

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ابوسعید خدری رضی اللہ عنہ سے بیان کیا کہ
رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہوتے
قریب سے کہ مسلمان کا بہترین ماں وہ ہے جو
ہو گی جنہیں وہ لے کر پہاڑی کی چوٹیوں
اور بارش رستے کی تنگیوں پر چلا جائے گا۔ وہ
فتنوں سے اپنے عزیزین کی حفاظت کے لیے وہاں
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PM's Health Insurance Scheme for journalists, artists' historic step of Shehbaz Sharif: Marriyum

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the health insurance scheme for journalists and artists was a historic decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. (Details on Page 8)



Protest camp to be held on 5th August in Brussels

A protest camp would be organized at Place de l'Albertaine near Central Train Station in Brussels, the capital of Belgium (at 3 p.m.) on Saturday, 5th August 2023. The event would be organized by Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) in connection day of 5th August 2019, when by removing the articles 370 and 35A of its constitution, the Indian government annulled special status of Jammu and Kashmir. (Details on Page 3)

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Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Barakahu Bypass on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Bhara Kahu Bypass, thanks COAS Munir for support

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday urged the nation to make determined and concerted efforts to make Pakistan regain its grandeur and stature and compete with the world.

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration ceremony of Bhara Kahu Bypass here, said the country's eastern neighbor had moved far ahead but nothing was to worry about if the nation was resolved to take the country forward as was dreamt by Quaid-e-Azam and pursued by Nawaz Sharif in 1990s.

Started in October 2022, the project was executed by NLC within nine months time, costing Rs 6.25 billion. It has removed a major bottleneck for millions of commuters travelling to Muree, Kashmir, and Galliat from across

the destination, besides remarkably reducing their travel time.

The prime minister, who inaugurated the project, said throughout his political career and during all of his interactions, his only intention had been to serve the poor masses who had been faced with tough conditions of life.

Calling the Bhara Kahu Bypass's inauguration a moment of satisfaction, the prime minister said the project would ease the difficulties of travelers of Islamabad, Punjab and KP visiting AJK and Galliat.

He said the project should have been completed years ago but the incumbent conceived it and managed to accomplish it within nine months despite challenges including land dispute with Quaid-e-Azam University which was settled through court.

The prime minister said he had given a three-month target for the

project completion which was also achievable had there been no challenges.

He said Bhara Kahu Bypass was also the vision of Nawaz Sharif whose government was removed through the "worst conspiracy" and the projects of his government were impeded.

He said the government completed the Metro Bus Project within no time which had been suspended by the previous government.

He told the gathering that the after the opening of LCs the environment-friendly electric buses were set to reach Islamabad for the facilitation of the residents of Islamabad.

The prime minister instructed the CDA to plant a million trees around the Bhara Kahu Bypass, though around 70,000 have already been planted.

The prime minister thanked

the party leadership for their support and contribution to the project and instructed the CDA to beautify Islamabad like Baku of Azerbaijan.

He also appreciated the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir for his dedicated support for the project.

In her address, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb recalled the journey of progress marked by determined and resolved efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during last 15 months.

She said the prime minister managed to revive the course of development which was initiated by the PML-N government in its previous tenure but was obstructed by the previous government.

She said within a short span of 15 months, the incumbent government provided relief to the people from across the coun-

try, be it free flour distribution or relief works during floods. The prime minister turned the instability into economic prosperity, she added.

She appreciated the prime minister for reviving the journey of economic development that had been initiated by Nawaz Sharif.

Former minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said for the first time, CDA was carrying out development works in rural areas of Islamabad.

He said projects worth Rs200 billion were launched in Islamabad and 90% of those had been completed.

CDA Chairman Noorul Amin Mengal said the CDA was spending Rs20 billion for the uplift of Islamabad's rural areas.

He said 55 parks and Sunday bazaars were being established in the rural belt.

President urges efforts to deepen Pak-Iran ties in trade, culture



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for efforts to deepen and widen the relationship between Pakistan and Iran, particularly in the areas of trade, economy, culture, and people-to-people contacts.

The president, talking to Pakistan's ambassador-designate to Iran Mudassar Tipu,

who called on him here, underlined that Iran was a brotherly neighbouring country and Pakistan greatly valued its relationship with Iran rooted in history, culture, and religion.

He underscored that in the regional context, it was important that efforts were reinforced to highlight the plight of hapless people living in the Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to the Iranian people, adding that Iran had supported the causes of justice and equity.

The ambassador-designate maintained that he was determined to further solidify Pakistan-Iran ties and, in the emerging geopolitical developments, elevate those ties to new heights exploring their full potential.

Military trial of civilians: Will stop army from any unconstitutional step, says CJP Bandial

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday said the armed forces would not be allowed to take "unconstitutional steps" as a six-judge bench heard a set of petitions challenging the trials of civilians in military courts.

The bench, headed by the CJP and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik, heard the case.

At the outset of today's hearing, the CJP expressed regret over the May 9 events and stressed that he didn't want the "army to raise their weapons against the people of Pakistan".

He said armed forces should be praised for not opening fire on civilians despite the violence on May 9. "However, the military will not be allowed to take any illegal steps," he noted.

Justice Bandial further said the court was of the opinion that there was a further need to hear Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan's arguments.

"The court would not be able to hear AGP for at least



two weeks due to the unavailability of judges," he remarked and adjourned the hearing of petitions against military trials of civilians indefinitely.

A day earlier, the Supreme Court 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.

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

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

Army installations, Corps Commander's house in Lahore and General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi came under attack during a protest by PTI workers.

British High Commissioner called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar extended warm welcome to the newly appointed High Commissioner H. E Ms. Jane Marriott. The Finance Minister underscored the significance of long historic ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom and discussed the avenues available for both countries to expand these relations further for mutual gains of the two sides.

The Finance Minister also apprised her of the overall economic outlook of the country and the challenges faced by the outgoing government during its tenure. He also shared the measures and policy decisions taken by the Government to overcome those challenges that resulted in putting the economy of the country on stability leading to a positive trajectory.

Pakistan, Iran chalk out five-year trade plan; target \$5b trade volume

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Thursday set a target of \$5 billion for bilateral trade as the two countries chalked out a five-year trade cooperation plan to enhance cooperation.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, addressing a joint press stakeout with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian, said the five-year trade cooperation plan was aimed at removing impediments in bilateral trade, finalizing the Free Trade Agreement and establishing of institutional linkages between the private sectors of both countries.

"I am confident that the steps we are taking today, will chart the course for a long-term durable economic partnership between our two countries in the months and years ahead," the foreign minister told the media after the



two leaders held a meeting as well as the delegation-level talks.

He said during their meeting, they had agreed to prioritize the operationalization of the five remaining border markets by the end of current year.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said Pakistan and Iran had decided to repatriate all the sentenced prisoners as per provisions of existing agreements between two sides. It was also decided to set free fishermen in custody in Pakistan and Iran and to waive off any

fine imposed by the authorities of both countries for the release of their vessels. He said the two sides would exchange lists of prisoners to put into practice the understanding expeditiously.

The meeting also discussed the grave human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Foreign Minister Bilawal thanked the Iranian leadership for its firm and consistent support to the legitimate cause of Kashmiri people.

PTI leader Iftikhar Durrani arrested in Islamabad



Spokeswoman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Iftikhar Durrani has been arrested by police in the wee hours of Thursday.

According to sources, police have arrested Durrani from his residence in Islamabad. Sources further disclosed that Iftikhar Durrani was shifted to some undisclosed location after arrest. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in a statement, said its core member was "kidnapped" from Islamabad and that it was "gathering details about his kidnapping".

It is pertinent to mention here that PTI members, and leaders have been facing arrests, re-arrests since the May 9 mayhem.

Pakistan's foreign reserves drop to \$13.46 billion

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan dropped by \$74 million to \$13.46 billion on June 27, 2023, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Thursday.

According to the stats issued by the SBP, the country's foreign reserves dropped by \$74 million to \$13.46 billion. The reserves in the SBP dropped by \$32 million to \$8.15 billion.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks declined by \$38 million to US\$ 5.3 billion, it added.

Earlier, the total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$13,534.1 million while reserves held by the central bank reached \$8,186.1 million, ARY News reported.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by US\$ 541 million to US\$ 8,186.1 million

mainly due to external debt repayments during the week ending on July 21, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,348 million, it added.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Senate was told today that the foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan have swollen from eight billion dollars to around 14 billion dollars due to prudent economic policies of the government.

As per details, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar responded to various points of order raised by the lawmakers in the Upper House.

The Finance Minister recalled that he had consistently been saying that Pakistan would not default and fulfilled all its sovereign commitments. He said the government managed to achieve this objective with generous support from friendly countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and China.

Credentials

ISLAMABAD: United Kingdom's High Commissioner-designate to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriot, the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea Mr. Park Ki Jun, and the High Commissioner-designate of Malawi Mr. Younos Abdul Karim, presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM's Health Insurance Scheme for journalists, artists' historic step of Shehbaz Sharif: Marriyum

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the health insurance scheme for journalists and artists was a historic decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

While addressing the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and State Life Insurance Corporation for the health insurance of journalists and artists here Thursday, she said that the prime minister took a historic decision for the health insurance of journalists and artists, which was starting from today, for the first time in the history of Pakistan.

She said that Rs 1 billion



had been allocated for each category of journalists and artists from all over Pakistan in the current fiscal year. She said that the prime minister had issued directives that the money allocated in the budget for journalists and artists should not be limited to announcements only but prac-

tical steps should be taken on this project.

The minister said that the registration for health insurance was started two weeks ago for journalists and media workers and one week ago for artists.

She said that the foundation of the health insurance card

scheme was laid during the Nawaz Sharif tenure as prime minister. She said that keeping in mind the experience of State Life Insurance Corporation, the Ministry of Information was going to issue health insurance cards for journalists and artists community.

She said that many value additions have also been done by State Life Insurance in the scheme. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that along with health insurance scheme, the welfare of journalists and artists had also been arranged by the incumbent government.

She said that in a short period of 15 months, Rs 120 million have been recovered and paid to newspaper employees in the form of salaries, while health insurance including job security of media workers has been started.

The federal minister said that in the last four years, the country was facing serious economic crisis and important projects were delayed. She said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif not only rescued these projects but also restored them and ensured their completion.

The minister thanked the entire team of the Ministry of Information for making the health insurance scheme for journalists and artists a success.

Minister for Law and Justice Nazir Tarar, Prime Minister's Coordinator for Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani, Secretary Information Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mubashar Hassan and Chairman State Life Insurance Corporation Shoaib Javed participated in the ceremony.

Heads of nation bowed down in shame from the incident of IU Bahawalpur: Siraj ul Haq

Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haque has said that 54 bills were passed by the National Assembly in two days, is it the assembly or the factory? The nation should be told under whose pressure this is happening? Rulers who are making laws will put handcuffs on their hands. Parliament approves 25 universities to launder black money of mafia. No one knows where the universities will be built and what they will teach. Exploitative and class education system has hollowed out the roots of the country, the young generation is being destroyed under conspiracy.

Universities, colleges have become bases for selling and using drugs, drug mafia is playing with the future of the country with a dirty business, no one is asking, students are being blackmailed in the name



of semester system, all this is Pakistan and Pakistanis. is an insult. The heads of the nation bowed down in shame from the incident of Islamia University Bahawalpur.

He expressed these views while addressing the participants of "Protection of Education March" at Bahawalpur University Chowk. A large

number of university students, parents, teachers and other concerned people participated in the march. Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Punjab South Rao Muhammad Zafar, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Bahawalpur Syed Zeeshan Akhtar, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Bahawalpur City Nasrullah Khan, Islamic Jamiat Talaba and JI Youth

officials were also present on the occasion. Ameer Jamaat appreciated the role of Islamic Jamiat Talaba for protecting the honor and dignity of female students in educational institutions, moral building of students and reviving student unions.

Siraj-ul-Haq said that there are 237 universities in the

country, including 97 private ones, everything else is being done in the educational institutions except for education and the building of morals and character. Not a single university is included in the list of 300 best universities in the world. The caretaker government of Punjab has released three times more funds than the federal government's budget for higher education for the purchase of vehicles for the bureaucracy. The dignity of girls is not protected in educational institutions, the whole system has become a mess because of a few teachers and employees

A former federal minister himself admitted that 70% of students in the federal capital use drugs. On one hand, education has been divided between the rich and the poor, on the other hand, education is in the hands of NGOs who are brainstorming to promote the secular agenda of the youth.

Toshakhana case: IHC reserves verdict on PTI chairman's plea

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: As per details, the PTI chief's counsel Khawaja Haris urged the court to hear the final arguments in this case and then announce the verdict.

He said that the trial court has not entertained the PTI chairman's defense statement and the witness was termed irrelevant without hearing the statement.

The Chief Justice remarked that he will look into this matter and the verdict was reserved till tomorrow.

Read more: Toshakhana case:

Chairman PTI challenges trial court's order in IHC

Earlier, the PTI chairman challenged the cessation of his right to defense by the trial court in Toshakhana case in the Islamabad High Court.

The petitioner pleaded to the high court to declare the trial court's yesterday's order as void and restore his right to defence in the case. PTI chairman also requested the court for hearing his petition today. Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Aamir Farooq heard appeal of the chairman PTI against declaring Toshakhana criminal case as maintainable.

Iranian Foreign Minister led Delegation calls on Speaker of the National Assembly

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Raja Pervez Ashraf, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan emphasized the significance of parliamentary collaboration as one of the key drivers in further solidifying and enhancing the close fraternal ties between Pakistan and Iran during his meeting with the Iranian Foreign Minister H. E. Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

The meeting explored avenues of boosting parliamentary and economic cooperation for the benefit of the people on both sides.

Speaker Ashraf remarked that Pakistan and Iran share a long-standing bond, enriched by historical connections, linguistic affinities, and cultural ties, making Iran an esteemed and brotherly neighbor to Pakistan. The parliamentary exchanges between the two nations through their parliamentary friendship groups have further played a vital role in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.

The Iranian Foreign Minister said that Iranians consider Pakistan as their second home and eagerly want to further strengthen the cordial relations between the two sides.

Pakistan committed to further strengthen economic cooperation with Iran: PM



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday underscoring the close brotherly relations, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen the ties with Iran, with particular focus on enhancing economic cooperation.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who called on him here, recalled the joint inauguration, with President Ebrahim Raisi, of the Mand-Pishin border marketplace on May 18, this year.

He stressed that initiatives aimed at economic uplift of the border areas, were a tangible manifestation of the shared priority to collectively work for the betterment of the two peoples.

Noting that President Raisi's policy of 'Neighborhood First' was fully aligned with his vision of a secure, prosperous and interconnected region, the prime minister stressed

the importance for Pakistan and Iran leveraging their unique geographical location to promote mutually reinforcing goals of regional peace and prosperity, through greater trade and enhanced regional connectivity.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was uniquely placed to play this role.

Expressing deep concern at the rising incidents of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, the prime minister underlined Pakistan's firm resolve to work with other Islamic countries, including Iran, in articulating a unified view against such despicable acts, aimed at sowing disharmony and divisions within communities and between societies.

Pakistan-Iran relations are characterized by frequent exchanges at the leadership level, commonality of views on important regional and global issues and strengthened cooperation in all areas of mutual interest.

Dar chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, Federal Minister for Power Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM Revenue Mr. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Secretary Maritime Affairs, Secretary Law & Justice, Special Secretary Finance, Chairman KPT and his team and other senior Govt officers attended the meeting.

The CCoIGCT considered a summary of Ministry of Maritime

Affairs regarding Commercial Agreement between AD Ports UAE and KPT for Out-sourcing of the operations of Bulk and General Cargo East Wharf Karachi Port.

The CCoIGCT after discussion approved the Price Discovery Mechanism in the light of discussion and constituted a committee to negotiate and frame a commercial agreement to be signed between the nominated agencies of the UAE and Pakistan for the development of Bulk and General Cargo Terminal at West Wharf, Karachi Port.

Electricity tariff hike amid unbearable loadshedding

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistanis are hit by a never-ending increase in the tariff of electricity that has made life unbearable for a large majority of population. On top of it, the escalating electricity prices are the frequent power breakdowns in the name of load-shedding flying in the face successive dispensations' claims that the country possesses extra power than required.

The incumbent dispensation has tried to justify the recent price hike on the pretext that it was undertaken on the behest of the IMF that is breathing on the country's neck to cough up more revenue.

Apparently the price escalation is the outcome of the country's largest-ever fuel price adjustment charges and the size of the various taxes being collected by the government on them.

IESCO, shortfall surges 125MW

The consumers have been hit hard by the spike in their bills in recent months, with the average electricity cost more than doubling for low-to middle-class households and many families are finding it difficult to pay their bills. With the steep rise in fuel price adjustment charges, the burden of government taxes in the electricity bills has also increased significantly.

The almost fifty per cent enhance-

ment in the base tariff that it committed to the IMF that it will implement from July through October is another factor for the swollen bills being delivered to the consumers who are already struggling to make ends meet in the face of soaring prices of food and fuel eroding real wages and rapidly declining purchasing power.

It was expected that price increase spiral will not stop even after a downturn in international fuel prices as long as there is no move to undertake long-standing power sector reforms in order to sharply cut system losses, control the allegedly rampant corruption in the distribution companies, stop widespread power theft by the powerful, and, more importantly, reduce reliance on imported fuels by shifting to local fuels for generation and encouraging renewable energy.

The prediction in this context proved right as NEPRA raised the national average tariff by around Rs.5 per unit to ensure Rs.3.28 trillion in funds to the loss-making power distribution companies (Discos) during the current fiscal year.

The Rs.4.96 hike, set to come into force from 1 July after formal notification by the government, would provide Rs.477 billion in additional revenue to Discos.

National political democratic leadership must dialogue on national priorities: Liaquat Baloch

Quatul Ain

MULTAN: Deputy Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Political, Electoral, National Affairs, Majlis-e-Qaima President Liaquat Baloch while addressing the General Election Central Consultative Meeting. He said that the political, democratic leadership, supervisory governments should follow their interests, wishes, constitution and law. The play is made by children. The incompetence, failures and governance style of Imran Khan and the coalition government have made the establishment more powerful. In order to save the country from political, economic and electoral crises, to



protect the constitution and democracy, the national political and democratic leadership must correct their mistakes and dialogue on national priorities, otherwise the politics will be weak and the state will suffer from further instability

Liaquat Baloch said that accurate census is an indispensable and constitutional requirement for national unity, but the process of census should not be used as a shield for deviating from the constitution and postponing elections. Elections should be held in the constitutional period after the completion of the term of the assemblies and dissolution. Jamaat-e-Islami wants timely elections. The postponement of the elections is considered as a cause of sensational effects for the constitution, security, stability of the country.

Liaquat Baloch said that after the dissolution of the assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the caretaker governments and the Election Commission failed to fulfill

their responsibilities. Now the stage of dissolution of National Assembly and Sindh Balochistan Assembly has come, the coalition government has made the appointment of caretaker governments a joke.

Liaquat Baloch said that the government, politics and the state should come together to approve the national action plan to end terrorism. The defects and implementation failures of the National Action Plan approved by consensus in the past should be addressed. Protection of the life and property of every Pakistani is the first responsibility of the state. The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan should be freed from the torment of terrorism

Time to come will reverse the big constellations: Ghulam Bilal Javed

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Senior business leader Ghulam Bilal has said that the parties included PML-N, People's Party and PDM are responsible for inflation and the country's crisis. People, compare the inflation of 14 months of PDM government with the three and a half years of Tehreek-e-Insaf. How can Maryam Nawaz accuse PML-N of inflation? People this time will not fall for the scam. The storm of inflation will bury PDM's power. People will reject those responsible for inflation in elections.



The storm of inflation in the country has ruined the life of a common man

President Peshawar Traders Chamber Ghulam Bilal Javed said that the industrialists and businessmen rejected the recent increase in electricity prices and said that neither the factories nor the new electricity rates.

They will not run and will not be able to fulfill the export order, in such a case, the shops and factories are closed and the keys are handed over to the government.

Women's University Multan starts degree programs: Prof Anum

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Women's University Multan has decided to start MPhil English, Islamiyat as well as BS Islamiyat and Diploma in Arabic. The last date for submission of applications has been fixed on August 18. The spokesman further said that Associate Degree Programs (ADP two-year) BS four-year, BS Post-ADP, BA, BSc two-year M. Admissions in Phil, PhD and Diploma programs are ongoing

Candidates will be able to take admission in 28 subjects for undergraduate and post graduate, 22 for MPhil and 14 subjects for PhD. B. Ed one and a half year, early childhood education, graphic designing, drawing and painting, modeling and sculpture and ceramics. Diplomas will be awarded in. The last date for submission of applications is fixed on 18th August, candidates have to apply online, all the admission details are released on the university website

Non-equitable relief phenomena takes us all on verge of collapse: Allma Tahir

MA Rashid

FAISALABAD: A new wave of inflation now having with threatening certainty due to the hike in petrol and diesel prices, said Allama Tahirul Hasan.



In preview of details, Government of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics must improve the method of Consumer Price Index otherwise all & sundry would fall into the unreturnable way.

Allama Tahir-ul- Hassan, Deputy Secretary Paksan Ulama Council further warned that, we have reached this situation due to the piles collected domestically and foreign debts, heavy subsidies to government institutions, other economic wrong decisions and many problems of governance. He further illuminated that the Government of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics should improve the method of consumer price index considering the needs & necessities of people, otherwise, a new wave of inflation would take us to verge of collapse which is standing on our heads. Allama Tahir has raised the question why the IMF wants to increase the prices of petrol, gas and electricity in Pakistan? He pointed out that the electricity, gas, etc. are expensive for the people & out of people's reach.

Whereas in Pakistan, petrol, electricity and gas rates are determined not by the IMF but by regulatory authority like Nepra and Ogpra?

Custom Multan Seized Non-Customs paid Miscellaneous items, says Asif Abbas Khan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Under the direction of Director General of Intelligence and Investigation Customs (I&I) Faiz Ahmad Chadhar, Customs I&I Multan seized non-customs paid vehicles and other miscellaneous items worth crores of rupees in 33 different operations against smugglers during the month of July. The goods have been seized by the Customs I&I teams under the supervision of Director I&I Multan Region Asif Abbas Khan during the month of July against the smugglers at the entry and exit points of different cities of Multan Region. Various prohibited and illegal goods including non-customs paid vehicles worth Rs. 20 crore 70 lakh have been seized under the Customs act 1969.

According to the sources, among the confiscated vehicles are Swift car, Vitz car and Kia car, while miscellaneous goods include chalia, dry milk, shopping bags, large quantity of Iranian diesel, juices, gutka, almonds, China salt, tires and large clothes. According to Director I&I Asif Abbas Khan, our teams are determined to suppress smugglers and prevent smuggling. Customs I&I Multan Region will not only continue its operations to discourage the smugglers but will speed them up further.

Bara Kahu Interchange

ISLAMABAD: Motorists are travelling on the newly inaugurated Bara Kahu Interchange by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as it is the mega project which is delivered just in 10 months, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Protest camp to be held on 5th August in Brussels

Sohail Anjum Malik

BRUSSELS: A protest camp would be organized at Place de l'Albertine near Central Train Station in Brussels, the capital of Belgium (at 3 p.m.) on Saturday, 5th August 2023.

The event would be organized by Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) in connection day of 5th August 2019, when by removing the articles 370 and 35A of its constitution, the Indian government annulled special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, a number of Kashmiri leaders, political workers, human rights activists and journalist were arrested in the occupied territory and atrocities against the people of Kashmir were rapidly increased.

In a statement from Brussels, Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed said, purpose of



the protest camp is to highlight the brutalities against the people of Kashmir and other illegal acts committed by the Indian authorities in the occupied Kashmir.

He called for end of atrocities in the illegally occupied Kashmir especially violence against the Kashmiri women and children.

Chair of KC-EU asked the international community including UN and EU to play their role for ending atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kash-

mir and implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions giving the right to self-determination to the Kashmiri people. He also called for withdrawal of Indian occupation forces, an end to Indian state terrorism, end of genocidal repression, rape, gang-rape, torture, and degrading treatment of Kashmiri men, women, and children. Ali Raza Syed also called for unconditional release of all detained Kashmiri political figures and human rights activities including Muhammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Khurram Pervaiz.

Chair of KC-EU asked the international community to play its role for a peaceful resolution of Kashmir and said, participation of the Kashmiri leadership in all round of the peace process in Kashmir should be ensured.

SMEDA to conduct high quality research for having tangible results on SME

News Desk

LAHORE: The International Expert on Finance and Development Prof. Asim Ijaz Khawaja, Director Center for International Development at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, has advised the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to conduct high quality research for having tangible results on SME development in Pakistan. It was suggested by him in an interactive session with a group of SME experts today at SMEDA head office. Mr. Soerat Aman Rana, General Manager Central Support Division of SMEDA led the in-house team of SMEDA experts on behalf of CEO SMEDA Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja.

Prof. Asim Khawaja informed that Pakistan's diaspora was keen to serve Pakistan for overcoming the prevailing economic problems. He offered to bring overseas students of business and economy to Pakistan for conducting quality research studies for SMEDA as internees. He opined that the research-based initiatives would enable Pakistan to meet the current economic challenges through rapid growth of SMEs.

LCCI delegation visits Multan Chamber

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the leadership of President Kashif Anwar visited the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan and visited the stalls set up by local artisans in the Chamber and highly appreciated the work of the artisans. Fareeha Younis, Convener of Women Empowerment Standing Committee Lahore Chamber, included in the delegation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Lahore, emphasized the need to upgrade the work of skilled workers according to modern requirements and export their products to foreign markets. Marketing should be facilitated for access. On this occasion, a ceremony was also held at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, in which the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Lahore, Kashif Anwar said that if the country's economy is to be strengthened,

the imports must be reduced and the size of the government should be reduced.

Mian Rashid Iqbal, president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, spoke on this occasion. He said that today the income of the government has increased by 7 thousand and expenses by 14 thousand billion. We are borrowing more to pay off debt

Fareeha Younis while speaking said that it is very easy to work with strong connections between the two chambers. Now business women are very active in Lahore Chamber and by working in leading roles, it gives a lot of confidence to women and their abilities are brought to the fore. There are a lot of women who are successful business women are the hands of these brothers, husbands, parents. The country is going through difficult situations but there is no shortage of talent in our country.

Saudi Arabia has made its business women tax-free. Our government



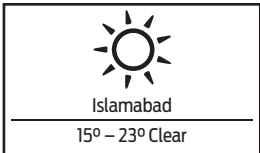
should also provide facilities to business women so that they can contribute to the development of the country's economy. Mrs. Romana Tanveer Shaikh, Chairperson of Women Entre-

preneurs Sub-Committee of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan said that the importance of women in domestic and business life is very high. Now Pakistani women are also working

side by side with men. Multan Chamber is providing all possible support and training to women entrepreneurs in obtaining loans from banks and accessing foreign markets.

Speaking on this occasion, Vice President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan Sheikh Asim Saeed and former President Khawaja Usman said that like the Charter of Democracy, all political parties should sign the Charter of Economy together for 10 to 15 years. Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh, Senior Vice President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, said that help desk of federal and provincial departments should be established in the chamber to solve NOC and other issues required for setting up new industry so that serious basis on one window operation can be established. But can work. A single window system should be created for local investors as well

So that it becomes easier for them to do business. Khawaja Muhammad Yusuf, former president of Avian Tejarat ve Sanat, Multan, said that like the Dubai model, a separate building should be constructed for the one-window operation industry in Pakistan.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:46 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:07 pm
Isha 8:41 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

PTS to celebrate Foundation Day on August 6th

Tariq hattak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehrik-e-Shadbad (PTS) will hold its first Foundation Day on August 6, 2023. Lt. Gen (ret) Asad Durrani will be the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The party was established by Dr. Hanif Mughal on August 6, 2022, in Rawalpindi, with a manifesto to promote education, justice, health, and employment for the masses.

Since then, people belonging to different classes and groups have joined PTS, but it is becoming popular among the exploited poor, labourers, farmers, and students.

Chairman PTS Dr. Hanif Mughal said in a statement issued here today that PTS wants to bring positive change to society, which is much needed as the economic situation has resulted in unmatched misery for the masses. Leading political parties have done nothing for the masses, which has resulted in widespread frustration as top leaders are focused on their personal welfare.



The downtrodden class, which is suffering from crushing deprivations, wants a break for which consciousness is necessary, and they must be able to speak for themselves, he said.

The PTS chief said that those with nothing should get the courage and strength to get their rights in a system that has been

hijacked by the irresponsible and greedy elite.

Every person in Pakistan should have equal opportunities irrespective of the area, sect, religion, and gender they represent, and the PTS will continue to strive for a society based on social justice, the rule of law, and human dignity, he said.

PTS also wants a better social protection programme for the masses, as almost fifty percent of the population is food insecure; freedom of the media; and legislation on women's rights, as women are in the majority in the country and without their active participation, the economy could never progress.

The function will be Presided over by Haji Abdul Rauf, President All Pakistan Tanzeem-e-Mughlia, while Brig. (ret) Aslam Khan, Dr. Ghulam Hussain, President of Mughal Society of Pakistan Baig Raj, Group Country Manager of United International Group Dr. Murtaza Mughal, will be Guests of Honour. Renowned broadcaster Naeem Qureshi will be Stage Secretary at the occasion.

Monsoon Tree Plantation Drive Kicks off at AIOU



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched a monsoon tree plantation drive of 2023. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood inaugurated the campaign by planting a maple leaf tree. Deans, Principal Officers, and faculty members were present at the planting ceremony. On this occasion, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that in view of climate change, plantation has become the most important need of the country and AIOU is playing an important role in meeting the need by planting hundreds of saplings not only in the main campus of the university but also in the 54 regional offices of the university throughout the country in both spring and autumn seasons. The monsoon planting campaign will be carried out at the national level, and students will also be mobilized in the campaign through the regional offices. He said that gardeners of the university have provided a conducive learning environment to the students by decorating the university with flowers and plants, for which they deserve appreciation. Dean Faculty of Education Prof. Dr. Tanzeela Nabeel, Dean Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad, Director Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmad Khan, Registrar, Raja Umer Younis, Director Admin, Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Amir Shah, Director Admissions, Syed Zia-Ul Husnain Naqvi, Controller of Examination, Mian Muhammad Riaz, Director Public Relations Dr. Bakht Rawan and other Principal officers also planted saplings.

According to the Horticulture Officer of the university, Syed Wajeeh Ul Hassan, in light of the instructions of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, 1,000 saplings have been requested from the Conservative Forest Department. These saplings will be planted in the regional offices of the university.

Consultative workshop to enhance access to legal aid in Pakistan hold



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Under the European Union-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly organized a two-day consultative workshop to improve access to legal aid in Pakistan. The workshop brought together representatives from the government, rule of law institutions, national and international partners, and civil society organizations to discuss LAJA's mandate and provide recommendations to LAJA/government regarding how to ensure access to justice through legal aid in a sustainable manner.

LAJA was established under the LAJA Act 2020 to provide legal, financial, and technical assistance for access to justice for poor and vulnerable groups in society on criminal cases. The key functions of LAJA are to provide legal aid/assistance to poor and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children; enhance public awareness of legal aid and laws in Pakistan; research legal aid and pro bono legal services in Pakistan; and advise the government on the right to a fair trial and due process of the law.

Under the European Union-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', UNDP Pakistan's Rule of Law Programme and LAJA organized the two-day consultative workshop to identify challenges faced by LAJA and develop recommendations to feed into a new strategic plan for LAJA to effectively implement its key functions.

Dr Muhammad Raheem Awaan, Director General, LAJA attended the workshop along with Dr Federico Romoli, International Aid/Cooperation Officer on Rule of Law, Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan and Mr Rana Kaiser Ishaque, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan. Representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN WOMEN also participated in the workshop.

Ms Mehnaz Akber Aziz, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Ministry, Government of Pakistan, attended the closing ceremony of the two-day workshop as a chief guest where all the key recommendations were presented.

Dr Federico Romoli, International Aid/Cooperation Officer on Rule of Law, Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan, with a separate note thanked LAJA, UNDP, UN Women, and UNODC, for their efforts in improving the provision of legal aid in Pakistan.

Broken shed

ISLAMABAD: A view of the broken shed of Blue Line Bus Stop at Express Way, which needs the attention of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

August 5 darkest day in the history of the state of AJK: Chaudhry Abdul Majeed



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has said that August 5, 2019 is the darkest day in the history of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. India, the claimant of the world's largest democracy, has proved that by abolishing the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir by abolishing Article 370 and 35A of the Constitution, He said that Indian Premier Modi is an extremist of Indian state. The rights of minorities are being encroached upon by oppressive rule.

The Bharatiya Janata Party is an enemy of Kashmiris and Muslims. Demography is being changed by settling there. For the past four years, India has issued domiciles to Hindus in the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir by the millions, and due to the curfew and military siege in the entire state, the unrestrained series of oppression continues. The United Nations and the leading countries of international human rights and the respectable world have turned a blind eye to this global terrorism of India. Do it so that Kashmiris can decide their future. He said that the United Nations and the international world have kept a soft attitude towards India, taking advantage of which India has kept the people of the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir hostage.

AJK president calls 5th August 'darkest day' in Kashmir's history



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, while terming 5th August as the darkest day in the history of Kashmir, has said that it was on this day when India, in brazen violation of the UN resolutions, stripped Occupied Kashmir of its special status by revoking Article 370 and 35A. Addressing a press conference here today, the president, while referring to the

dangerous dimensions of the move, said that after the abrogation, India on the one hand intensified its brutal repression in Kashmir while, on the other hand, launched a massive multi-front, legal, political and cultural offensive against Kashmiris to change the region's demographics and erase the Kashmiris' social, political and cultural identity.

"Since then, more than 4 thousand non-state investors have been allotted land in Kashmir and millions of

non-state subjects have been issued domicile certificates by the Indian occupation authorities", the president said, adding that selling Kashmir's land and issuing fake state subject certificates to outsiders was part of the Modi government's settler colonialism project intended to convert Muslim majority state into a minority.

Similarly, the president said that changing the region's political landscape through a controversial delimitation process was yet another

attempt to marginalize the Muslim majority, reducing its role in the decision making process and tilting the power of balance to Jammu. Barrister Chaudhry said that despite using all these tactics, India has miserably failed to break the Kashmiris' political resolve and their unwavering commitment to the noble cause of freedom from India's illegal and forcible occupation.

The president said that the Indian bid to convert Yasin Malik's life sentence to a death

Roundtable on Kashmir

Delegates analysed the struggle of Kashmir from prisms of legal, political and diplomatic angles

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A Roundtable conference was jointly organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute-IPRI and Legal Forum for Kashmir - LFK on the theme "Historical Analysis of Contested Sovereignty and Statehood in UN Recognised Disputed Territory of Jammu & Kashmir." The panelists included Former Foreign Minister Amb. Inamul Haq; Ahmer Bilal Soofi, President RSIL; Amb. Asif Durrani, Special Representative on Afghanistan; Nasir Qadri, Executive Director Kashmir Legal Forum; Ghulam Muhammad Safi, former conven-

er APHC, and Muhammad Ahmad Saghar, Convenor APHC. President IPRI Amb. Dr Raza Muhammad, Director Research IPRI Dr Raashid Wali Janjua, Chair IPRI Lawfare Maham-Naweed and former ambassador Fauzia Nasreen also spoke on the occasion.

Dr Nasir Qadri was of the view that Pakistan should have done more on the front of International Court of Justice, and added that there are ample avenues available to tap the legal decorum.

Amb. Durrani elucidated that Pakistan had to face a lot of setbacks as India is bent upon

crushing the Kashmiris, and even thinking of extra-territorial adventures. He cited Pulwama and Balakot incidents as cases of international aggression.

He said that India literally has three options while dealing with the Kashmiris, and they are: either to exterminate all the Kashmiris; befriend all the Kashmiris or talk it out with the Kashmiris.

It was noted that India's August 5, 2019, act is tantamount to occupying it for the second time. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a denial mode, and his acts are in contravention to law and Constitution of India itself.

It was a general consensus among participants that the struggle in Kashmir can be better highlighted from a position of strength if Pakistan reorients its economic, political and military muscles.

Dr Ahmer Bilal Soofi was of the view that the least that Pakistan can do is to list out the violation on all international foras, and call a spade a spade.

Ghulam Safi, former convenor APHC, said that Kashmiris have successfully registered three uprisings against India to this day, and regretted that there has not been a matching response to buoy the struggle. He pointed out

that time has come for Pakistan to make its position more clear, and openly support the fight for rights and self-determination.

Mahmood Saghar pointed out that from 1947 to 1988, the struggle had been peaceful but the world community did not lend an ear. He underscored that unfortunately Kashmiris are not part of decision-making, and at times even by Pakistan. This is why it is required that Pakistan must take a final stance on struggle in Kashmir.

The roundtable was told that it's time to break Indian intransigence, and the best way to do it is to increase the cost of India in



Kashmir; unite all groups under one narrative; adopt a sustained policy approach and influence international environment.

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May 9, Anti State Elements and World's dual standards - I

Whole world have witnessed the terrorist attacks on military and civilian installation in Pakistan following the arrest of Imran Khan on charges of corruption. Terrorists and Anti-State elements also attacked the Civil and Military Installation including Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), Mianwali airbase, the ISI building in Faisalabad and the Army Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Several terrorists were arrested and it was decided that they will be dealt by Military Act and Military courts. A civilian court is typically used to try individuals who have been accused of a crime that is not related to the military. These courts are run by civilian judges and use civilian laws. For example, if you are accused of shoplifting, you would go through the civilian court system as there is no reason for the military to get involved. On the other hand, a military court is a judicial body that is part of the military justice system. These courts are used to try members of the military who are accused of breaking military laws. For example, if you are a member of the military and you are caught stealing from a fellow soldier, you would likely be tried in a military court. In addition to trying members of the military, military courts can also try civilians who are accused of serious offenses, such as terrorism or espionage. These civilians are tried in military courts because their crimes are a threat to

national security. It is a normal practice everywhere and no one allows anyone to attack on its military and civilian installations.

Some voices against these arrests and actions were seen from abroad in last days. More than a dozen lawmakers in Canada written to prime minister Justin Trudeau, underscoring the simmering situation in Pakistan after the arrest of Imran Khan. Claiming to represent "thousands of concerned Canadians of Pakistani heritage", the letter underwritten by 16 members of parliament asked Mr Trudeau to address the political turmoil that has led to widespread arrests and human rights violations (according to them) in Pakistan. United Nations human rights chief Volker Türk condemned Pakistan's plans to prosecute civilians involved in May 9 protests under the Army Act. The UN high commissioner for human rights said in a statement, "Pakistan's plans to revive the use of military courts to try civilians is disturbing." Zalmay Khalilzad, the former US special envoy on Afghanistan, also expressed concerns over reports that PML-N-led coalition government is mulling tough actions against Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). In a series of tweets, the former US envoy warned that any move to disqualify former PM Imran from contesting elec-

tion or outlaw his party will further aggravate the "triple crises" that the country is facing.

Unfortunately, the world has dual standard. When they have to deal with such cases they act upon their laws but when others do that, they immediately term it as violation of human rights. Here are few examples which clearly show that how they themselves dealt with the similar elements:

The 2011 England riots, more widely known as the London riots, were a series of riots between 6 and 11 August 2011. Thousands of people rioted in cities and towns across England, which saw looting and arson, as well as mass deployment of police and the deaths of five people. The protests started in Tottenham Hale, London, following the death of Mark Duggan, a local man who was shot dead by police on 4 August. Several violent clashes with police followed Duggan's death, along with the destruction of police vehicles, a double-decker bus and many homes and businesses; which rapidly gained the attention of the media. Overnight, looting took place in Tottenham Hale retail park and in nearby Wood Green. The following days saw similar scenes in other parts of London, with the worst rioting taking place in Hackney, Brixton, Walthamstow, Wandsworth, Peckham, Enfield, Battersea, Croydon,

Ealing, Barking, Woolwich, Lewisham and East Ham. From 8 to 11 August, other towns and cities in England (including Birmingham, Bristol, Coventry, Derby, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham) faced what was described by the media as "copycat violence", with social media playing a role. By 10 August, more than three thousand arrests had been made across England, with at least 1,984 people issued with criminal charges for various offences related to the riots. Initially, courts sat for extended hours. A total of 3,443 crimes across London were linked to the disorder. Along with the five deaths, at least 16 others were injured as a direct result of related violent acts. An estimated £200 million worth of property damage was incurred, and local economic activity – which in many cases was already struggling due to the 2008 recession – was significantly compromised. Of these, almost 1,000 offenders have been jailed for an average of more than a year. A total of 945 of the 1,483 found guilty and sentenced for their role in the riots were jailed immediately, with an average sentence of 14.2 months. The largest number of cases was in London where there had been 1,896 first hearings, followed by the West Midlands, 301 hearings and Greater Manchester, 240. At Nottingham magistrates court an 11-year-old girl from Nottinghamshire pleaded guilty to criminal damage and attempted criminal damage during Tuesday night's riots.

To be continued

Pak-China friendship to jointly safeguard 'mutual interests, tackle global challenges

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong Thursday termed Pakistan-China friendship 'unbreakable' and said that the two sides had always stood by each other in hard times and will continue act "collectively" to protect their mutual interest for tackle global challenges. "The leaderships of both sides are agreeing to continue the mutual understanding through supporting traditional friendship to promote peace in the region", he said in an exclusive interview with PTV news channel.

He said China and Pakistan are unique and time-tested all-weather strategic cooperative partners, adding, the friendship between the two sides will be passed on from generation to generation and will not be shaken or changed.

He said Pakistan-China friendship is higher than mountains and strong than rocks.

Replying to a question, he said both the governments have decided to cooperate with each other and develop the agriculture, industry and transport sector.

Although, investment and cooperation will be expanded at the national level, marginalized and less-developed areas will get priority, he added.

He said that China and Pakistan were the most trustworthy good neighbors, good friends and good brothers to each other.

To another query, he replied that the recent visit of He Lifeng, the Chinese vice premier and special presidential envoy "reflects the importance" the two countries attached to deepen their bilateral ties further.

The CPEC has brought more billions of Chinese investment to Pakistan, establishing power plants, developing the strategically located deep-water Pakistani port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea and building transport infrastructure, he mentioned.

"Over the past decade, as an important pioneering project of the BRI, CPEC has achieved fruitful results and become a new benchmark for the friendship between China and Pakistan," he added.

The CPEC projects "are flourishing all across Pakistan," making a "tangible contribution" to the national development of the country and to regional connectivity as well, he mentioned.



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

Democracy under Cyber Siege - II

Usman Akhtar

The allegations of election interference and the subsequent investigations undermined public trust in the integrity of the electoral process.

This erosion of trust struck at the very core of democratic values, such as transparency and fairness. The election interference heightened concerns about the use of cyberwarfare as a tool to influence the political landscape of democratic nations. This prompted a significant increase in scrutiny of cyber defenses, regulations, and international relations concerning cyber conflict.

Likewise the influence of social media manipulation on Brexit is another example we have to cite that the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, commonly known as Brexit, was a historic and highly contentious event that took place following a referendum on June 23, 2016. As the dust settled and the debates raged on, one crucial aspect that emerged in the aftermath was the role of cyberwarfare and social media manipulation in shaping public opinion and influencing the outcome of the Brexit vote.

Foreign actors, particularly state-sponsored actors, were suspected of engaging in cyberwarfare and social media manipulation during the Brexit campaign. These entities used tactics like spreading disinformation, fake news, and divisive content to fuel existing political divides and sow confusion among the public. The exact extent and involvement of foreign actors remains a subject of ongoing investigation, but there is ample evidence pointing to their active involvement.

One of the crucial aspects of social media manipulation during the Brexit campaign was the use of targeted advertising and micro-targeting techniques. By leveraging the vast amount of data collected from users, campaign groups could tailor their messages to specific demographics, regions, and even individuals. This

precision targeting allowed them to reinforce existing beliefs, suppress dissenting voices, and sway undecided voters in key areas.

The intense social media manipulation during the Brexit campaign exacerbated existing divisions within UK society. It created echo chambers where individuals were exposed only to information that reinforced their existing beliefs, leading to increased polarization and a breakdown of constructive dialogue. This division continues to have lasting effects on the social and political fabric of the country.

While it is challenging to quantify precisely how much influence cyberwarfare and social media manipulation had on the Brexit referendum's outcome, there is a growing consensus that they played a significant role. The narrow margin by which the Leave campaign won—51.9% to 48.1%—further emphasizes how even a small shift in public sentiment could have had a decisive impact.

The emergence of cyberattacks targeting democratic institutions has a profound impact on public trust. When electoral processes and government institutions are compromised, citizens become increasingly skeptical and disillusioned. The integrity of democratic systems is called into question, eroding the confidence people once had in their government's ability to safeguard the democratic process. As a result, rebuilding this trust becomes a crucial challenge for governments and policymakers. The rise of cyber warfare introduces a new dimension to international tensions, with the potential for escalations between nations.

As cyberattacks become more prevalent and sophisticated, the risk of retaliatory actions rises. The interconnectedness of the digital world means that an attack on one nation's infrastructure could lead to a chain reaction, resulting in more widespread and devastating consequences. This escalating cycle of cyber warfare could have far-reaching implications for global stability and security.

To protect democratic institutions and critical infrastructure from cyber-attacks, governments must prioritize investing in robust cybersecurity measures. This entails adopting state-of-the-art technologies, conducting regular security assessments, and establishing proactive defense strategies. By fortifying their cyber defenses, nations can enhance their resilience and minimize the impact of potential cyber threats.

Empowering citizens with knowledge about cyber threats and promoting digital literacy is fundamental in the fight against cyberwarfare. Educated citizens are better equipped to recognize and respond to potential cyber-attacks, thwarting attempts that aim to manipulate public opinion or compromise data. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives are essential in creating a cyber-aware society that actively contributes to defending democracies.

A multi-stakeholder approach is indispensable in countering cyber threats. Governments, the private sector, and civil society must collaborate closely to pool intelligence, share resources, and leverage each other's expertise. Information sharing between these entities strengthens the collective ability to detect and mitigate cyber-attacks promptly. Private sector innovation can complement government efforts, while civil society's involvement ensures a democratic and transparent approach to cybersecurity.

Creating a framework of international norms and agreements governing cyber behavior is essential for promoting responsible state conduct in cyberspace. By establishing clear guidelines for acceptable cyber activities and consequences for violations, nations can reduce the likelihood of cyber conflict and promote a more stable digital environment. Developing mutual trust and understanding through these agreements fosters a safer cyberspace for all nations.

Concluded

The writer is student of Graduate program Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

Sovereign Wealth Fund- Hope or a Dream - I

The Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund (PSWF) Bill was passed by the Senate on Wednesday, August 2, just eight days prior to the dissolution of the National Assembly and the end of the current government's mandate. The bill, once signed by the President, will enable the government to establish a PSWF where the country's solvent assets worth Rs. 2.3 Trillion will be parked. PSWF is being established to provide a long-term investment vehicle for the nation's excess oil and gas revenues, invest in strategic assets such as infrastructure and energy initiatives, and provide financial assistance to the government.

The government has identified at least seven solvent and profit making companies with net worth of Rs. 2.3 trillion including Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited, National Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan Development Fund, Government Holdings Private Limited, Mari Petroleum Company Limited, and Neelum Jhelum Hydro Power Company Limited for their transfer to SWF.

The new sovereign fund is exempted from three core laws: the Privatisation Commission Ordinance, Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Ordinance, and the State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) Act, 2023. This, according to one opinion, clearly reflects the urgency on the part of the current government to allow the caretaker government to quickly sell some of the identified assets or use them to raise loans.

The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), worth \$ 850 million, has provided technical assistance to Pakistan in the drafting of the law, which may end up buying or bene-

fitting from this fund as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has repeatedly expressed interest in acquiring stakes in Pakistan's oil and gas sector, indicating the possibility of divesting shares of these assets. The crafting of such an important piece of legislation with the assistance of the law's beneficiaries could be considered a conflict of interest. This is the same formula

that was used while developing the mineral exploration policy, which acquired the input and agreement of prospective investors before it was finalised.

Interestingly, thanks to SIFC, Pakistan's relations with the UAE have suddenly improved. The government has already sold four terminals 6 to 9 of the east wharf of the Karachi port to the UAE on the platform of SIFC, and SIFC is also pressuring the Ministry of Commerce to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Act (CEPA) with the UAE before the end of the term, despite the opposition of the Pakistan Business Council, which claims that it will reduce 80% of tariff lines to zero duty in ten years, harming local manufacturing.

The IMF's latest staff level report had recommended the governments to carefully consider the potential benefits and risks of the sale of state-owned assets before making a decision to sell and has advised it to adopt a transparent and fair process for making such deals and to ensure that the proceeds of the sale are used for productive purposes. However, the report also noted that the sale of state-owned assets has become increasingly common in recent years, as governments have sought to raise revenue and reduce debt, besides improving efficiency and transparency in the economy, and attracting foreign investment.

To be continued

‘Kashmir will become Pakistan’ will be heard from all corners of the world

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Press conference of Muslim League leader Qayyum Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari along with the central leaders of the party at the Central House of Journalism in Muzaffarabad. He said that he fully believes and no one should have any doubt that the map of Pakistan is complete with Jammu and Kashmir. Until the disputed Kashmir is fully integrated with Pakistan on this map, we believe that the finger will continue to be pointed across the world at the current role of the United Nations and the voice of “Kashmir will become Pakistan” will be heard from all corners of the world.



The insidious face of India has been exposed in the whole world, but the world powers including the United Nations have remained silent spectators to date. He said that the Muslims of the whole world, including Pakistan, strongly condemned Indian actions, and every year on August 5, the day of solidarity with Kashmiris is celebrated and Indian actions are strongly condemned. He said that the founder of the Muslim League Qayyum Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan is the only leader of Tehreek Pakistan who has the

honor of freeing Azad Kashmir from the enemy.

Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari said that Pakistan is a responsible country that knows how to solve its problems by staying within its own resources. The enemy should never consider our interests as our weakness. Pakistan is a responsible nuclear country. But if an attempt is made to impose war on us, India will be given a surprise which will be remembered for centuries.

Syed Faqir Hussain Bukhari said that India is slaughtering minorities

in India apart from Kashmir through its heinous intentions. We will not allow India to become the policeman of the region. Just as India is oppressing the Kashmiris, it is also oppressing the minority communities living in India and is engaged in genocide. He said that India is such a nuisance in the region due to which the drum of war can be sounded at any time. None of its neighboring countries are happy with India.

Pakistan Muslim League calls upon the UN, international human rights organizations, and international powers to rein in India instead of turning a blind eye to Indian atrocities, give Kashmiris a chance to exercise their right to vote, and the arrested Kashmiri leaders who should be released immediately.

Pakistan Muslim League Qayyum Central Deputy Secretary Information Faisal Anwar, Youth Wing, and Social Media President Syed Saqlain Bukhari, and other officials participated in the press conference.

Self-driving of NEVs in Universiade Village wows foreign student-athletes



Xinhua

CHENGDU: Getting on a self-driving bus in the Chengdu Universiade Village was absolutely an impressive experience for 23-year-old Ian Skirkey during the ongoing 31st FISU World University Games in Chengdu, capital city of southwest China's Sichuan Province.

“The whole experience is pretty awesome, and this is a great opportunity to feel China's advanced technologies,” said Skirkey, a gymnast from the United States of America, adding that the Games has also offered him a chance to fly to China and experience the country's history and culture.

As the event features some low-carbon technologies, the self-driving experience of new energy vehicles (NEVs) becomes a notable highlight.

In the Universiade Village, the self-driving experience station has become the most popular site among student-athletes, and athletes from many countries have come to experience the charm of self-driving, including those from Poland, Croatia, India, South Africa, the Netherlands, the United States, and other countries.

Many student-athletes took out their mobile phones to take pictures and even signed their country's name on the bus. The student-athletes from South Africa also took out the stereo and played music on the bus.

“Great, it feels like holding a party in a self-driving bus,” one of the athletes said.

For this event, about 70 NEVs have been provided by Mogo.ai, a provider of self-driving technology and operational services in China.

“Some of these vehicles are self-driving ones, which will offer a high-tech travel experience for athletes, guests, and media friends from all over the world,” said Wei Jiaying, a staff member from the experience program, adding that the project is also fully in line with the concept of making the university games a green event.

According to the traffic regulations in the Universiade Village, the driving speed will be limited to 20km per hour. During the event, each bus is expected to carry about 10 people, and the whole project is expected to serve tens of thousands of passengers.

Among all the types of buses is one model called MOGO BUS M1, which removes the steering wheel, accelerator, and brake, has a surround cockpit, multi-screen information linkage in the bus, and provides 3D rendering images from multiple perspectives. It can also achieve human-machine interaction, allowing athletes worldwide to feel the self-driving experience with a great sense of future technology.

Google's Think Apps 2023 helps over 500 Pak developers

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Think Apps, the first and the biggest offline event focused on apps and games, was held by Google in Lahore, Pakistan. The event saw more than 500 developers, in addition to business and industry leaders from around the country, come together to learn how to bring Pakistani-made apps and games to the world.

The event comes on the heels of Think Games and Gaming Growth Lab that were both held for the first-time last year in Pakistan. Through these events, Google worked with over 1,600 developers and nurtured 50 early-stage gaming studios to compete on the global stage. Google also helped over 5,000 Cloud developers and over 3,000 Android developers upskill through community-led programs such as Cloud Seekho S5 and Android Seekho S2.

Pakistan is making a strong entrance into the global gaming and app market. The country's standing in the international app economy has improved significantly over the years, with Pakistan's developers moving up to 16th place in 2023 from 27th in 2018 in terms of app downloads. In 2022, apps developed in Pakistan were downloaded a staggering 4 billion times worldwide, marking a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30% from 2018 to 2020. In 2022 alone, a total of 65 apps from 24 local developers reached the top 10 rankings in the gaming and apps verticals on both the Play Store and App Store.

To help Pakistani studios and developers further unlock digital opportunities, Google is expanding its support for the apps industry in Pakistan through Think Apps, which is designed to bring in-depth knowledge and trends from global experts to local developers. The program is built on three unique focus areas:

Farhan S. Qureshi, Google's Director for Pakistan, said, “Google will continue to invest substantially to nurture Pakistan's developer ecosystem. The country has the potential to become a key player in shaping the future of the global app economy. I'm confident that Think Apps 2023 will enable even more local developers to create great games and apps, supercharge their growth, and scale globally with Google AI-powered solutions.”

Hazel Mobile Group, one of Pakistan's leading game development companies, has adopted Google's AAA (Android, AdMob, and Ads) Growth Framework to develop its more than 100 games and apps, resulting in the creation of over 200 jobs in Pakistan and more than 2 billion app downloads worldwide.

Across China: Unleashing global charm of Wushu at FISU Games

Xinhua

CHENGDU: In the shadow of glimmering swords, a gathering of chic young individuals recently showcased the epitome of traditional Chinese chivalry at the opening ceremony of the ongoing 31st FISU World University Games in Chengdu, capital city of southwest China's Sichuan Province.



Demonstrating the exceptional marksmanship and spear handling expertise of Emei martial arts, one of the major traditional martial arts schools in China, the actors embodied a virtuous demeanor on Friday while exuding a kind of softness that complements the martial prowess they display.

“I hope to continually boost the influence and vitality of Emei martial arts, propelling its reach to a global scale,” said Li Jin, one of the performers at the opening ceremony and also an inheritor of the Emei martial arts.

Wushu, or Chinese martial arts, boasts a rich history and enjoys a vast and loyal following. While its origins can be traced back to China, its appeal transcends borders, making it a truly

global art form. A total of 158 countries and regions have now united under the banner of the International Wushu Federation.

The martial arts event of the FISU Games commenced on July 29, standing as the pinnacle of martial arts excellence among college students worldwide. The competition features Nanquan, Tai Chi and various other Wushu routines, and 20 coveted gold medals will be awarded in various categories from July 29 to Aug. 3.

“The Chengdu Universiade is a good platform to spread martial arts,” said Chinese athlete Cao Maoyuan, who won two golds in the Wushu competition, adding that he would help more overseas friends learn martial arts and

Chinese culture.

“The inclusion of Wushu in the comprehensive sporting event of the FISU Games has a profoundly positive impact on the global promotion of martial arts,” said Liu Linglin, Wushu competition assistant of the executive committee of the Chengdu Universiade.

“Through these competitions, a wider audience gains the opportunity to grasp the essence of martial arts and experience its charm and elegance,” Liu added.

Mandy Cebelle Chen from Malaysia, the bronze medalist in women's Tai Chi, said she discovered her passion for martial arts at the age of 6, inspired by the sight of her brother practicing the art form.

Reflecting on her journey, she emphasized that martial arts hold a distinct allure, unlike any other competitive event or performance.

“Beyond the Universiade, a growing number of young people actively participate in various Wushu competitions worldwide,” Liu said. “Every Wushu practitioner hopes that martial arts can one day earn a place in the Olympic Games.”

Donald Trump to appear before court for arraignment: Here's what to know

With the continued worsening of his legal woes after his third indictment, former US president Donald Trump is set to appear before the federal courthouse to be arraigned Thursday for the charges pressed against him of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election, instigating supporters to storm US Capitol Hill.

Arrangements at the front of the building have been made with metal barricades erected around the E Barret Prettyman courthouse in Washington, where the “arrest and arraignment” of Donald Trump will take place.

The 77-year-old Trump is expected to enter a plea of not guilty at a hearing at 4:00pm before magistrate

judge Moxila Upadhyaya.

The accusations that the Republican presidential forerunner and six unnamed co-conspirators plotted to upend the 2020 election is the former president's third criminal indictment since March and the most serious of the cases threatening to derail his White House bid.

Donald Trump deliberately made false claims

Special counsel Jack Smith unveiled a 45-page indictment of Trump Tuesday charging him with conspiracy to defraud the US and attempting to disenfranchise voters with his false claims that he won the 2020 election.

“The purpose of the conspiracy was to overturn the legitimate results of

the 2020 presidential election by using knowingly false claims of election fraud,” the indictment said.

Jack Smith linked Trump's actions following his loss to Democrat Joe Biden directly to the attack on the Capitol, which he called an “unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy.”

The Special Counsel said: “It was fueled by lies. Lies by the defendant targeted at obstructing a bedrock function of the US government — the nation's process of collecting, counting and certifying the results of the presidential election.”

Trump is already scheduled to go on trial in Florida in May of next year on charges that he took top secret govern-

ment documents to his Mar-A-Lago estate in Florida and refused to return them.

The twice-impeached president also faces criminal charges in New York for allegedly paying election-eve hush money to an adult film star.

The Republican candidate has pleaded not guilty in the documents and hush money cases and accused prosecutors of seeking minus him from the presidential bid with “fake” charges.

In a late-night post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said Thursday's case was “brought by Crooked Joe Biden & Deranged Jack Smith,” again claiming that “this Indictment is all about Election Interference!”

Peace not possible without flourishing business: Motiwala

Bureau Report

KARACHI: “Pakistan can progress, sustain, and achieve a peaceful environment if business is provided an enabling environment to flourish and grow. This is highly important in conflict regions of Pakistan where business and society have been tremendously affected due to the nefarious activities of insurgents and extremists. Business activities are the catalyst to ensure a Peaceful, Progressive, Productive, and Prosperous Pakistan”. These views were expressed by Chief Guest Zubair Motiwala, CEO Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, while addressing the Global Compact Network Pakistan Conference on Business for Peace.

Zubair Motiwala, who is also Chairman of the Businessmen Group of KCCI, added that the government is now cognizant of the need to provide

a secure and safe business ecosystem for foreign investors. The formation of the Special Investment Facilitation Council would be the channel to motivate the drive for foreign investment and can rightly be termed as a pragmatic vision for Pakistan's progress and prosperity. He also said that we have enough textile capacity and hence it is time to focus on investments in other sectors.

Lal Dino Mari Baloch, Chairman Silicon Valley Holding Company based in Hong Kong, who was the Guest of Honor, declared that not all experiments to attract foreign direct investment have been as successful as envisioned.

Earlier, Majyd Aziz, President GCNP, in his welcome address, stated that the Business for Peace is an initiative of UN Global Compact and is a global platform that recognizes and promotes the transformative role of businesses in fostering peace,

stability, and sustainable development in conflict affected and high risk regions.

Junaid Makda, representing Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry as their Former President, stated that it is only Business that can lead to Peace instead of “Piece”.

Qazi Zahid Hussain, President PAJCCI and a leading name in the field of transit trade, stated that it is high time both Afghanistan and Pakistan governments create a joint system of trade facilitation and should synchronize their bilateral transit trade policies.

Col (R) Maqbool Afridi, a businessman and authority on Gwadar, explained the Gwadar ecosystem through an excellent multimedia presentation. He emphasized that a developed Gwadar would definitely lead to a developed Pakistan.



Dr. Farhan Essa and Dr. Masood Polio Campaign, informed the audience about the challenges of providing drops to children in conflict and high risk regions.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
48,611.18	48,764.55
Day's High	Day's Low:
49,404.50	48,541.34
Index Value	Change
16,009,419,379	-153.37
Percentage	Time
-0.31%	3 Aug, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,529.16	-32.47
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	3 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
35,321.91	+39.39
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	3 Aug, 12:59 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,159.28	-548.41
Percentage	Time
-1.68%	3 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	199	201
Bahrain Dinar	763.85	771.85
Canadian Dollar	224	226.2
China Yuan	39.94	40.34
Danish Krone	42.16	42.56
Euro	320	323
Hong Kong Dollar	36.81	37.16
Indian Rupee	3.47	3.58
Japanese Yen	1.94	2
Kuwaiti Dinar	933.09	942.09
Malaysian Ringgit	63.21	63.81
New Zealand \$	174.69	176.69
Norwegians Krone	27.93	28.23
Omani Riyal	745.95	753.95
Qatari Riyal	78.9	79.6
Saudi Riyal	77	77.7
Singapore Dollar	212.5	214.5
Swedish Korona	26.75	27.05
Swiss Franc	327.12	329.62
Thai Bhat	8.33	8.48
U.A.E Dirham	80.5	81.3
UK Pound Sterling	371	374.5
US Dollar	290	293

Jazz achieves fastest VoLTE growth with 15 million customers within two years

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Just two years after the nationwide roll-out of Voice over LTE (VoLTE) service, Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, has achieved 15 million VoLTE Daily Active Users (DAUs). The company has also achieved 1 million daily active users for its pioneering WiFi calling service, branded as JazzFi, in less than a month.

Jazz became the first operator to successfully test Voice over LTE (VoLTE) in 2019, before making it available across its network in 2021. Continuing its streak of industry-first innovations, the company also introduced its WiFi calling service, JazzFi, last month to give customers an enhanced indoor experience.

"With 15 million VoLTE customers in just 2 years, we have achieved the fastest VoLTE penetration in the entire region for which we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our customers," said Khalid Shehzad, Chief Technology Officer Jazz, during an event celebrating the accomplishment. "Besides improving the user experience by folds, the service also supports our DO1440 strategy by giving us room to work on more digital products covering different aspects of our customers' lives."

"Being a customer-obsessed digital operator in an aggressive pursuit of a digital economy, we have achieved these extraordinary landmarks which, in essence, are focused on delivering enhanced user experience to our 71 million customers," said Kazim Mujtaba, Chief Commercial Officer Jazz. "Besides our trusting customers, I congratulate all the teams involved in making our industry-leading VoLTE and JazzFi services a huge success."

VoLTE carries voice calls over a 4G LTE data network instead of previously used circuit-switched 2G or 3G networks, therefore allowing voice to become just another app that rides on its super4G network. JazzFi, on the other hand, is another innovative solution that enables customers to make and receive direct calls and SMS to any network or landline using any available WiFi, presenting a viable

Indonesia's Islamic Finance and Halal Industry boost development potential

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: As the sole trillion-dollar country in SouthEast Asia and a G-20 member, Indonesia offers substantial development potential for Sharia-based financing and the booming halal industry, which includes food, tourism, fashion and banking.

This was stated by Dr. Ebi Junaedi from the University of Indonesia who spoke at the 6th session of the Online Internship Program, discussing Indonesia's potential in Sharia Economy and Halal Market. The OIP, a collaboration between the Indonesian Embassy and Bahria University, aims to highlight modern Indonesia's key aspects for mutual learning and development of ties between Indonesia and Pakistan.

"Ranked 14th in area, 4th in population, 16th in GDP, and 28th in exports value with USD 320 billion export value last year, Indonesia is world's largest Muslim population and a robust and growing middle-income consumer market," Dr. Ebi Junaedi enlightened the participants when giving an overview of the country.

The speaker mentioned that Indonesia in



2022, was ranked 4th among the top global Islamic Economy indicators. Moreover, it was also ranked 6th in Islamic finance, 2nd in Halal food, 3rd in modest fashion and 9th in Pharma and cosmetic categories, he added.

"A promising landscape for Islamic Finance and Halal Industry was optimizing Indonesia's potential towards becoming a developed country" the speaker expressed his optimism in his projection.

Indonesia continue to demonstrates a relatively high score in social capital which refers to the benefits and advantages gained from social connections, trust, cooperation, shared norms and values within a society, he explained.

He said that Millennials, GEN-Z and Social Media are shaping the halal future market in

Indonesia as over 70% in Indonesia rely on social media to find out about new halal food. As of January 2021, Indonesia ranked third after China and India by reaching 170 million users on social platforms "Millennials Gen-Z with 55% percent total population represents potential consumers of the Islamic finance and the halal industry in Indonesia" the speaker highlighted.

In his presentation Dr. Junaedi also highlighted that in the global halal market industry of USD292 billion Indonesia ranked 10th adding that Indonesia's global market prospects were bright given that the halal industries of processed food and beverages, fashion & apparels and medicines & cosmetics were experiencing high growth both domestically and internationally.

The speakers said that challenges faced by Islamic and Halal products include certification costs, international collaboration, dependence on imported raw materials, market access and technological support despite high domestic and export demand.

While presenting comparison of Islamic Banks to the conventional banking industry, Dr. Ebi mentioned that though the Islamic

financial assets in Indonesia were modest and stood around 11 percent but it was steadily growing and emerging competitive.

He said that Indonesia's Sukuk market shows faster growth compared to the banking sector and it has risen from 6% in 2014 to 15.8 in 2021 and it is the 20% of the global sovereign Sukuk market which aligns with the government's policy to increase financing through bonds.

However, he stressed that Indonesia needs to double its efforts to catch up with other countries by improving financial performance, governance and maintaining sustainability while creating more awareness and knowledge.

Regarding key factors driving Islamic finance development in Indonesia he said that "Unique characteristics of Islamic finance, macroeconomic and structural reforms, financial literacy and consumer satisfaction were among key factors that were driving Islamic Finance Development in Indonesia".

In the Q & A session the speaker said that the Indonesian government aims to strengthen the sharia economy by establishing milestones, focusing on legal aspects, Islamic financial literacy, stakeholder involvement and digital economy.

Hardwork

ISLAMABAD: A worker of local administration is repairing the traffic signal lights at Serena Chowk in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

All Pakistan Customs Agents Association calls upon federal government to establish shipping and ports ombudsman

Commerce Report

KARACHI: Mr. Maqbool A Malik, Chairman, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association, Calls Upon the Federal Government to Establish a Maritime, Shipping and Ports Ombudsman in Karachi.

In an effort to foster transparency, efficiency, and fair practices in the shipping industry, Mr. Maqbool A Malik, Chairman, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association and Sheikh Tariq, Vice Chairman, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association, is urging the Federal Government to propose the establishment of a Shipping and Ports Ombudsman. The proposed Ombudsman, to be located in Karachi, would be a Federal body, headed by a distinguished individual, preferably a retired Judge from the Superior Courts, and equipped with a Secretariat.

The Shipping and Ports Ombudsman will play a pivotal role in resolving long-standing disputes and challenges faced by traders and citizens alike within the shipping sector. It will function as an independent entity, free from any external influences, thereby ensuring a fair and impartial approach to conflict resolution.

One of the main objectives of the Shipping and Ports Ombudsman is to streamline and optimize the processes involved in shipping and port operations. By doing so, it aims to minimize delays, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and enhance the overall efficiency of these vital sectors. This initiative will undoubtedly contribute to fostering a conducive business environment, which will attract investments and facilitate economic growth in the region.

Sheikh Tariq, Vice Chairman All Pakistan Customs Agents Association, emphasizes the significance of selecting a reputable indi-

vidual to lead the Ombudsman. A retired Judge from the Superior Courts is deemed the most suitable candidate, given their extensive experience in the legal domain and their unblemished track record in delivering justice. Such a person is expected to bring a wealth of expertise, integrity, and credibility to the position, instilling confidence in the stakeholders and ensuring the credibility of the Ombudsman's decisions.

The Shipping and Ports Ombudsman, with its Secretariat in Karachi, will serve as a crucial liaison between various stakeholders in the shipping industry. This includes traders, customs agents, shipping companies, port authorities, and citizens who have concerns or grievances regarding the shipping and port operations. By providing a dedicated platform for dispute resolution, the Ombudsman will effectively address complaints and uphold the rule of law in maritime affairs.

Zong 4G VAS ensures connectivity for prepaid customers during emergencies despite low or zero balance

Commerce Desk



ISLAMABAD: In a remarkable leap towards empowering its customers, Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications company, has taken a giant stride with the launch of a new value-added service (VAS) Zero Balance. Despite having low or zero balance in their prepaid accounts, Zong customers can make calls, use mobile data, give missed calls, and send text messages SMS.

Recognizing the importance of seamless communication and asserting connectivity as an essential service at the time of emergency, Zong 4G aims to provide its prepaid customers with uninterrupted communication capabilities.

Through the ZONG 4G Emergency Pack, prepaid customers will get a comprehensive set of features at PKR 7+tax (weekly), allowing them to make 2 phone calls (one on-net, one off-net) of 60 seconds each along with 10 missed calls, 20MB internet, 20 SMS, to stay connected or seek assistance when it matters the most. To avail this service, customers can dial *2445# activation code

The Investment Facilitation Council is the right move in right direction. Adil Bhatti

Asad Hashmi

ISLAMABAD: General Secretary of Real Estate Consultants Association (RECA) Adil Nawaz Bhatti has said that the Investment Facilitation Council is the right move in right direction.

The real estate sector has to be included in the agenda of the Investment Facilitation Council because a major source of foreign exchange remittances from abroad is investment in the real estate sector.

It would be a huge mistake for the government to ignore the demands of the real estate and construction

industry and dream of revitalizing the economy. Secretary Reza Adil Bhatti said that Improvements in the real estate and construction sectors have seen an immediate increase in foreign exchange remittances along with the betterment in automobile industry, mobile & telecom industry and retail industry.

More than 100 domestic industries are also driven by the improvement in this sector. Improvements in the real estate sector have always had a positive impact on Pakistan's economy by helping to achieve revenue targets.

UAE working to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Pakistan: Envoy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was working to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Pakistan that would create many new opportunities for the entrepreneurs of both countries to promote bilateral trade and exports. This was said by Rashid Abdul Rehman Al Ali, Deputy Head of Mission of UAE Embassy while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

He said that he was quite optimistic about the economic future of Pakistan as FDI from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and China was coming to Pakistan. He termed the

holding of first-ever Pakistan Minerals Summit a positive development for the country. He said that UAE wanted to further promote investment with Pakistan with focus on agriculture, textiles, marble & tiles, gemstone, mining and petroleum. He stressed for further strengthening government-to-government and business-to-business relations between the two countries to explore new avenues of business matchmaking. He said that Pakistan was most the favorable country for tourism and an improved tourism infrastructure would attract more tourists.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and UAE enjoyed cordial relations,



which were based on common foundations of history, religion and culture. He said that UAE has always helped Pakistan in difficult times, which showed its sincerity

with our country. He said that UAE was one of the major trading partners of Pakistan with a bilateral trade of over USD 10 billion and added that there was great poten-

tial to further increase this figure by regular exchange of trade delegations. He said that UAE's investors should invest in Pakistan's tourism sector to further upgrade its infrastructure.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI would like to organize a Pak-UAE business forum in ICCI auditorium in collaboration with UAE Embassy. The UAE DHM assured his cooperation to hold the said event in a successful manner.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Maqsood Tabish, Babar Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and shared useful ideas to further strengthen Pak-UAE bilateral trade and economic relations.

PM Shehbaz awards Rs10mn to Squash champion Hamza

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday received World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan here and also awarded him a cheque of Rs10 million for his acknowledgment.

Hamza Khan appreciated the prime minister as well as the cooperation he received from the Pakistan Squash Federation.

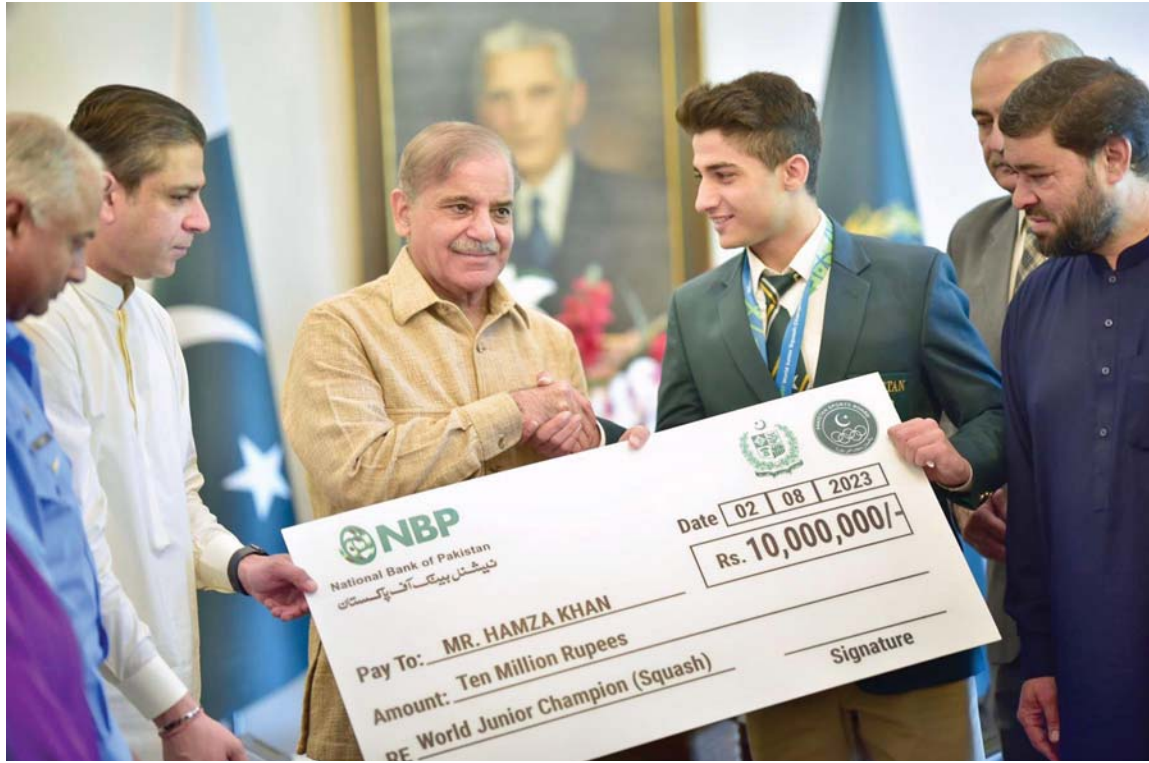
The prime minister, who also interacted with Hamza's parents in the Pashtu language, congratulated Hamza Khan for winning the World Junior Squash Championship held recently in Australia.

Calling the youth like Hamza the pride and asset of the nation, the prime minister said Hamza made the whole nation including himself proud by winning such a title after decades.

Recalling his experience of playing squash and calling it the best game, the prime minister expressed the hope that Hamza would continue to work hard to win the senior world title.

He said Hamza was a role model for Pakistan's youth and that he always strived for providing the sports facilities of international facilities to the youth.

He said recently, the government launched national sports initiatives for the promotion of sports activities in the



country and the uplift of the players.

The establishment of the first sports university and providing technical and financial support to train the youth in the sports sector was also part of the

very initiative.

The meeting was also attended by Hamza's father Niazullah Khan, his mother, Inter-provincial coordination Minister Ihsanullah Mazari,

SAPM Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Secretary Inter-provincial Coordination Hanif Orakzai, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Squash Federation Air Vice Marshal Kazim Hammad.

Serena Hotels and Pakistan Squash Federation celebrate Hamza Khan's historic win

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Despite all odds, our youth has always made us proud by showing their resilience and determination to succeed.

Pakistan's Hamza Khan won the World Junior Squash Championship in Melbourne on Sunday, a feat which was last accomplished by Jansher Khan in 1986.

In an epic finale against his Egyptian opponent Mohamed Zakaria, Hamza scored 10-12, 14-12, 11-3, and 11-6 by bringing the title of World Champion back to Pakistan after 37 years, creating history and motivating thousands of young players across the country.

In a ceremony hosted by Serena Hotels under its sports diplomacy initiative partnering with the Pakistan



Squash Federation, Senior Vice President, Air Vice Marshal, Mr. Kazim

Hammad, was the chief guest on the auspicious occasion, and he presented Hamza Khan with the Trophy along with his family making it even more special for the young athlete.

Hamza Khan has accomplished so much while facing a lot of difficulties in his career at an extremely young age and has made the whole nation proud, commented Group Captain Mr. Zafaryab Khan, the Honourary Secretary of Pakistan Squash Federation, congratulated Hamza, and his family for his momentous win.

The evening was graced by media colleagues, senior government officials, the corporate community, and other notable members of society. The evening was an ode to Hamza, his resilience, and his accomplishments against all odds.

PGA Golf Academy and PGA commenced Summer Camp

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The learning time began in June 2023 at the PGA Golf Academy, Lahore Garrison Greens Golf Club when Punjab Golf Association (PGA) commenced its Summer Camp Golf Activity for selected juniors under the coaching team comprising of M. Matloob, an accomplished golf professional and a golf coach of standing, backed by his trained team members Zahid Sultan, Maj Zain ur Rehman, Usman Ali, Muhammed Saqib and Nadeem Aslam. Members of the coaching camp numbered 28 and included 14 boys with good golf playing skills, eight boys with intermediate skills and six girls with a combination of good and intermediate skills.

Training sessions spread over eight weeks were regular and passionate indeed was the response of the trainees and they demonstrated purposeful resolve and unwavering intent in acquisition of basics of the game taught by proficient trainers. And their skills came to



light in the course of the two days PGA Juniors Golf Competition that was held at Lahore Garrison Course over the past two days. For most of them this was the first competition of their golfing life and they proved how well they had devoted their energies and grasped the technical skills necessary for furthering their golfing lives.

The top performer in the age bracket under 19 was Shamir Majid of American School of Academics who played admirably well, hitting his tee shots with stirring precision and avoiding any major blem-

ish or error. Noticeable was his confidence and at no stage in the competition did he appear nervous or edgy. His steadiness helped him to capture the first gross position with a score of gross 74, a commendable effort indeed. Other performers in this age category were Ahmed Ibrahim (Lahore Grammar School) and Muhammad Ibrahim (Beacon House School). Ahmed Ibrahim emerged as winner of second gross position with a gross score of 76 while third gross position was secured by Muhammad Abdullah. This talented and perhaps the fittest one had a score of gross 77. Others who appeared young ones of enormous talent were Saim Tahir and Jamshed Matloob. They did not achieve top positions but they over-awed the coaches with their playing capabilities.

The luminous one in age bracket under 14 was Zaid Umer (LGG). During the contest Zaid Umer excelled through superior play which yielded a winning score for him. With a round of gross 78 he won the first gross position. His nearest

adversary was Mashkoor Hussain who was successful in ending up as runner up, his score being gross 89. Third gross was won by Wahaj Amjad with a score of gross 97.

Top performer in Girls Category was Bushra Fatima (Lahore American School) while second position holder was Hadia Usma (LGG) and Adeena Ataulah (Lahore American School) was third gross. Net section performers were Aliha Amjad, first net, Ayezah Amin, second net and Areej Atif, third net.

Based on the intentness of the PGA Team, each participant was awarded a certificate of participation plus a Participation reward of Rs 15,000 which represented an enchanting happening for the kids. And the Vice President of Punjab Golf Association, Col Raja Asif Mehdi and Kashif Bhatti, General Manager awarded prizes to the trainee children of golf who hopefully will become national flag bearers. It was announced by Raja Asif Mehdi that PGA will reach out to schools for popularizing golf and alluring young ones to the game.

Saudi League 'determined' to succeed: executive

News Desk

LONDON: The Saudi Pro League is "determined to be a success" and will keep splashing the cash to attract some of the biggest names in football, according to one of its top executives.

Clubs in the oil-rich Gulf state have lured global stars, with Karim Benzema, Jordan Henderson and Sadio Mane among those following in Cristiano Ronaldo's footsteps.

Last month Al-Hilal made a 300-million-euro (\$328 million) bid for Kylian Mbappe, though the Paris Saint-Germain striker reportedly refused to meet with officials from the club.

The influx has taken place



despite frequent criticism that Saudi Arabia's lavish spending amounts to "sportswashing" — an attempt to shift the focus from its record on human rights.

British director Peter Hutton, who sits on the league's board, told the BBC: "I think the

budgets are in place for a number of years — you know, I don't see this slowing down."

He added: "I've worked in sport for 40 years and I've never seen a project as big, as ambitious and as determined to be a success."

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said the Saudi league has "completely changed the market" and he expects more high-profile players to move there.

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp fears the late closure of the transfer window in Middle East nation could have a detrimental effect on European clubs.

But Hutton said it was "not necessarily a bad thing" if European football lost a little of its power, pointing out Saudi clubs had still only spent a quarter or a fifth of what Premier League clubs had during the current transfer window.

"This doesn't necessarily mean that Europe isn't going to be as strong in world football

going forward," he said.

"But I would say that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's good that football has strength around the world."

Hutton said the Mbappe bid and the signing of 26-year-old Wolves and Portugal midfielder Ruben Neves shows it is not just older players who are being lured to Saudi Arabia.

And he is confident that commercial success will follow.

"When Ronaldo signed for Al Nassr we suddenly had this interest from international broadcasters," he said. "Last year, we ended up in over 170 territories once Ronaldo signed."

"It's clearly something that's caught the imagination of broadcasters worldwide."

Dar reiterates govt's support to promote sports activities



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday reiterated government's support and cooperation to encourage sports activities, especially Cricket which is becoming more popular among youth.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headed by Chairman Muhammad Zaka Ashraf that called on the minister here. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha and senior officers from Finance and PCB team also attended the meeting.

The minister also extended full cooperation of the government to make the Asia Cup 2023 event successful, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

On the occasion, Chairman PCB, Muhammad Zaka Ashraf apprised the Finance Minister of matters related to PCB and hosting of Men's One-Day International (ODI) Asia Cup-2023, jointly by Pakistan and Sri Lanka in August-September, 2023.

IPC Minister inaugurates facilities at PSB



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan-Ur-Rehman Mazari on Thursday inaugurated a series of renovated and upgraded facilities here at the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), thus marking a momentous occasion for sports enthusiasts.

Secretary IPC Ahmad Hanif Orakzai and DG PSB Shoaib Khoso, were also present on the occasion.

The Minister inaugurated the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, a symbol of Pakistan's proud hockey heritage. The newly refurbished stadium was all set to host thrilling matches and witness remarkable sporting achievements. A cafeteria was also inaugurated by the minister.

Mazari also inaugurated the newly renovated swimming pool, providing a refreshing and safe space for swimmers. The upgraded pool promises endless learning opportunities. Adding to the list of achievements, the Minister also inaugurated the newly renovated Rodham Hall.

During the event, the Minister also meet with the hardworking daily wagers at PSB. In a heartwarming development, these dedicated workers received fantastic news of their regularization in the recent board meeting. This means they would be able to enjoy greater job security and improved benefits for their valuable contributions.

Former Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board Ijaz Butt passed away

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Former Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board and former Test cricketer Ijaz Butt passed away.

PCB mourns the passing of former Chairman Ijaz Butt

The Pakistan Cricket Board through its Chairman and members of Management Committee, Board executives and employees has expressed its grief and sorrow over the passing of former Test cricketer and its former Chairman Ijaz Butt today. He was 85.

Ijaz Butt, born in Sialkot on 10 March 1938, featured in eight Tests for Pakistan from 1959 to 1962. He also remained Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board from 2008 to 2011 and during his tenure Pakistan cricket team won the ICC T20 World Cup in 2009.

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Zaka Ashraf: "On behalf of the PCB, I want to express my deepest condolences on the sad demise of Mr Ijaz Butt."

I had the privilege of knowing him personally and I have nothing but utmost respect for Mr Butt.

I offer my deepest condolences to Ijaz Butt's family and friends, and assure them that he will always be remembered for the contributions he made to Pakistan cricket.

Sports Board Punjab chief announces mega summer camps in all divisions of the province



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Sports Board Punjab's expert coaches continued to impart training to hundreds of male and female athletes in seven games — table tennis, badminton, taekwondo, wushu, self-defence, gymnastics and karate in SBP summer camps at NPSC Gymnasium Hall on Thursday.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, in a statement, said that Sports Board Punjab (SBP) Summer Camps are underway in all divisions of the province in which thousands of male and female athletes are getting top class training in different games under the supervision of expert coaches and trainers.