



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
پی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا (قیامت کے دن) میں خوش کو خوشوں کا اور اپنے پاس آنے والوں کا انتظار کرنا ہوں گا پھر (خوش کو خوش) پر کچھ لوگوں کو بچھ تک جتنی سے پہلے ہی گرفتار کر لیا جائے گا تو میں انہیں کا کر یہ تو میری امت کے لوگ ہیں۔ جو اب طے گا کہ آپ کو معلوم نہیں یہ لوگ لائے پاس پھر گئے تھے۔
(بخاری ص 7048)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Pakistan's foreign ministry condemns remarks by some governments on Faisalabad incident

In response to media queries about the remarks by some governments on the unfortunate incident in Jaranwala, Faisalabad, on 16 August 2023, Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said: "We reiterate what we have said earlier. (Details on Page 8)



Nation remembers Rashid Minhas for his heroic legacy, undying courage

The 52nd martyrdom anniversary of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, one the youngest recipients of Nishan-e-Haider, was observed on Sunday across the country. He embraced martyrdom at Goth Ahmed Shah in Sujawal district on this day in 1971. Lt. Gen. Naem Khalid Lodhi while talking to APP said that the defence of Pakistan is safeguarded by its venerable armed forces... (Details on Page 3)

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Press Conference

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Murtaza Solangi, Federal Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Principal Information Officer Asim Khichi addressing an important press conference at PID Media.



Photo by Raja Farid

Govt to ensure security, create jobs: PM



Spokesman Report

KAN MEHTARZAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul-Haq Kakar said on Sunday that efforts would be made to provide employment opportunities and maintain peace and security while expediting the development process in KanMehtarzai, KillaSaifullah and other areas of Balochistan. PM Kakar while addressing a reception through a video link, organized by the All Parties Conference in his native village KanMehtarzai, said that he would visit KanMehtarzai soon and review the issues faced by local people. AnwarulHaqKakar said that he was grateful to all the organizers of today's reception for felicitating him on behalf of all political parties, tribal elders, scholars, civil society and lawyers from his native town after his nomination as caretaker prime minister. A large number of people including leaders of various political parties, tribal elders, scholars, farmers, lawyers and students participated in the reception ceremony. The government and opposition parties unanimously nominated Anwar HaqKakar as caretaker Prime Minister. The local notables expressed confidence that AnwarulHaqKakar as caretaker Prime Minister would play his key role in the elimination of terrorism in the country, conduct of transparent elections and restoration of law and order.

Swear to God, I didn't sign Official Secrets, Army Amendments bills: President Alvi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has denied signing Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Arif Alvi took to X, formerly known as Twitter, Arif Alvi said God is his witness that he did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 as he disagreed with these laws.



Dr. Arif Alvi (@ArifAlvi) ... میں اللہ کو گواہ بنا کر کہتا ہوں کہ میں نے آفیشل سیکریٹس ترمیمی بل 2023 اور پاکستان آرمی ترمیمی بل 2023 پر دستخط نہیں کیے کیونکہ میں ان قوانین سے متفق نہیں تھا۔ میں نے اپنے عملے سے کہا کہ وہ بغیر دستخط شدہ بلوں کو مقررہ وقت کے اندر واپس کر دیں تاکہ انہیں غیر موثر بنایا جا سکے۔ میں نے ان سے کئی بار تصدیق کی کہ آیا وہ واپس جا چکے ہیں اور مجھے یقین دلایا گیا کہ وہ جا چکے ہیں۔ تاہم مجھے آج پتہ چلا کہ میرا عملہ میری مرضی اور حکم کے خلاف گیا۔ اللہ سب جانتا ہے، وہ انشاء اللہ معاف کر دے گا۔ لیکن میں ان لوگوں سے معافی مانگتا ہوں جو اس سے متاثر ہوں گے۔

Translate post
2:04 PM - Aug 20, 2023 - 363.9K Views

AS GOD IS MY WITNESS, I DID NOT SIGN OFFICIAL SECRETS AMENDMENT BILL 2023 & PAKISTAN ARMY AMENDMENT BILL 2023 AS I DISAGREED WITH

THESE LAWS. I ASKED MY STAFF TO RETURN THE BILLS UNSIGNED WITHIN STIPULATED TIME TO MAKE THEM INEFFECTIVE. I CONFIRMED FROM THEM MANY TIMES THAT...

— DR. ARIF ALVI (@ARIFALVI) AUGUST 20, 2023

"I asked my staff to return the bills unsigned within stipulated time to make them ineffective. I confirmed from them many times that whether they have been returned & was assured that they were. However I have found out today that

my staff undermined my will and command. As Allah knows all, He will forgive IA. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be effected," Arif said in his post on X.

On Saturday, it was reported that President Arif Alvi signed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Both the bills were passed by the parliament during the tenure of the coalition government and were sent to President Alvi for ratification.

Caretaker PM strongly condemns terrorist attack in N. Waziristan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar on Sunday while expressing grief over loss of lives, strongly condemned a terrorist attack in North Waziristan. On social media platform X, the prime minister said "Heartbreaking to know about the terrorist attack in North Waziristan which claimed the lives of 11 innocent laborers". While strongly condemning the senseless act of violence, he further said that they stood in solidarity with the affected families.

11 laborers died and two injured in a bomb blast in Gulmir Kot

Spokesman Report

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: At least 11 laborers died and two injured in a bomb blast in Gulmir Kot, tehsil Shawal North Waziristan, ARY News reported. As per details, the police spokesperson said that the bomb exploded in a van in North Waziristan which resulted in the death of 11 laborers while two others sustained injuries. Earlier, at least 40 persons were killed, and 200 sustained injuries in the powerful bomb blast that targeted Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) workers' convention. It was learned that nearly 400 people were attending the JUI-F worker convention on Shandy Morr near the NADRA office.

NA Speaker inaugurated 500-Kilowatt Ghumti Feeder at Rawat Grid Station

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf has inaugurated the 500-Kilowatt Ghumti Feeder, Rawat Grid Station. He said, "resolving issues of common people at their door step has been his priority." He further said, "this Feeder would resolve the issue of low voltage in 25 villages of Gujjar Khan." He remarked that he would continue to prioritise working for the welfare of common people. It is also pertinent to mention that more than Fifty villages of Gujjar Khan would benefit from this Feeder. It has been operationalized at the cost of 30 Million Rupees and it has been installed on the special instructions of

Shehbaz Sharif departs for London to meet Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif left for London on Sunday to meet the ex-premier Nawaz Sharif to discuss the political scenario, upcoming elections and likely return of the party supremo to Pakistan. Former information minister and the Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader, Maryam Aurangzeb also took to the X (formerly known as Twitter) and said that Shehbaz Sharif would leave Lahore for London today. She mentioned that Shehbaz Sharif would also meet party leader Mian Nawaz Sharif in London. During the meeting, sources said consultations would be held on party leader's return home.

PTI decides to move SC over President Alvi's tweet on key bills

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) decided to move Supreme Court (SC) over President Arif Alvi's tweet on key bills. As per details, the PTI spokesperson said that the President's tweet revealed the violations of constitution committed in last 16 months. The spokesperson stated that Parliament, ECP and the entire state machinery have been turned against the constitution and the unconstitutional caretaker governments in KP and Punjab are also the outcome of this mindset.

Law Ministry's clarification removes ambiguity created by President's 'tweet': Solangi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said a clarification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice had removed the ambiguity created by a statement posted by President Dr. Arif Alvi on its personal account on X (formerly known Twitter) regarding signing of two legislations. "The President is a head of the state, and his position demands respect. No one should expect that we would speak against the respect of the President," said the information minister while addressing a news conference here.

Flanked by Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Principal Information Officer Asim Khichi, the minister said there was no need to politicize the caretaker government's efforts, that were aimed at removing ambiguity on important matters. He said the President had posted a statement on the X about the two bills, sent by the Parliament, from his personal account on the platform, which might have created some sort of confusion, but did not cause any upheaval. However, it was imperative to remove confusion on the matter and the Law Ministry had issued a statement in this regard, he added. To a query, Solangi said he did not have any knowledge about the President's intentions and desires, particularly concerning his continuation in office. Institutions existed in the country for enforcement of laws, and a complete system was in place to ensure provision of rights to citizens and uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and laws, the minister said in response to another question.

Pindi Bhatian: 20 burnt to death, 14 injured in horrific road crash

MA Rashid

FAISALABAD: At least 20 people, including women and children, were burnt to death while 14 others sustained injuries in a collision between a passenger bus and a pick up carrying diesel barrels on Faisalabad Motorway near Pindi Bhatian. Dr Fahad said short-circuiting was the cause of fire in the bus. Read more: One dead, 24 injured in Nawabshah road accident



Earlier on May 31, at least six people had been killed while 30 others were injured when the passenger bus they were travelling in had turned turtle after skidding off a bridge in Khanewal.

According to rescue officials, the incident had taken place near Pull Rango. They had said the ill-fated bus was on its way from Lahore to Multan when it had met an accident.

Gazette notifications of Army Act, Secrets Law issued after controversy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Hours after President Arif Alvi denied signing two pivotal bills, the gazette notifications of Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2023, becoming law have been issued. The notification stated that

the acts – forwarded by Majlis-e-Shoora [Parliament] – were "deemed to have been assented by President Dr Arif Alvi".

The bills were published as laws in the Gazette of Pakistan and were dated August 18, 2023.

Earlier in the day, President Arif Alvi denied signing Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023

and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023 as he "disagreed with these laws".

In a post on social media platform X, Alvi said: "As God is my witness, I did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Amendment Bill, 2023 as I disagreed with these laws."

The president said he asked his staff to return the bills unsigned within the stipulated time to make them "ineffective".

"I confirmed from them many times that whether they have been returned and was assured that they were. However, I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and

command. As Allah knows all, He will forgive Insha'Allah. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be affected," the president said.

According to ARY News report, President Arif Alvi on August 19 [Saturday] signed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill 2023.

Ahlan wa Sahlan

Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfig Al-Rabiah, arrives in Islamabad on a four-day visit to Pakistan on Sunday.



Photo: Spokesman

Saudi Hajj Minister arrives in Pakistan on four-day visit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Minister for Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfig Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah along with a delegation arrived in Islamabad on Sunday evening on a four-day visit.

As per details, the Saudi Hajj Minister was cordially invited by caretaker Federal Minis-

ter for religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmad and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Saeed Almaliki at the airport.

During the visit, the Saudi delegation will discuss with Pakistani officials various issues related to the facilities being provided to the Pakistani Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, Road to Mecca project.

Saudi Minister for Hajj will also meet with the President caretaker Prime Minister and the Chief of Army Staff.

The visiting Saudi delegation comprises heads of the Saudi civil aviation and airlines and other departments.

Earlier, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator

Muhammad Talha Mahmood revealed that next year's Hajj expenses could be significantly reduced by up to 50 per cent due to timely measures taken by the government.

He emphasized the importance of providing affordable Hajj during inflationary times, considering it a vital service to the pilgrims.

On this occasion, Senator Talha Mahmood expressed his appreciation for the commendable services rendered by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and his Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, for their generous support in facilitating this year's Hajj arrangements.

Punjab Cabinet holds its meeting in a Church

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi reached Jaranwala along with all Provincial Ministers to show complete solidarity with the Christian community today. CM Mohsin Naqvi and Provincial Ministers reached AEC Church by sitting in the same coach and participated in the prayer ceremony of the Christian community. For the first time in the history of Punjab, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over the Provincial Cabinet meeting inside the church to express complete solidarity with the Christian community. All Provincial Ministers, Advisers, Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), concerned Secretaries and senior officials were present in the church. The Chief Secretary presented a one point agenda of the Provincial Cabinet.

The Provincial Cabinet unanimously approved the grant of financial assistance



of rupees 20 lakh for the owners of the houses being set ablaze in the Jaranwala incident. Mohsin Naqvi revealed that the financial assistance cheques amounting to rupees 20 lakh will reach the owner of every house whose house has been put to flames in the Jaranwala incident within 48 hours.

A special prayer was made in the church for the integrity, stability, progress, prosperity of the people, and for unity

and solidarity of the country and the nation. Mohsin Naqvi remarked that Pakistan is of every Pakistani and Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus are all one. We will put every oppressor to his logical end and we are standing with every oppressed person. According to the direction of CM, construction and repair of one more church along with Association of Evangelical Churches (AEC) Church has been completed and both

the churches will be opened for prayers after renovation. Provincial Ministers Senator Kamran Michael, Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Bishop Azad Marshall, Church Priest Saleem Arif, notable personalities of the Christian community, Commissioner Faisalabad, RPO, CPO, Deputy Commissioner were also present on the occasion. The letter written by the Holy Prophet SAW to the Christian community is a

beacon light for us. In light of the letter written by the Holy Prophet SAW to the Christian community, we have to take complete care of the Christian community till the Day of Judgement. The order which the Holy Prophet SAW has given is the highest order for us. We have held the Cabinet meeting inside the church. CM Mohsin Naqvi along with the Provincial Ministers visited the relief camp being established for the affected Christian families at Danish School Jaranwala. Mohsin Naqvi met with the affected Christian families, consoled them and assured them provision of justice. Mohsin Naqvi talked with the Christian families and listened to their problems. CM Mohsin Naqvi assured that the damages of the affectees will soon be redressed. Mohsin Naqvi while directing to undertake early registration of the affected families revealed that the restoration work of the churches has been started adding that the churches will soon be restored to their original condition.

SAPM Malik, EU Ambassador join efforts to strengthen Pak-EU relations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis, Jawad Sohrab Malik, met with EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kiosks to discuss improving Pak-EU economic ties, regional security, GSP+ benefits for sustainable development and aiding Overseas Pakistanis in the European Union. In a tweet, Malik expressed joy in welcoming EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka at his house.

Malik mentioned, having an amicable conversation about various matters, encompassing economic relations between Pakistan and the EU, we shared aspirations for regional security and stability cooperation.

He stated that Pakistan receives a distinct incentive through the EU's GSP+ program to encourage sustainable development and good governance. A committed effort is underway to formulate a sturdy and lasting solution to tackle the challenges faced by Overseas Pakistanis in the EU.

Jawad Sohrab, has been designated as the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis in the interim cabinet led by Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar.

Using his charitable arm, the Sohrab Foundation, Jawad Malik assists the most vulnerable parts of society. He was honored by the Pakistan Army for his relief contributions, earning national recognition.

Jaranwala incident: PPP demands 'speedy trial' of suspects

MA Rashid

JARANWALA: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has demanded the speedy trial of the suspected persons involved in the Jaranwala incident.

PPP leaders including Nayyar Bukhari, Sherry Rehman, Faisal Karim Kundi and others conducted a press conference in which they demanded the speedy trial of the accused involved in 'blasphemy' and 'riots' in Jaranwala that took place on August 16.

Nayyar Bukhari said that the government is making efforts to arrest the culprits and rehabilitation of the affectees of the Jaranwala incident. He added that he cannot immediately comment on the government's performance.

He said that a 'speedy trial' of the accused must be conducted who were behind the blasphemy and riots. He urged to penalise the culprits in the



Jaranwala incident.

Sherry Rehman said that the Christian community should be assisted besides expressing solidarity. She said that the groups involved in violent incidents had committed unconstitutional acts.

The PPP leader said that Pakistan is also the country of the Christian community and they must be given maximum protection. She clarified that discrimination and riots are terrorism.

Sherry Rehman added that the attacks on the Christian

community are tantamount to attacking the state, state writ and state reputation.

A PPP delegation including Sherry Rehman, Nayyar Bukhari, Faisal Karim Kundi, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Malaika Raza visited Jaranwala today and met the affected families.

The Jaranwala police had registered terror cases against more than 600 people on August 17 for "vandalising multiple churches and torching homes belonging to the Christian community."

Pakistan's foreign ministry condemns remarks by some governments on Faisalabad incident



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In response to media queries about the remarks by some governments on the unfortunate incident in Jaranwala, Faisalabad, on 16 August 2023, Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said: "We reiterate what we have said earlier. The Faisalabad incident is a sad reprehensible incident that has hurt the sentiments of Christians across Pakistan. The incident has been

strongly condemned by Pakistan's leadership and the entire Pakistani society. Such intolerant and violent acts are unacceptable to the ethos of Pakistani society.

The wheels of justice have been set in motion. The Government of Pakistan will not rest until those responsible for these vile acts are apprehended and brought to justice.

The incident has also reignited an inter-faith dialogue of tolerance and mutual respect and understanding in Pakistan."

Fatima murder case: MS Ranipur health centre nabbed for 'hiding facts'



Mehtab Chana

SUKKUR: Police arrested the medical superintendent (MS) of the Ranipur Rural Health Centre Ali Hassan Wassan for facilitating the prime suspect Asad Shah and hiding facts in the housemaid Fatima murder case.

Ali Hassan Wassan - the medical superintendent (MS) of the Ranipur Rural Health Centre - has been arrested by police on different charges related to the Fatima torture and murder case.

Wassan had allegedly facilitated the prime suspect Asad Shah by transporting Fatima's body via an ambulance without conducting the post-mortem. The accused was also facing charges of hiding facts in the case.

The medical board has apprehended rape of child maid Fatima, who was killed in Ranipur Haveli, quoting a top police official.

"We have decided to take remand of the under investigation former SHO, head muharrir, doctor and compounder," DIG Jiskani said. "The accused will be booked in the case to water down facts and burial of the

victim without a post-mortem," top police official said.

DIG Police Sukkur said that the orders have been issued to rescue the children, present in the Haveli. "A police camp will be set up in the haveli to collect DNA samples of all persons," police official said.

The body of child maid Fatima was exhumed for post-mortem examination and the samples of the body were collected on Saturday in the presence of medical board members and a Judicial Magistrate.

According to the initial post-mortem report, the body of Fatima was in its initial phase of decomposition. "Her face was blue on the one side and green on the other," according to the report.

"There were torture marks on the body including eyes, waist, forehead, feet, knees and hands." Some samples have been sent to the lab for micro-biology tests," report said.

The issue initially came to light after video clips of Fatima's body bearing severe torture marks went viral on social media. In the video, the seriously injured girl is seen struggling to sit up on her bed but collapses.

Ethiopian Airlines and PIA: A tale of two Third World state-owned entities

Commerce Desk

LAHORE/NAIROBI: In complete contrast to what we have been witnessing as far as the affairs of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) are concerned, Reuters reported that Ethiopian Airlines will start manufacturing aircraft parts in a venture with Boeing at an initial cost of \$15 million, the government's investment agency said on Friday.

The state-owned carrier, which is the biggest in Africa, has already signed the deal that also involves the local state Industrial Parks Development Corporation, the Ethiopian Investment Commission said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The airline, which has a fleet of 140 aircraft, said in June that its earnings rose by a fifth to \$6.1bn in its latest financial year.

On the other hand, former minister for aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique had warned earlier this month that the PIA - also a state owned entity just like the Ethiopian Airlines - might suffer alarming

losses of Rs259b by the year 2030 if urgent corrective measures were not taken, which included the transfer of its administrative control to the private sector, as the airline had a debt burden of Rs742bn.

Coming back to Ethiopia's state-owned airline, the commission said the venture will make "aerospace parts, including aircraft thermo-acoustic insulation blankets, electrical wire harnesses, and other parts."

"The investment project is expected to create employment opportunities for more than 300 Ethiopians," it said.

The commission did not say when production will begin. There was no immediate comment from Boeing. Other African carriers like Kenya Airways have said that a shortage of parts, caused by the Ukraine war crisis which cut supply of Russian titanium that is an important component of global aviation, has led to flight disruptions.

It was not immediately clear if Ethiopian Airlines has also suffered from similar lack of parts.

Ceasefire between Spirkai & Nano Khel tribes over disputed land 'Bala Pathatr' in Shakai

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: On Sunday In South Waziristan Lower/Upper Wazir and Mehsud tribes have started a bloody clash over land dispute in Shakai Tehsil.

According to local sources, the two tribes are facing each other on the disputed land between the Spirkai Wazir and Nano Khel Mehsud tribes in tiazra Tehsil of Upper South Waziristan and Shakai Tehsil of Lower South Waziristan and both sides continue to freely use small and heavy weapons, in which there is fear of loss of life.

It should be noted that the conflict between the two tribes has been going on for a long time over the land of "Bala Pathatr" before that there were clashes between the two tribes on the same



land in 2015 and again in 2017.

In this regard, local tribes, civil soci-

ety and youth have demanded from the Government that the police and district administration should play a timely role in stopping the bloodshed.

On the other hand, the Assistant commissioner, Wana Yasir Salman Kundi, says that after receiving the information, the district administration sent its staff and police to the scene along with the tribal elders, so that the situation can be controlled, there will be no loss of life or property.

According to AC Wana, I have just received information that the situation is under control and normal, there has been a ceasefire by both the tribes.

He said the administration is trying hard to resolve the recent land dispute amicably through Jirga with the help of tribal elders.

Flood of population is licking the country's resources: Prof Osama

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Regional Director Punjab Group of Colleges Prof Osama Bashir Qureshi has said that the flood of population is licking the country's resources like termites. We can control it, we have to educate the next generation about the studying population and its disadvantages.



On this occasion, District Population Welfare Officer Fayyaz Ahmed Chaudhry said that if we do not stop the unruly population, we will have only standing room in Pakistan.

And lack of food grains may also occur. Population has to be curbed for a prosperous life. Today, the population of district Multan has increased to 53 lakhs, which was 1.5 lakhs in 1972. And providing information day and night for a healthy couple, make sure to keep a gap of at least three years between children.

From the seminar, Deputy District Officer Malik Muhammad Hassan and Tehsil Population Officer City Hamad Dilawar gave full awareness about the formation of family to prevent population in the light of Quran and Hadith. In the end, Osama Bashir Qureshi, Sheikh Mohammad Rafiq, Fakhr Altaf and others were given commemorative shields in the ceremony by Tehsil Population Officer Sadar Haris. Imran Muhammad Asif and other officers, Vice Principal Subhan Khan Sherwani and professors participated.

Our state cannot afford religious hatred: Shaukat Virk

News Desk

LAHORE: Founder Trustee and General Secretary of Dr. A.Q. Khan Hospital Trust Dr. Shaukat Babar Virk has said that our state cannot afford religious hatred. A handful of misguided people have become a disease for Pakistan. If someone commits an unsuccessful attack on the glory of the Holy Quran, it is definitely the right of the state and state institutions to take strict legal action against him.



Dr. Shaukat Babar Virk added that damaging Christian places of worship is against Islamic teachings. In the presence of laws and law-enforcing security forces, no crowd or group can be allowed to play with the law and issue their decisions. He said that the services of the Christian people cannot be denied for the construction and development of Pakistan. A handful of extremist elements in the society are holding the state hostage. He said that organized attacks on citizens belonging to different minorities, including Muslims, are taking place in India, so this type of criminal behavior is not acceptable in Pakistan in the light of the decrees, other minorities including Christians. There is abundant religious and political freedom which can never be taken away by a handful of miscreants.

Karachi Arts Council organized a lecture on "Ismat Chughtai"

Spokesman Report



KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan organized a lecture on Ismat Chughtai "the first rebel of Urdu fiction ismat chughtai" at Hasina Moin Hall. The program was presided over by the well-known poetess Zahra Nigah, while the duties of Moderator were performed by Ambareen Haseeb Amber, well-known writer Nasir

Abbas Nayyar gave a lecture on Ismat Chughtai. In the ceremony, President of Arts Council Mohammad Ahmad Shah, Noor ul Huda Shah, Tanveer Anjum, Fatima Hassan, Anwar Sen Rai, Ezra Abbas, Afzal Ahmed, Nasra Zuberi were included and other intellectuals were also present in the program.

President of Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah said that the tradition of thinking is disappearing in our society, it is no less than a blessing to have people like Nasir Abbas Nayyar today. It is happening earlier, there was a tradition of public knowledge, in which most people including Qamar Jalil, Saleem Ahmed, Raees Amrohi, Shaukat Siddiqui used to sit all the writers in houses and hotels. Big writers also used to sit at Quetta Piala Hotel. Due to the money economy and chaos, this tendency is decreasing. Whatever high values are there who tried to develop this civilization after spending thousands of years, it is considered that it should be killed by someone of nobility and high values.

The excellence and honor of knowledge, intellectuals, writers and poets, why are they in the society? If these people are not there, then what business of life will stop. We will hold an evening in the name of Zahra Apa, in which she will tell us her stories. On September 20, it is the anniversary of Mir Taqi Mir. Well-known poetess Zahra Nigah expressed her opinion and said that I am not a critic, I have almost memorized the stories of Ismat Apa. My heart wants Ahmed Shah to be the great Urdu writer. Make a recording of selected stories of the writers, in which the tone, pronunciation, text and meaning are clear. It is the job of great writers to save. As much as I know Ismat Chughtai, it is a great honor for me.

Protest

KARACHI: Members of civil society hold a banner during protest in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Brilliant success in zonal election of Hydro Workers Union

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Central Vice President and Regional Vice Chairman of All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Workers Union Chaudhry Muhammad Khalid and Zonal Chairman Chaudhry Rashid Yameen have said that people like Zonal Secretary Malik Tanveer and Chaudhry Ilyas Sindhu are the capital of the union. They are the people who do, because of them, the good name of the union is increasing. Recently, their brilliant success in the zonal election is the result of the love of the workers for them. Now nothing will stop the work of the workers and labor in the entire



circle and zone

The workers are happy with their success. He expressed these thoughts

while addressing the reception given in honor of Malik Tanveer and Ilyas Sindhu at Mepeco Mumtazabad divi-

sion yesterday. We will work day and night to fulfill their trust and work for the development of Mepeco.

IFMEPCO is prosperous, prosperity will also come to workers' homes. From the reception, MEPCO Mumtazabad Division Vice Chairman Asif Rasheed Haji Younis Rana Tayyab Division Press Secretary Rana Adnan Division Chairman Chaudhry Irshad Singhida Secretary Haji Ahmed Hasan Vice Chairman Sheikh Bilal Rana Sohail Fayaz Ahir Tayyab Jahangir Zahid Hafeez Saleem Shah Shahbaz Bhatti Shaukat Ali Zahid Bhatta Rana Aslam Salman Wahab Munir Bhatti Ishrat Alvi Rao Aslam and others spoke.

There is a need to eradicate hatred, intolerance and religious hatred in the country

Mishma Chaman

An Arab has no superiority over a foreigner or a black over a white or a white over a black. These are the golden words that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said. Similarly, if we look at Christianity, Jesus Christ also declared those small ones as big, which we humans consider smaller or inferior to us. In other religions, prayer and fasting have their place, but we see the rights of the people or humanity prominent in them too. All the Prophets and Saints, regardless of their religion, have taught us to love people beyond our religion.

Recently, a news came across which was very painful and unfortunate. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha in Mthia city in interior Sindh, this tradition which has been going on for the past several decades was abolished by a charity organization, the tradition was established by the elders here to

prevent religious hatred in their city and to respect each other's beliefs and ideas.

Not only the Hindu community here but also many Muslims were troubled from within, but since it was all related to religion, even those who were supporters of this brotherhood could not openly express their sorrow. A collective sacrifice was offered in which 26 cows and bullocks were sacrificed by this charitable organization to fulfill Sunnah Ibrahim, which hurt the Hindu community living here for centuries and hurt their religious sentiments because in the Hindu community cow is listed as (Gau Mata) i.e. mother, not that in Thar Parkar the duty of sacrifice is done before it.

But since there is a large Hindu community living here, bulls and cows are never sacrificed here. There is a famous saying about Tharparkar that the Hindus here fast during Ramadan and the Muslims celebrate Holi and Diwali with them, but this may be not possible now because the crack in

this tradition of religious harmony is coming. In time, it will increase.

Likewise, if we look at an unfortunate incident in Sweden, in which an Iraqi man burned the Holy Quran, it was strongly condemned around the world. In our country too, people belonging to all religions including Muslims and Christians participated in the protest against this incident and condemned the Iraqi man for this heinous act. But in the state of grief and anger, our Muslim brothers forgot that the cross is a part of the faith of Christians all over the world, as the cross on the Swedish flag has been desecrated in various ways.

And then in Sweden in front of the Israeli Embassy, a few people burned the Holy Bible and the Torah, so this action made us stand with this Iraqi person, and if we say that there is no difference between him and us, then it is not wrong because in such people's heart, perhaps, there is no such thing as respect for any religion, although if we look, our religions do not teach us

all these things. Whether it is Christianity or Islam, we are encouraged to be patient and forgiving, which is exemplified in our holy religious books, the Bible and the Qur'an.

It is taught in the primary classes of the school that how the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dealt with an old woman who threw household garbage on him and how Jesus asked God for forgiveness for us and He put Himself on the cross for our salvation.

Here we have to think, whether we are following the commands given in our holy books, whether we have given place in our lives to the teaching that we have been asked to do over and over again and which depends on our hereafter? Therefore, if we want our hereafter to be in accordance with the teachings that we get from the Holy Bible or the Holy Quran, then we have to consider our attitudes that whether we have to stand with the Iraqi who spread hatred between religions by trying to create chaos in the world, or whether

we have to follow these orders, and take the path of goodness, because in order to eliminate evil from the society, we have to remove the obstacles in the way of good and all this will be possible only when we respect each other's beliefs and ideologies and promote religious harmony and tolerance. If we do not consider any human being superior to us, then we should also not consider anyone not inferior to us, regardless of his religion.

Forgetting the dirty act of a madman in Sweden, we need to adopt the good things of Europe and America, where Christians have opened their churches for the prayers of their Muslim brothers and for the worship of the people belonging to other religions. In fact, the missionaries who came from thousands of miles away in this subcontinent as well as in Pakistan served the people here without discrimination of color, caste and religion and provided them with medical facilities as well as education. We should continue this mission of serving humanity.

Therefore, not only Thar Parkar but also in other cities of Sindh, people who are working for peace and religious harmony, especially the religious leaders of all religions should come forward and work for the restoration of this tradition established in Thar Parkar for many decades, and not only in this city, but also in the whole country, they must do their part in ending the hatred, intolerance and religious hatred and promote love and brotherhood in living together with each other.

Because in the current situation, due to the difficulties that the country is facing, religious harmony among all the religions living in the country and unity of the people beyond all kinds of differences is the most important need of the hour, and if we do not adopt these principles today, our future generations may face challenges like religious hatred and sectarianism along with other challenges. Our survival lies in promoting tolerance and religious harmony among our fellow countrymen, for this every citizen of the country has to play his role.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:03 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 4:55 pm
Maghrib 6:49 pm
Isha 8:18 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 Ambulance115
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
DHO 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

23,364 individuals from flood-affected areas have been rescued

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the directions of Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa rescue and relief operations have been accelerated in the riverine/flood effected areas of the Kasur. DC Kasur and DPO Kasur are directly monitoring flood relief activities. Commissioner Lahore said that we are continuously monitoring water situation in the Sutlej river. He said that rescue teams are consistently present in the villages attached to the river and Backup rescue and relief teams are also ready. Provincial and district authorities, along with other organizations, are actively engaged in providing assistance and relief day and night, he added. Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa has stated that a total of 23,364 citizens have been rescued and shifted to safe locations from the flood-affected areas. Moreover, 15,800 animals have been transferred to safe areas via boats. He mentioned that Kasur district has been affected by the floodwaters, 15 villages under Section 144 have been evacuated, and 8 police checkpoints have been established for their protection. Furthermore, 22,000 ration boxes have been distributed in the third phase. Relief camps and nearby villages are being provided with timely food by the administration, Muhammad Ali Randhawa added. 93 Rescue boats and 3 troops are active in flood areas.

AIOU holds national songs competition



Tooba Khan

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized a national songs competition in connection with independence day celebrations in which 50 students from different institutions participated.

The event was arranged by the University's Regional Capus at Sir Syed Science, Rawalpindi.

Female students took the top three positions, with Hajra Batool winning first place, Faiza Ali second, and Rida Arif third. Prof Muhammad Arif, Prof Muhammad Bashir Malik, and Prof Baqir Wasim

served as judges for the event.

Additional Director Regional Services, Safeerullah presided over the event whereas the Director Student Affairs, Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali and Regional Director Rawalpindi, Nasreen Akhtar Mirza were the chief guests while Assistant Regional Director, Mehar Un Nissa hosted the event. Safeerullah congratulated the students and expressed the Vice Chancellor's interest in providing opportunities for co-curricular activities. He congratulated the students who secured positions and participated in the competition on behalf of the Vice Chancellor and guaranteed that the university would continue to offer these opportunities.

Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali congratulated the students for their participation and achievement. He announced that the university will organize similar events in all regional offices. Syed Kazim Ali expressed his belief in the patriotism of our youth based on their performances. Nasreen Akhtar Mirza expressed gratitude towards the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood, and Director General Regional Services, Dr Malik Tauqir Ahmad Khan, for their support in organizing the event. She congratulated the winners and their parents and praised her team for the success of the event.

Islamia University of Bahawalpur, PILDAT sign MOU on political science



Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Political Science, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) was held at the Baghdad-ul-Jadeed Campus. Vice-Chancellor the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar and Faheem Ahmed Khan Senior Projects Manager Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency signed the memorandum of understanding. According to the agreement, both institutes will organize various activities related to the training and participation of youth in the electoral process and their dialogue with the leading political parties about their awareness and role in the political system of Pakistan. Dean Faculty of Social Sciences Prof. Dr. Rubina Bhatti, Prof. Dr. Yasmin Rufi, Dr. Abid Shehzad, Director National and International Linkages, Dr. Shakeel Akhtar, Focal Person and faculty members of the Department of Political Science were also present on this occasion.

Sardar Attique '100% satisfied' with Pakistan caretaker setup

Abdul Majeed Tahir



ISLAMABAD: Arjeh President of Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that he is 100% satisfied with the caretaker setup of Pakistan. All the personalities in the caretaker setup are patriotic and the most worthy people. The caretaker setup After the nominations of two or three important ministers, it is felt that Pakistan has come out of external

pressure. Elections inside Pakistan do not seem to be held on time. There should be elections in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan simultaneously. The government of Azad Kashmir made its party successful in the election of Azad Kashmir through rigging. Whenever free fair elections are held in Azad Kashmir, the Muslim Conference will win with a huge majority, he expressed these views while talking to the media at Arja. He said that in the past, during Zia-ul-Haq's and Musharrarf's era, when the elections were held without the interference of Pakistani political parties, the Muslim Conference won the victory. Rather, politics is done on the basis of principles. I have never spoken ill of my opponents, nor do I take anything of theirs seriously. I have my own ideology and my own mission. If power was given on the basis of construction and development, then General Hayat lifetime would have been in power, but he got the least votes in the last election. Visionary works have been done during the rule of the Muslim Conference in Azad Kashmir. The Muslim Conference has built and developed according to its vision. What was the beginning of the era of, whenever there was an opportunity, he would start the journey. In politics, there should not be opposition for the sake of opposition, politics should be based on principles and ideas. Army Chief Asim Munir's lively stance on Kashmir raised the morale of Kashmiris. A strong Pakistan is the future of Kashmiris. Kashmiri forces stood with Pakistan, are standing and will continue to stand he added.

CDA Mazdoor Union and NIAZ SUPPORT Partner to Improve Mobility of Workers with Disabilities.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Niaz Support, a social enterprise that provides support to persons with disabilities in Pakistan, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the CDA Mazdoor Union (CBA) to provide customised wheelchairs to CDA workers and their families who are suffering from disabilities. The MOU was signed by Hussain Odhwani, Founder of Niaz Support, and Ch. Muhammad Yaseen, General Secretary-CDA Mazdoor Union and Pakistan Workers Federation. "We are delighted to partner with CDA to provide customised wheelchairs to their deserving workers and their families," said Odhwani. "This one-of-a-kind agreement will help to mobilise the deserving lower middle class families and bring mobility and prosperity within their homes." General Secretary CBA Union Ch. Muhammad Yaseen appreciated the great efforts of Niaz Support to mobilise persons with disabilities in Pakistan and thanked the founder for his generous offer to support CDA workers in need. "This partnership is a testament to our commitment to providing quality services to our workers," said Yaseen. "We are grateful to Niaz Support for their support and look forward to working with them to improve the lives of our workers with disabilities." The wheelchairs will be customised to the specific needs of each recipient and will be provided free of charge. This collaboration is a significant step towards improving the lives of persons with disabilities in Pakistan. It is a testament to the commitment of Niaz Support and CDA to providing equal opportunities to all.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Japanese Children Park in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ecotourism a must for sustainable local development'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The experts call for practicing ecotourism for sustainable development of local resources and communities. Speaking to the participants of the National Centre for Rural Development 'Three-day training workshop on 'Ecotourism and Sustainable Development', they urged the participants to play their role in practicing the ecotourism framework right from individual and family picnics to larger group tourism. The expert trainers included founder and director Pakistan



Mountain Festival and Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed, EvK2C-NR Scientific Advisor Ashiq Ahmed Khan, PTDC Managing Director Aftab-ur-Rehman, former IG Forests Syed Nasir Mahmood and former bureaucrat Zafarullah Siddiqi. Director Devcom-Pakistan Execu-

tive Munir Ahmed conducted a brainstorming session based on the SWOT analysis. He also presented a 10-point action agenda for the participants to take upon their future discourse. He urged the provincial governments to urgently form and establish the provincial tourism coordination boards, and the local tourism coordination committees to ensure ecotourism practices. The infrastructure at the tourist destinations shall be environment friendly.

Munir Ahmed emphasized on assessment of the carrying capacity of all the destina-

tions empowered by a robust monitoring system, community communication and education to conduct tourism in their areas on sustainable development parameters.

Ashiq Ahmed Khan said tourists go to the far-flung areas for living with nature, and watching the biological diversity. These resources must be protected through the ecotourism policies and practices by engaging all the stakeholders. Every tourist destination has very peculiar resources and landscapes that can be used in the "watch and enjoy" formula.

Nation remembers Rashid Minhas for his heroic legacy, undying courage

Dr. Saeed Ahmad Ali

The 52nd martyrdom anniversary of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, one the youngest recipients of Nishan-e-Haider, was observed on Sunday across the country. He embraced martyrdom at Goth Ahmed Shah in Sujawal district on this day in 1971. Lt. Gen. Naeem Khalid Lodhi while talking to APP said that the defence of Pakistan is safeguarded by its venerable armed forces, which also monitor and watch the ideological frontiers of the motherland every moment. "At the time of need, sons of the valiant armed forces combated and defeated the cowardly enemy including the scourge of terrorism in a befitting manner," he added. The brave armed forces and sons of the soil have a wide range of experience to deal with any aggression or the menace of terrorism and the entire world could learn from Pakistan how to cope with the enemy or terrorism, he said.

He said that the nation, standing with its forces, displayed unanimous spirit in facing any challenge or enemy boldly and defeated them on all fronts. In fact, there have been rare examples of such extreme valour and courage in global military history which the Pakistani nation and its heroes and soldiers showcased at various occasions, Lodhi said. A similar poignant story is of Rashid Minhas Shaheed, who after having joined the air force, was commissioned on March 13, 1971, in the 51st GD(P) Course. He began training to become a pilot. On August 20 of that year, in the hour before noon, he was getting ready to take off in a T-33 jet trainer in Karachi, his second solo flight in that type of aircraft. Minhas was taxiing towards the runway when a Bengali instructor pilot, Flight Lieutenant Matiuir Rahman, signalled him to stop and then climbed into the instructor's seat. The jet took off and turned towards India. Minhas radioed PAF Base Masroor with the message that he was being

hijacked. The air controller requested that he resend his message, and he confirmed the hijacking. Later investigation showed that Rahman intended to defect to India to join his compatriots in the Bangladesh Liberation War, along with the jet trainer. In the air, Minhas struggled physically to wrest control from Rahman; each man tried to overpower the other through the mechanically linked flight controls. Some 32 miles (51 km) from the Indian border, the jet crashed near Thatta. Both men died. Minhas was posthumously awarded Pakistan's top military honour, the Nishan-e-Haider, and became the youngest man and the only member of the Pakistan Air Force to win the award.

Minhas's Pakistan military citation for the Nishan-e-Haider states that he "forced the aircraft to crash" in order to prevent Rahman from taking the jet to India. This is the official, popular and widely known version of how Minhas died. Yawar A. Mazhar, a writer for Pakistan Military Consortium, relayed in 2004 that he spoke to retired PAF Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry about Minhas, and that he learned more details not generally known to the public. According to Mazhar, Chaudhry led the immediate task of investigating the wreckage and writing the accident report. Chaudhry told Mazhar that he found the jet had hit the ground nose first, instantly killing Minhas in the front seat. Rahman's body, however, was not in the jet and the canopy was missing. Chaudhry searched the area and saw Rahman's body some distance behind the jet, the body found with severe abrasions from hitting the sand at a low angle and a high speed. Chaudhry thought that Minhas probably jettisoned the canopy at low altitude causing Rahman to be thrown from the cockpit because

he was not strapped in. Chaudhry felt that the jet was too close to the ground at that time, too far out of control for Minhas to be able to prevent the crash. On August 20, 2023, in various events, on his 52nd martyrdom anniversary, Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs have paid glowing tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed. In a media release, the ISPR said Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas's martyrdom anniversary serves as a powerful reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by Armed Forces of Pakistan. It said in the line of duty, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas lived up to great traditions of Pakistan Armed Forces in defending the motherland. Meanwhile, Pakistan Air Force Directorate General Public Relations has released a short documentary to pay homage to youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday also paid a rich

tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed. In a tweet today, the premier said observing the 52nd anniversary of martyrdom of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed (Nishan e Haider) today, we as a nation salute his undying courage. His heroic act on 20 Aug 1971 preserved our national dignity and his legacy of valor remains undimmed. Mahboob Ali, a retired PAF officer told APP that after his death, Minhas was honoured as a national hero. In his memory the Pakistan Air Force base at Kamra was renamed PAF Base Minhas, often called Minhas-Kamra. In Karachi, Minhas was honoured by the naming of a main road, Rashid Minhas Road and a two-rupee postal stamp bearing his image was issued by Pakistan Post in December 2003. Rashid Minhas was a very young and inexperienced pilot. The crash took place during his second solo flight on T-33 aircraft. In the run up to the 1971 crisis the PAF had grounded all East Pakistani pilots in PAF and assigned them ground jobs.



Strong enough now: BRICS nations eye global geopolitical shift

News Desk

JOHANNESBURG: Leaders of the BRICS emerging economies, which account for about a quarter of the world's wealth, meet in Johannesburg this week looking to widen the bloc's influence and push for a shift in global geopolitics.

South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to host China's President Xi Jinping, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva for the annual three-day summit starting on Tuesday. Russian President Vladimir Putin also will join remotely.

Putin decided against attending in person as he is the target of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant that South Africa is in theory bound to enforce if he sets foot in the country.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will travel to Johannesburg instead.

Representing billions of people across three continents, with economies undergoing varying levels of growth, the BRICS share one thing in

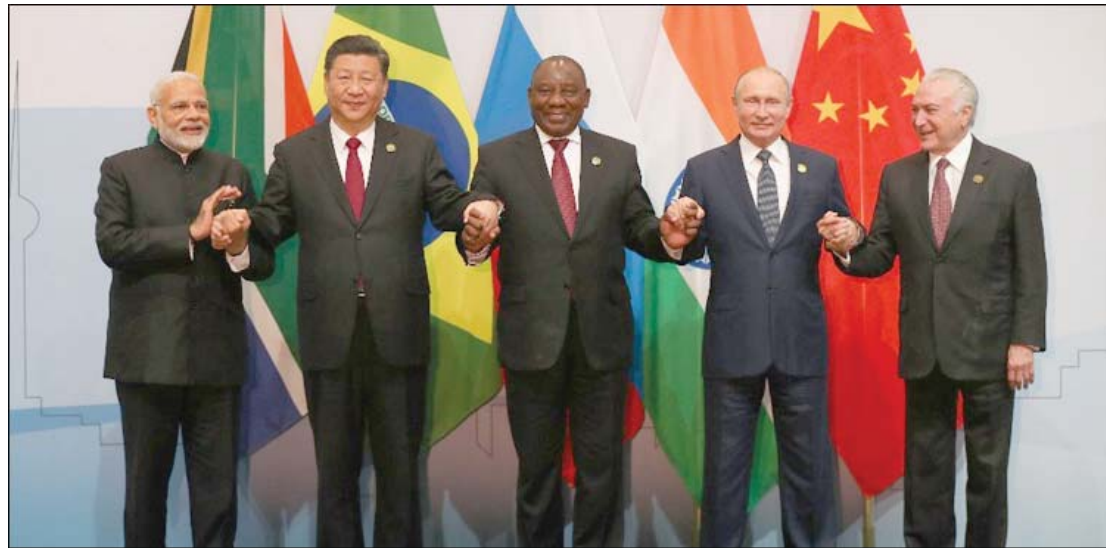
common — disdain for a world order they see as serving the interests of rich Western powers.

"The traditional global governing system has become dysfunctional, deficient and missing in action," Chen Xiaodong, the Chinese ambassador to Pretoria said at a briefing on Friday, adding the BRICS are "increasingly becoming a staunch force in defending international justice".

There is growing interest in the bloc — at least 40 countries have expressed interest in joining, and 23 of those have formally submitted applications to become BRICS members.

Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador-at-large for Asia and the BRICS, told AFP on Friday that one of the reasons countries are lining up to join is "the very polarised world we live in, that has been further polarised by the Russia-Ukraine crisis, and where countries are being forced to take sides".

"Countries in the South don't want to be told who to support, how to behave and how to conduct their sovereign affairs. They are strong enough now to assert their respective positions,"



added Sooklal.

The BRICS have raised hope for countries looking to restructure the global "architecture", he said.

"The major markets are now in the Global South... but we are still on the margins in terms of global deci-

sion-making."

Lebogang Legodi, international politics lecturer at the University of Limpopo, agrees that many states keen on joining the group "are seeing BRICS as an alternative to the current hegemony" in world affairs.

Around 50 other leaders will attend a "friends of BRICS" programme during the summit, which will be held at a convention centre in the heart of Johannesburg's Sandton, historically referred to as the richest square-mile on the continent.

This year's gathering is themed "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for mutually accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism".

It comes at "a critical inflection point," said Steven Gruzd of the Africa-Russia Africa project at the South African Institute of International Affairs.

"The current multilateral system is under strain," he said.

A decision on expanding the BRICS membership is expected at the end of the summit, according to Sooklal.

An upbeat Ramaphosa told a meeting of the ruling ANC party in Johannesburg on Saturday that "we are going to have a fantastic BRICS summit".

He said the presence of so many heads of state "goes to show the influence and the impact that South Africa" has in the world.

Formally launched in 2009, the BRICS now account for 23 percent of global GDP and 42 percent of the world's population.

The combined bloc represents more than 16 percent of the world's trade.

Election campaign

A girl uses her mobile phone in front of an Indonesian election campaign mural ahead of the polls at Banda Aceh, Aceh province, on March 17, 2019. Like the 2019 election, the young population will again become the majority of voters in the 2024 presidential race.



Saudi Arabia arrests 15,245 illegals in one week

News Desk

RIYADH: Authorities in Saudi Arabia have arrested 15,245 people in one week for breaching residency, work and border security regulations, according to an official report.

The report said, from Aug. 10 to 16, a total of 8,539 people were arrested for violations of residency laws, while 4,253 were held over illegal border crossing attempts and a further 2,453 for labor-related issues.

The report showed that among the 829 people arrested for trying to enter the Kingdom illegally, 53 percent were Yemeni, 44 percent Ethiopian, and 3 percent were of other nationalities.

A further 60 people were caught trying to cross into neighboring countries, and three were held for involvement in transporting and harboring violators.

Indonesian president to attend BRICS summit in South Africa

Spokesman Report

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo departed for South Africa on Sunday to attend the BRICS summit in Johannesburg amid speculation that the country could join the group as its latest member.

The meeting, which brings together major emerging economies countries led by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, will be held for three days starting Tuesday.

"Indonesia has been invited to the BRICS summit and of course in between the BRICS summit there will be meetings with other world leaders," Widodo told reporters ahead of his departure.

The trip is Widodo's first to Africa as leader of Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

He said earlier in the week that his government had not decided whether or not Indonesia would join BRICS.

The group, formally launched in 2009, seeks to tame Western economic domination in global affairs.

It represents 23 percent of the world's gross domestic product and 42 percent of the world's population.

Aside from attending the BRICS summit, Widodo said he would also visit Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique to strengthen cooperation.

Tanzania and Kenya opened embassies in Jakarta last year, while Mozambique is the first African country to sign a Preferential Trade Agreement with Indonesia.

Independence Day was celebrated in SLS College



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Independence Day was celebrated in SLS College in a very grand manner. The cake was cut and prayers were offered for the safety of the motherland. Sarfraz Malik, Managing Director of British Council's Gold Partner Institute, SLS College, said in his address that we celebrate every national festival in a grand manner so that patriotism is highlighted among the students. The ceremony was officially started with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the prayer for the safety of the country.

In the ceremony, Mubashir Nazir Qureshi said that students should go abroad and represent Pakistan positively with their good attitude. Students come from different cities of Pakistan and other countries to quench their thirst for education. He congratulated the IELTS Certified Instructor MD SLS College Sarfraz Malik for the award given by the British Council for his outstanding results in English tests and on highest IELTS candidates.

The cake of Independence Day was cut. At the end, certificates were presented among successful students of the UK Marriage English A1, IELTS, B1, Spoken English and Computer Courses.

Across China: Passion for sports ignites summer nights in ancient capital

Xinhua

XI'AN: After warming up, jogging and stretching, near the banks of Qujiang Pool, a renowned scenic spot in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, Zhao Wenlong uploaded his exercise data to his WeChat moments.

Born in 1988, Zhao has been a regular jogger for nearly 20 years. He even founded a club 10 years ago, drawing thousands of fellow jogging enthusiasts.

"People are busy working during the day. Night running is not just an efficient use of time but also a way to unwind after an intense day of work," he said.

Against the backdrop of Xi'an's illuminated urban panorama, a growing number of people have turned to nighttime activities across the city's parks, roadways and riverbanks amid the summer's heatwave.

Zhao said that in the past, as many as 100 club members ran together near the landmarks like the Daming Palace and Qujiang Pool, but now, the group is divided into small ones with each consisting of three to five joggers.

"It's not because we have fewer joggers, but because our club members have more routes to choose from," said Zhao.

Xi'an is home to about 13 million people, more than 1,000 miniparks and greenery squares, and a greenway exceeding 1,000 km. Many of the parks and squares are equipped with fitness facilities, making them perfect destinations for exercise fans.

Zhao Wenzhe, 29, has developed a penchant for night cycling.

"Nighttime offers favorable road conditions as well as an opportunity to admire the city's night scene while staying fit is a rewarding experience," said Zhao.

As one of some 300 members of an online cycling group, Zhao habitually checks the group's "ride invitation" messages before he finishes work. "We ride together if our route is the same. In that way, the night ride is safer and more fun," he said.

It is not just night runs or rides that have gained popularity. Activities such as frisbee, flag football, land surfing and even barroom baseball have emerged as popular nighttime sports, providing individuals with diverse options to break a sweat during the nighttime.

Guo Jianjun, a professor at the Capital University of Physical Education and Sports, said nighttime sports have become a widespread phenomenon, with an increasing number of young adults engaging in nocturnal physical activities.

This trend not only bolsters the physical well-being of young people

amidst the hustle and bustle of modern life but also forges an innovative avenue for social networking, Guo emphasized.

Figures show that the revenue in the cultural, sports and entertainment sectors in Xi'an saw a remarkable 15 percent surge in the first half of this year.

The infusion of sports has not only invigorated the nighttime economy but also broadened leisure options for residents and tourists alike.

According to Yang Jianshe, dean of the School of Sports and Leisure at Xi'an Physical Education University, engaging in nighttime sports and activities not only fuels advancements in sports equipment and services industries but also weaves sports into the realms of dining, culture, entertainment, and tourism. This interconnection contributes to the flourishing expansion of the nighttime economy.

Across China: Young Chinese reconnect with historical city through 'Citywalk'

Xinhua

ZHENGZHOU: Over the summer break, a wave of fashionably dressed young people flocked to Kaifeng in central China's Henan Province to explore the city that was the ancient capital of eight dynasties through a trendy "Citywalk"

They eagerly shared fresh perspectives and travel encounters on various social media platforms, adding new layers of appreciation to the city's rich tapestry.

"Citywalk," or meandering through the urban landscapes, means the act of walking freely along city streets unburdened by exhaustive plans and cumbersome bags. Such a convenient form of travel has emerged as a prevailing

trend among young people in China, offering them an avenue to intimately experience urban culture and local traditions.

Nestled in the eastern expanse of Henan and along the southern banks of the Yellow River, Kaifeng's historical roots extend over two millennia.

"Kaifeng is one of China's first national historical and cultural cities, boasting a deep-seated cultural heritage. It's an ideal destination for unhurried exploration, encouraging visitors to take a leisurely pace as they step into Kaifeng's embrace," said Wei Peishi, head of the city's cultural, radio, film and tourism bureau.

After appreciating the bustling ambiance of the Gulou business district, a tranquil shift awaits on Shengchanhou

Street where blue bricks, grey tiles and stone pathways form an aesthetic canvas.

Tucked away on the street's northern flank lies the "A Beam of Light" bookstore warmly welcoming book lovers with its eclectic collection and captivating aura featuring calligraphy, paintings and inscriptions.

"During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), Kaifeng thrived with a blossoming commodity economy and vibrant cultural interactions, leading to the rapid growth of bookstores," said Zhou Bing, who runs the bookstore.

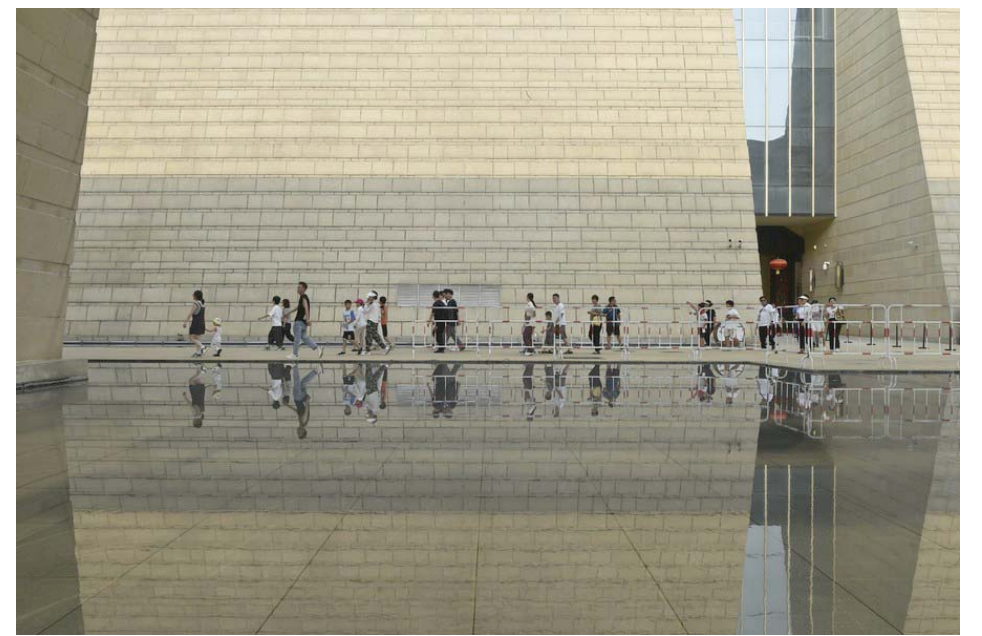
"Our aim behind selecting this location is to offer customers a glimpse of the historical era, allowing them to delve into the rich legacy of the Song Dynasty," Zhou added.

The Fuxingfang Block, where Shengchanhou Street is located, is home to more than 10 streets, 163 courtyards, six cultural relics protection units and over 30 historical buildings.

"In recent years, we've undertaken a revitalization drive, transforming aging blocks into a cohesive hub of historical and cultural significance integrating daily life, work and travel," said Xu Wenqiang, who works for the Xianguo Temple Street in Gulou District.

"The dilapidated streets and alleys have been infused with new life through renovation, and an array of bookstores, studios, traditional handicraft workshops and art galleries have opened here," Xu said.

As evening descends,



Kaifeng's streets transform into a vibrant snack market, with numerous trucks orderly parked. Amidst a medley of enticing aromas and lively vendor calls, visitors can be

seen savoring various snacks and delicacies.

"The essence of Kaifeng's cultural tourism lies in the profound culture of the Song Dynasty. Through cultural

tourism products with different themes, including architecture, cuisine and opera, we aim to help visitors gain a deeper appreciation of Kaifeng's history and heritage," Wei said.

Unstable Rupee keeps damaging economy amid tough IMF conditions

News Desk

LAHORE: Anjum Nisar says rupee emerges as worst performing currency in Asia, registering 26% decline in a year. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that the unstable rupee value and its massive fall continued to damage the economy, as the local currency has hit a new all-time low mark against US dollar in the interbank market amidst rising energy cost and escalating markup rate owing to tough conditions of the International Monetary Fund, devaluing the rupee by 1.96% or Rs3.82 against the US dollar in the inter-bank market. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that there was a complete breakdown of economic policymaking, as the country's fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies. During the week, the rupee emerged as the worst performing currency in Asia in the wake of strengthening of the greenback globally and a surge in its demand in Pakistan. Among all currencies, Pakistani rupee registered the largest decline of 26.6% in the past one year and the steepest drop of 22.3% in the first eight months of 2023. He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The empirical evidence showed that the one percent monetary tightening hiked the inflationary pressure by 1.3 percent in the case of Pakistan, he added.

Rupee plummets 2.53pc against dollar for third week

TLTP

KARACHI: Pakistani rupee continued losing ground against the US dollar for the third week in a row, depreciating by 2.53 percent in the interbank market, 2.61 percent in open market and 1.59 percent in the black market/ Hundi. According to the figures shared by the State Bank of Pakistan, the rupee opened at 288.49 in the interbank market on Tuesday last and closed at 295.78 on Friday last, going down by Rs7.29 (-2.53 percent) against the greenback. Monday was a public holiday in the country for being the national Independence Day. The rupee depreciated in three out of four sessions of the week and only held ground on Thursday when it gained one paisa against the dollar. During the current fiscal year 2023-24, Pakistani rupee has shed Rs9.79 against the US dollar in the interbank market, while it plummeted by Rs68.35 against the greenback in the current year. Similar was the case in the open market, as the local unit opened in the range of 295-298 against the dollar on Tuesday and closed the week at 303-306, going down by Rs8 (-2.61 percent). Following suit, the dollar was quoted at Rs315 in the black market/Hundi on Tuesday last and Rs320 was the rate at the end of the week, showing a depreciation of Rs5 (-1.59 percent). According to currency experts, the demand for the dollar remained high as imports are opening up gradually. They said the rupee's recent decline can be attributed to the removal of restrictions on letters of credit (LCs), which has led to an increased demand for dollars and subsequently weakened the rupee. They said that the price of oil going up in the international market could also be cited as a reason for the dollar price to spike. They also said that there is a shortage of greenbacks in the market.

No progress in power sector despite rise in electricity tariff to Rs51/unit: PIAF

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has stressed the need for overhauling the power sector through drastic measures, as there is no progress in this sector's financial position despite increase in electricity prices up to Rs51 per unit under the IMF's policy to remove inefficiencies, amidst escalating cost of line losses to a whopping level. PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol stated that the circular debt is projected to increase by another Rs545 billion by March 2024 despite a surge in electricity prices as foreign loans pegged with the so-called power sector reforms are limited to only increasing prices and ignore other critical issues. Pakistan eyes another loan of \$600 million from the World Bank for power sector reforms in the current fiscal year and the sector also remains in focus of the International Monetary Fund under a new \$3 billion standby arrangement. Yet, there is no improvement in the sector's financial health despite increase in electricity prices up to Rs51 per unit under the IMF's policy of fiscalization of power sector inefficiencies, a strategy that has led to a massive change in priorities of the low middle-income groups just to pay their bills.

Insurance against natural disasters can be very effective: Mian Shahid

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The United Insurance Company (UIC) continues to enjoy a stable outlook despite the overall decline in economic conditions in the country, which is an achievement. Pakistan Credit Rating Agency (PACRA) has maintained, while VIS Credit Rating Company has reaffirmed the Insurer Financial Strength (IFS) rating of United Insurance Company (UIC) at 'AA+' (Double A Plus). The rating signifies the strong capacity of the company to meet policyholders and contract obligations. Risk factors are very low, and the impact of any adverse business and economic factors is expected to be very small. UIC, being the group's flagship company, is a major player among the leading general insurers in the country and has an established



and growing takaful segment of the business.

Ratings derive comfort from growth and improvement in underwriting performance during the review period, despite a stressed global and domestic economic environment, it said. The business risk profile of the insurance industry is elevated owing to the projected slowdown in domestic economic activity due to high-interest rates, rupee devaluation, runaway inflation, high energy prices, and destruction caused by floods. Reacting to the development, the CEO of the UIC, Mian M A Shahid said that the overall economic downturn and natural disasters have brought the economy to its knees, and many businesses are struggling to survive. He said that natural disaster losses have escalated over the last several years due both to construction and other factors in high-

risk areas. As climate change continues to influence extreme events, the role of insurance in adapting to these changes is becoming increasingly important, he added. Mian M A Shahid said that insurance has a critical role to play in promoting disaster resilience. It can provide financial protection, preventing negative economic hardship after a disaster. The insurance industry can help speed up rebuilding and recovery by providing post-disaster funding and liquidity. Insurance could also promote risk reduction before a disaster through financial incentives, he said, adding that that the continued growth of UIC is the outcome of good management and a brilliant and dedicated team.

Weekly Bazaar

RAWALPINDI: People are busy buying vegetables in Sunday weekly bazaar at Committee Chowk in the city.



Photo: Online

ICCI and CDA launch Tree Plantation Drive from F-6 Markaz

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Noorul Amin Mengal along with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Director General Environment Protection Agency Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah visited Islamabad's posh commercial center F-6 Markaz and launched a tree plantation drive from markets by planting a saplings in the Supermarket. F-6 Markaz Traders Welfare Association President Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Secretary General Aqib Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Akhtar Abbasi, Malik Shabbir Awan, Imtiaz Abbasi and others were also present on the occasion. Chairman CDA took a round of the market along with Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, DG EPA Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah and representatives of Traders Association and reviewed the ongoing development works. He issued instructions to the CDA officials to speed up the ongoing works and to advance other works as well. Talking on this occasion, he said that the development work will be reviewed by visiting other markets soon. Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI had earlier planted thousands of saplings in Islamabad in collaboration with CDA and this year too, ICCI in coop-



eration with CDA and concerned market associations, would carry out the plantation drive in the markets to make Islamabad greener and promote a healthy environment. He said that along with planting new trees, a strategy should be made for proper maintenance of old trees so that they can be kept safe. He said that to determine the age of old trees in Islamabad, tags should be placed on them and special arrangements should be made for their proper maintenance so that they can be preserved for a long time. Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah, Director General EPA, said that there is a need to plant

more trees to protect the cities from the harmful effects of climate change and it is commendable that the ICCI in promoting the tree plantation drive in the markets in collaboration with CDA and trade associations, which will make the environment of Islamabad healthier. The President Supermarket Association Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi assured of full cooperation to make the plantation drive successful. He stressed that there is a need to replace the old sewage lines in the markets as the old lines are no longer able to bear the load due to the increase in population and often get blocked.

Fly Jinnah launches Mobile App for enhanced passenger convenience

News Desk

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's new low-cost carrier (LCC), announces the launch of its brand-new mobile application, designed to provide passengers with unparalleled convenience and a seamless travel experience.



With the new Fly Jinnah mobile app, passengers can now effortlessly book and manage their flights, making travel arrangements more convenient than ever before. The user-friendly interface allows users to explore flight options, select preferred seats, and choose from a variety of additional services such as adding baggage and meal selection. This ensures that passengers have complete control over their travel plans, right at their fingertips.

One of the key features of the Fly Jinnah mobile app is the integrated check-in process. Avoiding long queues at airport counters, passengers can now conveniently check-in for their flights through the app, saving valuable time and avoiding unnecessary hassle. Furthermore, the app provides passengers with digital boarding passes, eliminating the need for printed copies and making the boarding process smoother and more efficient.

Businessmen Panel hails caretaker cabinet for its 'exceptional credentials'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mirza Abdul Rehman Spokesman for the Businessmen Panel & Chairman of Coordination FPCCI capital office, Islamabad has welcomed the caretaker federal cabinet and said that the inclusion of qualified and capable people with extensive experience and expertise in the relevant fields in the caretaker federal cabinet has given hope to the business community and the people. He further said that Mr. Gohar Ejaz, appointment as Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce & Industries will facilitate the representation of trade and industry in the caretaker setup at this crucial juncture in Pakistan's economic history. We needed a strong voice in the interim setup from within the industry – and, Mr. Gohar Ejaz is an excellent choice for his exceptional credentials as an industrialist and exporter himself. He is Chairman of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association, Gohar Ejaz is a respected figure in Pakistan. His qualifications include a business degree, and he heads the "Ejaz Group Of Companies," comprising Ejaz Spinning Mills Limited and Ejaz Textile Mills Limited. Mirza Abdul Rehman Said that, maintained that the illustrious track record of Mr. Gohar Ejaz speaks volumes on his ability to come up with practical solutions to economic problems and get things done. Therefore, he is optimistic that Mr. Gohar Ejaz will be an effective & productive commerce minister and deliver results for trade and industry. Mirza Abdul Rehman pinned his hopes that Mr. Gohar Ejaz will be able to remove major bottlenecks in the growth of Pakistan's exports in general – and, regional, border, or barter trade through land-based routes in particular.

Ambassadors show keen interest in RCCI Health Expo & Summit 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of different countries have shown keen interest in the two-day RCCI Health Expo and Summit 2023 at a local Hotel in Islamabad. Atadjan N. Movlamov Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Yerzan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiev, Syrian Ambassador Rameez Alraee, Ethiopian Ambassador Jamal Becker, among others, visited different stalls and appreciated the products. Ethiopian Ambassador Jamal Becker in his tweet lauded RCCI efforts for a successful event, Med-Health Expo 2023, showcasing

the health sector potential. He also desired for close cooperation in the health sector between the two countries. The official twitter and Facebook account of Kazakhstan embassy in Pakistan also highlighted the visit of ambassador of Kazakhstan, Yerzan Kistafin, at the RCCI Med-Health Expo and Summit 2023. A panel discussion was also organized on the sidelines of the expo where speakers highlighted the export potential of pharmaceuticals in Pakistan given its capabilities in drug manufacturing, a skilled workforce and a growing global demand for affordable medicines. Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry was known for producing high-quality generic medicines at competitive prices and this cost-effectiveness makes Pakistani pharmaceutical products attractive to countries seeking affordable healthcare solutions, they added. The topics for the panel discussion



includes Medical Care and Challenges in the Modern Era, Development of Health Care Equipment in Pakistan, Biological and Vaccine Development in Pakistan, Industry-Academia Linkage & Research in the Healthcare Sector in Pakistan, Health Tourism etc.

