



**Over 90 countries confirm participation in third Belt and Road Forum in Beijing**  
The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Thursday said that the representative from more than 90 countries have confirmed their participation in the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing scheduled to be held this October. (Details on Page 8)



**PM assures resolving issues of business community is top priority of his govt**  
Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation held a meeting with the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and presented their proposals to revive the economy. Addressing the delegation, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar said that solving the issues of the business community is among the top priorities of his government. (Details on Page 3)

**Corps Commander's Conference**

RAWALPINDI: COAS General Syed Asim Munir presided 259th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at the General Headquarters.



**COAS lauds Corps commanders for constant focus on soldiers' wellbeing**

**Spokesman Report**

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday commended the Corps Commanders for their constant focus on the wellbeing of their soldiers and maintenance of morale which constituted the foundation of the Army's operational readiness. The Army Chief made these remarks while presiding over the 259th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The Forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs) including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Citizens who laid their lives for the safety, security and territorial integrity of the country. Fateha (prayer) was offered for the martyrs and it was reiterated that the State of Pakistan and its Armed Forces will continue to hold, the Shuhadas, and their families in the highest esteem, ever honouring them with utmost respect and dignity. Commemoration of Defence and Martyrs Day on 6 September across the country by all

segments of the society was appreciated for which the Armed Forces of Pakistan remain ever thankful to the proud nation. The participants reiterated the Pakistan Army's resolve to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against all kinds of direct and indirect threats. The forum reaffirmed that inimical propagandists' desperate attempts to cause a wedge between the state institutions and the public are indicative of their mounting desperation and will only result in more humiliation of such elements, InshaAllah (By the Will of Allah).

The participants were briefed on the prevalent geo-strategic environment, challenges to national security and their own strategy in response to the evolving threat. The forum resolved that all terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on the behest of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan will be dealt with full might of the state. The need for speedy development of the economic potential of Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) and Border Districts of Balochistan for sustainable

peace and growth was also emphasised. The COAS stressed on maintaining high standards of professionalism and motivation during operations and achieving excellence during the training of the formations. The forum reiterated to continue full support of ongoing efforts in uplifting socioeconomic growth under the umbrella of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and wholeheartedly assisting the government in curbing all illegal activities which hamper economic stability, growth and investors' confidence.

**Caretaker PM foresee general elections prior to Feb**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said that general elections in the country might be held ahead of February next year, but the Election Commission of Pakistan was the relevant forum to take a decision in this regard. The ECP was mandated to take a decision in this regard and the caretaker government would fulfill its constitutional obligation by extending all possible support to the ECP for holding of elections, the prime minister expressed his views during an interview with a private Tv channel (Aaj News) programme. To a question, the prime minister said that the Supreme Court was an apex body and if it announced any decision over the polls matter, it would be binding upon the interim government to implement its verdict in letter and spirit. Caretaker PM foresee general elections prior to Feb, stands ready to support ECP, implement SC's decision With regard to the electricity issues, the prime minister said that it was unjustified that those power consumers who had been contributing with payment of their bills were burdened at the cost of the power thieves. He said that the interim government could not resolve the power issues in the short period, which included theft, losses, DISCOS privatization and stressed upon a midterm plan to address these.

that the caretaker set up could not give such an agenda. It should be an indigenous programme of all the political parties who should opt to hold consultations among themselves and it was not the responsibility of the interim government, he reiterated. Caretaker PM foresee general elections prior to Feb, stands ready to support ECP, implement SC's decision With regard to the electricity issues, the prime minister said that it was unjustified that those power consumers who had been contributing with payment of their bills were burdened at the cost of the power thieves. He said that the interim government could not resolve the power issues in the short period, which included theft, losses, DISCOS privatization and stressed upon a midterm plan to address these. The prime minister said that privatization of DISCOS was being commenced as the private sector had to run the business activities, adding that the caretaker government had given a plan for implementation. He also expressed the confidence that his government would achieve something in this regard by the end of its tenure. To another query, he maintained that during their discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), there was no opposition to targeted subsidy to the poor power consumers. About social media and digital space, he said that there was discourse throughout the world as these platforms were also being used by the terrorists outfits who spread extreme hatred and propaganda. To a query, he said that India could not achieve its objectives unless it resolve all the outstanding issues with Pakistan, in an equitable manner. On one hand, you (India) wanted the veto power and on the other hand, stripped the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, disregarded the UNSC resolutions and continued maltreatment of minorities in India, he added.

**PTI fully supports lawyers' demand to hold polls within 90 days**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson on Wednesday said that PTI fully supported the constitutional demand of the country's legal fraternity to hold the general elections within the stipulated 90 days, as the nation has already rejected the efforts of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to suspend the constitution and delay the polls under the pretext of conducting fresh delimitation of constituencies. The PTI spokesperson stated that there was a complete consensus in the nation on holding elections within 90 days after the premature dissolution of assemblies. He said that the Supreme Court (SC) gave a very clear and unambiguous interpretation of the said article of the Constitu-

tion relating to the period of elections, which was 90 days in case of premature dissolution of the assemblies. PTI Spokesperson said that the legal experts adopted consensual approach regarding the authority of the President under the constitution to determine the date of the elections. He stated that the entire nation strongly rejected the efforts of the electoral body to suspend the constitution and delay the polls under the guise of conduct new delimitations. He made it clear that the caretaker government and the ECP did not have the authority to violate the Constitution and deprive the people of their right to vote.



**Message: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on the occasion of Navy Day**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy celebrates 8th September as the Navy Day to pay tribute to the sacrifices of its Officers and Men who demonstrated self-belief, grit-n- guile and absolute faith in Allah SWT to venture into enemy waters and bombarded coastal town of Dwarka. On this day, we acknowledge the sacrifices of our Shuhadas & Ghazis and honour their bravado and valiant spirit which lifted the morale of the nation against a sinister enemy during the 1965 War. During Operation Dwarka, codenamed 'Operation SOMNATH', Pakistan Navy's seven major warships proceeded on an audacious mission inside enemy territory and destroyed significant shore installations including Indian radar station and a radio beacon at Dwarka. PN Flotilla's attack took the enemy by surprise and dealt a severe blow to the morale of the Indian Navy that not only rattled its defences but paralysed its response. Furthermore, PN Submarine GHAZI posed an ominous threat to the Indian Navy severely restricting its operations and confining it close to the coast. Pakistan Navy besides ensuring own maritime defence also maintains round the clock pres-



ence in the international waters and engages with regional navies to foster interoperability and promotes maritime security at high seas. Therefore, Pakistan Navy is acquiring state of the art capabilities to meet emerging security challenges and augmenting indigenous capabilities to transition into a strong, agile and reckonable force in the region. In the present environment, Pakistan Navy has also embarked on nation building initiatives particularly to uplift coastal communities and is making vigorous efforts to prop up Blue Economy. In this regard, Pakistan Navy organised Pakistan's first ever Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition & Conference (PIMEC) in February this year, in collaboration with Minis-

try of Maritime Affairs. PIMEC witnessed participation of 22 foreign and 121 local exhibitors which is reflective of overwhelming interest towards exploitation of the vast untapped potential of Pakistan's maritime sector. Furthermore, Pakistan Navy has launched the pilot of Pakistan Maritime Science & Technology Park (PMSTP) at Bahria University Karachi Campus, earlier this month. PMSTP aims to focus on maritime education, research, innovation and technology development by bringing together academia, industry, foreign technology firms and state institutions. These efforts are focused on the development of Blue Economy which holds enormous prospects and given the attention it deserves; it can provide a significant boost to our national economy. As we observe Navy Day today, let us pay tribute to our Shuhadas and Ghazis for their supreme sacrifices to the nation. The Officers, CPOs/ Sailors and Civilians of Pakistan Navy reaffirm our resolve to defend our motherland and protect maritime interests against all threats and challenges. May Allah SWT be our Guide and Protector (Ameen)

*Pakistan Navy Zindabad  
Pakistan Paindabad*

**IMF 'approves' Rs15bn relief in electricity bills**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has given the green light to a relief plan of Rs 15 billion which aimed to give financial relief to electricity consumers in Pakistan. Sources close to the matter revealed that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) played a pivotal role in securing this relief from the IMF, adding that the FBR has exceeded expectations by collecting an impressive amount of Rs 20 billion in excess taxes. The IMF's decision to grant the relief of Rs15 billion - aimed at relieving the financial burden on electricity consumers - is a testament to the commendable perfor-

mance of the FBR. It underscores the tireless efforts of key figures in the caretaker government, including Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, Caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, and Caretaker Energy Minister Muhammad Ali. The relief package is expected to provide substantial benefits to consumers with up to 200 units of electricity consumption. Sources suggest that consumers falling within this category can anticipate relief ranging from Rs 3 to Rs 4 per unit on their electricity bills. Furthermore, there will be provisions for delayed payments, ensuring that these consumers do not face penalties for late payments.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Bohra community led by Shahzada Hussain Burhanuddin called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Defence Day  
celebrations at UK High  
Commission London-6  
Sept 23

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The reception was attended approx 220 guests, which include Pak origin British Parliamentarian, Defence Attaché's from over 50 countries, members of UK MoD, Pak community, and journalists.

Defence Attaché Cdre Zeeshan

Nabi welcomed the guests. Vice Adm (Retd) Ahmed Saeed DG NIMA, along with veterans of Pakistan, graced the occasion.

HE Dr M Faisal High Commissioner, on this momentous occasion, paid rich tributes to the Armed Forces and the people of Pak who rendered great sacrifices in Pakistan's fight against external aggression.

Over 90 countries confirm  
participation in third Belt and  
Road Forum in Beijing

## Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Thursday said that the representative from more than 90 countries have confirmed their participation in the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing scheduled to be held this October. "As of today, representatives from more than 90 countries have confirmed that they will attend the Forum," Mao Ning said during her regular briefing held here.

"Among them are official representatives such as leaders and ministers of Belt and Road partner countries, as well as people representing the business community, think tanks and civil societies who have actively supported and participated in Belt and Road cooperation," she added.

Mao Ning informed that many heads and representatives from international organizations have also confirmed their attendance, adding, "We believe more cooperation partners will do so in the coming days."



She said that today marks the 10th anniversary of the initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt. China will host the third Belt and Road Forum for

International Cooperation in Beijing this October.

This will be the culmination of events marking the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative and an important platform that brings together parties for discussions on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, she added. The second Belt and Road Forum was held in Beijing from April 25 to 27, drawing over 6,000 participants from more than 150 countries and 92 international organizations

Dr. Gohar Ejaz, and Atadjan Movlamov  
meet to enhance bilateral trade

## PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, hosted a productive meeting with H. E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, the esteemed Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan. The high-level discussions took place today at the Ministry of Commerce and covered a wide range of areas.

Turkmenistan expressed its keen interest in collaborating with Pakistan on various fronts. The Ambassador also invited Pakistan to participate in the development of their ambitious smart city project named



'Arkadag', worth \$5 billion. Pakistan can play a pivotal role by exporting construction materials and goods to support

this monumental endeavor. Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov emphasized Turkmenistan's need for agricultural

products from Pakistan, including rice, sugar, potatoes, and onions. Dr. Gohar Ejaz reciprocated this interest, underlining Pakistan's commitment to open trade channels and the importance of fostering strong business-to-business (B2B) links. Both leaders stressed the significance of enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation to bolster trade relations between the two countries.

Highlighting the importance of trade routes, Ambassador Movlamov pointed out that many trade corridors circumvent Pakistan rather than passing through it. He

encouraged Pakistan's active participation in exhibitions in Turkmenistan and urged the business community to take a vested interest in exploring the numerous opportunities available in Turkmenistan's evolving market.

This meeting marks a significant step forward in strengthening the bilateral trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Turkmenistan. Both sides have expressed their commitment to nurturing a more prosperous and interconnected future, laying the foundation for mutually beneficial collaboration.

SCO justice  
ministers pledge  
to strengthen  
interactions

## Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Justice ministers from member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have agreed to continue to strengthen interactions between their ministries and deepen cooperation in legal services. Based on the agreement, made at the 10th Meeting of the SCO Ministers of Justice in Shanghai, they signed a joint statement emphasizing the importance of cooperation in legal and judicial fields, and continuing regular dialogues and implementing agreements, China Daily reported.

Altogether, 11 bilateral and multilateral talks between the member states were held during the meeting. Du Yaling, head of the international cooperation bureau of the Ministry of Justice, which held the meeting, said during a news conference. The SCO was established 22 years ago and is the world's largest political, economic and international security and defense organization in terms of population. Its members include China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Ambassador Amna  
Baloch holds  
discussion with  
Belgian employment  
agencies

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union Amna Baloch on Thursday held a knowledge-sharing discussion with the Belgian employment agencies including Actiris, VDAB and Le Forem. The discussion was held under the aegis of IBZ-SPF Interieur in which various ways to strengthening engagement and increasing interfaces for people to people and business to business contacts were also explored, Pakistan Embassy in Belgium posted on X.

Earlier: She Attended the Defence Day of Pakistan event at Press Club Brussels. The event was jointly organized by the Pak-Belg Socio Cultural Association and Pakistani Community in Brussels.

Indian forces'  
personnel  
continue CASOs  
in IIOJK

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops and paramilitary personnel continue their cordon and search operations (CASOs) in different districts of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The troops and paramilitary personnel continue their cordon and search operations on the third consecutive day, today, in different areas of the Reasi district. Earlier, one youth was martyred by the troops in the Gali Sohlab area of the district on Monday, KMS reported.

Indian troops during a search operation destroyed a sitting place of nomads and seized two blankets, food and other items in the Paribag area of the Kishtwar district.

The Indian forces' personnel are also carrying out cordon and search operations in different areas of Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipore, Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian, Islamabad, Poonch, Rajouri, Banihal, Samba and Doda districts.

Meanwhile, Indian police during a house raid arrested an innocent youth in the Natipora area of Srinagar city.

Belligerence can't  
defeat peace loving,  
self-respecting  
nations: Amb Junaid

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkey Dr. Yousaf Junaid said that 16-day 1965 war had left a lesson that peace-loving, brave and self-respecting nations, determined to sacrifice lives for their country could not be defeated by force and belligerence.

"Over the last 76 years, three major wars, several skirmishes and numerous rounds of unprovoked clashes have been imposed on Pakistan. India continues its illegal military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and deny the right of self-determination to Kashmiris against every norm of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council," the ambassador said during a Pakistan's Defence and Martyrs Day reception held at Pakistan House in Ankara.



MOSCOW: Nikolay Shulginov held a working meeting with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Russian Federation Shafqat Ali Khan in connection with his departure from Russia and completion of his tenure.

The Head of the Ministry of Energy thanked Shafqat Ali Khan for fruitful cooperation in the field of energy, as well as for the work carried out within the framework of the Russian-Pakistani Intergovernmental Commission, co-chaired by Nikolai Shulginov.

"Over the years of our joint work, much has been done, including thanks to your deep understanding of the specifics of Russian-Pakistani cooperation. We look forward to a further productive energy dialogue between Russia and Pakistan," Nikolai Shulginov said.

In turn, Shafqat Ali Khan stressed that relations between the two countries have been developing positively for many years, including in energy issues, and expressed hope for further strengthening of energy cooperation.

The sides also discussed key issues of the current bilateral energy cooperation. In particular, the Minister noted that it is necessary to accelerate the creation of a working group for the preparation and further implementation of a Comprehensive plan for the development of the gas industry in Pakistan.

Nikolay Shulginov stressed that Russia is interested in holding multilateral negotiations with the participation of the Pakistani side to work out issues on the international transport corridor.



ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training launched the Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub. The Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub has been set up with the generous support of the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the World Bank: Spokesman Photo

BJP has lost its political ground  
in Jammu: Farooq Abdullah

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Conference (NC) President of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, has said that due to the anti-people policies, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lost its political ground in Jammu as well as in Kashmir valley.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Farooq Abdullah addressing a party function in Srinagar said that the BJP had promised a lot to the people of the Jammu region but delivered poorly on the ground.



"BJP betrayed the trust of the people in the region, leaving them feeling cheated.

People are suffering due to dilapidated roads, huge power cuts, non-availability of potable drinking water and acute deficiency of teaching staff in the schools," he added.

# India cannot cast an evil eye on Pakistan: PM AJK

**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that India cannot dare cast an evil eye on Pakistan. Speaking on a private TV program, the AJK premier said that India has tried this in the recent past but the way the Pakistani Shaheens hit the Indian plane and captured the pilot in the Bhimber area of Azad Kashmir was a great shock for the Indians. "India will never repeat the same mistake", the PM said, adding the Chankya doctrine was based on deceit and deception. The PM said that the ultimate goal of Kashmiris was to join Pakistan. Referring to the Indian government's designs in the region, he said India would never succeed in its nefarious designs.

He said that India cannot wipe the eternal love for Pakistan away from Kashmiris' hearts. "Pakistan has always supported us politically, morally and diplomatically", the PM said. He said that the Army Chief Gen. Asim Munir's recent statement raised the morale of Kashmiris on both sides of the line of control. "Termining Kashmiris' ongoing freedom movement as an indigenous



struggle, the AJK premier said that India has miserably failed in attempts to malign the Kashmiris' just and legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination. He said that if everything was normal in Kashmir, then for what purpose India has deployed 900,000 troops in the Occupied territory. India, he said, has unleashed a reign of terror in the region.

"There are thousands of unknown graves, violence and blood shed, oppression and suppression, atrocities and

human rights violations being committed by the Indian occupation forces in Kashmir", he said. He said that it was only the power of guns with which India has been controlling everything in Kashmir. He said that India enjoys a certain degree of political leverage because of its large consumer market, but one thing was very clear that it cannot hold Kashmir and the Kashmiris hostage for a long time. "Though the success of freedom movements is not pre-ordained but I am sure that

Kashmiri people will succeed in their struggle for freedom. In response to a question regarding the upcoming elections in India, the PM said that the anti-Pakistan rhetoric was likely to go up as India goes to the polls in 2024.

He said that the Indians might get rid of Modi provided they showed a little bit of political consciousness. On inflated power bills and hydel related issues, the PM said that an out of the box solution was required to solve these issues. He said there was a dire need to revisit the IPPs besides reducing the circular debt. He said that urgent relief will have to be given to the people in electricity bills.

He said that Azad Kashmir, which requires just 350 MW to fulfil its energy needs, produces 2800 MW of cheap electricity. He said that it was quite unfortunate that the electricity purchased from us at a very low cost was being sold to us via DISCOs at highly exorbitant rates. He said that AJK government's share in federal revenue was 90 billion, from which 20 billion rupees were deducted by the federal government on account of the electricity arrears.

## Sardar Attique addresses district workers in Bagh

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**



BAGH: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan during the visit of District Bagh, the workers received warmly welcome, during the visit, senior workers of the Muslim Conference and officials met him. President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, Chairman Union Council Bagh Sardar Zaman Khan and

Zakat Chairman Sardar Imtiaz Khan attended the luncheon hosted by elected Chairman. Sardar Abdul Rasheed Chaghatai Advocate, Sardar Mushtaq Nair, Member District Council Sardar Tariq Masood Advocate, Raja Zulfikar Advocate, Member District Council Raja Tabarak Ali Khan, Syed Amjad Gurdizi Advocate and others also attended in the luncheon.

On this occasion, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that Pakistan has fought for the survival and security of all Muslims in the region by successfully fighting the aggressive ambitions of India in every period. By defeating India's aggression with the help of the people, it was proved that wealth, reasons and external power are not the only guarantee of success. The Indian desire to have dinner and celebrate was crushed by the people and the forces together. Today, the entire nation needs the same unity and enthusiasm to face the malice and calamities of the enemy.

He said that the brave men of Pakistan. The armed forces are performing the duty of defending the homeland regardless of the hardships and weather conditions and the Pakistani nation and the people of Kashmir salute this spirit. He is proving that power is not the standard of truth, but truth and truth are the greatest power. He said that the day will surely come when the sacrifices of the people of Occupied Kashmir will pay off and Kashmir will be free from the Indian clutches.

## TCL's Cricket Fiesta: Big Screen LED TVs for the Ultimate Cricket Experience!



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: - TCL, Pakistan's No.1 LED TV brand and The Official Associate Partner of the Pakistan Cricket Team, is gearing up for an exhilarating cricket season with the announcement of their highly anticipated "Cricket Fiesta Sale." This exciting limited time offer brings unmatched discounts on TCL's top of the line LED TVs including 85" P735 and 55" P635, ensuring that cricket fans can enjoy the game like never before.

For those seeking a more compact yet equally impressive option, TCL presents the 55-inch P635 LED TV at an unbeatable price of just PKR 124,900. This sleek and sophisticated TV offers a cinematic experience with its 4K Ultra HD resolution, ensuring that every moment of the cricket season is crystal clear and vivid.

"Our exceptional discounts on our top-of-the-line LED TVs make it more affordable than ever to bring the stadium experience into your home," said Majid Niazi, Head of marketing for TCL.

In addition to these amazing deals, TCL extends its incredible discounts to other TV sizes, including 32", 43", and 40" LED TVs. Whether you're upgrading your living room setup or enhancing your entertainment space, TCL has a TV to suit your needs.

This limited time offer is available on TCL's nationwide stores, TCL-authorized dealerships and online on TCL's website.

## Shalimar Express Train Reroute Multan Railway Station for Karachi

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Good news for the people of Multan and South Punjab due to the special efforts of Divisional Superintendent Railway Multan Mahmood Rehman Lakho.

Shalimar Express train will stop at Multan from September 8, 2023 Economy class fares of Shalimar Express train have been made equal to Khyber Mail train

Shalimar Express train is a VIP train. Shalimar Express from Lahore to Karachi will reach Multan Cantt Station at 11:35 am.

At 11:55 am Multan Cantt Station will depart for Karachi via Bahawalpur Khanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Rohri, Hyderabad.

Shalimar Express will reach Multan Cantt Station at 8 pm to go from Karachi to Lahore

It will depart from Multan Cantt Station at 8:20 PM and depart for Khanewal Shorkot, Toba Tek Singh, Faisalabad and Lahore.

## Youngest students create a happy future: Habib Ullah Baig



**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Habibullah Baig, principal of Skans School of Accountancy, has said that there are numerous jobs in account fields in Pakistan and abroad. Create a happy future and contribute to the development of the country. At this time SKINS is leading all over Pakistan and is the only educational institute in South Punjab which is offering Accounts degree and is on victory stand and our educational quality is equal to any major city today jobs in Pakistan are waiting for them today our good chartered accountant is going abroad.

And many companies in Pakistan are in contact with us and are demanding accountants, he expressed these views yesterday while addressing an educational seminar with the support of ACCA. Prof. Arslan Arif and Prof. Dr. Qaiser Maqbool emphasized on the promotion of account education, informed in detail about its usefulness and said that today in the era of development, no one can deny account education, we need modern research. One has to study and work hard. Today's student follows the teacher's words more.

## Procession

KARACHI: A large number of the people are participating in the Arbaeen procession in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Jammu and Kashmir TEVTA meets to discuss admissions for session 2023-24

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary/Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority Razzak Ahmed Nadeem presided over the meeting of Principals/District Coordinators of Subordinate Institutions organized in the Committee Room of Head Office AJK-TEVTA.

Secretary / Chief Operating Officer Mohammad Younis Mir, Director Operations Anum Asif Abbasi, Principal Government College of Technology Rawalkot Engineer Mohammad Khurshid, Director Gems and Jewellery Training and Processing Center Muzaffarabad Imran Zafar, Deputy Director Accounts Mohammad Shafiq Khan Tareen, Deputy Director Operations Adil Rasheed, Deputy Director Admin Muhammad Saeed Khan, Assistant Direc-



tor Publicity Muhammad Ijaz Khan, Assistant Director Operations Muhammad Sajid Abbasi, Principal GCT Mirpur Raja Shakeel Ahmed Khan, Principal GVTI Kotli Muhammad Bashir Awan, Principal GVTI Bagh Raja Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Principal GVTI Uthmaqam Muhammad Maqbool Khan Salharia, GVTI Muzaffarabad

Zahid Ali Qamar Principal, Principal GVTI Kehoria Athar Ahmad Daro and others participated in the meeting. In the meeting, various suggestions were considered for the daily progress of the admissions for the session 2023-24 and to improve the performance of the institutions. People should be aware about the usefulness of technical education.

Chairman Tevta Razaq Ahmed Nadeem while issuing instructions to the principals of the Subordinate institutions said that in the light of the published advertisement, the trade wise admissions in all the institutions should be completed on time by the scheduled date.

Classes should be issued from On this occasion, Secre-

tary Tevta also gave instructions to the heads of institutions to improve their performance. Chairman Tevta also issued orders to extend the admissions till 25 September 2023 on the proposal of the principals. Urged to launch short courses in Rawalkot, reconstitute and activate Institute Management Committees of all categories and involve civil society.

Apart from this, the Chairman Authority ordered to increase admissions in new trades such as James Stone, Solar Panel, Hospitality and other offered trades under self-finance and the launch of computer classes. Apart from this, he stressed on the protection of assets in the institutions and on the orders issued by the central office to immediately coordinate the matters and work with the institutions established under public-private partnership.

## FIA Dera intensifies crackdown on hawala-hundi business, arrested accused

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: On the instructions of Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deputy Director FIA Dera Ismail Khan Region cracked down on people involved in the illegal business of hawala, hundi, five cases were registered and the accused were arrested.

FIA officials said that they raided different locations in Dera Ismail Khan city on a tip-off.

The raiding team arrested accused and recovered millions cash besides cheques of different banks, cell phones and receipt used for Hundi-hawala from the possession of the arrested person.

Deputy Director FIA Dera Region Abdul Hai Babar told the media about the raids carried out in Dera Ismail Khan during the month of August on the special instructions of Director FIA KP Nisar Ahmed Khan.

He said that indiscriminate action

has been initiated against the elements involved and those involved in heinous business like Hundi- Hawala.

While on another complaint of hundi-hawala reference business, FIA team raided a hotel and arrested a person named Naseemullah involved in illegal business and recovered Rs 9 lacs and fifty thousand.

In other raids against the persons involved in the hundi business, FIA Dera recovered an amount of Rs. 17 lakhs from the accused.

Cases have been registered after arresting and recovering the cheque books of different banks from their possession.

Deputy Director FIA Dera further said that on the complaint of stealing electricity at commercial level, FIA Dera along with the team of PESCO, while cracking down on the electricity thieves, they removed the electric Kunda's from guest houses and various bakeries and registered cases and arrested the accused.



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr ..... 4:20 am  
Zohr ..... 12:06 pm  
Asr ..... 4:38 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:26 pm  
Isha ..... 7:51 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

AIOU to celebrate Golden Jubilee in 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, recently chaired an important meeting to discuss plans for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the university. As AIOU will mark its 50th anniversary next year, he instructed the Deans, Professors and Principal Officers to ensure the participation of students in the celebrations. Various committees have been formed by the university administration to finalize preparations for the event. These committees will be responsible for highlighting the historical context of the university, setting up a history corner, organizing alumni associations, conferences, seminars, and convocations in the main campus and provincial capitals. All committees have started working with full enthusiasm to celebrate the 50 years of AIOU.

It is pertinent to mention here that the university began its journey in 1974 with basic courses. Subsequently, intermediate and BA level programs were introduced, followed by MA and MSc level programs in the 1990s and then MPhil and PhD level programs. Today, AIOU stands as the largest university in the country in terms of student enrollment and has largely achieved its founding objectives. As of June 2023, more than 46 lakh students have graduated from AIOU. It is worth mentioning that this university started from a rented house and now operates 54 regional offices in different cities across the country. Since its establishment, the university has made significant progress in various fields, which is why it has been decided to celebrate its Golden Jubilee on completion of 50 years.

# PM assures resolving issues of business community is top priority of his govt

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation held a meeting with the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar and presented their proposals to revive the economy.

Addressing the delegation, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar said that solving the issues of the business community is among the top priorities of his government. He welcomed the proposals of the ICCI delegation and assured the implementation of feasible proposals among them.

The Prime Minister said that soon after assuming the duties of the Prime Minister, he started holding meetings with the business community so that steps can be taken to solve their problems. He said that despite the current economic conditions of the country, the business community is playing its important role in the development of the country's economy as well as providing employment opportunities.

The Prime Minister said that consultation with all the stakeholders is necessary to solve the country's problems and issued instructions to the Ministry of Commerce

to start consultation with the Chambers of commerce across the country to get the input of the business community for revival of the economy. He directed the concerned authorities to submit an early report regarding the expansion of the scope of point of sales of FBR. He said that the performance of commercial attachés posted in Pakistani embassies will be improved. He stressed that the CDA performance should be improved and the business community should be made a part of the consultation process. He said that CDA should digitize all the facilities provided to citizens and land records. Secretary Commerce, Secretary Industries, Chairman FBR, Chairman CDA and relevant senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the business community will fully cooperate with the government in efforts to revive the economy. He congratulated Anwar ul Haq Kakar on assuming the charge of Prime Minister and briefed him about the key issues of the business community with proposals to their solution.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice Presi-



Farid, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Khan and others were included in the Malick, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Javed, Tariq Sadiq, Sardar Yasir Ilyas ICCI delegation.

## Closing Cermony

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan Adam M Tugio posing for a group photograph along with students after recognition ceremony of a local University in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

## China, Pakistan to collaborate study on Earth Science Research

Xinhua

BEIJING: In the midst of the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the launch of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China and Pakistan have achieved a new achievement in technological cooperation.

China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences (CPJRC) will be formally established in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, in October this year, sources from the 2023 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) said.

The CPJRC will harness the joint efforts of China and Pakistan to conduct research in the field of Earth science, promote cooperation in technology, talent development, and aspire to build a high-level technology innovation platform for both countries in the future, according to Hong Tianhua, the Exec-



utive Director of the China-Pakistan Earth Science Research CPJRC.

The CPJRC is jointly initiated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and will be based at the Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Chengdu and Quaid-i-Azam University in Pakistan.

It will also involve collaboration with research institutes affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other domestic research institutions, as well as

universities in Pakistan, such as Quaid-i-Azam University and University of Peshawar.

Hong Tianhua explained that the CPJRC will engage in joint research in natural disaster and risk management, geological structures and tectonic activities, climate change and environmental effects, etc.

Furthermore, the CPJRC will annually organize training programs for young Pakistani researchers to enhance their research capabilities. It will also assist outstanding Pakistani students in applying

for scholarships and pursuing advanced studies at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences and the University of Science and Technology of China. Academic seminars and conferences will be held to facilitate academic exchanges between scientists from both countries.

In addition, the CPJRC will also facilitate investments and the localization of relevant technologies for enterprises and institutions from China and Pakistan.

"The Chinese Academy of Sciences has many high-tech companies under its umbrella, and some mature technologies have been successfully applied in various fields and countries, for example, in the fields of green energy and digital technology," Hong said the CPJRC can assist these enterprises in going to Pakistan to contribute to Pakistan's development through technology.

## American Ambassador Donald Blome and Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz discussed bilateral trade



PPA

ISLAMABAD: American Ambassador Donald Blome called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Production, Dr. Gohar Ejaz in Ministry of Commerce today.

Both discussed to strengthen bilateral trade relations, fostering mutual cooperation between the United States and Pakistan.

Minister Dr Gohar Ejaz informed that the Government of Pakistan has formed a Special Investment Facilitation Council aimed at attracting investments in various sectors such as Mines and Minerals, Agriculture, Information Technology, and Energy and he invited that more US companies could explore the options to invest in these sectors

The Minister elaborated on the government's efforts for economic revival plan with the Ambassador underscoring the importance of economic growth of Pakistan's future and appreciated the US government for their continued support.

One of the key highlights of the meeting was the exploration of potential opportunities for boosting trade in various sectors, including Textile, Vale added Food products, Fresh Mangoes and Dates, Soybean and Beef.

## Fertilizer industry can drive agricultural transformation under Green Initiative Pakistan

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan is the only country out of the top five major urea consumers - including China, Brazil, USA, and India - that is, unfortunately, not investing in capacity growth over the next five years, even though it is facing a rapid surge in population. A robust domestic fertilizer industry can prove to be an invaluable partner for the Government to help achieve greater food security and agricultural exports under the Green Initiative Pakistan.

"As the fertilizer production in Pakistan has stagnated over time, the Government is forced to spend increasingly significant amounts of valuable foreign exchange to import urea. To transform the agriculture sector under the Green Initiative, it is crucial to prioritize sustainable gas supplies for the fertilizer sector and resolution of other outstanding issues. It could potentially aid the export of excess production and earn much-needed foreign exchange for Pakistan," Brig Sher Shah added.

Brig Sher Shah, Executive Director of Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC) said that, "The importance of a strong indigenous fertilizer manufacturing industry cannot be underscored enough to achieve sustained economic growth and the envisaged goals of Green Initiative Pakistan. The fertilizer industry stands with the Government to play its pivotal role in the next green revolution through abundant and affordable supplies of urea, balanced use of fertilizers, improved agri practices and upskilling of our hardworking farmers."

## Focus on global niche market to pay more dividends

PPA

FAISALABAD: The Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam Tugio urged the business community of Faisalabad to focus and research on global niche market for extra dividends and products expansion while taking into account products where Pakistan has comparative advantage.

Addressing a gathering of leading businessmen from various sectors at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Envoy said that young millennial globally are selective, environment caring and health conscious and usually prefer specific innovative products that are unavailable in traditional market. Citing the importance of non-traditional market, the envoy pointed out new trends of circular economy, creative economy and recycling economy which provide good trade and investment opportuni-

ties. He mentioned Bali as a preferred place for real estate sector of Pakistan to explore niche market for establishing restaurants and hotels as tourists from South Asia are the second biggest foreign visitors there.

On the importance of ASEAN region, Ambassador Tugio said global economy is shifting towards Asia, which ASEAN in Southeast Asia is the 4th largest economy in the world with a diverse population of above 650m people. He informed about Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) of ASEAN and five dialogue partners as an emerging trading block with 30 percent of global GDP and encouraged FCCI to conduct research on the benefit of building trade connectivity with ASEAN through RCEP as well as with an FTA with ASEAN.

Talking about challenges in the line of business activities, the Envoy particularly mentioned to narrow the gap

between perception and reality and consistency of economic policies for sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. "Indonesia considers Pakistan an important strategic partner for its geo-strategic importance and signing of PTA agreement reflects the interest of both sides since trade volume reached to record USD 4.2 bn which was 1.2bn before the trade agreement", said Tugio. However, he pointed out that due to high tariff several products from Indonesia such as tires and auto spare parts enter into Pakistan via other trade routes. The envoy suggested FCCI to carry a comparative advantage study on Pakistani products for Indonesian market and to provide list of potential new items to TDAP for more access and better trade volume as the countries are now in the process of revisiting PTA with the objective to expand it further. He also emphasized on frequent exchange



of trade delegations for better understanding of market demand and trends on both sides. Ambassador Tugio also invited the

FCCI members to participate in the upcoming annual Trade Expo to be held in Indonesia in October 2023 and assured facilitation from the Embassy. He also informed about Halal Trade Expo to be held right after the Trade Expo and underscored the growing market share of halal products both in the Muslim and non-Muslim countries. "Halal trade is beyond food which includes pharmaceutical, hospitality and tourism, lifestyle, beauty care and cosmetics and other related businesses with promising prospects joint collaboration", he added.

Earlier, the Senior Vice President of FCCI Dr. Sajjad Arshad expressed his gratitude to the Indonesian Ambassador for visiting the Chamber and for enlightening interaction with the members. He expressed keen interest in further expanding trade and business activities with Indonesia through the assistance and support of the Embassy.

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# India's G20 Presidency: Challenges, Opportunities

The world's gaze is fixed on New Delhi as leaders from the Group of 20 (G20) nations convene for a historic summit marking the culmination of India's year-long presidency. This momentous occasion underscores India's growing significance on the global stage and highlights the formidable challenges it faces in navigating intricate international relations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has strategically leveraged India's G20 presidency to bolster the nation's geopolitical standing and assert itself as a key global influencer. However, this path forward is fraught with obstacles, including persistent disagreements among G20 members, particularly Russia and China, on pivotal issues such as the Ukraine crisis.

India's dicey rise on the global stage is intricately intertwined with the ongoing geopolitical rivalry between the Western powers, led by the United States and supported by affluent European economies. This rivalry is rooted in the desire to curb China's rapid ascent and technological prowess.

On the other hand, China's unprecedented economic growth, bolstered by its vast resources and highly skilled workforce, has allowed it to engage with and invest in emerging economies, effectively creating mutually beneficial partnerships while simultaneously sowing apprehension among Western nations. The fear of China's influence has galvanized Western powers to promote India

as a counterbalance. While India claims the status of the world's fifth-largest economy, it is essential to acknowledge that a substantial portion of its population still grapples with poverty. This reality contrasts starkly with India's portrayal as an economic powerhouse. Thus, the effort to artificially elevate India's status to counter China's influence is riddled with complexities and contradictions. India's economic trajectory may have transitioned from a nation of modest global influence to one of the world's top economies. Nevertheless, this economic ascent has not translated into proportional influence on the global policy stage. India's journey to assert itself as a significant global player remains an ongoing challenge.

Despite the impressive economic figures, India's impact on global policies has often been met with a degree of restraint. While India is determined to leverage its G20 presidency to assert more influence across diverse domains, including economics, social issues, environmental concerns, and digital advancements, it remains acutely aware of the shifting dynamics in international relations.

However, it's important to recognize that once China reaches a favorable accord with Western powers on issues

of mutual concern, India's aspiration for a more prominent role on the world stage could face a sobering reality check. The pursuit of a greater global say is akin to building a house of cards, vulnerable to the winds of geopolitical change and strategic realignments.

India's leadership within the G20 framework unfolds against a backdrop of escalating geopolitical tensions, notably with China, with whom India grapples over border disputes. The absence of Chinese President Xi Jinping from the G20 summit in New Delhi has raised numerous questions and conjectures.

Xi's decision to abstain from the summit can be viewed through multiple lenses. It may be perceived as a diplomatic rebuff, indicating China's reluctance to engage with India on this particular platform. Alternatively, it could be seen as a strategic maneuver to elevate alternative multilateral groups, such as the BRICS, above the G20 and G7, as China aims to reshape the global order in alignment with its interests.

China's foreign affairs spokesperson, Mao Ning, announced that Premier Li Qiang would lead the Chinese delegation. This marks the first time a Chinese leader has skipped the G20 leaders' summit since its inception in 2008. The move symbolizes China's narrative of the "rise of the East and the decline of

the West," showcasing its willingness to assert itself on its own terms.

Despite China's rebuke, India is determined to leverage its G20 presidency to assert greater influence across various domains, including economics, social issues, environmental concerns, and digital advancements. India's proactive engagement with global business leaders through the B20 engagement group has been instrumental in promoting trade and investment opportunities for Indian businesses on a global scale. This positions Indian industry as a significant player in discussions on international trade and policy matters.

However, India's G20 presidency coincides with a period of pronounced global polarization characterized by rising debt levels, slowing economic growth, and heightened uncertainty. Even as India's rapidly expanding economy offers a strategic advantage, the path forward is marred by divisions and disagreements among G20 members, particularly regarding critical issues like the Ukraine crisis.

One domain where India can exert significant influence on global affairs is the digital sector. India's digital ecosystem, marked by technological innovation and a burgeoning tech-savvy population, holds the potential to transform the global landscape. India's successful digital transformation can serve as a blueprint for other nations, fostering international collaboration in the digital realm.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Accountability central to Sri Lanka's future

Sri Lanka suffers from a continuing an accountability deficit – be it for war crime atrocities, recent human rights violations, corruption, or abuse of power – which must be addressed for the South Asian country to move forward, according to a UN Human Rights Office report published Wednesday. "More than a year ago mass protests demanded better governance and an inclusive vision for Sri Lanka – in short, a renewal of the social contract. But the potential for a historic transformation that would address long-standing challenges is far from being realized," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement issued in Geneva. Fourteen years since the end of the war, tens of thousands of victims and their families continue to experience the pain and agony of seeking truth, justice, and remedy. While the Government has proposed a new truth-seeking mechanism, the report stresses that the groundwork needs to be laid by genuine efforts to create the enabling environment for any transitional justice process to succeed. This starts through meaningful and transparent consultations with victims and civil society on the current truth-seeking proposal and includes an end to all forms of harassment and unlawful and arbitrary surveillance against human rights defenders and victims' groups, as well as support for initiatives to acknowledge and memorialize the experience of victims. "Truth-seeking alone will not suffice. It must also be accompanied by a clear commitment to accountability and the political will to implement far-reaching change," Turk said. Among other recommendations, the report calls on the authorities to accelerate investigations and prosecutions into emblematic cases of human rights violations, as well as the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings. The High Commissioner has previously urged an independent investigation with international assistance to pursue further lines of inquiry into the full circumstances of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks. The report provides an update on the work of the accountability project established by the UN Human Rights Office pursuant to resolutions 46/1 and 51/1. The High Commissioner repeated his call for the international community to support accountability initiatives, notably through investigations and prosecutions using universal or extra-territorial jurisdiction, with other complementary measures. The report also details a number of concerns with proposed new laws, including a new Anti-Terrorism Bill and legislation to regulate broadcasting. The report notes that the President has set a different tone in advancing reconciliation initiatives and has promised to stop land acquisition for archaeological, or security purposes, which has been an increasing source of local conflicts and tension. At the same time, the UN Human Rights Office continued to receive reports of disputes over land, particularly in the North and East of the country. The continuing impact of the economic crisis of 2022 and the global downturn on people's human rights and well-being is highlighted in the report, including a dramatic increase in Sri Lanka's poverty rate which doubled from 13% in 2021 to 25% in 2022. Food insecurity is affecting a significant proportion of the population, in turn impacting the right to health and increasing the risk of school dropouts. The High Commissioner said the international community, including international financial institutions, should support Sri Lanka in its economic recovery and in meeting its international obligations while pressing for genuine progress in governance, transparency, and accountability. "I urge the Government and Sri Lankan political parties to strive for and deliver on the urgent need for renewal, deeper institutional reforms and tangible progress on accountability, reconciliation and human rights," Turk said. "This would be particularly appropriate in this year that marks both the 75th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence and the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."



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

## Significance of September 6, 7 & 8 - II

The theme of Pakistan Air Force Day celebrations often revolves around the achievements of the PAF in defending the nation's airspace and ensuring its territorial integrity. Airshows and aerobatic displays by skilled pilots demonstrate the capabilities of the PAF's aircraft and highlight the expertise of its personnel. These displays not only showcase the technological prowess of the air force but also inspire the youth to consider careers in aviation and aerospace.

The celebrations on Pakistan Air Force Day are not confined to the military alone; they also hold significance for the general population. The pride that Pakistanis feel for their air force transcends all boundaries, uniting the nation in honoring the sacrifices and contributions of those who have dedicated their lives to the service of their country. The day serves as an occasion to express gratitude for the protection and security that the PAF provides to the citizens of Pakistan. As the world continues to face evolving security challenges, the Pakistan Air Force remains committed to its mission of safeguarding the skies. It has played a pivotal role in disaster relief operations, search and rescue missions, and international peacekeeping efforts. These endeavors reflect the PAF's dedication to not only national security but also its broader responsibilities as a force for good in the global community. Pakistan Air Force Day is a reminder of the importance of maintaining a robust and capable air force, one that can respond effectively to any threat or challenge. It is also a celebration of the spirit of innovation, teamwork, and professionalism that defines the PAF. The achievements

of the air force serve as an inspiration to all Pakistanis, motivating them to strive for excellence in their chosen fields and contribute positively to the nation's progress. As the nation comes together on the 7th of September to celebrate Pakistan Air Force Day, let us salute the bravery and dedication of the men and women of the PAF. Their unwavering commitment to duty and their sacrifices in the defense of Pakistan's skies continue to inspire us all. May the PAF always soar to new heights of glory, safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and upholding the values of honor and integrity.

Then we have another special day, Pakistan Navy Day, celebrated annually on September 8th, holds a special place in the heart of the nation. This day serves as a tribute to the unwavering dedication, professionalism, and sacrifices of the men and women who proudly serve in the Pakistan Navy. It commemorates the naval forces' pivotal role in safeguarding the nation's maritime interests, ensuring security, and promoting stability in the region. Pakistan Navy Day is a testament to the Navy's commitment to excellence and its vital contribution to the country's defense and prosperity.

Established shortly after Pakistan's inception, the Pakistan Navy has evolved into a modern maritime force with a focus on defending the nation's maritime borders and promoting regional stability. Over the years, the Navy has not only developed its capabilities but has also demonstrated its readiness to respond to challenges in times of peace and conflict. On Navy

Day, the entire nation comes together to recognize the Navy's efforts in securing vital sea lanes, preventing maritime threats, and supporting humanitarian and disaster relief operations. One of the core principles that defines the Pakistan Navy is its commitment to maintaining a high standard of professionalism. Rigorous training, technological advancement, and strategic thinking are hallmarks of the Navy's approach. From maritime patrol and surveillance to ensuring the safety of shipping routes, the Pakistan Navy plays a multifaceted role that extends beyond traditional military duties. It is also responsible for supporting economic activities such as trade and energy transportation that are crucial to the country's prosperity. The celebration of Pakistan Navy Day often includes various events and activities that showcase the Navy's capabilities and achievements. Naval parades, exhibitions, and demonstrations highlight the cutting-edge equipment, ships, and technology employed by the Navy to protect the country's maritime interests. These displays not only inspire national pride but also serve as a reminder of the Navy's readiness to defend the nation's sovereignty and security. The observance of Pakistan Navy Day is not limited to the military establishment; it holds great significance for the general populace as well. It is a day to honor the sacrifices made by the naval personnel who have dedicated their lives to the service of the nation. The families of these individuals also play an essential role, offering unwavering support that enables the



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Navy to carry out its duties effectively. Beyond its defense role, the Pakistan Navy also contributes to international peacekeeping efforts, conducts joint exercises with allied nations, and participates in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. These endeavors reflect the Navy's commitment to fostering regional stability and global cooperation. Pakistan Navy Day serves as a reminder that a strong and capable naval force is essential for the security and prosperity of a nation. It underscores the importance of a vigilant and well-prepared Navy in an era marked by evolving maritime challenges, including piracy, terrorism, and environmental concerns. As Pakistan celebrates Navy Day, the nation comes together to honor the Navy's dedication and sacrifices. It is an occasion to acknowledge the guardians of the maritime frontiers, the men and women who work tirelessly to ensure the nation's security at sea. Their commitment to duty and their sacrifices continue to inspire us all, reminding us of the importance of a strong and capable Navy for the protection of our sovereignty and prosperity.

It is first time that Army is taking keen interest in economy revival of our country as well. Army Chief's full support to SIFC is quite evident. An important consultation was held between the Army Chief and businessmen for economic recovery, in which General Asim Munir assured of vigorous measures and said that task forces will be established for economic recovery, money exchanges will be brought into the tax net and dollar exchanges, Transparency will be brought in inter-bank rates.

*To be continued*

## Inflation Rate in Pakistan

Ansharah Farooq

Inflation is the rate of increase in prices over a given period of time.

Inflation is typically a broad measure, such as overall increase in prices or increase in cost of living in a country. Local as well as imported products got expensive due to certain reasons; devalue PKR, decline in remittance, strong monetary conditions and in certain cases due to many global problems.

Inflation is increasing price hike and increasing price hike is a materialistic thing. Due to increasing price hike such things happen in a country; High inflammation rate, High electricity energy cost, Increase in taxes, Increasing fuel cost, Increasing house rents, Expensive raw material.

The annual inflation rate in Pakistan eased for the first time in seven months to 29.4% in June 2023 from record high of 38% in the previous month, mainly attributed to reduced demand caused by high borrowing costs and a slowdown in price gain due to lower commodity prices. The biggest slowdown was reported for food and non-alcoholic beverages (39.5% vs 48.7%), alcoholic beverages and tobacco (109.5% vs 124%), housing and utilities (11.6% vs 20.5%), and transportation (20.3% vs 53%).

Inflation also decelerated for clothing and footwear (21% vs 22.5%), furnishing, household equipment, routine maintenance (42% vs 43.3%), hotels, cafes and restaurants (36.4% vs 42.3%), recreation and culture

(68% vs 72.2%). By contrast, inflation accelerated for education (9% vs 8.4%). On a monthly basis, consumer prices fell by 0.3%, reversing a 1.6% hike in the previous months. Additionally, the core inflation rate, which excludes volatile items, went up by 18.5% in August, from 20% in May.

Also, the price of one liter petrol is 233PKR in August 2022. But, the price of one liter petrol is 305PKR in August 2023. On the other hand, the price of one liter diesel is 244PKR in August 2022 and now-a-days one liter diesel price is 311PKR.

Inflation rate is also increasing because of the value of the dollar. In September 2023, one dollar is equal to 306.33PKR. The main reason behind the increase in tariffs is the condition Pakistan agreed to for a \$3-billion bailout by the IMF in June.

Inflation rate reached an all time high of 37.97% in May 2023 and a record low of -10.32% in February of 1959.

In our country Pakistan, the ratio of poor people is greater than rich people. The survival of those people who are facing the high ratio of inflation and their expenses are more than their income. Those people are unable to pay the expenditures of their lives. As a citizen of Pakistan, it's our responsibility to help our government and play a positive role in decreasing the ratio of inflation. Because clapping with one hand does not work.

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## Defence Day

# Salute to Our Heroes of Past and Present

Muhammad Aftab Alam

Pakistanis celebrate Defence Day on September 6 every year as a national day to commemorate the sacrifices offered by Pakistani soldiers on the altar of defending the borders of its motherland. However, the day also has special significance for commemorating the life-long struggle of countless individuals and organizations working round the clock in an endeavor of making the defense of this country impregnable.

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) is one such organization that is teeming with numerous unsung heroes who deserve recognition on this day of national pride. Having made the defense of Pakistan invincible on May 28, 1998, PAEC has now developed into the topnotch Research and Development (R&D) organization of the country. Besides, PAEC has also assumed the lead role in efforts to ensure sustainable development of the country in all spheres of life.

PAEC is making a steady progress in achieving 11 out of the 17 Global Goals or SDG on national level by using nuclear technology for peace and prosperity. Among these goals, 'SDG-7: Affordable and Clean Energy' is crucially important, as many areas of national growth are directly dependent on it. PAEC is diligently striving to meet the target set by the government of producing 8,800 megawatt (MW) of nuclear power by 2030 and 40,000 MW by the year 2050, for the country.

In this connection, the groundbreaking of the country's largest Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) was performed on July 14, 2023 in a step towards making nuclear energy the key source of power in the energy mix of the country. The 1200 MW Chashma-5 NPP will start generating electricity by 2030. This year, PAEC also gifted the nation with 1100 MW of clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity by inaugurating the much-awaited Karachi Nuclear Power Plant Unit-3 (K-3) in a giant leap to revolutionize the energy sector of the country. K-2 and K-3 are the maiden Generation-III NPPs in Pakistan with generation capacity of 1100 MWeach

and their addition to the national grid has contributed in reducing load shedding especially during summers.

Inauguration of K-3 is a memorable moment for Pakistan and its civil nuclear power program. It is the result of collaborated and continuous efforts of PAEC and China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), which culminated in a successful nuclear power program for Pakistan. The history of Pakistan's civil nuclear power program goes back to 1965 when construction of the first NPP namely Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) of 137 MW capacity commenced in Karachi. KANUPP started supplying electricity to national grid in 1972 and has now successfully entered the decommissioning phase after successful operation of over 5 decades.

Since then, PAEC has so far constructed four Nuclear Power Plants at Chashma with the assistance of China. These plants have total generation capacity of 1330MW. The first plant of Generation-III technology, Karachi Nuclear Power Plant Unit-2 (K-2) went into commercial operation on 21st May, 2021. Both K-2 and K-3 possess evolutionary design with improvements based on rich experience and extensive Tests and Analyses satisfying National and International Safety Codes, Standards and Practices.

All six NPPs of Pakistan, including K-2 and K-3, are under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. As far as efficiency of the PAEC-operated NPPs is concerned, Pakistan's Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-2 (C-2) made a national record in the country's history in 2020 by running for a year continuously, becoming the second electricity generation plant of the country to achieve this milestone. Previously, Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-4 (C-4) had made the record of running for continuous 365 days, on July 1, 2020. These records of efficient and safe operations speak volumes of the acumen and hard work of PAEC's teams of technicians, scientists and engineers. Currently, Chashma Power Plants (C-1 to C-4) are operating at above 95% of Capacity Factor.

PAEC gives highest priority to the



Safety and Security of its nuclear installations and that is why it has adopted "Safety First" as a slogan for the nuclear power plants. PAEC is cognizant of the fact that a country requires affordable and reliable energy to prosper. Pakistan's Nuclear Power Program is an important component of our quest for reliable, cost-effective and clean energy with zero carbon emission. Nuclear Power Program can also contribute significantly in mitigating effects of the climate change thus helping the country achieve 'SDG-13: Climate Action'. Furthermore, PAEC power plants also play an important role in the uplift of surrounding areas by improving infrastructure, creating jobs, imparting education and providing modern health facilities thus covering other SDGs. Nearly 75% employees working in Chashma are locals. Similarly, K-2/K-3 projects have given employment to over 2,000 skilled local workers.

In its quest to achieve 'SDG-3: Good Health and Well-Being', PAEC has so far established 20 Atomic Energy Cancer Hospitals (AECHEs) sited in all provinces and major cities of the country. Gilgit Institute of Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy (GINOR) sited in Gilgit and Diagnostic Centre in

Narawal (DCN) are the latest addition, while the construction of 21st AECHE has also commenced in Muzaffarabad. These hospitals are providing diagnostic and therapeutic facilities to Cancer patients at subsidized rates by dint of support from Patient Welfare Society (PWS) of the hospitals and Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM).

Nuclear Medicine, Oncology & Radiotherapy Institute (NORI) in Islamabad whereas KIRAN in Karachi and INMOL in Lahore, are among the flagship cancer hospitals being run by PAEC. Role of these 20 hospitals in the health sector is commendable as over one million cancer patients get diagnostic and treatment facilities at these hospitals every year.

In pursuing 'SDG-2: Zero Hunger', PAEC is also taking lead in utilizing nuclear technology to improve productivity of agriculture sector through the introduction of new crop varieties, pest control technologies, plant nutrition, water management, animal health and productivity and food decontamination and preservation. Four PAEC agriculture research centres have been established in the three provinces of Pakistan having major share of the cultivatable land in the country. Nuclear Institute of Agriculture (NIA) in Tando

Jam, Sindh, (1962), was the first such institute. Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB), Faisalabad, Punjab (1972), Nuclear Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Peshawar, KPK (1982) and National Institute for Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering (NIBGE), Faisalabad, Punjab (1994) were established and have contributed by developing and introducing over one hundred and fifty (150) varieties of different crops.

These centres also have a fair share in human resource development through training courses, workshops and internships, aiming to achieve 'SDG-4: Quality Education'. Different courses are routinely arranged at these centres every year for hands-on training of latest techniques and technologies in various fields of agriculture research. These courses equally benefit researchers, students and academia from various research organizations and universities. NIAB and NIBGE in Faisalabad are also affiliated with Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS). On national as well as international level, PIEAS is the top-ranking university of the country for award of MPhil and PhD degrees in various disciplines of engineering and other fields related to advancement

in science and technology. Besides, Karachi Institute of Power Engineering (KINPOE) and Chasnup Centre of Nuclear Training (CHASCENT) are other two important centres of PAEC established for developing and training of qualified manpower for its NPPs.

Covering 'SDG-17: Partnerships for the Goals' and in the sphere of international cooperation and promotion of the culture of sharing and learning from fellow scientists' research, PAEC started conducting annual meeting of researchers and scientists in Pakistan. A brainchild of the Noble Laureate of Pakistani origin, Dr Abdul Salam, the idea of holding this annual meeting of scientists from all over the world, was adopted by the then Chairman PAEC Munir Ahmad Khan and the successive chairmen of the Commission.

'International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs' has been organized every year since 1976 at the scenic hill resort of Nathiagali. Throughout its history, the INSC has attracted approximately 1,050 distinguished scientists and speakers, including eight Nobel Laureates, from renowned universities, research centres, and industries in developed nations.

Owing its credit to the untiring efforts of PAEC scientists, technicians and researchers, Pakistan is now an Associate Member of European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and scientists from the country are actively participating in various research activities at CERN and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Pakistan is also among the highest recipients of IAEA's technical support.

One hopes that the brilliant achievements by PAEC's dynamic workforce would continue with reinforcing vigour in the coming years. On this special day, as the nation salutes the brave soldiers, unflinching diligence of contributors to nation's unconquerable defense also deserves a standing ovation by all and sundry. -

*The writer is former sub-editor of daily Dawn and a PR practitioner. He can be reached at journalistinmaking@gmail.com*

## Bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belgium H. E Mr. Charles Delogne called on Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jilani Abbas Jilani. They discussed areas of bilateral cooperation and important regional and global developments. They agreed to enhance cooperation in all fields, especially trade & investment.



Spokesman Photo

## Four agriculture training centers established in KPK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate of Agriculture Extension of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan inaugurated four Agriculture Training Centers (ATCs) established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the merged districts. The objective of establishing these centers is to enhance the capacity of farmers in the merged districts to promote the cultivation of alternative crops and eradicate illicit crops and other drug-related crimes.

With funding from the U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, the ATCs were established by the UNDP Pakistan Rule of Law Programme in part-



nership with the Sustainable Development Unit of the Planning and Development Department (P&DD), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in the districts of Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, and Torghar. These centers will facilitate the training of the local farmers on the cultivation of alternative crops in the merged districts, where the cultivation of poppy predominates. Alternatively, crop cultivation will create opportunities for income diversification, gradually diminishing the prev-

alence of any illicit activities associated with narcotics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ms Lori Antolinez, Director, U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Mr Muhammad Jawed Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary of Agriculture Department, and Dr Samuel Rizk, UNDP Resident Representative, joined the event to celebrate the successful completion of the \$975K project.

In his address, Mr Muhammad Jawed Marwat,

Secretary Agriculture Department, extended his gratitude to UNDP Pakistan and the U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement for their unwavering support. He asserted, "We are committed to curbing poppy cultivation and the trade of illicit substances to drive economic and social growth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the merged districts."

UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative, Dr Samuel Rizk highlighted the U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's pivotal role in developing sustainable alternate livelihood solutions in the merged areas, "We appreciate the U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's collaboration and funding to build the first-ever Agriculture Training Centers in the merged districts."

## PIDE Roundtable Meeting on Fixing the Fiscal Policy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Macro Policy Lab recently hosted the "Fixing Fiscal Policy" Round Table Conference in Islamabad. The event addressed the persistent challenge of fiscal indiscipline in Pakistan and sought to chart a visionary path for the nation's fiscal policy. Distinguished participants included senior economists, researchers, and fiscal experts from various institutions across the country, such as the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, P&D Baluchistan, QAU, SZABIST, the US Embassy, ADTMA, P&D Punjab, IIUI, NUST, and COMSATS.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Associate Prof and Chief of Macro-Policy Lab, PIDE said that the Round Table Conference, "Fixing Fiscal Policy," aims to unite policymakers and thought leaders to foster collaboration and develop local solutions in the fiscal framework

of Pakistan.

In his opening remarks speaking at the occasion Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, VC PIDE said that three things need to be focused on for the fixation of fiscal policy. Firstly, the role of the government is crucial in ensuring effective fiscal management.

Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Principal of the School of Social Sciences & Humanities, NUST while speaking at the roundtable meeting said that to address economic challenges, it is important to immediately reset the role of the government from being an active player to a facilitator.

In his detailed comments, Dr Ashfaq Hasan Khan made a comment on the presentation and stated that "Within the constitutional limits, without improving the NFC Award, we cannot adequately address our fiscal issues"

The speakers while commenting on the session, said that the significant government intervention in economic activity/market, both as an active economic agent and through a regulatory regime,

has been a prominent feature in the economy. PIDE research suggests that the government has a footprint of over 60% of the GDP and there are more than 200 Federal State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), many of which are loss-making entities.

The second session began with the presentation of Dr Khalid Mahmood, Senior Research Economist, PIDE on "Taxation and Tax Administration". He stated that taxes often take the spotlight in media discussions; however, the tax policy in Pakistan is marred by arbitrary revisions, mini budgets, and IMF conditionalities. Additionally, tax administration inefficiencies require attention.

The speakers said that overall, the federal government relies heavily on indirect taxes, resulting in overwhelming collective revenues. The tax mix is not ideal, and there is a need to reconsider functional assignments and the experience of GST on services. The provincial tax efforts also contribute to this burden on the economy.



Indirect taxes, such as customs, federal excise tax, and sales tax, outweigh direct taxes, creating distortions and discriminatory resource allocation.

The 3rd and last session was "Pakistan's Debt Management"

which started with the presentation of Dr. Haider Ali, Lecturer of Economics at PIDE. He highlighted that Pakistan's debt profile has worsened in recent years with a significant increase in floating debt in recent years.

With increasing expenditure, our debt has continued to increase.

Mr. Mohsin Mushtaq Chandra Director General (Debt), Finance Division mentioned that Pakistan's external debt saw an increase in the last decade when

we turned to the global bond market to raise foreign reserve funds. The CDNS in recent times has dropped due to various policy decisions such as restricting institutional investment in saving schemes.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
45,757.23	45,807.57
Day's High	Day's Low:
46,035.81	45,703.53
Index Value	Change
6,480,736,936	-50.34
Percentage	Time
-0.11%	7 Sept, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,441.72	+15.58
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	7 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,531.88	+88.69
Percentage	Time
+0.26%	7 Sept, 1:18 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,991.08	-249.94
Percentage	Time
-0.75%	7 Sept, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	201	203
Bahrain Dinar	816.84	824.84
Canadian Dollar	229	231
China Yuan	41.79	42.19
Danish Krone	43.76	44.16
Euro	328.7	332
Hong Kong Dollar	39.1	39.45
Indian Rupee	3.69	3.8
Japanese Yen	2.28	2.36
Kuwaiti Dinar	985.65	994.65
Malaysian Ringgit	65.72	66.32
New Zealand \$	180.42	182.42
Norwegians Krone	28.83	29.13
Omani Riyal	798.42	806.42
Qatari Riyal	83.54	84.24
Saudi Riyal	81.2	82
Singapore Dollar	228	230
Swedish Korona	28.16	28.46
Swiss Franc	344.14	346.64
Thai Bhat	8.63	8.78
U.A.E Dirham	86.5	87
UK Pound Sterling	383.15	387
US Dollar	305	308

**CCP remains vigilant in fulfilling its statutory role amid sugar crisis**

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) is monitoring the ongoing sugar crisis in the country. If any indications of anti-competitive activities are found, CCP will take appropriate enforcement and policy actions.

It is important to highlight that CCP carried out dawn raids on Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) in 2021 and imposed substantial penalties of Rs. 44 billion on PSMA and its member sugar mills for cartelization.

However, CCP's decision was appealed against in the High Courts of Sindh and Punjab, and in Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) and recovery of penalties has been stayed. The Appellate Tribunal is dysfunctional since 14th July 2023 due to expiry of term of its Chairman whilst cases of sugar mills and similar important cases are pending. It is important to note that CAT has been dysfunctional for 7.5 years since 2010 leading to a huge backlog of cases. The sooner the Government appoints its Chairman, the quicker the Appellate Tribunal can finalise the appeals.

CCP has taken proactive measures against cartelization in the sugar sector, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring fair competition. Whilst CCP acknowledges the due legal processes associated with judicial review, expediting the resolution of cartel cases is crucial for delivering effective relief to consumers. Protracted delays in resolving cartel cases will negatively impact both consumers and the overall economy.

It is important to realise that cartelization, market abuse, and abuse of dominance prevent new entrants in the industry and discourage foreign investment. The lack of competition results in higher prices for consumers.

CCP is fully cognisant and vigilant in safeguarding consumers and promoting fair competition.

# Ambassador of the KSA called on Caretaker Minister for Finance

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Mr. Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, and Privatization Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, at the Finance Division, today.

Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar warmly welcomed the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and expressed her appreciation for the long-standing historical, religious, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The Minister also apprised the Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of continuation of policies and programmes of the Government to bring economic prosperity in the country.



H. E. Mr. Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia reciprocated the sentiments and reiterated that the long-term relationships of the both brotherly countries are timeless. He underscored shared that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is keen in seeking investment opportunities and deepening bilateral economic and trade ties with Pakistan.

Both sides expressed the desire to foster economic partnerships that can benefit both nations and contribute to regional stability and prosperity. They agreed to continue working closely to explore concrete steps for economic collaboration and to promote mutual cooperation.

The Finance Minister thanked the leadership of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their continuous support and cooperation.

## General Asim Munir's interest in economic matters is encouraging

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 Thursday that Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir's interest in economic matters is encouraging.

His meeting with the business community leaders has boosted the morale of the businessmen and industrialists across the country, he added.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the commitment of the COAS to improve the country's economy and attract foreign investors is commendable, but the most important thing is the assurance of continuing the IMF programme and starting a new one.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the Army Chief is well aware that the IMF programme is indispensable and that the economy can be stabilised under the supervision of this international organisation, but it is impossible to increase the growth rate.

But the basis of the decision to boost the economy will not be cheap fame but



better economic conditions in the country, he added.

The business leader said that the Army Chief is serious about bringing transparency to the value of the dollar, keeping an eye on currency traders and bringing them into the tax net, ending smuggling from Iran and Afghanistan, and increasing tax revenue.

COAS is also hopeful for investment of 100 billion dollars from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and other countries through the Special Investment Council, and its implementation will greatly help stabilise the economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that if this

investment is made, it will improve the country's economic situation, stabilise the rupee, and solve the problem of a lack of foreign exchange.

He said that General Asim Munir's opinion is correct that the annual expenditure of 1.3 trillion rupees on failed government institutions is counterproductive and it is better to sell them to save this capital, which is good and the business community has been waiting for it for a long time.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that investment alone cannot improve the situation unless structural reforms are made, for which the role of incompetent bureaucracy in important decisions must be eliminated.

These decisions can be effective only when political stability is ensured, anarchist politicians are disciplined, and terrorism is eradicated, he observed.

From 2005 to 2020, the country received sixty-two billion dollars in investments and loans, which have not been taken advantage of, and now we are again begging the IMF.

He noted that army chiefs have held many meetings with the business community before, but they did not yield any results, so it is the primary responsibility of all stakeholders to make this meeting fruitful.

## NHA to focus on increase in revenue through various schemes



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and Railways Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar presided over the 44th meeting of National Highway Council-Supreme body of National Highway Authority, held at Ministry of Communications here today. Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha, and highups from Finance Division, Planning & Development Division, Highway Construction Expert, Financial Professional and the senior officers of Ministry of Communications and National Highway Authority participated.

Addressing the meeting, Federal Minister of Communications and Railways Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar stressed to focus on undertaking new various schemes to increase the revenue level of the Authority at large. The Federal Minister directed to launch a comprehensive

media campaign for implementation of hiked violation fines on Motorways and National Highways across the country.

He further said, pace of work on construction of residential apartments for NHA employees be geared up. He desired to further improve the maintenance affairs of Motorways and National Highways and that maximum travelling and civic amenities on service and rest areas be ensured for ease of the travelers. Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar emphasized upon beautification of Motorways loops that will ultimately improve environmental conditions and this will be a practical step forward towards achieving environment friendly roads network in the country.

The Federal Secretary Communications and Chairman National Highway Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha also gave a detailed briefing regarding functioning, scope, financial and administrative affairs of the NHA.

## Critical situation

FAISALABAD: A view of the unfunctional factory along the Maqbool Road as due to the unstable economic and political situation, a lot of such factories shut their production across the country.



Photo: Online

## PSA expresses concern at media reports on change in net metering policy

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) has made a resounding call to action, urging authorities and stakeholders to continue supporting net metering as a crucial pillar of the nation's sustainable energy future. Net metering has been recognized as a cornerstone in the transition to clean and affordable energy, aligning Pakistan with the global shift towards solar power adoption.

The PSA noted that the government is contemplating a change in Net Metering policy, citing capacity charges of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as the reason. The PSA has termed it as an erroneous and misleading approach, which will aggravate the electricity prices in the country.

Speaking at a press event, PSA Chairman, Mr. Amir Chaudhry said, "The real issue lies in rampant energy theft,



which results in a significant shortfall in the revenue collection of Distribution Companies (DISCOs), resulting in a continuous increase in circular debt. In February this year, Power Division Secretary Rashid Mehmood Langrial, in a briefing to the National Assembly Standing Committee said that electricity worth Rs. 380 billion is stolen every year in the country. In the same briefing, he said that the impact of Rs. 520 billion in stolen electricity is to be passed on to consumers in bills from the next fiscal [i.e. now the current

fiscal year]."

PSA Chairman has stressed that Net Metering is a sustainable energy solution that allows consumers to generate their own electricity through solar panels and feed excess power back into the grid. This process not only reduces electricity bills but also contributes surplus energy to the national grid, creating a win-win situation for both consumers and the environment.

On the other hand, with electricity theft, in addition to the direct impact of 'paying customers' being forced to foot the bill

of stolen electricity, the cost of financing the circular debt, caused by the recovery shortfall, is also passed on to the customers who actually pay their bills, in the form of FC surcharge and PHL surcharge. On top of this, our electricity bills are loaded with a plethora of taxes, such as Electricity Duty of 1.5%, GST of 18%, further tax and extra tax of 5% and an additional 3%, and even advance income taxes of an additional 5% to 12% of the total bill value. The result is an exorbitant cost of electricity that drives up electricity price for those who pay their bills and hence incentivizes more customers to avoid paying their bills, which makes the problem even worse.

Rather than enhancing governance and vigilance to combat electricity theft or re-examining the impact of such massive taxation on electricity bills, the issue is being deflected by unjustly targeting solar energy.

## Fertilizer industry can drive agricultural transformation under Green Initiative Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan is the only country out of the top five major urea consumers - including China, Brazil, USA, and India - that is, unfortunately, not investing in capacity growth over the next five years, even though it is facing a rapid surge in population. A robust domestic fertilizer industry can prove to be an invaluable partner for the Government to help achieve greater food security and agricultural exports under the Green Initiative Pakistan.

"As the fertilizer production in Pakistan has stagnated over time, the Government is forced to spend increasingly significant amounts of valuable foreign exchange to import urea. To transform the agricultural sector under the Green Initiative, it is crucial to prioritize sustainable gas supplies for the fertilizer sector and resolution of other outstanding issues. It could potentially aid the export of excess production and earn much-needed foreign exchange for Pakistan," Brig Sher Shah added.

Brig Sher Shah, Executive Director of Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC) said that, "The importance of a strong indigenous fertilizer manufacturing industry cannot be underscored enough to achieve sustained

economic growth and the envisaged goals of Green Initiative Pakistan. The fertilizer industry stands with the Government to play its pivotal role in the next green revolution through abundant and affordable supplies of urea, balanced use of fertilizers, improved agri practices and upskilling of our hardworking farmers."

He highlighted the success of Fertilizer Policy 2001 in attracting around PKR 162 billion in new plants and capacity expansions of almost 2 million tons by the fertilizer manufacturers. The industry has also completely passed on the benefit of incentivized gas pricing under Fertilizer Policy 2001 to the farmers by selling urea at significant discount to international prices.

Brig Sher Shah also expressed support for the Government's resolve to curb blackmarketing and hoarding of urea. "These illegal activities result in higher market prices for the farmers and create a false impression that fertilizer manufacturers are earning unreasonable profits. The industry earnings are in line with any other key sector of the economy, whereas it has always shielded the farmers from higher international urea prices and contributed towards the country's food security."

# Palestinians look forward to earning medals at Hangzhou Games: official

Xinhua

RAMALLAH: Over 100 Palestinian athletes are gearing up for the Hangzhou Asian Games in Hangzhou this month, aiming to win medals and elevate Palestine's name during the tournament, a senior Palestinian official said.

The 19th Asian Games, slated for September 23 to October 8 in China's Zhejiang province, has seen over 12,000 athletes entries from all over Asia.

"China has great experience and a high capacity in hosting sporting events, and this thing we see through our teams that follow up with the organized Chinese teams by defining the arrival program, accommodations, and all technical matters," Nader Jayousi, head of the Palestine Asian Games delegation, told Xinhua.

Jayousi, who will visit China for the first time, believes there will be a high level of organization. He noted that China consistently hosts major sporting events, setting a global standard.

"Participating in such an important tournament would present a gold-



en chance to the Palestinian athletes to prove their professional and sports skills to the world by competing with athletes from various countries," Jayousi said, adding that the current Palestinian delegation is "the most import-

ant participating delegation in history as our athletes will compete in 17 competitions, including football, beach volleyball and e-sports, which hits a record high in Palestine Asian Games participation history."

Jayousi acknowledged the challenges ahead, stating, "we know very well that our mission will not be easy in the Asian games to achieve all our goals, mainly as the Asian players have succeeded in improving their skills."

However, he emphasized the significance of the Asian Games in gauging the players' abilities and aiding in their qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Moreover, Jayousi mentioned that the Palestinian athletes, through their participation in the Asian Games in Hangzhou, aim to foster friendly ties with other athletes and gain invaluable experience.

Despite Palestine's consistent participation in every Olympic and Asian Games, it secured only a bronze medal in 2002, Jayousi said. He highlighted recent significant achievements in Palestinian sports, the most recent being at the Arab Games in Algeria in July.

Jayousi emphasized the Palestinian delegation's commitment to participating in sports competitions, despite the challenging conditions in the Palestinian territories that have impacted all facets of life, including sports.

# Pakistan Women's ODI Cricket series against South Africa Begins 8, 11 and 14 Sept in Karachi

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Nida Dar-led Pakistan women's team will look to carry the momentum of the T20I series win in the ODI series

The first of the three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 matches at the National Bank Stadium will be Nida Dar's 100th ODI

Nida Dar-led Pakistan women's side will aim to continue their good run in the ODI series against South Africa after clean sweeping the touring side 3-0 in the T20I series played at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi from 1 to 4 September.

The three ODIs, which are also part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25, will be played at the National Bank Stadium on 8, 11 and 14 September. The first ODI between both sides will mark skipper Nida Dar's 100th ODI, and she will be eager to make it a memorable one.

All-rounder Nida has played 16 ODIs against South Africa, scoring 246 runs, including three half-centuries and has taken 18 wickets with 4-15 her best against the opposition.

The three ODI matches will be broadcast live on PTV Sports/PTV National, while in Pakistan Region, they will be live-streamed on ARY ZAP. The toss will take place at 1500, while the first ball will be bowled at 1530 PST.

To encourage fans to come to the ground, affordable tickets prices have been fixed for the three championship matches. The tickets for the matches have been put on sale on bookme.pk. Additionally, physical tickets will be made available to fans on match days at the stadium's box office.

All VIP enclosures of Fazal Mahmood, Hanif Mohammad and Javed Miandad will be open for spectators.

Pakistan, currently ranked fourth in the ICC Women's Championship with



10 points from nine matches, will aim to get maximum points in the forthcoming ODI series. This will be Pakistan's third ICC Women's Championship series at home in just over a year. Last year, Pakistan defeated Sri Lanka by 2-1 in Karachi and later clean swept Ireland in a three-match ODI series in Lahore. In an away series against Australia in January this year, Pakistan women's team lost 3-0.

On the other hand, South Africa, ranked ninth in the ICC Championship 2022-25, have played and won their only series in the ICC Women's Championship till date, defeating Ireland 3-0. They are currently third in the ODI rankings, while the hosts are ranked 10th. South Africa's captain Laura Wolvaardt, who was named player of the series in the T20I series with 157 runs from three matches, will be looking to continue her rich vein of form in the ODIs.

Meanwhile, the home side will be banking on Sidra Amin, Fatima Sana and Ghulam Fatima, all of whom figure prominently in the ICC Women's Championship 2022-2025 run-scoring

and wicket-taking charts. Right-handed batter Sidra, till date has made 535 runs from nine ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 matches, occupying the second spot in batting charts. She was also among the runs in the three-match T20I series, scoring 133 runs at a strike-rate of 116.67.

In the bowling, right-arm fast Fatima Sana leads the ICC Women's Championship table with 16 scalps from nine matches. 21-year-old Fatima will aim to significantly contribute to the team's cause in front of the local crowd. Leg-spinner Ghulam Fatima, is also among the wickets for the home side. She has featured in six ICC Women's Championship matches and has taken 12 wickets, including her maiden five-wicket haul against Ireland in the third ODI in Lahore last year.

In head-to-head encounters, Pakistan and South Africa have faced each other in 25 matches to date. South Africa have won 19 matches, while Pakistan have won in four outings. One match was tied, while one ended in a no-result.

Left-arm spinner Nashra Sundhu, who has bowled economically against

South Africa in the T20I series and bagged four wickets said: "Our recent 3-0 victory in the T20I series against South Africa was a fantastic confidence booster for the team. We have been working tirelessly on our skills, and it's clear that our hard work is paying off."

We are well aware that South Africa is a formidable opponent in the ODI format, and we are ready to face the challenge. Our goal is to put up strong performances and secure maximum points to solidify our position in the ICC Women's Championship standings.

South Africa's all-rounder Marizanne Kapp, who has bagged 17 wickets and scored 406 runs in 16 ODI matches against Pakistan said: "I like playing against Pakistan, and ODI cricket is my preferred format of choice. Even though I enjoy the shorter formats as well, I do believe that ODI cricket is my strongest format, so I look forward to the ODI series. I have had success against Pakistan, and hopefully, I can continue that in these conditions. We have seen in the T20I series that Pakistan looks like an all-new outfit they are playing, and it's really good for women's cricket."

In all three T20I games, we weren't able to finish games resulting in three close losses. We are a relatively younger side compared to what we had in the past, and I think in conditions like this, one needs a bit of experience to pull through.

**Pakistan ODI squad for South Africa series:**

Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Bismah Maroof, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Muneeba Ali, Nashra Sundhu, Omaima Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz (wk), Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar

**ODI series Itinerary**  
8 Sep - First ODI v South Africa  
11 Sep - Second ODI v South Africa  
14 Sep - Third ODI v South Africa

# Pakistan pace trio reminds Shoaib Akhtar of Wasim and Waqar era

Spots Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar on Thursday said the team's current pace attack, featuring Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah reminds him of the era of the great pair of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis.

Pakistan's pace trio is one of the world's best fast-bowling attacks, and they proved it in the ongoing ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023.

The trio has taken 23 wickets between them in the first three matches of the Asia Cup co-hosted by Pakistan and Sri Lanka, a precursor to next month's one-day international World Cup in India.

Left-arm pacer Shaheen rattled the Indian top order last week in a group match that was abandoned due to rain after just one innings and remains a threat ahead of a key Super Four clash between the arch-rivals on Sunday.

"These youngsters are very,



very talented and I am happy that Pakistan is able to produce such fast bowlers over and over again," Shoaib Akhtar said in an online chat organised by Star Sports.

"This pace battery reminds me of the old days... reminds me of

that era of two Ws (Waqar and Wasim). They are very confident and have the mindset of taking wickets."

Wasim and Waqar took over 900 ODI wickets between them, striking fear into the hearts of

opposing batsmen with their lightning-fast reverse swing deliveries.

Shaheen leads the charge with new-ball partner Naseem, but it is first-change Rauf who tops the Asia Cup bowling chart with

nine wickets.

Pakistan thrashed Bangladesh in the opening match of the Super Fours in Lahore on Wednesday with Rauf returning 4-19 from his six overs.

"I would say Shaheen Shah Afridi is on top of his career right now. Haris Rauf has a wicket-taking mindset like Shaheen," said Shoaib Akhtar, who later joined Pakistan's pace attack alongside Wasim and Waqar.

"I would just advise Naseem to bowl more wicket-taking deliveries than be a stock bowler. He seams the ball more than Shaheen and can penetrate more."

Pakistan has had a history of producing great fast bowlers including Fazal Mahmood, Sarfaraz Nawaz and World Cup-winning captain Imran Khan.

Shoaib Akhtar said Pakistan remain favourites to win the Asia Cup and the World Cup starting October 5 and predicted Babar Azam's team will topple India in both tournaments.

## CM Adviser announces cash award for Arshad Nadeem

Spots Desk

LAHORE: Acknowledging the remarkable achievement, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports Wahab Riaz has announced a cash award of Rs 30 lakh for Olympian athlete Arshad Nadeem, who won a silver medal in javelin throw competition in recently-organised World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary.

The Adviser to CM Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs, in a statement on Thursday, said that no doubt, Arshad has accomplished a great feat and created history by winning Pakistan's first-ever medal in World Athletics Championships.

He said Punjab Sports Department is working for the welfare of all national male and female athletes. "Punjab government will patronize all those players who will work hard with great amount of passion and dedication and win laurels for the country," he explained.

## Zone-VI Whites moved in to Semi Finals of the A. S Natural Stone U-13 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament

Spots Desk

KARACHI: Eight more matches decided in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-13 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at various cricket grounds.

**Summarized Scores:**

At Landhi Gymkhana Ground Zone-IV Whites beat Zone-II Greens by 8 Wickets in the Morning match. Ateeb Wasif 3/6, Arshaman Riaz 3/6.

Zone-IV Whites 77/2. Fakhar Sialvi 33.

In the second match Zone-V Whites beat Zone-III Blues by 112 runs. Zone-V Whites 190/4. M. Aqeel 53, M. Mehdi 48.

Zone-III Blues 78/9. Danish Rehman 3/16.

At Young Fighter Ground in the Morning Match Zone-I Whites beat Zone-VI Blues by 13 runs. Zone-I Whites 96. M. Yaseen 4/9, Mohaad Khatri 3/13.

Zone-VI Blues 83. Areeb Noor 34. Azzam Abbasi 4/6.

In the evening match Zone-VII Blues by 13 runs. Zone-VII Blues 117/6. Ejmal Tariq 3/9, M. Ahmed 3/1.

Zone-II Whites 80. Shan e Baqar 4/10, Yahya Aslam 3/20.

At TMC Ground in the morning Zone-VII Whites beat Zone-II Blues by 7 Whites. Zone-II Blues 75. Asim Shah 4/1. Hasan Siddiqui 4/11, Saghir Ahmed 3/15. Zone-VII Whites 76/3.

In the evening match Zone-V Blues beat Zone-III Whites by 32 runs. Zone-V Blues 156/4. Asad Ullah 50, Burhan Uddin 4/8.

Zone-III Whites 114/6. M. Tashfeen 3/2. Burhanuddin 3/14.

At KCCA Stadium Zone-IV Blues beat Zone-VII Greens by 15 runs. Zone-IV Blues 106/7. Raja Abdul Ahad 3/8.

Zone-VII Greens 91/5.

In the last match of the day Zone-VI Whites beat Zone-I Blues.

## Asia Cup 2023: Pakistan team reaches Colombo



Spots Desk

COLOMBO: The Pakistan cricket team touched down at Colombo airport on Thursday via a chartered flight from Lahore to participate in the remaining Super 4 stage matches of the ongoing ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023.

Pakistan team will take a rest today, as well as tomorrow before hitting the practice nets on Saturday, September 9 to prepare for their next Super 4 stage match.

Pakistan will play their second match of the Super 4 stage against arch-rivals India on Sunday, September 10 in Colombo.

The teams of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also reached Colombo along with the Pakistan team.

Asia Cup 2023's remaining Super 4 stage matches, as well as the final, are scheduled in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo.

Pakistan hosted a total of four matches in the ongoing tournament including the ongoing Super 4 fixture between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Asia Cup 2023 featured six teams, divided into two groups, with the top two teams from each group qualifying for the Super 4 stage.

Hosts Pakistan and their arch-rivals India qualified from Group A with three points after both teams defeated Nepal and shared a point each due to the match between them being washed out. Meanwhile defending champions and co-hosts Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh qualified from Group B, after Afghanistan missed out on a Super 4 berth by the barest of margins in their final group-stage match against Sri Lanka.

This year's Asia Cup kicked off with host Pakistan defeating Asia Cup first-timers Nepal in the curtain raiser on August 30 in Multan. Meanwhile, the final of the tournament will be played on September 17 in Colombo.

The Asia Cup 2023 is being played in the ODI format and is serving as an opportunity for the Asian teams to bolster their preparations for the upcoming ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023 in India.

## Babar Azam, Shadab Khan shortlisted for ICC Player of the Month award

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam and all-rounder Shadab Khan have been picked as the nominees for the ICC Player of the Month award for August, alongside an explosive West Indies wicket-keeper.

Joined by Nicholas Pooran, Babar and Shadab's display of class and talent during their recent performances has contributed to their nomination for the prestigious award.

Pakistan's prolific right-hander Babar is aiming to become the first men's category cricketer to win three ICC Men's Player of the Month Awards after notching up 53 and 60 during the three-match series victory over Afghanistan and a mammoth 151 against Nepal in the Asia Cup opener last month.

Meanwhile, Shadab is nominated for the first time in the Player of the Month awards after impressing with bat and ball in August against Afghanistan and Nepal.

The leg-spinner claimed just one wicket in the first two matches against Afghanistan but he took 3-42 to secure the whitewash. He also bowled a good spell of 4-27 in the win against Nepal.