

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
 ابوہریرہؓ نے بیان کیا کہ جبرائیلؑ نے رسول اللہ ﷺ کے ساتھ ہر سال ایک مرتبہ قرآن مجید کا دورہ کیا کرتے تھے لیکن جس سال نبی کریم ﷺ کی وفات ہوئی اس میں انہوں نے نبی کریم ﷺ کے ساتھ دو مرتبہ دورہ کیا۔ نبی کریم ﷺ ہر سال دن کا نصف کیا کرتے تھے لیکن جس سال آپ کی وفات ہوئی اس سال آپ نے جس دن کا نصف کیا۔
 (بخاری ص ۹۹۸)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI

Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJsCS & Services Chiefs pay glowing tribute
 Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJsCS & Services Chiefs pay glowing tribute to Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his 75th Shahadat Anniversary today. His matchless chivalry, unwavering resolve & fortitude shall always be remembered. Captain Muhammad Sarwar, the first recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, who demonstrated indomitable courage and valour in defence of motherland and embraced Shahadat at Tilpatra (Azad Kashmir) in 1948.



Majlis-e-Shoora assures minority rights, addresses law & order concerns in Sindh

The Majlis-e-Shoora, chaired by Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Wednesday expressed solidarity with all minority communities including Hindus reaffirming their legal rights enshrined in the Constitution. The session held to address various issues, including concerns raised by Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party about the deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh. (Details on Page 8)

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Cheques distribution

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing cheques among the successful candidates under PM's Youth Business Loan Scheme on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

Economy on track of progress as default risk ebbs away: PM

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the country's economy was on the course of progress as the risk of default has been averted, consequent to the efforts by the coalition parties.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Business Council here, said all the coalition parties cooperated in every decision of the government.

He said the government was keen to revive national economy through investment facilitation and business-friendly policies.

The prime minister said restoring the confidence of investors and the business community was the greatest achievement.

He said the government would miss no opportunity for economic recovery, restoration of confidence of international partners, investors and the business community.

He told the meeting that a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been established for foreign direct investment in Pakistan.

He acknowledged that the business community did not only provide employment opportunities in the country but also becomes a source of foreign exchange by enhancing exports.

Headed by Chairman Muhammad Aurangzeb, the PBC delegation appreciated the federal government's efforts for economic revival during the last year.

They also lauded the government for successfully signing the agreement with the International Monetary Fund and appreciated the incorporation of the business community's proposals in its policies.

The prime minister welcomed the PBC's proposals and appreciated the business community's role in the country's socio-economic development.

Federal ministers Marriyum Aurangzeb, Engineer Khurram Dastgir, Minister of State Dr Musaddik Malik, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, State Bank of Pakistan governor, parliamentarians and senior officers attended the meeting.

Election bill empowering caretaker setup sails through parliament

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The joint session of the Parliament on Wednesday passed the Election Act Amendment Bill 2023, which aims to empower the caretaker prime minister, despite the opposition from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The amendment to Clause 2A of Section 230 of the Election Act, which was also opposed by PPP leader Raza Rabbani, empowered the caretaker prime minister.

Following the passage of the Election Act Bill, the caretaker prime minister will have increased financial powers. The caretaker government will be authorised to make necessary decisions for the country's economy, international organisations, and foreign governments, and enter into agreements.

Moreover, the joint session also approved an amendment to allow candidates to nominate three polling agents. Each candidate will be able to nominate three polling agents at a single polling station, with



only one polling agent remaining inside the polling station. The presiding officer is now mandated to display the list of voters outside the polling station.

The ECP will be bound to publish details of the postal ballots issued before the elections on its website. If there is a difference of 5% in votes between the losing and winning candidates, a recount will be conducted. The recounting will be done by the returning officer in the presence of the candidates.

After the passage of the Election Act, the presiding officer will be required to immediately send a copy of the result to

the Election Commission and the returning officer. Furthermore, a photo of the final result will be taken and sent to the returning officer and the election commission. In case of no internet facility, the presiding officer will be expected to personally deliver the actual result and provide the results by 2am. Delays must be explained with a concrete reason.

The Election Act Bill also includes an obligation for Nadra to provide the record of new identity cards to the election commission. Complaints will be addressed by the election commission one day before polling. Failure to take the oath will result in the seat being considered vacant.

In addition to educational qualification, the Senate technocrat seat will now require 20 years of relevant experience.

Moreover, five days before the polling day, the polling station will not be changed. Candidates will be allowed to use their already existing bank account for election expenses. Constituencies will be based on an equal number of registered voters.

Constituencies will be announced four months before the election schedule, and the number of registered voters in all constituencies will be equal. Complaints against delimitation can be made within 30 days.

According to the Election Act Bill, if the nomination is rejected or withdrawn, the fee will be refunded to the candidate, and the candidate will be able to object to the establishment of the polling station on valid grounds, within 3 days of the final results, the political parties must provide the final priority list of the specific seats.

Also, the presiding officer will be bound to provide voting facilities to the disabled, the election tribunal will decide on the petition filed by the candidate within 180 days, and the decision on the violation of the code of conduct should be taken within 7 days instead of 15 days. Criminal action will be taken against the presiding and returning officers for negligence. In case of non-conduct of intra-party elections, the political party will be fined Rs2 lacs.

SC turns down PTI chief's plea to stop Toshakhana criminal trial

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday rejected a petition of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, seeking an order to restrain trial against him in the Toshakhana case.

PTI Chairman Khan had filed appeal against the Islamabad High Court's decision to send the Toshakhana case back to the trial court for hearing.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Yahya Afridi turned down PTI's chief request and sent the case back to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to re-examine the case.

The PTI chief and his legal counsel appeared before the



bench. In its order, the apex court asked the high court to decide Imran Khan's appeal and other applications together. The court maintained that it would not be proper to interfere with the proceedings of the trial court.

The court also issued a notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), ordering it to submit its response today. Later, Amjad Parvez, the ECP lawyer, attended the hearing to submit the response.

Bilawal, Russian FM discuss bilateral cooperation in various sectors



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov of the Russian Federation on Wednesday and exchanged views on bilateral matters and growing cooperation in diverse areas.

The Foreign Minister also renewed the invitation to Foreign Minister Lavrov to visit Pakistan, a press release issued by the foreign office spokesperson said.

The two Foreign Ministers also discussed the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI). Recognizing the importance of

this initiative and its potential impact on disruption of global food supply chains causing food inflation and food-security-related challenges, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored the need for concerted efforts to find viable solutions that would in particular benefit developing countries already under economic strain.

He expressed the hope that all parties involved in the BSGI would engage in constructive dialogue to revive the Initiative. In this regard, the Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's support for international efforts for restoring the deal by addressing the concerns of all sides.

Pakistan monsoon death toll reaches 150

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 150 people have died in weather-related incidents across Pakistan since June 24 when monsoon rains began, ARY News reported quoting National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

According to the data compiled by the NDMA, worst-hit regions include Punjab, where 66 people died, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 41 fatalities, Sindh 15, Balochistan 6, Islamabad 11, AJK 6 and Gilgit-Baltistan reported five deaths.

More than 233 people had been injured in the incidents caused by the rains or flooding, while more than 468 houses were damaged.

Meanwhile, a fresh westerly wave is likely to enter in upper parts of the country from today. This monsoon spell will continue till July 30, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said today.

Under the influence of the new weather system Islamabad could receive rainfall with thunderstorm. South Punjab, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan will receive thunderstorm and rain, according to the Met Office.

PTI Senator Dr Zarqa's clinics sealed in Lahore



Afraz Nazish

LAHORE: Two clinics of Dr Zarqa Suharwardy – a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf senator who responded to Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's objectionable remarks against the PTI lawmakers – were sealed by a team of Punjab health department after conducting a surprise raid in Lahore.

A Punjab health department's team conducted a surprise raid at the PTI Senator Dr Zarqa Suharwardy in Lahore on late Tuesday night and sealed the clinic.

Deputy District Health Officer Cantt said in a statement that

'Some FSC-passed girls were running the whole clinic and Dr Zarqa was not present there.' He further claimed that the team did not found Punjab Healthcare Commission's licence in the clinic. 'We also found dengue larvae in the clinic and a case is registered under the dengue control act.'

While talking to media Dr Zarqa said that PML-N always exhibited 'Gullu Butt' style after failing to give a mannerly response. She added that she may be arrested by the authorities tomorrow.

The senator suggested the government to peacefully and honourably spend 18 days left remaining in its tenure. She said that doctors came to their clinics after appointments of the patients. 'My clinic is registered with CRA and I am also a registered doctor in PMDC. We are being targeted in vengeful actions by political opponents for supporting the PTI chief.'

MPA Aslam Abro's brother, nephew shot dead in Karachi gun attack



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Brother and nephew of Sindh MPA Aslam Abro were shot dead in a firing incident at their vehicle in Karachi on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, unknown attackers riding motorbikes opened fire at MPA Aslam Abro's car in Defence Phase 7, Karachi. The police said four persons were in the vehicle at the time of the attack.

As a result of the firing, Aslam Abro's brother lawyer Akram Abro and his son, Shehryar Abro were killed. Police say shells of 9MM

pistols have been found at the crime scene, and added more than 25 fire were shot at the vehicle.

According to police officials, statements of eyewitnesses will be recorded while the police are in contact with the affected family.

According to the initial reports, the police said the attack is said to be the result of old enmity.

Aslam Abro hails from Sindh's Jacobabad district, where his family is reportedly having old enmities, the police said and added that an investigation will be carried out with the help of CCTV footage.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet meeting on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Federal cabinet okays amending Official Secrets Act

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has approved the plan to amend the Official Secrets Act 1923 to modify the law in accordance with the modern-day needs, citing sources.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired the federal cabinet session today in which key decisions were taken including the approval for amending the Official Secrets Act 1923.

Under the amendments, the laws related to the Official Secrets will be modified in accordance with the modern-day needs. Sources told ARY News that the role of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) would be enhanced and it will be included as an investigation institution.

A framework will be formulated to enhance coordination between major investigation institutions and their roles. The federal government will also upgrade law related to the mechanism of joint investiga-

tion teams' formation for probing into the secret data.

Sources added that the amendments aim to enhance the protection of the information related to the national security.

The federal cabinet has approved draft of the amendment bill of the Investment Board Ordinance 2001 for promotion of foreign investment in Pakistan.

The amendment will empower the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and evolve mechanisms for working relationship with various ministries and provincial governments, besides raising its basic structure and formulating nature of work, Radio Pakistan reported.

Once it will become law, the Special Investment Facilitation Council will ensure speedy implementation of foreign investment projects in the country.

The Cabinet, on the recom-

mendation of the Ministry of Narcotics Control, constituted a ministerial committee under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif to finalise the National Cannabis Policy.

The cabinet also approved the restructuring of Accountability Courts on the recommendation of the Ministry of Law and Justice, under which eleven Accountability Courts will be converted into seven Banking Courts, Two Intellectual Tribunals, a Special Court Central and a Special Court in Balochistan. This reorganizing will not incur any additional costs.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Information Technology, the federal cabinet approved in principle the E-Safety Bill 2023 to protect user data and prevent illegal and illegal use of information systems.

Under the E-Safety Bill, a framework will be evolved under a certain law to ensure

protection and unauthorized use of user data on all types of online services, online shopping, data provided to various companies and social networking websites in Pakistan.

After approval of the bill, heinous crimes like online harassment, cyber bullying and blackmailing will be effectively prevented.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the Cabinet also accorded approval in principle to the Personal Data Protection Bill 2023.

The cabinet accorded approval to the policy of inclusion and removal of names in the Exit Control List (ECL) on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior.

It also approved that if the reason for inclusion of the names in the Passport Control List and the Exit Control List is the same, the name will be removed from both the lists.

The federal cabinet accord-

ed approved to the reorganization of Board of Directors of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines.

It also approved the appointment of members of Selection Committee of Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority.

Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz Sharif said the government is implementing 'Whole of the Government' policy to increase Foreign Direct Investment in the country. He said the policy is aimed at speedy implementing the projects with foreign investment.

The prime minister appreciated Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik for his successful efforts to finalise the LNG Agreement with Azerbaijan.

He said the agreement will not only be an important step in the development of trade relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, but also prove to be an important milestone for Pakistan's energy security.

US 'horrified' over assault on women in Manipur, India: Spokesperson

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States is "shocked and horrified" by the video of an outrageous attack on two women in the Indian state of Manipur, and called for a peaceful resolution of the violence there.

"We were shocked and horrified by the video of this extreme attack on two women in Manipur," Vedant Patel, Deputy Spokesperson of the State Department, told his daily press briefing on Tuesday.

The video showing two women being paraded naked and molested by a group of men on May 4 in Kangpokpi district surfaced on July 19, attracting worldwide condemnation.

"We convey our profound sympathies to the survivors of this act of gender-based violence and support the Indian Government's efforts to seek justice for them," he added.

Patel was responding to a question about the Manipur incident from the correspondent of a private Pakistani television channel.

"And as we have previously stated,



we encourage a peaceful and inclusive resolution to the violence in Manipur and encourage authorities to respond to the humanitarian needs and protect the lives and property of all groups," Patel said.

Replying to a question about press freedom in Pakistan, the spokesperson said that the US discusses this issue with all stakeholders around the world, including Pakistani officials.

"A free press and informed citizenry are key for any nation and its democratic future. We've been very clear about that," Patel added.

Loans of 30b distributed in five months: SAPM

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said the loans of Rs. 30 billion were distributed during the last five months under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme.

She stated this while addressing the ceremony held for the distribution of laptops and cheques under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme and Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023, respectively at the Sindh Governor House.

The SAPM said the business loan programme was initiated by former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in 2013.

She said loans amounting to Rs. 75 billion were distributed under the scheme in last 10 years.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the loan was being provided in three tiers. In the first tier, the loan of Rs. 0.5 million, in the second tier, Rs. 0.5 to 1.5 million and in the third tier, Rs. 1.5 million to 7.5 million is provided, she said.



On the occasion, the students, recipients of laptops, were presented Guard of Honor by a contingent of Sindh Police. The recipients of loans and laptops expressed their pleasure and thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Ameen-ul-Haque, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Sindh Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Nasir Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, President of different banks also attended the ceremony.

Majlis-e-Shoora assures minority rights, addresses law and order concerns in Sindh

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Majlis-e-Shoora, chaired by Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Wednesday expressed solidarity with all minority communities including Hindus reaffirming their legal rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The session held to address various issues, including concerns raised by Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party about the deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh.

The speaker apprised the joint sitting of parliament about the alarming situation in the 'Kacha' area of Sindh, where dacoits were posing a serious threat to the Hindu community.

These dacoits had targeted the community's properties and lives, causing fear and hindering their ability to

practice religious rituals freely.

The senator sought the Speaker's ruling on the matter and urged the government to take immediate action.

In response, Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf assured the Hindu community of full support and emphasized that they should not live in fear, as it was the state's responsibility to ensure their safety and protect their rights.

MNA Kesoo Mal Kheal Das of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz echoed the sentiment, highlighting that all believers of different faiths were equal citizens of the state.

He urged the government to protect the Hindu community and take decisive action against the dacoits in the province to restore law and order.

MNA Akbar Ali Chitrali of Jamat-e-Islami reiterated that all citizens of Pakistan were equal under the Constitution stressing that any threat



posed to bona fide citizens, such as the Hindu community, was a threat to the Constitution itself.

He assured the Hindu community that Muslims stood in solidarity with them and would provide unwavering support.

MNA Ghous Bux Mahar of Grand Democratic Alliance also raised concerns about the law and order situation in Sindh, expressing reservations about the current system of government.

Meanwhile, MNA Qadir Khan Mandokhail of Pakistan Peoples Party

condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark, calling on the government to take appropriate measures to address such incidents at the international level.

He urged Western countries to take practical steps to prevent such occurrences, as they caused immense mental agony among Muslims worldwide.

He demanded the government to send those countries ambassadors home where such disrespectful acts had taken place.

The Majlis-e-Shoora pledged to protect the rights of minorities and ensured a secure and peaceful environment for all citizens, irrespective of their faith.

It expressed the hope that the issues raised by members would be given due consideration, and the government would take prompt action to address the concerns.

NDMA Chairman emphasises undertaking encroachment clearance in river beds

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Acting Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) during a NEOC session with key stakeholders on Wednesday emphasized undertaking encroachment clearance in and around river beds and conducting public awareness campaigns to maximize the general public's knowledge of risks associated with the monsoon season.

The Acting Chairman NDMA presided National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on the current monsoon situation, a news release said.



He also underscored the news to enhance vigilant monitoring of rivers and reservoirs during monsoon season. The session was attended by representatives of PMD, FFC, PDMA, SDMA, GBDMA, FFD, Provincial and Irriga-

tion Departments, SUPARCO and PCIW.

The Acting Chairman NDMA reviewed the situation of major Dams and the regulation of river flows during ongoing monsoon spells.

The PMD briefed about

the heavy rainfall observed in the areas of Sindh and Punjab and the expected heavy rainfall in the Northwestern Parts of Balochistan and in the Northern parts of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa from 26 July to 1 August.

The PDMA highlighted the rescue and relief work carried out in the respective areas after the recent spell of rain.

The FFD reported that Tarbela and Mangla Dams are at 81% and 77% of the storage capacity respectively and further highlighted that encroachments in Ravi river bed around Shahdara Bridge area and downstream Mangla Dam should be cleared timely by provincial authorities.

The Acting Chairman NDMA instructed relevant departments to strengthen coordination among all relevant departments to streamline disaster mitigation and contingency plans.

Free flour scheme: NAB questions PFMA office bearers again



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has expedited probe into the alleged irregularities in free flour scheme and questioned the office bearers of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA), citing sources.

A NAB team reached PFMA office in Lahore and questioned the office bearers in connection with a probe into the alleged irregularities in free flour scheme.

The PFMA spokesperson confirmed the NAB team's visit to the office. The spokesperson added that it was third visit of the NAB team in which the investigators sought some documents which were provided to them.

The anti-corruption watchdog had launched an investigation into the alleged theft of 1.5 million flour sacks which would be distributed among the deserving families under the free flour scheme. In May, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched an investigation into alleged 'irregularities' in Punjab free flour scheme following the allegations levelled by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

Sources told ARY News that a team

of accountability watchdog visited office of Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) in Lahore and questioned the officials about free flour scheme.

In a statement, the PFMA spokesperson said that the NAB team was apprised of the process of wheat collection from the government and flour grinding. Meanwhile, the bureau also visited Directorate of Food Department and conducted investigations into the alleged irregularities.

It is pertinent to mention here that PML-N senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi alleged Rs20 billion in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's free flour scheme launched during Ramadan.

Speaking at an event in Lahore, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi questioned the incumbent government's capability, saying that the political leadership's failure was the reason behind current crisis.

He maintained that incompetent leadership will only cause harm to the country instead of resolving the issues.

The PML-N leader also expressed concern over the 'differences' among national institutions. He also called upon politicians to sit together and resolve the disputes for the sake of the country's progress.

OIP discusses Indonesia's resilient recovery from multidimensional economic crises

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Session III of the Online Internship Program (OIP) organized by the Indonesian Embassy and Bahria University, discussed Indonesia's economic successes in reversing the upheavals and its rise as an emerging global economy.

Dr. Muhammad Faisal, Executive Director of Center of Reform on Economics (CORE) Indonesia in his lecture while outlining the main features of the Indonesian economy mentioned that Indonesia is a top 15 global economy, part of the G-20 group and is expected to be one of the top 10 by 2050. He highlighted that Indonesia is a major producer of palm oil, natural rubber, oil & gas, coal and minerals but has also developed a manufacturing

and processing industry, with its main industries ranging from labor-intensive to hi-tech. "Indonesia's as a Middle power is considered an economic giant at ASEAN level, with a GDP over one trillion USD and has successfully reduced poverty rates since 1998" he added.

Dr. Muhammad Faisal, highlighted Indonesia is classified as an upper middle income economy and has reduced its poverty rate since 1998. However, he reminded that these all achievement were made possible only after the country through its resilience recovered from the several political economic crises. "The 1960 domestic severe political and economic crisis which led to hyperinflation, extreme poverty and currency redenomination. The repercussions were

political turmoil that eventually led to regime change in the country", Dr Faisal recalled.

According to the speaker, President Soeharto government from 1966-1996 brought decades of stability and high economic growth to Indonesia, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in natural resources extraction and manufacturing sectors. Yet, he said, the 1997-1998 economic crisis hard hit Indonesia and led to high inflation again and a crisis that engulfed countries in Asia. "1997-1998 economic crisis again led to political turmoil and regime change, with an IMF intervention of USD 110 billion" Dr. Faisal explained.

The speaker further highlighted that the Reform Era that follow was marked by political reforms and stronger corruption eradication measures.



He stated that during this period, the GDP grew at a lower rate until 2007 but sound economic policies reduced vulnerabilities and strengthened external balances leading to increased foreign reserves, FDI, tourism and exports.

"The IMF loan was fully repaid, and the Indonesian economy demonstrated resilience during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis" he added.

The speaker made special reference to development strategies pursued under the leadership of President Joko Widodo aimed at promoting downstream industry development, banning raw material exports and encouraging value-added products like EV nonrenewable energy sectors. He also acquainted the participants about Indonesia's rapid growth of the digital economy and country's four global unicorn with worth above one billion USD.

In the Q&A session regarding IMF role and intervention, the speaker replied that in 1998 IMF intervention helped but forced liberalization

flooded resulted in Chinese products flooding Indonesian market. On the other hand, he said, the forced political reforms which followed massive decentralization still face policy issues. To another question regarding Indonesia strategy to maintain a balance when it comes to relations with US and China, the speaker said that Indonesia's strategy to maintain balance with the US and China is based on an independent and active foreign policy. "Economic relations ultimately influence political relations but as a natural leader in ASEAN Indonesia must maintain neutrality and centrality of ASEAN", he concluded.

The session IV of OIP next week will be focusing another dimension of Indonesia's winding road to build strong and resilient economy.

Art

ISLAMABAD: A skilled man is busy in finalizing the statue of the Buddha at his hut at Lok Versa in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Shutter down strike against increase in electricity prices

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chamber of Small Traders South Punjab has announced to come to the streets and shutter down against the increase in electricity prices and demanded from the government and the officials and employees of other institutions including Justice and Justice to stop free electricity. This announcement was made by Chamber of Small Traders South Punjab President Chaudhry Tariq Karim, District President Sheikh Tahir Amjad, City President Zafar Iqbal Siddiqui, South Punjab Secretary General Sheikh Aamir Saleem Sr. Vice President District Multan Khawaja Yasir Ashfaq held a joint press conference at the Press Club. Duran Kia Chaudhry Tariq Karim further said that due to the increase in electricity prices, especially the small traders, farmers, laborers, small government and non-government employ-



ees are suffering from serious problems.

The sad situation is that commercial Rs 65, domestic Rs 28 per unit, as soon as the electricity bills come, traders and people get 440 volt shocks. The situation is that the lower class is limited to eating one meal instead of two. Even mosques and madrassas are getting heavy bills while on the other hand Azad Kashmir government has declared mosques and madrassas exempt from electricity bills.

He said that the government of Pakistan should also make the mosques and madrassas exempt from electricity bills. The increase in tariff should be withdrawn but the increase of Rs.4 to Rs.8 per unit of electricity should also be withdrawn. Instead of generating expensive electricity through furnace oil, the government should generate electricity from coal and water so that the common poor man can be truly empowered. Get relief and not force them to

commit suicide

He said that for the protest movement against the increase in electricity prices, an important meeting has been called in the month of August after Ashura, in which the future action plan will be announced if the government does not accept the demands and in the electricity bills. If the increase is not returned, the business community across the country, including Multan, will be forced to conduct shutter down and protest movement.

Tragic incident in Bahawalpur Islamia University is very sad, says Tasnim Sarwar

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: President of Jamaat-e-Islami Women's Wing South Punjab Tasneem Sarwar, member of Central Majlis Shura Rafia Fatima, candidate for PP Constituency 214 Shaz-ia Sher Afzal has said in a joint statement regarding the tragic incident in Bahawalpur Islamia University that "this alleged incident is very sad and it is a matter of the future of the girls. It should be investigated very transparently and the culprits should be severely punished. The media trial of innocent people should be stopped. Providing a safe environment for female students and teachers should be given top priority

The establishment of separate educational institutions for women is inevitable. The govt should arrange separate educational institutions and female teachers for female students on an emergency basis. There is a need, especially the ever-deteriorating moral situation of educational institutions, the environment of educational institutions, extra-curricular activities and the monster of social media from above is really worrying.

Mixed Cropping and Relay Cropping System introduced

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Attil has said that in order to meet the nutritional needs of the growing population, the current farming system must be adapted according to the contemporary requirements and modern and new technology used in the world must be adopted. More than less area. Inter cropping and relay cropping systems have to be introduced in the field to get production. The best use of the available resources should be made for agricultural development and the stability of the country's economy. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting held on acceleration and innovation in research activities to achieve more production from less area in the committee room of the Agriculture Secretariat.

The heads of Adaptive Research Farms of South Punjab, scientists of MNS Agricultural University and other relevant officers participated in the meeting. On this occasion, Secretary Agriculture South Punjab gave instructions and said that the heads of Adaptive Research Farms and scientists of Agricultural University should strengthen mutual relations. And keep sharing information about your trials regularly. To make the intercropping and relay cropping system more profitable, separate trials of the same type should be set up in the three research stations and the agricultural university and their data should be collected regularly so that the results of these trials can be obtained to get correct information about the economic benefits.

Workshop on Research Supervisor's Capacity Building in Women's University: Dr Malka



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: One workshop on Research Supervisor's Capacity Building under the auspices of Centre for Professional Development, Women University Multan. The focal person Dr Malka Liaquat (Director, CPD). The resource persons were Prof Dr. Kalsoom Paracha, Prof. Dr. Malika Rani, and Dr. Sara Musaddiq. These resource persons have successfully completed their capacity-building workshop of Ph. D. supervisors which was organized by the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) and British Council. In order to deliver the outputs of training, a one-day workshop was arranged to guide peers regarding updated trends and policies.

Participants of the workshop were Ph. D. and MPhil Supervisors from the departments of Chemistry, Physics, BBT, MMG, Statistics, CS&IT, History, and Pakistan Studies, Urdu, Islamic Studies, and Environmental Sciences of The Women University, Multan. The workshop aimed at providing necessary support and resources to conduct high-quality research and develop essential skills for their academic or professional careers. During the session, Role, Responsibilities & Expectations of a Supervisor was briefed by Dr. Sara Musaddiq. She highlighted and emphasized the crucial role, a research supervisor plays, in guiding and supporting students or researchers. Whether in academia, industry, or other research-focused institutions, supervisors' responsibilities and expectations are vital for the success and growth of the researchers they mentor. Further, she highlighted the different policies implemented by Higher Education Commission (HEC) such as eligibility and supervision processes.

24 hrs monitoring and quick response mechanism of all districts control rooms: Dr Rizwan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Secretary Emergency Services Department Dr. Rizwan Naseer reviewed arrangements of Rescue 1122 to provide emergency cover to mourning processions of Ashura in all Districts of Punjab. He also reviewed monitoring and quick response mechanism of all districts control rooms and Provincial Monitoring Cell.



He directed all DEOs to restrict the leaves of the rescuers, implement Code Red on 9th & 10th of the Muharram to provide emergency cover. He asserted that the Disaster Response Force (DRF) stationed at Emergency Services Academy will be dispatched in case of any major emergency for backup support.

The Secretary ESD was chairing a video link meeting of all Districts Emergency Officers and senior rescue officers at Emergency Services Headquarters here on Wednesday. He directed all DEOs to review the checklist of preparedness & continuously hold meetings of District Emergency Boards with key focal persons of Shia Sect/ Majlis, ensure training of Imamia Scouts/ volunteers, and mapping of all processions and mass gathering event well in time.

Deputy Commissioner, CPO review Muharram security in Shujaabad and Jalalpur Pirwala

Asim Tanveer

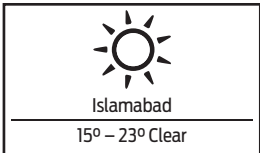
MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir and CPO Mansoorul Haq Rana visited Shujaabad and Jalalpur Pirwala yesterday. Assistant Commissioners Shujaabad and Jalalpur Pirwala also gave a briefing on Muharram arrangements along with the police officials. Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner and CPO also met with the civil society and the licensees Holders and discussed about law and order. Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir said that there is a zero tolerance policy regarding law and order on the occasion of Muharram



and administration have the support of every class, including the business community and scholars. The district administration has made exemplary

arrangements on Muharram routes and assemblies. A security plan has been formed and those who disrupt peace and order will be dealt with

iron hands. Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana said that the security situation of the entire district will be monitored from the Muharram control room.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:38 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:09 pm
Maghrib 7:13 pm
Isha 8:50 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

A rapidly growing population is the biggest threat

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The Haripur Chamber of Commerce and Industry said on Wednesday that the biggest threat facing the country is not being addressed.

Pakistan is facing climate challenges, terrorism, floods, drought, corruption, instability, energy crisis, a sinking economy, water scarcity, mafia rule and other threats, but a major threat is a rapidly growing population, a ticking time bomb, which is not being handled on merit, it said.

Pakistan's available resources and infrastructure is unable to bear the burden of such a large population, said Khurram Sheikh, Patron-in-Chief, Haripur Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In a statement issued here today, he said that in 1950 the population of Pakistan was 34 million which has now increased to over 240 million and in the next twenty-seven years it will be more than 400 million.

The system will be unable to cater for the needs of the population like providing health, education and employment etc. and the system will simply collapse.

Pakistan's population has been experiencing exponential growth over the past few decades. Several factors contribute to this increase including high birth rates, limited access to family planning services, cultural norms, and beliefs, he observed.

Khurram Sheikh said that the GDP growth rate sometimes increases and sometimes decreases, but the population



growth rate continues to increase straining vital resources, crippling the economy, and overwhelming social infrastructure.

He said that at present, about forty percent of the population is suffering from food insecurity, forty-four percent of the children under the age of five are stunted, and records of maternal and child deaths are also being made.

The business leader noted that agriculture production per acre in the country is alarmingly low while the destruction of important crops due to weather effects has become a regular occurrence.

In these circumstances, the departments created to control the population are suffering from worst governance instead of being active and the division of powers between the Centre and the provinces is not clear which is another favour of the Eighteenth Amendment to this nation.

He said that if attention is not paid to the health, education and skill-building of the youth and the population growth rate is not reduced, millions of youth in the country will take negative paths which will prove disastrous for the economy and society and dealing with them will become impossible.

He informed that Bangladesh, which shares a similar cultural and historical background with Pakistan, has managed to curb its population growth significantly.

Bangladesh faced a population crisis in the 1970s, with a high fertility rate and a rapidly growing population resulting in an immediate action and implementation of various policies and programmes.

From a fertility rate of around 6.3 in the 1970s, the country has successfully reduced it to 2.1, as of the latest available data. This achievement is considered a significant milestone, as a fertility rate of 2.1 is considered the replacement level, where the population size stabilises.

Furthermore, Bangladesh's contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) stands at 65.0%, while Pakistan's CPR is 34.1%. This substantial variation reflects the disparity in family planning services and awareness between the two countries.

Keeping in view all the facts, our policymakers should take the issue of population control seriously and consider it as a matter of national security, he demanded.

We must unlock Pakistan's potential and address the social and economic challenges that lie ahead.

PhD TTS University Professors are Deprived of Salary Raises Due to HEC's Delaying Tactics

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The President of APTTA, Dr. Yasar Shah, has shown serious concern for the annoying attitude of HEC management. A couple of weeks ago, APTTA staged a massive protest in front of the HEC office in Islamabad.

A sit-in at the same place was to be staged until the demands were met and notifications were issued. However, upon the mediation by the Senator Mushtaq between HEC & APTTA, the APTTA cabinet postponed the dharna. It was mutually decided that HEC would resolve the salary raise issue vide HEC notification F. P. 2-103/HEC/2021-22/687 of the Tenure Track System (TTS) university teachers within a week by keeping the APTTA cabinet in loop. During discussion with HEC management anomalies were found on the salary draft compiled by HEC finance office, where HEC sent the same wrong figures to Government of Pakistan-Finance Division, however, it was mutually decided that APTTA will draft revised salary figures based on different federal universities and the said has been shared with HEC. However, it is very unfortunate that nothing tangible has been observed so far.

APTTA management has said that the gravity of this issue demands immediate attention and remedial action, as the potential consequences could have far-reaching and devastating effects on future generations of our nation. The prevailing negligence within the HEC management ranks has raised serious alarm bells, warranting swift and decisive measures to rectify the situation. It is imperative that the HEC management acknowledges the urgency of the matter and takes prompt action to rectify the situation by increasing the salary that has been notified by Government of Pakistan-Finance Division and Prime Minister of Pakistan 2 years ago vide notification No. F.No.4(6) R-4/2016. It is crucial that the HEC management shall recognize the gravity of the situation and commit swift and effective measures to mitigate the damage caused by their negligent attitude.

APTTA cabinet has warned the senior management of HEC to notify the salary increase till 31st of July 2023. Otherwise, a massive protest followed by a prolonged sit-in will be staged in early August 2023 by thousands of PhD TTS university teachers in front of HEC. It is very unfortunate and humiliating that HEC has been unable to do anything practically except verbal commitments and delaying tactics.

Productivity demands Research based techniques with cheaper electricity

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The organized industrial sector in Pakistan is not giving optimum production and we must take immediate measures to enhance its productivity to the maximum level, said Dr. Arslan Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Umer Mian Pakistani Origin Researchers based in UK. They visited the R&D Section of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and had detailed deliberation with its Chairman Engineer Ahmad Hassan. They said that the improvement in industrial sector at the global level was a continuous process but in Pakistan it is facing stagnation. "Few large-scale industrial units acquired latest technologies to improve their quality but they failed to transfer this technology at the grass root level", they said and added that they are providing consultancy to the more than 180 leading industrial units of the world. They said that they could also offer similar services to the Pakistani industrialists at a much cheaper rate. Engineer Ahmad Hassan said adding that, a few years ago R&D Section had identified ten major issues but successive governments failed to overcome these irritants and hence our economy was in deep crisis. He further elaborated that the industrialization is an imperative task to attain the economic autarky and we must reorganize our industrial sector on modern scientific lines by using the artificial intelligence. Engineer Ahmad Hassan expressed concern over the high cost of electricity and said that government must take bold decisions to check wastage and theft of electricity instead of enhancing its tariff.



Value-added textile industry slams frequent increase in power prices

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The value-added textile industry has rejected the frequent increase in prices of electricity and gas, saying the massive jump in electricity base rates up to Rs. 7.50 per unit for already under financial stress industry consumers would make Pakistani products uncompetitive in the international market.

Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) Central Chairman Mubashar Naseer Butt and North Zone Chairman Waseem Akhtar Khan, in a joint statement, remarked that at a time of unsatisfactory export volumes and low industrial growth, the hike in electricity base tariffs for the export industry was surprising. If the decision is not withdrawn, it will prove dangerous for the country's garment industry, they stressed.

Central Chairman Mubashar Naseer Butt said that tariff of industry, commercial sector and other categories of consumers will cause the burden of another hike of Rs. 7.50 per unit for them. He said that the increase in base rate of electricity is also part of pact signed between government and IMF, which says that the government has to notify NEPRA's determinations without any delay and amendment.

Mubashar Butt stated that on July 14, 2023, the NEPRA had already approved average rebasing in tariff of Rs. 4.96 per unit across the board.

PRGMEA Central Chairman observed that the abrupt disruption of concessions committed under the Textile Policy 2020 - 2025 has resulted in decline in industry's exports, which declined from \$18.5 billion during FY2021-22 to around \$16.6 billion during the outgoing FY2022-23.

Pak-Ethiopia Relations

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula called on Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways, Khawaja Saad Rafique at Ministry of Aviation on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

The life of 'Martyr of Humanity Hazrat Imam Hussain' is a torch for humanity, Dr. Maqsood Jafri

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Imam Hussain's great sacrifice will continue to make humanity recognize right and wrong until the end of the world. Hazrat Imam Hussain's life is a torch not only for Muslims but for the entire humanity. These views were expressed by eminent researcher and intellectual Dr. Maqsood Jafri while presenting his lecture titled "Shaheed Humanity of Hazrat Imam Hussain" in the program "Nuqta Nazar" organized by Nazria Pakistan Council Trust, Islamabad.

The ceremony was presided over by renowned poet and intellectual Naseem Sahar, while renowned poet and intellectual Dr. Farhat Abbas was the guest of honor. Hameed Qaiser, the

host and program director of the event, representing the council, thanked the guests for their arrival and introduced the chief guest.

Dr. Maqsood Jafri added in his lecture that "Pakistan needs inter-faith harmony more than ever. Today, under the guise of Islam, vested interests have adopted sectarianism for a long time." They are not letting the message reach the common man. It is necessary that the learned scholars with wisdom and knowledge explain the real background and purpose of the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain to the common man. What message did he send to humanity by refusing to pledge allegiance?" The President of the event Naseem Sahar and the guest of honor Dr. Farhat Abbas offered salutations to the Imam in accord-

ance with the theme.

In response to a question, Dr. Maqsood Jafri said that the requirement of Hussain's martyrdom is that Muslims should unite and establish a democratic and welfare system of Islam. Avoid sectarianism and religious extremism because the Imam himself said in the field of Karbala that "the purpose of my establishment is the establishment of religion and the restoration of human rights, that's why he is called 'martyr of humanity'."

Answer to another question While giving, he said that with the sacrifice of Hazrat Hussain, the real, true, eternal and everlasting message of Islam will remain alive and alive till the end of the world. Among the participants of the event were Zaheer



Geelani, Muhammad Sajid Qureshi, Moazzama Tanveer, Fawzia Noreen, Dr. Ruqia Abbasi, Faiza Afrin Qureshi, Shaji Haider Hashmi, Hafiz Ikram Mahmood,

Muhammad Zubair Qureshi, Adnan Hameed, Aziz Abrarul Haq, Sarmad Khalil, Muhammad Naeem, Khalid. Bhatti and Muhammad Umair were includ-

ed. At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Maqsood Jafri prayed for the repose of the soul of his late friend and founder of the Trust, Zahid Malik.

COMSTECH and the University of Sargodha sign MoU

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the COMSTECH secretariat in Islamabad on Wednesday. The officials of COMSTECH and the University of Sargodha were also present in the MoU signing ceremony.

Both parties agreed to develop and implement joint educational and scientific programs in the fields of science, technology and innovation and collaborate in joint organization of international events, such as work-

shops, conferences, symposia, seminars, exhibitions, and training courses.

COMSTECH will offer associate membership of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence to the University of Sargodha and the registration in the OIC technology and innovation portal. University of Sargodha will benefit by arranging the visits of distinguished scholars to the university under COMSTECH distinguished scholars program. COMSTECH will provide support in placement of students, academics and scientific personnel at the University of Sargodha along with international academic exchanges.

COMSTECH will develop a program in association with the University of Sargodha through which

students from OIC states will conduct research in different fields of science, technology and innovation at University of Sargodha.

Both institutions will jointly work on the faculty development, imparting training and consultation for the establishment of science park at the University of Sargodha, and launching of a technician training program.

The University of Sargodha is a major public sector university in Punjab, started its journey in 1929 with the establishment of De'Montmorency College, later renamed as Government College Sargodha, and was awarded the university charter in 2002.

COMSTECH is the OIC minis-



terial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation, established in Makkah by the third

Islamic Summit in 1981. COMSTECH works for strengthening cooperation among OIC member states in science

and technology and undertake follow-up-actions for implementation of the resolutions of the OIC.

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Save agriculture and farmers from disaster

Agriculture is no less than the backbone of Pakistan's economy. Agriculture provides employment to a large part of our population and 18 to 19 percent of the country's GDP is related to agriculture. However, the sector faces many challenges, including outdated practices, water scarcity, climate change, making barren lands cultivable and limited access to modern technology. In order to arrest the decline of agriculture and ensure the welfare of the farmers, it is necessary to take advantage of the modern technologies which are necessary for the farmers to overcome the existing constraints.

Water scarcity is a major problem in the country. In terms of area, a large part of this small country, estimated at 23 million acres, is spread over non-agricultural lands. This leads to inefficient irrigation practices and reduced crop production. By adopting proper irrigation systems such as drip irrigation and sprinkler systems, farmers can minimize water wastage and optimize water use. Additionally, the deployment of sensor-based technologies can provide real-time data on soil moisture. This will help farmers make informed decisions about irrigation schedules. The organizations and government should provide subsidies and financial incentives to encourage farmers to adopt these water-saving technologies. It is estimated to have an area of 22 million acres. Despite the fact, that most of this area is non-agricultural land. Beside this Pakistan still occupies an important position in the world for the production of cotton, sugarcane,

wheat, rice, maize, mangoes and dates. If uncultivated lands are also made cultivable, the country's GDP can increase substantially.

Climate change poses major challenges to agriculture in the country, in addition to unpredictable weather patterns, increased pest and disease pressure on crops, and declining soil fertility. Implementation of climate smart agricultural practices is imperative to mitigate these challenges. These practices include conservation agriculture, agro forestry, crop diversification, and integrated pest management. Farmers should have access to weather forecasting systems and early warning mechanisms, as well as adequate training and education on modern meteorological practices. Additionally providing small loans to farmers for seeds and plants, encouraging the use of organic fertilizers and promoting sustainable farming practices can help increase soil health and long-term productivity.

A major problem is the role of middlemen which hinders our farmers from getting fair price for their produce due to which the farmers do not get full compensation for their labor. Establishing digital platforms or mobile applications that directly connect farmers with buyers. It can ensure transparency in transactions by eliminating middlemen. Further, providing farmers with access to agricultural extension services through digital platforms to provide real-

time information on best farming practices, crop disease and pesticide management. This can empower farmers with the knowledge to make informed decisions and improve their productivity and profitability as well.

Integrating precision farming practices and data analytics can revolutionize Pakistan's agricultural development. Remote sensing technologies, drones and satellite imagery can provide valuable insights into crop health, soil conditions and water availability. Farmers can use this information to optimize the use of fertilizers, pesticides and water resources. Using these experiences can also lead to higher yields and lower costs.

New and advanced technological methods are essential to save agriculture and farmers from disaster in the country. By leveraging innovative solutions like precision irrigation, climate smart agriculture, digital platforms, and data analytics, farmers will be able to overcome the challenges they are facing.

Farmers are facing various problems which hinder the increase of production capacity. Including: In timely delivery of water to the crops. Lack of high quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at reasonable prices.

As such, farmers are often at the mercy of middlemen who manipulate prices to the detriment of farmers. Without adequate facilities to store and preserve their produce, farmers are unable to

obtain higher prices or access better market opportunities. Climate conditions, including droughts, floods, and pest outbreaks; affects crop yield and profitability. The fragmentation of agricultural land into small plots reduces farming efficiency and profitability due to problems related to inheritance and tenancy. Most farmers have limited access to training and extension services. Lack of effective coordination between various government departments and institutions also hampers the implementation of farmer-friendly policies and programmes. Literacy is at the forefront due to which they are using old farming methods.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes investment in agricultural infrastructure, farmer education and training, facilitating access to credit, improved irrigation systems, appropriate market reforms, and includes climate-resilient farming practices. Collaboration between the government, private sector and civil society organizations is essential to overcome these challenges and uplift the economy of farmers in Pakistan. The vision of the Pakistan Army for the development of the agricultural sector is highly commendable. Army chief General Asim Munir assures full support for "Green Pakistan Initiatives". With these efforts Pakistan can not only ensure food security but also increase the employment of its farmers, which will ultimately be major steps towards a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector.

Writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at javedullahraja@gmail.com



Analysis

Javed Ullah Raja

Pak-China tourism

Chairman of the National Assembly Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Muhammad Abu Bakar has said that exchange of tourists between Pakistan and China would help create new economic opportunities for the two countries, especially Pakistan.

Pakistan is rich in natural beauty and the Chinese tourists could visit Karachi, Lahore, and other cities and especially the northern areas of Pakistan which have a lot of attractions for Chinese tourists, he told China Media Groups Urdu Service in a special conversation.

While inviting Chinese friends to visit Pakistan, he hoped that the promotion of tourism exchanges between the two countries would lead to creating new economic activities which would not be beneficial for the two people of Pakistan and China but also for the region.

He said that the people-to-people exchange between the two countries should be promoted for a better understanding of each other and as per the requirements of the new era.

Talking about Chinese-style modernization, he lauded the remarkable development of the People's Republic of China under the table leadership of President Xi Jinping.

Muhammad Abu Bakar also congratulated the Chinese leadership upon the 0th anniversary of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI).

In response to a question about Pakistan-China all-weather friendship, he said, We have been hearing about Pakistan-China friendship since childhood. This friendship seems to be stronger and stronger in every era.

About his visit to China, he said that it was his first visit to China and he has learned a lot from the high-level meetings held here.

Expressing happiness over the rapid development of China, he said, found China much more developed than what I had heard and read about this great country.

He said that China always supported Pakistan and stood firmly by Pakistan in difficult times and added, We are proud of this great neighbor and friendly country.

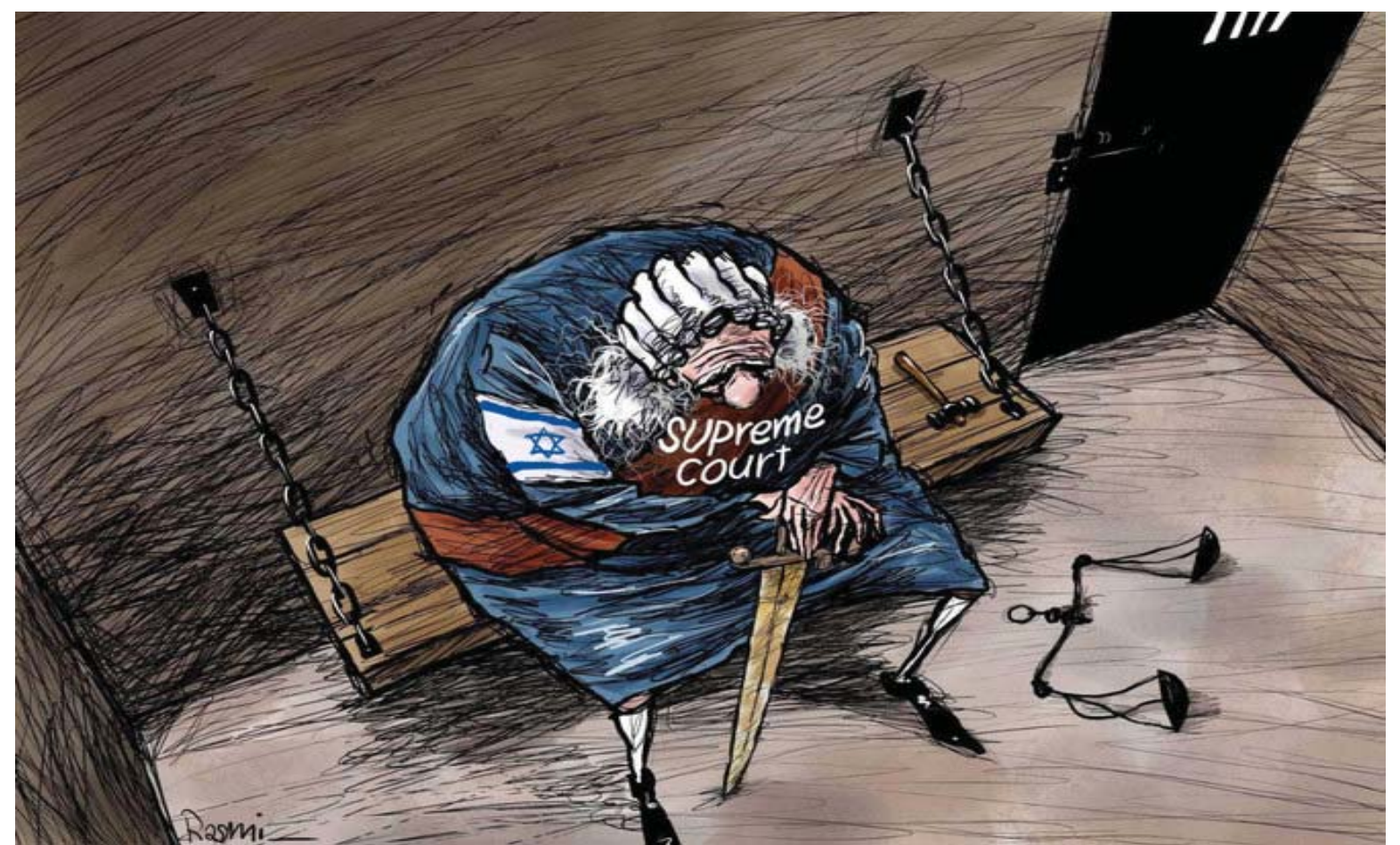
Regarding China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said that this is a pilot project of the BRI and is truly a game changer for Pakistan and the region.

The CPEC has provided Pakistan with valuable opportunities for high-level development.

About the Chinese investment in Pakistan, he said that it is bringing positive changes in Pakistan and expressed confidence that economic cooperation between China and Pakistan will further help Pakistan to achieve its goal of development.

Muhammad Abu Bakar opined that CPEC will bring about many new opportunities for development in Pakistan.

He thanked the Chinese friends for their warm hospitality and expressed good wishes for the Pakistan-China friendship.



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

Artificial Intelligence: Pakistan Lagging Behind

Muhammad Usman

Where world is heading towards Artificial Intelligence, which was once considered mere fiction but now becoming reality, a developing country like Pakistan, with dwindling economy, outburst unemployment rate, sky high inflation and tangled in the vicious cycle of external debts, is ignorant of the progress being made by countries like US, China, India, Japan, Taiwan and Korea in the fields of education, technology, economic augmentation and much more. World has started paving revolutionary paths in the field of artificial intelligence after the development of artificial tools like Chat-GPT, a product of American company Open AI. Recently launching of Chandrayaan-3 on 14 July, 2023 by our so declared enemy India, which is becoming an economic giant too. These are a few examples to pinpoint my argument: Where are we standing right now?

On 30 November, 2022 an American company Open AI, which focuses on early staged artificial intelligence, launched Chat-GPT which just in 5 days after launch gained 1 million users, which other companies like Netflix, Facebook, Twitter took months to gain. Chat-GPT is an advanced language model which can generate human-like responses by engaging in natural conversation and can assist on many other tasks like education, business, health, climate change, software devel-

opment and more.

However, this very tool of the Open AI is posing many advantages and disadvantages to the world at large akin; Chat-GPT is akin search engine which interact with human's conversations in a very natural way which provides almost all kind of information, until and unless inbuilt in it, regarding education, health, space, climate change, wars, software development and future predictions based on algorithm and much more. Its effective use can shape one's life in a positive way as it prescribes things akin to any therapist or doctor. The GPT 3 model is trained on 175 billion parameters while the GPT 4 model is trained on more than 1 trillion parameters. ChatGPT is trained on 300 billion words. ChatGPT has 570 gigabytes of text data, so one can assist it in a very diverse way. In medical AI has very spectacular use as it will be able to read reports, run tests and can prescribe like human doctors. Countries have started a race to adapt Chat-GPT into their education institutions with proper rules and regulations as it can assist students in better understanding of the concepts, it has decreased the load on teachers as can make presentations and can be used for further experiments. Chat-GPT can be effective in businesses, manufacturing processes, development of new plans and bundles of things.

If we talk about the drawbacks of this remarkable human accomplishment it also poses severe threats to the future as well as present societies in the following ways; Students at large start misusing it in cheating during exams,

many of them get caught by their investigators. By doing so students are hindering their capabilities of learning which later on can pose severe threats to their jobs acquisition. It is a wonder that AI is being used for political purposes, e.g elections as social media platforms can show people's interest by assessing data. Augmentation in the numbers of online scams have been reported as with the help of AI, by generating fake pictures and voice notes one can blackmail others and ask for money. According to the World Economic Forum, by 2025, 85 million jobs will be disrupted and will replace human labour with robots and machines which is quite shocking. But it will also generate 97 million new jobs related to the AI revolution so countries must address this severe threat by literarting individuals regarding AI skills.

All in all by implicitly reviewing needed information regarding the AI revolution and tools like Chat-GPT and their miracles, now it's up to us how we adapt with it. Many countries have started taking serious implications regarding the use of AI intelligence by introducing rules and regulations and making their citizens aware of the effective use of AI. So Pakistan also needs to review it thoroughly, introduce the rules and regulations so that people can remain abstain from misusing it, which will produce labour that can compete with manmade robotics in near or far future, otherwise will be left behind.

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Is the university campus a safe haven for drug dealers?

Police arrested Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB) Chief Security Officer Ijaz Shah and reportedly seized ice (crystal meth), aphrodisiacs and objectionable videos of university officials and students from his two mobile phones. An FIR 1132/23 under section control of narcotic substances Act 1997-9(2)1 registered against him by SI Muhammad Afzal Nawaz in Baghdad AI -Jadeed Police Station. According to the police statement, when Ijaz Shah was searched, a black wallet came out of his pocket, and 5 pills of Cialis (tadalafil) used for sex were also found in the pocket. Ijaz Shah confessed to using and selling ice on campus and the objectionable photos and videos were of staff members and women students from various departments of the university.

Earlier, Director Finance / Treasury Abu Bakar was also arrested in a drug case FIR 1014/23 of Islamia University Bahawalpur. Sources are giving various reasons for this. V. Chancellor Professor Dr. Athar Mehbub is also included in this target. At present there is a massive lobbying for the appointment of a new VC after the tenure of the Vice Chancellor is completed. Existing VCs are busy with their expansion efforts and the opposition group is laying its chessboard to stop this process. The current VC carried out many reforms during his tenure, including massive enrollment of students in the institution, establishment of new departments, increase in faculty, construction of new buildings, etc.

After arresting and lodging an FIR against the security officer and recovery of drugs is a serious matter. At this time, the reputation of the university is at stake, in which near around 65 thousand students from all over Pakistan, including this region, are studying. Here another aspect should be kept in mind that the owners of the private educational institutions here have various grievances against the University and its officials. At present, all those educational institutions are trying to damage the image of the university by going to any level for the sake of their survival, in which they have been quite successful. While Islamia University is admitting students at a reasonable fee, here private expensive educational institutions are at a standstill.

To teach him a lesson, a managed case was registered against him. He later got out of the case by paying a huge bribe. We have gone through the difficulties of false cases. There are very painful moments. At this stage even writing the truth becomes an unpleasant act. No doubt, these days supply of drugs has become a normal thing in educational institutions from Islamabad to Karachi. The mafia has succeeded in achieving nefarious goals by drugging our future builders (students).

At present, there are waves of corruption, injustice and looters are present everywhere. When a member of any mafiaoperative does not get his unfair share, he joins the state machinery with him. There must be a transparent investigation in this matter as well. Because thousands of female students are studying in this educational institution. This is a very sensitive issue. In this time the people of ordinary newspapers are creating anxiety among the parents of the students by publishing unconfirmed news. Such news does not meet any standards of journalism. According to the report of police and sensitive institutions, 5 professors and 11 students have been found involved in the scandalous business of supplying drugs and making videos of female students. We are hopeful that DPO Bahawalpur Syed Mohammad Abbas will definitely bring this organized scandal to an end according to the law.

There is a need to root out the scourge of drugs from educational institutions. Several cases of this scourge have come to light in Zakaria University Multan as well. On August 14, 2021a student of Zakaria University, Kaleemullah, was killed because he complained about drug dealers. The spread of drugs is increasing due to the infiltration of outside elements in educational institutions. At present, news of drug selling at hostel canteen of Zakaria University is common and also published in national newspapers. University Administration contracts of canteens should be given to people who have character. Remember, high bidders come with ulterior motives. We have also to dispel the perception that the country's universities are safe havens for drug dealers.

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China willing to strengthen strategic coordination with Pakistan: Zhao Leji

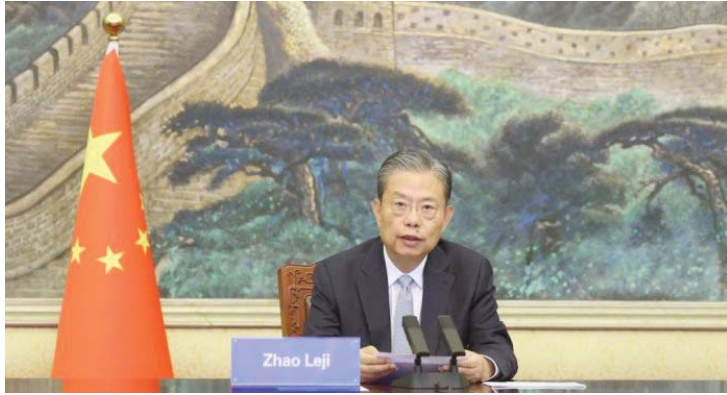
Spokesman Report

BELJING: China is ready to work with Pakistan to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields and push forward the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership for new and greater development.

These views were expressed by China's top legislator Zhao Leji during his talks with the Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf via video link, China's state-run media reported on Wednesday.

Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, hailed Pakistan for giving firm support to China on issues concerning China's core interests over a long period of time.

He said China is willing to strengthen strategic coordination with Pakistan and promote the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community of



shared future in the new era.

It is hoped that the two sides will deepen all-round practical cooperation, push the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to a new level, strengthen friendly people-to-people exchanges, continue to closely coordinate and cooperate on international and regional issues and make global governance more just and equitable,

he added. China hails Pakistan for taking the lead in supporting the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, and joining the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative, Zhao said.

"We welcome Pakistan's support for and participation in China's proposals and initiatives, and jointly promote the

effective implementation of relevant initiatives," he added.

Zhao said the NPC is willing to work with Pakistan's National Assembly to strengthen exchanges, carry out exchanges on governance experience, timely issue and approve legal documents conducive to bilateral cooperation, and provide legal guarantee for the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said Pakistan firmly supports China's core interests and stands ready to work with China to strengthen the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and jointly build the Belt and Road.

The National Assembly of Pakistan is willing to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning with the NPC of China, and play a positive role as a legislature in promoting cooperation in various fields and promoting the development of bilateral relations, he added.

Masood Khan commends US-based Zenab Mansoor on conquering Everest

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, Tuesday congratulated Dr. Zenab Mansoor, a Pakistani-American paediatrician residing in Seattle, Washington, who recently scaled Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain.

Dr. Mansoor is the third Pakistani woman to summit the mountain, after Samina Baig and Naila Kiani.

Felicitating her on the feat in a call, Ambassador Masood Khan said her achievement has made Pakistan proud.

"Your achievement showed the immense poten-



tial of Pakistani women, and sets a high bar for the future generations, especially girls," he said.

Dr. Zenab told the Ambassador that for five years she

prepared herself to realize that dream. She said she had scaled five out of the seven highest peaks on all the seven continents, including Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus

in Europe, Denali in North America, Vinson in Antarctica and now Everest in Asia. "I felt proud of raising the flag of Pakistan on top of Mount Everest," she said.

PeH appeals masses to participate in 5th Aug protest

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu (PeH) and Kashmir Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that India's exploitative actions of August 5, 2019, in the occupied state were the worst attack on the basic human rights of the Kashmiri people.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he appealed to the masses to participate in anti-India protests across the state on August 5, saying that on August 5, 2019, India attacked the people of the state by unilaterally abrogating Articles 370 and 35A.

"All the basic human, social, political and religious rights of the Kashmiri people were taken away by military force after 5th August 2019," he added.

Vice Chairman Usman Ali Hashim said that it has been 4 years since the Indian brutal actions, but the people of Jammu and Kashmir have not recognized Indian military rule even for a moment.

"Kashmiri people are fighting unprecedentedly for their freedom and right to self-determination", he reiterated.

He said, "Each and every citizen should raise their voices against Indian colonial tactics."

Pasban-e-Hurriyat appealed to the people living all over the world and particularly to people of the capital of the base camp to raise the black flag and protest in front of the United Nations observers on August 5 and demand the right of self-determination for the political future of the state.

The protest is scheduled on 5th August 2023 at 9 am near Ghariyan Chowk.

"August 5, 2023, should be observed as a day of protest against Indian imperialism across the state, the United Nations will be called to annul Indian actions", they stated.

Fatiha

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the residence of Former Mayor Rawalpindi and PMLN leader Sardar Naseem to express condolences upon the demise of his mother on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

India: Modi gov't faces no-confidence vote over Manipur unrest

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a clear majority of 301 members in the 542-seat lower house of parliament, so the no-confidence vote will not affect its stability.



The opposition instead wants to trigger a debate about violence in the remote, BJP-ruled Manipur state, where more than 130 people have been killed and 60,000 displaced since it began in early May.

Approving the opposition motion, lower house speaker Om Birla said he would soon decide when the debate and vote would take place.

The ethnic tensions in the small state of 3.2 million people are seen as a rare security and political failure by Modi's government, which will face a national election by May 2024.

Further incidents of arson and the destruction of some abandoned houses, government offices and vehicles by armed mobs were reported from at least two districts of Manipur on Wednesday, a local police official said, asking not to be named.

Modi had not commented in public about the violence until last week, when videos showing two women being paraded naked and molested by a mob in Manipur sparked national outrage.

Modi condemned the mass assault as "shameful" and promised tough action against the perpetrators.

Opposition parties have, however, disrupted the monsoon session of parliament which began last week, to demand a detailed statement by Modi on Manipur in parliament, followed by a debate.

As head of the government, he will have to respond to the no-confidence motion before it is put to vote.

The government has offered a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah, saying internal security is his ministry's responsibility.

The violence began on May 3 after a court ordered the state government to consider extending special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education enjoyed by the tribal Kuki people to the majority Meitei population as well.

Shashi Tharoor, a leader of the main opposition Congress party, said the government must invest time to answer questions about Manipur.

"Everyone knows that Manipur has witnessed horrendous loss of lives in violence, sexual assault and displacement. How can this not be the main agenda?" Tharoor told Reuters.

UNGA adopts Pakistan-backed Moroccan resolution

News Desk

UNITED NATION: The UN General Assembly Tuesday adopted, by consensus, a Moroccan resolution, co-sponsored by Pakistan, calling for countering hate speech, and strongly deploring attacks against places of worship, religious symbols and holy books.

The resolution, entitled: 'Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech', won the approval in the 193-member Assembly amid growing acts of desecration of the holy Quran.

Diplomats said that Pakistan led the efforts, along with Malaysia and Egypt, to work toward the resolution of the language aimed at upholding the sanctity of religious sites, symbols and holy books.

The paragraph reads: "Strongly deploring all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their religious symbols, holy books, homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law."

Spain submitted an amendment asking for the last words of that paragraph "in violation of international law" be deleted.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, the Spanish delegate emphasized that although such actions are deeply offensive and disrespectful, they do not constitute a violation of international law, and thus proposed the elimination of the reference to "in violation of international law".

But the amendment to change the phrasing was defeated. It secured only 44 votes in favour, with 62 voting against. There were 24 abstentions.

Under the terms of the resolution, the General Assembly urged member states to engage with all relevant stakeholders to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and respect and acceptance of differences, among other things, to reject the spread of hate speech which constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence.

It further called on Member States and social media companies to counter hate speech and address its increasing spread, enable research into measures to reduce it and promote users' access to effective reporting channels.



John The Film Premiers with a Star-Studded Exclusive Screening in Karachi

Zindigi Prize KPK Regional Sets New Height of Success at GIKI

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Zindigi Prize, a revolutionary entrepreneurship competition, achieved resounding success during its KPK Regionals held at the Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIKI). The event, organized by Zindigi and co-hosted by GIKI, has emerged as a game-changer in the entrepreneurial landscape of the country. Following the resounding success of Z Prize regionals in Lahore & Islamabad, GIKI equally matched the event's triumph.

The three-day event at GIKI commenced with an impressive opening ceremony, showcasing innovative ideas from young entrepreneurs at the KPK Regional. Workshops, talks by renowned Pakistani entrepreneurs and Speed Dating sessions

enriched the experience of everyone participating. The final day featured the Zindigi Academia Innovation Summit, bridging the gap between the academia and the corporate world, with 85 startups showcasing their ideas.

After meticulous deliberation and evaluation, the panel of judges declared MUSJ from the University of Engineering and Technology as the winner of the competition. The runner-up positions were secured by Ootien from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi and Aquadrome from CECOS University, Peshawar.

In his remarks, Minister of Science, Technology and Information Technology in KPK, Shahid Khattak, wholeheartedly appreciated students' exceptional contributions in addressing and resolving societal challenges. He

recognized their talent as a driving force for positive change in KPK. He thanked JS Bank and GIKI for supporting young entrepreneurs and fostering a culture of innovation through initiatives like Zindigi Prize. Minister Khattak announced collaborative efforts to expand Zindigi Prize to government educational institutions at all levels, empowering budding entrepreneurs and advancing KPK's economic progress.

Zindigi Prize holds a special place in our hearts. As a home-grown Youth brand, we are driven by a strong desire to serve society and give back to Pakistan. It is heartening to see all these amazing young entrepreneurs contributing to make a difference around them. It is an affirmation of our commitment to fostering innovation and empowering the next



generation of change-makers." - Meena Munawar Khan, Chief Product and Marketing Officer, Zindigi.

Rector GIKI, Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid, has also demon-

strated unwavering support for initiatives that foster innovation and entrepreneurship. The Catalyst, which is GIKI's incubation center, he mentioned, stands as a remarkable testament to GIKI's

commitment to nurturing and uplifting the entrepreneurial landscape of Pakistan. "We encourage initiatives like Zindigi Prize, and extend our gratitude to Zindigi by JS Bank for choosing

us to cohost," said Rector GIKI.

Chief Guests at the closing ceremony included Minister ST & IT KPK-Shahid Khattak, Director General DoST-Sajid Shah, Rector GIKI-Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid, and SI Project Director-PM's Innovation Fund-Abdullah Somoro.

Zindigi Prize has successfully nurtured and propelled aspirations of budding entrepreneurs through its ecosystem of support. With over 120 universities participating and attracting 4000+ start-ups from all corners of Pakistan, this competition has become a beacon for aspiring entrepreneurs seeking seed money and invaluable mentorship opportunities. The objective of Zindigi Prize is to empower start-ups towards success by providing them with the necessary resources and guidance.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
46,682.52	46,417.34
Day's High	Day's Low:
46,724.57	46,499.36
Index Value	Change
11,699,748,320	+265.18
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	26 Jul, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,676.89	-14.91
Percentage	Time
-0.19%	26 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
35,477.12	+39.05
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	26 Jul, 11:59 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,668.34	-14.17
Percentage	Time
-0.043%	26 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198	200
Bahrain Dinar	766.54	774.54
Canadian Dollar	224	226.2
China Yuan	39.13	39.53
Danish Krone	42.34	42.74
Euro	322	325.2
Hong Kong Dollar	35.97	36.32
Indian Rupee	3.43	3.54
Japanese Yen	2.01	2.08
Kuwaiti Dinar	939.13	948.13
Malaysian Ringgit	63.13	63.73
New Zealand \$	179.36	181.36
Norwegians Krone	27.95	28.25
Omani Riyal	748.62	756.62
Qatari Riyal	79.18	79.88
Saudi Riyal	77.5	78.3
Singapore Dollar	210.5	212.5
Swedish Korona	27.5	27.8
Swiss Franc	333.43	335.93
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.4
U.A.E Dirham	80.7	81.5
UK Pound Sterling	375	378
US Dollar	291.5	294

Ambassadors of some countries have become viceroys: 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 Wednesday that Pakistanis are becoming poorer rapidly.

The countries we helped a lot some decades ago have become very rich, while Pakistan's economic decline has been going on for several decades, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to the economic downturn, the dependence on international institutions and lending countries has increased, therefore their interference in internal matters is also increasing.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that due to the scarcity of resources and continuous borrowing, the country's interests have to be sacrificed.

He informed that the ambassadors of many countries have become like viceroys in Pakistan, and this situation cannot continue for long.

Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif, who has personally saved Pakistan from default by persuading the IMF for a three billion dollar standby programme, is also emphasising the need for fundamental economic reforms, he added.

The business leader said that Pakistan has lagged far behind the countries that set development goals with Pakistan's help.

Pakistan's economy has shrunk to 377 billion dollars, which is ten times less than the Indian economy, and due to political uncertainty, it is unlikely to change its condition in the next few years.

He observed that Pakistan's GDP per capita has fallen to 1600 dollars, which is 1000 dollars less than Bangladesh, which is deprived of many important resources.



Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan's importance is steadily declining, and it is widely believed that those running the country are neither interested in reforms nor want to put

the country back on track.

Therefore, no organisation or country is ready to give us a grant; rather, they prefer to give loans with strict conditions and always demand something important in return, due to which even profitable businesses are being sold while loss-making enterprises are being paid 800 billion rupees so that they can live.

Now every Pakistani is paying 71% capacity charges in the electricity bill, due to which Pakistan has become the most expensive electricity producing country in the world.

Now the lending countries to Pakistan also look at the IMF programme first because they are fed up with giving loans to Pakistan. At one time, Pakistan's relations with the Middle East and Gulf countries were better than those of India, but now India has taken the lead here as well.

We hope that they will give priority to geo-economics over geo-politics to prevent Pakistan from becoming a totally failed state.

Construction work

ISLAMABAD: Workers are busy in their work at the site of Khayaban-e-Margalla Road, as the construction work is keep going gradually, in Federal Capital. ONLINE PHOTO



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PTCL implements Robotic Process Automation for Digital Transformation of Customer Care Operations

Commerce Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the leading ICT services provider in Pakistan, has announced the implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in its Customer Care operations as a vital part of its digital transformation strategy.

The aim is to improve overall customer experience across all touch points. The initiative will help PTCL firmly align with the highest global standards in digitalization and automation, reinforcing its position as the industry leader.

Commenting on the initiative, Ahmad Kamal, Group Chief Customer Care Officer at PTCL & Ufone 4G, stated: "We are delighted to announce the implementation of Robotic Process

Automation (RPA), a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance the customer journey. This cutting-edge technology empowers us to deliver the best customer experience by automating a wide range of activities, including data transfers, customer profile updates, data entry, inventory management, and even complex tasks, all with a remarkable accuracy rate of 100%. The latest initiative positions us to enhance our capacity and efficiency, ultimately delivering an unparalleled experience to our customers."

The implementation of RPA is a clear testament to PTCL's unwavering commitment to make digital innovations and contributing to Digital Pakistan by delivering an unparalleled user experience to its valued customers.

Bank Alfalah launches #GreenWayForward by planting in Collaboration with WWF- Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bank Alfalah, one of the largest commercial banks in Pakistan, has initiated a #GreenWayForward, a plantation drive with World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan), a leading organisation that works on ecosystem conservation. This collaborative effort aims to contribute to the reforestation of mangroves and improve natural resource management in Pakistan.

WWF-Pakistan has been at the forefront of environmental conservation since 1970, and together with Bank Alfalah, they plan to plant a minimum of 15,000 saplings at the Wetlands in Sandspit, Karachi, symbolising the total number of employees at the Bank. In addition to the planting initiative, WWF-Pakistan will provide comprehensive post-care for



the saplings for one year. This includes regular monitoring and the replacement of the planted saplings, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Atif Bajwa, President and CEO of Bank Alfalah, stated, "Bank Alfalah is committed to environmental sustainability and playing an active role in addressing climate

change. Our partnership with WWF-Pakistan for planting 15,000 mangroves is the first step forward in preserving our planet for future generations. We believe that by working together, we can take due action to preserve our ecosystem."

In light of the devastating floods experienced in Pakistan

last year, a consequence widely attributed to the climate crisis. While recognising this urgent need to address this environmental challenge, this partnership urges communities and individuals to actively engage in tree plantation drives actively, fostering a collective effort towards building a sustainable future for our community.

Lucky Cement receives KCCI export trophy

Commerce Report

KARACHI: Lucky Cement Limited, Pakistan's leading producer and exporter of cement, received the KCCI Export Trophy Awards for its outstanding achievements in the international market. Mr. Muhammad Ali Tabba, the CEO of Lucky Cement Limited, was honored with the prestigious KCCI Platinum Export Trophy Award for the company's exceptional performance in the cement sector during the year 2020-21.

Lucky Cement Limited has successfully exported its cement to several international markets and regions such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, and Africa. Lucky Cement Limited takes pride in its state-of-the-art storage terminal situated at the Karachi port, which boasts an impressive storage capacity of 24,000 tons. This modern facility



allows the company to excel in exporting not only break bulk and containerized shipments but also loose cement from Pakistan.

The recognition received by Lucky Cement Limited serves as a testament to its unwavering dedication to providing premium-quality products and maintaining the highest standards across all aspects of its operations. The company holds prominent ISO certifications, including ISO 9001:2008, 14001:2004, 45001:2018, and 27001:2022, reflecting its unwavering dedication to quality, environment, health, safety, and information security.

ICCI and HAP mull to organize handicrafts expo

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Maryam Iqbal, Chairperson, Handicrafts Association of Pakistan (HAP) visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a meeting with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI to organize a handicrafts expo in Islamabad to promote trade and exports of this sector. The foreign diplomats and other stakeholders would also be invited to the expo. Both sides also exchanged views on the need of bilateral cooperation to promote the interests of handicrafts businesses.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan produces a wide range of handicrafts, includ-

ing textiles, embroidery, beadwork, block printing, patchwork, woodcrafts, pottery, jewellery & stone carving and there is a great need to organize exhibitions of these products to promote their trade and exports. He said that the handicrafts industry plays an important role for the economy as it provides jobs to women, brings prosperity and earns precious foreign exchange with the minimum capital investment. He said that the country's economy cannot achieve smooth growth without the better participation of women in economic activity and the handicrafts is the only industry, which offers great opportunities for women

participation in productive activities. He said that Pakistan should learn from the Chinese experience, which has become the world's biggest manufacturer of handicrafts, accounting for over 40% of global trade. He said that Joint ventures between women entrepreneurs of Pakistan and China should be encouraged to promote the handicraft industry and uplift Pakistan's economy.

Ms. Maryam Iqbal, Chairperson, Handicrafts Association of Pakistan said that promotion of handicrafts businesses would reduce poverty & help in women empowerment. She said that the rising cost of inputs, lack of easy access



to finance and poor marketing network were the major hurdles that were holding back this industry from its actual growth potential. She stressed that the government should take measures to reduce the cost of doing business for

this sector, help in its proper marketing, set up expo centres for this sector and encourage frequent exhibitions of handicrafts products to promote this sector up to its real potential. She also briefed the President ICCI about the plans

and activities of her Association for the betterment of the handicrafts sector.

Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Kashif Zaheer, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqarnain Abbasi and others were present on the occasion.

Emirates welcomes Air Canada



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Air Canada and Emirates today announced a customer service milestone in the two airlines' strategic partnership with the move of Air Canada's operations to Dubai International's (DXB) flagship Terminal 3 as of July 26th. The co-location of operations in one of the world's premier terminals will significantly improve the connecting experience for customers and underscores the benefits of the partnership between the two airlines launched in November 2022.

Customers transiting in Dubai between the Americas on Air Canada and the Middle East, Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and Africa on Emirates will enjoy a seamless and expedited experience with the convenience of remaining in the same terminal.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer, said: "We are delighted to welcome Air Canada to Emirates Terminal 3 in Dubai, which marks another step forward in our strategic partnership to deliver even more value to travellers. Co-locating at T3 means Air Canada customers can enjoy a smooth connection experience when transiting in Dubai onto Emirates' global network, and those eligible can enjoy access to Emirates' signature Business Class Lounges and other hub facilities in Dubai prior to their flight. Working closely with Air Canada, we hope to further enhance travel experiences and offer even more convenient connectivity for travellers."

Welcoming Air Canada to Terminal 3, Majed Al Joker, Chief Operating Officer of Dubai Airports, said, "In addition to a long history of partnership, Dubai Airports and Air Canada share a common goal of consistently delivering exceptional service and exceeding guest satisfaction. This relocation will streamline operations for Air Canada, enable us to optimise our airport's efficiency and improve the overall travel experience. Terminal 3 is a world-class facility designed to cater to the evolving needs of modern travellers, with biometric touchpoints, spacious and comfortable waiting areas, and a wide variety of dining and shopping outlets."

Pakistan Shaheens depart for Australia

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Rohail Nazir-led Pakistan Shaheens departed for Australia in the wee hours of Wednesday to feature in Top End T20 Series and two 50-over matches in Darwin which is being organised by Northern Territory Cricket (NTC) from 30 July to 9 August.

Australian Capital Territory's ACT Comets, Melbourne Stars, Melbourne Renegades, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and NT Strike will participate in the six-team tournament along with Shaheens in a T20 format with the top-two sides making it to the final.

Following the T20s, Shaheens will also play two 50-over matches against PNG and NT Strike on 8 and 9 August, respectively.

21-year-old Rohail Nazir has captained Pakistan Shaheens in the past during their tour to New Zealand in December 2020. He was also a part of the Shaheens squad in the recent



tour to Zimbabwe, where the team featured in two four-dayers and six 50-over matches.

Rohail, who played for Pakistan U19 in the ICC U19 World Cup in 2018 and 2020 editions, will have the services of four players – Ahmed Khan (2022), Ali Asfand (2022), Mohammad Irfan Khan (2020 & 2022) and Syed Zeeshan Zameer (2022) –

who had represented Pakistan U19 in the ICC U19 World Cup before.

Apart from these four players, Amir Hassan, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awais, Sajjad Ali, Shamyul Hussain and Wahaj Riaz recently played for Pakistan U19 in the tour to Bangladesh in April/May this year.

Rohail, who was among

the non-traveling reserves for Shaheens that clinched the ACC Emerging Men's Teams Asia Cup title in Sri Lanka, told PCB Digital: "Many congratulations to Pakistan Shaheens for winning the Emerging Asia Cup. We all had put in a lot of effort in the camp held in Lahore under the coaches and the results are visible to everyone."

It is a huge opportunity for me to lead the side. I have represented and captained Shaheens in the past. I am really excited to lead and play in Australia where I had played in the past as well. I have played alongside many players present in the squad and few of them are from my city Islamabad so I know a few of them.

It's a great opportunity for each member of the team to perform in Australia. Such tournaments are really helpful for players to learn and improve their skills.

For me, the tour is an opportunity to perform and get a chance to play for Pakistan in the

upcoming Test series in Australia later this year.

Pakistan Shaheens squad:

Rohail Nazir (captain), Aaliyan Mahmood, Ahmed Khan, Ali Asfand, Amir Hassan, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awais, Basit Ali, Faisal Akram, Sajjad Ali, Mohammad Irfan Khan, Shamyul Hussain, Shawaiq Irfan, Syed Zeeshan Zameer and Wahaj Riaz

Player Support Personnel – Muhammad Masroor (head coach-cum-manager), Hanif Malik (batting and fielding coach), Umar Rashid (bowling coach) and Imtiaz Khan (physiotherapist)

Schedule of Pakistan Shaheens' matches:

30 Jul – vs NT Strike (T20)
31 Jul – vs ACT Comets (T20)
1 Aug – vs Melbourne Renegades (T20)
2 Aug – vs Melbourne Stars (T20)
4 Aug – vs PNG (T20)
6 Aug – Final
8 Aug – vs PNG (50-over)
9 Aug – vs NT Strike (50-over)

England retain Anderson in unchanged XI for Ashes finale

Sports Desk

LAHORE: England have named an unchanged team for the fifth and final Ashes Test at The Oval starting Thursday, with record wicket-taker James Anderson keeping his place in the side.

James Anderson's 689 Test wickets are the most taken by any fast bowler, with only spinners Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708) ahead of the veteran seamer.

But in this year's Ashes, James Anderson, 41 on Sunday, has taken just four wickets in three Tests at a costly average of 76.75 apiece.

Nevertheless, he has kept his place in an attack where both Mark Wood and Chris Woakes have been passed fit.

Australia have already retained the Ashes at 2-1 up with one to play following last week's rain-marred draw



at Old Trafford.

But a win for Ben Stokes's men in London would deny their arch-rivals a first Ashes series victory in England since 2001.

James Anderson insisted in a recent newspaper column he has no intention of retiring and plans to continue a Test career that already spans 20 years so long as he is wanted by the England set-up.

And England captain

Stokes, speaking at a pre-match press conference at The Oval on Wednesday, said Anderson was still part of his plans.

"Jimmy Anderson is the greatest fast bowler to play the game," he said.

"He's not had the impact and the wickets he'd have liked to in this series, he's come under a bit of flak, but he's a quality performer."

Stokes, meanwhile also paid tribute to Stuart Broad,

Anderson's longstanding new-ball colleague.

The Nottinghamshire seamer is the leading wicket-taker in the Ashes and is now about to appear in his sixth Test in a row this season, having featured in the off-match against Ireland at Lord's.

"At 37 years old it's testament to the work and effort he puts in," said Stokes.

"It's amazing. It was always going to be hard for one bowler to play every game this series but he's been incredible for us. He's been very good at coming on with the ball and changing the game."

England team for fifth Ashes Test:

Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Moeen Ali, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (capt), Jonny Bairstow (wkt), Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, Stuart Broad, James Anderson.

Messi scores two goals against Atlanta United in first Inter Miami start

Lionel Messi provided an assist in his first start for the Major League Soccer (MLS) club Inter Miami as he scored two goals leading to 4-0 victory against Atlanta United in a Leagues Cup match early Wednesday at the DRV PNK Stadium, Florida.

It did not take the Argentine long to leave his mark in American football.

Miami had just won once in their last ten matches and it all seemed like a dead-end for the MLS club but Messi's arrival brought a change in fortunes for them as they thrashed Atlanta by four goals.

Messi, 36, gave his team an early breakthrough by scoring a goal in just the eighth minute after a fantastic lobbed pass from his teammate Sergio Busquets.

That was not it for the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner, he completed his brace in just the 22nd minute after scoring with another brilliant finish with his weak foot on Robert Taylor's assist. As if that was not enough, the 2022 World Cup winner also registered his first assist with Miami. Messi ran half of the pitch with the ball at his feet on the counter and assisted Taylor who also scored his brace with the Argentine's assist.

Babar Azam slips but Saud Shakeel makes big leap in ICC Test Rankings

A Sports

DUBAI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam slipped two spots to fifth in the latest ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings, updated on Wednesday, while Saud Shakeel enjoyed a massive surge at the back of a record-breaking double century.

Pakistan's hero with the bat amid their four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the first Test, Saud Shakeel got the reward of his heroics in the Galle Test as he rose 12 spots to 15th and a new career-best rating on the latest rankings for Test batters.

Meanwhile, Pakistan captain Babar Azam, who was close to reach the summit in the Test batting rankings, dropped two spots after a below-par individual performance in the aforementioned Test.

His scores of 13 and 24 result-



ed in him losing 27 rating points and down to the fifth spot in the rankings.

Besides the duo, All-rounder Agha Salman shot up 17 places

to 58th overall for batters, while young seamer Naseem Shah (up one place to 44th) and inexperienced spinner Abrar Ahmed (up 12 spots to equal 45th) found

new highs on the list for Test bowlers after excellent performances with the ball against Sri Lanka.

Notably, New Zealand

captain Kane Williamson, who got a fortunate push to the top of the Test batting rankings, again managed to cling to the summit with 883 rating points but the race for bragging rights and the No.1 spot for batters further intensifies.

Australia right-hander and former No.1 ranked batter Marnus Labuschagne rose three places to second overall after his century at Old Trafford, while England trio Joe Root (up three spots to third), Harry Brook (up two places to 11th) and Zak Crawley (up 13 places to 35th) also made some good ground.

After losing their first Test at home narrowly, Sri Lanka have a moment to cherish as their lethal left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya rose seven places to seventh overall on the list for bowlers following his seven wickets for the match.

Pakistan to host first-ever Int'l Women's Volleyball Championship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: With an aim to promote and encourage young girls towards volleyball, the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) in collaboration with Empower Sports Academy would likely be hosting the first-ever International Women's Volleyball Invitational Championship in Islamabad early next year.

According to PVF women's wing Chairperson Malika Junaid, said Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), PVF were focusing on to encourage female towards volleyball.

The purpose to host the international event was to provide opportunities to women players as to improve their skills and techniques.

It would be the first time in the history of Pakistan that teams from USA and Europe would be taking part in the women's volleyball competitions, she said.

She said we were also planning to send Pakistan women's team for a training tour to Turkey this year. We also aim to promote and inspire young girls to showcase their talent and to excel in the game of volleyball.

PVF Women's wing chairperson said Islamabad would host the international championship which was planned to be held in the first week of January next year as we were expecting five international teams to visit Pakistan for the historic event.

On the other hand Founder of Empower Sports Academy Alisha Junaid was also busy coordinating with the foreign teams to finalise all other arrangements as Empower Sports Academy advisor Tim Kelly (who was also based in the USA) visited Pakistan last week to witness the preparations and training camp of the national women's volleyball team.

Rizwan replaces Sarfaraz as concussion substitute for second Sri Lanka Test



A Sports

LAHORE: Mohammad Rizwan replaced Sarfaraz Ahmed as the concussion substitute on Day 3 of the ongoing second Test against Sri Lanka, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed. "Sarfaraz Ahmed has been replaced by Mohammad Rizwan as a concussion substitute in the ongoing second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka," said PCB in a statement.

"Match referee David Boon accepted the Pakistan team management's request for the substitution," it added.

Notably, Sarfaraz was hit on his head while ducking a bouncer by Asitha Fernando in the afternoon session on day three.

The incident occurred in the 81st over of Pakistan's first innings when Sarfaraz Ahmed came out to bat at number six after Saud Shakeel's dismissal.

Asitha Fernando welcomed the wicketkeeper batter with a short-pitched delivery but the ball deflected down to the fine leg boundary off the helmet.

However, Sarfaraz Ahmed continued to bat on his way to a 22-ball 14 before he was taken off the field after 86 overs.

According to the PCB, he will remain under observation of the cricket board's medical panel.

When this story was filed Pakistan were 512/5 in the 123rd over and had gathered a mammoth lead of 346 runs.

Salman Ali Agha (103) and Mohammad Rizwan (20) were unbeaten at the crease as Pakistan looked to add a little more to their massive advantage before potentially declaring their first innings in the closing minutes of the ongoing third day.

Abdullah Shafique led the way for Pakistan's batting charge with a sensational double-century and put his side in complete command Prabath Jayasuriya finally got rid of him.

He top-scored for Pakistan with 201 from 326 deliveries, hitting 19 boundaries and four sixes.

Pakistan hockey team yet to receive NOC for Asian Champions Trophy

The Pakistan hockey team waiting for the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Government of Pakistan to participate in the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy which will be held in the Indian city of Chennai.

As per sources, the Pakistani team have their flight scheduled for July 31 as the event is starting from August 3 in Chennai.

The Pakistani team have already gotten Indian visas and the NOC has also been issued by the Interior Ministry.

However, the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not issue the NOC today which has left the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) concerned.

The Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination will inform the federation once they issue the NOC.

It must be noted that the PHF has not yet been informed about the NOC and tomorrow will be the last working day in the country before the Muharram holidays.

Saud Shakeel breaks an all-time Test record during second Sri Lanka Test

A Sports

LAHORE: Saud Shakeel's half-century in the second Test against Sri Lanka on Wednesday, propelled him to become the first-ever batter in the history of Test cricket to score a half-century in each of the first seven Tests of his career.

With his astounding consistency, the left-handed batter left behind the likes of Sunil Gavaskar, Basil Butcher, Saeed Ahmad, and Bert Sutcliffe, who scored a half-century in each of their first six Tests.

Pakistan were 210/3 in

response to Sri Lanka's 166 when Pakistan's first match hero Saud Shakeel walked out to bat.

The in-form batter wasted no time adapting to the conditions and soon put on an important partnership for the touring side.

He played a brilliant 57-run knock from 110 deliveries, hitting six boundaries before Asitha Fernando dismissed him in the 81st with Pakistan at 319/4.

With his record-breaking half-century, Saud Shakeel put on an important fourth-wicket partnership with Abdullah Shafique. They added 109 runs to the total which lifted Pakistan

to stretch their first-innings lead to 153.

Pakistan, resuming their first innings at an overnight score of 178/2, enjoyed a fruitful opening session of Day 3 despite their captain Babar Azam's dismissal as the touring side acquired a dominating 107-run lead.

The pair of Babar and Shafique, batting since the last session of the opening day, finally got broken in the early half of day three's opening session when Prabath Jayasuriya, once again, dismissed Pakistan captain Babar.

The left-arm spinner trapped

Babar Azam plumb in front to draw a much-needed success for Sri Lanka while the Pakistan captain fell just 11 short of his half-century.

He scored 39 off 75 deliveries, laced with four boundaries and a six.

Notably, Rain played spoilsport on the second day of the ongoing second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Only 10 overs of action was possible on an important second day due to persistent downpour.

Pakistan were 178/2 and had a 12-run lead when the rain intervened.

