



COAS Munir felicitates PLA on 96th founding anniversary

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday felicitated the People's Liberation Army of China and lauded its role in China's defence, security and nation building, said Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). According to military's media wing, the army chief expressed these remarks on the 96th anniversary of the founding of PLA of China commemorated... (Details on Page 8)



'Historic' National Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill passed by Senate: Ishaq Dar

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has said that the 'historic' bill for the establishment of the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund was passed by the Senate today. Ishaq Dar, while addressing an event at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) headquarters today, welcomed the Senate for unanimously passing the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Inauguration day

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Türkiye's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi cutting a rope to launch into sea Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Class Corvette "PNS Tariq" in Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

High time for Pak-Turkiye enhanced strategic cooperation, says PM after MILGEM-IV launch

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Launching ceremony of PN MILGEM Class Ship PNS TARIQ (Desig) was held at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW). Honourable Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Vice president Republic of Türkiye H. E Mr. Cevdet Yilmaz also attended the ceremony as Guest of Honour.

PN MILGEM Class ships are the most technologically advanced surface platforms being constructed for Pakistan Navy. The ships will be fitted with latest Command & Control Systems including

modern weapons and sensors. The contract for construction of 04 MILGEM class ships for Pakistan was signed between Ministry of Defence Production, Pakistan and M/s ASEAT (Turkish Firm) in 2018. Under the project, two ships are under construction at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, while the other two are being constructed at KS&EW, Karachi.

While addressing on the occasion, Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan admired the collaboration of Ministry of Defence Production, Ministry of National Defence of Türkiye, M/s ASFAT, KS&EW and Pakistan Navy for synergized efforts to make the project a success and congratulated them on successful launch of the ship. He added that relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye is unique because of deep rooted historical ties between the two brotherly countries and such defence cooperation shall continue in future as well.

Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz while addressing the ceremony termed the brotherly Pakistan-Turkiye relations as exemplary and acknowledged the potential for more collaboration in the field Defence Production. He lauded the efforts and remarkable work done by KS&EW and M/s ASFAT and emphasized for adopting proactive approach for timely completion of undergoing projects. He strongly condemned the recent incidents of terrorism in Pakistan and appreciated the people of Pakistan for their all out support during the earthquake in Türkiye.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi during his speech highlighted that these ships will significantly enhance Pakistan Navy's combat potential and will augment peace and security in the region. The Admiral emphasized that PN has kept the policy of indigenization at the forefront and hence it is very satisfying to see the state of the art warship being built in the country. Earlier, MD KS&EW Rear

Admiral Salman Ilyas in his welcome address highlighted that Karachi Shipyard is fully cognizant and completely aligned with the goals set forth by the Government of Pakistan for self-reliance in defence shipbuilding industry.

The ceremony was attended by senior government officials from Pakistan and Türkiye including officers and key representatives of Pakistan Navy, M/s ASFAT and KS&EW.

Federal ministers Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Ahsan Iqbal, Syed Naveed Qamar and Israr Tareen, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also attended the ceremony.

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Xi extends condolences to President Alvi over suicide bomb attack



Spokesman Report

BELJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping has sent a message of condolence to President Arif Alvi over the deadly suicide bomb attack that hit a gathering in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

In his message, Xi said that he was shocked to learn of the suicide bomb attack which caused heavy casualties.

On behalf of the Chinese government and people, Xi mourned deeply for the fatal victims and conveyed sincere

sympathies to the bereaved families and those injured.

Xi stressed that China opposes all forms of terrorism and strongly condemns the attack.

He also pledged that China will continue to firmly support Pakistan in promoting its national anti-terrorism action plan and jointly safeguard peace and security in the region and the world. On the same day, Chinese Premier Li Qiang also extended condolences to Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif over the attack.

'Daniyal Aziz, Talal Chaudhry punished as they told truth': Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that both Daniyal Aziz and Talal Chaudhry were punished only because they were telling the truth at that time which was not acceptable to those who wanted to minus Nawaz Sharif from politics.

In a tweet, she congratulated both the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leaders for emerging as real leaders in front of history and the masses.

"Both of them faced extremely unfavorable condi-



tions but did not leave the path of truth nor did they leave the people of the constituency, and stood by their position, leadership and party", she maintained.

She congratulated Daniyal Aziz, Talal Chaudhry, and the people of their constituency.

Amjad Zubair Tiwana appointed Chairman FBR



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Establishment Division has notified the appointment of Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana as Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

"With the approval of the Federal Government, Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana, a BS-21 officer of Inland Revenue Services (IRS), presently posted as Member (Inland Revenue Operations) FBR headquarter, Islamabad is appointed as Chairman FBR under section 10 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973, with immediate effect and until further order," the notification added.

Under another notification, he has also been assigned additional charge of the post-Secretary Revenue Division under section 10 of the Civil Servants Act 1973 with immediate effect for the period of three (03) months or till the posting of a regular incumbent, whichever is earlier.

SC rejects PTI chief's request to stay Toshakhana trial

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday rejected the request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's chairman to stay the Toshakhana case trial, observing that it could not interfere into the lower court's proceedings.

Justice Yahya Afridi, while heading the three-member bench which heard the PTI chief's petition, observed that the court had taken up the appeal and issued an order despite it had become ineffective. The case would remain pending with the bench, he said, adding the Islamabad High Court (IHC) should decide the case.

He said the apex court had instructed the high court to hear the all appeals together, which might grant the petitioner relief.

Justice Afridi also observed that the top court had granted the requested relief to the petitioner but it was strange that he again approached it.

The PTI chief's lawyer Khawaja Haris said that his client's case was fixed before the IHC for hearing on Thursday. The case was about the trial court's jurisdiction.

They had approached the top court because the high court did not issue a stay order against the Toshakhana case trial, he added. The court adjourned the further hearing of the case till Friday.

Dr Faisal assumes office of Pakistan High Commissioner to UK

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Mohammad Faisal has assumed the office of the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom.

On his arrival at the airport, he was received by Kathryn Colvin CVO FCIL, Special Representative of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, a press release on Wednesday said.

Dr Faisal assumes office of Pakistan High Commissioner to UK "With rich experience of three decades in the foreign service of Pakistan, High Commissioner of Pakistan Dr. Faisal aims to further deepen and strengthen the historic relationship between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, building upon the strong bilateral relations existing between the two countries," it was added.

Dr. Mohammad Faisal holds degrees of MBBS, M. Sc., LL.M and Masters in Political Science.

Military trials of civilians: SC rejects plea for full court bench

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected a plea seeking the formation of a full court bench to hear a set of pleas challenging the trials of civilians in military courts, ARY News reported.

A six-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha A. Malik announced the reserved verdict.

During the hearing today, CJP Bandial said the bench had discussed the plea and the formation of a full court was not available until September due to summer vacations. Earlier, the apex court had rejected the federal government's plea to constitute a full court.

A day earlier, CJP Bandial discussed the petition with other petitioners and then reserved the verdict on senior counsel Faisal Siddiqi's plea. In a previous hearing, AGP Mansoor Usman Awan presented a list comprising the names of 102 suspects in the military's custody before the court. According to the list, seven people were under custody for breaking General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, four suspects attacked the army institute, 28 suspects attacked the Lahore corps commander's residence, 15 people were involved in attacks on army garrisons in Multan and Gujranwala, eight suspects attacked an ISI office in Faisalabad while five were involved in the attack on the PAF Air Base in Mianwali.

Pakistan, Turkiye agree to maintain close coordination for improved ties



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan and Türkiye on Wednesday agreed to continue close coordination and engagement through well-established bilateral mechanisms to continue with the upwards trajectory of bilateral relations.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and visiting Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz, here, after they jointly launched PNS Tariq Corvette.

The two leaders discussed

wide-ranging issues encompassing bilateral relations, the regional situation and other areas of mutual interest.

Appreciating the strong bilateral cooperation, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed the importance of transforming the brotherly relations into mutually rewarding trade and economic ties.

He underscored the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts and joint collaborations in R&D, IT, energy, infrastructure, food security, tourism and mining sectors.

Group photo

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Turkiye's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and other dignitaries in a group photo at the launching ceremony of Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Corvette "PNS Tariq" on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

COAS Munir felicitates PLA on 96th founding anniversary

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday felicitated the People's Liberation Army of China and lauded its role in China's defence, security and nation building, said Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

According to military's media wing, the army chief expressed these remarks on the 96th anniversary of the founding of People's Liberation Army of China commemorated at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

According to the ISPR, Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir was the chief guest on the occasion.

While highlighting various



General Wang Zhong, Chinese Embassy officials and Officers from tri-services of Pakistan attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese Charge d'Affaires thanked COAS for hosting the event for the 96th anniversary of the founding of the PLA.

She said this all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China and Pakistan has stood the test of the time and change of international landscapes.

She endorsed that China and Pakistan have just jointly celebrated the 10th anniversary of the launch of CPEC and in the past months, COAS and other military leaders paid successful visits to China, which has strongly promoted the relationship between the two militaries.

facets of the deep-rooted ties between the two states, militaries and the people, the army chief said that Pakistan-China relationship is unique and robust that has proven its resili-

ence in the face of all challenges.

The army chief said that PLA and Pakistan Army are brothers in arms and our relationship will continue to

contribute towards safeguarding our collective interests.

Charge d'Affaires of the embassy of the People's Republic of China Pang Chunxue, Defence Attache Major

'Historic' National Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill passed by Senate: Ishaq Dar

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has said that the 'historic' bill for the establishment of the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund was passed by the Senate today.

Ishaq Dar, while addressing an event at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) headquarters today, welcomed the Senate for unanimously passing the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill.

Dar said that seven state assets worth Rs2,300 billion were initially included in the fund including three assets of the finance ministry. It also included three state assets of oil and gas reserves and an energy ministry asset.

The finance minister said that the practice of parking state assets to showcase them



to the world was also adopted by Indonesia and Egypt to gain the confidence of investors. He added that the fund containing the national assets acts as a sovereign guarantee of the government.

He praised FBR's performance in the first month of the current fiscal year and revenue collections more than its assigned target in July. Dar said that the government set a big target for tax collections

this fiscal year. The finance minister said that Pakistan's reserves reached \$14 billion amid dangerous predictions but the government arranged the external payments.

He said that the current account deficit range was brought to positive from March 2023 and those who are willing to see Pakistan default have failed. The country bore a financial burden and

made timely payments.

He said that the economic team paved the way for Pakistan's economic stability. He added that the tax officials need encouragement, as well as, there is a need to adopt friendly behaviour with the taxpayers.

The finance minister said that Pakistan will never default. Dar said that the government wants to make FBR a friendly board of revenue.

Regarding the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund, Dar said that the fund based on national assets acts as a sovereign guarantee of the government.

The bill was moved by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar which was unanimously passed by the Senate today.

On July 31, the National Assembly had approved

legislation to establish the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund which aims to ensure sustainable economic development through the efficient management of funds and assets, adhering to the highest international standards.

Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, announced the introduction of the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill, 2023 in the National Assembly, which was later successfully passed by the House.

The Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund aims to consolidate the scattered investments of the Pakistani government into a single entity and assess their face value. The fund will be regulated with financial policies, considering the segregated accounts of the government in the form of shares and state-owned companies.

FO says 'terrorists behind Zhob attack identified as Afghan citizens'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office confirmed Wednesday that the terrorists behind the Zhob Cantt attack were identified as Afghan citizens.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson confirmed that three terrorists involved in July 12 Zhob attack were identified as Afghan citizens belonging to Kandahar province.

The FO instructed the Afghan Embassy to receive the bodies of the terrorists.

The FO expressed deep concerns and condemnation over the continued involvement of Afghan citizens in terrorist attacks in Pakistan and the use of Afghan territory for terrorism within Pakistan.

Earlier in the month, it was learnt that Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists had used the weapons left by the US in Afghanistan during the attack in Balochistan's Zhob.



Five terrorists were killed and nine Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred in a clearance operation in northern Balochistan after militants attacked launched a "dastardly attack" on the Zhob garrison.

"In total, five terrorists were killed during the operation," the ISPR said. However, it added, at least nine security personnel embraced martyrdom in the exchange of fire.

It has been revealed that the TTP terrorists donning uniforms of US soldiers, helmets, and hand gloves were equipped with the latest US weapons including M16 Assault Rifles.

PTI casts aspersion on Dilawar's rejection of Khan's plea to present witnesses

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership and legal team termed Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Humayun Dilawar's decision depriving PTI Chairman Imran Khan of legal and constitutional right to produce witnesses in his defence in the Toshakhana case, as judicial murder of the justice.

They said that ADSJ Dilawar confiscated all the rights from Imran Khan to present his defence because he knew if witnesses gave testimony, the case would be finished instantly as there was nothing in it.

PTI Chairman spokesperson on Legal Affairs Naeem Haider Panjutha said that Judge Dilawar rejected their request of presenting witnesses in defence despite presenting list of defense witnesses and fixed the case for today (Thursday) for the final argument.

He feared that after hearing the final argument, the judge would give a decision against PTI Chairman. Naeem said that the matter was pending in the Supreme Court and High Court and even the apex court stated that the trial court cannot pass a final decision or order until receiving the decision on the transfer application from the High Court.

He went on to say that the judge was conducting proceedings on a war-footing basis as he made his mind to pronounce the decision before August 5.

Naeem stated that they submitted the list of witnesses and informed the court that they would bring bank records and other documents as the witnesses were also present there, seeking just two days time so that they could defend the case effectively.

However, he said that the judge rejected their application and fixed the case for the final arguments today (Thursday).

PTI senior leader Babar Awan said that the Toshakhana case against Imran Khan was being conducted in the same fashion as the case conducted by Maulvi Mushtaq against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He said that declaring the witnesses as unnecessary and rejected the statement without writing, adding that it was judicial murder of justice, which they rejected altogether.

PTI senior leader Farrukh Habib raised question as to why the judge was conducting such a speedy trial of Imran Khan's case. He said that the judge's biasness was established and proved who uploaded anti-Imran Khan's posts on his facebook accounts.

He demanded that voice should be raised against this injustice.

PTI chief's indictment in ECP contempt case deferred again

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday again deferred the indictment of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former prime minister in a contempt case filed against him.

The PTI chief was asked to appear before the ECP for indictment but he did not show up.

A four-member bench headed by Sindh member Nisar Ahmed heard resumed the hearing to charge frame the former prime minister.

Shoaib Shaheen appeared before the ECP to represent the former prime minister. Shaheen pleaded with the ECP to adjourn proceedings as his client has to visit the hospital for check-up. He also sought exemption for the former prime minister from appearance in the ECP contempt case.

Ikramullah Khan, a member of ECP observed charges were to be framed against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief today and added how can exemption be granted to the accused in a contempt case.

Read more: Fawad Chaudhry apologises in ECP contempt case

To this, Shaheen said charges against his client are yet to be proved.

Later, the hearing was adjourned until August 22.

In August 2022, the ECP issued notices to Imran Khan and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral watchdog.

The political leaders repeatedly lambasted the commission and CEC Sikander Raja and termed the electoral body as a "subsidiary of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz".

People stand by Nawaz Sharif due to his ideology: Marriyum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said the people, voters and legislators of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) firmly stood by its Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif due to his ideology.

However, those who hatched conspiracies against the country could not face the people today, the minister said while addressing a news conference after his visit to the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Corporation.

She said the people fully knew that it was Nawaz Sharif who could steer the country out of the crises.

The three-time elected prime minister, she said, was removed in 2017 through a conspiracy which culminated into the "Project Imran" that was imposed on the nation in 2018 and the journey of development came to a grinding halt, the minister regretted.

She said many uplift projects started by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government were stopped, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was put on the back burner, achievements against terrorism went in vain and the masses faced the worst inflation during the four-year tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) regime.

In the last 15 months, she said, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with his allies brought the country out of crisis created during the four-year inefficient and incompetent rule of the PTI.

She remarked that the PTI chairman was "an enemy of the country", who first signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on tough conditions, then violated and suspended it for petty

political gains jeopardising the economy and prestige of the nation.

Marriyum said the PTI regime was bent upon auctioning the national institutions, however, it was the current government which had completely transformed them by initiating reform programmes.

The minister congratulated PML-N leaders Talal Chaudhry and Daniyal Aziz as their five-year disqualification period had come to an end.

The two leaders, she said, stood firm with Nawaz Sharif and the party in difficult and tough times.

"Talal Chaudhry and Daniyal Aziz fought against the odds and remained steadfast as political workers," she added.

The minister said the National Assembly had approved the PEMRA Amendment bill today, expressing her gratitude for the media workers and stakeholders for supporting the bill.

After the passage of this bill, she added, minimum salary of media workers would now be as per the government's guidelines, and the issue of delay in the payment of salaries would also be resolved.

The media, she said, through a self-regulatory move had joined hands with the government to make 'misinformation and disinformation' as part of the bill.

She said that the amendment was enacted to promote responsible journalism in the country. Now, they would have to fulfill their responsibilities on misinformation and disinformation, she maintained.

The scope of public service messaging had been widened in the amended PEMRA Bill, Marriyum Aurangzeb noted. She congratulated the employees of Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Corporation (SRBC) on the completion of 108-room building.

PAC directs NAB to investigate \$3b interest-free loans matter

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to formulate a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to probe the matter of interest-free loans of three billion dollars given to industrialists during the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Chairing the PAC meeting, Noor Alam Khan asked for taking strict action against those not cooperating with the JIT in that regard.

The committee expressed serious concern over the non-attendance of the meeting by NAB Chairman Nazir Ahmed Butt. Deputy Chairman NAB said that Nazir Butt was ill and admitted to the hospital. The committee has asked the authorities concerned to provide his medi-



cal records.

Noor Alam Khan demanded a list of 640 people from NAB allegedly involved in the scandal. The NAB has assured to provide a report on the issue of three billion dollars in interest-free loans to the PAC in the next four days.

The PAC Chairman said that loans were given at an interest rate of three to five per cent.

LHC CJ issues instructions to solve the problems of the Bar on priority basis

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Senior Judge Mr Justice Ali Zia Bajwa, Senior Registrar, District and Sessions Judge Anjad Ali Shah, Principal Staff Officer to Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Muhammad Shahzad Gul, Personal Assistant Muhammad Shahzad Ahmed Nasir Deputy Registrar Zahoor Ahmed Sheikh on the arrival of Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Mr. Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti to the Multan Bench. Assistant Registrar Arslan Zafar, Protocol Officer Shahid Iqbal Lack, Faraz Ahmed and Secretary to Senior Judge Riaz Ahmed welcomed him. On this occasion, a bouquet of flowers was presented. Chief Justice Lahore High Court heard various cases in Court No. 1. Later District and Sessions Judge



Multan Akmal Khan met the Chief Justice.

On this occasion, he also met the delegation of the Assistant Advocate General Office briefing about the

new complex under construction in District Court and informed about their problems.

Lawyers from different bars also held meetings and informed about

the problems faced by the bar in their areas

The Chief Justice has issued instructions to solve the problems of the bar on priority basis.

Completing the arrangements of possible floods in Multan Division

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak has assigned the task of completing the arrangements to the district administration in view of possible floods. Commissioners and Irrigation Department should carry out full inspection of protective dams, encroachment operation and evacuation of people and cattle should be ensured. Persons displaced from the Bat area should avoid returning for now



And those who do this will be dealt with severely. He said that there is low level flood in river Ravi, Sutlej. There is currently no risk of flooding in Chenab River. However, the administration is on full alert. Aamir Khattak said that a plan for evacuation from riverine areas and availability of machinery should be prepared.

While giving a detailed briefing regarding the river situation and safety measures, Commissioner Aamir Khattak was told that The district administration is fully prepared for floods and monsoons. Control rooms are functional to monitor and alert the flood situation. Although the river situation is normal, the emergency plan is fully prepared. Evacuation of people from the bet areas is ensured, but they go back for animal fodder, crop cultivation.

Warnings have been given many times, announcements have been made, extraordinary measures are being taken so that there is no loss of life or money. Additional Commissioner, Sarfraz Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner Nauman Afzal, Deputy Commissioners participated in the meeting.

Medical entry test arrangements finalized: Amir Khattak

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: On the instructions of the Punjab government, the divisional administration has finalized the arrangements for conducting the medical entry test. A review meeting was held on the arrangements for the entry test under the chairmanship of Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak. Commissioner Multan said that this is not just a test. It relates to the future of the candidates and the dreams of the parents. Therefore, fool-free arrangements should be ensured. He said that more than 20 thousand candidates will participate in the medical entrance test, so this time considering the large number of candidates, the medical entrance test will be conducted in different universities. In this regard, security and ideal parking arrangements will be ensured at the examination centers.

Walk-through gates will be installed in the examination centers. Administrative officers will be the administrative heads of examination centers of various departments and responsible for the delivery and sale of paper boxes. He added that shaded waiting areas and water management for parents and students will also be done while the Waste Management Company will ensure high sanitation arrangements. The traffic police will plan the routes in and out of the university. Commissioner Aamir Khattak directed that quality and cheap items should be provided at the food and drink stalls in the universities.

Ahl-e-Sunnat leaders say if PM tries to amend 295C, they will protest: Allam Farooq Saeedi



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Prominent scholars belonging to Ahl-e-Sunnat organizations have said that the government wants to amend 295C under the pressure of IMF, if an attempt is made to remove or amend the blasphemy clause, the Ahl-e-Sunnat scholars and people Protest will be on the streets. All Islamic countries will be forced to protest and expel Swedish ambassadors from their respective countries for insulting the Holy Quran in Sweden. Allama Muhammad Farooq Khan Saeedi, the Provincial Nazim of Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat, expressed these thoughts by making the heart-breaking incident of Islamia University a non-life-threatening investigation.

Maulana Muhammad Ayub Mughal, Provincial President of Jamaat Ulema Pakistan Noorani. Leader, Protection of Namos Rislal Mufi Muhammad Usman Pasruri, Senior Vice President, Sunni Tehreek Punjab, Mirza Arshad Qadir. Leader, Protection of Namos Rislal Muhammad Yunus Ghazi, Advocate. Datta Kashif Busan, Tehreek Ahl-e-Sunnat leader Muhammad Hussain Babar Advocate, Eminent Ulama Mufti Khurshed Ahmad Siddiqui, Allama Ruknuddin Qadri, Hafiz Zafar Qureshi, Qari Zwar Qadri.

These leaders said that if any kind of amendment is attempted in 295C, the lovers of Rasool will come out in the whole country with shrouds on their heads and any kind of amendment in the blasphemy law will not be tolerated. They demanded that the government of Pakistan should convene a meeting of the heads of all Islamic countries on the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden. He said that the case of Islamia University is a great tragedy in the history of Pakistan. Mixed education should be ended. If any influential minister is involved in this tragedy, action should be taken against him without discrimination.

Preparation

FAISALABAD: Shopkeepers display large size of national flags outside their shops at Amin Pur Bazaar to attract customers during the celebrations of the Independence Day, in the City.



Airport to provide all possible facilities to passengers on daily flights: Ghazanfar Raza

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Manager Multan International Airport Syed Ghazanfar Raza has said that 150 domestic and international weekly flights are being operated from Multan station and providing all possible facilities to the passengers traveling on these flights is the top priority of Civil Aviation every day. On the basis of Multan Airport, 12 international and 3 to 4 domestic flights are being dispatched Daily Basis. He expressed these views while talking to the media. For this, the goods had to be checked at different counters



age of time. To a question, he said that all the baggage of the passengers was checked by scanning machines, only the suspicious baggage was being opened and checked. 11 lakh passengers have traveled domestically and abroad which is a record

He further informed that the

responsibilities of the airport administration include provision of facilities to passengers, immediate redressal of complaints and problems like loss of baggage are also resolved. He takes it into custody and transfers it to the warehouse, which is later contacted and handed over to the passenger. On a question, he said that there is a seating capacity of 6,000 passengers in the lounge of Multan Airport, while currently 600 passengers are seated. Seating arrangements have been made. Likewise, there are 4 jetties at the airport

Out of which only those are being used, however, the remaining 2 can also be used if the number of flights increases in the future. The person lives under the cover of hidden cameras while strict security arrangements have also been made.

Sirajul Haq will reach bahawalpur on 3rd August. Hasan Akhrawani

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Media Coordinator, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Hasan Akhrawani has said that Sirajul Haq will reach Bahawalpur today where he will lead and address the Tafuk Shikham March. He further said that at present there has been an increase in cases of harassment in universities and other educational institutions.

There has been an increase in drug dealing which is condemnable. It is a pity that the increase in such incidents in educational institutions is a slap in the face of the administration itself.

Today, Thursday, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan will lead and address the Protection of Education March at Sirajul Haq University Chowk, Bahawalpur

Walhar Railway Station name changed to Haider Ali Shaheed Railway Station

MA Rashid

FAISALABAD: As a result of the struggle of the Railway PREM Union, the Railway Administration and the Government of Pakistan changed the name of the Walhar Railway Station to Haider Ali Shaheed Railway Station as a tribute to the bravery of Haider Ali, a gang man who was martyred by terrorists on March 1st at the Walhar Railway Station in District Rahim Yar Khan. Now officially renamed Haider Ali Shaheed Railway would be considered.

P. Railway CEO Shahid Aziz and AGM Aamir Baloch provided a copy of the official notification to the Central President of Railway PREM Union, Sheikh Mohammad Anwar who met CEO along with a delegation. The Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, Divisional President Fayyaz Shehzad, Adnan Shakur, Haji Abdul Aziz Madni, Junaid Khurram, Farid Warsi, Mohammad Nadeem, Tahir Gujjar, Mohammad Najeeb and others were also present on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Railway CEO Shahid Aziz,

AGM Aamir Baloch said that Haider Ali, the gang man who sacrificed his life for the Railway, was martyred, so this station has been named Haider Ali Shaheed for the first time in the history of Pakistan.

He said that, the credit goes to Railway PREM Union and its leader Sheikh Muhammad Anwar. Pakistan Railway PREM Union is working day and night for the welfare of Railway employees even has given all the attention of the PREM Union.

As a result of this, PREM Union is picturing a role model

for the trade unions of the entire Pakistan, especially in Railways. On this occasion, President of PREM Union, Government of Pakistan, Minister of Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq, CEO Shahid Aziz and AGM Aamir Baloch, Aamir Nisar, DS Sukkur Mahmood ul Rehman Lakh and Railway administration expressed their gratitude. He said that he appreciated the eternal sacrifice of the life of the Railway employee and awarded him this honor. Every railway worker and officer puts their duties and responsibilities above all regional, linguistic,



and political prejudices and distinctions for the improvement of Pakistan Railways and keeping its train opera-

tions better and better and this is their first priority. To maintain normal services of Prime Union Railway will continue to

extend all possible cooperation to the management, will thwart any conspiracy to disrupt the normal services of the Railways.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:45 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	5:06 pm
Maghrib	7:08 pm
Isha	8:42 pm

EMERGENCY

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

King Abdullah Campus of UAJK to be inaugurated on August 4

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The highly anticipated inauguration ceremony of the King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Campus of Azad Jammu and Kashmir University (UAJK) is set to take place on Friday, August 4, 2023. The campus, generously funded by the Saudi government through the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), stands as a symbol of Islamic brotherhood and solidarity, following the devastating earthquake that struck the region in 2005.

The momentous event will be graced by esteemed dignitaries, including AJK President and Chancellor of the University, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary, and Head of Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) Asia Operations, Dr. Saud Ayid Alshammari, who will jointly inaugurate this multibillion-dollar project. The ceremony will witness the presence of a high-level Saudi delegation, officials from the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, top officials from the Economic Affairs Division of the Federal government, and senior AJK government functionaries.

Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary, the current President of Azad Kashmir and the Chancellor of the university, played a pivotal role in securing financial support for the King Abdullah Campus. His relentless efforts included meetings with the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki, where he discussed the challenges faced and sought early delivery of laboratory equipment for the university.

One killed, two injured in different cases in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: One person was shot dead in target killing case while two others were shot in three different cases in three different parts of Attock on Wednesday, police sources said. In the first incident, a man was shot dead over old enmity in day broad light assassination incident within the highly guarded tehsil court complex of Jand town of Attock. Police sources said that the victim was going back to home after appearing in the local court in which he was nominated as murder accused and was on bail was targeted by his rivals within the court complex and showered bullets over him resultantly he died on the spot.

In the second incident, a man was shot and injured for revisiting robbery in day broad light robbery incident near Chach interchange in the limits of Hazro Police station on Wednesday.

EPC holds second round table on Engineer Parliamentarians

Muhammad Amin

ISLAMABAD: The second event of the Engineer Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC), titled "Round Table of Engineer Parliamentarians Caucus," was successfully held at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) in Islamabad. The event commenced at 10:00 am and was organized by the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC). This round table was hosted by Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, MNA, and Chairman PEC, along with Engr. Senator Rukhsana Zuberi, Convenor-EPC, and former Chairperson PEC.

The Chief Guest for the occasion was Chairman Senate, Honorable M. Sadiq Sanjrani. Regrettably, he could not attend due to urgent official commitments. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed members of EPC, along with honorable Parliamentarians, including Engr. Senator Farhatullah Baber, Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani, MNA; Engr. Senator Muhammad Asad Ali Khan Junejo; Ms Shahida Rehmani, MNA/Secretary of Women's Parliamentary Caucus; Sardar Shafiq Tareen, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee of Science & Technology; Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro,

MNA/ Parliamentary Secretary, alongside experts and professionals from diversified engineering fields.

During the event, Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani, MNA, shared that the National Assembly of Pakistan has unanimously passed a resolution on 1st August 2023, and recognized the establishment of the Engineer Parliamentarians Caucus. The resolution will also be presented in the ongoing Senate. The main objective of the caucus is to strengthen engineering policy and advocacy in all technical matters for the Government, aiming to enhance quality control and boost both export and import substitutions.

Engr. Senator Asad Junejo, while extending appreciation for this commendable initiative, emphasized that the solutions to the challenges being faced by the country lie with engineers. As a member of various standing committees in the Parliament, he strongly believed that engineers' involvement in policy decisions is crucial, and the caucus will play a pivotal role in this regard.

Other members of Parliament also lauded the initiative of the Pakistan Engineering Council, acknowledging that the Engineer Parliamentarians Caucus is a



significant milestone and represents a strategic collaboration between the engineering profession and the Parliament for the socio-economic development of the country.

The plenary session featured speeches by Engr. Senator Rukhsana Zuberi, Engr. Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Engr. Naseer Ahmed

Gillani, and Engr. Mian Sultan Mahmood, who presented insights into the economic challenges and their engineering solutions. These specialized sessions were chaired by Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim-Khani, MNA; Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, MNA & Chairman PEC, Engr. Senator Muhammad Asad Ali Khan June-

jo and Miss Shahida Rehmani, MNA. The Engineer Parliamentarians Caucus is poised to make a significant impact on shaping the future of engineering practices in Pakistan and addressing the country's socio-economic challenges with the expertise and collaboration of engineers in the parliamentary process.

Construction work

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their work during the construction of underpass at Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed Road in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

RIFHA Inter-campus to partner with AJK TEVTA on vocational training

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (AJK-TEVTA) Director for Promotion of Technical and General Education (RIFHA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY Lahore Campus) Umar Farooq met with the officers of AJK-TEVTA. A meeting

was held on working relationship. Secretary/Chairman AJK-TEVTA Razaq Ahmed Nadeem presided over the meeting. In the meeting, Director Admin/Finance Raja Muhammad Aftab, Director Operation/Projects Anum Asif Abbasi, Deputy Director Accounts Muhammad Shafiq Khan Tareen, Deputy Director Operations Adil Rasheed, In-charge Planning Ehsan

Danish, Assistant Director Publicity Muhammad Ijaz Khan were involved. Matters were discussed.

The Chairman Authority ordered that (RIFHA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY) identify its courses related to training courses, graduation, technical education in which there are immediate employment opportunities and the courses being offered

on priority basis. Steps should be taken to provide training to the youth of Kashmir.

(RIFHA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY) was represented by Director (RIFHA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY) Lahore Campus Umar Farooq and agreed to cooperate with each other to work together for the development of mutual relations and TVET sector.

Former DG Iqbal, Exxion Buildings chief lauds Bandala Sports Ground

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SAMANI/BHIMBAR: Regarding the construction of Bandala Sports Ground, former DG Information Raja Azhar Iqbal along with Exxion Buildings Bhimbar Mazhar Hussain visited Sports ground cite. On this occasion, Exxion Buildings Mazhar Hussain briefed that this ground will be completed soon by the Department of Sports, Youth and Culture at a cost of 37 lakh 29 thousand rupees. It will happen, the work order has been done in June—now they are starting the regular construction work, the preliminary level survey has been completed by the Buildings Department, the local dignitaries said in the conversation that the personal efforts of the former DG Information Raja Azhar Iqbal have given positive results to the youth.

This is a big project to encourage activities, from which hundreds of young



people from across the tehsil including Walian Baghsar, Bandala, Samahni Chowki, Dub Sandua will be benefited, Raja Azhar Iqbal, former

DG Information, said that this stadium is for the young generation without discrimination. The ground is a gift, we are all grateful for the

cooperation of the people of the area, we should move forward with positive thinking in such a work of collective interest.

Bhambar commissioner inaugurates water filtration plant in Baldia



Bureau Report

BARNALA: Deputy Commissioner Bhambar Mirza Arshad Mahmood Jaral says that we all should play our role as citizens for the betterment. A water filtration plant was set up with the support of Clean Water Project Department, which was officially inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Bhambar Arshad Mahmood Jaral, SP Bhimbar Raja Akmal at here yesterday. Good wishes were expressed for him and prayers were given for his well-being in this world and the hereafter. In this event, Tahsildar Raja Asif Munir Khan, former Director of Rehabilitation Muhammad Shakeel, SHO Barnala Chaudhry Arshad, Vice Chairman Barnala Baldia Muqdar Abbas, journalists Hamid Latif Jaral, Aslam Jaral, Shabbir Mughal and others were also present on the occasion.

Fruit orchards feared to be destroyed due to non-start work on 46 feasible dams in Wana: WAWA

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Wana Welfare Association (WAWA) issued an important message about the residents of Lower South Waziristan district, in the statement issued by General Secretary Wana Welfare Association (WAWA) Jalal Wazir, it has been said that 90 percent of the population of our region is dependent on agriculture, but our agriculture is facing many threats.

WAWA ran and got RS 80 crores approved from the former PTI KP government but because it was not included in the priorities of our elected representatives, this important issue has become a matter of politics or corruption.

GS Jalal Wazir said that if our dams were ready today and this long-standing problem would have been solved.

He expressed the fear that if we do not build these dams, soon our agriculture will end and the wheel of life in Wana will stop and even if the drinking water disappears then we will have to displacement.

If we build dams, our old (water creases) system will be restored. Because there are 22 old karis in Wana, there is a whole system of irrigation which was lost due to the lowering of the water table and 20,000 solar tube wells, which are the biggest source of water wastage, will not be needed.

AKU partners with Gilgit-Baltistan govt to develop teacher capacity

City Desk

KARACHI: Aga Khan University (AKU) and the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have signed an agreement to improve the quality of teaching practices in GB schools. The agreement was signed under the guidance of AKU's President Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin.



The project, titled "Education Fellows: A Pilot Project on Hiring of Education Fellows and Improving Quality of Pedagogy in Gilgit-Baltistan," will be implemented by Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) in collaboration with a consortium comprising Karakorum International University (KIU), Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Knowledge Platform (KP). All through, the consortium will work in close collaboration with the Directorate of Education, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan.

"We are excited to partner with the School Education Department, Government of GB on this important project," said Professor Anjum Halai, Regional Vice-Provost at AKU. "It has the potential to make a significant impact on the quality of education in GB, and we are proud to be working with our partners to ensure its success."

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Democracy under Cyber Siege - I

Usman Akhtar

Cyberwarfare has emerged as a critical challenge for democracies worldwide, posing a significant threat to their stability, security, and integrity. As the digital landscape expands and technology evolves, the potential for cyber-attacks on democratic institutions, processes, and critical infrastructure has become increasingly pronounced. By understanding the depth and scope of this looming menace, policymakers and cybersecurity experts can devise more effective strategies to safeguard democracies from cyber threats.

Examining process of cyberwarfare and its key elements strengthen our knowledge that cyberwarfare denote employing technological means to initiate targeted assaults on computer systems and networks, with the objective of causing harm or obtaining unauthorized entry to confidential data. Within the realm of International Relations and Politics, cyber warfare encompasses a dynamic definition encompassing the art of persuasion, cognitive influence, and mass opinion manipulation. Notably prominent during the Cold War era, the competition between the USA and the Soviet Union exerted considerable influence over public sentiment and democratic procedures in numerous nations.

Cyber warfare encompasses a diverse array of tactics, varying between nations and circumstances. Among these methods, phishing and social engineering attacks stand out as common techniques employed by cybercriminals to deceive individuals into disclosing sensitive

information, such as login credentials or financial data. In democratic contexts, these attacks may specifically target government officials, political candidates, or voters, aiming to gain unauthorized access or propagate disinformation. Another pressing concern lies in malware and ransomware attacks, which pose a significant threat to critical infrastructure, including power grids, communication systems, and transportation networks. Successfully targeting these essential services could result in the crippling of a nation's functioning and erode public trust in democratic institutions.

Moreover, nation-states have been implicated in sponsoring cyber campaigns to influence the political processes and elections of other nations. These campaigns often involve disinformation and psychological operations, strategically manipulating public opinion, sowing discord, and exerting influence over the decision-making processes of targeted populations or governments. The use of cyber espionage, where cyber capabilities are clandestinely employed to infiltrate and gather sensitive information from target entities, is also commonly associated with state-sponsored cyber operations, seeking to obtain intelligence or competitive advantage. Considering the interconnectedness of modern information systems, the impact of these tactics can be far-reaching, shaping narratives and perceptions on a global scale.

Question arises what are the vulnerabilities of democratic systems to cyber attacks. Then we realize the safeguarding of democratic systems against cyber-attacks is an intricate challenge, primarily due to the extensive and interconnect-

ed nature of modern technology. With digital infrastructure deeply ingrained in every aspect of governance, it becomes imperative to address the multitude of entry points that potential cyber attackers may exploit.

One area of concern lies in the weaknesses present within electoral systems typically in developing countries of South Asia and voter databases. The susceptibility of these crucial components to cyber-attacks can introduce grave consequences, as any form of tampering could severely compromise election outcomes and, in turn, erode the trust citizens place in the democratic process.

Additionally, the rise of disinformation and the manipulation of information through social media platforms present another formidable threat to democratic processes. The proliferation of misleading content and fake news has the potential to distort public opinion, mislead voters, and exert undue influence on critical decision-making moments within democratic societies. As stated by the Authors Peter Singer and Emerson Brooking "These new wars are not won by missiles and bombs, but by those able to shape the storylines that frame our understanding".

There are several instances where cyber warfare has been proven as a lethal weapon for a state-sponsored attack like 2016 United States Presidential Election was overshadowed by accusations of foreign interference, with Russia being a prominent actor involved. Cyber Warfare tactics played a significant role in this interference, raising widespread concerns about the integrity of the democratic process and the impact of online disinformation on the election's outcome. According to

former CIA Director Michael Hayden, the Russian interference in the 2016 election stands out as "the most successful covert influence campaign in recorded history." Their tactics were wide-ranging and highly effective.

Russian intelligence agencies, specifically the GRU and the FSB were found responsible for hacking into email accounts of influential political figures, including members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta. The stolen emails were then strategically leaked through various online platforms, particularly WikiLeaks, with the aim of tarnishing the reputation of the Democratic Party and its nominee. State-sponsored Russian operatives utilized popular social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to spread misinformation and divisive content. Their campaigns sought to amplify existing societal divisions, propagate false narratives, and create discord among the American public. These disinformation efforts were targeted at swing states and specific demographics to sway voter sentiment.

The proliferation of disinformation through social media and the leaking of hacked emails contributed to a climate of confusion and mistrust among voters. The intended consequence was to sway public opinion away from the Democratic candidate and potentially influence voter turnout. The constant stream of leaked emails and disinformation put the Democratic campaign on the defensive and diverted attention from the vital policy issues that should have been the central focus of the election discourse.

To be continued

Students must learn IT skills

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Aminul Haque on Wednesday urged youth especially the students to enhance their Information Technology skills so as to cope with the fast-changing trends in the globe.

He was addressing to the inauguration ceremony of a Digital IT Laboratory at Ebrahim Ali Bhai Government Girls and Boys School at Orangi Town on 9 here.

The Minister said that a modern Digital IT Lab equipped with the latest desktop computers, printers and fast internet connection is established at Ebrahim Ali Bhai Government Girls and Boys School, to facilitate the students learn IT skills.

He added that training in 15 different modern IT fields will be imparted to the students in the facility free of cost, enabling them to learn IT skills including data analysis, freelancing, E-Commerce, Graphic Designing, Video Animation, Content Writing, online marketing, and advance data analysis, Artificial Intelligence and other modern skills and practices in the IT fields.

He said that the students of 9th and 10th classes as well as those who successfully passed out from the school should also learn and get training in the IT Lab.

He said that our youth has great potential and talent, it just needs to be nurtured, expressing hope that by the time of matriculation, the students will become the best IT professionals and every student who completes the training will appear as bread earners for his family.

This skilled young generation will also provide stronger support to Pakistan's economy, the Federal IT Minister added.

He said that measures to provide such training facilities at the level of schools and colleges is a step aimed to boost IT exports up to US \$ 15 billion.

Syed Aminul Haque further said that his ministry has taken revolutionary steps for the further promotion of information and communication technology across the country.

He maintained that steps were underway to take IT exports to a record level through the provision of maximum incentives and facilities and the freelancing policy.

He said that the Ministry has established IT laboratories in the schools and now it is the responsibility of the students to take the maximum possible advantage of these.

The Federal IT Minister said that the successful students will also be issued certificates of the courses from the IT Lab. These types of labs will help students, especially girls, to learn modern IT skills at ease and earn by working even from their homes.

He said the Principal of the Ebrahim Ali Bhai School had been informed that the school management was now responsible for the sustainability and maintenance of this facility at least for the next five years.

On the occasion, Syed Aminul Haque also inspected the lab and also exchanged views with the students regarding Digital Pakistan Vision.

He also paid a glowing tribute to the students and teachers of Ebrahim Ali Bhai School for participating in national-level competitions and securing prominent positions in the examinations.



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

Hydro Politics

Asadullah Mahesar

Thereafter the war of 1947 between India and Pakistan, India cut off the water of Pakistan in April 1948. From here, the clash of water between two neighbouring countries had begun and it was resolved in 1960 after a long discussion of nine years. The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) was signed to sort out the long-lasting dispute of sharing of rivers between India and Pakistan in 1960 at Karachi; moreover, the Treaty was facilitated by the World Bank. According to the Treaty the Western rivers like, Indus, Jhelum and Chenab were assigned to Pakistan whereas the Eastern rivers like Ravi, Beas and Sutlej were exclusively allocated to India. Furthermore, India had granted the right of 20% of Western rivers for non-consumptive use encompassing, hydro-electric projects, domestic and agriculture purposes. The Treaty is being observed as the most successful treaty of the world that has lasted since 1960 after the two full-fledged wars of 1965 and 1971 between India and Pakistan.

Here, we should know the process of resolving the dispute over rivers that has been prescribed in the Treaty. There are three processes assigned to sort out the contention over the water between India and Pakistan. In the first case, the Permanent Indus Commission has been constituted to rectify the questions raised by two countries and the Commission ought to meet twice in a year to monetarize the Treaty. In the second process, if the questions become differences and do not resolve through the Commission then it would be fixed by a Neutral Expert appointed by the World Bank. Furthermore, if the differences become disputes and don't sort out by a Neutral Expert then it will go to the Perma-

nent Court of Arbitration.

Additionally, Pakistan has always reservations regarding the constructions of hydro projects on the Western rivers by India. Although India began to construct the Baglihar project of 900MW on river Chenab in 1999 that was completed in 2008 in Indian occupied Kashmir (IOK). Besides, Pakistan declined over the design of the project saying that it would reduce the flow of water in Chenab River. So, the dispute over the project could not be resolved through a bilateral discussion; therefore, it went to a Neutral Expert appointed by the World Bank in 2008. Consequently, the case was resolved through a Neutral Expert and India had accepted the claim raised by Pakistan to redesign the project.

Recently, India has been constructing the Kishenganga of 330MW and Ratle of 850MW projects on Jhelum and Chenab rivers respectively in IOK. Whereas, Pakistan had objections over these projects so, Pakistan requested the World Bank to proceed the dispute over Kishenganga and Ratle projects before the Court of Arbitration on 19 August 2016. Thus, India requested, too, the World Bank to appoint a Neutral Expert to overcome the dispute. However, the World Bank paused the process of appointing the Chairman of the Court of Arbitration and a Neutral Expert in December 2016 as the two countries resolved the disputes through bilateral discussion. India wants to resolve these disputes by graded approach as prescribed in the Treaty that the differences between two countries would be sorted out by a Neutral Expert, but Pakistan wants it through the Court of Arbitration. Moreover, India wants to amend the Treaty to settle down the disputes through bilateral approach and for this purpose India sent a notice to Pakistan in January 2023, but Pakistan doesn't want to do so. Therefore,

the World Bank accepted both requests of India and Pakistan to appoint the Chairman of the Court of Arbitration and a Neutral Expert December 2022.

Furthermore, India declined the constitution of Court of Arbitration by raising six arguments: first, the formation of Court of Arbitration is illegally, second, the Court doesn't have competency, third, the dispute should resolve by a Neutral Expert, fourth, Pakistan doesn't follow the Treaty, fifth, the differences would be resolved first by a Neutral Expert instead of Court of Arbitration, Sixth, the constitution of Court's penal does not follow the section 'G' of the Treaty. Whereas Pakistan's only contention is that India is harnessing the water of Western rivers that were allocated to Pakistan. Besides, India claims that they want to construct the projects by 'run-of-the-river' dams that means India does not divert the flow of rivers.

Consequently, India did not appear before the Court of Arbitration resultantly, the Court gave its decision on 6th July 2023 to reject the objections raised by India and the verdict was in favour of Pakistan. Besides, India discards the rolling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and it claims that two processes cannot proceed simultaneously. Now the Court will address the certain disputes over the IWT to resolve the issues relating to the projects constructed by India on Jhelum and Chenab rivers respectively. Obviously, this is a huge success for Pakistan, but we should have to know that it is not a final decision to resolve the dispute between two nuclear armed countries, however, its beginning. Pakistan must prepare for the future hearing of the Court.

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Consequence of not learning from past mistakes

Haleema Saadia

Pakistan is paying the high cost of weak political institutions. Currently, Pakistan is snapping under the burden of debt servicing. Its economic decision-making is surrendered to international lenders such as IMF. Many people and institutions are responsible for bringing Pakistan to this state. Politicians are one of them. Since the inception of Pakistan, they treated politics as if it's a zero-sum game. Almost all Politicians fail to regard their political opponents as legitimate. The absence of an accommodationist political culture undermined democracy. In such an environment, unelected institutions are getting more and more powerful.

Although Imran Khan's government was propped up by the military in 2018, millions of people did vote for him. They believed in his promise that he will transform Pakistan into a prosperous country. But he failed to fulfil his promises. He repeated the same mistakes that other party heads and politicians made in past. Like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, he awarded party tickets to members of elite families while shunning party workers and loyalists. Opportunist landlords and other members of the aristocracy flocked to the PTI bandwagon as they flocked to PPPs in the 1970s. These opportunists leave the party at the first sign of trouble. Now when the state and establishment are launching ruthless crackdowns to annihilate PTI, these politicians are leaving in flocks.

Now that he fell out with his former patrons, he is telling his voters that the real power during his tenure was in the hands of unelected pillars of the state. However, when he was prime minister, he kept praising those unelected powerful people. Many people have lost faith in politicians due to their dishonest tactics. He will likely meet the same fate as Bhutto. George Santayana, a Spanish-American philosopher, once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

After the PTI government's dismissal and increase in support for Imran Khan despite his many lies and false promises in past, a fearful state has emerged which is repressive of dissent. It is trying to guard the status quo vigorously. The military institution has become so powerful that it will continue to have priority over economic development for appropriation, even if animosity with India disappears. If the current status quo persists, Pakistan may meet the Soviet Union's fate of internal collapse resulting from the inability of the economy to bear the weight of ever-increasing defence expenditures. Politicians didn't learn anything from history and other politician's mistakes so the trial and tribulations continue for the Pakistani masses. Electoral politics is not only dominated by elite families but also males while women and other deprived sections of our country are relegated to secondary roles. Pakistan is now facing the twin threat of demographic and ecological disaster. The existing state of affairs is damaging for Pakistan.

Democratic forces are on the back foot not only in Pakistan but also in many other countries around the world from Thailand, Cambodia to even the United States of America. Politicians are to blame for this to some extent. Recently the Thai reformist Pita Limjaroenrat's bid to become Prime Minister ended after military-appointed senators and judges colluded with the army to stop him. Despotism may not win this time as the cost of suppression has increased in the wake of the globalisation of communication.

Nonetheless, now that it's clear that those who are imbued with power and authority are doing nothing to resolve Pakistan's problems and only care about power, its time that poor masses and deprived classes take the reins into their own hands and try their hardest to change the status quo which is detrimental to our beloved country.

The writer is Kallar Syedan based analyst and she can be reached at saadiahaleema11@gmail.com

Iranian FM arrives Pakistan on bilateral visit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Wednesday arrived here on a two-day bilateral visit to Pakistan to discuss entire gamut of bilateral ties and the emerging regional situation with the leadership of Pakistan.

During his visit, Foreign Minister Abdollahian will hold talks with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday.

"The wide-ranging agenda includes discussion on all aspects of bilateral relations and the emerging regional situation, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Foreign Minister Abdollahian will call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for an exchange of



views on the consensus between the leadership of the two countries for taking this relationship forward. The Iranian foreign minister will

also call on the speaker National Assembly and chairman Senate where the two sides would discuss parliamentary linkages between the two brotherly countries.

Earlier, a high-ranking delegation comprising the deputy foreign minister for economic affairs and senior officials from the ministries of trade, roads and urban development, investment, agriculture, energy etc, preceded the foreign minister for preparatory meetings, the spokesperson said.

"Foreign Minister Abdollahian's visit will be an opportunity for the two sides to discuss the entire range of bilateral ties with particular focus on regional connectivity, energy and economic and investment ties between Pakistan and Iran," it was added.

Meeting

BAGHDAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan in a meeting with Prime Minister of Iraq Mohammed Shyaa Al Sudani on Wednesday.

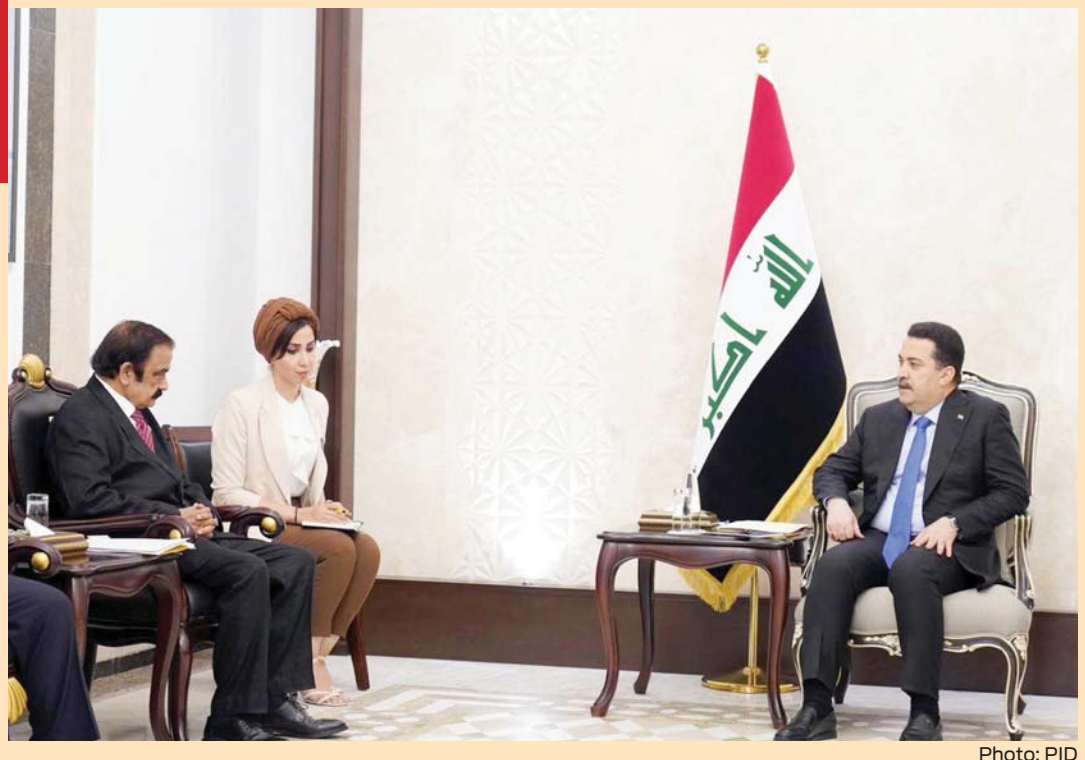


Photo: PID

E&TD ready to set up Vehicles Registration Desks in markets

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) lauded the reforms initiatives of Excise and Taxation Department (E&TD) of the Islamabad Capital Territory to facilitate the people in vehicles registration and making significant increase in its revenue. He urged that the FBR should emulate the good performance of E&TD to facilitate the taxpayers and improve its tax revenue. He said this while talking to Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department ICT during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that trackers should be embedded in the number plates of vehicles to control their theft. He said that a penalty should be imposed on those buyers who delay the registration of vehicles to ensure their timely registration. He said that the department should set up facilitation desks in ICCI and



markets to facilitate the business community in registration of vehicles. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with E&TD in raising better awareness about its services in the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department of ICT briefed the business community about various reform initiatives introduced by him due to which the tax revenue of E&TD has increased from Rs.4.6 billion to Rs.19 billion in just 3 years. He said E&TD

is ready to set up vehicles' registration desks in markets in collaboration with ICCI. He said that with the introduction of technology, the motor vehicles registration has increased to 1.5 million. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that all the departments of ICT should focus on automation and digitization to promote transparency and improve service delivery. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI lauded the reforms brought in E&TD and urged that other departments should emulate

its performance to improve service delivery.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI was ready to give awards to honest and top performing government officers who have brought innovative reforms in their respective departments.

Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Rizwan Chheena, Ashfaq Chatha, Asad Aziz, Babar Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and lauded the good performance of E&TD.

Collectorate of Custom catches smuggling items worth billion rupees red handed



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Collectorate Custom performing brilliantly in a short span of 6 months in spite of limited resources and lesser personnel, recovered red handed smuggled goods worth 301 million.

Mohammad Ismail Collector Customs and Additional Collector Dr. Tahir Khattak told that, viewing the reliable mobile information was received at Faisalabad Airport by Collector Customs Enforcement Sargodha. The Collector alerted the airport staff and specially deployed immediately the Faisalabad Anti-Smuggling Squad at the airport. He personally supervised the operation, which successfully led to the recovery of high value mobile phones and many other electronics items.

The details of smuggled items are as follows: iPhone Various (785), 2- Samsung (120) 3- OnePlus (15) 4- iPad (78) 5- Drone Battery (10) 6- The total value of the confiscated goods, estimated by the appraising officer to be Rs 163 million including laptops, play stations and drones (14).

This speedy action failed three attempts. As a result, mobiles worth Rs 138 million and prohibited drugs worth Rs 20 million have also been seized by Collectorate of Customs Enforcement Sargodha, mobiles and electronics worth Rs 301 million from Faisalabad International Airport were also taken in custody.

Remember that, the Collectorate of Customs Enforcement Sargodha is a newly established Collectorate comprising of three Civil Divisions of Sargodha, Faisalabad and DG Khan.

According to the sources, 2.2 billion rupees have been earned in the last 06 months.

Further, an amount of Rs 475 million has been recovered from auction and adjudication. The Collectorate of Customs Sargodha's exceptional services were appreciated.

So under the given circumstances with limited human and material resources compared to the wide jurisdiction of the Collectorate.

S&P Global introduces enhanced benefits with its 'People First 10.0' Initiative

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: S&P Global has launched 'People First 10.0,' the latest iteration of its enhanced global benefits policy across all its markets, including Pakistan. The policy commits to leading with care and empathy and enabling the company's people to thrive at work, at home, and in life. 'People First' prioritized the needs of S&P Global colleagues to cover a variety of their personal, professional, and social requirements.

Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director, S&P Global Pakistan, expressed enthusiasm for the People First 10.0, saying, "We are proud to unveil People First 10.0, which demonstrates our unwavering dedication to our colleagues' well-being. We listen to our people and the continuous feedback inspires our approach towards people friendly policies with 'People First'. We believe that when we lead with care and empathy, we empower our people to thrive."

Samia Qamar, Director of People, S&P Global Pakistan, speaking about People First 10.0 said, "Initially introduced in 2018, the People First initiative has continuously evolved, incorporating feedback from employees through continuous conversations and the VIBE engagement survey. The idea of 'People First' was further reinforced during the pandemic, and it embraced a hybrid working model, strengthening the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion."

S&P Global's 'People First' policies (1.0-9.0) have evolved and adapted to the changing needs of S&P Global's people over the past six years. The Policy is built on S&P Global colleague's feedback and is derived from the company's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, empowering colleagues to excel both personally and professionally. S&P Global divisions include S&P Global Ratings, S&P Global Market Intelligence, S&P Global Commodity Insights, S&P Global Mobility, S&P Global Sustainable1 and S&P Dow Jones Indices.

Sonia Majeed, first Asian, Pakistani singer awarded Golden VISA from Dubai, UAE



Spokesman Report

DUBAI: According to the report of Global Times Media Europe, Sonia Majeed, the owner of a beautiful voice and an international award-winning famous singer, was awarded a golden visa by Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on which she received so many greetings, flowers and appreciations by her fans from all over the world. Congratulatory messages are being received and still receiving.

Sonia Majeed said that she is thankful to her fans who sent her congratulations. It should be remembered that Sonia Majeed is the first Asian Pakistani female singer living in Dubai who has won several national and international awards for her singing. Her singing is much loved and appreciated. "I always played my valuable role in the field of art and culture, she has gained worldwide fame due to her excellent performance," she said.

Sonia is also very much known for her social work towards the women's and children around the globe. She has been working with United Nations program for many causes as mostly as the Voice Ambassador, Peace ambassador and Goodwill Ambassador. Sonia Majeed thanked all the fans family and all her music lover for getting her at this stage she is really gratified and humbled with such love and gratitude.

International Workshop on Development of Animal Disease Models for Metabolic Disease Kicks Off



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Three-day international workshop on the development of animal disease models for metabolic disease inaugurated at COMSTech on Wednesday. The workshop is being delivered by COMSTech distinguished scholar, Prof. Dr. Hafizur Rahman, Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Dhaka International University, Bangladesh.

The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said in his welcome remarks that this is an important event in the context of challenges we are facing today. He said we live long but we live with chronic diseases. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that we think that the pharma industry is designed to develop new drugs to treat diseases, but the reality is different. They design and develop drugs as a business.

Prof. Choudhary informed that we think that the diseases cannot be treated from current therapies. He said many diseases currently are managed and are not treated, like diabetes. Prof. Choudhary emphasized the need of developing of our own drugs.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Dr. Hafizur Rahman said that this workshop is timely and the need of the hour. He said everyone nowadays can live long, but by managing some diseases. Prof. Rahman said that the diabetes is a metabolic disease and it cause many problems. He informed that the drugs are designed and developed by the western countries to address their own needs. He said that one drug can't be effective all over the world. He emphasized the need of developing localized models and medicines.

Dr. Hafizur Rahman is Chairman, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Dhaka International University, Bangladesh. He has more than 60 publications in international journals. He has also received MEXT fellowship from Japan for the PhD program and has been awarded several research grants. He has a wonderful connection with researchers of Japanese Universities, and has received MIN6 cells as a Gift from Osaka University, Japan for PCMD, ICCBS, University of Karachi, Pakistan. Recently, Dr. Hafiz was awarded "COMSTech Distinguished Scholar" title.

The event is hybrid, and is being attended by six foreign scholars from Afghanistan, Iran, Yemen and Uganda along with 46 local researchers at COMSTech and more than 60 participants from different OIC member states are attending the workshop online.

YouTube Premium and YouTube Music arrive in Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: YouTube announced the debut of YouTube Premium, a paid membership that amplifies viewing experience on YouTube with ad-free, offline and in the background play, and YouTube Music, a new music streaming app that offers immersive music experience, in Pakistan.

Farhan S. Qureshi, Google's Director for Pakistan, said, "With more than 2 billion logged-in viewers watch a music video each month on YouTube globally and over 2 million creators come to share their voices with the world, I'm so happy that YouTube Premium and YouTube Music are now available in Pakistan to provide Pakistanis viewers with new experience. In Pakistan, over 400 channels

have over 1M subscribers, which is an increase of over 35%, year over year while over 6,000 channels have over 100K subscribers, an increase of over 30%, year over year. That's an impressive number! This makes me even more excited for YouTube to be part of this fast growth ecosystem and to continue our partnership with the Pakistani creative industry and support more Pakistani artists to grow their audience with YouTube Premium and YouTube Music."

YouTube brings these ultimate entertainment services to viewers in Pakistan, who love to watch music video content. More local artists are sharing their works and creations on YouTube, such as music video premieres, YouTube exclusive content, and featured song lists, and are expanding their fanbase globally.

YouTube Premium is available from 479.00 PKR and includes membership to YouTube Music Premium while offering an ad-free experience with background play and offline downloads for millions of YouTube videos. Viewers can also sign up for Premium Family Plan, available from 899.00 PKR, which allows them to share their Premium membership with up to 5 other members of their household. YouTube Music Premium is available from 299.00 PKR and offers ad-free music, background play and downloads on YouTube Music. Music Premium Family Plan is available from 479.00 PKR.

Eligible students can sign up for Premium Student Plan which is available from 329.00 PKR and Music Premium Student Plan for 149.00 PKR on the web and Android.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
48,764.55	48,230.50
Day's High	Day's Low:
48,852.05	48,178.88
Index Value	Change
17,252,250,150	+534.05
Percentage	Time
+1.11%	2 Aug, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,561.63	-104.64
Percentage	Time
-1.36%	2 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
35,350.79	-279.89
Percentage	Time
-0.79%	2 Aug, 1:17 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,707.69	-768.89
Percentage	Time
-2.30%	2 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198	200
Bahrain Dinar	761.72	769.72
Canadian Dollar	224	226.2
China Yuan	39.13	39.53
Danish Krone	42.34	42.74
Euro	319	322
Hong Kong Dollar	35.97	36.32
Indian Rupee	3.43	3.54
Japanese Yen	1.9	1.96
Kuwaiti Dinar	932.56	941.56
Malaysian Ringgit	63.13	63.73
New Zealand \$	178.06	180.06
Norwegians Krone	27.95	28.25
Omani Riyal	743.89	751.89
Qatari Riyal	79.18	79.88
Saudi Riyal	76.7	77.4
Singapore Dollar	210.5	212.5
Swedish Korona	27.5	27.8
Swiss Franc	329.62	332.12
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.4
U.A.E Dirham	80	80.9
UK Pound Sterling	370.2	374
US Dollar	289	292

PTCL Group
Introduces 6
months Maternity
& 30 days
Paternity Leaves

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunication and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has achieved a momentous milestone in organizational culture by introducing 6 months of Maternity and 30 days of Paternity leaves for its employees.

The policy guidelines provide ample time for new mothers and fathers to bond and care for their newborns through availing fully paid maternity and paternity leaves, respectively. To make it more flexible and convenient, paternity leaves can be availed on a staggered basis during the first year of childbirth.

Policies are made to benefit powerful: 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 there is a perfect alliance between tax defaulters and tax evaders, which is a great threat to the survival of the state.

The non-tax-paying influential classes are divided along political, ideological, and national lines, but when their interests are threatened, they immediately unite and force the government to its knees, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the process of rent-seeking has been going on for decades, due to which the government is always short of funds for development, public welfare, and debt repayment and has to take new loans to repay

the previous debts while selling profitable assets.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that influential and wealthy people always become part of some political party, and the attempt to collect taxes from them may result in political chaos.

For this reason, no serious attempt is being made to bring these people into the tax net, and the government has to increase the tax burden on the people.

These privileged people continue to thrive during civil and military regimes, and no one can even think of annoying them, he noted.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that at present the focus of the entire system of the country is the welfare of the influential instead of the masses, which has brought the country to the threshold of bankruptcy, and news in foreign newspapers titled 'Pakistan for sale' is being published.



For the past forty years, whatever statements every government makes, its policies are made for the welfare of this limited class with unlim-

ited influence, which at first has continuously compromised the country's development and now has almost bankrupted it.

In the current situation, tax revenue has been continuously decreasing for a decade. According to FBR data, the salaried class pays 242 billion rupees in taxes, which is 200% more than the tax paid by exporters and retailers.

Not a single country has progressed by increasing taxes on salaried people, but our policymakers always find it a viable option.

Last month, the IMF released a report in which it stated that there are serious threats to the Pakistani economy, but this report did not wake anyone and did not create any jolt in the country's power structure, which is unfortunate.

Now we should stop celebrating getting a loan from the IMF, and the economy's direction should be corrected; otherwise, the country will sink, he warned.

Protest

FAISALABAD: Workers of Pakistan Markazi Muslim League hold protest rally at District Council Chowk against the unbearable inflation and the price hike of electricity and fuel.



Photo: Online

Zindigi, powered by JS Bank launches innovative partnership with Mastercard

Commerce Desk

KARACHI:- Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, in collaboration with Mastercard, is set to revolutionize the mass transit system in Karachi. This transformative partnership aims to enhance public transport accessibility, convenience, and financial inclusion for the city's residents.

Zindigi will launch a state-of-the-art digital payment system, driven by cutting-edge technology. In the initial phase, over 1 million customers will receive special Zindigi cards that offer a secure and effortless mode of payment for their public transportation needs. The prepaid, open-loop contactless cards can be used to pay for daily commutes with a tap.

Noman Azhar, Chief Officer, Zindigi, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "Zindigi has always been at the forefront of promoting a digitized economy, offering safe and secure digital payment solutions to its customers. This collaborative effort with Mastercard provides commuters with a unique payment experience, reducing the need to carry multiple cards. It also supports regular payments across retail and e-commerce through a single card."

Selim Ergoz, Senior Vice President, Government Engagement, Eastern



Europe, Middle East and Africa, Mastercard, said, "Mastercard has been an architect of pioneering smart city and urban mobility solutions for over a decade. To date, we have worked on more than 300 trailblazing mass transit projects around the world. As public transport is often one of the areas where cash is used the most, we are committed to advancing innovation in this space by introducing digital alternatives. Our latest partnership enables us to bring our global know-how from cities like Singapore, Sydney, and London to Kara-

chi to ensure a hassle-free commute for the city's passengers with our tap-and-go transit payment solutions."

The collaboration will leverage Mastercard's extensive expertise in digital payment solutions to provide a secure and reliable payment ecosystem for Zindigi cardholders. Mastercard's global network and advanced technology infrastructure will create a robust foundation for Zindigi's digital payment platform, facilitating seamless transactions and enhancing customer experience.

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Bank Alfalah disbursed PKR 970m for flood-impacted communities in the first half of 2023 during phase-2

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah, a leading commercial bank in Pakistan, reported the highlights of the first half of 2023 during Phase-2 of its comprehensive rehabilitation and rebuilding initiative, which started with immediate rescue and relief in phase-1 in 2022.

With a steadfast commitment to empowering communities and promoting sustainable development, the bank has joined forces with esteemed partners. It has disbursed around PKR 970 million to address critical sectors such as healthcare, emergency care, housing, education, and livelihoods.

Under the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Chairman of Bank Alfalah, who graciously donated \$10 million to devastating floods that hit Pakistan last year, and with the steadfast support of the Board of Directors, the Bank has embarked on a two-pronged strategy to redevelop communi-

ties in a sustainable, equitable, and financially inclusive manner. This initiative addresses immediate needs and provides a comprehensive framework for long-term rehabilitation.

Phase-1 focused on immediate relief, with Bank Alfalah partnering with reliable and trusted non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across Pakistan. These partnerships facilitated the rescue and assistance of flood-impacted individuals in hard-hit locations.

Bank Alfalah is embarking on phase-2 of its flood relief efforts, focusing on rehabilitation and rebuilding lives. This phase encompasses several key areas: sustainable housing, healthcare, education, and livelihood support.

Healthcare Provision worth PKR 501 million
Amongst all initiatives, there is a strong dedication

to healthcare and education. A partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation has been strengthened by a generous donation of PKR 200 million, aiming to uplift pediatric healthcare in areas affected by floods. This collaboration seeks to bolster access to premier healthcare and reduce child mortality rates, predominantly in isolated areas.

Furthermore, an association with the ChildLife Foundation has been augmented with a fund of PKR 50 million, earmarked for medicinal support in Children Emergency Rooms managed by ChildLife, situated in flood-damaged areas in Larkana, Sukkur, Nawabshah, and Hyderabad.

Sustainable Housing Provision worth PKR 260 million

Bank Alfalah has partnered with reputable organisations such as Karachi Relief Trust, Bait-us-salam, Sahil Welfare Trust, and the Shahid Afridi Foundation to address the housing needs of flood-affected communities and promote climate resilience.

Subsidised Loans Provision worth PKR 250 million

To support the households affected by the floods, Bank Alfalah is offering PKR 250 million as interest-free rehabilitation loans through its partnership with Akhuwat. These loans will provide individuals with the necessary financial support to reconstruct their houses.

Education Support Provision worth PKR 59 million

In alignment with its dedication to education, Bank Alfalah has partnered with The Citizen Foundation and donated PKR 59 million to rebuild and restore the education infrastructure in flood-impacted areas. With this fund, TCF will construct three (3) schools and ensure that children in Nawabshah and other flood-hit regions can access quality education and a pathway towards a brighter future.

MCB Bank posts highest ever half yearly profit before tax of Rs.53.84 billion (+65%)

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Board of Directors of MCB Bank Limited (MCB) in its meeting under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha, on August 02, 2023, reviewed performance of the Bank and approved the condensed interim financial statements for the half year ended June 30, 2023. The Board of Directors has declared 2nd interim cash dividend of Rs. 7.0 per share i.e. 70%, in addition to 60% already paid, bringing the total cash dividend for the half year ended June 30, 2023 to 130%.

Through the focused efforts of the bank's management in building no-cost deposits, MCB achieved substantial growth in core earnings, resulting in an impressive 65% year-on-year increase in Profit Before Tax (PBT) for the half year ending on June 30, 2023, reaching Rs. 53.84 billion. Profit After Tax (PAT) posted a remarkable growth of 140% to reach Rs. 26.69 billion; translating into Earning Per Share (EPS) of Rs. 22.52 compared to EPS of Rs. 9.39 reported in corresponding period last year.

On the back of strong volumetric growth in

current account and timely repositioning of the asset book, net interest income for the period under review increased by 72% over corresponding period last year. YoY average current deposits of the Bank registered a remarkable growth of Rs. 196 billion (+32%).

Non-markup income increased to Rs. 14.1 billion (+9%) against Rs. 12.9 billion in the corresponding period last year with major contributions coming in from fee commission income (Rs. 8.8 billion), income from dealing in foreign currency (Rs. 3.6 billion) and dividend income (Rs. 1.5 billion).

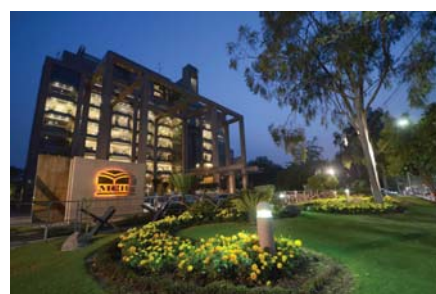
Improving customer and interbank flows, diversification of revenue streams through continuous enrichment of service suite, investments towards digital transformation and an unrelenting focus on upholding high standards of service delivery supplemented a broad-based growth of 31% in income from fee commission; with trade and guarantee related business income growing by 62%, cards related income by 45% and income from home remittance by 34%.

The Bank continues to manage an efficient operating expense base and manage costs

prudently. Amidst a persistently high inflationary environment, impact of sharp currency devaluation, rapidly escalating commodity prices and continued investments in human resources and technological upgradation, the operating expenses of the Bank were reported at Rs. 24 billion (+23%). The cost to income ratio of the Bank improved significantly to 29.58% from 37.46% reported in corresponding period last year.

On the financial position side, the total asset base of the Bank grew by 9% and was reported at Rs. 2.28 trillion. Analysis of the assets mix highlights that net investments increased by Rs. 169.6 billion (+17%) whereas gross advances reported a decrease of Rs. 154.5 billion (-19%) over December 31, 2022.

The Bank continued its focus on building no cost deposits, leading to a robust growth of Rs. 196 billion (YoY: +32%) in average current deposits. The average current to total deposits ratio improved to 52.3% during the period under review from 41.1% in corresponding period last year. Despite the exceptional increase in interest rates during the period, the domestic cost of deposits was contained at 7.93% as compared



to 5.48% in the corresponding period last year.

Return on Assets and Return on Equity significantly improved to 2.45% and 29.59% respectively, whereas the book value per share was reported at Rs. 160.24.

During the period under review, MCB attracted home remittance inflows of USD 1,610 million to further consolidate its position as an active participant in SBP's cause for improving flow of remittances into the country through banking channels; with market share improving to 12.5% compared to 11.3% in the corresponding period last year.

While complying with the regulatory capital requirements, the Bank's total Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is 19.46% against the requirement of 11.5% (including capital conservation buffer of 1.50% as reduced under the BPRD Circular Letter No. 12 of 2020). Quality of the capital is evident from Bank's Common Equity Tier-1 (CET1) to total risk weighted assets ratio which comes to 17.07% against the requirement of 6%. Bank's capitalization also resulted in a Leverage Ratio of 5.89% which is well above the regulatory limit of 3.0%. The Bank reported Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) of 245.97% and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) of 145.29% against requirement of 100%.

Pakistan Credit Rating Agency re-affirmed credit ratings of MCB at "AAA / A1+" for long term and short term respectively, through its notification dated June 23, 2023.

The Bank on consolidated basis is operating the 2nd largest network of more than 1,600 branches in Pakistan. The Bank remains one of the prime stocks traded in the Pakistani equity market and ranks amongst the highest capitalized banks in the industry.

Two Japanese mountaineers summited Tirich Mir after seven years

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: The two Japanese mountaineers scaled 7,708m Tirich Mir, the highest peak of the Hindukush mountain range here in Chitral after a gap of seven-year of its last climbing.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Authority spokesperson Mohammad Saad, the Tirich Mir was last climbed by two French engineers in 2019, adding that the two Japanese climbers including 44-year-old Kazuya Hiraide and 38-year-old Henro Nakajima earlier attempted to climb this peak in 2019 but failed.

This year both the mountaineers managed to climb the main peak of Tirich Mir and received a warm welcome by the local people as well as the tourism authority on their achievement, said Saad, adding that honorary shields were awarded to both the



climbers

He said that Tirich Mir is the highest peak of the Hindukush mountain range and was first climbed in 1950 by a Norwegian expedition which was led by Arne Naess, the famous Norwegian

philosopher, other expedition members were P. Kvern berg and H. Berg.

Last time it was scaled by two French engineers in 2016 and since then no other mountaineers could reach the top of the peak.

Saad said that both the Japanese climbers after reaching the base camp at an altitude of 5200 meters from Shagrom, the last village of Tirich valley, started their journey towards the peak.

Climbing continuously for six days, fortunately the weather was very favorable and they reached the summit. They adopted a completely new route above the base camp and left their landmark for the coming mountaineers.

Both the climbers have planned to climb Noshaq and Asturnal, the other peaks in Chitral of the Hindukush, Saad said and informed that they have already held a record of summiting Rakaposhi in 2019, Shaspar in 2017, Deran in 2013 and Spantec in 2004.

The Japanese mountaineer thanked the people of Chitral and KP tourism authority for their warm welcome, hospitality and support.

Wahab Riaz inaugurated the Nutrition and Health Assessment Screening Camp

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz inaugurated the Nutrition and Health Assessment Screening Camp at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on Wednesday.

Director General Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan, Administrator NPSC Gymnasium Hall Mustafa Shah, Assistant Director Social Welfare Faizan Amjad and other officials were also present on this occasion.

The 3-day Nutrition and Health Assessment Screening Camp is being organised by Punjab Sports Department with the collaboration of Social Welfare Department Punjab where over 30 nutrition experts conduct different screening tests of young participants of SBP Summer Camp.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz and Director General Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik inspected the health screening process at different stalls where health experts and nutritionists briefed



them about the health screening procedure and its different phases.

Talking to media on this occasion, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that regular health screening is very important for young athletes belonging to different games. "The nutrition requirements do change in a child with the growth level and he/she requires a different kind of diet and other healthcare as per his/her age group."

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz further said that the purpose of Nutrition and Health Assessment Screening Camp is to assess the health and fitness of young athletes. "This is a very major development and through regular health assessment of our youth, we can produce a crop of hundred percent fit athletes," he added.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said if a child wants to play sports in the

future, he must pay attention to his diet. "These screening tests will reveal any deficiency in the children and then we can treat and feed these kids accordingly."

He said that complete screening of children is being done here to ascertain their physical growth and height could be improved. "Children will be tested every three months and this process will continue for one year. In this regard, an MoU has been signed with the Department of Social Welfare for the fitness of the players."

In his media talk, Director General Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik said that conducting summer camps is a wonderful initiative of Sports Board Punjab. "Nutrition, screening and health tests are very important for the development of children and the parents should get free tests for their children at this camp."

Director General Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik further said the test identifies nutritional and other health deficiencies in our children. "More than 30 nutritionists will conduct tests on more than 700 children and also recommend their diet in the camp."

The parents of children on this occasion said that the Nutrition and Health Screening Camp has provided us with great awareness about nutritional and other health deficiencies in our children.

Moreover, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz and Director General Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik also visited summer camps of wushu, taekwondo, karate, gymnastics and self-defence on this occasion and inspected the training activities.

Misbah-ul-Haq to lead high-profile Cricket Technical Committee



Sports Desk

The Pakistan Cricket Board has constituted a high-profile Cricket Technical Committee (CTC), consisting former Pakistan captains Misbah-ul-Haq (head), Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Hafeez.

The CTC will provide recommendations on cricket-related matters, including, but not limited to the overall domestic structure, scheduling, playing conditions, appointment of the national selection committees, appointment of national team coaches, central and domestic contracts and plans for the development of umpires, referees and curators.

The CTC will have the powers to invite additional cricket experts, and shall report to the head of the PCB Management Committee on regular basis.

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Zaka Ashraf: "I am delighted to welcome Misbah-ul-Haq, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Hafeez on board for the betterment of cricket in our country. These three former captains possess great cricket knowledge and understand the demands of modern-day cricket. Domestic cricket structure is a pillar of any cricketing nation. We have to make it fool proof and its structure progressive. The presence of Misbah, Inzamam and Hafeez, three of Pakistan's most experienced and decorated cricketers who rose through the domestic ranks, will help us in providing our cricketers the best system to thrive so that we can produce the best cricketers."

Misbah-ul-Haq: "It is a great honour for me to be appointed as the head of this committee, which comprises well-respected individuals who have served Pakistan cricket for decades."

"This is a challenging assignment, but with the vast experience and knowledge that this committee possesses, I have no doubt whatsoever that we will be able to make a positive difference by providing recommendations that improve and enhance the state of the game from the grassroots till the very top."

Acting Director - Domestic Cricket Operations, Junaid Zia, has been included as the ex-officio member of the CTC, and Usman Tasleem is the ex-officio and secretary.

About the CTC members:

Misbah-ul-Haq - Pakistan's most successful Test captain with 26 wins in 56 matches. He led Pakistan to the number one spot in the ICC Test Rankings in August 2016. The right-handed batter played 75 Tests, 162 ODIs and 39 T20Is and scored 5,222, 5,122 and 788 runs in the three formats, respectively. He was the member of the Pakistan side that lifted the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2009 under the captaincy of Younis Khan.

Inzamam-ul-Haq - Member of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 1992 winning side, Inzamam captained Pakistan in different stints from 2001 till 2007. He made 11,739 ODI runs - the most for any batter from Pakistan - in 378 matches at an average of 39.52 and struck 10 centuries and 83 half-centuries. He scored 8,830 Test runs in 120 matches at an average of 49.60 and scored 25 centuries and 46 half-centuries. He played a solitary T20I match against England at Bristol in August 2006, leading Pakistan to a five-wicket win in their maiden appearance in the format.

Mohammad Hafeez - Scored 3,652 runs and took 53 wickets in 55 Tests, 6,614 and 139 in 218 ODIs and 2,514 and 61 in 119 T20Is. He holds the record for being the only third all-rounder in international cricket to score 1000-plus runs and take 30 or more wickets in a calendar year after Sanath Jayasuriya and Jacques Kallis. Under his captaincy, Pakistan played the semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2012.

Zaman Khan wants to break through in Pakistan's World Cup squad

DERBY: Pakistani fast bowler Zaman Khan wants to represent the country in this year's Cricket World Cup.

"I always think that since I have been doing so well in big games under pressure situations so if I get a chance to play in the World Cup all these experiences of handling the crunch moments will help me perform at my best during such a huge tournament with ease for Pakistan," Zaman told Geo News.

The pacer was speaking at Inco Cricket Ground in Derby before flying to Canada to play in the Global T20 league.

The 21-year-old right-arm pacer who comes from a humble background in Azad Jammu and Kashmir has been consistently performing well in the last few months. During his stint with Derbyshire, he was

among the top wicket-takers in the T20 Blast representing.

Zaman ended up getting 25 wickets at an average of just 16.55 in 14 matches.

"Throughout the Blast I strived to perform my best and do good for the team that was the reason I got so many wickets so it really went well for me and I've learnt a lot."

"The knowledge I've gained I will carry forward and do good for my team and in future this experience will help me to do well in any league around the world," said Zaman.

On the English conditions, Zaman said that it's not easy bowling in the UK as the batsmen do not play too many dot balls.

He also feels very lucky that he got a chance to work closely with Derbyshire's Mickey Arthur, who is also working as the



team director of Pakistan's national team.

Arthur had roped him in days before the start of the T20 Blast to represent Derbyshire Falcons in the tournament.

"Mickey Arthur was very glad about my performance in the Blast. He always backed me up and kept on telling me that for him I'm a match-winner and can contribute a

lot to the team's victory. This sort of feedback boosted my confidence," Zaman said.

Zaman was representing Derbyshire along with fellow countryman Haider Ali.

Speaking about their time together Zaman revealed that Haider used to make delicious fresh meals for him and took good care of him for that he nicknamed Haider "Ammi" meaning mother in Urdu.

"He took great care of me while we were together, I used to call him "Ammi" as he used to cook fresh food for me whenever I wanted. But his speciality is his very delicious meat curry," he said.

Zaman was all praise for Lahore Qalandars skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi for the support and encouragement he has shown towards him.

PGF Golf Calendar spells out golf activity for 2023-24

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) Golf Calendar for 2023-24 (July 2023 to June 2024) arouses and ignites vibrant and animated golfing action in the golf arenas of Pakistan. A series of 64 exhilarating championships are due to take place through the period that will end in June 2024. And it is befittingly highlighted by Pakistan Golf Federation that whether you are a sports enthusiast, an avid golfer or simply seeking thrilling events to attend, the golf calendar is packed with action, passion and unforgettable moments of sporting joy.

As for the actual action, from 10th August to 13th August 2023, the Defence Authority Country and Golf Club hosts the Independence Day Cup Open with

features and attributes like huge prize money for performing golf professionals, car for a hole in one and the allurements of competing on a grand golf course. The leading golf professionals will all converge to Karachi and while the outstanding ones seek ascendancy through masterful performances, the golfing fans will be on the look out for magical golfing activity.

From Karachi the action moves to the world class Rumanza Golf and Country Club Golf Course, Multan for the Azadi Cup Night Golf Tournament. To be played under floodlights the participating golfers will endeavor for a marvelous experience, yearning for sparkling results and a purposeful experience.

Other activities in August include the 6th SGA Jinnah Tour Match in Karachi and the 3rd KPK Soni Wali Cup Match

in Abbottabad.

The stand out golfing action during September to December 2023 will all be excellence oriented. And that includes the holding of 5th PGF Inter Club Golf Tournament at Rumanza Golf Course, Multan, the 50th Pakistan Open Golf Championship from 6th September to 10th September in Karachi followed by CNS Open Golf Championship from 13th to 17th September and thereafter the 43rd Punjab Open Championship from 5th to 8th October in Lahore and a few more prominent championships like Prime Minister Open Championship to be held at Rawalpindi from 9th October to 15th October, the 2nd Defence Raya Open from 26th to 29th October, the Sind Open from 21st December to 24th December and the CJSC Open Championship, also in December.

The year 2024 starts with FGA Ladies Amateur to be held at Islamabad and in January of 2024 golfing contests will keep golf courses of Karachi bustling and lively. Faldo Series trials are lined up for dates between 4 Jan and 7 Jan and then take place the sublime ones like the CAS Open Golf Championship and Rashid D. Habib Memorial Open where the prize money is colossal.

More prominent Championships to follow are the DHA Open in Karachi, 2nd Rumanza Open in Multan and the noteworthy J. A. Zaman Memorial Open in Lahore.

The incomparable Smart City 63rd National Amateur Golf Championship is booked for early April and PGF Rumanza match Play Golf Championship in late April 2024.

Prize Money Intensive events

like President PGA Open and KP Open take place in May 2024.

Concluding championships of the year are fanciful for the professionals and these are PGF Qualifying School for Professionals and PGF Qualifying School for Senior and Junior Professionals due to take place in June 2024.

The PGF Golf Calendar sets forth a healthy, affable and engaging time for those who seek illustriousness in golf and owe a debt of gratitude to the Pakistan Golf Federation and the Provincial golf bodies like Punjab Golf Association, Sind Golf Association, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa who have ensured continuous competitive golf activity. The PGF Team is incredibly spirited and in coordination with Punjab Golf Association, Sind Golf Association and KPK Association wish to take golf to international heights.

Pakistan Cricket Board

INVITATION TO BID

Live Streaming Media Rights

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) wishes to invite sealed bids from interested parties to obtain the Team Live Streaming Media Rights for the PCB.

A complete set of bidding documents can be obtained, free of cost, by interested parties from the undersigned from Monday to Friday during office hours (09:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. Pakistan Standard Time) by or before **24th August, 2023**.

Complete sealed Technical and Financial Proposals should be submitted in the manner specified in the bid documents from Gaddafi Stadium Lahore latest by 10:30 am on **25th August, 2023**. The Technical Proposals shall be opened at 11:00am on same date.

Parties providing unsubstantiated and/or incorrect information are liable to be disqualified. The disqualified bidders will be informed of the grounds of rejection upon receipt of a written request by PCB.

Financial Proposals of only those parties who have been technically qualified shall be opened for further evaluation. Sealed Financial Proposals of bidders who have not been technically disqualified shall be returned unopened.

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PCB reserves the right in its discretion to cancel or amend the entire bidding process at any stage and to reject any or all bids prior to accepting the same.

PID (L) NO. 407