

No increase in power tariff for consumers of 200 units per month: PM

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the 63% domestic consumers using up to 200 units per month would be exempted from the recent increase in power tariff. A partial subsidy was also being given to those consuming up to 300 units per month... (Details on Page 8)



Masood Khan urges Pakistani students visiting US to gain new knowledge, skills

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has told a group of 25 Pakistani students, currently in the U. S. on an education programme, to use this opportunity to broaden their intellectual horizon. The students are here under 'Study of the US Institutes' (SUSI) programme, which is aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting educational cooperation between Pakistan and the U. S. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Inauguration

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveiling the plaque of the groundbreaking of Ombre Special Economic Zone Lahore on Monday.



Photo: PID

COAS Asim Munir, US Centcom chief discuss regional security



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: US Central Command (Centcom) chief General Michael Erik Kurilla called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir at the military's General Headquarters.

The statement of the ISPR said that Commander Centcom called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Syed Asim Munir wherein matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and stability, defence and security cooperation, particularly military-to-military ties, were discussed during the meeting.

The visiting dignitary

acknowledged Pakistan's achievements in the war against terrorism and lauded Pakistan's efforts for regional peace and stability.

In his last visit in 2022, the US Centcom chief laid a floral wreath at Martyrs' Monument in honour of the Martyrs of Pakistan.

A smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan army presented a guard of honour to the visiting dignitary.

The visiting dignitary also visited Torkham where it was appraised on counter-terrorism and border management mechanisms in place along Pakistan-Afghanistan Border.

Modern technology, alternative energy inevitable to achieve exports competitiveness: PM

Spokesman Report

SHEIKHUPURA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the utilization of modern technology and alternative energy by the industrial sector were inevitable to make exports competitive in the international market.

The prime minister, addressing the soft launching of Ombre Special Economic Zone, Sundar Green Special Economic Zone and Smart Special Economic Zone, said owing to surging oil prices, the only option was to exploit the potential of solar, wind and hydel energy for the cost-effectiveness of local products.

He said the issue of circular debt was required to be addressed on a war-footing basis, which was swelling due to wasting billions of rupees annually because of line and transmission losses as well as power theft.

The prime minister appreciated the private sector for chalking out a plan to establish the three special economic zones and assured all-out support from the federal and Punjab governments.

He said the commitment by the private sector to attract investment worth billions of rupees was also laudable, besides their plans to set up a three-megawatt solar power plant and other allied facilities like the vocational training center.

He hoped that the interim government would also take all possible measures to keep the national economy on track of progress, as the incumbent one was already making necessary legislation to pave the way for future course of action.

The prime minister told the gathering that an agreement between Pakistan and Azerbaijan for the import of LNG was signed earlier in the day under which the latter would provide an LNG shipment per month with the former having the option to purchase it or not, in accordance with the needs and without any penalty.

Similarly, he said, the private sector should also sign the deals with Qatar to import LNG for industrial use – not for sale in the market – and assured that the Federal Government would facilitate them at the Karachi Port. Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for spreading the network of SEZs across the country. He said during Nawaz Sharif's last government, the SEZs were planned across the country under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, but, despite complete mapping and other formalities, all the projects faced unnecessary delay, except Rashakai.

He said the agreement with International Monetary Fund was signed to ebb away the risk of default and put the country on the course toward progress.

The prime minister said as far as the SEZs by the public sector were concerned, the government would provide land free of charge to the investors, as it had done for the Bahawalpur Solar Park.

However, he said the use of SEZs' land for non-industrial use would not be tolerated and recalled similar "misconduct" by some parties in Faisalabad and other SEZs where people had been minting money by selling out the land.

CPEC from vision to reality



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A two-day international conference, themed "Decade of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Belt & Road Initiative (BRI): From Vision To Reality," started here on Monday to mark the 10-year celebrations of CPEC.

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has organized the conference in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, a news release said.

The key objective of the conference is to bring together policymakers, scholars, practitioners and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and insights related to the economic, social, environmental and geopolitical impacts of CPEC and BRI.

Chinese Charge d'Affaires Pang Chunxue was the

chief guest on the first day of the conference, which was attended among others by Secretary Planning Syed Zafar Ali Shah and Chief Economist of Pakistan Dr Nadeem Javaid, who is also Project Director of CPEC.

Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr Mukhtar Ahmed and hundreds of policymakers and experts were present on the first day of the conference. Chief Economist Dr Nadeem Javaid, in the inaugural session, said the objective of the conference revolved around the socioeconomic impact of CPEC and opportunities for industry relocation, the prospect of regional connectivity and technology transfer, enhanced cooperation for security, geopolitical implications to overcome challenges and maximizing synergies in CPEC and BRI initiatives, besides people-to-people connectivity.

Interim PM to be appointed as per Constitution: Marriyum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the caretaker prime minister would be appointed as per the procedure enshrined in the Constitution.

The announcement for the purpose would also be made accordingly, the minister said in a news statement.

According to the Constitution, the prime minister and the opposition leader would finalize the interim PM's appointment after consultation, Marriyum noted.

She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would consult with allied parties and also seek the guidance of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in that regard.

Senate passes eight bills, refers others to relevant committees for review

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Upper House of Parliament approved eight bills and sent several others to relevant committees for further review and discussion during Senate proceedings on Monday.

Additionally, during the same session, several other bills were referred to relevant committees.

This move is part of the parliamentary procedure to ensure thorough consideration and detailed examination of these bills before they can be potentially passed into law.

During Monday's Senate proceedings, the Upper House of Parliament approved a series of bills, including The Horizon University Bill, 2023, which received unanimous support.

Senator Hidayatullah presented this bill.

Another bill, titled Imam Bukhari International Islamic University Sialkot Bill 2023, was also

successfully passed by the Senate, and Senator Professor Sajid Mir played a key role in its presentation.

Additionally, the Senate approved the National University of Security Sciences Islamabad Bill 2023, which was moved by Senator Rana Mehmood ul Hassan.

Furthermore, the Contempt of Parliament Bill, 2023, was presented by Senator Kauda Babar and others, and it received the Senate's approval.

Among the bills passed during the proceedings, the NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan (Amendment) Bill, 2023, stood out, and credit for its presentation goes to Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Lastly, the Senate approved the Institute of Management Sciences and Technology Bill, 2023, which was presented by Senator Rana Maqbool Hussain.

Civil judge's wife in the dock for 'torturing 14-year-old domestic help'



Correspondent

SARGODHA: The wife of a civil judge posted at the Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad has allegedly tortured a domestic worker.

Reports said 14-year-old Rizwana, who hails from 88 North, Sargodha, was given a job as domestic help through Mukhtar at the house of the civil judge.

According to the parents of the girl, their daughter was employed six months ago. They said their daughter was subjected to severe torture by the wife of the judge.

They alleged that Rizwana's body had marks of severe torture which was inflicted on her by the judge's wife.

The civil judge posted at the Judicial Academy, however, said there was no violence against the girl.

ECP issues non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chief in contempt case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday evening issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chief, IPP leader Fawad Chaudhry, and former PTI secretary general Asad Umar.

A four-member ECP bench, headed by Member Sindh Nisar Durrani heard the ECP contempt plea against PTI chief, Fawad Chaudhry and Asad Umar. However, lawyers representing them did not appear before the ECP.

Umar's assistant lawyer requested the commission to exempt him from appearing because Umar had cases against him, adding that he had got an appointment from doctor. "Umar kept on

presenting before the ECP," he added.

Member ECP ordered him to file the plea.

Chaudhry's assistant lawyer told the ECP that Chaudhry was in Lahore while his lawyer Faisal Chaudhry was in the IHC.

The capital police have been directed to arrest the PTI chief and present him at 10am before the electoral watchdog. The ECP will hear the plea tomorrow (Tuesday).

Lawyer murder case
Earlier, a three-member bench of the Supreme Court on Monday barred the law-enforcement agencies from arresting the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief till next date of hearing on Aug 9 in lawyer Abdul Razaq Sharif murder case.

Agreement

LAHORE: Masood Nabi, MD Pakistan LNG Ltd and Ms Mariam Alamszade, CEO SOCAR signing an agreement for LNG cargo on Monday on behalf of Pakistan and Azerbaijan respectively. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other dignitaries witnessing the ceremony.



Photo: PID

No increase in power tariff for consumers of 200 units per month: PM

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the 63% domestic consumers using up to 200 units per month would be exempted from the recent increase in power tariff.

A partial subsidy was also being given to those consuming up to 300 units per month, who were around 31% of the total domestic consumers, he added.

"Due to the toughest conditions from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government had to raise the electricity prices but I stressed that the burden should not be passed on to the protected

segments of the society," he said after witnessing the signing of a framework agreement between the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) Trading and the Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL).

The framework agreement was signed by PLL Managing Director Masood Nabi and Chief Executive Officer of SOCAR Trading Mariam Alamszade.

Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Punjab Governor Balegh Ur Rehman, diplomats and government officials were also present on the occasion.

Under the framework agreement, the SOCAR Trading has offered supply one cargo per

month of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Pakistan on flexible terms and with the credit line for 30 days after delivery of the cargo in one year contract which is extendable by another year.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said it was really a great day as "we are standing here as brothers from two brotherly countries—Pakistan and Azerbaijan".

He expressed good wishes for President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev whom he met in Baku few weeks ago and thanked him for finalizing the agreement.

"We had extremely productive and very fruitful discussion over there as to how to

promote economic relations between the two friendly countries," he said, adding immediately on his return to home, the Government of Pakistan accorded approval to the Azerbaijan Airline to land at Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

"This is a big step forward to promote tourism and investment, and exchange of delegations between the two countries."

The prime minister also appreciated and thanked Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, DrMusadik Malik, secretary petroleum, Pakistan's ambassador in Azerbaijan, SOCAR Trading CEO, and PLL MD for their efforts to conclude the framework agreement.

The ambassador of Azerbaijan in Islamabad, on the occasion, said the framework agreement would help further strengthen bilateral economic relations.

He said the cooperation between the two countries remained sustainable since the start of diplomatic ties.

He said approval of giving airspace to the Azerbaijan Airline would increase the number of visitors and business delegations between the two countries.

A team of horticulture experts from Azerbaijan was arriving in Pakistan to share their first hand experience in the sector with the Pakistani authorities, he added.

President for Fostering Trade and Economic Linkages with Ethiopia



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ethiopia to foster trade and economic linkages with Ethiopia by facilitating and enhancing interactions between the two countries' business communities. He also urged the Ambassador to work towards increasing trade volume with Ethiopia by reaching out to Ethiopian businesspersons for the import of Pakistani products. The President made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Mian Atif Sharif, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

Talking to the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan-Ethiopia bilateral ties were marked by common history, interests, and support for each other on various international fora. He said that the bilateral relations between the two countries needed to be further cemented by taking the mutual

trade volume to its fullest potential. The President also called for enhancing cooperation in the field of education and people-to-people contacts, adding that students in Ethiopia could benefit from online/video educational materials/courses of the Virtual University of Pakistan and Allama Iqbal Open University to enhance their skill sets.

He stated that Pakistan's offer of training young Ethiopian Diplomats at the Foreign Service Academy and scholarships for banking courses would further help improve bilateral ties with Ethiopia. The President asked the Ambassador to create awareness in Ethiopia about the rising tide of Islamophobia in the world and the need for collective efforts to promote inter-faith harmony and mutual respect. He also urged the newly-appointed envoy to highlight the human rights violations and atrocities being committed by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as well as the maltreatment of minorities in India.

Iranian envoy calls on Finance Minister to discuss trade, investment and security



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan H. E. Mr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division, today. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar warmly welcomed the Ambassador and extended felicitations on assuming the charge of Ambassador in Pakistan. The Finance Minister extended blessings to the Iranian leadership and people on the start of new Islamic year. The Finance Minister highlighted deep rooted historical relations between Pakistan and Iran based on age old commonalities.

Ambassador H. E. Mr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam also reciprocated the historical relations between the two countries and stressed upon the potential held by both countries for mutual cooperation. He appreciated the cooperation and support of the present government in enhancing the bilateral relations in trade

and economic fields. The two sides discussed in details various fields for mutual cooperation including trade, investment and security between the two countries. They discussed enhancing trade relations by activating the recently inaugurated border markets and opening of three more border markets between the two countries in order to achieve the optimal trade volume through the border trade mechanism and removing technical hurdles in enhancing trade relations between the two countries.

Collaboration in the banking sector between the two countries also came under discussion as the heads of central banks of two countries would meet next week in Pakistan to discuss and sort out the issues related to banking cooperation. The Finance Minister and the Ambassador appreciated the decisions of Joint Economic Ministerial Commission, which convened after 5 years and stressed upon fast track implementation of actions to enhance bilateral trade and economic ties between the two countries.

Masood Khan urges Pakistani students visiting US to gain new knowledge, skills

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has told a group of 25 Pakistani students, currently in the U. S. on an education programme, to use this opportunity to broaden their intellectual horizon.

The students are here under 'Study of the US Institutes' (SUSI) programme, which is aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting educational cooperation between Pakistan and the U. S.

The 5-week annual programme began in 2010, with the ambassador pointing out that from the 1950s till today, education has been a "robust link" between the two countries.

He congratulated the students, who called on him Sunday, on their selec-



tion and for making "us proud."

"You will take valuable inputs from here back to your own environments — this is a process of cross fertilization," the ambassador said.

Pointing out that intellectual capabilities recognize no boundaries, Masood Khan, added, "Your peers and also the environments in which you work, will benefit directly from your experience."

He expressed the hope that the experience the visiting students would gain would empower them to

replicate and adopt what they have observed during their stay in the United States.

The Ambassador reminded the students that they represented a rich civilization, having an experience of seventy-five years in nation-building and surviving many upheavals.

Masood Khan thanked the U. S. government and all those involved in organizing the SUSI programme for their commitment and support to promote educational cooperation between the two countries. He also expressed appreciation for the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and the US mentors for hosting the visiting fellows.

The Ambassador also interacted with the participants and invited them to share their thoughts about the programme and its learning experience, according to a press release of the Pakistani embassy here.

While sharing their experiences, the participants lauded the remarkable organizational skills that they observed at the individual and societal levels, the formulation and execution of policies at state and federal level, the interactive environment, the appreciation of diversity, the spirit of inclusivity, the provision of equal opportunities and presence of an informed and vigilant citizenry to guard their rights and discharge their responsibilities.

They also noted the relentless pursuit of the American dream as a defining aspect of US society.

The Ambassador extended his best wishes for their future endeavours and looked forward to their continued contributions to strengthening Pak-US relations.

Sindh governor, US Consul General exchange views on investment potential

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and US Consul General Nicole Theriot on Monday exchanged views on the investment potential in the province.

The projects in line with US Agency for International Development (USAID) were also highlighted during the US consul general's meeting with the Sindh governor.

Tessori believed that for the purpose of the bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United States, diplomacy was going to be crucial.

The Sindh governor said, "Under the auspices of USAID, the masses are receiving better facilities in the fields of health and education".

Tessori emphasised the importance of the US investment, saying, "With the US investment, employment opportunities will be created and the poverty will be reduced."

The Sindh governor apprised the US consul general of the IT programmes for paving way for the youth to become self-sufficient.

India-made eyedrops cause deaths, blindness in US, following int'l cough-syrup crisis

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: After a cough syrup claimed hundreds of lives in different countries last year, India-made eyedrops have claimed four lives, blinded 18 people, and caused infection to hundreds of others in the United States.

After inspecting Global Pharma's plant in India's Chennai city, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the US, observed that the Indian manufacturer of eye drops violated several safety norms, as per media reports.

The firm also recalled the drops in February after a recommendation from the FDA. The FDA had also stopped imports of the products.



So far, the eyedrops have caused bacterial infections in hundreds of people across the US as the medicine-related traces were detected in the blood, urine and lungs of the patients.

According to media reports, the eye drops — made in India by Global Pharma and imported to the US under two brand names, EzriCare Artificial Tears and Delsam Pharma's Artificial Tears — were linked to a deadly outbreak of drug-resistant infections in the US.

In March, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified 68 patients across 16 states with a rare strain of Pseudomonas aeruginosa, which can cause serious infections, especially in immunocompromised people. The drug-resistant strain had never been found in the country before the latest outbreak, it added.

Indian pharma history has a history of playing with lives as in December 2022, 18 children died in Uzbekistan after they allegedly consumed cough syrup 'Doc-1 Max', manufactured by an Indian firm.

Also in October last year, Indonesia banned the import of all medicines from India after the death of 99 children caused by the syrup which also killed another 69 children in Gambia.

In June this year, Liberia and Nigeria had confiscated over 250 containers of the deadly syrup.

Despite enjoying special concessions from the United States, India has proved to be an unreliable trade partner. The hundreds of deaths caused by the innocent people claimed by the Indian

Agricultural revolution will continue in Pakistan Inshallah: COAS Asim Munir

Asim Tanveer

KHANEWAL: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Monday said the government of Pakistan in collaboration with the Army would create modern farms like Khanewal model farm that would benefit the small farmers and spread the scope of Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) across the country.

On the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Khanewal Model Agriculture Farm, the Chief of Army Staff gave an important speech to the participants.

The inauguration ceremony of Khanewal Model Agriculture Farm, a flagship project of Green Pakistan Initiative was attended by the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research as the Chief Guest whereas the COAS attended the event

as Guest of Honour.

The Ceremony was also attended by Chief Minister Punjab, Government officials, agricultural experts, notable farmers and Senior Army Officials.

The Army Chief vowed to pull out Pakistan of the current crisis.

"Pakistanis are a proud, zealous and talented nation. All Pakistanis have rejected the beggar's bowl. Allah Almighty has bestowed Pakistan with all blessings. No power in the world can stop us from progressing. Agricultural revolution shall come in Pakistan, Inshallah," the Army Chief said.

He said a state was like a mother, and the relationship between the people and the state was that of love and respect. The COAS underscored that security and economy go hand in hand, whereas there was no concept of economy without security and vice versa.



Addressing the participants of the ceremony, the Army Chief read Allama Iqbal's poetic verses and emphasized on the importance of every member of the society in the development of nation. "The destiny of nations is in the hands of individuals. Every individual is the star of nation's destiny," he remarked.

According to details, subsequent to the establishment of Land Information Management System - Centre of Excellence, Launching of Green Pakistan Initiative at National Seminar on Food Security, today's inauguration of flagship farm was undertaken to ensure that Pakistan not only becomes food secure, it also produces enough surplus for exports, thereby contributing towards the national economy.

Agriculture experts including those from field crops, orchard, speciality corps, textile and livestock sectors appreciated the Government's wholeheartedness and Pak Army's assistance towards revolutionizing the agriculture sector. This is being done by promoting contemporary technology, collaboration of public and private sectors and trickling down dividends to the local farmers.

and the presence of experts, government representatives, academia, Industry and potential investors at the event.

The participants appreciated the efforts of setting up a state-of-the-art farm in a short time and introducing a new level of agriculture in Pakistan.

While interacting with the participants, COAS vowed to extend all out support to the Government of Pakistan for 'Green Pakistan Initiative' and bringing about Agricultural reforms.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Federal Minister for Food Security Tariq Bashir Cheema also addressed the ceremony and later inaugurated the Model Farm and appreciated the efforts made by the FonGrow Management towards the establishment of mechanized and technological advanced farm which will be a role model for others to follow.

10th year celebration of CPEC

ISLAMABAD: The two-day International conference, organized by the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives in collaboration with Embassy of the Republic of China, kicked off on Monday with the theme "Decade of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) & Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) from vision to reality to mark the 10-year celebrations of CPEC, Islamabad on July 24, 2023.



Photo: PID

Restore broken wall of Qasim Bagh Fort very soon in original condition: Mohsin Naqvi

Asim Tanveer

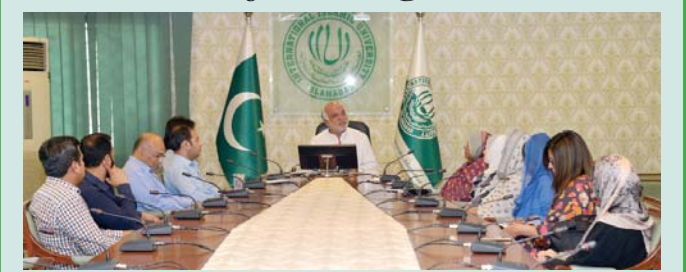
MULTAN: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh in Multan, inspected various parts. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the fortifications of Qila Kohna of Multan Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed his



displeasure over the cleaning status of Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was outraged to see dirt on the rear side of the shrine of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's order to the concerned institutions for cleaning on priority basis

Mohsin Naqvi also ordered the restoration and opening of the rear gate of Mazaar Bahauddin Zakaria. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's directive to restore the broken wall of Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh Fort of Multan is a historical asset, will be restored to its original condition. Steps will be taken to restore the wall and other damaged parts of Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh. Chief Secretary, Inspector General Police, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Additional IG South Punjab, Commissioner Multan Division and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Rana Tanveer inaugurate academic block established with Saudi funding at IIUI



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain will inaugurate the Academic and examination Block at International Islamic University (IIU) that is established with the Saudi funding to facilitate the students as per international standards.

The inauguration ceremony will be held today (Tuesday) at 12 o'clock in the New Campus. The ceremony will be attended by well-known social personalities, eminent journalists and University President Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi.

Meanwhile, in the light of President IIU's vision of providing best educational facilities to the students and solving their problems on priority basis, the committee constituted by him met here at the New Campus to review issues like SOPs to solve the problems of students and training of officials. Dean Faculty of Social Sciences Dr. Zafar Iqbal presided over the meeting. In the meeting of the committee, the solution of the problems of the students in the newly formed modern block, its inauguration and other issues were also considered. At the end, the Chair of the committee directed the three committee heads to submit their reports on next Tuesday, to finalize the action plan in this regard.

Unity Foods carries out beach cleaning activity under the Plastic Free July global initiative



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Unity Foods Limited, a leading agro-products company, organized a beach cleaning activity at the Seaview Beach, Karachi, under the Plastic Free July global initiative, first launched in July 2011 by the Plastic Free Foundation. Millions of people across the world take part every year in this initiative and Unity Foods participation has put Pakistan too on the initiative's global map.

Members of the senior management team including Mr. Salman Yousuf, Chief Marketing Officer, and Ms. Nageen Fatima Rizvi, Head of Corporate Communications, led a team of over 70 employees of the company and their children in the activity, which aimed at raising awareness of the alarming threat that plastic pollution poses to our planet, while also inculcating a sense of personal and corporate social responsibility amongst participants.

As a company that is in the primary business of supporting Pakistan's food security infrastructure, Unity Foods Limited, continually takes up initiatives that bring holistic benefits to local communities, landscapes, and social causes. The beach cleaning activity involved both employees and their children, as it also aimed at educating the future generation about the importance of countering plastic pollution, through an experiential activity.

A Record increase Cotton Cultivation in Punjab After Many Years: Mohsin Naqvi

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: An important meeting chaired by the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at the Circuit House, Multan, reviewed the steps taken to ensure the supply of cotton production and agricultural medicines. Consideration of preventive measures to protect cotton from damaging insects A record increase in the area under cotton cultivation in Punjab after many years, cotton was cultivated on an area of about 5 million acres.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi appreciated and congratulated the tireless efforts of farmers, agriculture department and administration for increasing the area under cotton cultivation. Cotton should not be sold at less than 8500 rupees. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi gave the task of ensuring the sale of cotton at the fixed rate to all the commissioners Farmers will be fully compensated for their labor. Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and concerned officers should continue field visits.



Secretary Agriculture gave a detailed briefing about the current cotton crop Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi's measures for record cotton cultivation are commendable. President of Pakistan Kissan Etihad Khalid Khokhar said after 31 years, a

high quality cotton crop was seen, the credit goes to Mohsin Naqvi and his team.

Chief Secretary, Inspector General Police, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Additional IG South Punjab, Secretary Agriculture, Commissioner Multan Division, RPO Multan, Secretary Agriculture South Punjab, Mian Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture Multan Professor Dr. Shafiqat Saeed, DG Plant Protection Karachi Allah Dutta Abid and related officials attended the meeting. Provincial Information

Minister Aamir Mir, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretaries Irrigation, Livestock, Food, Information, Finance, All Divisional Commissioners and RPOs, Chairman Punjab Information Technology Board

Shahid Sattar, Chairman Pakistan Carp Production Association Rao Rehman, Chairman Carp Life Pakistan Atif Kamal, Pesticide Expert Saad Akbar, Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad and related officials participated in the meeting through video link.

JS Bank Leadership meets the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Bank's President and CEO, Basir Shamsie, and Chief Operating Officer, Imran Haleem Shaikh, held a significant meeting with His Excellency Moazzam Ahmed Khan, the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom. The purpose of this meeting was to enhance and provide seamless and secure financial services to non-residential Pakistanis living in the UK. During the meeting, the focus was on exploring avenues to financially empower customers and cater to the ever-evolving need for simple and convenient financial mechanisms.

Additionally, the Bank seeks to empower the new generation of freelancers who aspire to receive payments for their services from across the world.

Basir Shamsie, President and CEO of JS Bank, expressed his thoughts on the collaboration, stating, "At JS Bank, our mission is to provide exemplary financial services to our customers and actively contribute to the improvement of the country's economy. This collaboration has paved the way for the bank to achieve both of these objectives. We extend our sincere gratitude to the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK for supporting us in reaching this goal."

This meeting marks a significant landmark in JS Bank's journey, presenting potential collaborations and exciting opportunities, and stays true to the Bank's unwavering commitment to addressing the unique financial requirements of its users through innovative banking products and services tailored to meet the specific needs of its diverse customer base.

JS Bank is determined to continue its efforts toward becoming the preferred bank for Pakistanis, both at home and abroad, and aspires to continue its journey of impact by providing pioneering conventional and digital financial solutions in the years to come.





Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr3:36 am
Zohr12:14 pm
Asr5:10 pm
Maghrib7:14 pm
Isha8:52 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad9222596
Rawalpindi9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi555489
CAA9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA921334-43
CDA9208301-04
Met Office9250360-6
RDA5555864
TMA5770886
Cantonment Board9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation9209224
Potohar Town9209224
Rawal Town5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-119204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-89203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-89266316
Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi0331-5022125

Govt; resolving the long-standing issues in Mirpur President AfJK



Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the government was committed to resolving the long-standing issues of Mirpur city on a priority basis. The AJK President said this while talking to a representative delegation from Mirpur that called on him here today. Led by Khawaja Tahir Pahlwan, the delegation was comprised of Director General Mangla Dam Housing Authority Chaudhry Muhammad Mansha, former Deputy Administrator Mirpur Municipality Chaudhry Anjad, Chaudhry Tahir Ayub, Chaudhry Mumtaz Rasheed, Chaudhry Zahid Ayub, Chaudhry Irfan Razaq and others. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Mirpur's long-standing problems, including early completion of the Rathoa Hariyam Bridge and Mirpur Water Supply Scheme would be resolved on an urgent basis. He said that work on sewerage and construction of roads within and outside the city was also under progress. He said that the government was also keen to address the issue of unemployment in the state. On this occasion, the delegation led by Khawaja Tahir Pahlwan gave a detailed briefing to the President regarding the problems faced by Mirpur. Barrister Chaudhry assured the visiting delegation that steps would be taken to resolve the problems of Mirpur on a priority basis. of merit, he said, was among the top most priorities of his government. He made it clear that all those found guilty of corruption would be held accountable. "There will be across the board accountability and every looted penny of the state will be recovered", the PM said.

PM to formally launch Journalists Health Insurance Card scheme on August 7: Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would formally launch Journalists Health Insurance Card Scheme on August 7. She stated this after launching the registration process for Journalists Health Insurance Scheme by uploading its form on the website of the Press Information Department and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The minister said that the health insurance form was now available online for media workers and journalists and they would be able to register themselves through the online health insurance form. The minister said that for the first time, the government had allocated Rs 1 billion for the health insurance of working journalists

in the federal budget. Marriyum Aurangzeb uploaded this online registration form along with journalists present there while Principal Information Officer Mubashar Hassan was also present on the occasion. The minister congratulated Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, PIO Mubashar Hassan and the entire team of the Ministry of Information for launching the scheme. Talking to the media persons, she said that the Prime Minister had allocated funds worth Rs 1 billion for working journalists. She said that health insurance for working journalists and artists was the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The minister said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had launched the health card scheme in 2013 which continued in the PTI era after the change of its name. She said said that an online



form of health insurance card scheme for journalists was being released. This registration form would be available on the website of the Press Information Department, she said and added that the process of registration of journalists was being started. The health insurance form was simple and easy to fill and all details related to health issues were available in the form, the minister said. She said that all health facilities were being provided to journalists in the health insurance card scheme. "Health insurance and salaries of journalists have always been an

issue in Pakistan", she remarked. During 14 months, she added Rs 110 million had been recovered from the platform of ITNE and direct payments had been made to the employees in print media. The minister said Minimum wage, job security of electronic media had been addressed in the amended PEMRA law, adding it was the Prime Minister's directive to ensure health insurance to journalists as soon as possible and all working journalists had been included. This project was for the whole of Pakistan, journalists from all over the country should start registering in it, she maintained. "Health insurance facilities from the government are for journalists across the country, not for journalists of Islamabad only", she remarked. She said during the tenure of the present coalition government, no action had been taken against journalists having critical views about its policies and performance. In the present government rule no journalists attacked, kidnapped, arrested or fired at as was the practice during the previous government, she added. "Taking a jibe on PTI tenure, regarding the title of media predator given to Imran Khan by Reporters Without Borders, she the current government did not get that title, on the contrary the ranking of freedom of expression in Pakistan improved by seven ranks. Replying to questions from media persons, she said that the health insurance scheme was not only for press club members, it was for all journalists and media workers. "It is not mandatory for a journalist to be a member of the Press Club for health insurance registration," she said.

CDA relief camp

ISLAMABAD: Sanitation Workers of Capital Development Authority are on duty at Flood Relief Camp at Super Market in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Additional taxes harming the promising sector: Atif Ikram Sheikh

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh said on Monday that additional taxes on the internet will further reduce its usage and hit the economy. IT exports are already stagnating, as output in 2023 was less than that in 2022. It fell one percent year-on-year which can be tip of the iceberg. Exports of telecom services, computer services, and information services (ICT) stood at \$2.6 billion in 2023 versus \$2.62 million in 2022, he said. Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President ICCI and Chairman PVMA said in a statement issued here today that digitalization leads to greater economic growth. Better digital connectivity results not only in more opportunities for citizens but also increases the ability to gener-



ate trade and improve employment prospects, he said. Mobile technologies generated more than \$4.5 trillion in terms of economic value addition, which is approximately 5 percent of global GDP, but according to the World Bank, almost three billion people in the world remain offline. The report says that over 40 percent of the global population does not have access to mobile broadband.

He said that according to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, the South Asian region lags behind the East Asian Pacific region in terms of digital connectivity. The former reported 82 mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people in 2021, while the latter reported 128 subscriptions. Further, while only 2.4 percent of the South Asian population is connected using fixed broadband, this surges to almost 30 percent in the East Asian and Pacific region, he added. Pakistan performs worse than its South Asian counterparts. Only 21 percent of the population uses the internet, fixed broadband connectivity is at 1.3 percent, and mobile cellular subscriptions are at 82 percent. According to a survey, over 56 percent of the manufacturing firms in Pakistan own

a website, 37 percent of the smallest firms with less than 20 employees own a website, and more than three-quarters of the largest firms, with more than 100 employees, own a website. Firms located in smaller towns are less likely to own a website than firms located in larger cities. In comparison, over 62 percent of the firms in India own a website. Atif Ikram Sheikh underlined that it is essential that Pakistan improve its quality of digital infrastructure to ensure not only better connectivity for its citizens but also to improve its economic potential. Better digital connectivity can enhance the standard of living of people as it provides better access to not only basic services but also access to important information that can aid various commercial aspects, he said.

Government urged to support housing sector to facilitate access to education in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: There is no way of economical development of Pakistan without education. Introducing a new method for reforming the education system has become need of the hour. Pakistan has the capacity to improve the education system, said Jawad Amin, Country head Mega City. He said that the Mega City has allocated a large area based on 45 kanals for the International University, the construction is being started by the International Educational Institution soon. The students of Potohar and Azad Kashmir have also bene-

fited, who have to travel long distances to Islamabad to get education. Adequate accommodation structure ensures that the educational institutions are easily accessible to the students. When schools are located in or near residential areas, it becomes easier for students to get an education. The quality of accommodation and the surrounding environment can have a significant impact on student well-being and learning outcomes. Jawad Amin said housing developments often lead to the construction of new schools or the expansion of existing educational facilities to accommodate a growing popu-



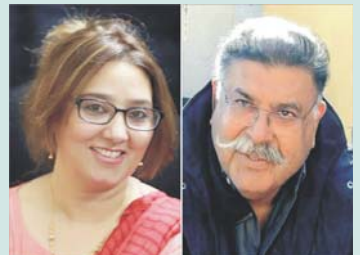
lation. As urban areas expand, the demand for educational infrastructure also increases, and the housing sector plays an important role in meeting this demand. Improvements

in the housing sector can have a positive impact on the socio-economic status of families. When families have access to adequate housing, they prioritize their children's education and invest in their educational needs. Jawad Amin said that to promote educational development, the government and relevant stakeholders must work to address the challenges of the housing sector and create policies that support both the housing and education sectors because by ensuring access to dignified employment and well-equipped educational facilities, we can give Pakistan an educated and empowered youth.

Dr. Pervez Chairman and Ms. Aasma Butt Vice Chairperson elected for two years

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The General Body of National Horticulture Society of Pakistan has elected Dr. Pervez Ahsan as Chairman and Ms. Aasma Butt as Vice-Chairperson for the next 2 years. Those who decided that they will spend their full energies in making the organization more successful than before.



In the general body meeting of National Horticulture Society of Pakistan, the honorable members unanimously elected new members for the year 2023-25. Under which Dr. Pervez Ahsan as Chairman, Ms. Aasma Butt as Vice-Chairperson, Afzal Mughal as Senior Vice Chairman, Mirza Mohammad Younis as Vice Chairman, Mubasher Mahmood Qureshi as Secretary, Asif Razak as Technical Secretary, Umar Habib as Joint Secretary, Iqbal Makin was elected as Finance Secretary, Amir Butt as Co-Privacy Secretary elected. The members of National Horticulture Society of Pakistan expressed confidence in the newly elected officials. Congratulating them and expressing their best wishes. Dr. Pervez Ahsan, Chairman and Ms. Aasma Butt, Vice-Chairperson of National Horticulture Society of Pakistan, in their joint statement, reiterated their determination that they will devote their full energies to further developing the organization in the future. New measures will be taken for the beautification of Islamabad, their duties will be performed honestly. They said that in the future, flower exhibition, seminars, training courses for gardeners, flower exhibition in Murree and other events will also be organized. While other elected members also reiterated their full support to the elected body.

Bhara Kahu students top respective Metric Councils with outstanding success

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: ICC Federal Board felicitated the top position holders in matriculation for their outstanding success and presented flower bouquets. According to the details, the position holders students and their parents were invited to the career directorate office. Director General Career Group of Institutions Professor Muhammad Aamir, Principal Career College Section Muhammad Adnan Abbasi, Principal Matriculation Section Fazal ur Rahman Khattak congratulated the students and parents for topping the Matric Federal Board Bhara Kahu. On this occasion, Professor Muhammad Aamir said in a special meeting with the parents and students that success and failure depend on hard work. Full (100 percent) scholarship will be given to those who scored more than 1000 marks in Federal Board and other boards. Those who scored 85 to 90 percent marks will get 50 percent Fee scholarship and those who scored 80 to 85 percent marks will be given 30 percent scholarship. Hiba Ullmah 1061, Masooma Zahra 1044, Hafsa Khurshid 1031, Sania Wazir 1028, and Abdul Manan topped with 1012 marks in Year College Bhara Kaho Matric Section Federal Board.

Kashmir demands UN & EU to highlight Indian rule in IIOJK

Our Correspondent

MUZAFFARABAD: The rising human rights violations and arrests of political leadership in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) must be highlighted at international forums like United Nations UN, European Union EU and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation OIC to exert pressure on Indian government to stop excessive use of force to crush the indigenous ongoing political movement in IIOJK. These views were expressed by speakers at a seminar on "IIOJK after August 5, 2019 and role of diaspora and Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir". The seminar was organised by Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement JKSM in connection with "accession to Pakistan week" that started on July 19 to mark Kashmir's accession to Pakistan announced on July 13, 1947 in Srinagar. On the occasion chief guest President Tehreek-e-Kashmir United Kingdom TeK UK Raja Fahim Kayani said that people in UK and other European countries are ready to contribute for Kashmir cause saying but the zero

Adnan Haider raises voice against unfair taxes on real estate sector

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a compelling move, Maqam CEO Syed Adnan has taken a courageous stand against the burdensome and inequitable taxes imposed on the real estate sector in Pakistan. The real estate sector plays a pivotal role in the economic growth and development of Pakistan, yet it has been grappling with an excessive tax burden that hampers its potential. The exorbitant taxes on property transactions and capital gains have deterred potential investors and stifled market activity. As a result, the sector faces stagnation and a lack of much-needed investments. Syed Adnan's unwavering commitment to this cause has gained significant support from industry peers, investors, and the general public.

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Pakistan's most wanted criminals - I

In Pakistan, we have an unrivalled ability to quickly reduce our heroes to zero. The events of May 9th were the most recent examples of numerous monuments and resting places of Shaheeds who gave their lives for the security and safety of the nation being desecrated, destroyed, and disregarded, and the perpetrators of these heinous and abhorrent acts are now paying dearly for their actions. This was most likely not the first time we had degraded and humiliated our heroes. We've done it in the past, we're doing it now, and maybe we'll keep doing it in the future. This heinous act of denigrating heroes is not as simple as it appears. It chills the nation's psyche and has an impact on its social and cultural character and loss of societal ideals. It sows discontent and creates internal splits and makes the public enraged and misled. It erodes national identity and social cohesion, resulting in a society that is fragmented and harms a country's reputation both internally and globally leading to strain diplomatic relations and worldwide criticism.

Our past is full of such horrors. After her brother's death, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's sister Fatima Jinnah was humiliated and mistreated. She was persecuted for supporting her brother's political career and Pakistan's independence. The ruling establishment opposed Fatima Jinnah's 1965 bid for Pakistan's presidency. During the 1965 presidential elections, Fatima Jinnah was exposed to hostile propaganda and smear campaigns to undermine her and doubt her leadership abilities. She lost the election not on merit but on the strength of time-tested tactics of unprecedented rigging, threats, use of government sources and finances, election irregularities, isolation, and pressure to

withdraw from the race. She lost the election even though she had played crucial roles in shaping the history and identity of our nation despite adversity and mistreatment. Fatima Jinnah died in Karachi on 9 July 1967. She died of heart failure, but rumors remain that the same group as in the case of Liaquat Ali Khan murdered her at her home.

Liaquat Ali Khan was the first Prime Minister who introduced stability to the country despite numerous obstacles, such as refugee crises, administrative issues, and the incorporation of princely states. Liaquat Ali Khan played a pivotal role in stabilising the new nation and consolidating its political structure by drafting and passing the Objectives Resolution in 1949, laying the foundation for the constitutional principles of Pakistan, and emphasising the significance of an Islamic framework for the country's government. In 1950, he enacted the Land Reforms Regulation, shaped Pakistan's foreign policy, activated Pakistan's United Nations function, and emphasised Pakistan's desire for peaceful coexistence with its neighbours, maintained cordial ties with the United States. However, he was assassinated in 1951. His murder was and remains a mystery, and it will continue to be so eternally.

From 1973 to 1977, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the Prime Minister of Pakistan. In 1973, he gave Pakistan its constitution, enacted a series of nationalisation measures, reduced economic inequality, and promoted social justice. In response to regional security concerns, notably after the

defeat in 1971, he spearheaded the nuclear weapons programme. His famous remark that Pakistan would develop nuclear weapons even if it had to "eat grass" to achieve this objective still reverberates. He pursued an independent foreign policy for Pakistan, sought ties with Muslim nations, and was instrumental in establishing the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). After the war of 1971, he inked the Simla Agreement in 1972 to promote peace and stability in the region. Once a champion, he was reduced to zero after being accused of authoritarianism, murder conspiracy, and traitorous behaviour. He was given a death sentence and executed in 1979.

Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan is commonly referred to as the "father of Pakistan's nuclear programme." Due to his role in the development of nuclear weapons, he was celebrated as a national hero, but now it was his turn to become Zero. He was forced to confess transferring nuclear technology to other countries, was charged with espionage for sharing nuclear technology particularly with North Korea, Libya, and Iran, was accused of violating international non-proliferation norms, which were deemed treasonous because they compromised Pakistan's national security. He was placed under house arrest and prohibited from speaking to the media or engaging in nuclear proliferation-related activities until his death.

Pakistan's prime minister in the late 1980s and early 1990s was Benazir Bhutto. She was the first Muslim female Prime Minister and one of few worldwide. She

was Prime Minister twice: 1988-1990 and 1993-1996. She championed democracy and human rights. She prioritised education and healthcare reforms for women and marginalised populations. She privatised state-owned industries and encouraged foreign investment to boost growth. She actively shaped Pakistan's foreign policy, improved relations with neighbours, and strengthened international links. She helped overcome gender barriers in politics as a symbol of women's empowerment. She supported the nuclear programme. But her time to turn zero was fast approaching. She was accused of corruption, financial mismanagement, kickbacks, embezzlement, illegal payments, misuse of power, illicit Swiss bank accounts, and benefiting herself and her followers. She was killed in a Rawalpindi political rally suicide attack on December 27, 2007.

Nawaz Sharif was Pakistan's prime minister three times: 1990-1993, 1997-1999, and 2013-2017. He brought many reforms for foreign investment to economic growth, he privatised, deregulated, and liberalised the economy. He built Lahore-Islamabad Motorway (M2) and, most importantly, led Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests in response to India's nuclear tests, establishing Pakistan as a nuclear power. He established the Yellow Cab Scheme, loaned small enterprises, and provided economic support to low-income families. During his time as Prime Minister, he launched infrastructure, education, and healthcare projects, pursued trade agreements to increase Pakistan's trade opportunities and attract foreign investment, and strengthened democratic institutions and processes.

To be continued



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

NDMA holds special NEOC session

Acting Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Brigadier (Approved Major General) Naiknam Muhammad Baig on Monday presided the special National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on current monsoon situation.

The session was attended by DG Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), representatives of Federal Flood Commission (FFC), provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs), State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), Armed Forces and PCIW, a news release said.

The Acting-Chairman NDMA reviewed restoration of roads and bridges, monsoon-related incidents and rescue & relief operations in parts of country including Chitral, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in the past two days.

He instructed relevant departments to prepare resource contingency plans, implement early warning systems and disaster mitigation interventions in hazard-prone areas by learning from the experiences of Floods 2022. He noted that proactive measures are essential in mitigating disaster impact and called for tangible actions before disaster strikes.

The DG PMD briefed on rainfall data in last 24 hours and upcoming monsoon spell. He informed that next monsoon spell is expected to bring heavy rains in the upper parts of the country from July 31st to August 6th, triggering urban flooding in major cities, flash flooding and landsliding in hilly regions.

He apprised of major reservoirs including Tarbela and Mangla which are nearly full at 79% and 74% respectively. It was mentioned that two Indian dams Pong & Thein are also close to capacity and there is a possibility of flood flow from India into River Indus, which may affect Lahore adversely. The FFC informed that all major rivers are currently within normal limits.

The PDMAs, GBDMA, and SDMA presented details of rescue and relief operations and restoration work of blocked communication infrastructure in their respective regions.

The Acting-Chairman NDMA directed Provincial Authorities to undertake public awareness on all media channels and social media to maximise general public's knowledge on risk associated with monsoon season and make arrangements for allocation of their resources according to PMD's weather projections.

Cypher Drama- Another anti-state crime of captain - II

Taking part in the debate, Adil Farjon accused Pakistan of enforced disappearances, torture, crackdown on peaceful protests and violence against religious minorities. "Israel believes that it is essential that Pakistan heeds our recommendations to take all appropriate steps to prevent arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment and bring perpetrators of such acts to justice and end the widespread use of the death penalty, especially against children and persons with disabilities," she said. Farjon called on Pakistan to "decriminalise same-sex activities" in line with international human rights standards and adopt a "comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation" in this regard. The Israel envoy also expressed concerns over the parliament passing amendments in January to tighten the blasphemy law in Pakistan, which she claimed was "often used to target and persecute religious and other minority groups". In response, foreign office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement that Israel's politically motivated statement was fundamentally at variance with the otherwise positive tone of the session and the statements made by a vast majority of states. "Given Israel's long history of oppression of Palestinians, Pakistan can certainly do without its advice on protecting Human Rights," she added.

The question is why Pakistan's worst enemies like Israel, who spoke against Palestinians, Muslims and Kashmiris at every international forum were now supporting the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)? This is not to be taken lightly. It's a matter of great concern which should be taken seriously by the State and people.

The nation also saw what Captain and his party did on May 9. They directly attacked the civilian and military installations across the country. They had done what our enemies could not do in 75 years.

Then came to Captain's Cypher Drama. It should be noted that Chairman PTI Imran Khan made a narrative of conspiracy against his government based on the messages or ciphers of the Pakistani ambassador to the US, in which Imran Khan claimed that the US had a hand in the overthrow of his government. In the meeting of the National Security Committee, the stand of the PTI government regarding the cipher was denied. Regarding the cipher, former DG ISPR Lt. Gen. Babar Iftikhar said that an attempt was made to dramatize the cipher and rumors and false news were spread with the aim of gaining political advantage.

This drama proved a political stunt as Captain's alleged conversation with principal secretary Azam Khan triggered a firestorm in which he can be heard speaking about the "US conspiracy" to topple the PTI government. In the leaked audio, Imran Khan could be heard directing his then principal secretary that they should play with the cypher issue without taking the name of the United States. "Let's

play with it," Imran Khan allegedly said in the audio, to which Azam Khan suggested that they should hold a meeting on the US cypher to bring it on record.

Recently, in a shocking revelation, the principal secretary to the deposed prime minister Azam Khan has termed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo Imran Khan's cypher narrative as "baseless" and claimed that it was concocted to deflect attention from an impending no-confidence motion. Ex-principal secretary's confession provided detailed insights into Imran Khan's alleged strategy to manipulate public opinion and create a narrative against both the establishment and the opposition.

According to Azam Khan's statement, when he presented the cypher to Imran Khan, the PTI chief displayed enthusiasm and referred to the language used as a "US blunder." However, instead of treating it as a confidential document, Khan apparently saw an opportunity to exploit its contents for political gain. The ex-prime minister, as revealed by Azam Khan, suggested utilizing the cypher to divert public attention by highlighting "foreign involvement" in the opposition's no-confidence motion. Imran Khan allegedly planned to portray the situation as a foreign conspiracy in collaboration with local partners, thereby playing the victim card. When Azam Khan expressed concern about the secrecy of the document and advised against disclosing its contents to the public, Imran Khan proposed an alternative strategy. The PTI leader called a meeting that included then-foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and then-foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood. During this meeting, Qureshi and Mahmood were instructed to provide Imran Khan with the minutes of the discussion, as he had conveniently "lost" the original copy of the cable, added Azam.

Readers, the effect of his heinous conspiracy on the country was that when a prime minister accuses the head of state of a false conspiracy on a government like the United States, the future prime ministers and foreign ministers and the country have to pay for it. Captain has repeatedly erred by being irresponsible on the most sensitive issues of national security and relations with foreign countries. But the biggest diplomatic blunder was the cypher. The way the Captain created a narrative on the cypher and repeatedly took a U-turn from this narrative is unprecedented. The state of Pakistan should file a case against Chairman PTI for what Azam Khan said and what the former prime minister did. The government should conduct a high-level investigation against this high treason to investigate the irreparable damage to Pakistan. It's the right time to take strict action on this Anti-State crime.

Concluded

Writer is senior defense analyst

Extortion and sexual assault against Pakistani female university students

The increase in sexual assault cases against women shows that there are dangers for them in the workplace, in educational settings, and on the streets and roads. Such egregious occurrences ought to draw the society's attention to the problem of sexual harassment of women in workplaces, educational institutions, and other settings.

Yesterday, it was discovered that the former security chief of Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Retired Major Ijaz Shah) was discovered carrying many videos of female students and staff on his phone. During the course of their investigation, the police allegedly discovered 5500 pornographic films and photos. The nation has been shaken by the Islamia university of Bahawalpur's drugs and sex scandal.

In February 2022, Parveen, a nurse student at People's institution of Medical and Health Sciences in Nawab Shah, filed a lawsuit alleging sexual harassment and attempted murder against institution administrators. She claimed that three masked university employees broke into her room, thrashed & battered her, and even tried to strangle her. But she was able to get away and protect herself.

The federal investigation agency (FIA) received over 6000 reports of sexual harassment in August 2021, with the majority coming from college students who were being threatened by their peers, professors and coworkers. Images and videos captured during recreational and educational activities were utilized as extortion threats.

As of November 2020, A campus protest against the abuse of female students by male lecturers was organized by female students at Islamia College, University of Peshawar. In the same month, around 300 students at Karakoram International University in Gilgit staged a demonstration in opposition to the alleged sexual harassment of a female student by a university employee.

Nadia, a young PhD candidate in molecular medicine at Karachi University, reportedly killed herself in August 2020 after complaining about

being harassed by her supervisor.

Another issue broke out in 2020 at the prestigious Lahore Grammar School, when four instructors were fired after adolescent students alleged that staff had sent them offensive texts and photographs and had also tried to blackmail them.

The same year, a Gomal University lecturer was fired from his position after being found guilty of sexually harassing his students.

This is one of the factors contributing to Pakistan's poor performance in the higher education system. Pakistan is 50th out of a total of 50 nations. It received a score of 92.0 out of 100. India, a rival and neighbour, received a score of 60.9 out of 100 and is ranked 24th in terms of the top higher education systems.

The country has failed to succeed as a "Safe Nation" for women, as evidenced by these devastating and heart wrenching incidents of blackmail and sexual harassment with females in educational institutions and workplaces.

Conclusion
 The nature of these scandals has the potential to significantly affect Pakistan's already-poor education-
 al opportunities for women. These controversies prevent parents from afterwards sending their daughters to colleges and universities. Considering that women won't read, how will Pakistan develop? While these scandals provide conservative ideas a boost, education is nevertheless seen as a beacon of hope and encouragement for female participation in social activities.

Parents don't let their daughters enroll in educational institutions for further education because they are dreadful of these wolves.

Thus, the hope of these girls that they will pursue further education, to serve their country, and uphold the honour of their parents are dashed. Last but not the least, who is accountable for the entire system? and who will dismantle this mafia?

Writer is analyst and staff member based at Multan

Xi to attend opening ceremony of Chengdu Universiade, related diplomatic activities

Xinhua

BEIJING: From July 27 to 28, Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony of the 31st summer edition of the FISU World University Games in Chengdu and hold a welcome banquet and bilateral events for foreign leaders attending the opening ceremony and visiting China, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced here on Monday.

The foreign leaders to attend the opening ceremony and visit China are President Joko Widodo of the Republic of Indonesia, President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President Evariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi, President Irfaan Ali of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili of Georgia, and Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka of the Republic of Fiji.



Burundi commends cooperation with China in sports sector: official

Xinhua

BUJUMBURA: Burundi has enjoyed good cooperation with China in the sports sector for decades, a senior official at the Burundian ministry in charge of sports told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"Our cooperation has been notably materialized by sports equipment offered by China as well as technical support whereby China has been sending experts in various sports disciplines to train Burundian athletes," said Samuel Niyubahwe, director general of youth, sports and culture at the Burundian Ministry of East African Community Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture.

He indicated that several sports federations have benefited from support from China, citing the examples of Chinese Wushu



and table tennis.

"Procedures for the construction of a stadium for the Wushu Federation of Burundi are underway," said Niyubahwe.

Besides, he said China has been sending its experts to Burundi to train Burundian athletes in disciplines like table tennis.

He, however, said Burundi has fewer sports federations in comparison to other countries in the Great Lakes

region. According to him, Burundi has about 30 sports federations, whereas other countries in the Great Lakes region have more sports federations.

"We (Burundi) are in high speed to create new sports disciplines and federations that did not exist before here in Burundi, and we need support," added Niyubahwe. Niyubahwe said Burundi will send six athletes to

participate in the upcoming World University Games to be held in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. He added that he expects several medals from those athletes and that the Burundian flag will be flown during the games. "Burundian athletes will learn experience from other athletes during the competition."

Niyubahwe noted that the Burundian sports sector is being promoted, explaining that this is notably evidenced by the development of the national policy on sports and the construction of stadiums that abide by international norms. He emphasized that China has recorded "miracles" in sports, notably in recent years. "China can inspire Burundi in the sports and cultural sectors."

Greek athletes excited to attend Chengdu Universiade



Xinhua

ATHENS: Greek athletes eagerly await the commencement of the Chengdu Universiade.

Greece has declared a 34-member delegation for the International University Sports Federation (FISU) Summer World University Games, scheduled to take place in China. The participants will compete in artistic gymnastics, swimming, water polo, athletics, and archery.

Following the delegation's formation, both athletes and officials expressed their enthusiasm for the Games set to run from July 28 to August 8 in Chengdu, Western China.

Ioanna Sacha, a 24-year-old post-graduate psychology student, is thrilled to travel to China and partake in the swimming events. For Sacha, the Chengdu Universiade signifies a return to normalcy post-pandemic.

"I would like to see good performances, timings, and races," she told Xinhua.

Lida Nanou, a student of Applied Mathematics at the National Technical University of Athens and an archer, views her upcoming trip to Chengdu as a cherished experience.

"We have expectations; we will do our best as a team. It's great that the Universiades are back. We are going to meet athletes from all around the world. I find this experience very valuable in our journey as athletes," she said.

For Dimitrios Konstantinos Drakiotis, a 21-year-old Business Administration student, the Games hold significant importance.

"The Summer World University Games in Chengdu is like the Olympic Games for students," Drakiotis, from the University of Piraeus and an archer, explained to Xinhua.

As this is his maiden voyage to another continent and first time in a global competition, he emphasized that it's an opportunity for students to engage more in sports.

Avanza Group and AshreiTech Inc. join forces to launch Avanza

News Desk

KARACHI: Ashreitech Inc., a global technology enabler, and Avanza Group, a digital transformation and automation specialist, announce their strategic partnership and the establishment of Avanza USA Inc., a new venture aimed at revolutionizing the tech landscape in the North American market. Avanza USA Inc. will serve as a dedicated platform to market cutting-edge Blockchain, AI, Web 3.0, Payments & Transaction Processing and Banking products for Governments, Counties, Financial Institutions, Large Enterprises and consumers in North America.

Rahim Iqbal, one of the founding partners of AshreiTech, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "This collaboration is transformative as it opens up the possibilities for taking up projects of global scale."

Waqas Mirza, CEO at Avanza



za Innovations shared his thoughts: "Ashreitech and Avanza's collaboration is aimed at bringing a rich and excit-

ing portfolio of cutting-edge technology and solutions to the North American region."

Int'l Court of Justice' decision on Israel's rule over Palestine' reprehensible'

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: State of Palestine's delegation, headed by Dr. Riad Malki, met Registrar of Int'l Court of Justice, Mr. Philippe Gautier, and submitted Written Statement on UN's request for an advisory opinion (Res. 77/247) about Question of Palestine.

In its Written Statement, the State of Palestine provided insurmountable evidence of Israel's illegal policies and practice and drew a clear picture of the wrongs and indignities suffered by the Palestinian people over decades.

The Court's verdict is clear: Israel's colonial occupation & annexation of Palestinian land, racial discrimination, apartheid, and its systematic denial of rights including self-determination are flagrantly unlawful! It's time for an immediate, unconditional, and complete end.

These proceedings show the world's desire for the Court's counsel on legality & accountability regarding Palestine's rights. Palestinians face existential threat as Israel denies self-determination & freedom. Urgent action needed!

State of Palestine trusts Int'l Court of Justice's independence & commitment to uphold int'l law for justice & peace. Ready for constructive engagement in the Court's next stages.

Transportation of mortal remains of deceased Pakistanis in boat wreck in Greece

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On the direction of honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan and under supervision of honorable Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & HRD the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HRD/OPF in coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Pakistan Mission Athens, is transporting mortal remains of Pakistanis who drowned in Greece in a migrant workers boat wreck. As per details, a fishing boat overloaded with migrants sunk off the coast of Greece—killing at least 78 people and leaving hundreds missing. Greek authorities rescued 104 people from the vessel after it got into distress and sank 45 miles southwest of Peloponnese in the early hours of Wednesday, 14th June, 2023.

As of today, 13 mortal remains have been transported out of the 15 identified Pakistanis through matching of finger prints while the identification of other recovered bodies through matching of DNAs is in process by Disaster Victims Identification (DVI), Department of Greece. The mortal remains of 13 Pakistanis have been repatriated through commercial flights starting 20.7.2023 at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore and Islamabad International Airport, Islamabad. The mortal remains of 13 Pakistanis have been received at Lahore and Islamabad airport by OPF Officials and handed over to the legal heirs of the deceased. The mortal remains of deceased Pakistanis were transported by OPF Ambulance to their home towns in Gujranwala, Gujrat, Nowshera Virkan, Mandi Bahauddin, KallarSyedan and Mirpur (AJ&K).

In the instant, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HRD/OPF under the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & HRD, Mr. Sajid Hussain Turi is closely following this transportation of mortal remains from Greece and remains committed to facilitate transportation of mortal remains to their home towns in Pakistan in safe, secure and swift manner through OPF Ambulances.

AJK to be turned into model state: Anwar Haq

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while reiterating his commitment to turn AJK into a model state, has said that the development of the liberated territory was vision and mission of his government. The AJK premier made these assertions while talking to a delegation that called on him here today. "A new era of development will begin soon and the liberated territory will be turned into a model state where every citizen will have equal opportunities to survive and thrive", he said, adding that establishment of rule of law would be his first priority. He said that the state resources would be utilized honestly and transparently to ensure uniform development and prosperity in the state. The PM said, adding that his government would leave no stone unturned to end the surging unemployment in the state. He said that the coalition government would take on board all its allies. He said that the government was struggle hard to put the region on the path of development. Restoration

BankIslami and IBA Karachi join forces to empower youth with digital certification program

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a progressive move towards youth empowerment and fostering economic growth, BankIslami, Pakistan's leading Islamic Bank with an AA- rating, announced its strategic partnership with the esteemed Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi to introduce a groundbreaking digital certification program. Spearheaded by BankIslami's President & CEO, Syed Amir Ali, this program aims to educate and empower young individuals with essential technical skills, enabling them to contribute to the betterment of their families & society, at the same time bringing in the much needed foreign exchange in the country.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony between BankIslami and IBA Karachi took place on Friday, underscoring the commitment of both organizations towards promoting inclusive education in Pakistan.

Speaking about this collaboration, Syed Amir Ali, President & CEO of BankIslami, shared, "BankIslami recognizes the critical importance

MG Pakistan introducing new variants and expanding market presence in 2023

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: MG Pakistan, a prominent player in the country's automotive industry aims to introduce two new variants of its popular models, the MG HS Excite and 2.0 AWD, in a bid to further strengthen its market presence and cater to evolving consumer preferences.

As part of their expansion strategy, MG Pakistan is also turning its focus towards the sedan segment, which currently holds a substantial 45% market share.

Asif Ahmed, General Manager Marketing Division, expressed optimism about the potential of the sedan market and revealed that their first sedan offering for

Pakistani consumers might be the MG GT, a 1600 CC Sedan car.

Following the remarkable success of the MG C-SUVs, with over 15 thousand units sold in the last two and a half years, MG Pakistan sees great potential in the sedan category, as well as in other C and D SUVs.

Key to MG Motors' vision is the localization of high-value parts to enhance competitiveness within the domestic market and explore potential export opportunities. While the company currently relies on imported parts due to its greenfield status, it aims to seek partnerships with global manufacturers to enable the local production of high-tech components, which will further

contribute to the growth of Pakistani's auto industry.

Amidst the prevailing economic situation, MG Motors remains positive about Pakistan's automotive potential.

Asif Ahmed noted that Auto industry has always shown 'V' type recovery and indicated a promising and prosperous market in the near future.

MG Pakistan majority share holder Shanghai Motor International Limited (SMIL) have expressed a long-term commitment to the Pakistani market. As the fourth Knock Down (KD) plant globally, the MG plant in Pakistan represents a significant \$100 million investment, reaffirming the company's dedication to the country.

Currently, the MG plant has an annual production capacity of 25,000 vehicles. However, due to the impact of the economic situation, the monthly output has been limited to 400 cars.

Speaking about the difference between locally assembled MG vehicles, Asif Ahmed highlighted that the locally assembled MG HS Excite offers the same build quality and specifications as the MG HS Exclusive CBU.

MG Pakistan aims to maintain global standards and specifications for its clients, setting the brand apart from other local manufacturers.

Asif Ahmed emphasized that MG is the only company in Pakistan with Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEV), Plug-in Hybrid



Electric Vehicles (PHEV), and Electric Vehicles (EV) in its lineup. He stressed the importance of a stable and long-term robust auto policy with a focus on New

Energy Vehicles for Pakistan's automotive industry.

Regarding the current industry trends and sales volumes, Asif Ahmed attributed the situ-

ation to economic turmoil and historic interest rates, resulting in price increases due to PKR devaluation, which has occurred in the past as well.

To transform into a vehicle export market, Pakistan must forge global partnerships for the production of high-value and high-tech auto parts. As the country has historically produced low-value auto parts, becoming competitive is essential for entering the export market. The potential for attracting Chinese investment in the Pakistani automobile sector is high, as Chinese companies are increasingly setting up production facilities outside China to export their vehicles.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
46,054.81	45,920.73
Day's High	Day's Low:
46,195.70	45,872.67
Index Value	Change
6,655,207,472	+134.08
Percentage	Time
+0.29%	24 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,678.59	+14.86
Percentage	Time
+0.19%	24 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
35,415.35	+187.66
Percentage	Time
+0.53%	24 Jul, 1:20 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,700.94	+396.69
Percentage	Time
+1.23%	24 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196	198.5
Bahrain Dinar	760.55	768.55
Canadian Dollar	222	224
China Yuan	39.13	39.53
Danish Krone	42.34	42.74
Euro	319.5	322
Hong Kong Dollar	35.97	36.32
Indian Rupee	3.43	3.54
Japanese Yen	1.98	2.04
Kuwaiti Dinar	928.48	937.48
Malaysian Ringgit	61.87	62.47
New Zealand \$	176.75	178.75
Norwegians Krone	27.95	28.25
Omani Riyal	729.95	737.95
Qatari Riyal	77.21	77.91
Saudi Riyal	77.9	78.8
Singapore Dollar	210.5	212.5
Swedish Korona	27.5	27.8
Swiss Franc	330.24	332.74
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.4
U.A.E Dirham	79.9	80.7
UK Pound Sterling	371	375
US Dollar	291.5	294

NTDC and French Development Agency (AFD) Sign €180 million Project Agreement



News Desk

LAHORE: French Development Agency (AFD) and the National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) entered into a project agreement for provision of €180 million soft loan for construction of NTDC projects. In a ceremony held at the NTDC office in Islamabad, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, Managing Director NTDC and Mr. Philippe STEINMETZ, Country Director AFD, signed a project agreement today.

The funds provided through this loan will assist NTDC in the execution of various projects aimed at enhancing the power transmission and distribution systems in Punjab. The projects include the construction of a new 220 kV grid station and a 50 km transmission line in Arifwala, which will be connected to the MEPCO distribution system. Additionally, the existing 220 kV grid station in Vehari will be upgraded to 500 kV level, along with a 48 km transmission line. This upgrade will significantly increase the transmission capacity and benefit the consumers of MEPCO. Furthermore, a new 500 kV grid station in Sialkot together with 91 km of transmission lines will be constructed and connected to the GEPCO distribution system.

The project agreement signing ceremony was attended by General Manager (PD North), Chief Engineer (Substation Design), Chief Engineer (Dasu Transmission Line Project), DG Human Resources, Dy. Manager PMU NTDC and representatives of AFD.

Overall business environment for exports has to be improved, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that strengthening the value of the rupee makes exports difficult while making imports cheaper.

A strengthened currency reduces exports and increases imports, which drain the forex reserves, and the country has to borrow, which burdens 240 million people in the country, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the value of the rupee and dollar must not be controlled to boost exports and remittances. Efforts to control the value of currency reduced textile exports by \$2.8 billion in 2023.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that non-textile exports, which were 12.46 billion dollars in 2022, fell to 11.23 billion dollars in 2023.

He said that in order to increase exports, it will also be necessary to improve the overall business environment by looking at issues such as energy price and uninterrupted supply, access to capital, tax refunds, import restrictions, competition, the supply chain, and the implementation of positive policies.

The business leader said that it has become impossible for the business community to increase production and exports by borrowing at a 22 percent interest rate, while exporters are unable to invest due to delays in refunds, which is a major obstacle to increasing exports.

Mian Zahid Hussain added that the textile policies made since 2014 have not been fully implemented, which not only affects the confi-



dence of investors but also affects exports. If the textile policy had been fully imple-

mented, it would have been possible to increase the textile exports by 25% per year. Under the State Bank's Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF) scheme, an investment of three hundred billion rupees was made in the country at a very low mark-up, which increased exports by 5 to 6 billion dollars, but due to the non-supply of gas and electricity, their increasing prices, and other problems, this investment could not be taken advantage of.

The energy price should be at par with the other countries in the region; otherwise, investments would be lost and many people would become unemployed.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the textile mills located in Punjab and Sindh are getting gas at different prices, due to which many problems are arising, but despite the claims for years, this problem has not been solved.

Tech-based financial innovation is inevitable for sustainable growth: SECP Commissioner

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi, Commissioner, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), urged the industry to focus on tech-based financial innovation to serve the underserved and unserved businesses in Pakistan. He was speaking at the launching ceremony of the thirteenth edition of the Year Book 2022 of the NBF and Modaraba Association 2022.

In his keynote address, Mr. Lodhi highlighted the importance of the NBF and Modaraba sectors in Pakistan and stressed that the sector has enormous untapped potential and is critical for advancing financial inclusion; therefore, by focusing on these sectors, it can contribute to Pakistan's economic growth and development. He also lauded the association for being active in spreading awareness while encouraging it to work together on the development of innovative products, targeting underserved micro and small businesses.

Mr. Lodhi reiterates that the SECP is committed to adapting to technological



innovations and fostering a culture of innovation in the financial services industry. He informed participants that the fourth Cohort of the SECP's regulatory sandbox, specifically targeting the Islamic Finance segment, aims to encourage new ideas, products, services, and business models that are not currently addressed in the existing regulatory regime.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Mahfuz-ur-Rahman Pasha, Chairman NBF and Modaraba Association, thanked the SECP for its continued support of the association and the industry. Ms. Khalida Habib, Executive Director; Ms. Musarat Jabeen, Executive Director; and members of the association were present at the well-attended event.

Pakistan to Resume Cherries' Exports to China after a Decade

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: MNFSR succeeded to resolve 12 years-long pending issue of market access of cherries exports from Pakistan to China, commented Minister of National Food Security and Research, Tariq Bashir Cheema.

General administrations of Customs China (GACC) confirmed the Department of Plant Protection (DPP), Ministry of National Food Security and Research, that Pakistani exporters can export cherries from Pakistan to China from DPP-registered orchards and Packhouses. This will result in huge exports of Pakistani cherries.

The focus courtesy of the Minister of National food security and Research, Tariq Bashir Cheema, and Federal Secretary of National Food Security and Research, Zafar Hassan regarding cherries exports and bringing export quality to global standards was the prime factor behind this success.

Their visionary leadership and determined efforts to widen the export base of Pakistani fruits manifested in seeking market access for



cherries. This market access request was pending since 2012.

However, GACC after a video inspection of quarantine procedures and registered orchards & cold treatment facilities, and Pack houses registered with DPP with respect to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, allowed the export of cherries from Pakistan to China in accordance with the agreed protocol.

Department of Plant Protection took special steps to upgrade registered orchards, Cold treatment facilities and packhouses as per requirements of GACC.

DPP had put in place repeated technical compliance audits for compliance to boost the export of cherries through improvement in food safety and phytosanitary measures besides quality, storage, and packaging. Now, 90 cherry orchards

Working

FAISALABAD: Workers are busy in their working at hosiery factory to earn daily wages for the livelihood of their families.



Photo: Online

PTCL Group collaborates with GSMA to address Digital Gender Disparity



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading ICT services provider, PTCL Group (comprising PTCL & Ufone 4G), joined forces with the GSMA team in the realm of mobile technology usage by micro-entrepreneurs played a pivotal role in guiding the PTCL Group team. The collaborative efforts led to the identification of strategic pathways for harnessing the transformative potential of mobile technology.

usage in Pakistan, leveraging insights from the authoritative Mobile Gender Gap 2023 report.

During the workshop, the invaluable expertise of the GSMA team in the realm of mobile technology usage by micro-entrepreneurs played a pivotal role in guiding the PTCL Group team. The collaborative efforts led to the identification of strategic pathways for harnessing the transformative potential of mobile technology.

ICCI calls for economic empowerment of women to reduce poverty

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Women are half of the total population of Pakistan, who are endowed with immense talents, but due to lack of better opportunities, women are currently unable to play an active role in the economic development of the country, so the government should take favorable policy measures for the economic empowerment of women, which will pave way for Pakistan to move towards sustainable economic development. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Cham-

ber of Commerce and Industry while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry during its visit to ICCI led by Rizwana Asif President.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that developed countries have achieved rapid economic development by focusing on better development of women, but in Pakistan, women still do not have better opportunities to participate in economic development, although our women are second to none in terms of talent and capabilities. He emphasized that the government should address

the key issues being faced by women entrepreneurs on a priority basis and provide them with maximum ease in doing business so that more women feel motivated to start their own business, which will not only reduce poverty and unemployment from the society, but the economy will also move towards fast recovery. He assured that ICCI will cooperate with IWCCI to solve the problems of women entrepreneurs.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Indus-

try, said that getting a loan for business is the major problem for women, due to which many of them are unable to start their own business. She said that the SBP has increased the policy interest rate to 22 percent, which has made it almost impossible for women entrepreneurs to take loans from banks. She demanded that the government should introduce a new scheme to provide easy loans to women for business startups, which will boost business activities and increase prosperity. She further said that the government has made a significant hike in the prices of



electricity and gas, which has also increased the difficulties of business women. She demanded that the government should review the utility prices and bring down the interest rates to single digits, which would significantly reduce the cost of

doing business and strengthen the economy by increasing business activities.

Dr. Sonia Saleem, Senior Vice President, Dr. Joharia Azhar, Sadaf Abbasi Executive Members of IWCCI and others were in the delegation.

Air Chief felicitates Hamza Khan for winning world junior squash championship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu on Monday congratulated Hamza Khan on winning the World Junior Squash Championship 2023, held in Melbourne, Australia.

The young squash player Hamza Khan won the title by defeating Mohamed Zakaria of Egypt with a score of 3-1 during the final match played in the coastal city of Melbourne, a Pakistan Air Force news release said.

The Air Chief expressed his felicitations to the young champion for bringing the title back to Pakistan after a gap of 37 years.

He further said that this victory has evoked memories of Jan Sher Khan's triumph in the 1986 World Squash Championship and termed it a revival



of Pakistan's glory in the game of squash. The Chief of the Air Staff further said that the entire nation takes pride in the outstanding performance by the talented player, which has raised the national flag



high in the sport of squash. Being the President of Pakistan Squash Federation, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force said that PAF has been

tremendously contributing for the promotion of Squash in the country and reiterated his resolve that PAF along with PSF would continue to support young talent to bring more such victories for the nation.

He also lauded the unwavering commitment of the Senior Vice President of Pakistan Squash Federation, Air Vice Marshal Kazim Hamad and the Contingent Manager, Air Commodore (Retired) Aftab Sadiq Qureshi in making utmost efforts for the provision of quality training and supporting the talented youth to excel in the game of Squash.

The Air Chief appreciated the hard work put in by the coaching staff for providing international standard training and coaching facilities to the young players. He also lauded the PSF's management in making concerted efforts for bringing back the lost glory in the game of squash.

Pakistan's Ushna, Sarah beat Guam in Billie Jean King Cup

Sports Desk

KUALA LUMPUR: Ushna Sohail and Sarah Ibrahim guided Pakistan women's tennis team to a thrilling 2-1 victory over Guam in the opening round of the Billie Jean King Cup on Monday.

Pakistan's pair of Ushna and Sarah recovered from a set down to claim a sensational 4-6, 6-0, 7-6(2) victory in the opening round of the Billie Jean King Cup.

Losing the first set by 4-6, the national pair hit back in style by winning the second without dropping a point.

The third and decider frame went right down to the wire but Ushna and Sarah displayed nerves of steel to claim a narrow victory.

Ushna Sohail was equally impressive in the single's competition as she outclassed Guam's Sydney Packbier with a straight-set victory.

Meanwhile, Sarah Ibrahim failed to produce an alike result in her singles clash with Fremont Gibson, losing 3-6, 4-6.



Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) president Senator Salim Saifullah Khan lauded the national team for their initial success in the tournament while also expressing hope for a much better for the rest of the tournament.

"The President of PTF, Senator Salim Saifullah Khan and the Executive Committee of PTF extend-

ed their felicitations for their initial success, with the hope that the team would display much better results with full zeal and enthusiasm in the next upcoming matches," said PTF in a statement.

"Moreover, the President wishes them all the very best for the rest of the tournament," it added. It is worth mention-

ing here that the Pakistan women's Tennis team reached here on Sunday to participate in the ongoing Billie Jean King Cup, being held from 22nd July to 28th July 2023.

The national team features non-playing captain Sara Mansoor, Sara Ibrahim Khan, Ushna Sohail, Amna Ali Qayum and Meheq Khokhar.

Pak vs SL: Shafique, Masood put Pakistan in comfortable position

After rattling Sri Lankan batsman in the first innings, Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood's strong partnership has put Pakistan in a comfortable position after the end of day one of the second Test in Colombo on Monday.

After bowling out Sri Lanka for 166 runs, Pakistan were off to a poor start with batting followed by the early dismissal of Imam ul Haq. The left-handed batter scored just six runs before walking back to the pavilion.

Abdullah and Shan carried the innings for Pakistan and scored 108 runs off 117 balls. Shan played a quick knock of 51 runs which is now called as 'Pakball formula' on social media.

Babar (8*) is at the crease with Abdullah (74*) as Pakistan walked out at stumps with 145-2 in 28.3 overs.

Asitha Fernando took two wickets for the hosts.

Abrar Ahmed and Naseem Shah rattled Sri Lanka before Tea on day one as they were bowled out for 166 in the first innings.

The bowling duo went berserk on Sri Lankan batters who couldn't find any clue to settle down at the crease.

Dhanajaya de Silva tried hard to replicate his first Test's heroics here but he could only score 57 before falling to Abrar with Saud Shakeel taking a well-judged catch.

Mohammad Haris reviews Pakistan Shaheens' emerging Asia Cup title win

A Sports

Pakistan Shaheens' captain Mohammad Haris reviewed his men's incredible victory in the recently concluded ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup and termed it "very satisfying".

Pakistan Shaheens successfully defended the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup title. Shaheens defeated India A in the final by a comprehensive 128-run margin at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Sunday evening.

The star of the final was the right-handed batter Tayyab Tahir, who scored a match-winning century.

Eight teams featured in the 50-over

tournament which was held in Colombo from 13 to 23 July.

The teams were divided into two pools, with Afghanistan A, Bangladesh A, Oman A and Sri Lanka A forming Group A, while Pakistan Shaheens along with India A, Nepal and UAE A, were in Group B.

Pakistan Shaheens finished second in their group, beating Nepal and UAE A by four wickets and 184 runs, respectively. In the third fixture, Shaheens went down against India A by eight wickets.

Top two teams from each group qualified for the semi-finals held on Friday, 21 July. Sri Lanka A, table-toppers from Group A, took on Pakistan Shaheens,



while India A, who finished at the top of Group B, played Bangladesh A.

After going down to India A, Shaheens staged a remarkable comeback and defeated Sri Lanka A by 60 runs to qualify for their second successive final. Arshad Iqbal's maiden List A five-wick-

et haul and Omair Bin Yousuf's 88 lifted Shaheens to victory.

In the final, Shaheens were unstoppable from the first ball of the match, and a comprehensive all-round performance led by Tayyab's century guided Shaheens to lift the trophy.

In the batting charts, three Shaheens batters finished among the top 10 batters of the tournament.

Tayyab, who occupied fifth spot, scored 190 runs from four outings, at a strike rate of 110.46. He struck 22 fours and four sixes in the tournament and also scored one century and one half-century. Tayyab complemented his batting with good fielding, taking four catches.

Second phase of Engro Cricket Coaching Project commences from Wednesday



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The second phase of the second edition of the Engro Cricket Coaching Project under the PCB Pathway Cricket Programme will commence from Wednesday, 26 July in Lahore and Muridke.

Like the first phase, five coaches will be involved in the second phase which consists of 55 U19 players. The second phase of the cricket clinic will run concurrently in Lahore's National Cricket Academy (NCA) and Muridke Country Club (MCC) from 26 July to 10 August.

Local coaches along with Australia's Geoff Lawson, New Zealand's Scott McLaren (strength and conditioning coach), United Kingdom's Gordon Parsons and Julien Fountain and Zimbabwe's Tatenda Taibu will work with the U19 players. South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs was part of the first phase for a week and worked with U13 and U16 players at both NCA and MCC.

Earlier, in the first phase, which ran from 10 to 24 July, 25 U13 players featured in Lahore's NCA from 13 to 24 July, while 37 U16 players took part in the programme at the MCC from 10 to 24 July. The eligibility criteria for the U19 players is 1 September 2004.

27 U19 players reporting at NCA:

Adeel Mushtaq (Multan), Afaq Khan (Mardan), Ali Hamza (Mandi Bahauddin), Ali Hassan Baloch (Lahore), Awais Ali (Gujranwala), Awais Raheem (Karachi), Ch Shujah (Abbottabad), Farhan Yousaf (Lahore), Hafiz Usman Nadeem (Lahore), Haroon Arshad (Karachi), Husnain Majid (Rahimyar Khan), Inamullah (Sahiwal), Mohammad Danish (Muzaffargarh), Mohammad Nabeel (Rawalpindi), Mohammad Tayyab Arif (Sialkot), Mohammad Usman (Mianwali), Mohammad Zeeshan (Faisalabad), Momin Qamar (Faisalabad), Muhammad Ismail (Sahiwal), Naveed Ahmed Khan (Karachi), Saad Baig (Karachi), Saad Masood (Rawalpindi), Salman Ahmed (Pakpatan), Sameer Ahmed Minhas (Multan), Shamraiz Khan (Pishin), Ubaid Shahid (Lahore) and Yahya Shah (Hyderabad)

28 U19 players reporting at MCC:

Abidullah (Rawalpindi), Afkar Durrani (Dir Lower), Ahmed Hussain (Peshawar), Ali Raza (Sheikhupura), Ali Zoraiz Asif (Lahore), Arsalan Ali (Islamabad), Fahad Amin (Karachi), Hamza Nawaz (Bahawalnagar), Haseeb Nazim (Multan), Ikramullah Tareen (Quetta), Jawad Ali (Charsada), Mohammad Ansarullah (Peshawar), Mohammad Aqib Asghar (Vehari), Mohammad Irfan (Khyber Agency), Mohammad Shan (Bahawalpur), Mohammad Shoaib (Peshawar), Mohammad Tahir (Mohmand Agency), Mohammad Zubair (Peshawar), Mohammad Zulfikar (Charsada), Mohsin Ali (Hub), Qurban Ali (Chaman), Riazullah Khan (Dir Upper), Shahmir Nisar Khan (Islamabad), Shahzaib Khan (Mansehra), Syed Tayyab Hussain (Karachi), Taha Masood (Rahimyar Khan), Usman Ghani (Quetta) and Wazdan Khan (Karak)

Prize money awarded to the winning teams of the Prime Minister Youth Program Hockey Sindh Region



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Prize money was given to the players of the winning team of Prime Minister Youth Program Talent Hunt Sindh Regional Men's and Women's Sports Hockey League, Karachi's boys and girls team in a grand and dignified ceremony, held at Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology (SSUET) that was attended by Sports Consultant SSUET, Olympian Hanif Khan, Director Sports International SSUET, Mubashir Mukhtar, Farooq Khan, Laeeq Lashari, Javed Iqbal and Numanuddin. Registrar SSUET, Commodore (R) Syed Sarfraz Ali gave prize money to the players of both teams.

Registrar SSUET, Commodore (R) Syed Sarfraz Ali said that Sir Syed University is becoming a trusted name for sports and sportsmen. Sir Syed University awards scholarships to talented players for their outstanding performance, while more than 10 sports teams regularly participate in HEC events. In recent years, Sir Syed University has been acknowledged for hosting different HEC events excellently for which I congratulate Director Sports SSUET, Mubashir Mukhtar, and his team.

Stunning architecture dazzles in Chengdu

Noureen Chaudhry

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

A prominent set of facilities to be used for the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games is the Dong'an Lake Sports Park. Located in Chengdu's Longquan District and designed by gmp Architects (von Gerken, Marg, and Partners), this futuristic set of three cuboidal blocks will host swimming and artistic gymnastics. Outdoor green spaces connect the three venues which are

also tied together by spiraling corridors that link them to the Dong'an Lake Sports Park Stadium, host to the opening ceremony on 28 July. The futuristic aluminum enveloping the venues helps set them as 'artifacts in nature', as described by the designer, while the nearby Torch Tower brings another standout element to the area.

The Fenghuangshan Sports Park features two beautiful new venues in Chengdu - the gymnasium and football stadium. The former is an 18,000 seat venue built to National Basketball Association standards which will serve as a competition venue for basketball at the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games. Designed by HKS, its inspiration is from a tea infusion set called allows people to see the stadium as a bowl, the plaza surrounding it as the saucer, and the gymnasium as the lid that goes on top. This ties to the strong tea house culture that exists in Chengdu. The exterior of the venues

is based on Shu Jin, or Imperial Embroidery, which originated in Chengdu, and the surface gives the impression of silk threads that attract and reflect light uniquely throughout the day.

It's not just the sport venues that marvel visitors to Chengdu. If people land in the city's new airport they will see another great example of its unique architecture. Chengdu Tianfu International Airport opened midway through 2021 and will serve as the primary international airport for the city, with Shuangliu International Airport shifting focus to domestic flights. The design (by the China Southwest Architectural Design and Research Institute, China Airport Construction Group Corporation, and French firm ADP Ingénierie) features building space equal to 46 football fields. The mythical sunbird, representing the city of Chengdu, is referenced in the design with the two terminals built to be distinct while sharing

the same architecture.

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

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



all great examples of the traditional architecture that dots the Chengdu landscape. Chengdu is a feast for the eyes.

Modern and traditional architecture, of which just a few examples are listed here, lend greatly to what will be an incred-

ible experience for all those coming to, or watching from around the world, the Chengdu 2021 FISU Games.