



Ishaq Dar reveals reason behind 'rising sugar prices'

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China rejects India's protest over release of standard map

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wednesday rejected India's protest over the release of standard map and hoped that the Indian side could stay objective and calm and refrain from over interpreting. India on Tuesday lodged a strong protest with China over its release of standard map that laid claim over Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin as region within its borders. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

COAS appreciated

Rawalpindi: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir visits Tilla Field Firing Ranges near Jhelum on Wednesday.



Photo: ISPR

COAS witnesses field fire, battle drills near Jhelum

Spokesman Report

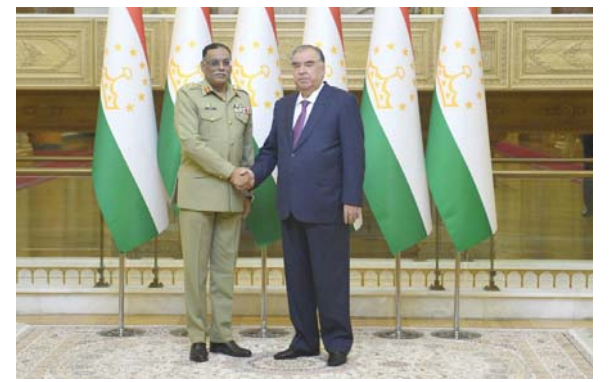
RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir COAS, visited Tilla Field Firing Ranges near Jhelum today. COAS witnessed Field Fire and Battle Drills.

On arrival, COAS was briefed on training objectives set for the exercise with a view to validate operational readiness of the formation in challenging environment.

COAS appreciated the synergy displayed by Airforce, Army Aviation and ground troops in execution of various operational drills. COAS praised the troops for their combat proficiency and offensive spirit. He also appreciated high morale and battle worthiness of the troops.

Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Lieutenant General Syed Aamer Raza, Commander 4 Corps.

CJCSC calls on Tajikistan President



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza Wednesday called on President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

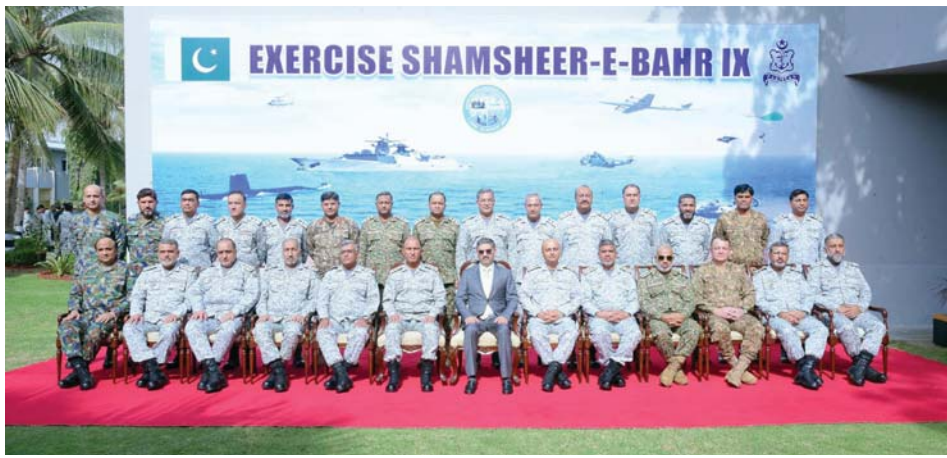
The CJCSC, who is on official visit to Tajikistan, also had separate meetings with other government and military officials during which matters of mutual interests were discussed, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

PM emphasizes significance of war games in validating naval war plans

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday emphasized the significance of war games in validating naval war plans in sync with military and national security policy, besides exploring operational concepts and refining deployment strategies.

The prime minister, addressing the debrief session of Pakistan Navy's war game Shamsheer-e-Bahr IX, lauded the well-deliberated plans of the force commanders and the insightful analysis of the war game, which would help crystallize operational plans for maritime security and seaward defence of Pakistan, a PM Office press release said.



He also highlighted the enhanced responsibilities of the Pakistan Navy in ensuring the security of China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor and Gwadar Port.

Prime Minister Kakar expressed complete confidence in the prepar-

edness of the Pakistan Navy to meet all threats and challenges, and reassured the government's commitment to provide all avail-

able resources for its capacity building.

Earlier upon arrival at the venue, the prime minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

While presenting the overview, the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) outlined the objectives of the war game which was conducted in tri-service format, with participants of relevant ministries and divisions as well.

He highlighted various concepts tried during the war game and recommendations pertaining to the Pakistan Navy's deployment strategies.

The debrief of the exercise was attended by high-level government officials and senior officers from tri-services.

Saudi crown prince expected to visit Pakistan next month



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman is expected to visit Pakistan next month, diplomatic sources.

Sources say that Mohammed bin Salman will arrive in Pakistan on September 10 and his stay in the country will be for around six hours, after which he will depart for India on a state visit for G-20 meeting.

During his short stay in Pakistan, the crown prince will hold meetings with caretaker premier Kakar, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and other officials.

Matters pertaining to mutual interest would come under discussion, say a diplomatic source. The construction of an oil refinery in Pakistan by Saudi Arabia will also be discussed during MBS visit, they say.

Pakistan discusses relief in electricity bills with IMF

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has contacted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over proposed relief in electricity bills.

Caretaker Minister for Finance, Dr Shamsahad Akhtar, has contacted IMF resident representative Esther Pérez Ruiz over the matter, sources at finance ministry stated.

The minister discussed for relief over electricity bills with the IMF, the finance ministry sources said.

The monetary fund was briefed about the situation emerged after hike in electricity bills, sources said.

The proposals for providing relief in electricity bills to consumers have been shared with the IMF, sources at ministry stated.

According to sources, the IMF got the government's stance over the relief and invited a written plan for relief over the power bills. "A written relief plan will be delivered to the IMF this evening," ministry sources added.

Authorities barred from taking Imaan Mazari outside Islamabad



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) has barred the authorities from shifting human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari outside the federal capital.

As per details, the IHC judge Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb ordered Interior Secretary, IG Islamabad and FIA to not take Iman Mazari out of Islamabad.

The court also directed the authorities to not arrest the daughter of Shireen Mazari in any case registered after August 20.

Earlier, the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) granted a three-day physical remand to the human rights lawyer, Imaan Mazari, in a case related to "collection of funds to fuel anti-state activities".

Arrears: Chinese company warns to close Thar coal production work

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chinese coal company has cautioned to close coal production in Thar Coalfield over non-payment of arrears.

The production at Thar coalfield could be suspended after September 10, resulting in shutdown of 1320 megawatts power generation from the region, sources said.

The arrears of China Machinery Engineering Corporation have soared to US\$50 million, and delay in June to August payments causing difficulties for the company to perform its contract issues, sources said.

The firm's China head office has given deadline for recovery of all payables by October.

In the next four months more 30 million dollars would also require to be paid, and the contract period will be concluded in four months.

Chinese firm has informed the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company in a letter that it could not continue coal production from Thar Coal Block-2 if the arrears would not be paid by September 10.

Journalist Fayaz Zafar arrested under MPO

Bureau Report

SWAT: A senior journalist in Swat namely Fayaz Zafar has been arrested by the local police under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance (MPO).

Swat police department confirmed that they arrested a senior journalist Fayaz Zafar under MPO. Later, the journalist was shifted to swat jail from the DC Office.

The journalist told the media that he was taken to the deputy commissioner (DC) office where he was subjected to torture. He added that he was arrested for reporting the truth.

Earlier in the month, a senior journalist and Kawish Television Network (KTN) Sukkur bureau chief Jan Mohammad Mahar had been murdered by unidentified assailants on August 13.

The attackers on a motorcycle had opened fire at Mahar inside his vehicle after he left his office at 9:00 am in Sukkur.

In August, another journalist had been murdered by an unidentified man in Ahmedpur - Khairpur.

Senator Mandviwala calls on Caretaker PM



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwala on Wednesday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The senator felicitated the prime minister on assuming the office and extended his best wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The caretaker prime minister thanked Mandviwala for his wishes.

PTI chief to stay in jail as court extends judicial remand in cipher case

Bureau Report

ATTOCK: A special court on Wednesday extended the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's judicial remand till September 13 in the cipher case.

Judge Abul Hasanat Zulqarnain, who heard the case at the Attock District Jail under Official Secrets Act 2023, issued the decision in the case of the missing cipher, a classified state document.

Hearing of the case took place at the Attock Jail following approval by the Law Ministry amid security concerns expressed by the Interior Ministry.

Shamsheer-e-Bahar IX

KARACHI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the debriefing session of Pakistan Navy's War Game "Shamsheer-e-Bahar IX" on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

'President has no role in election date', Law ministry tells Alvi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law on Wednesday told President Arif Alvi that he has no role in the announcement of date for general elections "following the amendment in Elections Act".

The law ministry has forwarded its response to President Alvi's letter, seeking opinion on Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) stance that "only it had the authority to decide the election date".

In the letter, the Law ministry said that the right of announcing the date of election rests with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"According to Article 48(5) of the Constitution, where the National Assembly is dissolved by the President, he shall appoint a date for election and appoint a caretaker cabinet in accordance with the provision of Article 224 or as the case may be under Article 224-A," the ministry said in the letter.

Under Article 58, the letter noted, the President shall act on and in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister and such advice shall be binding on him. "An advice sent under Article 58a shall take effect within 48 hours", it added.

The ministry further said that the system will witness a distortion if President's authority to give election date is accepted. "The purpose of amending



the Election Act was a single authority can give date of elections," it added.

The development came after Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja responded to President Alvi's letter for meeting to "fix an appropriate date" for general elections, saying that participating in such a meeting would be of "scant importance" after changes to the election law.

The president had written to Sikandar Raja Sultan, inviting him for a meeting regarding holding general elections in the country.

In his letter, President Alvi quoted Article 244 of the Constitution, saying he was duty-bound to get the elections conducted in the 90 days' prescribed period once the National Assembly is dissolved prematurely.

Responding to the letter, ECP CEC said it was "imperative" to point out that Section 57 of the Elec-

tions Act had been amended due to an act of Parliament, which had empowered the commission to "announce the date or dates for the general elections".

"Where the president dissolves the National Assembly, in his discretion, as provided in Article 58(2) read with Article 48(5) of the Constitution then he has to appoint a date for the general elections. However, if the assembly is dissolved on the advice of the prime minister or by afflux of time as provided in Article 58(1) of the Constitution, then the commission understands and believes that power to appoint a date or dates for elections rests exclusively with the Commission.

CEC Raja said that the delimitation of constituencies, after the approval of the digital census, was one of the "foundational legal steps" towards holding polls.

He further said that the ECP was taking its responsibility of holding general elections in the country "very seriously" and had also invited major political parties to give their views on the electoral map.

Earlier, it was reported that the ECP decided to hold general elections in the second week of February 2024.

Sources privy to the development told ARY News that the election commission is likely to issue general elections schedule after December 2023. "The election schedule will be issued 54 days after the completion of the delimitation process," said sources with ECP.

Election Commission meets with Balochistan Awami Party, BAP, others

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan held three consultative meetings today with various political parties. The first meeting involved a delegation from the Awami National Party (ANP), followed by the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and finally the Balochistan National Party (BNP) at the ECP Secretariat in Islamabad.

These sessions were scheduled at 11 AM, 2 PM, and 3 PM respectively. The meetings were chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Sikandar Sultan Raja. Members of the Election Commission, Secretary ECP

and other senior officers also attended the meetings.

Representatives from the Awami National Party, Mr. Mian Iftikhar Hussain, Mr. Zahid Khan, Mr. Khushdil Khan, and Mr. Abdul Rahim Wazir attended the meeting. The Balochistan Awami Party was represented by Mr. Nasibullah, Mr. Manzoor Kakar, Mr. Noor Muhammad Dummer, and Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran. Balochistan National Party's representation included Mr. Abdul Kareem Noshervani, Ms. Sana Jamali, and Mr. Danish Kumar.

The delegation from the Balochistan Awami Party endorsed the Election Commission's new delimita-

tion decisions. BAP members stated that since the census results have been published, there is no need to carry out new delimitation, as it could



lead to discrepancies with political parties, candidates, and the public. They recommended that a fair and transparent delimitation and unbiased elections be ensured.

Furthermore, they emphasized that before announcing the election schedule following delimitation, the seasonal effects in different parts of the

country should be considered, so that candidates and voters do not face difficulties during the elections.

They praised the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commission's performance, expressing their complete trust in their abilities. The Balochistan Awami Party expressed complete confidence in the Election Commission, based on past decisions as well.

Representative Agha Hassan Baloch from the Balochistan National Party expressed full confidence in the Election Commission and suggested that elections should be held within 90 days. He noted that the recent census results were not accurate,

showing a lower population count for Balochistan. Therefore, his party believes that new delimitation would not be beneficial. However, if the Election Commission deems delimitation necessary, it should be correctly carried out for all constituencies, including those where delimitation was previously done inaccurately.

The Chief Election Commissioner assured the delegations that after appropriately reducing the duration of the delimitation process, the announcement of immediate elections would be ensured with full transparency and in accordance with the constitution and laws.

Caretaker PM Kakar to address UNGA session on Sept 22



News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar is likely to attend the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which opens on September 5, it emerged Wednesday.

Caretaker PM Kakar will apparently be the first interim prime minister to represent Pakistan at the UN General Assembly. He will be addressing the UN summit on September 22 and he would return the same day after delivering his speech.

A small delegation will accompany the caretaker prime minister including interim Foreign Minister Syed Jilil Abbas Jilani, interim Information and Broadcasting Minister Murtaza Solangi, interim Climate Changes and Law and Parliamentary and Water Resources Affairs Minister Ahmad Irfan Aslam and Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Qazi.

A UN press statement marked Sept 19 as the first day of the high-level general debate that is addressed by world leaders.

Finance Minister's statement in Standing Committee meeting misinterpreted: Solangi



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said a statement made by Caretaker Minister for Finance Shamshad Akhtar in the standing committee was misinterpreted by some sections

of the media forcing her to issue clarification.

The minister while sharing her video message in this regard wrote on his handle on the X (formerly known as Twitter), "The statement by Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Finance Minister of Pakistan. According to her, a light vein comment was blown out of proportion forcing her to clarify."

In her message, the finance minister said her statement was misinterpreted.

She said it was an honour for her to serve the country in difficult circumstances.

Pakistan, Iran agree to enhance cooperation in diverse sectors



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Wednesday agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in diverse sectors.

The understanding was reached at a meeting between Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Sami Saeed and newly appointed Iranian ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri-Moghaddam and in Islamabad.

During the meeting, the both sides discussed various avenues of collaboration between the two nations including bilateral trade, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, cooperation in energy and economic sectors.

The planning minister emphasised

the importance of the long-standing friendship between Pakistan and Iran and reiterated the commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties.

Sami Saeed commended the existing border markets between Pakistan and Iran and suggested exploring additional areas of mutual interest and collaboration. The minister also proposed evolving a mechanism to facilitate smoother trade transactions.

The Iranian Ambassador offered his country's cooperation in the energy sector, acknowledging Pakistan's energy security needs.

Both sides emphasised the need to enhance trade and connectivity between the two nations, expressing a mutual desire to boost the bilateral trade volume.

Ishaq Dar reveals reason behind 'rising sugar prices'

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister Ishaq Dar believes that the increase in sugar prices is thus not a reflection of stock position but "exploitative policies of unscrupulous businesses and poor governance".

Talking to X (formerly Twitter), the former finance minister asked "not to raise false alarm over existing sugar stocks of 2.3 million metric tons."

"With the next crushing season only 2.5 months away i.e. by November 16 2023, there is no need for raising false alarm over existing sugar stocks of 2.3 million metric tons," Ishaq Dar wrote on X.

According to the PML-N leader, the country's monthly consumption of sugar is just over "half million metric and opening stock at the start of new crushing season in mid-Nov23 will be around one million metric tons".

He pointed out that the increase in

sugar's retail prices is thus not a reflection of stock position "but exploitative policies of unscrupulous businesses and poor governance".

Ishaq Dar claimed that the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led (PDM) government had allowed export of quarter million metric after due verification by the relevant authorities and institutions of the "then opening stock, crushing results, national consumption and maintenance of strategic reserve of sugar".

Dar also said that the decision was made to earn precious \$125 million for the national foreign exchange reserves.

It is pertinent to mention here that the wholesale price of sugar has hit a record high and reached Rs163 per kilogram in Pakistan.

Wholesale Grocers Association in its statement said that the per kilogram price of sugar has gone up by Rs6 with a 1-kilogram pack being sold out in the wholesale market at Rs 163.



In retail, the price of the commodity varies between Rs170 to Rs180 per kilogram.

Chairman of the Wholesale Grocers Association Rauf Ibrahim said sugar is not available to wholesalers even at high prices. If the surge continues the sugar prices can go beyond Rs 200 per kg.

ECC bans sugar export. Meanwhile, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet decided to impose a ban on sugar exports.

The committee decided to ban sugar exports. Prior to this decision,

the ECC approved the summary to export 32,000 metric tonnes of sugar in June.

Earlier in the day, it was reported that the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) had decided to import 100,000 metric tons of sugar, priced at Rs 220 per kilogram.

Sources within the Food Department disclosed that the department currently holds a surplus stock of 1 million tonnes of sugar while importing additional sugar pricing at Rs 220 per kg.

Sources stated that the Food Department will have to utilize its reserves of sugar which depletes the surplus stocks to introduce the imported sugar into the market which impacts the consumer prices.

Sources claimed that the citizens will have to pay an additional Rs 120 to purchase the government subsidized sugar of Rs 100 per kg at Rs 220 per kilogram.

AJK PM announces Poonch administrative package to address deprivation of its people

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq has approved the historic administrative package for Poonch Division, notification issued. Senior Minister Finance Colonel (Retd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Government Ministers Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Mian Abdul Waheed, Diwan Ali Khan Chaghtai, Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Sardar Javed Ayub, Sardar Muhammad Hussain, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Sardar Zia Qamar, Sardar Aamir Altaf, Ch. Azhar Sadiq, Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Chairman of Inspection Commission Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah while addressing a crowded press conference. Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq handed over the notification file to former President and Prime Minister Sardar Yaqub Khan on this occasion.

The AJK premier said that to remove the feeling of deprivation

of Poonch division, a big package has been approved in consultation with the allied parties, which have been notified. The government is aware of the problems of the people and we will solve all the problems. The purpose of the Poonch package is to remove the feeling of deprivation of the people of this division. By giving the posts of Chief Engineer Highways Poonch, Chief Engineer Electricity Poonch, Director Health Services Poonch, Divisional Director Colleges Poonch, Chief Engineer Buildings / Public Health Engineering, Poonch has been empowered. The problem of power outages has been resolved and I will use my power fully for the welfare of the people where necessary.

Our struggle will continue until achieving the right of self-determination. Financial discipline has been established. What is the end of gray areas? Thanks to a stable and strong Pakistan, the candle of the Azadi Kashmir movement will continue

to burn. I will never dissolve the assembly, nor am I accustomed to protocol, nor am I in any dilemma. I will take the same as long as I have the power, I will use it with all my might for the good of God's creation. The Prime Minister said that the focus of my press conference today is Poonch Division. Environmental problems are arising due to the diversion of Neelum Jhelum River.

SOPs have been made in collaboration with WAPDA to solve these problems. Talked to the Government of Pakistan regarding the construction of Rathua Hariyam Bridge in Mirpur. Talking about our rights, we associate it with nationalism. The people of Poonch have always felt deprived. The people of Poonch have always resisted. They said that there were some facilities in Muzaffarabad and Mirpur which were not in Poonch division. We have appointed Chief Engineer for Poonch for roads and electricity.



Head office level decisions will be made in capital Muzaffarabad. Senior officers will start sitting in Poonch from tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. The scope of protests on electricity bills has spread across the country. I want to at least avoid people's curses, the announcements I made took 15 minutes but took 45 days to make.

In response to a question, the Prime Minister said that whoever of my members has the

support of 27 members should come forward and show it. I will sit in the opposition. If someone comes forward and shows the majority of members, I will go home. I will dissolve the assembly, I will quietly sit in the opposition, the democratic system cannot run without giving portfolios to the ministers, soon a decision will be made to give portfolios to the ministers. He said, I am proud to be a Kashmiri. Even though I am a political

activist, I do not declare, the economic problems in Pakistan are getting worse day by day, which has also affected Azad Kashmir. He said that the fair distribution of resources will be ensured according to the needs, our tragedy is that we have abandoned the rule of law and are following traditions while I have tried to make everyone subject to the law.

To be done and started on my own first, in four months I will

have seen more than a thousand files, only the signatures have not been signed. It is noted that so far none of my orders have been declared illegal by any competent forum, with enabling legislation. Let me move forward. One thing has been made clear, everyone including me has to justify their existence.

In response to a question, the Prime Minister said that I know when to take a decision as the Prime Minister of the state, there are many issues now. Neelum Jhelum, flour problem, electricity, Mangala Dam issues are yet to be resolved. In response to another question, he said that he will start his public visits from Poonch, we have budgeted this year. Azad Kashmir has been divided into 33 constituencies, decision-making powers have been given to MLAs for the first time. I will only fear Allah, I am not afraid of anyone else. But they are giving subsidy, no crackdown has been done against the teachers.

Appreciation

NOWSHERA: Qaumi Islahi Tehreek presenting a souvenir to Ms. Shahana Sikandar, the first woman TMO in the history of PK of Nowshera at a function organized in her honor.



Faith leaders pass unanimously resolution to promote interfaith harmony, peaceful coexistence

ISLAMABAD: The faith leaders, in response to the recent interfaith disturbances and acts of violence that shook Jaranwala, on Wednesday came together and passed a unanimous resolution, fostering interfaith harmony, promoting religious tolerance, and nurturing peaceful coexistence among all communities in Pakistan. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony convened a successful 'Interfaith Harmony Conference' here at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts in which a number of faith leaders, religious scholars, diplomats and people from all walks of life participated with a united vision of unity and inclusivity.

Drawing inspiration from the foundational principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, faith leaders and religious scholars reiterated their commitment to unity and harmony. They paid homage to Jinnah's historic speech on 11th August, 1947, which emphasized the importance of these ideals in shaping the nation.

AIOU holds painting, speech competition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A national song, painting, and speech competition was organized by the Islamabad regional campus of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) at Zargham Mazhar Shaheed Model College, Islamabad. Many students from schools and colleges of Rawalpindi/Islamabad participated in this event.

Anwaar Haider took the first position in the speech competition, followed by Hamza Aziz in second place and Ahsan Ali in third place. In the national song competition, Shakeel Ahmed, Munebullah and Rabeet Hasan secured the first, second, and third positions respectively, while Hasan, Anas Ali, and Ayan took first, second, and third place respectively in the painting competition. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Tauqir Ahmad Khan presided over the event while Regional Director Islamabad, Ahsan Shakur and Regional Director Rawalpindi, Nasreen Akhtar Mirza were also present on this occasion.

Dr. Tauqeer Ahmad Khan congratulated the students and expressed the interest of Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood 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. Moreover, the Department of Sociology, AIOU organized a seminar on "Climate Change and Impacts of Floods" in connection with the World Humanity Day in the main campus of AIOU. Adil Shiraz, Country Head of Care International was the chief guest. Head, Department of Sociology, Dr. Syed Imran Haider, faculty members and students also participated in the seminar.



Peshawar to remain close on today

Bureau Report



PESHAWAR: Malik Mehr Elahi Provincial Chief Tanzeem e Tajran KPK, Senior leader of Anjuman Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Muhammad Afzal Ashraf, Chairman of Anjuman Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shoukat Ali Khan & Ghulam bilal javid chief Executive Traders Alliance Federation KPK has announced a shutter down strike on August 31 against the inflated electricity bills and rising inflation.

In a statement, Malik Mehr Elahi - President Tanzeem e Tajran KPK - said that markets across Peshawar will remain closed on Thursday 31 (August) in protest against inflated electricity bills and rising inflation.

Other trade unions also backed the decision, saying that all markets of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will observe a shutter down strike on August 31.

Meanwhile, Babai Tajran Ameen Hussain Baber Chairman Sarafa & Jewellers Association said that Free power transmission concessions from all government and non-government organizations should be stopped completely.

Moreover, All Pakistan Trade Association has announced a countrywide shutter-down strike on August 31 (Thursday) against the inflated bills.

The association demanded the government should formulate people-friendly policies, adding that the authorities should also end free electricity units for government officials.

The inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests from Khyber to Karachi and protests in some parts of the country are turning violent.

The protesting masses have been demanding that the government should end the provision of free electricity to the notables and provide them relief as the bills they have been receiving are more than their salaries.

Protest demonstrations were held in several parts of Peshawar. Masses carrying banners and placards along with their children criticized the government for making their lives miserable.

'PML-N can decide to separate from government': Former PM

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan has said that PML-N can decide to separate from the government in the current situation. My opinion is in favor of separation from the government.

The state does not tolerate prostitutes, nor can they entrust this region to the ignorant.

31st August (today) Strike and Peaceful Protest Announced, Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Anwar Haq skeptics doubt each and every one.

Do not establish new provinces in the name of posts, there is already a lot of division in the division.

The package announced for Poonch will neither reduce the electricity bills nor solve other problems. Civil disobedience means inviting the use of Article 56, which cannot be



supported under any circumstances. The President's Act became irrelevant after 1970 and Act 1974. There is a mindset in Islamabad that asks what is the need of the Supreme Court and the President in Azad Kashmir. The events of August 5, 2019 were part of the Bajwa doctrine. By staying away from doctrine, he created confidence among Kashmiris.

Addressing an emergency press conference at the Central

Press House on Wednesday, Raja Farooq Haider Khan said that at that time, the increase in electricity bills and the non-availability of cheap flour in Azad Kashmir. People are protesting all over Azad Kashmir, although the Prime Minister has held meetings but no results are visible, it is the responsibility of the government to solve this problem. Due to increasing problems, the temperature of Muzaffarabad has had

a negative impact. Raja Farooq Haider Khan said that being a political activist, living and dying are with the people. The demands are valid which have always been supported. At the time of Mangala Dam inauguration, the then President of Azad Kashmir was seated in the second line, fuel adjustment charges should not be taken in Azad Kashmir, on one side our rivers are being diverted, on the other side taxes are being levied.

The Neelum Jhelum project was justified by the fact that if we do not build it, India will divert the river, Neelum Jhelum was initially 450 megawatts, if it had remained the same, the environmental problem and water problem would not have arisen in Muzaffarabad today. The Neelum Valley starts from Dumlai. No agreement was reached on the Neelum Jhelum during my tenure. At that time, the Prime Minister of Pakistan went to Imran

Khan twice to solve our environmental problems, to be with the people on the issue of electricity bills. They cannot pay such heavy bills, the problems will not be solved by appointing administrative officers in the districts, will the electricity become cheaper if new offices are established, this strategy is not successful to deal with any administrative issue. 18 billion rupees are spent on increasing salaries People sacrificed for Azad Kashmir, what do they want to achieve by humiliating the region of Azad Kashmir, then the same thing will happen that the area of all our districts is less than Azad Kashmir.

Criticizing the ongoing propaganda on social media, he said that those who support India should also support the perpetrators of 1 lakh martyrs and also explain the illegal occupation of Occupied Kashmir, regarding the victims of Indian aggression on the Line of Control. Also give a policy.

Turkiye pledges to support Kashmir cause at international forums: APHC

MUZAFFARABAD: Government of Turkiye and their all political parties pledged to support the ongoing liberation movement in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir IIOJK.

This was said by the joint delegation of Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) led by Speaker Legislative Assembly Latif Akbar during a press conference who recently visited Turkiye.

Speaker Akbar said that Turkish parliament speaker received them warmly in Ankara parliament to express solidarity with the people of IIOJK.

Former AJK Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami

Abdur Rashid Turabi said that following the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation OIC Turkiye has key role in Muslim world and they support Kashmiris right of self-determination at various international forums which they have been continued since 1990.

India tries to put pressure on Turkiye to keep Ankara away from supporting Kashmir cause.

"We attended various conferences in Istanbul and Ankara in connection with Kashmir dispute and urged Turkish leaders to expand their parliamentary role and in this connection they were asked to use their European Union links for the peaceful settlement of IIOJK.



Kashmir relief fund will also be established in Turkiye. We also briefed law makers and media about the existing threats of IIOJK leadership and the issues faced by Indian Muslims," Turabi observed.

Convenor APHC Mehmood Sagar said that the main purpose of the conference in Istanbul was to engage Arab countries lawyers and human rights activists and in this connection first time Kuwait delegation joined us and

supported Kashmiris legitimate peaceful struggle during the Istanbul conference. However, we asked both Turkish and Kuwaiti brothers that

we need their support for Kashmir cause same they support Palestine cause..

The APHC Convenor Mehmood Ahmad Sagar said that they have seen Ankara commitment more serious than Islamabad with Kashmiris. He said

Pakistan needs to introduce Kashmir desks in foreign embassies and make Muzaffarabad a real base camp to promote Kashmir freedom struggle.

All leaders from Shabir Shah to Yaseen Malik are in prisons and Pakistan should support the IIOJK movement

vehemently. World should know that plebiscite is the demand of all communities of IIOJK either they are Hindus, Muslims or Pundits.

Senior APHC leader Altaf Ahmed Bhat said that Turkiye has much more commitment with Kashmiris' political struggle and they will never disappoint us. They believe that Kashmiris ought to be given right of self-determination.

The senior APHC leader Bhat further said that Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell KLC should be utilised to finance the ongoing liberation struggle of IIOJK across the globe. All funds for Kashmir freedom struggle must be sent through KLC accounts.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:13 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:46 pm
Maghrib 6:37 pm
Isha 8:03 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

Jamal Shah visits Aiwan-e-Quaid Building, Bagh-e-Shuhada site

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamal Shah, Interim Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture on Wednesday visited Aiwan-e-Quaid Building at Fatima Jinnah Park, Islamabad and expressed his desire to further upgrade the facilities.

During visit, the senior officials at Aiwan-e-Quaid briefed him about various facilities available at the building.

The Federal Minister also visited various facilities of Aiwan-e-Quaid Building including Quaid-i-Azam Gallery, Quaid Public Library, Auditorium, documentation center, Training and research center.

The Federal Minister said that the facilities would be upgraded to make it more useful place for the people for relevant cultural, educational and literary activities.

The Minister also visited Bagh-e-Shuhada, being developed adjacent to the Islamabad Art Gallery which besides other features would also contain



portrait of martyrs and a beautiful Monument with the purpose to aware people particularly children and young generation about sacrifices of Martyrs. The Minister said that Bagh-e-Shuhada would be inaugurated on September 6 in a graceful ceremony followed by a musical concert aiming to pay tribute to Martyrs and Art Exhibition at Islamabad Art Gallery

JS Bank announces BankIslami acquisition

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: JS Bank has announced the successful acquisition of an additional 67.33% stake in BankIslami Pakistan Limited, a move that solidified its position as one of Pakistan's fastest-growing financial institutions. The acquisition was executed through a series of agreements with existing shareholders and a public offer, taking JS Bank's total shareholding to 75.12% in BankIslami Pakistan Limited, effectively making BankIslami a subsidiary of JS Bank and an integral part of the JS Group.

Basir Shamsie, President & CEO of JS Bank, expressed his enthusiasm about the acquisition: "This is a significant milestone that promises to better meet the needs of our valued customers and enhance the offerings of both Banks. Both teams are excited to embark on this new chapter, and create more customer-centric financial institutions."

JS Group is one of the founding investors in BankIslami, and both institutions have enjoyed a longstanding relationship.

Both JS Bank and BankIslami will continue to operate as separate and independent organizations. While BankIslami will continue to uphold its strong roots in Islamic Banking, JS Bank will stay true to its trajectory of growth in conventional banking especially in the area of consumer lending space. Both entities will continue to leverage their respective strengths to develop and deliver best-in-class products and services to their customers.

Poverty-stricken

ISLAMABAD: Laborers sit along the road side at Sector G-11 along with their equipments as waiting for customers to hire them for a day job and pay daily wages for the livelihood of their families.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

IBA, AAA Associates come together to establish a Scholarship Endowment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: AAA Associates, a leading real estate organization of Pakistan, and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, country's prestigious higher education institution have partnered to establish a Scholarship Endowment fund. With an aim to advance the institute's financial assistance program for its deserving students, the AAA Associates Scholarship Endowment will benefit deserving students in perpetuity.

Executive Director, IBA Karachi, Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi and Managing Director, AAA Associates, Mr. Shahzad



Ali Kiani signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi. Under this MOU, the latter will provide financial support

to set up an endowment fund which will benefit students in posterity. Other members gracing the event included Mr. Wajid Riaz, General Manager, AAA Associates, Ms. Malahat

Awan, Director Alumni Affairs and Resource Mobilization, IBA Karachi, and Mr. Moeid Sultan, Director Finance, IBA Karachi.

Mr. Shahzad shared AAA Associates' resolve towards building a brighter future for our country by investing in education. Dr. S Akbar Zaidi appreciated AAA Associates for its initiative and for supporting IBA Karachi in its mission of providing quality education to all the students regardless of their financial backgrounds.

To ensure inclusivity, the IBA, through its financial assistance program supports approximately 30% of its student body every year.

Aga Khan University Medical College receives prestigious int'l award

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University's Medical College has been awarded the AMEE (Association for Medical Education Europe) 2023 Stellar Award at an award ceremony in Glasgow, United Kingdom.

The Stellar Award is presented to institutions who have won three ASPIRE-to-Excellence awards. AKU received the award for excellence in assessment and student engagement in 2013 and the award for curriculum development in 2022.

Over 50 global institutions have received ASPIRE-to-Excellence award(s), but AKU is only the third ever to get the Stellar Award for receiving



recognition across three or more categories and the only one from Asia. The other two are from USA and UK.

"The award recognises AKU's consistent commitment to excellence which is aligned with local health

needs. Faculty development, a supportive learning environment for students, community outreach and utilization

of technology are all integral components for the creation of a holistic, forward-looking and solution-based system of healthcare education," said Dr Sadaf Khan, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and Associate Professor of Surgery at AKU. "This is indeed a moment of pride for Pakistan and its academic community," said Dr Adil Haider, Dean of AKU Medical College. He lauded the faculty and staff for 'their outstanding contributions in maintaining the highest academic quality'.

AMEE is an international association for health professions education with over 30,000 members in over 130 countries across five continents that promotes excellence in healthcare education.

Experts call for leveraging waste to energy for decarbonization of cement sector and industries

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Decarbonization of cement sector and other industries requires strengthening of the regulatory and policy ecosystem, innovative technologies to replace carbon-intensive cement and reliable and affordable alternate energy sources like waste to energy to offset carbon emissions from cement supply chain. These were the recommendations stressed by experts at a special guest lecture on "Charting the course of Decarbonization Driver's of Pakistan's Cement Industry" with Ahsan Anis, Chief Operating Officer, of Power Cement Limited. The event was jointly organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Policy Research Institute for Equitable Development (PRIED).

Speaking at the session, Ahsan Anis, Chief Operating Officer, of Power Cement Limited apprised about the decarbonization initiatives being taken by Power Cement including a FLSmith plant with 7700 tonnes/day production capacity since 2020 to increase efficiency, investment in solar, wind, and waste-to-energy power generation for sustainable, clean and affordable energy supply.

Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI stressed strengthening regulatory and policy support mechanisms to facilitate decarbonization in not just cement but other sectors producing the construction materials, and industrial input.

Highlighting the barriers hindering cement sector's decarbonization Dr Ankita Gangotra, Associate Industrial Innovation, Climate Program at World Resources Institute emphasized on creating awareness on clinker substitution, establishing performance standards to steer decarbonization of cement sector.

Sunil Dahiya, energy analyst at Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) remarked that lack of clarity on long-term expansion pathways for decarbonization hinder sustainable progress. He urged that governments must demonstrate political commitment by prioritizing consumption of low-carbon, construction in PSDP infrastructure projects and aligning public procurement with responsible consumption principles.

Engr. Ahad Nazir, Head Centre for Private Sector Engagement, SDPI, Dr Fahim Khokhar from NUST, Ms. Saleha Qureshi, Research Associate at SDPI - highlighted that Under its clean energy transition program, SDPI is conducting a study on the "Decarbonization potential in the cement sector of Pakistan." The study explores decarbonization strategies for Pakistan's cement industry, including Energy Efficiency, Fuel Switching, Clinker Substitution, RE-integration, and Carbon Capture and Storage technologies.

Sastaticket.pk partners with Product Soch to Foster Product Management Excellence in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Sastaticket.pk, Pakistan's leading online travel and tourism platform, is excited to announce its partnership with Product Soch, a distinguished Product Management community. The collaboration aims to fortify the practice of product management in Pakistan, creating an environment where both emerging and seasoned professionals can connect, collaborate, and collectively enhance their expertise.

At the core of this partnership, Sastaticket.pk will serve as the Venue Partner for Product Soch, facilitating a dynamic platform for product leaders, practitioners, cross-functional managers, and forward thinkers to converge, share insights, and advance the Pakistani Product Management community.

"Joining hands with Product Soch is a significant step forward for Sastaticket.pk as we strive to contribute to the growth and development of the product management discipline in Pakistan," said Mohib Hassan, Chief Operating Officer of Sastaticket.pk. "Through this collaboration, we envision empowering product professionals across the nation with the skills and knowledge necessary to craft exceptional products that resonate with both stakeholders and customers."

"We are thrilled to partner with Sastaticket.pk, a renowned name in the travel and tourism industry," said Sarrah Moiz, Head of PR at Product Soch. "This collaboration signifies our shared commitment to equipping Pakistani Product Managers with the tools and insights required to build innovative and impactful products."

As part of the inaugural event, industry professionals will convene to delve into the art of crafting compelling product narratives. The discussion will emphasize the pivotal role that well-constructed product stories play in enabling Product Managers to foster empathy among diverse stakeholders, including customers.

This partnership between Sastaticket.pk and Product Soch underscores the organizations' shared dedication to elevating the field of Product Management in Pakistan and fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth.

Masses are being sacrificed for the interests of elite

Tariq Khattak

Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Wednesday that the integrity of the country and interests of the masses are being compromised for the sake of the elite.

The previous government has left after creating a crisis in the country and exposing people to unmanageable problems, he said.

The IMF will have no objection to reducing the price of electricity; therefore, people should not be misled on the issue of electricity rates, he added.

Saifuddin Sheikh said in a statement issued here today that the electricity bill is kept within ten percent of the income of a common man, and more than that is considered cruel in civilised nations.

But the situation is otherwise in Pakistan, where the people are not given any facilities but are subjected to excessive taxation and the highest possible electricity tariff.

He said that if the IMF were asked to reduce electricity bills, it would have no objection, but the lender would demand a plan to cover the deficit, which would mean increasing the government's income.

Increasing government income will be very difficult as the tax-paying sector is already paying too much tax and cannot bear any more burden while collecting tax from the non-tax-paying sector was never a priority.

Similarly, the corrupt and ruthless elite will not be brought into the tax net in any case, even if it affects the integrity of the country, he observed.

He said that the government would be left with the option of making gasoline more expensive and increasing the tax on imports to increase revenue.

He said that tax collectors are more interested in collecting benefits than fulfilling their responsibilities. They always avoid direct taxation, and they are totally dependent on indirect taxes, which means that even if these institutions are closed, the tax revenue of the government will decrease by only 10%.

He said that the price of sugar had increased by 23 rupees in the month of August, and now it has become more expensive than flour. India has banned the export of sugar, but its smuggling from Pakistan continues unabated because the smugglers pay the sugar mafia in dollars.

He noted that serving elites is the common agenda of all the administrations in Pakistan, and they have nothing to do with the welfare of the masses.



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Indian state-sponsored terrorism; Sabotaging CPEC

It is not a cliché. It is a proven fact that India is involved in state-sponsored terrorism. Sabotaging CPEC is currently at the center of India's nefarious design. The arrest and confession of Indian RAW Agent Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav (also spelled Kulbhushan Yadav, pseudonym Hussain Mubarak Patel), who was caught in Balochistan in 2016, has fully exposed India. His disclosures about the presence of Indian saboteurs' sleeper cells in Pakistan and terror financing raise questions about the Western world's engagement policy with India.

Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has established a special cell with an allocation of over 500 million dollars dedicated to undermining CPEC. These apparatuses are involved in intelligence operations and gathering sensitive operations about CPEC besides fostering anti-CPEC activities.

Similarly, India is also fostering ethnic conflict in Balochistan to make it CPEC's Achilles heel. The province of Balochistan is a pivot of CPEC, and it is geographically adjacent to Afghanistan. Therefore, militancy and insurgency in Balochistan mean that it can endanger the entire project of CPEC. So, India is fueling insurgency in Balochistan by offering Baloch ethno-nationalist separatists with diplomatic resources, funding, and arms. These insurgents are involved in attacking Chinese workers, officials, development projects, and government infrastructure.

Pakistan's dossier, reportedly containing irrefutable evidence of Indian state backing for acts of terrorism in Pakistan, may have become dusty in the United Nations records. What issues of international concern should receive the United Nations' attention and which should be left to rot is decided or influenced by which UN Member(s) is an open secret.

It's not just Kulbhushan Yadav's confession but a person no less than Chuck Hagel, the former US Secretary of Defence made a public disclosure about how India finances 'troubles' in Pakistan using Afghan soil. The Spokesperson of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), Ehsanullah Ehsan, also revealed the connection between the two terrorist organizations and the Indian intelligence agency RAW, as well as the role of the Afghan Security Agency in this equation.

To begin with, the factor that exposes India's involvement in disrupting CPEC is its intelligence operations in Pakistan.

senior commander for Tahreek Talib-an Pakistan said that India's intelligence apparatuses offered extensive help to TTP. India via its proxies is attempting to sabotage and destabilize CPEC.

In a similar manner, Indian immoral acts are also well enumerated in the report launched by the European Union DisinfoLab in December 2020, called "Indian Chronicles." It uncovered a massive network involved in targeting Pakistan and CPEC. These operations resurrected media outlets, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose main objective is to amplify content to undermine Pakistan. This indicates the magnitude and scale of the Indian campaign against CPEC.

In relation to this, India has also invested in developing an enormous perception crisis on CPEC through its extensive campaigns. This campaign is involved in the mass-level proliferation of misinformation against CPEC through social media networking sites including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Its anti-CPEC perspective focused on the audience, especially in areas such as Gilgit Baltistan, Ex-FATA, and Balochistan. Its content amplifies misinformation that China is likely to take over Pakistan's areas such as Gwadar and Pakistan will be trapped in the Chinese debt trap. The function of this campaign was to create mistrust and anxiety among the people

of Pakistan to build an anti-CPEC narrative and instigate uprisings.

Similarly, India's antagonism to CPEC is also witnessed in the multilateral forums. During the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in July, the Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar coached its opposition to CPEC in the discursive strategy by emphasizing the violation of India's sovereignty through BRI's connectivity project. India's discursive response against CPEC is its diplomatic endeavor to develop a narrative in the international forums that will challenge the legitimacy of CPEC. Despite this, the deconstruction of its strategic vocabulary and languages indicates a clear opposition to undermining the interests of China and Pakistan.

In a nutshell, contrary to its discursive strategy, India's efforts to disrupt and sabotage the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor are evident. It has heavily invested itself through efforts such as intelligence apparatuses, misinformation campaigns, proxy groups, diplomatic efforts, and alliances to weaken CPEC. This has exposed its distaste for CPEC. New Delhi views the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC as strategic challenges to its hegemonic ambitions and geo-political challenges against which India is making efforts to undermine CPEC and China's interests.

About Author is a highly esteemed international expert on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Afghanistan and Central Asia. He can be reached at qaisernawab098@gmail.com



Analysis

Qaiser Nawab

Online crime in Southeast Asia

Hundreds of thousands of people are being coerced in Southeast Asia by criminal gangs into carrying out online scams, often under the threat of torture, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) has said.

Many have been trafficked into working in online criminality and face serious violations such as torture or sexual violence, OHCHR, which is based in Geneva, said in a report.

"People who are coerced into working in these scamming operations endure inhumane treatment while being forced to carry out crimes," UN human rights chief Volker Turk said in a statement.

"They are victims. They are not criminals." OHCHR said that at least 120,000 people across Myanmar and another 100,000 in Cambodia may be held in situations where they are forced to execute lucrative online scams – from illegal gambling to crypto fraud. Other States including Lao PDR, the Philippines and Thailand have also been identified as the main countries of destination or transit.

The latest OHCHR report sheds new light on cybercrime scams that have become a major issue in Asia, with many workers trapped and forced to participate in scams targeting people over the internet. The report notes workers face a range of serious human rights violations, and many have been subjected to abuses such as torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence and forced labour. Victims of such operations can be scammed for an average of \$160,000 each, often through sophisticated scripts sent via unregulated social media applications.

According to OHCHR, these victims come from across the ASEAN region as well as mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, South Asia and even further afield from Africa and Latin America.

Turk called on States to ensure justice "for the people who have been so horrifically abused." Speaking in Geneva, Pia Oberoi, OHCHR's Senior Advisor on Migration and Human Rights in the Asia Pacific, said ongoing regional "economic distress" paired with the COVID-19 pandemic has meant there is a lack of regular and safe pathways towards decent work opportunities. "This has meant populations are more likely to rely on recruitment forums or intermediaries," so criminal gangs are increasingly targeting individuals through these platforms, suggesting victims are destined for real jobs.

"There weren't red flags being raised" – particularly for the more educated, multilingual young men who the report notes are frequent victims.

"It follows a pattern of how labour migration has taken place in the region, and also speaks to the sophistication of these fraudulent recruitments," added Ms. Oberoi.

According to OHCHR, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated response measures had a drastic impact on illicit activities across the region – with increased virtual work and the movement of businesses to less regulated spaces.

Ms Oberoi said the situation is "unfolding in locations where regulation is weak," such as conflict-affected border areas in Myanmar, "with little to no rule of law" and in "laxly regulated jurisdictions such as special economic zones in Laos PDR and Cambodia." Describing the trends across the region, she added that the ability of ASEAN nationals to travel across borders without a visa, also means there is a "lack of protection-sensitive screening", as officials don't always have the training to "identify protection-sensitive responses."



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

Nation is hopeful from capabilities of Current Technocrat Government - I

In an increasingly complex and technologically-driven world, the role of government has expanded far beyond traditional functions. As societies grapple with intricate challenges spanning from Financial issues and climate change to artificial intelligence, the need for competent and specialized individuals in leadership positions becomes ever more apparent. This is where technocrat ministers step in, bringing their expertise, data-driven insights, and innovation to the table.

Technocrat ministers are individuals appointed to ministerial positions in a government based on their specialized knowledge and expertise in specific fields such as economics, science, technology, healthcare, and environmental affairs. Unlike traditional politicians, who often possess a general understanding of various issues, technocrats have in-depth knowledge and experience in a particular domain. Their appointments can help bridge the gap between policy and practical implementation, resulting in more effective and efficient governance. One of the primary advantages of having technocrat ministers is their ability to make informed decisions based on empirical evidence and data. Their specialized knowledge allows them to analyze complex issues critically and propose solutions grounded in research and best practices. This evidence-based approach minimizes the risk of policy decisions driven by political motives rather than the well-being of the population.

Today's challenges are increasingly multidimensional and often transcend national borders. Financial matters, Climate change, cybersecurity, and global health crises are prime examples of issues that require interdisciplinary approaches. Technocrat ministers, with their deep understanding of these challenges, can foster cooperation among experts from various fields, enabling governments to develop holistic strategies that address the interconnected nature of these problems. Rapid technological advancements are reshaping economies, societies, and governance structures. Technocrat ministers who specialize in technology, innovation, and digitalization can guide governments in adopting cutting-edge solutions and regulating emerging technologies effectively. This helps nations remain competitive in the global arena while ensuring that advancements are ethically and responsibly integrated into society. A challenge many governments face is the gap between policy formulation and execution.

Technocrat ministers possess the practical experience needed to design policies that are not only well-conceived but also feasible to

implement. This reduces the risk of policies that sound good on paper but fail in practice due to unforeseen complications or impracticalities. Technocrat ministers often enjoy higher levels of public trust due to their expertise-driven approach. Citizens are more likely to believe in policies that are transparently rooted in factual information and have a tangible basis. This can help foster a sense of accountability within the government, as decisions are made based on objective criteria rather than political considerations. Globalization has intertwined the fates of nations and economies. Technocrat ministers adeptly understand the implications of international agreements, trade dynamics, and global trends. Their expertise equips governments to make well-informed decisions that maximize the benefits of globalization while safeguarding national interests. In a world where intricate challenges require nuanced solutions, the role of technocrat ministers cannot be overstated. Their specialized knowledge, evidence-based decision-making, and ability to tackle complex issues are essential for effective governance in the modern era. While striking a balance between political representation and technical expertise remains crucial, the inclusion of technocrats in government can lead to better policies, improved public trust, and a more resilient approach to the multifaceted challenges of our time.

Let's delve into some compelling few examples of countries that have embraced technocrat ministers, showcasing how their inclusion has positively impacted policy formulation, implementation, and overall governance.

Italy, a nation renowned for its rich history and cultural heritage, faced a critical juncture in 2011 when it grappled with a severe financial crisis. To navigate this crisis, the Italian government appointed Mario Monti, an economist and academic, as the Prime Minister. Monti's technocratic cabinet was composed of experts from various fields, each with a deep understanding of economic intricacies. Monti's administration swiftly implemented measures to stabilize the economy, reform labor markets, and enhance fiscal discipline. The appointment of technocrat ministers not only facilitated the swift execution of these reforms but also instilled a sense of confidence among international partners and financial markets. Italy's experience showcases how technocrat ministers can efficiently address immediate challenges by leveraging their expertise without the constraints of political affiliations.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Diverts attention electricity rates, 'Saraiki Soba conference's Deception' - I

A group of people from south Punjab raises voice for Saraiki Suba by separating southern districts of the Punjab. A critique on intellectual push behind any movement usually traces out the pros and cons which present a clear picture of a specific scenario. To divert attention from the electricity rates, a conference of the Saraiki province has been organized in Islamabad September 5, 2023; Pakistani citizens are deeply troubled by the energy expenses and are protesting across the country against unbearable electricity prices. In this protest, no public representative and none of the people demanding Saraiki Soba came forward, and people are forced to resort to suicides amidst inflation and distress. However, a few individuals in our city are enthusiastic about organizing a conference for the Saraiki province in these troubling times and are active on social media uploading their posts. The citizens say that in this difficult hour, they are progressing beyond the successful protest against 13 unjust taxes in electricity bills, to stand up for their legitimate and legal rights. In these circumstances, the division of people and the expression of the need for a separate province in the name of language are not commendable. The people are well acquainted with the intentions of such people. The citizens of this city know that neither have the public representatives been of any help nor have self-proclaimed "Saraiki "intellectuals supported them in

these tough times.

The residents of Multan City are aware that the slogan of the Saraiki province is merely a conversation to a limited extent. These handfuls of people are futilely engaged in their efforts to divert attention from real issues and situations. They are not effectively contributing. In the hearts of the people, they should join the protest on the road, standing alongside the public in this difficult time, against the skyrocketing prices of fuel, diesel, and food items, to provide relief to the people by countering the unbearable and unjust taxes and tariffs on electricity. The citizens say that this conference could have been organized at any other occasion. Such organizations always fail because the owners of these organizations distance themselves from the people and leave them in times of public difficulties.

It is said that the educated and conscious class always strengthens their roots in the public. Such intellectuals after getting to know the people closely, they guide them. At this moment, the whole nation is occupied with protests and grievances over the illegal and unbearable burdens of inflation and electricity bills. In these moments, some people are planning a conference for the Saraiki province to divert attention from the government's unsuccessful and anti-people policies. However, these people will not succeed in diverting the public's attention from the issues.

To be continued



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

8th Round of Pakistan-China bilateral consultations on arms control & non-proliferation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The 8th round of Pakistan-China Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control & Non-Proliferation was held in Beijing from 29-30 August 2023. Mr. Mohammad Kamran Akhtar, Additional Secretary (Arms Control & Disarmament/Policy Planning) from Pakistan and Mr. Sun Xiaobo, Director General, Department of Arms Control, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China led their respective delegations.

Additional Secretary, prior to talks, called on Mr. Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of the Republic of China. During the meeting, both sides exchanged in-depth views on China-Pakistan relations, international



and regional security situation and a range of issues of mutual interest.

During the Consultation, the both sides discussed a broad spectrum of topics related to Arms Control, disarmament & non-proliferation including regional and global security situation.

Pakistan's delegation also visited leading think-tanks in Beijing including China's Arms Control & Disarmament Association (CACDA) & Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). It was agreed, during the visits, to further enhance strategic outreach between think tanks & research institutes of both countries.

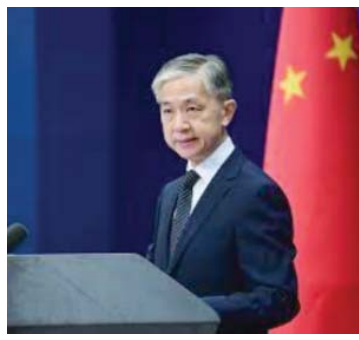
The Two sides agreed to hold the 9th round next year on a mutually agreed date.

China rejects India's protest over release of standard map

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wednesday rejected India's protest over the release of standard map and hoped that the Indian side could stay objective and calm and refrain from over interpreting. India on Tuesday lodged a strong protest with China over its release of standard map that laid claim over Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin as region within its borders.

"On August 23, the Ministry of Natural Resources release the 2023 edition of standard map.



It is a routine practice for China to exercise sovereignty in accordance with the law," Wang Wenbin said during his

regular briefing held at the International Press Center (IPC).

"We hope relevant side can stay objective and calm and refrain from over interpreting," he added. According to reports, India launched a strong protest through diplomatic channels with the Chinese side on standard map released by China saying such acts will only complicate the situation. Indian External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India rejected these claims as they had no basis and that such steps by the Chinese side only complicated the resolution of the boundary question.

Pakistan exports 8 shipments of rock salt to China via Khunjerab border

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan has exported eight shipments of around 35 tons rock salt to China from June to July this year through the Khunjerab land border.

"Imports and exports volume across the Khunjerab Port stand at 40 to 80 thousand tons per year. Daily imports are about 471.6 tons per day," Zhang Xiaobo, China's Customs Director of Khunjerab Port, told CGTN.

He said since 2019, China had set up a dedicated border trade area, for businessmen to settle increasingly bigger trades, and after a three-year hiatus during the COVID-19, "the zone is officially in use this year."

Zhang said, "From June to July this year, we received eight shipments, amounting to 35 tons of Himalayan rock salt."

In addition to rock salt, there are also copper and wooden handicrafts, as well as some carpets." He said, "Each trader is given a tax-free trade quota worth about US\$ 1100 each day."

The increasing convenience here is starting to attract Pakistani exporters who used to ship goods to China via a much longer sea route." Wafa Baig, a trader, said it was his first time using the Khunjerab border.

"Last month we brought crude quartz, 27 tons, the first assignment."

In the future, our plan is 1,000 tons." While comparing the land route and the sea route, he said, "By sea it takes a long time, by road is faster." According to reports, a new airport for civilian use has been opened near the border this year, as the authorities strive to enhance business convenience through better infrastructure.

Pak-Iran Relation

Islamabad: Ambassador of Islamic Republic Iran, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jilil Abbas Jilani. They reviewed bilateral relations; agreed to maintain positive momentum in bilateral dialogue & exchanges; to further strengthen Pak-Iran coop in trade, investment, energy, security & regional connectivity.



Islamic Microfinance Industry surpasses \$60 billion, paving the way for poverty alleviation: Zubair Mughal

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: The global Islamic microfinance industry has reached a significant milestone, surpassing \$60 billion in value within the \$3.8 trillion Islamic finance landscape. This achievement highlights the growing recognition of Islamic microfinance as a potent tool for poverty alleviation. The industry's potential to bridge financial gaps while adhering to Shariah principles positions it as a viable alternative for fostering financial inclusion and tackling global poverty challenges.



This initiative aims to introduce Islamic microfinance as a powerful poverty alleviation tool in diverse countries around the world. AlHuda CIBE's impactful projects have earned them a reputation for collaborating with esteemed international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), IFC, Asian Development Bank (ADB), USAID, GIZ, and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). The firm has also extended its services to various central banks, rural development initiatives in different countries, agricultural development projects, and numerous other developmental ministries at the micro-level. Over its operational history, the consultancy firm has successfully executed more than 45 diverse projects through its Center of Excellence, which is composed of dynamic and dedicated team members operating under the guidance of vigilant management.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair, CEO of AlHuda CIBE, emphasized the crucial role Islamic microfinance plays in tackling global poverty. Despite its promising growth, the industry represents just 2% of the total Islamic finance landscape. To truly uplift populations living under the poverty line, he emphasized the need for exponential contributions.

Mr. Zubair called for the rapid introduction of Shariah (Islamic) FinTech services, a revolutionary concept combining Islamic finance, micro-

finance, and cutting-edge technology. This three-fold approach, he believes, holds the key to achieving the UN's top priority goal of poverty alleviation.

He further added, In the context of Muslim-majority countries, there exists a unique challenge where the poor population is proportionally twice as large. This demographic reality underscores the pressing need for inclusive financial solutions tailored to these nations. Remarkably, a staggering 72% of the unbanked population hails from these Muslim-majority countries, indicating a substantial gap in financial inclusion. The financial exclusion experienced by a significant portion of these inhabitants underscores the critical importance of addressing this issue with innovative and relevant approaches. This disparity not only represents an economic hurdle but also a social and developmental imperative that necessitates immediate attention. Islamic microfinance serves as a compatible and highly viable solution, seamlessly integrating with various micro-credit lending approaches such as Grameen lending, village banking, co-operative societies, credit unions, self-help groups, and commercial microfinance models. This synergy enhances its efficacy in addressing the pressing issue of financial inclusion within these communities.

Shariah FinTech's cross-border accessibility and less regulated nature

make it a game-changer in the financial world. As technology, including blockchain, cryptocurrencies, DiFi, and the Metaverse, merges with microfinance, accessing Islamic microfinance services becomes more convenient. This integration empowers impoverished populations, fosters financial inclusion, nurtures new startups, and drives expansions in existing small businesses.

To expedite progress, Mr. Zubair urged experts, governments, and central banks to collaborate on introducing FinTech regulations, creating an enabling environment for innovation. By embracing Islamic Microfinance and Shariah FinTech services, the world can become closer to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, making steps towards a more inclusive and poverty-free world.

About AlHuda CIBE: AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) is a well-recognized name in Islamic banking and finance industry for research and provide state-of-the-art Advisory Consultancy and Education through various well-recognized modes viz. Islamic Financial Product Development, Shariah Advisory, Trainings Workshops, and Islamic Microfinance and Takaful Consultancies etc. side by side through our distinguished, generally acceptable and known Publications in Islamic Banking and Finance.

Chinese Consulate approves project for financial support to orphan students of Gwadar

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The Chinese Consulate Karachi has approved a project to provide financial support to the orphan students of Gwadar under which 350,000 RMB would be spent.

Balochistan Education Department has compiled a list of 1201 orphan children in Gwadar, said in press released issued here on Monday.

It is reported that two-thirds of the RMB 350,000 will be used to purchase school bags and stationery for students while the remaining amount will be distributed among the orphan students in the form of cash.

China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC), District Administration and Education Department of Gwadar have discussed the method of distribution of money under the project.

The official of Gwadar district administration said that China's diplomatic missions in Pakistan have accelerated socio-economic and human resource development projects in Gwadar with the cooperation of Chinese institutions working in Gwadar.

Up-gradation of schools in Gwadar is also in progress, recently the Chinese Consulate distributed 10,000 free ration bags to the deserving people of Gwadar and most of the recipients belonged to the fishing community.

UN organizes fourth of 12 dialogues about sustainable development in Sukkur

News Desk

ISLAMABAD:- Today the fourth in a series of 12 dialogues on sustainable development was held in Sukkur, Sindh, by the United Nations and the district administration.

In total, more than 1,000 local leaders living in 12 major cities across six provinces and territories will discuss the development challenges which they face, and how they impede economic and social progress in their districts. The dialogues will be held in the different languages spoken across Pakistan in the coming weeks.

"These dialogues bring the United Nations closer to the people and the local governments that we serve, said Julien Harnais, UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. "We are actively listening to their concerns and their ideas. They will work together, and with us, on accelerating progress to bridge inequalities and reduce poverty. We will share their suggestions with the federal Government as we focus on returning to sustainable development."

Standard Chartered launches a comprehensive Digital-Banking Solution



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan announced the strengthening of its Digital Banking Solution at a press conference today. This full-fledged client centric solution will enable the Bank's clients to enjoy the benefits of 24x7 banking convenience and most of all, experience unparalleled financial services in the digital age. It has been developed leveraging global expertise and best practices in partnership with local service providers under the digital drive of the State Bank of Pakistan.

With this digital innovation the Bank strives to deliver an end-to-end, scalable digital experience. The all-encompassing Digital Banking Suite is designed to empower clients with seamless and secure access to banking services from anywhere, at any time. It also includes the digital onboarding journey where clients can open bank accounts and complete transactions within minutes.

Rehan Shaikh, Chief Executive Standard Chartered addressing the media stated, "I am delighted to celebrate an important milestone today in our transformation journey as we integrate cutting edge technology, innovation, global expertise and learnings into our digital offerings to empower customers with seamless access to their finances, offering real-time insights, personalized services, and convenient transactions."

Saadya Riaz, Head, CPBB, Standard Chartered added, "Standard Chartered recognises that technology-driven enablement and partnerships can facilitate the resolution of challenges faced by our clients in various sectors and accelerate economic growth for different market segments. Through enhancement in digital capabilities, the Bank is committed to working with the Central Bank, local and financial technology players to innovate and develop especially curated products for multiple segments."

Russia claims Prigozhin plane may have been downed deliberately

The Russian government said on Wednesday that authorities looking into the cause behind the plane crash of mercenary Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin are considering the possibility of the plane being downed on purpose.

This is the first explicit acknowledgment by the Kremlin that Prigozhin may have been assassinated.

"It is obvious that different versions are being considered, including the version—you know what we are talking about – let's say, a deliberate atrocity," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters when asked about the investigation.

When asked if the International Civil Aviation Organisation would investigate the crash, Peskov said that the circumstances made it different, though he cautioned that investigators had made no formal conclusions yet about what exactly took place.

"Let's wait for the results of our Russian investigation," Peskov said.

The private Embraer jet on which Prigozhin was travelling to St Petersburg from Moscow crashed north of Moscow killing all 10 people on board on 23 August, including two other top Wagner figures, Prigozhin's four bodyguards and a crew of three.

The cause is still unclear, but villagers near the scene told Reuters they heard a bang and then saw the jet plummet to the ground.

The plane crashed exactly two months since Prigozhin took control of the southern city of Rostov in late June, the opening salvo of a mutiny which shook the foundations of President Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Russia has informed Brazil's aircraft investigation authority that it will not probe the crash of the Brazilian-made Embraer jet under international rules "at the moment", the Brazilian agency told Reuters.

Asked about that report, Peskov said: "First of all, the investigation is underway, the Investigative Committee is engaged in this."

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
46,244.55	46,770.41	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
46,857.88	46,101.33	
Index Value	Change	
7,413,331,135	-525.86	
Percentage	Time	
-1.12%	30 Aug, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,473.67	+8.68	
Percentage	Time	
+0.12%	30 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
34,908.65	+55.98	
Percentage	Time	
+0.16%	30 Aug, 1:31 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
32,333.46	+106.49	
Percentage	Time	
+0.33%	30 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	205	207
Bahrain Dinar	807.97	815.97
Canadian Dollar	233.5	236
China Yuan	41.75	42.15
Danish Krone	44.22	44.62
Euro	344	347
Hong Kong Dollar	38.72	39.07
Indian Rupee	3.63	3.74
Japanese Yen	2.23	2.31
Kuwaiti Dinar	985.36	994.36
Malaysian Ringgit	63.83	64.43
New Zealand \$	179.13	181.13
Norwegians Krone	28.04	28.34
Omani Riyal	789.03	797.03
Qatari Riyal	83.27	83.97
Saudi Riyal	85	85.8
Singapore Dollar	227	230
Swedish Korona	26.74	27.04
Swiss Franc	345.28	347.78
Thai Bhat	8.61	8.76
U.A.E Dirham	87.5	88.4
UK Pound Sterling	403	408
US Dollar	320.50	323.50

People paying price of installing unnecessary power plants, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that the power sector is destroying the economy and wiping out the middle class.

There will be no middle class in Pakistan if the electricity tariff is not reduced immediately, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that if the price of electricity can vary in different states and provinces in neighbouring India, why is it not possible in Pakistan?

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the policy of punishing honest consumers for power theft elsewhere should be abolished.

He said that the electricity tariff in different areas of India is 16 to 24 rupees in terms of Pakistani rupees. Most of the electricity in India is generated from local coal, while in Pakistan,

only 2600 MW of electricity is generated from local coal.

Power houses are manufactured locally in India while in Pakistan everything is imported, he said, adding that wind, solar, and hydropower are also cheaper in the neighbouring country, and payments to the investors are made in local currency, while in Pakistan we are forced to pay in dollars.

In addition, other countries in the region have not seen massive currency devaluation and skyrocketing interest rates, while in Pakistan, the rupee is depreciating due to an annual gap of \$20 billion in revenue and expenditure.

Due to the difference in income and expenditure, the country remains under pressure, and electricity also becomes expensive. Line losses, unpaid bills, and electricity theft are also rampant in Pakistan, he said.

The business leader said Rs 800 billion worth of electricity is stolen per year, and honest consumers of electricity have to pay for these losses.

There are frequent interruptions in the

supply of electricity; consumption of electric-



ity in summer is 30000 MW, in winter it is only 9000 MW and in view of future needs, there is an installed capacity of 40000 MW, which results in huge amounts of capacity payments. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the production of electricity from Thar coal should be

increased, and the production of electricity from furnace oil should be completely banned.

Surplus electricity should be provided to industries at cheap rates in the winter. Cheap electricity should be added to the energy basket, he demanded.

17.5% GST is being levied on electricity bills which is 5% in neighbouring India and 10% in developed countries. People's income in Pakistan is lower than in developing countries, while amenities are lower than in Africa, and GST on electricity bills is higher than in Japan, China, Australia, and South Korea, which is surprising.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the IMF has prohibited Pakistan from selling electricity at a loss, but it has not imposed any restrictions on GST, so this cruel tax should be reversed immediately.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the power sector has bankrupted the people and they have not been able to pay the bills, so the forced surcharge of ten percent on late payment of bills should also be abolished immediately.

Waiting

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is waiting for customers to sell mud pottery at Golra area and earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

JazzCash to enable QR transactions at Shell sites nationwide

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash, Pakistan's leading digital financial services provider, has joined hands with Shell Pakistan Limited (Shell) to enable QR payments nationwide. This collaboration will allow JazzCash customers to conduct QR transactions at Shell retail sites across the country through a secure and convenient payment process.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Murtaza Ali, Head of JazzCash, said, "We are thrilled to be collaborating with Shell for this partnership, and are confident that this step will help us build avenues for digital financial inclusion in Pakistan. JazzCash is committed to expanding its services and

collaborating with industry leaders like Shell to ensure that our customers benefit from the convenience and security of digital payments."

Mr. Waqar Siddiqui, Chief Executive & Managing Director of Shell Pakistan Limited, added, "We at Shell are delighted to announce our collaboration with JazzCash, which will allow us to provide a hassle-free payment experience to our customers at Shell retail sites across Pakistan. As digital payments continue to gain popularity, we believe that this collaboration will further encourage the use of such payment methods in the country. This collaboration is in line with our commitment to provide our customers with the best possible experience at our sites."

ICCI and WFP discuss cooperation to address food insecurity issues

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Rei Ishii, Head of Supply Chain, World Food Program (WFP) visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed areas of collaboration between WFP and ICCI to address the food insecurity issues in the region.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the visiting guest and said that WFP is providing critical relief and nutrition support to vulnerable segments of society in Pakistan, which is commendable. He assured that ICCI is ready to mobilize its member companies to join hands as partners with WFP in terms of suppliers and vendors



in its efforts to strengthen the food and nutrition security for the vulnerable people of Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Rei Ishii, Head of Supply Chain, World Food Program said that WFP has provided over 3.8 million flood-affected people with 80,000 metric ton of food and nutrition assistance and

US\$ 31 million in cash-based transfers since August 2022. She said that Pakistan is confronted with substantial multidimensional risks that are obstructing its advancement towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2025. She said that WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2023-27 supports Pakistan's achievement

of its national development priorities and the agenda for sustainable development, with a focus on zero hunger. She said that WFP provides policy and advisory support to the Government of Pakistan to strengthen food systems in Pakistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that providing food and nutrition support to poor people is a very noble cause and assured that ICCI and its members are ready to extend all possible cooperation to WFP in this noble mission.

Faseeh Ullah Khan, Executive Members ICCI also highlighted various areas of mutual cooperation between ICCI and WFP that would be beneficial for both organizations.

Atajan Molamov will participate in the third Pakistan Business Conference: Khurshid Barlas

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Founder Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, M. Khurshid Barlas, along with a delegation including Fahad Barlas, Convener Exhibition, Shamriz Iqbal, EC member, met the Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Dean of Diplomatic Honorable Mr. Atajan Mulamov. Chairman Khurshid Barlas briefed the Ambassador of Turkmenistan about "Third Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction Exhibition 17-19 November 2023" Pakistan China Friendship Center Islamabad.

In the three-day exhibition, a large number of prominent builders, developers, allied construction industry from all over the country, including bank projects and various business community associat-

ed with tourism industry will participate. Highlighting the exhibition, Chairman Khurshid Barlas said that the expo is a trade fair known as where property developers set up their stalls to introduce their latest property developments as well as upcoming projects to property buyers and investors. Turkmenistan's friendship is getting stronger with time. Turkmenistan wants to expand bilateral parliamentary and trade relations with Pakistan.

Turkmenistan values fraternal and friendly relations with Pakistan. The people of Turkmenistan and Pakistan share a deep bond with each other. Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas invited the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to participate in the 3rd Pakistan International Exhibition and Conference.

PYMA appeals to PM for cut in power tariff

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Sohail Nisar, Senior Vice Chairman, Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA), has termed the recent increases in electricity rates as destructive for businesses and industries, has appealed to the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Caretaker Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali to reduce the power tariff. Otherwise, it could lead to the shutdown of businesses and industries.

Sohail Nisar requested the caretaker govt to engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on more lenient terms for the sake of saving the economy from disaster. He also emphasized that concrete proposals for relaxation of conditions should be discussed, and public interests should be a priority when making future agreements.



Pakistan celebrates success in Huawei ICT Competition 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Huawei in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan held closing ceremony of Huawei ICT Competition 2022-23 at the Awan-e-Sadar, celebrating the success of the Pakistani teams that brought home accolades and prizes in the regional competitions.

The students from Pakistan had won second and third prize in the Network Track and third prize in the Innovation Track at the Huawei ICT Competition 2022-2023 Global Final concluded at Huawei Headquarters in Shenzhen, China.

the world took part in the ICT Competition, said a news release received here on Wednesday.

The Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, graced the Ceremony as Chief Guest to celebrate the success of some of Pakistan's brightest young minds. Students from Pakistan won the second and third prize in the Network Track and third prize in the Innovation Track at the Huawei ICT Competition 2022-2023 Global Final concluded at Huawei Headquarters in Shenzhen, China.

Dr. Alvi presented the second prize certificate in the Network Track to Muhammad Faez Ali, Asad Anwer from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro and Maryam Fareed from Lahore College for Women University.

Lauding the continuing friendship with the People's Republic of

China, the Honourable President, Dr. Alvi, said, "It gives me great pleasure to know what Huawei has been offering and specifically how well the students from Pakistan have been performing in this ICT Competition over the years. Once again these brilliant students have made the country proud. This ICT Competition Program from Huawei speaks volumes of the efforts made in the past decade and how this Industry-Academia Relationship has been thriving towards providing the solid backbone towards the ICT Industry of Pakistan."

Mr. Shunli Wang, Vice-President of Huawei Middle East & Central Asia, congratulated the Pakistan team that raised the Pakistan flag amongst global competition and made the country proud. He said, "The achievements Pakistan students and teachers have made, reflect on the great vision and determination



of Pakistan government towards ICT talent nurturing, innovation and technology adaptation."

Thanking the President, Ministry of IT and Telecommunication and Higher Education Commission for the support and inspiration, he added, "Your presence at this event is one of the best motivational factors, not only for the students of this competition,

but also for millions of Pakistan younger generations in the future and Huawei as well."

Huawei is building a robust ICT talent ecosystem and accelerating the digitalization progress of the world by launching more Huawei ICT Academies, releasing talent white papers, and holding the Huawei ICT Competition.

Dr. Umar Saif, Federal Minis-

ter of IT & Telecom, said, "Time and time again Pakistan's outstanding students have made the nation proud. Huawei's ICT Competition tangibly shows us the struggles and hard work that laid the foundation for this thriving Industry-Academia relationship. We believe that Digital Transformation and AI are both key factors for our vision for Digi-

tal Pakistan."

Dr. Saif commended Huawei for its exemplary contributions, saying, "Huawei is one of the leading technology giants in the world and has a large footprint in Pakistan. We all agree that artificial intelligence, big data etc. is the future. With technical support from state-of-the-art companies like Huawei, we can train our youth to introduce digitization in Pakistan, this training having been a crucial step in that direction."

Asad Anwar, a member from the winning team from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro, said, "The direct linkage that Huawei provides to the academia through the Talent Ecosystem program means a lot to us students and today I am proud to be part of the legacy that has been set by my University and especially our teachers."

Pakistan crushes Nepal to start Asia Cup 2023 on a winning note

A Sports

MULTAN: Pakistan bowling unit decimated Nepal after centuries from captain Babar Azam and Iftikhar Ahmed as the host kicked off their Asia Cup 2023 campaign with a statement 238-run victory.

Set to chase a mammoth 343, Nepal's batting lineup failed completely and could only accumulate 104 before being bundled out in the 24th over.

The associate side got off to a poor start to the pursuit as they lost three wickets inside two overs with just 14 runs on the board.

Following the early slump, Aarif Sheikh and Sompal Kami stabilized the run chase with a gutsy 59-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

The pair frustrated the Pakistan bowlers before Haris Rauf provided a much-needed breakthrough by dismissing Aarif Sheikh, who could score 26 off 38 deliveries, hitting five boundaries.

Aarif's dismissal sparked collapse and Nepal began to lose wickets at an alarming rate and consequently slipped from 73/3 to 104 all out.



Sompal Kami waged a lone battle for Nepal with a cautious 46-ball 28 which featured four boundaries.

Besides Sompal and Aarif, only Gulshan Jha (13) managed to make it into the double figures.

Shadab Khan led the bowling attack for Pakistan with 4/27, followed by two wickets each from Shaheen Shah Afridi

and Haris Rauf while Naseem Shah and Mohammad Nawaz made one scalp each.

Opting to bat first, Pakistan piled up a massive total of 342/6 in 50 overs at the back of a marathon 151-run knock by skipper Babar Azam and Iftikhar Ahmed's maiden century.

Babar Azam scored a classy 151, while Iftikhar Ahmed wreaked havoc on Nepal

bowlers with an unbeaten 109.

The hosts Pakistan had a shaky start after winning the toss with both opening batters back to the pavilion inside seven overs with only 25 runs on board.

Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan then helped rebuild the innings as they added 86 runs for the third wicket before Mohammad Rizwan perished courtesy of a direct hit. He scored 44 runs off 50 deliveries with the help of six boundaries.

Agha Salman also followed him after adding only five runs to the total, leaving Pakistan at 124-4 in the 28th over.

Babar Azam was then joined by Iftikhar Ahmed on the crease, and together they exhibited a fiery batting display against Nepal bowlers.

They added 214 runs in only 131 balls for the fifth wicket, steering Pakistan to a mammoth total.

Babar Azam's 131-ball 151 featured 14 boundaries and four sixes, whereas Iftikhar Ahmed scored 109 runs from 71 balls with the help of 11 boundaries and four sixes. Nepal's Sompal Kami picked up two wickets, while Karan KC and Sandeep Lamichhane contributed with one wicket each.

LDA, Pakistan Cycling Federation in high-profile meeting on Green Lane



Tahir Amin Malik

Munawar Abbas Bukhari, the Additional Director General of LDA, recently held a significant meeting with Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, the General Secretary of Pakistan Cycling Federation, and Sheikh Mazhar Ahmed, the General Secretary of Pakistan Federation Baseball. Mr. Klair expressed his heartfelt appreciation for LDA's valuable cooperation in launching the pioneering Green Lane project. He foresees LDA's partnership as a key contributor to the advancement of professional cycling in Lahore, through Pakistan Cycling Federation. Sheikh Mazhar Ahmed also commended LDA's endeavors, expressing confidence that their commitment to sports development will illuminate Pakistan's name across all sporting domains. Mr. Klair further conveyed his gratitude by presenting a bouquet, acknowledging LDA's dedicated involvement and genuine enthusiasm for sports, encapsulating his sentiments.

T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup to be held in Nepal in October

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The second edition of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023 will be held from October 2 to 8 at the neutral venue of Kathmandu, Nepal, Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council (PWCC) said on Wednesday.

"The event, being hosted by Pakistan was earlier scheduled to take place in July but was pushed to October due to the rainy season in Kathmandu," President PWCC Rookhsana Rajpoot, who is in Kathmandu to oversee arrangements for the event told APP on the phone.

According to Rookhsana, the PWCC was all set to host the event in Pakistan but due to some travelling issues of the Indian team it was decided to shift it to Nepal. She said every effort would be made to make the event a real success. "We'll be trying to ensure that fans enjoy exciting contests during the event," she said.

Teams from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will participate in the Asia Cup.

The tournament will be played at Kathmandu's Mulpani Cricket Ground. She said geographically Nepal was the best destination for all the participating teams to arrive. "The inaugural edition of the tournament was also held in Nepal in May 2019," she said.

Pakistan are the reigning champions as they defeated India in the final to lift the trophy.

Rookhsana said the PWCC would be responsible for covering the event cost, while Nepal's National Disability Sports for All Organization (NDSO) and Physically Challenged Cricket Association of Nepal (PCCAN) would provide logistic support.

Pakistan down Bangladesh in Hockey 5s Asia Cup



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan continued their winning streak at the Men's Hockey 5s Asia Cup 2023 as they downed Bangladesh 15-6 in their second match in Salalah, Oman on Wednesday. According to information received here, Pakistan captain Rana Abdul Waheed Ashraf scored four goals, Arshad Liaquat and Muhammad Abdullah netted three goals each, Abdul Rehman scored two goals, while Ehtesham Aslam, Murtaza Yaqub and Zakaria Hayat scored one goal each. Pakistan's Arshad Liaquat was awarded the man of the match award for his standout performance.

In their opening match on Tuesday, Pakistan had defeated Japan 26-1.

Best Wishes

H. E. Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, expressed good wishes for the Nepalese cricket team on the Asia Cup cricket match in City of Saints "Multan".



England's women cricketers awarded match fee parity with men



Sports Desk

England's women cricketers will be paid the same match fees as their male counterparts, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Wednesday.

The pay increase, which follows similar moves in New Zealand and India, will take effect immediately, beginning with the Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka, which starts on Thursday.

The change was recommended by the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket report in June, which said "women receive an embarrassingly small amount compared to men".

The report said match fees for the England women's team were a quarter of those paid to the men's team for white-ball games while the figure was just 15 percent for Tests.

ECB chief executive officer Richard Gould said the recent "thrilling" Ashes series against Australia, watched by record-breaking crowds, showed the growing popularity of the women's game.

"We all want cricket to be the team sport of choice for female athletes and — with the investments we are making and increasingly lucrative opportunities around the world — we are seeing cricketers become some of the highest-earning female athletes in UK team sports," he said.

"However, we know there is still much further to go as we ultimately strive for equality across the game."

Australia retained the Ashes after the multi-format series ended in a draw.

England captain Heather Knight described the equalising of match fees as "fantastic to see".

"The direction of travel for the women's game has always been the most important thing, creating a sustainable product that people want to watch and play and I'm sure this will make cricket an increasingly attractive sport to girls and young women as we continue to grow the game," she added.

Pakistan defeated Nepal by 238 runs in the opening match of the Asia Cup

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Asia Cup 2023 opening match Pakistan gets off to a flying start, Nepal flooded with runs after a one-sided encounter against Pakistan at the Multan Stadium. In the first match of Group A of the Asia Cup, the Green Caps defeated the Nepali team by a huge margin of 238 runs.

In the match played at Multan Stadium, Pakistan won the toss and decided to bat against Nepal. The national team set a mountain target of 343 runs to Nepal thanks to the excellent batting of captain Babar Azam and Iftikhar Ahmed. Pakistan started their innings. So the openers of

runs. Shaheen and Haris Rauf also got out 2, 2 players. Naseem Shah and Muhammad Nawaz took one wicket each. Before that, Pakistan cricket team scored 342 runs for 6 wickets by playing first. Babar Azam scored 151 runs and Iftikhar Ahmed scored one hundred and nine runs after Babar Azam. and won by 238 runs

In the match played at Multan Stadium, Pakistan won the toss and decided to bat against Nepal. The national team set a mountain target of 343 runs to Nepal thanks to the excellent batting of captain Babar Azam and Iftikhar Ahmed. Pakistan started their innings. So the openers of

the national team returned to the pavilion soon, Fakhar Zaman returned to the pavilion after scoring 14 runs while Imamul Haque was run out after scoring 5 runs, on this occasion Rizwan and Babar Azam batted responsibly.

And the total score reached 111 runs. Rizwan got out after scoring 44 runs, then Agha Salman, who came after him, returned to the pavilion after scoring 5 runs. Iftikhar Ahmed, the batsman who came on this occasion, fully supported the captain, Babar Azam 151. Scored runs and got out in the last over while Iftikhar Ahmed played an aggressive innings of 109 runs

off 71 balls and remained unbeaten. The players were dismissed while Karan and Sandeep Lamecha took a wicket each

In response, Nepal's batting line suffered from problems from the beginning. Two wickets fell for ten runs. Shaheen showed them Pauline's address. Apart from Asif and Simple, none of the two players could stay on the wicket, they scored 28 and 26 runs respectively, while Gulshan played an innings of 13 runs. Three players were out for zero. Shaheen got four wickets of two Shadab, two Naseem and Nawaz got one wicket each. Babar Azam was the man of the match.

PCB announces regional coaches for 2023-24 domestic seasons

A Sports

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday announced regional coaches for the upcoming domestic cricket season 2023-24.

There are 14 Test cricketers and seven international cricketers who will be involved in the coaching panel for the domestic season starting on 10 September.

The appointments have been made after carrying out a robust review process, keeping in view the needs of the upcoming players across all formats of the game and to further upskilling the coaches by challenging them in different envi-



ronments. The process was carried out by the Cricket Technical Committee (CTC), regional presidents and the domestic department. Due to his prior commitment, Mohammad Hafeez couldn't become a part of the process for these appointments.

The coaches include 14

Test cricketers who will coach different sides in the regional tournament in the forthcoming season. They are Ijaz Ahmed Jnr (head coach, Lahore Whites), Riaz Afridi (head coach, FATA), Arshad Khan (head coach, Peshawar), Aizaz Cheema (bowling coach, Lahore Whites), Humayun Farhat

(age-group, Lahore Whites), Rao Iftikhar Anjum (age-group, Lahore Blues), Zahoor Elahi (batting coach, Multan), Shahid Nazir (age-group, Faisalabad), Azam Khan (non-first-class head coach, Larkana), Irfan Fazil (age-group, Multan), Qaiser Abbas (non-first-class Islamabad), Akram Raza (non-first-class, head coach AJK), Junaid Khan (non-first-class, head coach Islamabad) and Abdul Rauf (non-first-class, bowling coach AJK).

Also, among the coaches, seven are former international cricketers. They are Masoor Amjad, Zafar Iqbal, Shoaib Khan, Ghulam Ali, RiffatUllah Khan, Faisal Athar and SamiUllah Niazi.

A Sports

Bangladesh's wicket-keeper batter Litton Das has been ruled out of the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 with a viral fever and has been replaced by 30-year-old wicketkeeper-batter Anamul Haque.

Litton Das failed to recover from the viral fever and was unable to travel with the team to Sri Lanka for their opening game against co-hosts Sri Lanka in Kandy on Thursday.

Litton Das has been the highest run-getter for Bangladesh in ODIs since the start of 2022, amassing 878 runs in 25 innings at an average of 41.80.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's National Selection



Panel called up Anamul Haque, who will join the squad in Sri Lanka today.

Anamul Haque has played 44 one-day internationals for Bangladesh and scored 1,254 runs, including three centuries.

"He [Anamul Haque] has been in the runs in domestic cricket and we have

continued to monitor him in the Bangladesh Tigers programme. He was always in our consideration," Minhajul Abedin, Chairman of the national selection panel, said.

"Due to Litton's unavailability, we needed a top-order batter who could keep wicket and Anamul got the nod." Previously, Bangladesh's

fast bowler Ebadot Hossain was also been ruled out of the Asia Cup with a knee injury and was replaced by uncapped fast bowler Tanzim Hasan.

Bangladesh will kick off their Asia Cup campaign against Sri Lanka in Kandy on August 31.

Bangladesh squad for Asia Cup

Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Anamul Haque, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Mahedi Hasan, Mohammad Naim, Shamim Hossain, Tanzid Hasan, Tanzim Hasan