

Called On

ISLAMABAD: Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili on Thursday called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here at Air Headquarters



Saudi Chief of General Staff lauds exceptional progress of PAF through indigenization

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili on Thursday called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here at Air Headquarters.

Leading a high level delegation, the Saudi Chief of General Staff expressed his admiration for the exceptional progress made by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), particularly in the area of indigenisation and lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel during the meeting whereas the delegation also underscored discussion on several key areas of mutual interest, defence co-operation and geo-strategic situation, a PAF news release said.

On his arrival, a smart-

ly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili the guard of honour.

Later, the visiting dignitary was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers.

During the meeting, the Chief of the Air Staff shared his pragmatic policy decisions aimed at modernizing PAF through the smart acquisition of niche technologies with a special focus on artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and electronic warfare, in addition to the upgradation of infrastructure and revitalization of operational and training domains.

The Air Chief highlighted that Saudi Arabia being the center of the Muslim world and a significant strategic partner, has longstanding religious, cultural and historical bond

with Pakistan which is exemplified through robust bilateral relations.

He also reiterated his unwavering commitment to enhancing the existing ties in realms of military-to-military cooperation, joint exercises and collaborative training.

Highlighting the bond of brotherhood between the two nations, the Air Chief said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relationship with Saudi Arabia which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability."

The Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces also pledged to play his role in further improving the existing bilateral ties at all levels and expressed his desire to consolidate cooperation in various fields including train-

ing, emerging technologies and mutual cooperation in the aviation industry.

The Saudi delegation also visited different installations and technological infrastructure including PAF's National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre (NIIAOC) and PAF's Cyber Command along with National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP), where they were briefed about the operational capabilities and ongoing projects of PAF's modernization drive.

The Chief of the Air Staff briefed the visiting dignitary about his vision of PAF's National Aerospace Science & Technology Park project and highlighted that the mega project was aimed at fostering collaborative research, development and innovation in the

domains of aviation, space, IT, cyber & computing to ensure social, economic, technological and scientific benefits both for Pakistan and our valuable partners.

The visiting dignitary expressed keen interest in the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park which will serve as a beacon of innovation to promote futuristic aerospace and aviation capabilities.

He also appreciated the unwavering commitment of the Air Chief in making the project a huge success in a record time.

The meeting between Chief of the Air Staff and Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces is a testament to the strong commitment of both nations to further enhance their strategic partnership through continued dialogue and collaboration.

China, Pakistan joint air exercise to further deepen pragmatic cooperation: Expert

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The China and Pakistan joint air force exercise recently concluded in Northwest China is beneficial to both sides in terms of skills, tactics and interoperability, said Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert.

The two countries use different training approaches, but at the same time fly the same aircraft, the J-10C, so both sides can learn from each other, Fu told Global Times.

With the return of participating Pakistani forces to their home country, China and Pakistan successfully wrapped up the Shaheen-X joint air exercise in Northwest China, with observers predicting more military interactions and exchanges that will further

deepen pragmatic cooperation between the "Iron Brothers." The J-10C and JF-17 fighter aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force contingent on Tuesday landed back at an operational air base in Pakistan after successful participation in the joint air exercise in China.

Aimed at validating interoperability between China and Pakistan in the face of realistic contemporary air combat scenarios, the exercise was a collaborative endeavour that facilitated the exchange of valuable insights and lessons learned.

A video attached to the press release highlighted that the Shaheen-X was an operational exercise that deepened brotherhood, created synergy, enhanced professional skills and operational preparedness



and shared cultural values.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force dispatched warplanes including the J-16 fighter jet to the joint exercise, the video showed.

The drill, the 10th edition in the Shaheen exercise

series, started on August 28 in Jiuquan, Northwest China's Gansu Province and Yinchuan, Northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

In addition to fighters, other types of aircraft such as early warning aircraft and ground

equipment, including ground-to-air missile systems, radar installations and communications units, also participated in the drill that practised typical combat scenarios such as joint air defense and joint countermeasures.

The exercise featured advanced warplanes from both sides and formed complete combat systems that stress interoperability, a Chinese military expert who requested anonymity told the Global Times.

The J-16 from the Chinese side is the PLA Air Force's most powerful and all-round fighter jet, only second to the stealth-capable J-20, while the J-10C from the Pakistani side is the Pakistan Air Force's most advanced aircraft, the expert said.

SC dismisses appeal pertaining to refund of income tax under tribal areas' special status

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday dismissed an appeal in a case pertaining to income tax refund under the special status of tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A three-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the case. During the course of proceedings, Riaz Hussain, the petitioner's counsel, adopted the stance that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the Customs Department had issued notifications related to tax refunds for tribal people. The CJP questioned whether the petitioner wanted issuance of separate notifications for the tribal areas vis-à-vis all laws of Pakistan. Justice Athar Minallah said that if the special status (of tribal areas) were maintained then a separate notification was required. The CJP remarked that what was the problem in paying a small amount of tax when the petitioner lived in Pakistan availing all facilities.

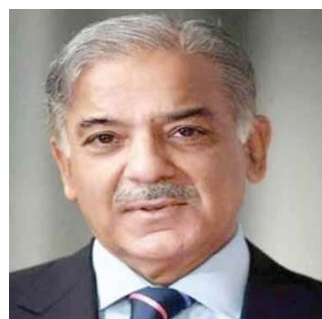
After Maryam, Shehbaz races back to London to see Nawaz

Bureau Report

LAHORE:- Pakistan Muslim League-N President and former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif left for London to have an important meeting the party head.

The former PM is going to London with an important message for his elder brother Nawaz Sharif. Shehbaz Sharif will reach London via Qatar on today (Thursday) night as Nawaz Sharif has called him to London again for an important consultation.

Party sources said Shehbaz Sharif is expected to have an important meeting with Nawaz Sharif on Friday. In the meeting issues of Nawaz Sharif's return home on Oct 21, consultations on



preparations for the elections and other issues would be discussed.

Party Information Secretary Maryam Aurangzeb said that Shehbaz Sharif is going to London following the direction of Nawaz Sharif and after meeting will return home soon.

Shahbaz Sharif left for London again after a two-day stay in Pakistan. Earlier, Shahbaz Sharif had stayed in London for a month.

On Thursday morning, Maryam Nawaz also left for London via Dubai and she will stay there for a week.

PM to meet Chinese vice president, address think-tank on UNGA margins today

Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will spend a busy day in New York today where his schedule includes a meeting with Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, the PM Office said Thursday. The meeting with the Chinese leader will be held on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

During the day, the prime minister will deliver his address to the leading think-tank Council of Foreign Relations where he will outline Pakistan's perspective on regional and international issues. He will meet Sultan Al Jaber, President-designate Confer-



ence of the Parties (COP-28).

The prime minister will hold a meeting with the delegations of the Association of Physicians of Pakistan-descent of North America (APPNA) and the U. S.-Pakistan Business Council. Kakar will give an interview to the American media and will meet heads of various U. S. companies.

Election date announcement a positive development: Solangi



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Thursday that announcement of the election date by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was a positive development.

Addressing a news conference, he welcomed the announcement on behalf of the caretaker government. It was a moment of delight that the election would be held in line with the law and the Constitution. Flanked by Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatization

Fawad Hassan Fawad, he said it was a day of despair for rumour-mongers as the ECP made the announcement regarding general elections which would be held in the last week of January 2024.

The ECP had said that all the groundwork would be completed by November 30 and political parties would be given 54 days for the election campaign in line with the Election Act 2017, he added. Murtaza Solangi said the country would be run by elected representatives of the people which would bring political and economic stability.

Govt takes steps for medical education's betterment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Thursday said that effective measures are being taken for the improvement of health services and medical education.

The minister said this during a visit to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University. Vice Chancellor Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University Dr. Tanveer Khaliq gave a briefing on various educational activities, recent performance and challenges in the university.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that universities should play their role keeping in view the modern requirements of research and training in the field of medicine.

He said that special attention needs to be given to research in the health sector in Pakistan.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the government is paying special attention to strengthening the health emergency system.

The staff of the medical department should maintain their principles and standards, he added.

The minister said that the govern-



ment is taking concrete steps to develop medical education on modern lines.

Dr. Tanveer Khaliq informed the minister that the university has developed AI-based arterial blockage diagnosis software at Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University Islamabad. This software will play an important role in the field of vascular surgery, Dr. Tanveer Khaliq added.

He said that the university is among the top five universities in the THE ranking in Pakistan.

The university has also been short-listed in the QS ranking.

He said that the construction of the new academic block of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University has been started.

The project will be completed in a short period of just three years for which a huge sum of three billion rupees has been allocated.

ECP announcement confirms Jamal Shah's early election prediction

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah has expressed his contentment as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) validated his previous statement by scheduling the General Elections for the final week of January. In a statement on Thursday, he emphasized that he had consistently said in numerous TV interviews that ECP would announce the elections

prior to February.

He said the caretaker government would fulfill its constitutional obligations by extending all-out support to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding free and transparent elections in the country. The minister said the main mandate of the caretaker government was to provide all-out assistance to the ECP for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in all provinces of the country.

Kashmiris to stage anti-India demo during Modi's address to UNGA: Barrister Sultan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the Kashmiri diaspora community would hold an anti-India protest demonstration in front of the UN office in New York on September 26 when Indian premier Narendra Modi will be addressing the UN General Assembly.

The anti-India protest, he said, would be attended and addressed by the representatives of the Kashmiri expatriate community hailing from different parts of the world.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Barrister Sultan said that the protest demonstration being staged in front of the UN General Assembly was meant to expose India's nefarious designs in the region besides seeking the global community's attention towards the



fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Urging the Kashmiri expatriate community to settle in America and other parts of the world to make it a success, the AJK president said that

arrangements for this demonstration have been finalized.

The President said that he asked some friends in New York to mobilize the Indian minorities living in the US to join this protest or hold separate protests on the day.

Meanwhile, Barrister Karamat Hussain, President of Kashmir Peace Forum International UK, called on President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Wednesday.

On this occasion, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry directed the President of Kashmir Peace Forum International to redouble his efforts to expose atrocities unleashed upon Kashmiris by the Indian occupation forces in occupied Kashmir.

Referring to the international community's legal and moral obligations towards resolving the Kashmir dispute, he said that it was high time that the international community should play its much-needed role to help resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully in accordance with the UNSC resolutions.

Killings over property, honour continue unabated



News Desk

LAHORE: Four people were clubbed to death in Ghotki over just another deadly property dispute as such killings remain a routine news item in Pakistan.

Obviously, the murdered persons were family members because these matters involve blood relations. So a son killed his mother Maryam (55) and sister Sumaira (25) along with two nieces Iqra (9) and Ayat (6).

These and other killings, including those involving honour, completely negate our claims that our culture and traditions are strong and that they protect the individuals against the harmful social elements. Police stations and courts – not to mention the issues and incidents which remain unreported – across the country are filled with cases representing "competing interests" within the families.

At the same time, these traditions also result in competition and enmity between two families that may or not belong to the same clan or tribe – the identity which makes a person respectable or otherwise in our traditional society.

According to the latest figures released by Lahore police, a total of 337 people have so far been killed in the city over honour rivalry and old enmity.

So issues like a simple marriage proposal or small piece of land or the desire to educate your daughters can result in deaths.

The basic issue before us is whether we want to carry on with this mindset that makes us a hostage to these traditions. If yes, then what is our place in the 21st century? What do we want to achieve in today's world?

You know why the Greek philosopher emphasised on reasoning? Because asking question about yourself and surroundings do help solving puzzles that remain mysteries otherwise.

AIOU holds RDs conference



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood chaired the Regional Directors Conference of Punjab at Multan Regional Campus the other day.

Different educational issues from admissions to examinations and issuance of degrees were discussed and various measures were suggested for the convenience of students in the meeting.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood said there was a need to promote and popularize education as well as social and economic activities to eradicate poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy.

Regional offices and Model Study Centres of AIOU will be established in every part of the country that lacks the basic facilities for education.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that the university had prepared an academic calendar to complete all teaching and administrative matters, and regional directors played an important role in implementation of the academic calendar.

He asked regional directors to submit the results of the assignments within the stipulated time frame to conduct the final examinations as per scheduled timings.

He further said that the student supported system was our priority as students' facilitation were very important in the distance education system.

The regional directors assured the Vice Chancellor to comply with the academic calendar and complete all academic activities on time.

In the end, the Vice Chancellor praised the long-standing services of the Regional Directors for the development of the University in wonderful words.

Sindh announces holiday on September 29 on account of Eid Milad un Nabi

The caretaker government in Sindh on Thursday announced September 29 (Friday) as a public holiday on account of Eid Milad un Nabi (PBUH).

The country is set to celebrate 12th Rabi ul Awal, the day of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birth, next Friday.

All the government offices and institutions will remain closed on September 29 in honour of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

"The Government of Sindh declares 12th Rabi ul Awal 1445 (AH) 29th September 2023 (Friday), Eid Milad un Nabi (SAWW) as a public holiday for all offices, autonomous, semi-autonomous bodies, corporations and local councils under the administrative control of the government of Sindh," a notification of the holiday stated.

Cholistan Desert

BAHAWALPUR: A view of the camels drinking water from pond at Cholistan Desert of the southern part of Punjab .



Photo: Online

KP NMDs 7 hospitals are feared to be closed due to non-payment of staff salaries

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Due to non-payment of liabilities (dues of 7 hospitals awarded and running under Public Private Partnership (PPP) to TCP in the merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is a fear of being closed.

On the other hand, Director Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Shaukat says that I am trying to release the funds.

The problem of Sheikh Fatima Model Hospital Shulam will be solved in two or three days, and there is no justification for the closure of other 6 hospitals including the mentioned hospital.

In this regard, when I asked about the other 6 hospitals established in other tribal districts, there was no response from the DG.

However, it should be remembered that Sheikh Fatima Hospital sholam, which was established with UAE funds

in Birmal Tehsil of South Waziristan Lower District, was given to TCP by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government under Public Private Partnership in 2018.

However now hundreds of employees including other hospitals have not been paid by TCP for the last 8 months, and due to which the hospital is feared to be closed, while apart from this, the situation of the other six hospitals is also the same.

Which includes Toi Khullah Category D, Darazida Category D, Kurma Alizai Category D, Bajaur Pashat Category D, Mamond Category D, Navagai Category D Hospital. It should be noted, that 65 dialysis patients have been admitted in Shaikh Fatima Hospital Sholam for a long time and now they are fighting for life and death day and night due to lack of facilities.

On the other hand, the Chief Executive Officer of Trans Continental Parma

(TCP) says that the salaries of doctors, staff and class four employees working in 7 hospitals in tribal districts have been stopped for the last 8 months.

When asked why staff salaries are stopped, the CEO said, that the liability of our 7 hospitals is around 65/70 crores, they are not being paid to us by the health department of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and due to which this alarming situation has arisen.

The CEO said that I am being disturbing in various ways so I cannot fulfill everyone's demands.

He pointed out and said that everyone has kept their pockets open, it is not enough for me to fill everyone's pockets.

He said, Sholam hospital about main issues, Dialysis supplies are unavailable, as a result of the Dialysis unit being non-functional.

2. No Salaries from last 8 months.
3. No operational funds for POL.
4. No Surgical, Nephrologist and

Gynaecologist in the hospital.

5. No Electricity.
6. Non availability of Oxygen Supplies,

The CEO further said, in Sholam hospital total around 66 employ presently working without salaries including doctors, nurses, paramedics.

It is worth mentioning here that better facilities were provided to patients earlier in Sheikh Fatima Hospital Sholam, and now due to non-available of funds, patients coming from far away were turned away.

Family members of kidney disease sufferers say that our patients are close to death, therefore, the provincial government should see our poverty and fund to release the hospital.

It should be remembered that dialysis patients are also brought to the said hospital from the neighboring country of Afghanistan, but due to the non-function of the hospital, the patients are feared to have died.

Pakistan's climate action pompous sans harnessed institutional capacities, coordination: Speakers

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a seminar on Analysis of Pakistan's Institutional Capacity for Climate Action Thursday said the country's climate action would be fruitless if it was not curated through harnessed institutional capacities, corrected policy endeavours, and improved coordination among the relevant department inclusive interventions to cope with environmental degradation.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organised a special seminar as part of its series of dialogues intended to stir a debate on pressing environmental issues related to the country's efforts and achievements

on climate action, global leadership for addressing global warming, climate finance and the first ever loss and damage fund declared due to the country's ardent efforts at the previous COP-27 conference held in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Research Associate and author of one of the policy paper related to the aforementioned effort, Ahmed Awais Khaver in his opening remarks said the seminar was part of the series of seminars being held in collaboration with Oxfam Pakistan which was the second one of the four sessions to be held by the SDPI.

Deputy Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Shafiqat Munir in his welcome note said the seminar was part of the pre-launch

seminar series prior to the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Dubai, UAE.

He mentioned that the seminar focused the 13th sustainable development goal of Climate Action (SDG-13), whereas SDG-12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) could not be ignored and it encompassed all climate action by emitting less through less consumption, hence reducing the carbon footprint.

He underlined that the seminar would help debate the capacities of the country to take the daunting of climate action and would help garner more ideas on this policy paper to prepare a better and enriched research document.

Author of the Policy Paper on

Climate Action, Awais Umar, Research Associate at SDPI briefed the participants on the document that studied climate action and vulnerability of the country.

He mentioned that Pakistan made a significant contribution through policy making efforts on Climate Action-SDG-13 but lacked effective implementation.

The country, he said had Climate Change Policy 2021, an updated version of the same document promulgated in 2012. However, the provinces with a few exceptions lacked the important policy initiative to drive their efforts coherently to address climate change, he added.

Lecturer at National University of

Sciences and Technology (NUST), Sheeba Tariq opined that the country needed decentralisation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) rules and regulations at the provincial and district level because the vulnerable community deemed recognition that were neglected in every policy initiative.

"Women empowerment should be part and parcel of development strategies as the current policy initiatives lacked women responsive strategies and policies which should have bottom-up approach," she added.

Sheeba Tariq noted that there was phaseout plan for coal-fired power plants under CPEC amid its 60% renewable energy transformation goal alongwith that the Electric Vehi-

cle transition agenda also had no plan for lithium batteries' disposal or waste management that was environmentally hazardous.

Deputy Manager, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Mujahid Afzal said the barrier to implementation of climate change policy in the country was finances which could not be managed from its own resources but rather possible through the international community's support.

He highlighted that due to the demographics of the country that varied due to diverse communities, the concept of community development varied from region to region and therefore should be handled in separate manner in different areas of the country.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:31 am
Zohr	12:01 pm
Asr	4:23 pm
Maghrib	6:07 pm
Isha	7:30 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	9204654
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9203883
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9266316
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249

Hikvision launches its first service center in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hikvision has officially inaugurated its first service center in Pakistan, the Return Merchandise Authorization center (RMA Center). Located in Umer Plaza, Rawalpindi, this opening represents a significant advancement in the company's commitment to offer high-level after-sales support to its expanding customer base.

In 2016, Hikvision established its presence in Pakistan, bringing advanced offerings to the video security industry and expanding its product lineup to encompass access control systems, video-based doorbells, smart home products, and other cutting-edge innovations. The RMA Center initiative is the next step in the company's evolution and stems from Hikvision's mission to enhance technical support services, optimize after-sales problem-solving efficiency, and foster advancements in both service and product quality. The primary objective is to assist customers in overcoming software and hardware challenges, ensuring seamless product functionality.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Klaus Liu, General Country Manager, Hikvision Pakistan, said, "We are thrilled to introduce Hikvision's first-ever RMA Center in Pakistan, a testament to our unwavering commitment to providing world-class after-sales support to our valued customers."

India destabilizing region to establish its hegemony: SAPM

MA Rashid

FAISALABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights & Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick condemned on Thursday India's destabilising activities in the region through state-sponsored terrorism, aimed at establishing its own hegemony.

Speaking to the media after participating in a Mehfil-e-Milad at Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) on Thursday, she asserted that India was engaged in disseminating venomous propaganda against Pakistan. This was occurring despite India's own involvement in recent terrorist activities, as revealed in Canada, where RAW officials were reported to have been involved in the killing of a Khalistan movement activist.

Mushaal went on to highlight India's support for extremist organizations like the RSS, which she claimed was also collaborating with the Indian government and RAW in developing nuclear weapons. She stated that the RSS and RAW had an extensive global network and were allegedly involved in the harassment of Kashmiris and Sikhs not only in Pakistan but also in Australia

and Europe. However, she welcomed Canada's strong response to the killing of a Sikh leader, asserting that this incident had exposed India's darker side, as well as the malicious intentions of the Modi government. Mushaal claimed that the Indian government was not only supporting terrorists but also promoting terrorism to suppress the movements for Khalistan and Kashmir freedom.

She emphasised that Kashmiris had been struggling for their right to self-determination for the past 75 years, while India continued to use force to deny them their fundamental and constitutional rights. She expressed regret over the silence of the world's human rights advocates on the pressing issue, describing it as deeply unfortunate.

Responding to a question, she stated that Kulbhushan Jadhav was an operative of RAW involved in terrorist activities globally, including in Pakistan. He had been deployed to establish a RAW network and promote its activities in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Jadhav was also involved in terrorist activities in Punjab. Mushaal urged the entire nation to unite



in countering Indian propaganda and thwarting its nefarious schemes. Addressing another question, Mushaal clarified that the caretaker

government consisted of technocrats and was non-political. The responsibility of fixing and announcing election dates lay with the Election Commission

of Pakistan (ECP). She assured that once the ECP announced the election date, the government would implement it accordingly.

Punjabi Music fever is at an all-time high on Spotify in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In recent years, the music landscape in Pakistan has witnessed a remarkable transformation, with Punjabi music gaining unprecedented popularity on Spotify. The younger generation, in particular, has been drawn to the traditional and modern blend of instruments in Punjabi tracks, resulting in an impressive surge in both: the number of releases and listener consumption.

According to Spotify data, the year 2023 has seen a phenomenal rise in the production and appreciation of Punjabi music. Compared to 2021, the total number of Punjabi track releases have more than doubled, showcasing the industry's vibrant growth and creative evolution.

Punjabi pop, with its catchy tunes, has witnessed a remarkable 99% year-on-year increase in listener consumption. Meanwhile, Punjabi Hip Hop has seen an astounding 106% growth in its listenership. This surge in popularity reflects the genre's universal appeal, transcending borders and cultures.

One iconic Punjabi track that



continues to reign supreme is "Pasoori" by Ali Sethi and Shae Gill. This enchanting track has captured the hearts of music lovers worldwide and remains one of the most streamed songs globally.

"Punjabi is catching on to be a worldwide phenomenon, and we're starting to see its effects in Pakistan too. More and more artists are experimenting with Punjabi and the growth in

consumption of Punjabi music is going through the roof," said Rutaba Yaqub, Spotify's Senior Editor for Pakistan, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh. "Spotify is at the forefront when it comes to showcasing and promoting Punjabi music, which is why we're confident that this genre is only going to get bigger. Our Spotify playlist 'Punjabi Sauce' features some of the top Punjabi tracks in Pakistan right now."

Punjabi music's influence extends far beyond Pakistan's borders, reaching top markets in India, Canada, US and UK. Spotify data has further highlighted that some of the top Punjabi language tracks by Pakistani artists include the evergreen "Pasoori" by Ali Sethi and Shae Gill, "Dil Diyan Gallan" by the effervescent Atif Aslam, "Baari" by Bilal Saeed and Momina Mustehsan, "Samjhawan-Lofi Flip" by Jawad Ahmad, "Khuda Aur Mohabbat (Original Score)" by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and "Tu Jhoom" by Naseebo Lal and Abida Parveen.

As for the musical trends of 2023, the top five tracks in terms of streams include; "Beqadra" by Nehaal Naseem, Spotify's Fresh Finds artist, "4U" by Maanu, Spotify's RADAR artist, "Mangan Aiyaaan" by Atif Aslam, "Lagda Nahi" by Toshi and Ammy Gill and "Bin Maahi" by the legendary Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

As we continue to witness this incredible surge in popularity, one thing is clear: Punjabi music is here to stay, uniting music enthusiasts across the globe in a harmonious celebration of culture and art.

Traders Alliance Federation demanded extension the date of income tax returns

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Traders Alliance Federation KPK chief Ghulam Bilal Javed and Tanzeem Tajran KPK president Malik Mehr Elahi have requested the government to extend the deadline till January 31, 2024. Traders have demanded an extension in the date for filing income tax returns to facilitate those who have delayed filing their returns due to the disruptions in the country due to inflationary storm, rising electricity bills and lack of business. President Traders Alliance Federation, ex-executive member Sarhad Chamber Peshawar Ghulam Bilal Javed requested the government to extend the last date for filing income tax returns till January 31, 2024 as many taxpayers



are facing high inflation especially in electricity bills. Could not file return on time due to increase in margin. We request Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar Khan that the entire nation, including the taxpayers, has been severely affected by the increase in electricity bills and severe inflation, and now the extortion mafia and the increase in petrol prices have

gripped the people. Therefore, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should be directed to extend the last date for filing Income Tax returns to 31 January 2024, which will be widely appreciated by the business community. Malik Maher Elahi and Ghulam Bilal, provincial presidents of the Trade Unions KPK, in a joint statement urged the FBR to extend the

last date for filing income tax returns to January 31, 2024 to facilitate traders who That returns could not be filed.

If the FBR instructs its commissioners to extend cases who were unable to file returns on time, Malik Maher Elahi said, "We still request the Chairman FBR to issue tax returns to the public. Don't leave yourself at the mercy of commissioners for admission. Extend the date appropriately to protect SMEs and large traders. Ghulam Bilal emphasized that it would be better for the FBR to extend the date to January 31, 2024 in the interest of better collection as it would reap more profit. Because of the current situation, a good number of entrepreneurs are not able to file their returns."



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of the prize winners of the International Peace Day painting competition with Devcom Pakistan Creative Director Riffat Ara Baig. The ICLC and partners organized the competition on Thursday at Government Polytechnic Institute for Women H-8, Islamabad.

Workshop on 'National Media Fellowship' concluded



Jamshed Rizwani

MULTAN: The ten-day workshop of the "National Media Fellowship on Responsible Reporting and Representation of Gender Based Violence and Child Marriage" concluded in Karachi.

The fellowship is the flagship media initiative of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and is supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Center for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) IBA.

The workshop was attended by 40 journalists reporting on GBV and child marriage issues from across the country. All provinces of the country were represented at the workshop. Journalists came from English, Urdu and Regional media and from print, radio, TV and digital platforms.

The participants were sensitized on GBV and child marriage issues and trainers discussed on how to report on these areas with sensitivity and responsibility. Participants were also taught hand-on skills like mobile journalism, data journalism and digital journalism.

The NCSW initiated first National Media Fellowship on GBV and Child Marriage in 2022 which successfully concluded with 162 GBV and Child Marriage stories published in all mediums. This is the second cohort of this initiative.

NUST offers 6-month Certificate in Health Professions Education

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: With a view to enhancing the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals, the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) has introduced a comprehensive six-month Certificate in Healthcare Professions Education (CHPE).

The programme was geared towards advancing healthcare services vis-à-vis patient experiences and overall healthcare outcomes. The initiative came at a time when the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) made it mandatory for all medical faculty to acquire this certification.

CHPE has been tailored to cater to the growing demand for highly skilled educators and trainers in the healthcare industry.

Carefully designed by the experts in the field, the curriculum equips healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to excel as educators and mentors in these epoch-making times.

The healthcare industry currently faces unprecedented challenges with regard to improved affordability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare. NUST recognised these challenges and was committed to address them by leveraging cutting-edge technologies.

NUST invited healthcare professionals, the public, and policymakers to join in this exciting journey towards a healthier and more connected future. CHPE is open for enrollment now. Details about the programme could be accessed through the NUST website, www.nust.edu.pk.

Gulji Ki Batein

Gull naz

Once a group of ladies were sharing the stories of their struggles and how they overcame them. Someone stated, "I never had any problems faced no hardship in my life and I am very happy". I asked, "How can a person feel happiness if faces no ups and downs and go through rainy days?" she said "when life is smooth without any problem, you are happy." I started thinking "until one passes thru

the darkness how she or he can witness the light? one can't feel joy until go through sadness or there is no sense of achievement without any exam".

I mean that "AH" moment, for example, on a day you wake up late, get ready in a hurry, rush to work in a heavy rain or snow, run to catch the train, walking fast keep looking at your watch and finally when you reach on time, you say, "AH, THANK GOD, I MADE IT" and feel happy & accomplished.....

That AH moment..... They are many instances in life when

we say "AH" and feel the joy after we achieve our goals, come out of any bad situation, fulfill our dreams, or overcome any hurdle and that's called life.

Life is never a smooth ride, it's a bumpy road with ups and downs, lows and highs.

It has a unique flavor of sweetness, salty, sour, little spicy and a touch of spark and that makes it tasty.

If it was smooth or plain, we wouldn't have that "AH" moments, never felt the joy and did not know how to thank God.

Allah also said (Inna Ma al Usre

Yusra.) "Their is a joy after hardship".

If we are going through hardships and have bumpy ride we are actually living a life and get chance to say Alhamdulillah and feel happy.

These struggles, ups and downs and hardships make us strong and teach us the life lessons which were never taught in school books.

We feel the actual essence and flavor of life, and come to know the many other sides of people and learn how to become a warrior and deal with world.

ALHAMDULILLAH. Stay blessed and happy.

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Water scarcity looming large on country

Abdul Wahid

Without water resource rapidly depleting, wastage of this precious resource is posing serious challenges by pushing us towards water-scarce status from the existing water-stressed nation. Our present per capita water availability has declined below 1000 cubic meter from 5600 cubic meter in 1950s with fewer reservoirs constructed since Pakistan's inception.

A major chunk of water resources continue to flow to the Arabian Sea and a vast quantity is wasted due to obsolete irrigation system.

Multiple vested interests politicking on water issues since ages opposing different water reservoir projects and the big-big farmers managing much more water for their lands had inflicted irreparable loss to this resource and the nation.

"Despite having one of the largest irrigation systems and the fourth largest groundwater aquifer in the world, the per capita water availability declined below the scarcity threshold of 1,000 m³/capita in 2010," stated Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resource (PCRWR).

"This places, Pakistan in the category of water-scarce countries," the PCRWR mentioned in its National Water Conservation Strategy prepared in February this year. "For us, surface water has always been the main focus as we ignored issues like groundwater overdraft, salinity and water-logging, climate change and ecosys-

tem deterioration." The findings revealed that with these challenges, water scarcity is going to increase further due to growing demand, mainly coming from a rising population with a growth rate of over two percent and rapid urbanization, exacerbated by the impact of climate change.

Although scientific evidence has proved that water resource development and governance influence water security yet poor and outdated management practices exacerbate the water crisis.

"According to all indicators, Pakistan is fast becoming a water-scarce country," said Chairman PCRWR, Dr Muhammad Ashraf.

"But, there is little awareness of this looming disaster amongst stakeholders and policymakers who cannot foresee real picture of its repercussions on socio-economic fronts." He recommended to engaging policymakers on the basis of scientific evidence to make them realize the gravity of the situation and ensure the synthesizing of the latest methods of diffusion and adoption and scaling up of promising water management.

"Water management is part of Pakistan Vision 2025 that envisages improving water efficiency in agriculture," he said.

"Similarly, it is also part of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 that provides for managing water usage at domestic, industrial, and agricultural sectors." Dr Ashraf said the Draft National Water Policy provides for establishing a National Water Commission as well as policy guidelines for sustainable management of water resources.

Province would develop their own

strategies in line with this Policy.

"We need collective efforts for water resource management and a mass awareness campaign was direly needed to educate all stakeholders on this issue," he added.

Since our agricultural sector is the major user of our water resource, there is a dire need to prudently using water for this sector by minimizing distribution, conveyance, and application losses, developing crop zones based on land and water resource availability, ensuring water efficient technologies at the village level, train farmers on efficient use of water, promote well-accepted irrigation methods like raised beds, ridges and zero tillage technology in Rice grown areas and much more for raising awareness and promoting sense of responsibility.

"Punjab is under severe threat of water scarcity due to increased water demand and climate change impact," said Dr Javed Iqbal, Director Strategic Planning and Reform Unit, Government of Punjab.

"Water charges in vogue are under-priced for the supply of water in canal command area," he said.

"Although the 'abiana' rate has been revised in 2022-23 yet we need adequate water pricing for sustainability of water resources infrastructures." Dr Javed stressed to manage our existing water resources by introducing the best practices and improving storage capacity ensuring to save every drop of water.

Inefficient use of water for irrigation has been a major challenge for the country as this sector uses 96% of our river water resource and a significant amount

of water is wasted due to our irrigation system's antiquated design and poor maintenance.

Besides conservation, water pricing is another critical public policy issue that needs to be addressed to improve the utilization of this precious resource.

Any such pricing mechanism should be broad-based covering not only the agricultural sector alone but the domestic, industrial and commercial sectors as well.

"Principles of integrated water resource management stress a system-wise approach instead of addressing surface water and groundwater issues separately," said International Water Management Institute Representative Dr Mohsin Hafeez. He said Pakistan has adequate institutional capacity for surface water governance at the provincial level but unfortunately, groundwater remains an unregulated area.

As surface water availability becomes increasingly unreliable, he said, consumers in agricultural or industrial and commercial sectors have switched to the unabated abstraction of underground resources in the absence of regulation for reasonable use. "Therefore, we need to develop an integrated water management plan," he remarked.

"Once a water market is developed, imposing restriction on groundwater abstraction will not be as challenging as it is today." Amidst all of these measures, the PCRWR suggests a realistic water pricing system for different sectors underlining and evolving a comprehensive strategy for water conservation and governing its usage by all sectors of the economy.

NAB reopen cases after SC verdict

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) likely to reopen cases against PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif after Supreme Court (SC) verdict.

According to sources, the NAB will likely to reopen the Ramzan sugar mill case against the former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and the plot allotment case against the PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

Sources said that NAB will also reopen the cases against other political bigwigs and bureaucracy including Rana Mashhood, and former VC Punjab University Mujahid Kamran.

The Paragon Housing Society case against former federal minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq and Salman Rafiq and the misuse of powers case against the Ex-Speaker Punjab assembly Sabtain Khan is also expected to reopen.

Earlier, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) sent back references against politicians to accountability courts after Supreme Court struck down some sections of the amendments made to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) last year.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Supreme Court ordered restoration of corruption cases against public representatives as it struck down some sections of the amendments made to the country's accountability laws last year by the previous coalition government.

In a majority 2-1 verdict, the top court approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's petition challenging amendments made to the country's accountability laws.

Former CJP Bandial and Justice Ahsan declared Imran's plea to be maintainable while Justice Shah disagreed with the verdict.

Following the verdict, the references against some of the country's political bigwigs will once again land in the accountability courts.

These include the Toshakhana reference against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, LNG reference against former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, rental power reference against former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf and assets beyond means case against former finance minister Ishaq Dar.

In June 2022, the former premier moved the apex court against amendments made to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance under the National Accountability (Second Amendment) Act 2022.

NAB law amendment The NAB (Second Amendment) Bill 2021 states that NAB's deputy chairman, to be appointed by the federal government, would become the acting chairman of the bureau following the completion of the tenure of the chairman.

The bill has also reduced the four-year term of the NAB chairman. After approval of the law, NAB will not be able to act on federal, provincial or local tax matters.

It has also set a three-year term for the judges of the accountability courts. Under the proposed law, it has been made binding upon NAB to ensure the availability of evidence against an accused prior to his or her arrest.



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

G20 Summit Dehli, Grapes are Sour - I

The G20, or Group of Twenty, is a forum of the world's major economies that convenes annually to discuss and address pressing global challenges. In 2023, Delhi hosted the G20 summit, where leaders from 19 countries and the European Union came together to deliberate on critical issues facing the planet. The G20 Delhi 2023 Summit's resolution contains of four Pillars.

One of the most prominent and urgent issues discussed at the G20 Delhi 2023 summit was climate change. The resolution recognizes the existential threat posed by climate change and reaffirms the commitment of the G20 nations to the Paris Agreement. Leaders agreed to implement concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to clean and renewable energy sources, and support vulnerable nations in adapting to climate impacts. The resolution also emphasizes the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use practices. The global economy has faced significant challenges in recent years, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The G20 Delhi 2023 resolution prioritizes economic recovery and resilience. Leaders pledged to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, reduce inequalities, and enhance global economic stability. Measures to strengthen healthcare systems, ensure equitable access to vaccines, and promote digitalization as a driver of economic growth are central to the resolution. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for global cooperation in addressing health crises. The G20 Delhi 2023

resolution recognizes the importance of enhancing global health security and preparedness. Leaders have committed to improving healthcare infrastructure, ensuring equitable vaccine distribution, and strengthening international collaboration to prevent future pandemics. The resolution also emphasizes the importance of addressing mental health challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Leaders pledged to advance social and economic inclusion, gender equality, and access to education and healthcare. The resolution underscores the importance of reducing poverty, promoting decent work, and investing in sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, it recognizes the significance of partnerships with non-G20 countries and international organizations to achieve these goals.

Now come to another point. The above mentioned objectives and goals suits for civilized leaderships and countries whereas India and its leadership are quite opposite. India, so so-called world's largest democracy is involved in severe human rights violations. Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that is essential for a thriving democracy. Severe concerns have been raised in India about press freedom and the stifling of dissent. Journalists, activists, and citizens have faced threats, harassment, and even violence for expressing their views or criticizing government policies. The arrests of activists and journalists on charges such as sedition have drawn international attention and criticism. India has religious and cultural diversity but it has also been a source of tensions and conflicts. Incidents of religious violence, discrimination, and hate crimes have

raised concerns about the safety and rights of religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians. While the world leaders were busy in G20 and on the other hand Human Right violations were going on against minorities, their properties and worship places. Muslims and minorities shrines, mosques, businesses and properties were attacked by extremist Hindus during those days. Media showed number of videos and pictures about these malicious attacks. There have also been concerns about religious conversion laws and the impact on freedom of religion. Gender-based violence and discrimination remain significant human rights challenges in India. Despite legal protections, incidents of rape, domestic violence, and gender-based harassment persist. The #MeToo movement in India highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse across various industries. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the low participation of women in the workforce and their unequal access to opportunities. Access to quality education and healthcare is a fundamental right, but it remains a challenge for many in India, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Disparities in access to education and healthcare services have a profound impact on the lives of millions. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these disparities, with many struggling to access medical care and educational resources. India is home to a significant number of indig-

enous communities, often referred to as Adivasis. These communities have faced displacement from their ancestral lands due to development projects, mining, and industrialization. Land disputes and inadequate compensation have resulted in the loss of livelihoods and cultural heritage for many indigenous people. Human rights violations in India remain a matter of concern, and addressing these issues is essential for the country's continued progress and reputation on the global stage. Ensuring the protection of freedom of expression, religious freedom, gender equality, access to education and healthcare, and the rights of indigenous people are vital steps toward a more just and equitable society. The world should continue to watch as India grapples with these challenges and works toward upholding the principles of human rights and social justice. India's Human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir, Manipur and Assam are in front of the world.

Unfortunately, now India is in hands of a fundamentalist Modi and his Hindutova which have a very strict ideology against minorities. There mentality can be observed by the statement of Shankersinh Vaghela, Former Gujarat CM, "Godhra train burning was preplanned & executed for Modi BJP's electoral victory in 2002 assembly elections-Only RSS knew Karsevaks were in that train and in that particular coach. The fire was set from inside, not outside.

Then the attitude of India with its neighbors has always been worst. Its interference in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal is not hidden. India has been engaged in spying activities and has been hosting and facilitating the terrorism activities in Pakistan.

India has also been conducting false flag operations against Pakistan. False flag operations have been a contentious topic in geopolitics, often associated with covert activities designed to manipulate public opinion or provoke military responses. While allegations of false flag operations have been leveled against several nations, it is crucial to approach these claims with skepticism and a commitment to seeking the truth. A false flag operation refers to a deceptive tactic wherein a nation or entity carries out an action while disguising its true identity, making it appear as though the operation was conducted by another party. The primary goals of such operations are to manipulate public opinion, create pretext for military action, or deflect blame from the actual perpetrators. False flag operations typically involve a high degree of secrecy and subterfuge. The United States was accused of orchestrating the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which played a significant role in escalating U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The alleged attack by North Vietnamese patrol boats on U.S. Navy vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin provided the justification for the U.S. Congress to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, effectively authorizing military intervention in Vietnam. Although not executed, Operation Northwoods was a plan developed by the U.S. Department of Defense to stage false flag attacks, including terror-

ist acts, to provide a pretext for military intervention in Cuba. The plan was never implemented but highlights the potential for such actions.

In past, India wrongly blamed that some Pakistan-based terrorist groups were involved in attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001. This incident led to heightened tensions and a military standoff between the two countries. However in reality the attack was a false flag operation conducted by Indian intelligence agencies to justify its military response. Following terror attacks in Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019), India wrongly accused some group of Pakistan of being responsible. Pakistan, in turn, denied involvement and raised questions about the evidence presented by India, and strongly referred it a false flag operation. After Pulwama drama, India conducted airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan, while claiming to target militant centre. While India portrayed this as a preemptive strike against terrorism, Pakistan claimed it was a false flag operation to divert attention from domestic issues. The ground realities also confirmed that it was a false flag operation.

Recently, another false flag operation was conducted by India in Occupied Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), a Colonel, a Major and a DSP of the Indian Army were killed in an alleged encounter in Anantnag, reports are coming out that this incident was carried out in the style of India's past false flag operations. It should be noted that the former governor of Occupied Kashmir, Satya Pal, had also hinted at such false operations in the past few days.

To be continued

Consistency in policies essential for completion of CPEC: Dr Qibla Ayaz

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Islamic Ideology (CI), Dr Qibla Ayaz has stressed need for consistency in policies regarding China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to take maximum benefits of the project.

He was addressing a seminar on 'Sino-Pakistan Relations-The New Avenues' organized by PCFA, KP held here at China Study Centre of the University of Peshawar (UoP). Besides, Pro Vice Chancellor UoP, Dr Mohammad Saleem, Director CSC, and Secretary General Pakistan China Friendship Association KP Chapter, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, a larger number of students also attended the seminar organized by Dr Qibla Ayaz had recently headed the visit of a delegation of 20 Pakistani religious clerics to the People's Republic of China. Prominent members of the delegation were included Maulana Mohammad Tayyab (Swabi), Maulana Fazle Ali Haqqani (JUI-F) and Qazi Asif Luqman (the son of the late Qazi Hussain Ahmad).

During their stay in China, the members of the delegation have visited Beijing, Gulain and Xinjiang Region Capital City and Urumqi, where they met Muslims and also offered Friday prayers at Masjid.

The members of the delegation have had also visited an Islamic Centre at Urumqi, beside getting briefing from the Uyghur Muslims.

He said that there is no restriction on Muslims to worship and they enjoy freedom of performing religious obligations. He urged the Muslim population of China to adjust themselves in their system and play active role in the politics of their country saying quoting a phrase 'absent is always wrong'.

The chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology said that for the success of the CPEC, the maintenance of peace in Gilgit and Hazara regions of Pakistan is essential. He also stressed need for inter-sect harmony in the country to complete this project of economic progress and development.

In response to the questions of the students, he said that the People's Republic of China is playing active role in the global politics, saying the establishment of peace between the two Islamic rival states the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Islamic Republic of Iran is the ample proof in this regard.

Similarly, he said that China is also utilizing its good offices for brokering peace between Yemen and Saudi Arabia and has become first country of



the world, which has posted full-pledge ambassador in Afghanistan.

He said that the government of Pakistan should also frame long-term foreign policy, which should not be

changed with the change of the government as CPEC is long period project and consistency in policy is must for it.

Earlier welcoming the Chief Guest, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Secretary

General Pakistan-China Friendship Association, KP Chapter in his speech said that Pakistan and China Relations have strengthened with the passage of time. China is now Rising and Shin-

ing across the globe due to its systems and a great lesson to learn which is the need of the hour. Traditionally the relations with China are very old. Peshawar-Urumqi and Abbottabad-Kashgar have been sisters cities since 1985 and 2007 respectively. The relations between Pakistan and China today are at a high peak and we expect that both countries will continue supporting each other and will work for the progress of the people, he said.

Prof. Dr. Kausar Takreem, Coordinator, China Study Center, University of Peshawar while welcoming Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Pro Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar, Deans, Faculty members, students, and government officials to the seminar, said that China-Pakistan relations are based on mutual trust and benefits. The province of Xinjiang is strategically significant to China because it has the largest oil deposits. She also emphasizes that Chinese authorities are promoting the harmonious coexistence of all the ethnic groups in the large family of the Chinese nation, protecting freedom of religious belief by the law and closely promoting the high-quality economic and social development of People's livelihood.

ISSI and IDD sign an MoU in a virtual ceremony

Spokesman Report

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) represented by its Director General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and the Institute for Development and Diplomacy (IDD) of ADA University, Azerbaijan, represented by Director, Dr. Fariz Ismailzade, signed an MoU in a virtual ceremony today.

While speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Bilal Hayee, Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan suggested that both Institutes should prepare a future roadmap to strengthen their relationship including mutual exchange of resident fellows. He recommended that both sides could start research collaborations on topics of mutual interest, like regional connectivity, Islamophobia, climate change, regional security issues and disputes.

While admiring the dedication and efforts on both sides, Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan said that both Institutes could play pivotal role



in initiating intellectual discourse and public debate to strengthen bilateral relations and regional prosperity. They could join hands to promote their shared history, culture and values. He emphasised organizing joint activities to anti-terrorism and misinformation.

In his remarks on the occasion,

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI hailed the signing of the MoU. He stressed that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan are extremely fraternal and present an example for inter-state relationships. Both sides support each other in their national causes, like Kashmir

and Karabakh. He appreciated Azerbaijan's support at the OIC contact group on Jammu and Kashmir. He added that bilateral relationship has grown appreciably, while there is a huge potential for future collaboration on subjects of vital interest including trade, energy, cultural and people-to-people contacts, anti-terrorism, and combating misinformation. He reiterated ISSI's commitment to provide its platform for the promotion of the just cause and sacrifice of the Azerbaijani nation in safeguarding their sovereignty and territorial integrity. DG ISSI also thanked the two Ambassadors for their valuable support in the culmination of this initiative.

Dr. Fariz Ismailzade, Vice Rector of ADA University, in his remarks, expressed his deep gratitude for ISSI. Pakistan and Azerbaijan are brotherly countries supporting each other politically, economically and diplomatically. Both countries are also trying to deepen and expand their relationship in humanitarian and educational fields, he said.

PIC grants swift access to 50-year property records, upholding right to information

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) promptly facilitated a citizen's access to property records spanning 50 years in just one month, underscoring the commission's strong commitment to upholding the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, and ensuring the public's fundamental right to information.

According to details, Sarfraz A. Bhatti, a concerned citizen, sought assistance from the Pakistan Information Commission when faced with challenges in obtaining property documents from the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

His appeal was set for a hearing on August 23, 2023. During the hearing, the CDA clarified that the requested records, dating back to 1978, necessitated additional time for retrieval.

After numerous hearings and unwavering dedication, the Pakistan Information Commission efficiently obtained and furnished all the requested 50-year-old property records to Bhatti.

In expressing his contentment, Bhatti praised the diligent endeavors of the Pakistan Information Commission in facilitating his access to the information he had sought. He emphasized that this achievement underscores the pivotal role the PIC plays in guaranteeing citizens' access to essential public records.

The Pakistan Information Commission underscored the commission's unwavering commitment to its mission. It stated that even in the face of resource limitations, the commission is resolute in guaranteeing that public records are delivered to citizens within the legally prescribed time frame. Citizens can file appeals with the commission at no cost to access public records from any public entity.

Access to information is a constitutional right in Pakistan, and the Commission's endeavors are geared towards empowering citizens by facilitating their access to vital information and ensuring accountability within public bodies.

India halts visa services for Canadians citing security threats as Hardeep murder row deepens

Tensions between India and Canada have flared as India suspends visa services for Canadian citizens, intensifying a diplomatic dispute following Canada's allegations that India may be involved in the assassination of a Sikh separatist activist on Canadian soil.

BLS International, the agency responsible for processing Indian visa applications in Canada, delivered a letter to Indian stock exchanges on Thursday, formally declaring the suspension of visa services "till further notice" due to operational reasons, effective from September 21, 2023.

Previously, BLS International had posted on its website that India had suspended visa services for Canadians starting on Thursday, citing information from the Indian mission. The notice briefly disappeared on Thursday before resurfacing without explanation.

This development follows India's stern travel advisory issued the previous day, urging its citizens in Canada to exercise caution and vigilance due to "politically condoned hate crimes." The advisory also highlighted threats targeting Indian diplomats and segments of the Indian community opposing anti-India agendas, particularly mentioning Indian students.

The travel advisory comes on the heels of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's statement regarding "credible allegations" of a potential link between "agents of the government of India" and the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh Canadian citizen who was fatally shot by masked assailants in June.

NCC Visit

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education, Madad Ali Sindhi during his visit to the National Curriculum Council (NCC) Secretariat.



China and Pakistan to further enhance agricultural cooperation

Xinhua

HEFEI: As an important activity of the 2023 World Manufacturing Convention, Anhui-Pakistan International Agricultural Cooperation and Development Forum was held in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province this Wednesday. Guests from China and Pakistan gathered in Hefei discussing the agricultural cooperation between the two countries and sharing experience in developing agriculture.

The forum was co-hosted by the Anhui Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the foreign affairs office of Anhui. 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),

and agriculture is among the most essential fields of cooperation between countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

During the forum, officials, experts, scholars and business representatives from China and Pakistan had in-depth exchanges on topics like agricultural cooperation and expressed their willingness to promote China-Pakistan exchanges and increase in-depth cooperation in agricultural science and technology and agricultural project investment.

"Pakistan attaches high importance to its economic relations with China. China is Pakistan's largest trading partner and largest source of foreign direct investment," said Hussain Haider, Consul

General of Pakistan in Shanghai, adding that in the second phase of CPEC, agriculture is a major area of bilateral cooperation.

Characterized by large population and agriculture, Pakistan's arable land accounts for about 40 percent of the total land area, and agriculture accounts for about 20 percent of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product. The per capita arable land of Pakistan is twice that of China.

Zhang Shuguang, vice governor of Anhui Province, said that as a major agricultural province in China, Anhui has rich agricultural resources, good industrial foundation, and shares strong correlation and complementarity with Pakistan in agriculture.

Over the recent years, Anhui has actively participated in the construction of CPEC, and has achieved important results in the field of agriculture.

Anhui's expertise in modernizing agriculture and enhancing productivity, coupled with Pakistan's vast agricultural potential, make us natural partners in this journey.

Our collaboration under the umbrella of CPEC exemplifies the strength of our bilateral ties," said Muhammad Suleman Chawla, senior vice president of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, calling on more exchanges of agricultural technologies and promoting trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Anhui.

In the forum, eight Chinese



and Pakistani enterprises signed agreements of cross-border agricultural cooperation, including seed breeding and talent introduction.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
46,202.12	45,889.57
Day's High	Day's Low
46,309.80	45,733.44
Index Value	Change
4,356,299,411	+312.55
Percentage	Time
+0.68%	21 Sept, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,678.62	-53.03
Percentage	Time
-0.69%	21 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,301.34	-139.54
Percentage	Time
-0.41%	21 Sept, 1:21 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,571.03	-452.75
Percentage	Time
-1.37%	21 Sept, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198	200
Bahrain Dinar	783.43	791.43
Canadian Dollar	220	222.20
China Yuan	40.45	40.85
Danish Krone	42.35	42.75
Euro	314	317
Hong Kong Dollar	37.93	38.28
Indian Rupee	3.57	3.68
Japanese Yen	1.92	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	954.31	963.31
Malaysian Ringgit	63.21	63.81
New Zealand \$	175.71	177.71
Norwegians Krone	27.87	28.17
Omani Riyal	765.08	773.08
Qatari Riyal	81.57	82.27
Saudi Riyal	78.75	79.5
Singapore Dollar	217	219
Swedish Korona	26.62	26.92
Swiss Franc	329.03	331.53
Thai Bhat	8.31	8.46
U.A.E Dirham	81.7	82.5
UK Pound Sterling	372.5	376
US Dollar	293.2	296.1

An unreliable power system is a major threat to investment, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that inflation is widening the gulf between the rich and the poor.

The middle class has become poor, and the people are suffering under the burden of inflation, which is causing economic and social problems, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the business community cannot invest or plan for the future due to inflation, so this problem should be solved immediately.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that inflation is a significant cause of economic instabil-



ity, which is an obstacle to domestic and foreign investment.

He said that unemployment will continue to rise until there is no investment in the country, and the solution to unemployment is to promote technical education.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is a need to create a strategy to end inflation, in which the first priority should be given to speculation and hoarding while administrative measures should be taken.

Targeted subsidies for poor people should be increased because people can no longer feed themselves. SIFC is an excellent arrangement for prioritising foreign investment under which investors will be provided with a better environment so that they can provide employment to the people and also transfer technology, he observed.

While other measures are necessary to save the country's economy and attract domestic and foreign investors, it is also

necessary to improve the broken energy sector.

The current price of energy and supply disruptions are enough to scare away any investor.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the capacity payments of the power sector, which were 185 billion rupees in 2013, will reach 1600 billion rupees in 2023, while by 2031 these payments will reach 3700 rupees, which will be 75 percent of the electricity bills.

The vast majority of the country's population will not be able to buy electricity due to increasing capacity payments.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that due to corruption and incompetence, the power sector has been ruined to such an extent that success in this regard is now the only option; otherwise, it will destroy the economy.

NPO & FCCI agreed to keep close coordination among Productivity Movement in Pakistan

MA Rashid

FAISALABAD: President Chamber of Commerce and Industry Faisalabad, Dr. Khurram Tariq, Engages in Vital Discussions with CEO of National Productivity Organization Muhammad Alamgir chaudhry, Government of Pakistan

Islamabad, Dr. Khurram Tariq, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Faisalabad, recently held a pivotal meeting with the esteemed CEO of the National Productivity Organization (NPO), Muhammad Alamgir chaudhry, Government of Pakistan. The meeting was convened to address critical issues pertaining to Pakistan's current economic situation, analyze the factors contributing to the country's economic challenges, and explore productive solutions to rejuvenate the nation's economy.

During the meeting, Dr. Khurram Tariq expressed his profound concern about the state of the Pakistani economy, highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of why it has encountered difficulties in recent years. He emphasized the importance of initiating extensive training programs at the grassroots level as a fundamental step towards fostering economic growth and development in Pakistan.

In his statement, Dr. Khurram Tariq stated, "To ensure the future prosperity of Pakistan, we must begin by nurturing the poten-



tial of our nation from the very grassroots.

In response, the CEO of the National Productivity Organization underscored the organization's commitment to addressing the productivity deficit in Pakistan and its role in steering the country towards progress. The CEO highlighted NPO's ongoing efforts to enhance productivity and efficiency in various sectors, emphasizing their dedication to working collaboratively with government bodies, industry leaders, and other stakeholders to achieve economic revitalization.

The CEO stated, "The National Productivity Organization is actively engaged in

a range of initiatives aimed at improving productivity and fostering economic growth. We believe that sustainable development is contingent on enhancing our nation's productivity levels, and we are committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to make this vision a reality."

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to forging a strong partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Faisalabad and the National Productivity Organization, with a shared goal of developing innovative solutions to address Pakistan's economic challenges and pave the way for a more prosperous future.

'Leadership Transition at Zong 4G: Mr. HuoJunli Takes the Helm'

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications company, welcomed Mr. HuoJunli as the new Chairman & CEO, marking a significant leadership transition.

Mr. HuoJunli has officially taken the helm, succeeding Mr. Wang Hua, who has admirably served as CMPak's CEO and Chairman for over five years. Mr. Wang Hua has returned to CMCC, where he will undertake a new role within the organization.

Mr. HuoJunli holds a Master's degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering from Beijing Univer-



sity of Posts & Telecommunication, and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Xi'an Jiaotong University."

Mr. HuoJunli brings an extensive and diverse background with nearly three decades of experience in the telecommunications industry. His career, which began in 1997, has been marked by a series of notable roles within CMCC, including leadership positions such as heading the NOMC and Information Security department for China Mobile Shanxi Province Company. In 2017, he further advanced his career as a board member and Chief Technology Officer (CTO).

Mr. HuoJunli enthusiastically shared his sentiments upon taking on the leadership role at

Zong 4G, stating, "I am thrilled to embark on this new chapter at Zong 4G. The company has a well-earned reputation for its steadfast commitment for its steadfast commitment to pushing boundaries, fearlessly addressing challenges, and consistently delivering exceptional results throughout its 15-year history. I am wholeheartedly committed to guiding our journey towards excellence and playing a pivotal role in advancing and expanding the telecommunications industry in the country, aligning with the vision of a Digital Pakistan."

Japan keen to develop trade ties with Pakistan: Ambassador Mitsuhiro

Bureau Report

SIALKOT: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Mitsuhiro Wada has said that his country is keen to boost trade ties and enhance trade volume with Pakistan.

He said this while addressing a meeting of Sialkot exporters held at Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) Wahub Jahangir, Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh, and delegations of various leading firms from Japan and Sialkot business community.

The Japanese ambassador stressed the need for making all-out sincere efforts to strengthen mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Japan. He said that Sialkot is famous for its production of soccer balls and others. The ambas-

sador said that both nations had been supportive to each other and last year the two countries celebrated the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations.

He said that potential of Pakistan economy was huge and his country was interested in finding more opportunities. He said that 80 Japanese companies were doing business in Pakistan and 80,000 workers were working in these companies in Pakistan. He said that there were so many international competitive companies working in Sialkot. He said that famous prestigious companies including trading companies and logistic companies present here in the meeting have very strong business network globally.

The ambassador said that his visit would promote new ways of cooperation between two countries. He also showed keen interest in SCCI's documentary "Sialkot, the City of Progress-



ive People", which was screened during this meeting.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik said that today's visit of the ambassador was also significant as it was the first visit of a Japanese envoy to the Sialkot Chamber after 2016. He said that Japan and Pakistan enjoyed a

special bond of friendship starting from the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1952. He said that Sialkot, the export industrial excellence of Pakistan, was playing a vital role in economic uplift of the country through its industrial produce that is exported to all parts of the world.

The SCCI president said that top cricket and hockey brands hail from Sialkot and the city produces sports goods, surgical instruments, textile apparel, and leather goods for top brands of the world. The city could be termed the "House of Brands" and is open to trade with the top in business. Malik said that there are countless points of connection and cooperation but trading partnership should underpin our shared cooperation. "I am pleased to mention that Japan is one of the largest trading partners of Pakistan with our bilateral trade standing at \$1.23 billion with Pakistan's exports

of goods and services at \$260 million." He said that several government level trade engagements over the recent years reflect the future planning of the two countries to support sustainable trade. We wish to learn from Japanese expertise and technical strength to shape our future industrial setup. "We look forward to partner with organizations like JICA, and PJBF to support business-to-business linkages between the two countries," he added.

He said that Sialkot Chamber is a strong advocate of women empowerment to promote women's sense of rights and enhance women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship and leadership skills. In this regard, Sialkot Chamber has established a Women Resource Centre and supported the formation of the Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Sialkot which is functioning independently to support women-based businesses.

SECP introduces Shariah Governance Framework 2023

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has notified the Shariah Governance Regulations, 2023, revamping the regulatory framework by combining and repealing the earlier Shariah Governance Regulations, 2018 and the Shariah Advisors Regulations, 2017.

The new regulations, issued under Section 512(1) read with Section 451 of the Companies Act, 2017, have introduced the concepts of voluntary Shariah supervisory boards and separate requirements for Shariah stock screening of listed securities. It also includes, jurisdiction of Section 451 of the Act to cover all securities has also been restored.

New regulations replaced the requirements of renewal of Shariah-compliant securities and qualification &

experience requirements for Shariah advisors have been further strengthened. In addition, powers and functions of Shariah advisors have been redefined by allowing them to offer services within all regulated sectors. The format of the independent assurance report by the external Shariah auditor on the format agreed with by ICAP has also been added.

The regulations have been framed after comprehensive public consultation involving representatives from listed companies, brokers, asset management companies, mutual funds, and Shariah advisors.

The framework is expected to boost confidence in Islamic finance, attract investors, promote financial stability, and foster innovation. It is also expected to drive growth in sectors aligned with Islamic principles; part of SECP's priorities.

FFC wins the prestigious 'Company of the Year Award' by RCCI



Spokesman Report

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) held its 35th International Achievement Awards Ceremony and Business Opportunity Conference at Cairo, Egypt. Fauji

Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has been conferred 'Company of the Year Award' in recognition of Company's dedication, devotion, commitment and exemplary business performance during Year 2022. Senior Manager Public

Supreme Court upholds CCP's Enquiry & Information Gathering Powers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a historic judgment, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has unanimously upheld the statutory powers of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP). The powers relate to gathering of information and conducting of enquiries. A three-member bench comprising former Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, and Justice Ayesha A. Malik passed the judgement.

The Supreme Court declared that there is no restriction on CCP's general regulatory powers to call for information under Section 36 of the Competition Act, 2010. It has also stated a clear obligation on undertakings to fully comply with CCP's directives for the provision of information.

The apex court has further declared that CCP is not obligated to provide detailed reasoning before commencing an enquiry. The court stated that initiation of an enquiry under Section 37 of the Act is not an adverse action. It is merely a fact-finding exercise distinct from show cause proceedings under Section 30 of the Act.

In 2020, CCP had inquired cooking oil and ghee companies for information about ghee and cooking oil prices. Dalda Foods was the sole entity to challenge in the Islamabad High Court. Dalda asserted that CCP did not possess sufficient grounds to justify the enquiry or the call for information. The Islamabad High Court had set aside CCP's call for information letters and the initiation of enquiry. The high court had imposed extraordinary requirements on the exercise of CCP's regulatory and enquiry powers. CCP had challenged the decision of the High Court before the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

While allowing the CCP's appeal the Supreme Court has set aside these requirements, which included the requirement to provide detailed reasoning to an undertaking when initiating an enquiry and to pass a reasoned order in this regard. Hence the stance and actions of the CCP were upheld in the historic and landmark judgement of the Supreme Court.

President Xi's sports aspiration



Xinhua

HANGZHOU: What do sports mean for Chinese President Xi Jinping? A hobby, a means to cultivate a strong nation, or an approach to his global vision? One may find some clues to the answers in a reply letter Xi sent to the U. S.-China Youth and Student Exchange Association and friends from the state of Washington in August. He wrote, "Sport is a bond that promotes friendship among peoples."

As the leader of a country that has hosted both the summer and winter editions of the Olympics in less than two decades and will soon host the 19th Asian Games, Xi clearly understands the constructive role sports games play in global governance.

"We should promote solidarity through sports, build up positive energy across the international community, join hands to tackle global challenges such as climate change, food crisis and terrorism, and shape a better future through cooperation," Xi said in July as he welcomed guests attending the opening ceremony of the 31st summer edition of the FISU World University Games in the Chinese city of Chengdu.

During multiple foreign trips, the president chose sports as a bridge to reach out to local people.

During a state visit to the United States in 2015, Xi watched an American football training session of students from the Lincoln High School in Tacoma.

He was presented with a ball and a jersey by the students. In return, Xi

gave them gifts, including a ping-pong table.

When visiting the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Switzerland in 2017, Xi gave the committee a magnificent piece of Suzhou embroidery featuring ancient Chinese ladies playing cuju, which is considered the earliest form of football.

The artifact showcases the inseparable connection between ancient Chinese cuju and modern football and, more importantly, exemplifies the cultural exchange and mutual learning facilitated by the universal language of sports. During that visit, IOC President Thomas Bach said, "President Xi is a true champion, and I want to give him a set of medals because he has a clear vision about the important role of sports in society and the importance of sports for education for the young people."

Stronger China, Healthier People

"Sports set the stage for a stronger and more prosperous country," Xi said in 2017. The statement speaks volumes about the role sports play.

In early January last year, when inspecting the preparatory work for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing, Xi noted that the ultimate goal of building a sporting powerhouse and a healthy China is to enhance the public's health, fitness and happiness. This aspiration is essential to China's wider endeavor to build a modern socialist country in an all-round manner. Driven by Xi's instructions and relevant major decisions made by the Central Commit-

tee of the Communist Party of China, China has made headway in building itself into a leading country in sports.

By the end of 2022, the country had 4.23 million sports venues covering a total area of over 3.7 billion square meters. More than 500 million Chinese regularly exercise and over 90 percent of the whole population meet national physical fitness standards.

International sports events held in China spark waves of enthusiasm for sports in the host cities and the whole country, effectively contributing to China's fitness development. Before the 12,000 athletes gather in Hangzhou, the Asian Games' 56 competition venues and 31 training venues, which were opened to the public in the run-up to the event, have welcomed nearly 10 million people to do exercises.

Similar scenes were seen before and after the Winter Olympics in Beijing, as Chinese passion for winter sports soared.

Speaking of the success of the Winter Olympics, Xi highlighted the combination of hosting the Games with serving the people, and said that national fitness campaigns have been strengthened through the promotion and popularization of ice and snow sports.

In the August letter, Xi wrote that the Chinese government and people have full confidence in hosting a splendid Asian Games in Hangzhou. This will be the third Asian Games in China and another platform for people from different regions and cultures to make friends and uphold the ideal of peace, as well as a window for the rest of the



world to see China with their own eyes.

President Xi's dedication to sports as a way to promote national health and global solidarity highlights the crucial

role of sports in China's development.

As China invests in sports infrastructure, promotes healthy living, and hosts international events, it demonstrates its

cultural heritage and extends an invitation to the world to enjoy the universal language of sports, friendship and peace.

Naila Kiani has successfully climbed Mount Manaslu, the world's 8th highest peak

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Naila Kiani, a talented and determined young female climber from Pakistan, has achieved another milestone by scaling Mount Manaslu, the eighth tallest mountain in the world, soaring to 8,163 meters above sea level. This time again, the expedition was fully funded by BARD Foundation.

Right after the summit, Naila spoke to the media about her recent achievement. "This wonderful journey I'm currently on has given me the chance to realize my lifelong dream. I intend to make the most of this opportunity to inspire and encourage other girls like me who might be looking for someone to guide them as they begin writing their own stories of success." She also thanked BARD Foundation for their constant support in her endeavors.

Next on her ambitious list are Mount Cho Oyu and



Mount Shishamangma, standing at 8,021 meters and 8,012 meters above sea level, respectively. Naila has already made history by becoming the first Pakistani woman to successfully climb all five of Pakistan's 8000-meter peaks and 8 highest peaks in the world. With this recent expedition, she now holds the distinction of being the first Pakistani woman to summit the nine highest peaks in the world.

Naila is a strong and accomplished woman who is not only enhancing Pakistan's global image but also paving the way for other aspiring women to follow their dreams and passions in the same field.

Mehreen Dawood, the Managing Director of BARD Foundation applauded the news and said, "Naila's inspirational journey is drawing positive attention to our country. She is a true example of resilience and strength. Such achievements will further

boost tourism and the sport of mountain climbing in Pakistan and globally. It is a proud moment for BARD Foundation and our nation, and we firmly believe that with her strong determination, she will also set the precedent for other women to step up and achieve their dreams."

BARD Foundation has always played a vital role in promoting talent and paving the way for successful careers for many. The initiative undertaken by Bilquis and Abdul Razak Dawood believes in changing fortunes by helping competent individuals realize their potential as champions in their chosen fields. The purpose of the Foundation is to develop strong and confident individuals, with a special emphasis on skill construction and improvement. The Foundation extends assistance to anyone who has the spirit of adventure by becoming a part of their transformative journey.

Hangzhou Asian Games to be most eco-friendly, smartest games: OCA

Xinhua

HANGZHOU: The Hangzhou Asian Games will be the most eco-friendly and smartest games that have ever been held, said Vinod Kumar Tiwari, acting director general of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). "The infrastructures and stadiums designed, are completely eco-friendly. We see almost all of the cars here are electric vehicles. This probably will be a pioneering thing for the next future Asian Games," Vinod Kumar Tiwari told Xinhua, adding that other countries can learn from the concepts introduced by the Hangzhou Asian Games. The OCA's acting director general said he was also impressed by the convenience of the digital applications used at the Hangzhou Asiad. "The most impressive thing is that nobody takes cash here, and they pay through mobile phones. The second one is the accreditation card. You just walk in and your photo comes out. You don't have to scan your barcode or anything," said Tiwari, adding that the Asian Games is not only about competition and sports, but also cultural exchanges. "It is one of the most picturesque places that you can find in Hangzhou," Tiwari, who was also a torchbearer, said of Hangzhou's West Lake. "When we started the Asian Games in 2006 in Qatar, nobody had heard of Doha, but now it is a sporting hub. "These competitions make Hangzhou a vibrant city and bring it to the world. I'm sure that when we finish the games in Hangzhou, it will be a sporting hub not only in China, but in the whole of Asia," concluded Tiwari.



16-member bridge team to represent Pakistan in Asian Games

Sports Desk

LAHORE: A 16-member Pakistan bridge contingent (10 males and six females) including 11 players and five officials will participate in the 19th Asian Games under the captaincy of seasoned bridge master Ghalib Ali Bandesha.

The bridge event of Asian Games will be competed in three categories - Men's Team, Women's Team and Mixed Team to be staged at Hangzhou Qi-yuan (Zhili) Chess Hall from Sept 27 to Oct 6.

Ghalib Bandesha, the skipper of national bridge squad, in his exclusive chat on Thursday with APP informed that Pakistan will field its bridge teams in two competitions - Men's Team and Mixed Team events of Asian Games. "Five players



of our national squad will feature in Men's competition while six in Mixed Team event," he added.

Bandesha, who has grabbed several titles and gold medals during his 12-year international career including gold medal in BFAME Championships in 2017, China-Arab States Bridge Championships 2013, Bridge Festivals Dubai in 2016, 2017 & 2018, Jordan 2022, China 2016, 2017 and 2018 and

Turkey 2022, is also one of the key members of Pakistan bridge contingent.

He said that Pakistan bridge contingent is consisted of highly experienced players like Rubina Agha and Masood Mazhar, who have won numerous world titles and medals during their respective careers. "We are quite upbeat that our players will exhibit outstanding performance and win laurels for the country in the mega event".

He informed that the teams from 13 countries will show their prowess in the Asiad bridge event. "We know that some best bridge outfits of Asia such as China, India, Hong Kong and Singapore will be in the competition and our players will have to demonstrate their true potential to achieve success in the Asian Games," he added.

Pak bridge contingent: Players: Ghalib Ali Bandesha (capt), Rubina Agha, Masood Mazhar, Anwar Mumtaz, Kizilbash, Shahab Sarki, Yousuf Jan Mohammad, Samira Jimmy Fancy, Azra Raja, Arslan Mansoor, Farrukh Liaqat and M Zia Hai. Team officials: Raheel Ahmed, Jaweria Hai, Mosammat Lata Begum, Raana Bodman and Mohammad Arif Bajwa.

Hangzhou Asian Games reunites 'Asian family,' says Palestinian official

Xinhua

RAMALLAH: The Hangzhou Asian Games is a grand reunion of the "Asian family," and Palestine will actively participate in it, a senior Palestinian official has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Jibril Rajoub, secretary-general of the Central Committee of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah), praised China's rich experience in hosting world sports competitions and its excellent preparation and organization work.

"Participating in the Asian Games in China is a 'happy moment' for Palestinian athletes, which will inspire them to achieve excellent results," said Rajoub, who is also head of the Palestinian Supreme Council for Youth and

Sports.

The Palestinian delegation, made up of more than 100 athletes, will compete in 16 games, the Palestinian official said, noting that the Hangzhou Asian Games is "a landmark event" in the history of Palestinian sports.

Describing Hangzhou, the host city in eastern China, as an ancient and beautiful city with a unique architectural style and profound cultural heritage, Rajoub said the games will further promote sports and cultural exchanges among Asian countries and regions, and enhance friendship among Asian people.

Rajoub also said China and Palestine have established "extremely good" cooperation in sports, and thanked China for its support for the development of Palestinian sports.

He expressed the hope that his visit to China will further strengthen sports cooperation between the two sides.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Palestine, said Rajoub, noting that the visit of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to China earlier this year is a new milestone in the bilateral relations.

Speaking highly of China's consistent position in supporting the just cause of the Palestinian people, Rajoub thanked China for its support to the Palestinian people at the United Nations and other levels.

He welcomed China's active role in promoting international reconciliation and peace talks in Palestine, adding that ending division and achieving reconciliation

are the "common aspiration" of the Palestinian people.

Rajoub said that China's successful brokering of a historic reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March showed its growing influence in regional and international affairs, noting that Palestine and other Middle Eastern countries need to strengthen cooperation with China to get rid of the Western influence and enhance strategic autonomy.

Moreover, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative provides an important platform for China-Palestine and China-Arab cooperation, and enhances the development and stability in the Middle East, he said, adding that Palestine and other Arab countries are willing to join hands with China for a better future.