies to the fertiliser industry and advocated redirecting these benefits to the farmers directly.

Musadik Malik claimed the fertiliser sector consumes around 1500 MMcf of gas in the country and their agreements for cheap gas are reaching expiry.

He noted that new contracts for supplying gas to the fertiliser sector will be negotiated on different terms to ensure a more equitable and efficient system.

Earlier in June, Bloomberg reported that

Pakistan failed to secure liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the spot market in its first attempt in about a year, as no supplier seems to budge to the cash-strapped nation's offer.

Traders, on the condition of anonymity, told the publication that Pakistan LNG Limited's (PLL) bid to purchase six shipments for October to December closed Tuesday with no companies responding to the offer.

The report said that many overseas banks weren't accepting letters of credit Pakistani counterparts to purchase LNG shipments, making suppliers reluctant to offer cargoes, Bloomberg reported last week.

Pakistan's inability to buy gas will aggravate energy shortages in the country, increasing the frequency of blackouts and curbing the supply of fuel to industrial consumers.

FO responds to reports about Pakistanis detained in Libya

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Saturday said that Pakistan's mission was in contact with Pakistani-origin detainees in Libya and was interacting with the United Nations for their medical check-ups and provision of medicines.

In response to media queries regarding Pakistani nationals detained in Libya's Benghazi, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said, "At the instructions of the Foreign Minister, our Charge d'affaires in Tripoli, Mr Ashiq Ali, visited the detention center in Benghazi and met with detainees of Pakistani origin.

"Food and basic necessities have been provided to them," Mumtaz Zahra Baloch added.

She noted that the country's mission was in contact with the United Nations medical team for routine medical check-ups and provision of medicines to the detainees.

"The mission also remains in contact with IOM for their early repatriation," the FO spokeswoman added.

Earlier, it was reported that more than 15,000 Pakistanis - who were trying to enter Europe - are detained in Libya's jails for seven months and were waiting for the government's help.

In a video that went viral on social media, a prisoner revealed that several inmates were sick and some of them are in critical condition.

He said that kids are also among the other prisoners and they neither have any access to medicine nor food which is life-threatening.

Tribal Elders/Labours/Watchers demand release of funds in respect of SW Forest Division



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 laborers, 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.

Deputy Chairman Senate starts work of St. Upmalaise Housing Society

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate. Mirza Muhammad Khan Afridi has said that today the long-standing demand of the victims of St. Housing Society has been fulfilled. Allottees have also been given the allotment letters of the plots. Today is a happy day for all these families. Expressing these views, Deputy Chairman St. Mirza Muhammad Afridi started the work of St. Upmalaise Cooperative Housing Society and addressed the ceremony of distribution of letters in the allotments. Former Senator Pir Sabir Ali Shah, Sardar Yakub Nasir, MNA Shahid Akhtar, Chairman Society Muhammad Ali Azam, Soci-



ety President Shirazam Khan, Sarfaraz Bugti, General Secretary Shehzad Ahmed Sheikh, Zahid Awan, Rao Kamran, Hala Lur Rehman, Prince Umar and others participat-

ed in this occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Deputy Chairman St. Mirza Muhammad Afridi said that today I am happy that I am formally starting the work of St. Upma-

laise Society. The work of this society was stopped for a long time now we have given happy news to all these victims. Very soon all these elites will settle in their homes. Speaking at the

ceremony, Chairman of the Society, Muhammad Ali Azam, thanked the Deputy Chairman of the Senate and said that today our long-standing demand has been fulfilled, now very soon we will complete the work of this society.

MNA Ms. Shahida Akhtar while addressing the ceremony said that the present government and the members of the Senate have given special attention to this society and today its work has started. I congratulate all the elites and hope that all the members of the society will use all their abilities to build this society and help the elites to build their houses very soon. At the end of the ceremony, letters were distributed among all the authorities.

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Karbala: A Testament of Resilience against Oppression

Karbala: A Testament of Resilience against Oppression The incident of Karbala reminds us to stand firm and defy tyranny. Imam Hussain (A.S) sacrifice embodies the timeless message that justice and righteousness should never be compromised, inspiring us to rise against oppressors. Karbala stands as a symbol of unwavering resilience in the face of oppression. The events that unfolded during the tragic Battle of Karbala in 680 CE hold great significance for Muslims worldwide, as they epitomize the struggle against tyranny and the sacrifice for justice. The story of Karbala, led by Imam Hussain, serves as an eternal lesson for humanity, inspiring individuals to stand up against oppression, regardless of the circumstances.

We cannot ignore the ongoing injustices, even in the face of overwhelming odds. Numerous individuals in various regions endure oppression, and as Muslims, it is incumbent upon us to take a stand. Imam Hussain demonstrated remarkable courage by confronting an army of 30,000 with just 72 companions in the desert. While sacrificing our lives may not be expected, we must question our reasons for remaining silent or inactive. How can we stay mute while tragedies persist daily worldwide? The month of Muharram encompasses far more than mere mourning. The annual ritual of remembrance serves as a crucial reset button, reminding us of the imperative to stand up for justice and oppose oppression.

It acts as a powerful teaching tool, especially for younger generations, instilling the significance of raising one's voice

against injustice, regardless of who the oppressed or the oppressor is. Imam Hussain (A.S) stance in Karbala was not merely an act of defiance; it was a resolute commitment to upholding fundamental principles. Despite being heavily outnumbered, Imam Hussain and his small band of loyal followers displayed unparalleled courage and resilience. They chose to lay down their lives rather than succumb to oppression. This selfless sacrifice resonates deeply, as it exemplifies the ultimate act of devotion and steadfastness in the face of tyranny. The martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his companions serves as a reminder that the struggle for justice often demands great personal sacrifice. The message of Karbala reverberates beyond its historical context, inspiring movements for social justice and liberation across time and place. Imam Hussain's sacrifice has served as a source of inspiration for countless individuals and communities facing oppression. From anti-colonial struggles to civil rights movements, the principles and values embodied in Karbala have been invoked to galvanize people in their quest for justice and freedom.

The spirit of Karbala continues to ignite the fires of resistance against oppression and tyranny. Hussain (A.S) stood up for oppression in the face of adversity and sacrificed everything to stay true to his principles. How many times in a day are we faced with dilemmas that make us question our own principles? As

students we are put into situations that test us – how often do we fall short of our own expectations for ourselves? And it's not just the sacrifice of Hussain – each of his family members and his companions gave everything and committed to his stand for justice. No matter who you are, everyone has a part to play. Karbala imparts valuable lessons, it emphasizes the importance of righteousness, even when standing alone. It encourages individuals to uphold what is right, even if it means facing certain death, as it serves the greater good and is the only means to defeat injustice. It teaches us to be just and impartial

when confronting tyranny. Whether or not we have personal connections to the oppressed or oppressor, it is crucial to stand up for what is right. Karbala underscores the significance of kindness, even towards adversaries.

For instance, Hur, the General of the enemy army, and his soldiers were shown compassion and provided with water by Hussain, despite the scarcity of resources. These lessons highlight the transformative power of righteousness, justice, and compassion in the face of adversity. The event of Karbala stands as a powerful testament to the unwavering resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering pursuit of justice by Imam Hussain and his companions. It serves as a reminder of the profound significance of standing up against oppression, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. The tragic events of Karbala highlight the enduring legacy of courage, principles, and the

eternal struggle for truth and righteousness. It continues to inspire generations to reflect on their own principles and responsibilities in the pursuit of justice and the preservation of human dignity.

Hussain's (A.S) message was about standing up to falsehood and encouraging the community to strive to do good. Each person can take individual inspiration from this, and it's not one's job to tell you how to go about it. But don't stop at just reading or listening. Take it in and implement it into your life. Don't give in to what you know is not right. Free yourself from your own moral struggles. In fact, Hussain (A.S) is a symbol of universal compassion and resistance against oppression. He transcends the boundaries of religious affiliation and represents the struggles and aspirations of oppressed people worldwide.

Hussain is likened to every Afghan life, every Syrian refugee, every Palestinian, and every Kashmiri suffering from injustice, implying that his essence embodies the plight of the marginalized and oppressed. He symbolizes a movement that stands against injustice and tyranny, urging individuals to fight for a just and equitable world. Hussain's strength and valor inspired people to stand up against oppression, fostering a spirit of resilience and determination in the face of adversity. Ultimately, Hussain represents humanity's inherent goodness and the potential for positive change when people unite to confront oppression and promote compassion and justice.

The writer is a student in the school of Politics and International Relations at Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad. She can be reached at sarwaramalika18@gmail.com



Analysis

Malaika Sarwar

GPEI concludes four-day visit to Pakistan

A high-level delegation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) concluded its visit to Pakistan.

The delegation including the Polio Oversight Board, visited Pakistan to discuss the impact of political transition on eradication efforts and the strategies in place to vaccinate children that remain unreached in the polio-endemic districts of southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the four-day visit from July 16-20 that included Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad, the delegates visited the National and Provincial Emergency Operations Centers, attended a meeting of the National Task Force on Polio Eradication, and held separate meetings with the leadership of Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel.

"Pakistan continues to make important progress in the fight to eradicate polio. I'm impressed by the commitment I've seen again this week from the federal and provincial governments in getting the job done," said POB Chair Dr Chris Elias.

"The experience globally is that strong government leadership is key in the final push to defeat polio."

The delegation also met the governor of Punjab, the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and provincial chief secretaries, health secretaries, commissioners and deputy commissioners of priority districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Lahore and Peshawar, respectively, and met with the chief secretary of Balochistan.

"While the challenges before us are formidable and complex, I remain cautiously optimistic about the goal of interrupting transmission of poliovirus in Pakistan by the end of this year.

This will require solidarity and collective action at all levels to enable rigorous implementation of the strategy, which must be fully supported by communities and the political, administrative and security leadership," said WHO Regional Director Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari.

Endemic transmission of wild poliovirus remains restricted to seven districts in the south of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, namely Tank, Bannu, North Waziristan, South Waziristan Upper, South Waziristan Lower, DI Khan and Lakki Marwat.

A vaccination campaign is ongoing in the seven endemic districts named "Reaching the Unreached."

The campaign specifically targets over 270,000 children under five in 69 low-performing union councils where vaccine coverage for polio and other essential immunization has been inadequate.

"Under our regional vision of health for all by all, WHO will continue supporting Pakistan's polio programme to give our future generations a world free from polio," Dr Al-Mandhari added.

UNICEF's Deputy Regional Director Noala Skinner appreciated the leadership. "We applaud the leadership of Pakistan and the dedication of frontline workers, including thousands of women, who tirelessly vaccinate and protect millions of children from the deadly poliovirus," she said, adding, "The next six months are critical for Pakistan's efforts to eradicate polio."

"We are so close to our goal of reaching all children with polio vaccines. Together, we must ensure that the programme is able to reach every child in Pakistan, regardless of where they live."



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

Gig economy and its importance

Gig Economy means a way of working that is based on people having temporary jobs or doing separate pieces of work, each paid separately, rather than working for an employer. The "gig economy" involves the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment-by-task basis. The gig economy is based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving connecting with clients or customers through an online platform. Gig Economy in this study refers to digital platforms that allow freelancers to connect with individuals or businesses for short-term services or asset-sharing.

The gig economy involves people who balance a range of income streams and work independently, job-by-job.

While the idea of pooled resources is by no means a novel concept, the advent of digital networks as a means for freelancers to connect with customers is a rapidly evolving and yet somewhat ill-defined movement. The definition of the "Gig Economy," often used synonymously with or in relation to the "Sharing Economy" or "Freelance Economy," varies by academic and business publications alike. Yet while research entities have not quite aligned on a collective definition of this industry, the positive growth of digital freelancer services is a universally understood phenomenon. For the purposes of this study, the "Gig Economy" under

evaluation refers to digital platforms that allow independent freelancers to connect with individuals or businesses for short-term services or asset-sharing. The key component underpinning this understanding is the freelancer's – the individual offering goods or services for a price – involvement on digital or online platforms. For example, an individual selling crafts on Etsy would be counted in this understanding of the Gig Economy; however, if that individual were to sell the same crafts exclusively at in person markets, he or she would be excluded. The increasing supply of Gig Economy freelancers offering their services to Gig platforms is motivated by the following factors:

- Evolving social attitudes about P2P (Peer-to-peer is a decentralized communications model in which each party has the same capabilities and either party can initiate a communication session.) sharing of personal items are now more accepting and even encouraged of sharing underutilized assets for profit.
- Increasing digitization rates through rapid smartphone adoption and increasing internet access in underserved regions is expanding the number of eligible Gig freelancers.
- A cultural shift toward embracing a "flexible" work-life environment is altering the working population's expectations of a typical 9-to-5 work day.

• The rising costs of living paired with a shrinking middle class is compelling the employed lower-to-middle class to seek additional part-time income through Gig work.

On the demand side, consumers and businesses demonstrate an accelerated uptake in requesting Gig services, in part driven by the following elements:

• With the boom of "on-demand" services, millennials have become accustomed to fulfilling their needs instantaneously through a variety of platforms, an expectation new Gig entrants are required to meet to remain competitive.

"Overall, most gig workers are satisfied with their job and working for gig economy platforms appears to reflect mainly voluntary choices rather than the lack of other options."

Gig Economy by Sector Transportation-Based Services Asset-Sharing Services Handmade Goods, Household and Miscellaneous Services Professional Services

Here are some Examples of a gig economy are those jobs that individuals discover and access through online platforms that list such jobs. These jobs are often one-time or short-term contract jobs. These include driving for a ride-sharing service, painting someone's house, freelance work, coaching, fitness training, and tutoring. The job is exchanged for cash and there are no

other benefits, such as health insurance. There are categorized independent workers into four segments.

1. Free agents, who choose independent work and derive their primary income from it.
2. Casual earners, who use independent work by choice for supplemental income.
3. Reluctant, who make their primary living from independent work but would prefer traditional jobs.
4. Financially strapped, who do supplemental independent work out of necessity.

In-depth conversations with representatives from key Gig companies indicate that the nature of platforms' journey to achieve their desired growth targets can be agnostic to qualities such as region or size. In expanding to new markets, platforms often share a set of strategic objectives they perceive as necessary to be successful in their growth endeavors – such as increasing freelancer.

In sum, the findings of this study support the sizable opportunity presented by the digital freelancing platforms that constitute today's Gig Economy. Gig economy is an important industry in a country's GDP and does pay well for some jobs. As Gig platforms work with external partners providing adjacent technologies, they can leverage combined capabilities and expertise to capture the target customer and freelancer populations needed to support their growth objectives.

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Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Injustice grips Pakistani prisons as voices go unheard

In the depths of Pakistani prisons, a silent tragedy unfolds, as thousands of destitute souls find themselves locked away, their voices silenced by a justice system that fails to provide them with the support they desperately need. These individuals, unable to afford the services of a lawyer, are appointed public defenders by the jail or the court.

Yet, once they sign the power of attorney, these defenders seem to fade into the shadows, leaving their clients vulnerable and unheard. As these detainees and extradited persons make their appearances in court, they face an all-too-familiar scene: the absence of government lawyers. The court, regrettably, turns a blind eye to this absence, allowing the wheels of justice to grind to a halt. Furthermore, the cases of countless individuals, imprisoned for years on end, remain pending within the confines of Pakistani jails.

Whenever these prisoners are brought to court, they are met with a disheartening absence of judges, attorneys, and witnesses. The very foundations of justice tremble under the weight of these inadequacies. To add insult to injury, if a public prosecutor does take up a person's case, they may brazenly demand illegal fees, trapping the impoverished behind bars. Failure to pay these exorbitant sums leads to continued imprisonment, perpetuating an unjust cycle of suffering. Additionally, the police, responsible for warrant appearances, often fail to show up in court; further compound the issues plaguing the justice system. It is no wonder, then, that faith in the Pakistani judiciary system has eroded among the people.

The disillusionment runs deep, for judges

merely pay visits to prisons to fulfill formalities, while true justice remains elusive. The prevailing reality starkly contrasts with the perceptions held by the general public. To rectify this disheartening state of affairs, concrete and practical steps must be taken. First and foremost, the installation of CCTV cameras throughout all prisons, meticulously monitored by the judiciary, is imperative. By shedding light on every nook and cranny, these cameras will act as guardians of truth, ensuring accountability and deterring illicit activities. In conjunction with this measure, all power of attorney or WakalatNama documents should be registered with the Bar council and the relevant session judge's office.

This will serve as a safeguard against fraud and protect inmates from being preyed upon by unscrupulous individuals seeking exorbitant fees. Moreover, it is essential that prison rules be diligently imparted to all inmates, enlightening them about their inherent rights within the confines of their cells. No form of corporal punishment should be tolerated within these walls, for the dignity and humanity of every individual must be upheld.

By implementing these few critical steps, we can forge a path toward a brighter future, where the marginalized and helpless within our society find solace and support. Let us join hands, government and NGOs alike, to usher in a new era of compassion and justice, where every individual, regardless of their circumstances, is treated with fairness and respect. Together, we can ensure a higher standard of living for those who have long been denied their rights.

The writer is a senior Journalist He can be reached at pmpk55@hotmail.com



Analysis

Syed Fawad Ali Shah

Pak-US Economic Alliance to draw two countries together: Congressman McCaul

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee Michael McCaul has said that economic alliance between United States and Pakistan would bring the two countries closer to each other.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States is responsible for oversight and legislation relating to foreign assistance; national security developments affecting foreign policy; strategic planning and agreements; arms control and disarmament issues; the United States Agency for International Development; the Foreign Assistance Act; public diplomacy, including international communication, information policy, international education, and cultural programs; and other important matters.

"I think the more trade and economic investment we can have together, the closer the ties between



our two nations", he said.

"We have a security alliance, a security partnership, but we also need to have an economic alliance and that would draw our two countries together."

"You don't choose your neighbors but you can choose your friend. We always want Pakistan and United States to be friends."

Talking to a media person after attending BBQ Reception and Mango

Festival, hosted by Ambassador Masood Khan at the Embassy of Pakistan, Congressman McCaul said that Pakistan is located in a difficult part of the world. Referring to Afghanistan, the issue of refugees and the menace of terrorism, he said that "it is in our best interests to have a strong alliance and be strong partners with Pakistan."

Talking about the quality and the taste of Pakistani mangoes, Congressman McCaul said that Pakistani mangoes were the finest, the best. "The hospitality is fantastic," he added.

Later, Ambassador Masood Khan also had a meeting with Chairman Michael McCaul at the Embassy.

"It was a pleasure to receive Honorable Michael McCaul @RepMcCaul, Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee, at Pakistan Embassy. Discussed ways to strengthen Pak-US ties. Wish him more success!" tweeted the Ambassador.

The Yellow River Tourism Overseas Promotion Season 2023 kicks off in Pakistan



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: 2023 Yellow River Tourism Overseas Promotion Season is officially launched in Pakistan by China Cultural Center in Pakistan on their various social media platforms including Facebook Official Page, We chat, Channels, Twitter account of Cultural Counsellor and Director China Cultural Center in Pakistan H. E Zhang heqing. The event will run from July through September, 2023.

The Promotional Season is organized globally under the guidance of the Bureau of International Exchange and Cooperation, Department of Industrial Development, Department of Resource Development of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Department of International Cooperation of the State Administration of Radio and Television, the Center for Chinese and Foreign Cultural Exchanges (CCCE), in cooperation with nine provincial and regional departments of Culture and Tourism of Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Shandong, Henan, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia.

The Yellow River Tourism Overseas Promotion Season 2023 comprises of number of different exhibitions and documentaries such as documentary series "The Great Yellow River Delta", "Sing along the Yellow River", Photography Exhibition "Explore the Yellow River, Discover Beautiful China", tourism and cultural resources of Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Shandong, Henan, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia and much more.

In addition, nine selected routes highlighting the various attractions worth seeing in each region will be launched during the Yellow River Tourism Season, covering the nine provinces through which the river flows. Five selected rural tourist routes that take visitors deep into the villages along the Yellow River have also been introduced.

The regions along the Yellow River, the cradle of ancient Chinese civilization, have made significant progress in recent years in terms of coordinated industrial development, ecological protection, and promotion of Yellow River culture.

The event's objectives include providing a complete picture of the Yellow River, learning about its cultural significance, reviving its cultural heritage, promoting cultural exchanges, and better communicating the Yellow River's history to Pakistani audiences.



First Global Media Forum begins in Azerbaijan

Spokesman Report

SHUSHA (AZERBAIJAN): President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev inaugurated the first-ever Global Media Forum on "New Media in the Era of the 4th Industrial Revolution" here on Friday.

The media forum was organized on the occasion of the 148th anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Press which brought together 150 participants from 49 countries, including 34 state news agencies – Associated Press of Pakistan among them – and 12 international and media organizations, besides 60 local media heads and representatives.

President Ilham Aliyev, addressing the audience, said the role of media was significant in educating the people and highlighting their problems.

He hailed the role of social media, saying he also got information from



social media tools about the issues, besides the traditional media.

Talking about liberated areas and war, he said "From the first day, even I would say, from the first hours of the Second Karabakh War, Türkiye, its people and its leader were side by side with us. The statement of Presi-

dent Erdogan in the first hours of the Second Karabakh War that Azerbaijan is not alone was a great moral support to us.

"After the victory in the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan and Türkiye formalized their relationship, which, actually, were de facto relations

between allies."

The Forum is scheduled to discuss critical issues of global importance in the media and information communication fields. The world's illustrious media leaders, experts, professors will deliberate about new tools of journalism and communications in the digital era, digital transformation, media management and sustainable media business models, and media literacy in the new media, methods of fighting disinformation and fake news, and the safety of journalists.

The Non-Aligned Movement Media Platform initiative will also be put forward by the Forum.

It is the first time that the city of Shusha has brought together heads of the world's leading media and journalist organizations, media and communication experts, and renowned journalists.

Dasterast serves 10,000 homemade meals

City Desk

KARACHI: Karachi based social startup help women owned homebased businesses achieve better outcomes. The newly established startup aims at utilizing the available skillset and talents and channeling them into financial products. Conceived primarily to counter the gender disparity on the principle of women- has partnered with home chefs and together they created and served 10,000 orders in their first quarter of operations.

Rehan Ali, Cofounder Dasterast explaining the core idea behind the initiative said, "we believe in sustaining life while improving livelihoods. The belief translates into enabling homebased women earn through their skills and talents and become

economic contributors."

Pakistan's performance on the gender parity index is alarming and grassroots level initiatives although small in numbers have a big impact in improving the situation. Enabling women to achieve financial gains help achieve profound change in their lives and society at large.

"Dasterast's impact on empowering women and supporting their economic independence is truly commendable. As a part of NIC Karachi's 11th Cohort, we are amazed at the work they're doing to uplift home-based women entrepreneurs through their e-commerce solution and the provision of fresh, healthy, and hygienic meals.

Their initiative aligns perfectly with our mission to empower innovative startups and foster positive

change within communities. We are proud to have Dasterast as a part of our incubation program and look forward to witnessing their continued success in creating a more inclusive and empowered society," said Sana Shah, Program Manager of NIC Karachi.

"Dasterast is not limited to food as it offers an e-commerce solution for homebased women to set up online stores and initiate their businesses. The inclusion of women, comprising 49% of country's population, is imperative for growth," said Rehan.

The generated economic value and finances transcends into the social sphere and thereby empower and protect women against maltreatment. The financial progress also contributes to their physical and mental health.



North Korea threatens nuclear response after US sub deployment

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: North Korea's defence minister said Thursday the current port visit of a US nuclear-capable submarine to South Korea could meet the legal conditions under which Pyongyang would use its nuclear weapons.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points ever, with diplomacy stalled and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un calling for increased weapons development, including tactical nuclear weapons.

The United States and South Korea have stepped up displays of military muscle in response, and a US nuclear-capable submarine made a port call to South Korea this week for the first time since 1981.

Pyongyang's defence minister Kang Sun Nam said the arrival in Busan port of a US Ohio-class submarine "may fall under the conditions of the use of nuclear weapons specified in the DPRK law on the nuclear force policy", referring to North Korea by its official name.

North Korea last year adopted



a sweeping nuclear law, setting out an array of scenarios in which it could use its nukes, including pre-emptive nuclear strikes if threatened.

Kang said the presence of the sub was an "undisguised and direct nuclear threat to the DPRK", and meant that "strategic nuclear weapons have been deployed on the Korean peninsula for the first time after 40 odd years."

"The US military side should realise that its nuclear assets have entered extremely dangerous waters," he said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol visited the Ohio-class submarine Wednesday, and warned Pyongyang that were it to

use nuclear weapons against the South, "it will lead to the demise of its regime".

Ohio-class subs can carry up to 20 Trident II ballistic missiles. The US Navy typically does not confirm if a submarine is carrying nuclear weapons before it goes out to sea.

The allies also held their first Nuclear Consultative Group meeting in Seoul Tuesday, to improve their joint response to any nuclear attack by North Korea.

It appears that the deployment of the submarine has rattled the North, Hong Min, a researcher at the Korea Institute for National Unification, told AFP.

"Pyongyang's message is that the US and South Korea are acting in a manner that is bring-

ing the North closer to consider invoking its nuclear weapons use guidelines," he said.

"Yoon's comment during his visit to the submarine mentioning the end of the North Korean regime appears to have rattled Pyongyang a lot, prompting it to react much more aggressively."

North Korea has conducted a string of banned weapons tests this year, including twice launching its newest solid fuel Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile.

Seoul and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in response, staging joint military exercises with advanced stealth jets and US strategic assets.

Washington first announced it would deploy a submarine capable of launching ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads to the Korean peninsula in April, while Yoon was on a state visit.

North Korea balks at having US nuclear assets deployed around the Korean peninsula.

Kang said that for Washington and Seoul, "any use of their military muscle against the DPRK will be their most miserable choice by which they will have no room to think of their exist-



33PE5DL

Woohae Cho / Pool / AFP

ence again".

Pyongyang's statement comes as an American soldier, Travis King, is believed to be in North Korean custody after crossing the border during a tourist trip to the Joint Security Area in the Demilitarised Zone on Tuesday.

Pyongyang has a long history of detaining Americans and using

them as bargaining chips in bilateral ties. It has not yet issued any comment on King.

The US-led United Nations Command has said it is working with North Korea's military to "resolve this incident".

But with relations between Pyongyang and Washington at one of their lowest points in years,

experts say it will be difficult to gain consular access to King.

In addition, nearly all foreign embassies in Pyongyang withdrew foreign staff after North Korea closed its borders in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

That includes Sweden, which handles US consular affairs in the North Korean capital.

PIA passengers can fly to 16 Chinese cities via Beijing



Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Passengers traveling by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) can now fly between Pakistan and 16 captivating cities in China via Beijing in partnership with Air China.

The Chinese cities include Guangzhou, Shanghai, Wuhan, Chengdu, Chongqing, Changchun, Hangzhou, Harbin, etc, an official of PIA told APP on Saturday.

The national flag carrier has also offered a 20 percent discount for students on flights between Pakistan and China.

PIA offers low fares with free baggage of 80 Kg for economy class and 100 Kg for executive economy class respectively.

PIA has already announced that it will resume its flight operation to China from August 06.

Initially, PIA will operate one weekly flight on the Islamabad-Beijing-Islamabad route every Sunday with departure from Beijing at 21:15.

According to the official, the one-way fare from Beijing to Islamabad is 3814 RMB and the fare for the Return ticket is 5685 RMB.

The passengers can avail of further discounts if tickets are purchased online.

Punjab to fully promote aquaculture: Bilal Afzal

Bureau Report



LAHORE: The caretaker provincial minister for forests, fisheries and environment Bilal Afzal has said that the Green Pakistan project is very important for the economic development of the country in which the Punjab government will play its full role. He expressed these views in a meeting with the delegation of Pakistan Kisan Etihad in his office. He said that along with agriculture, fish farming would also be fully promoted, while steps would be taken to establish Punjab Fisheries Development Board and Aquaculture Association. Bilal Afzal welcomed the suggestions of the participants for the improvement of agriculture and fish farming and assured that research and teaching programs would be started in universities on aquaculture. The representatives of Kisan Etihad demanded the government to lift the ban on the import of Genetically modified organism (GMO) soybean seeds. "Aqua Excellence Center should be established in Punjab and cheap sources of energy such as solar energy and biogas should be promoted as well," they further added. Among others, central Spokesperson of Kisan Etihad Saeed Dogar, CEO of AllTech Islamabad Dr. Shahzad Navid Jadoon, President of Fish Market Lahore Ibad Hussain, Head of AMG Feed Mills Nabil Chaudhry and President of Fish Farmers Union Multan Chaudhry Salahuddin, were also present in the meeting.

Rupee crashes for 6th session to 286.81 versus dollar

TLTP

KARACHI: Pakistani rupee crashed against the US dollar in the interbank market for the sixth successive session by Rs1.66 (-0.58 percent) on Friday.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said in a tweet that the rupee opened at 285.15 against the dollar in the interbank market and closed at 286.81. During the last six sessions, the rupee has weakened against the US dollar by Rs10.35 in the interbank market.

Similarly, the local unit depreciated against the greenback in the open market by Rs3 (-1.03 percent). The rupee was quoted in the range of 291-294 against the dollar in the open market as compared to 288-Hundi, the dollar was quoted at Rs310 against Rs305 a session earlier.

During the current fiscal year 2023-24, Pakistani rupee has shed Rs0.78 against the US dollar in the interbank market, while it plummeted by Rs59.38 against the greenback in the current year.

SECP and PTA foster collaboration for a safer digital ecosystem

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Mr. Akif Saeed, held a meeting with the Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, HI (M), aimed at fostering effective collaboration and exploring areas of mutual interest between the two institutions.

The Chairman SECP was accompanied by the Commissioner Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi and Head of Specialized Companies Division Khalida Habib.

The high-level meeting witnessed constructive discussions and deliberations on several key areas of mutual interest. Both organizations firmly expressed their commitment to enhance collaboration to make Pakistan's digital/cyber landscape more secure.

Recognizing the significance of joint efforts, it was agreed that SECP and PTA will formalize their collaboration through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU will lay a foundation for future collaborative initia-



tives, strategically aimed at fortifying the regulatory framework and effectively dealing with issues falling within their respective regulatory space.

Specific to illegal lending Apps it was agreed to set up a joint monitoring and reporting mechanism for ensuring appropriate and timely action.

The Chairman SECP apprised his counterpart about the SECP framework for digital lending apps, the envisioned role of cyber security auditors to certify the confidentiality and security requirements of digital apps. It was informed that the SECP publishes a Whitelist on its website for validating the legal status of digital lending apps operate in Pakistan. Akif informed the Chairman PTA that, in light of the growing digitization in the corporate and financial sectors, SECP is building a cyber security framework and would share it with PTA for feedback.

The Chairman PTA, appreciated SECP's extensive regulatory framework for lending Apps, specially highlighting the importance of data localization measures.

Both regulators agreed to launch a joint awareness campaign in Pakistan to raise awareness about illegal digital lending app risks. This regular feature aims to protect the public from potential fraudulent practices.

The meeting culminated on a positive note with both parties looking forward to implementing the discussed initiatives.

Customs Collectorate Multan Region carried out an intelligence-based operation and seized smuggled goods

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Collector Customs Multan Region Dr. Rahmatullah Vastro Said in order to prevent smuggling, the series of mega crackdown continues in southern Punjab including Multan, Multan Customs Collectorate Enforcement has seized non-customs paid goods and vehicles worth Rs 14 crore 98 in July while carrying out operations against smuggled goods. While doing so, he said that the anti-traffic organization had received a tip-off two days ago

After receiving information from reliable sources, Customs Collectorate Multan raided the warehouse of the bus stand after confirming that there was a large amount of smuggled cigarettes and Indian brand Ratna Gutka in a warehouse near Vehari Chowk Bus Stand in Multan and confiscated foreign cigarettes and Ratna Gutka worth more than 7 crore rupees on the spot. There has been a continuous increase in the smuggling of Iranian oil and diesel in the country, which the customs teams are continuously working within their limits.

However, there is a need to create a better



policy for the prevention of smuggling so that smuggling can be eliminated by promoting legal trade. Collector Customs said that Multan Customs Enforcement is always active in preventing evils such as smuggling despite limited resources. However, for the complete elimination of smuggling, there is a dire need for timely information exchange and cooperation between the relevant institutions so that the society can be freed from smuggling. In response to a question, he said that Iranian diesel sold at petrol pumps and Action

against petrol is the responsibility of Ogra. Because we have been stopped in this regard, during the last one week, more than 10 cases of confiscation have been made in the limits of customs enforcement including Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur. He said that he completely rejects the impression that the government has prevented us from taking action against smugglers. The customs agency is actively working to eliminate smuggling within its borders and the prevention of smuggling cases is increasing every month.

PTEA seeks govt's intervention as exports in line with regional standards



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) has sought Government's intervention as textile industry has lost its compatibility against the regional competitors; our textile exports are witnessing drastic downfall on account of disadvantage in respect of production costs.

Expressing deep concern over the current economic uncertainty, PTEA's spokesperson, in a statement has said that the economic slowdown pulled country's exports down and experienced a troubling trend of negative growth right from the beginning of the outgoing fiscal year, except for a slight increase in August 2022. Terming high production cost as the major factor behind this decline, he said that due to inefficient and unfriendly socio-economic environment, the cost of doing business in Pakistan has escalated enormously due to intermittent raise in the prices of raw materials and production inputs rendering our exports uncompetitive in international market. Terming Large-Scale Manufacturing sector as a major economic driver, accounting for almost a quarter of the total GDP, he said that in May 2023, LSM experienced a concerning 14.37% year-on-year decrease. The 11-month period of FY-2023 also shows an overall decline of 9.87% year-on-year. The sector's drop is a concerning indicator for the economy, which is already confronted with a number of issues, including high inflation, a growing current account deficit, and a falling rupee. Government must take cognizance of

serious matter and step up to save industrial sector from disaster as high production cost is holding it back from growing up to full potential. Taking advantage, rival countries are creeping into our traditional markets, he lamented. With Government support, they have accelerated export growth and have increased their market share in global trade.

He was of the view that high priced energy which accounts for approximately 30-40% of production expenses, has immensely damaged the export growth and adversely impacted the textile industry. Withdrawal of Regional Competitive Energy Tariffs shall turn out to be further disastrous for textile industry which is already facing a serious blow of non-viability. The government should encourage exports and export-oriented sectors to have long-term sustainability in the balance of payments. Textile exports have witnessed a massive increase of over 55 percent from \$ 12.5 billion in FY 2020 to \$19.5 billion in FY 2022 as a direct consequence of the competitive energy tariff. He urged the Government for implementation of WACOG based uniform gas tariff across the country, the only workable solution which allows the creation of a combined and logical gas market.

It was demanded that the government must take cognizance of serious matter to safeguard country's exports and employment. Textile industry is the only hope for revival of country's economy which is currently jolted by high cost of doing business.

Waiting for customers

RAWALPINDI: A street vendor is waiting for customers to sell lemons and earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.



Photo: Online

Realtors demand urgent withdrawal of high taxes on real estate sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The construction and real estate sector is the backbone of the economy as it facilitates the growth of over 70 allied industries, generates economic activities, attracts investment and creates plenty of new jobs. However, the government in the budget 23-24 has imposed high taxes on the real estate sector that would destroy property businesses and ultimately retard the overall growth of the economy. Therefore, the government should urgently engage realtors in consultation and rationalize high taxes on this important sector to save the businesses and the economy from their destructive consequences. This was stressed by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) while addressing a seminar on tax issues of real estate sector organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA) and Federal of Realtors Pakistan (FORP).

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that many businesses from real estate sectors have already closed down due to high tax rates and if these taxes were not revised, more businesses would face closure. He said that instead of imposing high taxes, the government should provide attractive incentives to the construction and real estate sector that would bring more investment to the country and help in early revival of the economy. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with IEAA and FORP in



their efforts for resolving tax issues. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President, Islama-

bad Estate Agents Association and President, Federation of Pakistan Realtors highlighted the major tax issues of the real estate sector. He said that the 1% tax on deemed income of immovable assets under Sec-7E entails destructive consequences for the real estate and property sector and urged that the government should immediately withdraw this tax to save the real estate businesses from collapse. He said that the WHT on filer buyers and sellers has been raised from 2% to 3% while on non-filer buyers, it has been from 7% to 10.5% and on non-filer sellers from 4% to 6%. He said that these tax measures would have counterproductive impact as they would promote tax evasion instead of improving the tax revenue for the country. He cautioned

that if the government did not revise high taxes on the real estate sector, the realtors would launch a strong protest against such coercive tax measures.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI & CEO Centaurus, Musarrat Ejaz Khan Chairman Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Abid Khan Chairman IEAA, Ch. Zahid Rafiq Secretary General IEAA, Ch. Masood & Ch. Abdul Rauf former Presidents IEAA, Malik Rahim Tufail, Rana Arshad and others also spoke on the occasion and called upon the government to withdraw high taxes on the real estate sector to save the economy from further troubles.

Shoaib Akhtar irked over Babar Azam's absence from World Cup promo

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar expressed his disappointment over the absence of Babar Azam from the recently-unveiled promo for the ICC Men's World Cup 2023.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday, released a promo video for the mega event featuring superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

The promo, released on all ICC social media platforms, became cricket fans' attention within minutes but it did not go well with Pakistan fans.

The two-minute-long video promo was alleged to under-represent Pakistan and also did not feature the top ODI batter, Babar Azam.

Besides being the top-ranked batter in the 50-over format, Babar Azam is the current ICC Men's ODI Player of the Year and Sir Garfield Sobers ICC Player of the Year.

He is also currently the only batter to feature in top-three of all-format ICC rankings.

Consequently, former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar, known for his blunt opinions, did not mince his word while criti-



cising the promo for under-representing Pakistan and the absence of Babar Azam.

"Whoever thought that World Cup promo will be complete without Pakistan & Babar Azam's significant presence, has actually presented himself as a joke. Come on guys, time to grow up a bit," wrote Shoaib Akhtar.

To hype the ICC Men's World Cup, the cricketing governing body produced a

promotional video for their forthcoming extravaganza and called one of India's most famous stars Khan to be the face of their advertising.

The 2-minute long video, centred on the tournament's ethos and tagline — 'All it takes is one day', is narrated by Shah Rukh Khan.

"The difference between making history and being history: one day. Jerseys will

be worn, and chests will swell with pride, on that one day. Passion will triumph logic, and memories will be etched, on that one day. Fears will be conquered, and odds will be braved, on that one day. From the highs of joy, to the lows of anguish, it will all be embraced, on that one day," narrates Khan.

"Rivalries will be redefined on the pitch, and respect reimagined in the stands. The power of belief will emerge from the hearts of a billion. Songs will be sung, dances will be danced, and eyes will widen in wonder, on that one day. And when that day comes, and when that day finally comes, glory will be immortalized," continued Khan.

"This is the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, for everything ever dreamt for, pushed for, lived for, it takes one day," concludes the movie star in the video.

The video features montages of iconic moments from the previous editions of the World Cup.

It also stars guest appearances from 2019 World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan, Dinesh Karthik, Jonny Rhodes, Muttiah Muralitharan, Shubman Gill and Jimimah Rodrigues dancing with cricket fans.

Lionel Messi scores late winner on magical Inter Miami debut

Spots Desk

LAHORE: Lionel Messi made a Hollywood start to his American adventure, scoring a last-second winner with a curling free-kick in his debut game for Inter Miami on Friday.

Deep in the fourth minute of stoppage time, with the Leagues Cup match against Mexican club Cruz Azul standing at 1-1, Lionel Messi won a free-kick just outside the box, in perfect range for his famous left foot.

The script had been written and Messi delivered his line perfectly.

The seven-times Ballon d'Or winner took a glance at the position of Cruz Azul goalkeeper Andres Gudino, then put his head down before curling his shot high to the keeper's right and into the top corner to deliver the 2-1 triumph.

The capacity 20,000 crowd at Miami's DRV PNK Stadium went wild, with some fans running onto the field before being apprehended by security. Smoke bombs in Miami's trademark pink went off in the area behind the goal, occupied by the team's most passionate supporters.

"We wanted to start like this by giving these people a victory," said Messi.

"We knew that it was very important for us to start this championship in winning fashion and luckily we were able to do it in the end, and I am very happy," he added.

Inter Miami are rock bottom of Major League Soccer and without a win in 11 games in league play, so Messi said the victory was sorely needed.

"It is a huge joy to get this first victory after how we have done in the league," he said. "It is important to start winning, beyond the fact that it is another championship, for confidence it is very good to get victories."

Inter Miami and Major League Soccer hope that the arrival of the Argentine World Cup winner and all-time great will transform the sport and push it into the American mainstream.

If Lionel Messi's debut was any guide, the former Barcelona star still has plenty to offer.

Even before his wonderful goal he had



looked sharp and alert, his touch belying the fact that until little over a week ago he was vacationing on a Caribbean beach with his family.

Sergio Busquets, the Spanish midfielder and former Barca team-mate, who has joined Lionel Messi for his American adventure, also made a strong impression after they both entered the contest in the 54th minute as part of a triple change with Venezuelan Josef Martinez.

Busquets showed his famous, almost telepathic understanding with Lionel Messi remains, after over two years apart from each other, with the midfielder delivering pieces from all angles into the Argentine's feet.

But it was Lionel Messi's magical finish that will remain long in the memories of Inter Miami fans.

He also made sure that the club's co-owner David Beckham had a broad grin at the final whistle.

"To be honest, as soon as I saw the free kick given I thought this is the way it's meant to end. Especially when you've got players like Leo and Sergio on the pitch, that's what they produce," said the former England midfielder.

"It's so exciting tonight for our fans. All of these people that come down here to see Leo just step onto the pitch, let alone just do what he's done. It's a dream come true for everyone in this stadium to see."

"It's such a moment for this country, such a moment for this league," he said.

Lionel Messi became the biggest name signing in MLS's history when he joined Miami after his contract with Paris Saint-Germain came to an end in June.

NBA great LeBron James, reality television star Kim Kardashian and tennis legend Serena Williams were among the stars who turned out.

Many fans were decked out in replica pink Miami shirts with Messi's name and

number 10 on the back. Others sported Messi masks and banners, one wore a goat mask in a nod to Messi's Greatest Of All Time status.

There was some disappointment when the teams were announced with Messi on the bench and it was clear that plans had been made to celebrate his first start as fireworks exploded above the grandstands when the referee blew the whistle to start the encounter.

Against the run of play, after Cruz Azul wasted a series of chances, Miami took the lead in the 44th minute with a fine, low shot from Robert Taylor which flew off the post.

Lionel Messi and Busquets came in with that lead intact but saw the Mexicans draw level through a powerful drive from Uriel Antuna in the 65th minute.

Then came Messi's moment, the perfect introduction to his new fans and his new country.

Pakistan U-16 volleyball team makes a triumph start in the 1st Asian Men's U-16 Volleyball Championship



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan U-16 Volleyball team began their journey in the highly anticipated 1st Asian Men's U-16 Volleyball Championship scheduled from 22-29 July 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan with a very good victory over Chinese Taipei.

In the opening match Pakistan Team showcased remarkable skills, resilience, and teamwork, defeating Chinese Taipei with a decisive 3-0 set (25-15, 25-18, 25-16). The victory marks a spectacular start for the team and sets a promising tone for their upcoming matches.

Ch. Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman, Pakistan Volleyball Federation expressed his delight in the team's outstanding performance, saying, "Our young athletes have showcased immense talent and potential. It is a proud moment for us as they display their commitment and passion for the sport. We are confident that they will continue to shine throughout the championship."

The Pakistan U-16 Volleyball team's success was a result of the tireless efforts put in by the coaching staff, led by Head Coach, Saeed Ahmad Khan Sady. The meticulous training and strategic planning contributed significantly to the team's victory on the court.

The Pakistan Volleyball Federation extends its heartfelt congratulations to the U-16 Volleyball team for their triumphant start in the championship. The federation remains committed to supporting and nurturing the young talents of Pakistan, empowering them to achieve new heights in the world of volleyball.

The Pakistan Team will play its next match on 24 July 2023 with Mongolia.

Parnell takes five-for as Seattle Orcas sink Texas Super Kings in MLC



A Sports

MORRISVILLE: South African pacer Wayne Parnell dismantled Texas Super Kings with an economical five-wicket haul and led Seattle Orcas to a dominant eight-wicket victory in the Major League Cricket (MLC).

Put into bat first in the top-table MLC clash, Texas Super Kings endured Wayne Parnell's attack, who returned figures of 5/20 to book them for a paltry total of 127. The Super Kings had a dismal start as they lost in-form Devon Conway, who fell for a golden duck on the very first delivery of the innings.

Skipper Faf du Plessis (13 off 10) and Cody Chetty then put on an anchoring 36-run partnership for the second wicket before both perished in successive overs.

Chetty scored 22 off 18 deliveries, laced with two boundaries and a six before falling to Parnell.

Following Chetty's dismissal, the Super Kings ran into a frustrating collapse and soon slipped to 48/6 in the ninth over.

Experienced all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, alongside Daniel Sams, tried to anchor the innings with a vital 56-run partnership for the seventh wicket. The pair appeared to have settled down before Andrew Tye got rid of Sams to get a much-needed breakthrough for his side in the 17th over. Sams could score 26 from 19 balls, hitting a boundary and two sixes.

Bravo, on the other hand, stood his ground firm before falling victim to a ruthless final over by Wayne Parnell, which saw Super Kings losing three wickets including a run out.

Bravo top-scored for the Super Kings with a run-a-ball 39 which featured four boundaries and a six.

Wood strikes for England in fourth Ashes Test after Bairstow runs riot

Spots Desk

LAHORE: Fast bowler Mark Wood ripped through Australia's top order following Jonny Bairstow's thrilling 99 not out as England strengthened their grip on a must-win fourth Ashes Test at Old Trafford on Friday.

Australia were 113-4 in their second innings at stumps on the third day, still 162 runs behind England's huge first-innings 592.

Mark Wood had superb figures of 3-17 from seven overs, a haul that included the 100th Test wicket of an injury-blighted career.

England, at 2-1 down with two to play in, must win in Manchester if they are to stand a chance of regaining the Ashes.

Forecast rain over the weekend could scupper their hopes, but Bairstow told the BBC: "We've put ourselves into a position taking four wickets tonight that hopefully, well, we've done everything that we could've done in the game."

"The weather is the weather. What comes will come and we can control what we have done so far in the game which is score at a rate that puts us in a position that hopefully forces a result," the 33-year-old Yorkshireman added.

Wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow followed his blistering 81 ball-assault, which included 10 fours and four sixes, by holding a routine edge off Wood as Australia lost Usman Khawaja early in their innings.

David Warner, Australia's other left-handed opener, survived against nemesis Stuart Broad before uncertainly chopping onto Chris Woakes for 28.

Mark Wood's 100th Test wicket arrived when Australia star batsman Steve Smith was caught down the legside by Bairstow for just 17.

Durham express quick Wood, 33, again showed the value of sheer speed when Travis Head, on one, was undone by a rising delivery that took the shoulder

of the bat before looping to Ben Duckett in the gully.

Marnus Labuschagne was 44 not out at stumps, with Mitchell Marsh unbeaten on one off 27 balls.

England had already enjoyed a remarkable run-spree, with opener Zak Crawley top-scoring with 189 when Bairstow came in at 437-5 on Friday.

Jonny Bairstow, one of the stand-out batsmen during England's 'Bazball' era of aggressive run-scoring, was only on 49 not out when joined by last man James Anderson.

He pulled a six off Mitchell Starc to complete his fifty in style.

Jonny Bairstow also hoisted Australia captain Pat Cummins for two soaring sixes off successive balls, even though by then all the fielders — with the exception of wicketkeeper Alex Carey — were on the boundary, a sure sign of how England had rattled their arch-rivals.

There were more cheers from the crowd when the last-wicket



pair ran a bye, who had controversially stumped Jonny Bairstow during the second Ashes Test at Lord's when the England batsman thought the

ball was dead. Having turned down the chance to get the two he needed for his hundred by only running a single, Jonny Bairstow finished

one shy of what would have been a dazzling century after Anderson was low to Cameron Green, in what could be the 40-year-old England great's last Test on his

Lancashire home ground.

"Jimmy and I put on 66 for the last wicket," said Bairstow. "We took the runs we could and it (being left 99 not out) is just one of those things."

All of Australia's three front-line bowlers, conceded more than 100 runs each, with Josh Hazlewood taking 5-126 in his 27 overs.

Hazlewood defended the way Australia bowled at Bairstow and Anderson.

"Bairstow had some incredible shots there at the end. So credit to him," he said.

England resumed on the third day of the fourth Ashes Test at 384-4, with Harry Brook 14 not out and England captain Ben Stokes unbeaten 24 not out.

Both batsmen went on to make the fifties as Australia twice missed chances to run out Stokes.

Cummins bowled Stokes for 61 but the 30-year-old fast bowler's figures of 1-129 were the most expensive of his 54-Test career.