



President for educating 27 mln out of school children through traditional, nontraditional ways

President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday sought the government's special attention to provide education to the 27 million out of school children through both traditional and nontraditional ways. (Details on Page 8)



APHC leader Wani thanks Pakistan for raising Kashmir at UN

Senior APHC leader and Vice Chairman Jammu Kashmir National Front (JKNF) Altaf Hussain Wani has thanked Pakistan Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar for raising the Kashmir issue during his speech to the UN general assembly. In his statement issued here Saturday, Wani said, "The people of Jammu and Kashmir, owe a debt of gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for their continued and consistent support..." (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Bright Star 2023

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force contingent landed back after successful participation in the multinational tri-services air exercise Bright Star 2023 held in Egypt.



PAF contingent returns triumphant after participating in Exercise Bright Star-2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) contingent has landed back on Saturday at an operational air base after successful participation in the multinational tri-services air exercise Bright Star 2023, held in Egypt. The exercise brought together 30 nations from across the globe, fostering camaraderie and showcasing the prowess of participating armed forces. The distinguished event showcased the remarkable performance of PAF's contingent, consisting of skilled combat pilots, proficient air defence controllers, and adept technical ground crew, who demonstrated pride and professional excellence as a unified team while operating advanced JF-17 Thunder fighter-jets, a PAF news release said.

The primary objective of the Bright Star Exercise was to promote interoperability and facilitate knowledge sharing among participating countries. Throughout the exercise, PAF's air and ground crew

consistently demonstrated exceptional air combat capabilities, effectively highlighting the impressive strengths of Pakistan's esteemed asset, the JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft. Engaging in rigorous training and immersive, realistic aerial warfare scenarios, the PAF contingent reaffirmed its preparedness to address contemporary air warfare challenges, underlining its unwavering commitment to serving the cause of global peace and security.

The resounding triumph of PAF's crew in the Bright Star exercise within the realm of aerial warfare serves as a testament to their unwavering dedication and operational proficiency. Pakistan Air Force's participation in the exercise underscores its ability to adapt to cutting-edge advancements in air combat and its willingness to establish strong partnerships with the international community in order to effectively address the evolving challenges of aerial warfare in the modern world.

Bringing economic stability, government's foremost priority, says PM Kakar

Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that bringing economic stability in the country was the foremost priority of the government and in this regard a comprehensive economic revival plan was in force. He said assisting the process of elections was one of the prime duties of the government. "We will be assisting and supporting the process, and while doing so really try to focus on the economic revival plan. That is the biggest challenge."

In an interview with the US based weekly magazine Newsweek here on Friday, the prime minister pointed out that the caretaker government was deeply concerned about the situation of stability. "At the moment, it's pretty much under control. It's something which we fully and lawfully



monitor, and we are in charge to pull all the strings when it comes to stability." With respect to Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, he said it would take some time to get relations with the neighboring Afghanistan's de facto government better.

"It'll take a bit of time, but we are quite confident that we will be able to manage that." "We do have a larger perspective and outlook on the whole of the region. But these day-to-day events do mire and complicate our relationship at times. But we're trying to manage

it in a manner which is mutually beneficial to both sides," he added.

Responding to a question regarding the US' attention in South Asian region, PM Kakar said as a Pakistani and someone coming from that region, he would be very much baffled if that region was being ignored or if it deserved less attention by the United States, because this was where actually lot of things were happening. "A population of around 3 to 4 billion resides in that region. How do you ignore 4 billion people? How do you pay less attention to 4 billion people out of 8? Almost half of humanity resides there."

He said there were potential conflicts in those areas. "It would be very stingy on my part not to mention Kashmir, because it is a flashpoint between two nuclear states. God forbid, if there is any sort of military confrontation between the two nuclear powers,

how would that translate to the region? How would that translate outside the region? What sort of implications would it have for the European continent? What implications will it have across the planet into North America and the rest?"

The prime minister expressed his concerns over the entire so-called "Indo-Pacific" policy of the Western Hemisphere via the encirclement of a regional power around the South China. "We do view it and we are closely monitoring all the developments." "The so-called Indo Pacific strategy is done for the objectives which suit Western powers...so, there is an element of concern and there is a legitimate sense of caution on the Pakistani side, we are closely monitoring that...and we are trying to do our own preparedness to respond to such a challenge," he added.

FMs of Pakistan, Egypt agree to boost bilateral engagement in diverse fields



News Desk

NEW YORK: Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry met in New York and reviewed the current status of bilateral relations. The meet-

ing was held on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Both sides agreed to further enhance bilateral engagement and cooperation between the two friendly countries, the Foreign Office said.

Health Minister takes notice of injection reaction's complaint

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An immediate investigation was launched into complaint of a citizen of an adverse reaction to the injection given to a victim. The action was taken on the direction of Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan, following taking notice of the complaint of the resident of Kasur.

According to Ministry's spokesperson, the federal minister contacted Punjab Provincial Minister for Health Dr Javed Ikram on telephone. He added the Punjab government has constituted a five-member committee in this regard. The committee has started the investigation from every angle. Dr. Nadeem Jan assured that the government would ensure all necessary steps to ensure a transparent investigation of the incident. "We are in contact with the provincial government and keeping a close eye on the situation."

CAA divided into two separate organizations

Tariq Khattak

KARACHI: In order to divide the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), a nine-member committee has been established. A notification was issued according to which, the Ministry of Aviation's Joint Secretary II - Shazia Rizvi - has been appointed as the chairperson of the nine-member committee.

The notification stated that Vice Air Marshal Taimoor Iqbal will serve as the deputy of the committee, meanwhile, the other committee members comprised of Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Aviation, Asif Iqbal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Abdul Malik, Deputy Director General of Regulatory CAA, Nadir Shafiq, President of Aircraft Accident Investigation Board, Commodore Mirza Amir, Director Finance of CAA, Saqib Butt, Director of Aviation Security, Sameer Saeed, Director of APS, Sadiqul Rahman, and Director HR of CAA, Abid Ali Shah.

The nine-member committee is instructed to complete its work by October 15.

As per the notification, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will be divided into the Pakistan Airport Authority and the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation.

The committee will be responsible to transfer the current assets and funds to these two organisations as well as oversee the transfer of employees, records, offices, and furniture.

Additionally, the committee will have the authority to distribute machinery, vehicles, and funds.

Cipher case: IHC to hear PTI chairman's bail plea on Sept 25

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed for hearing the former prime minister and PTI chairman's bail plea in the cipher case.

The PTI Chairman Imran Khan was sent to jail on August 5 following his conviction in the Toshakhana case.

The registrar's office has issued the cause list for the next week.

The PTI chairman's bail application is scheduled for hearing on Monday, which will be heard by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq.

On Sept. 12, the Islamabad High Court reserved its verdict on a petition filed by PTI chairman challenging the law ministry's decision to conduct the trial in the cipher case at Attock jail.

It is pertinent to mention here that the PTI chief Imran Khan and vice chairman was booked for 'deliberately missing a copy of the diplomatic cypher'. The first information report (FIR) was registered on August 15 under the Official Secrets Act. It was registered on the complaint of Home Secretary.

The case was registered after Azam Khan, ex-principal secretary to the PTI chairman and former prime minister made startling revelations and claimed that the former PM used US cypher for his 'political gains' and to avert a no-confidence motion against him.

Azam Khan, who had earlier been "missing" since months, suddenly appeared before the scene and made startling revelations about US cypher, while recording his statement under the CrPC 164 before a magistrate.

Govt hints at reducing petrol price

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi on Saturday hinted at reducing the petrol price in the next fortnight's review as the Pakistani rupee gained massively against the US dollar.

"There are enough chances that the fuel prices will come down in the next announcement," the minister said while talking to media at Karachi Press Club.

Solangi said that the rupee gained Rs30 to Rs35 against the greenback due to administrative measures taken by the caretaker government in the last few days.

On elections, He said that the interim government will play its due role in facilitating the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for free, fair and transparent polls in the country.

The minister went on to say that the government was taking various measures to support economic situation of the country and these measures have shown results recently in the decreasing price of dollar.

On Sept 15, the government made a massive hike in petrol and diesel prices after making tall claims of providing relief to the masses.

A massive hike of Rs26.2 per litre was made on petrol and the new price would be Rs331.38 per litre. Moreover, Rs17.34 was jacked up on diesel and the new price would be Rs329.18 per litre.

Within a month, the caretaker government hiked the petrol price by Rs58 per litre and diesel by Rs56 per litre.

ECP delists PTI prohibited funding case again

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday again delisted the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) prohibited funding case.

The election commission's Media Communication and Outreach Wing shared that the case of PTI prohibited funding confiscation, fixed for September 26, had been delisted.

Earlier in August, the ECP announced the much-awaited verdict in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) prohibited funding case.

The ECP bench in its reserved verdict said the case against PTI has been proven.

ECP, in its unanimous verdict, ruled that the party received funds from business tycoon Arif Naqvi and 34 foreign nationals.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan



Raja, comprising Nisar Ahmed Durrani and Shah Muhammad Jatoti announced the reserved verdict.

It is pertinent to note here that the Investigation Agency had registered a case against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and 10 others over accusations of receiving foreign funding. The case had been registered by the FIA Corporate Banking Circle.

The case's First Information Report (FIR) stated that the accused including the former premier violated Foreign Exchange Act and all of the nominated persons were beneficiaries of the private bank account.

Press conference

NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing a press conference on Saturday.



Photo: PID

President for educating 27 mln out of school children through traditional, nontraditional ways

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday sought the government's special attention to provide education to the 27 million out of school children through both traditional and nontraditional ways.

During a meeting with Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sinhi who called on President Dr Arif Alvi here, the president also stressed for promotion of quality education and professional training in the country.

He said special arrangements should be made to provide education to the people living in remote areas



of the country.

President Alvi also proposed that online tools of education could also be utilized for the provision of education to the people living in remote areas.

persons, the president stressed that special arrangements should also be made for them to give education along with the normal children.

With respect to the girls education, he said the girls should be encouraged to continue their education in schools.

He said the universities should equip their students with skills according to the needs of the market.

The number of people enrolled in universities for higher education in Pakistan is very less compared to other countries in the region, he said adding special measures should be taken to increase the number of people with higher education in the country.

He proposed the universities to provide higher education to more students with the help of online education and different shifts, adding that besides the 4-year programs, the universities should also start 2-year degree programs.

With the help of online and distance education programs of Virtual University and Allama Iqbal Open University, the number of highly educated people can be increased, the president said.

He also stressed the universities to focus on artificial intelligence, machine learning, cyber security and cloud computing

Matters related to the Federal Urdu University were also discussed in the meeting.

PML-N to hold rallies in Lahore ahead of Nawaz Sharif's return

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to hold rallies in Lahore to mobilize party workers ahead of former premier Nawaz Sharif's expected return to Pakistan next month.

Sources privy to the development told that the party has decided to hold 7 rallies in different Lahore constituencies ahead of Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan return.

The power shows will be held NA-123, NA-124, NA-125, NA-127, NA-128, NA-128 and NA-136, say sources, adding that all rallies will be held between October 1-8. PML-N Chief Organiser



Maryam Nawaz will address rallies.

Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday claimed that there was 'no change' in the return plan of his brother and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif as the latter

is set to land in Pakistan on October 21.

Shehbaz Sharif rushed back to London merely hours after he returned to the country from the UK, a development that gave way to rumours regarding a possible change in travel plans of Nawaz Sharif.

The former premier left London earlier in the week after spending several weeks here, but upon reaching Lahore, made a sudden plan to return in order to meet with his elder brother, party supremo Nawaz Sharif.

Sources told that a consultation meeting was held in London which was attended by PML-N bigwigs including Maryam Nawaz, Ishaq Dar, Abid Sher Ali, Mian Javed Latif, Talal Chaudhry, Burjees Tahir, and Sheikh Rohail Asghar.

Speaking on the occasion, the PML-N supremo said that Pakistan - a prospering nation - was brought to the brink of destruction under a conspiracy in 2017.

Govt starts preparations for 5G spectrum auction

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology (IT) has started preparations for the auction of 5G technology in Pakistan.

According to sources, the IT ministry has started preparations for the launch of 5G services and issued instructions to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and related departments.

The government is expected to raise millions of dollars from the 5G auction, with the spectrum auction likely to be held by August 2024, sources said.

Sources said that mobile companies are currently using around 367 MHz of spectrum and the new spectrum auction will increase this volume to over 600 MHz.

Tessori, Gohar discuss increase in industrial production



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Interim Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries & Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Sunday called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here.

They discussed the measures to increase industrial production, and continuous supply of electricity and gas to industries especially in the metropolis.

The Sindh Governor said that the

people and industrialists were equally worried about electricity load-shedding and increase in rates.

He said that the economic development of the country depended on industrial activity.

He further said that if Pakistan's economic hub Karachi developed then the entire country would develop.

The caretaker federal minister said that the interim government was taking steps to provide relief to the industrialists.

Measures to mitigate TB negative impacts urged

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Health, Iftikhar Ali Shallwani expressed the need for intensified efforts backed by increased funding to mitigate and reverse the negative impacts of the pandemic on Tuberculosis (TB).

He was addressing the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis at the United Nations Headquarters.

The Secretary, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination expressed deep concern over the continued challenges being faced by the current health systems, despite numerous scientific advancements.

He highlighted the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to TB diagnosis and treatment and the burden of TB disease.

He shared Pakistan's progress in establishing more TB diagnostic centres and also expanding Lab network to diagnose TB cases, especially MDR-TB.

He mentioned being one of the largest TB burden countries Pakistan needs certain innovative approaches through private sector and CSO involvement for TB response sustainability and affordability.

He emphasized that the need for action has become even more pressing in the context of ongoing conflicts, global energy crisis and associated impacts on food security, which are likely to further worsen some of the broader determinants of TB.

He highlighted that tuberculosis remains Pakistan's top cause of death from infectious diseases and that Pakistan has the fifth highest TB burden globally.

Mushaal Mullick lauds PM for championing Kashmir cause at UNGA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights Mushaal Mullick has said that Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has championed the Kashmir cause in the best possible manner at United Nations General Assembly. In a statement issued here Saturday, Mushaal Mullick said that she was grateful to the Prime Minister for voicing the oppressed Kashmiris in the United Nations General Assembly session.

"The Prime Minister has proved to be the ambassador and advocate of Kashmiris", she added. She said that Kashmiris had been encouraged by the Prime Minister's address in the General Assembly. She said that the innocent Kashmiris know Pakistan as



the center of their hopes for achieving their right to self-determination. The Special Assistant said that Indian state terrorism had started to reach the rest of the world from the region. The international community has to stop India for the sake of peace, she said and added, according to the resolutions of the United Nations, the solution of the Kashmir issue is indispensable for regional peace.

Extortionist group collecting funds for outlawed TTP arrested

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The arrested accused affiliated with the group - who allegedly collected extortion money for the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) - confirmed backing outlawed TTP by different means the presence of the commanders in Afghanistan, ARY News reported on Saturday.

According to the details, the security agencies have successfully apprehended the active members of a group involved in collecting extortion money on behalf of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The arrested was made

upon intelligence information, while during the interrogation, the culprits disclose that they were backing the outlawed TTP by different means, including assisting in extortion activities.

The arrested culprits also confirmed the presence of banned TTP commanders in Afghanistan, stated that the outlawed TTP commander Abdul Raziq is currently in Afghanistan and used to give instructions through WhatsApp. The arrested suspect further revealed that the outlawed TTP commander Abdul Raziq requested the videos of shops and residences from Afghanistan and demand extortion payments.

Ranipur Haveli murder: ATC grants 5-day physical remand of Fayyaz Shah

Nabi Bux

KHAIRPUR: An anti-terrorism court here granted physical remand of accused Pir Fayyaz Shah in the murder case of child maid Fatima Phuriro.

Police produced Fayyaz Shah in the court and pleaded for 14 days' physical remand of the accused. But ATC granted five days' physical remand of the influential pir from Ranipur.

Police had arrested Fayyaz Shah on Friday in murder case of child maid Fatima.

Fayyaz Shah was taken into custody when he was going back to his haveli after address-

ing a press conference, sources said.

Earlier, the Sindh High Court's Hyderabad bench had granted interim bail to Fayyaz Shah.

Khairpur Police had conducted raid in Defence area of Karachi in search of two accused of the murder of minor maid at Ranipur Haveli. Police raided residence of the family of influential Pirs of Ranipur at Khayaban-e-Shamsher in Karachi's posh area of Defence Society, sources said.

The raid was conducted for arrest of two nominated accused in the murder case,

Hina Shah and Fayyaz Shah, at the residence of Niaz Shah, a brother of Fayyaz Shah, police sources said.

However, no person was arrested in police raid. "Mobile phones of the accused have been off to avoid arrest," police said.

On Thursday, an anti-terrorism court granted five days of physical remand of main accused Asad Shah and co-accused, Intiaz Meerasi in the murder case.

The postmortem report of the girl had confirmed that the minor maid was sexually abused.



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senior APHC leader and Vice Chairman Jammu Kashmir National Front (JKNF) Altaf Hussain Wani has thanked Pakistan Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar for raising the Kashmir issue during his speech to the UN general assembly. In his statement issued here Saturday, Wani said, "The people of Jammu and Kashmir, owe a debt of gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for their continued and consistent support of our legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination". Prime Minister Kakar's bold stance on the issue of Kashmir, he said,

demonstrated Pakistan's consistent policy, its unwavering commitment and allegiance towards the cause of Kashmir. "We deeply appreciate Pakistan's enduring support and its unwavering commitment to seek a settlement of the dispute in line with the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people", Wani said, adding that despite facing many daunting challenges, Pakistan has never hesitated to go the extra mile in advocating Kashmiris' cause at important world forums". He expressed the hope that Pakistan would continue to extend its moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from India's unlawful and forcible occupation. Lauding Pakistan's role in championing the cause of Kashmir at the world level, Wani said that Pakistan has always played a pivotal role in providing every possible support at the regional and international level to the ongoing liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people

All political parties to be provided level-playing field for elections: Solangi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Friday reiterated the caretaker government's commitment for providing a level-playing field to all registered political parties during the general elections.

Addressing a news conference alongside Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, the minister assured impartial treatment to any political group during the election campaign.

Solangi said the caretaker government's tenure was extended a little bit due to the approval of fresh census results by the

Council of Common Interest.

He pointed to Article 51 (5) of the Constitution, stating that elections would be held in line with the recently approved census after delimitation of the constituencies.

The minister disclosed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was actively engaged in the delimitation process and announced that preliminary results of the process would be announced on November 27, with the final results set for release on November 30.

In accordance with the Election Act, he said the ECP would have to give 54 days to political parties for their election

campaign.

Solangi welcomed the announcement by the ECP that elections would take place in the first week of January, which ended propaganda against the caretaker government.

As regards the criticisms of Fawad Hassan Fawad, who served in the civil service for over 35 years, the minister highlighted that Fawad had worked with various governments.

He stressed that civil servants had no power over choosing their assignments, and that unfounded criticism of someone who had been unjustly imprisoned was unfair.

Solangi also clarified that



Fawad Hassan Fawad had no political affiliations.

Responding to a query, the minister expressed his commit-

ment to pursuing justice in the Jan Muhammad Mahar murder case, noting that he had personally raised the matter with the interim chief minister of Sindh.

Solangi said the caretaker government had nothing to do with Nawaz Sharif's matter, adding his cases were in the court, and it was inappropriate to speculate on the issue.

He stressed that all citizens in the country were entitled to their fundamental rights, highlighting the importance of student organizations as a pillar of democracy. The minister underscored the role of the independent and empowered Election Commission in ensuring free, fair, and

transparent elections, with the caretaker government requiring ECP approval for transfer postings. Solangi said government was actively working to address the issues of workers in newspapers and TV channels. He confirmed the lawful arrest of journalist Khalid Jamil by the FIA and emphasized adherence to constitutional and legal procedures, including producing individuals before the court within 24 hours. Solangi said the caretaker government would not interfere in judicial matters. To another query, he said the institutions were functioning freely and if anybody had any issue, they could reach out the relevant forums.

Rescue work

LAHORE: Workers of Railway Department are busy in their work to rescue de-track train on railway lines in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Environmental Ministry joins forces with blue carbon for sustainable forestry growth

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Climate Change and UAE's Blue Carbon collaborated to unlock economic potential in forestry, aligned with global climate goals, with a focus on carbon reduction projects and their community benefits.

Ministry of Climate Change recently hosted a four-day technical workshop with UAE's Blue Carbon, attended by representatives from the provincial forestry departments, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The workshop's main goal was to explore how Pakistan's Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector can generate carbon credits known as Internationally Transferable Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs) under Article 6 of the Paris

Agreement.

Throughout the workshop, the primary focus was on exploring potential projects to reduce carbon emissions within Pakistan's AFOLU sector, with a specific emphasis on its forests. The in-depth conversations that occurred during these sessions illuminated Pakistan's forest resources and their readiness for Article 6 mechanisms, thereby highlighting potential areas of cooperation with Blue Carbon.

Under the guidelines of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, Pakistan's environmental assets were emphasized as valuable tools to tackle both environmental and economic challenges within the emerging compliance market.

Blue Carbon, headquartered in the UAE, was founded with the esteemed support of Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook Al Maktoum, a member of the



UAE royal family.

Utilizing the UAE's visionary approach to development and entrepreneurship, Blue Carbon specializes in crafting systems and resources that facilitate social development endeavors for both private enterprises and countries seeking to improve their environmental assets. Blue Carbon stands out by offering end-to-end development and facilitation services for

carbon projects, particularly in the realm of ITMOs.

One important conclusion drawn from these conversations was the recognition that starting projects in forestry could set the stage for future endeavors in various sectors, ultimately enhancing Pakistan's sustainable development and economic prospects.

In addition to carbon reduction, the meetings emphasized the vital supplementary

advantages of climate adaptation services and support for community livelihoods within these mitigation-based projects. Given Pakistan's continuous battle with the adverse effects of climate change and the substantial dependence of local communities on forest resources, the significance of these additional benefits is immeasurable.

The joint effort undertaken by Blue Carbon and Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, in collaboration with provincial forestry department representatives/AJK/GB, represents a significant milestone in the worldwide fight against climate change. This collaborative initiative positions Pakistan to harness the economic potential within its natural forest resources while harmonizing with the overarching goals of the Paris Agreement.

Officials inauguration of dialysis unit for patients at Wana DHQ Hospital

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Mohammad Nasir Khan and District Police Officer Mr. Farmanullah formally inaugurated the Dialysis Unit at DHQ Hospital Wana for dialysis patients by cutting the ribbon.

Assistant Commissioner Wan Yasir Salman Kundi, Deputy DHO Dr Irfan, Dr Hidayatullah and local leaders of Wan political alliance were also present on this occasion.

On this occasion, Dr. Hamad Mehmood, Health Manager/MS DHQ Wana of Health Management Organization (MERF) Medical emergency resilience foundation, while giving a briefing to the guests said, that God willing, all facilities will be provided free of cost to dialysis patients.



DPO went round the entire hospital and inspected the facilities and met

the doctors, and inquired about the facilities from the patients.

Later, MS/ Health Manager Dr. Hamad Mehmood gave a presentation to the guests in the conference hall about the facilities available in the hospital and the performance of the last year.

On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner and DPO paid tribute to MERF Hospital management and doctors and appreciated their performance.

On the other hand, the families of the dialysis patients said that we are thankful to Health Manager Dr. Hamad Mehmood and the hospital administration. Who, seeing our difficulties and poverty, provided us timely dialysis facilities.

DC Nasir Khan further said, that the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the district administration have been trying this forever, that all possible facilities are provided to the patients in the hospital on time.

Pakistan, China sign MoU to establish mechanism for academic exchanges, joint research

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The National Defence University Pakistan and Grandview have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish mechanisms for active collaboration for academic exchanges, joint research and sharing of experiences. Pakistan Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Moin Ul Haque and Mr. Ren Libo, Founder and President of Grandview Institution, Ren Libo signed the agreement at a ceremony held at the Grandview Institute. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Haque said that National Defence University (NDU) is a prestigious institution of higher learning and strategic thought providing key inputs for shaping Pakistan's defense and foreign policies. He also appreciated the Grandview Institution as a vanguard of scholarship and diplomacy which contributed significantly to global affairs. Ambassador Haque noted that this MOU was part of the two countries' efforts to build linkages between think tanks and universities, which would serve as platforms for further strengthening relations between the two countries.

In his speech, Ren Libo expressed his desire to enhance engagement with the Pakistani side. He further reiterated that the two sides should plan and execute joint projects under the agreement for practical cooperation in this regard.

World should act against Indian RAW's globalized terrorism: Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, ex-Premier AJK, President Muslim Conference, has urged for serious action by the world leaders and human rights organizations to counter Indian terror agency RAW from going global in its widespread terror and killings activities. Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar's targeted murder in Canada is now being condemned by western democracies as a diabolic act of Indian RAW. This heinous secret is open now worldwide, Sardar Attique Khan said in his media statement Friday here.

He has drawn the attention of the world community to the repeated calls by him and by other Kashmiri leaders that India has launched dozens of her human killers agencies who are busy in group murders of Kashmiri youth and leaders and serial abductions of women in India-held part of Jammu and Kashmir state. Murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada has once again confirmed the truth of our frequent calls to international community and it is time to oust India from its UN membership as it is a shocking slur to keep Indian terror country in the UN fold, Sardar Attique added.

The Kashmiri leader reminded that Indian agencies have been carrying out all sorts of anti-human killer activities in Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and in Baluchistan. RAW is proxy killer in Afghanistan also. RAW agent Kulbubhushan Jadhav is still under investigation in Pakistan, he reminded.

Sardar Attique Khan said that all world countries should shut the presence of RAW in their national lands to prevent effectively repeat of Canada killer episode.

India seizes properties of Khalistan activist Gurpatwant Singh

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: India's NIA on Saturday said it confiscated the properties of Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, a Khalistani activist whom it accuses of terror activities in India, as tensions with Canada grow over Sikh separatists.

The seizure of a house and land owned by Gurpatwant Singh Pannu in India's northern state of Punjab "comes as a big boost to the country's crackdown on the terror and secessionist network being operated from various countries, including Canada," a statement issued by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said.

Tensions between India and Canada escalated after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday there were "credible allegations" linking Indian government agents to the murder in Canada in June of a Sikh separatist leader campaigning for the creation of an independent Sikh homeland called "Khalistan".

Following the diplomatic standoff between the two countries, videos of Pannu threatening Indian Hindus to leave Canada surfaced on social media platform 'X' (formerly Twitter).

The anti-terror agency had registered a case against the alleged militant in 2019 for spreading fear and terror in Punjab and other parts of the country.

NIA issued non-bailable warrants of arrest against Gurpatwant Singh Pannu in February 2021 and he was declared a 'Proclaimed Offender (PO)' in November last year.

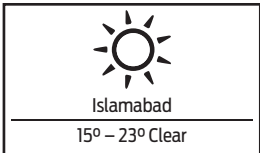
Planes landing at Karachi airports face laser light mischief

News Desk

KARACHI: The pilots have reported an increase in the incidents of laser light strikes on the airplanes while landing or taking off at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, ARY News reported on Saturday, citing sources.

Sources told ARY News that the pilots - flying national and international airplanes - made a number of complaints about an increase in the incidents of laser light strikes at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport during the last week.

The mischief can disrupt a pilot's vision and cause distraction or disorientation during the takeoff and landing, subsequently risking the lives of those onboard.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:33 am
Zohr	12:01 pm
Asr	4:20 pm
Maghrib	6:04 pm
Isha	7:27 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
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	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

LUMS faculty showcases Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Project

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Maryam Mustafa, Director, Saida Waheed Gender Initiative and Assistant Professor of Computer Science at LUMS, recently presented her project, 'Awaaz-e-Sehat: Empowering Maternal Healthcare with Voice-Enabled Electronic Record Management' at the 78th United Nations General Assembly. She was part of the session on 'Artificial Intelligence for Accelerating Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: Addressing Society's Greatest Challenges'.

Dr. Mustafa's project won a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation out of over 1,300 global proposals for its Grand Challenges Catalysing Equitable Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use award. Her co-researchers on the project are Dr. Hassan Mohy Ud Din (Project Co-PI, LUMS), Dr. Beena Ahmed (Project Co-PI, UNSW) and Dr. Fozia Umber (Project Co-PI, Shalamar Hospital).

Country's affairs to be run by people's representatives: Solangi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Election Commission and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Saturday that as per the Constitution, the country's affairs would be run by its elected representatives.

Addressing a press conference on the occasion of his visit to Karachi Press Club, the minister said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was responsible for conducting free, fair, transparent and impartial elections under Article 218(3) of the Constitution.

Principal Information Officer Muhammad Asim Khichi was also present on the occasion. He said that the caretaker government would play its full role in holding free and fair elections. The minister said that delimitation of constituencies would be completed by November 30 and after that, the final date of the election would also be given.

Terming Karachi Press Club as

his old home, he said it has been an important front in the evolution of democracy in the country.

He said that Karachi Press Club had a historical status and its role in the freedom of expression, knowledge and people's right to rule was praiseworthy.

The minister said that working class and oppressed people of Pakistan also come to Karachi Press Club and explain their pains and sufferings. Murtaza Solangi said that he was aware of the hardships suffered by the journalists as there were problems related to their jobs.

He said that the current caretaker government was a constitutional and legal government under Article 224 of the Constitution and during its tenure, injustice cannot be done to journalists.

He said that measures would be taken together with the Principal Information Officer to solve the problems of journalists.

In response to a question, the caretaker Federal Minister for Information said that the ECP had

announced holding of elections in the last week of January.

He said that the caretaker government would help the Election Commission in every way and all the requirements of the ECP would be fulfilled.

In response to a question about the prices of petroleum products, the caretaker federal minister of information said that the prices of petroleum products were determined by the prices in the world market.

He expressed the hope that the prices of petroleum products would decrease in the coming days.

To a question related to non-payment of salaries to media workers and journalists, the federal minister said that government advertisements would not be issued to those media houses that would not pay salaries to their employees.

To another question, he said that about Rs 8 billion had been recovered from electricity thieves.

He said due to electricity theft, other consumers are burdened and



there was a need of correcting this system.

In response to a question, the minister said that if someone had

any reservations about the ECP, he could knock the door of the courts.

He said that the caretaker set up had limited mandate and time

duration and they want to improve the economy of the country while remaining in their constitutional ambit.

Thailand ready to finalize FTA with Pakistan to improve trade ties: Ambassador

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand said that his country is ready to finalize a free trade agreement with Pakistan as negotiations on it have reached the final stage and it is now up to Pakistan to expedite it. He revealed that Thai Air is resuming its flights from Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. He said that many Pakistanis visit Thailand and stressed that they should also play a role to increase bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that both countries should focus on promoting bilateral investment to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

He said that the Pakistani business community should display its products in Thailand Industrial Fair 2024 in January next year, which would help them to improve their business prospects. He said that many Thai investors want to invest in Pakistan, but they don't know where to invest. He identified seafood, mangoes, the halal



food and halal cosmetics as potential areas for two-way trade. He expressed these views during an interaction with the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Ms. Kamolwan Siriposil, Thai Economic Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Khemathat Archawathamrong, Thai Counsellor and also accompanied him on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that

ICCI would take up the issue of FTA with relevant Pakistani authorities for swift progress on it as it would help increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and Thailand.

He said that Thailand's annual exports in 2022 were over US\$ 285 billion and imports were around US\$300 billion, but its bilateral trade with Pakistan in 2022-23 was less than US\$ 1 billion. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items and stressed that they should diversify trade to achieve better results.

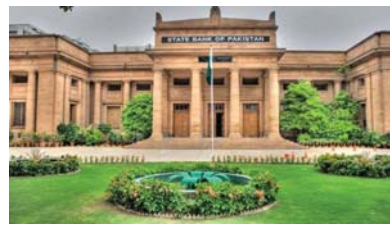
Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government has established a Special Investment Facilitation Council to facilitate new investments in defense, agriculture, minerals, IT & Telecom, energy and other sectors and stressed that the Thai investors should take advantage of these opportunities in Pakistan.

Aamir Hussain, Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Malik Najeeb, Khalid Chaudhry, Fiazan Shehzad, Kashif Chaudhry, Ms. Parveen Khan, Ch. Tahir and others were also present on the occasion.

Governor State Bank to oblige the management of banks to conduct timely biometrics of pensioners

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Pensioners Association General Secretary Aurangzeb Tanuli appealed to the Governor State Bank of Pakistan to oblige the management of all banks to conduct timely biometrics of all pensioners in March and September as per the policy. It is not possible for pensioners to submit biometrics along with life and no marriage certificate together, which is against the policy. Blocking the pension account of a pension-



er on this basis is illegal. This issue should be resolved immediately so that the problems of the pensioners can be resolved. Aurangzeb Tanuli, General Secretary of

All Pakistan Pensioners Association, pointed out the important issue and said that there are clear orders from the State Bank and the Finance Minister that all pensioners are required to get their biometrics done in March and September every year.

All Pakistan Pensioners Association General Secretary Aurangzeb Tanuli appealed to the Governor State Bank of Pakistan to oblige all banks to conduct timely biometrics of all pensioners as per the policy in March and September or take a life certificate.

SDPI, Economic Think-Tanks network reaffirm support for economic reforms to upcoming govt

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr. Vaqar Ahmed on Saturday reaffirmed SDPI and National Network of Economic Think-Tanks's support for economic reforms agenda to the upcoming governments, public and private sector.



He was speaking at a policy dialogue titled "Building a Resilient Pakistan Economy: A Call to Action", organized under the National Network of Economic Think-Tanks by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute here, a news release said.

Dr. Ahmed reiterated SDPI's emphasis on collaboration through the network to put forth policy recommendations that can help the new governments guide economic policies to keep IMF program on track in view of the reform objectives and develop a medium-term development agenda.

Assistant Professor, IBA, Adil Nakhoda underscored the need to address cross-border smuggling, monetary policy changes to develop resilience against dollar, energy sector viability and management of circular debt to make adjustments in agreement to the IMF deal.

CEO, the Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers, Wajid Iqbal remarked that improving the structure of regulatory bodies and building their human development capacity to match global standards is vital to creating the enabling environment being stressed.

He further highlighted the unequal preferences and subsidies given to some economic sectors and urged they must be addressed to provide equal opportunity to all.

CEO, TIE Islamabad, Sumera Abbassi emphasized the active role of venture capture funds in mobilizing finances for SMEs. She remarked that there is need for investor education programs to create awareness among investors about the actual investment potential in Pakistan and urged for measures to encourage high-net private companies and investors to increase investment flow.

Head Centre for Private Sector Engagement, SDPI, Ahad Nazir expressed that the economic system has demonstrated different outcomes to similar shocks due to structural inefficiencies and lack of institutional memory.

He called for rectifying issues like the non-productive use of resources as seen in the case of women's labor.

Professor of Economics, BUITEMS, Balochistan, Dr. Abdul Salam Lodhi stressed restructuring economic policy to boost industrial development and sustainable, self-sufficient agriculture. He highlighted that an enabling environment for industries and exports is lacking due to chronic mismanagement and poor governance.

GCU Lahore, Professor Dr. Saima and CEO, Ain Consulting Ltd., Qurat-ul-Ain

Highlighted that 85% of the informal economy is associated with women's labor and their lack of resilience to economic and political externalities. "Cultural poverty is limiting the individual agency of women despite them being the largest segment of Pakistan's economy", she added.

Devcom International Peace Day Posters Exhibition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Over 100 posters depicting hope for world peace, social justice and equal human rights put on display at the Government Polytechnic Institute for Women (GPIW), H-8, Islamabad on Saturday to mark the International Peace Day. Themed on 'actions for peace', the art works are mostly designed, painted and prepared by the girl students from different schools and colleges of the twin cities of Rawalpindi-Islamabad.

The poster exhibition was organized by the Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) in collaboration with the Dazzler, Islamabad Crescent Lions Club (ICLC), Islamabad Devcom Centennial Leo Club (IDCLC) and Government Polytechnic Institute for Women H-8 Islamabad. Devcom-Pakistan Executive Direc-



tor Munir Ahmed while introducing the peace poster exhibition said: A competition was organised among

the students to inculcate passion to understand the concepts of peace in society and globally. They have painted many meaningful images of hope through their creative expression in different mediums including oil on canvas, acrylics on canvas, charcoal, pastels, watercolours and sketching with colour-pencils.

Munir Ahmed said "We believe the emerging youth is the only future hope in maintaining peace and tolerance if educated and groomed on the actual philosophies of living and working together."

The president ICLC Brig (retd) Muhammad Aslam Khan said without ensuring the fundamental human rights to every citizen, peace cannot be restored and maintained in our society. He said our religion Islam has defined the rights of every citizen and the same are reflected in the universal charters, we only need to implement these charters and practice

the actual Islamic teachings.

Separately, the ICLC and partners organized a national peace conference the other day to mark the International peace day. Caretaker Federal Minister Human Rights and Women Development Khalil George was the chief guest. The speakers included former MNA Asiya Nasir, CEO Economy Watch Dr. Murtaza Mughal, Pir Azmat Sultan, CEO Dazzler Adnan Saeed, ICLC Secretary Sibtain Raza Lodhi, Mahrukh Shaikh, chairman National Peace and Justice Council Mian Waheed and others.

The speakers urged for national interfaith harmony through developing understanding among the communities and promoting tolerance for diverse and conflicting opinions. Different interfaith harmony youth initiatives shall be launched in different parts of the country, especially at the hotspots. The clubs shall groom the young leadership and



jointly engage them in the community services and environmental management.

The first prize winner Amber Malik from the Quaid-i-Azam University said that it was a big

opportunity for the students to show their peace of mind for the peace in society. More such types of activities shall be given to the students across the board to groom them as positive thinking active citizens.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Shrinking middle class - A serious challenge for economic growth

Rabia Anjum

Waging a struggle against unprecedented inflation and price hikes, the middle class in the country is fast shrinking posing serious challenges to economic managers and our socio-economic fabric.

The recent statistics present an astonishing situation finding this class difficult to make ends meet as this vital segment of society in any developed country, is considered a backbone of economies.

But, unfortunately in our case, this class is gradually slipping away with more and more people falling within the poverty line ambit feeling it too difficult to meet their ends.

"No one seems ready to pay heed to our miseries. No one is here to understand our sufferings. We are at a trajectory and dying as a class," remarked Mohammad Salman. "We belong to a class that can neither seek help from the privileged ones nor be able to elucidate the poor."

Mohammad Salman is a government servant, striving hard to manage the lives of a family of five. He lives with his parents along with four other brothers in a joint family system.

"The skyrocketing prices of daily commodities, rising utility bills, unaffordable rents of the houses and runaway infla-

tion has put people of middle class in a dire strait," he said.

"We are between the devil and the deep sea. Given our lifestyle and living standard, the poor take us as rich while the rich consider us worthy of no sympathy. We are a sandwich between the poorest and the richest," he said narrating his quagmire and the middle class of Pakistan.

Waheed Khan, an employee of the Metropolitan Corporation Quetta repeats the same saga as his situation was not different from Muhammad Salman.

"With my present salary, it is impossible to manage the running expenses of my small family," he said. "Therefore, after my job till 1500 hours at MCQ, I have to go for another private job at the wholesale market to earn some money for my family."

The middle class had been a large populous contributing to the growth of the national economy for decades. But, the mounting prices of commodities, schooling of their offspring, electricity and gas bills, and rents have made their lives miserable with many forced to sell their valuables just to feed their children.

"The life of salaried and fixed earning class has become miserable," said Mehfooz Ali Khan, an eminent economist and former Provincial Secretary Finance of the Balochistan Government.

Referring to the latest household survey that finds seven members as the average family size in Pakistan, he said making the monthly budget of a family of seven

is hardly impossible.

"The upper class is enjoying its life as it was in the past. They have the same routines of travelling, dining, wearing, and doing business," he said. "Where it matters, is the middle class gradually being pushed to a painful living."

The most persuasive evidence of this squeeze is the considerable decline in the middle class's savings rates. As per a survey report, the saving rates of the middle class were close to three percent, before rising to over 7 percent in 2007-08. After 2008, their savings rates fell sharply, back to below three percent.

Mudasir Iqbal, a school teacher said, in the recent past, he used to save a reasonable amount through ballot committees but saving money from his monthly fixed salary has now become a distant dream.

"For me, it is a challenge now to manage current household expenditures with my salary that hardly increased 20 to 30 percent during the last couple of years against the massive inflation of 200 to 300 percent," he stated.

According to experts, if current trends continue, more than 20 million people who are currently classified as middle class will fall into the lower strata, bringing the total number of persons who are deemed lower middle class to more than 50 million.

Caretaker Information Minister of Balochistan Jan Achakzai, however, contended to turn things around and

bring respite for the inflation-stricken segments of the society.

"The civil and military leadership in the country is striving hard to bring about positive change in the lifestyle of marginalized segments of the society as well as the middle class," he pleaded.

Given the present economic turmoil, things are not that easy to address as the country is also facing a dilemma of distribution of wealth. The loopholes in the current economic system facilitate the rich to amass more wealth, at the same time letting the impoverished class to grow more destitute.

This dangerous trajectory would also have profound implications for Pakistan's social cohesion and economic stability.

In this situation, former Finance Secretary Mehfooz Ali Khan has recommended to more revenue generation through judicious tax collection, cutting down public sector expenditures, ensure ease of doing business and reduce production cost to enhance exports.

"The time has come to charge people as per their earning. The salaried class is charged taxes at source but those earning billions slip away. We shall have to curb this tendency," he said.

Therefore, steps are required on war footing to save our middle class by providing them relief and introducing a judicious tax system to grab money from influential who are sucking the blood of this nation since decades.

Global scientists meet to save int'l deltas

Scientists from deltas of the world shared the scientific perspective of deltas in the UN Convention for Conserving River Deltas (UNCCRD) science meeting presided by Professor of Public Policy, Community Development & Applied Economics, University of Vermont, USA, Dr Asim Zia.

Indus Delta was represented by Dr. Altaf Siyal, a distinguished Professor at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, who shed light on the pressing concerns plaguing the Indus Delta, a vital ecological region in South Asia. Dr. Siyal's presentation elucidated the multifaceted challenges that have led to the degradation of this critical ecosystem, a news release said.

Dr. Siyal emphasized several key factors that contributed to the Indus Delta's destruction, underscoring the need for immediate attention and concerted efforts to address these issues, which included diminishing river flows, reduced sediment supply, seawater intrusion, sea level rise, shrinking active Indus Delta, land subsidence, coastal erosion, and wave action and storm surges.

He talked about pollution from industrial waste, water scarcity, soil salinity, environmental and ecological degradation, and degradation of freshwater acquirers with resultant economic impacts of the annual loss of about \$2 billion due to Indus delta degradation.

Dr. Siyal made a compelling argument that the degradation and shrinking of the Indus Delta have intensified due to the diversion of Indus River flows through the construction of hydraulic structures, calling for a reevaluation of these practices.

He proposed an integrated approach for the revival of the Indus Delta, emphasizing the importance of leveraging indigenous knowledge and skills in this endeavour. He stressed the need for sustainable development and conservation strategies that engage local communities and respect the ecosystem's delicate balance.

Scholars from various other deltas participated were: Dr Kevin Xu, Director Coastal Studies Institute Louisiana State University; Dr Tan Sinh Bach; Dr Godi Godar; Dr. Ho Hua Loc and Dr Diana Rice provided scientific assessments of global deltas while in closing comprehensive synthesis with next steps and actions were presented by Dr. Emma.

The issues highlighted by all speakers underscored the urgency of addressing the environmental challenges facing global Deltas and considered it imperative that governments, researchers, environmental organizations, and communities collaborate to ensure the preservation and revitalization of the global vital ecosystem for future generations.



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

Need to capitalize local potential for self-employment

Altaf Hameed Rao

In any land of political turmoil, the politicians and the policymakers keep spending their abilities on political engineering keeping their eyes off the local products in strengthening the economy and revenue earning.

Since we are the ones living in such a situation over the decades, the marvelous products of our beloved country remain neglected from promotion in potential local, regional, and international markets.

The uncertainty prevailing during the transitions, as well as routine governments' tenure, is deemed to be one of the major factors hampering our prospect gains in different areas.

Our Azad Jammu and Kashmir region can validly be quoted as an example of being rich in natural resources, a skillful workforce, and different products.

Spanning 13,297 sq. km of the picturesque area with a population of 4.5 million people, this region besides its snow-covered and lush green mountainous, thick forests and precious minerals, is also known for quality handicrafts.

Once globally famous for its traditional ancient handicrafts produced of Kashmiri silk yarn, pashmina shawls, embroidery dresses, and pheran, these products are gradually losing world markets due to improper marketing and value addition.

Even under the umbrella of the State Departments of Commerce and Industry, the sericulture and small industries are yet to be groomed to the level of competing internationally.

The full-fledged revival of the cottage industry is direly needed to benefit from the skills of a talented workforce through a consistent and well-planned approach and methodology to promote their products locally and internationally.

"Protecting Kashmiri craftsmanship is still

a challenge. We have a rich potential in our experts that needs to be protected and promoted," remarked Syed Asghar Ali Shah, Retired Director of AJK Small Industries Corporation. "Our traditionally known arts are dying day by day and this expertise is also not being transferred to our younger generation."

He informed that Kashmiri handicrafts like Ring/ Pashmina Shawls were still in demand remarkably due to their peculiar nature and unique quality, work and designs.

"Therefore, the Azad Jammu Kashmir Small Industries Corporation and the State Sericulture Department should diligently focus on their modernization and promotion," Asghar Ali said.

He pleaded that promoting handicrafts and silkworm rearing would help in local employment generation as well as earning handsome foreign exchange.

"Therefore it is direly needed to enhance investment in the cottage industry to promote business activity and business activities should be promoted and established at various parts of the state by engaging the local population in accordance with the environment and availability of local raw material, so that, the alarming/double-digit rate of unemployment can be addressed", he underlined.

Experts have suggested that besides promoting the production of natural silk and silk cocoons through silkworm rearing within 35 days, other raw materials can also be utilized for preparing potential walnut wooden carved products, hand-knitted carpets, pashmina shawls, Kashmiri embroidery dresses, paper mache, numda, gabba, chain stitch, loi, pattu and traditional Kashmiri Kangri (a manual heater Kashmiris use keeping it in their Pheran or Phirin).

Since raw materials and experts are locally available what is needed is patronage, availability of resources, and exploring new markets.

Although the state government has

announced five years of tax holidays for new industries, the intending entrepreneurs may have the required industrial plots available in Industrial Estates in various parts of AJK for the establishment of handicraft production units on easy installments.

Since AJK is fully enriched with huge natural potential with a conducive environment and locally produced raw materials for the promotion of the cottage industry, the experts recommend the formation of farmers' clusters, promote craftsmen for sustainable productivity, and ensure the supply chain of their products.

Furthermore, they pleaded to establish handicrafts export warehouses at dry ports, enhance a number of handicrafts display centers, organize workshops and training courses to equip the craftsmen with the latest techniques, and develop linkages with allied departments working in various provinces of Pakistan.

Besides the provision of hybrid mulberry plants with imported silk seed to intending farmers for maximum production of silk cocoons and natural silk, it has been also recommended to recognize the skills of artisans, craftsmen, and farmers vying to promote these businesses.

Silk, goat, and rabbit farmers should be provided certificates, craftsmen should be provided special training to improve the quality of silk as per international requirements, identification of potential international markets, and encourage unemployed youth to engage in this business for the welfare of their families as well as economic progress of the state.

As many of the world economies bank on their cottage industry for economic growth, it is imperative for us to revive our cottage industry as a whole as well as specifically focus on the rare production of rare commodities to attract more buyers, starting afresh by incentivizing small and cottage industry for self-employment of the inflation stricken populace of the country.

Terrorism from Afghan Soil - II

This influx of advanced weaponry into Pakistan has made the TTP a formidable adversary, one that follows no rules, respects no territorial boundaries, and is completely committed to a toxic ideology. They now possess lethal weapons and are well-equipped to carry out their activities with deadly precision. On the other hand, Pakistan's security agencies operate within the constraints of local, national, and international laws, respecting the territorial boundaries of neighboring Afghanistan.

Given these challenges, Pakistan has adopted a cautious and prudent approach. It has employed economic measures to encourage the Afghan Interim Government to act responsibly and honor its commitments under various bilateral and international agreements. Pakistan has wisely closed smuggling routes and border crossings, with the closure of the Torkham border crossing being particularly significant. Pakistan is likely to extend this embargo until Afghanistan takes concrete steps to rein in the TTP.

The Prime Minister's caution regarding illegal Afghan immigrants on Pakistani soil is well-founded. There are over 50 million Afghans in Pakistan, with only 2.8 million of them registered. This massive undocumented population poses significant challenges to national security and resources. The Prime Minister has categorically stated that all illegal Afghan immigrants in Pakistan will be identified and repatriated through due legal processes.

Addressing the acts of terrorism by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from Afghanistan into Pakistan requires a comprehensive understanding of the complex web of historical, geopolitical, and socio-economic factors.

Furthermore, Pakistan should exercise caution and not be ensnared by the Afghan Government's proposals. The Afghan Government has persistently suggested that since they lack authority over the TTP, Pakistan should engage in direct negotiations with the Taliban. Pakistan, in a gesture of goodwill,

previously acceded to this suggestion, allowing TTP fighters and committed adherents to relocate to various regions within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces and Northern areas. However, this move inadvertently provided the TTP with an opportunity to regroup and activate their sleeper cells, leading to an escalation of their nefarious activities across the country.

Simultaneously, the government should address this issue with the U. S. government and its allies, stressing the need to provide compensation to Pakistan and its security agencies for the loss of lives, damage to property, and the economic losses incurred as a result of the conflict. Pakistan has borne the brunt of the war waged on its soil by weapons left behind. It is imperative that the international community supports Pakistan by enhancing the capabilities of its security forces with improved weaponry and providing essential training to effectively counter attacks launched by the TTP and other criminal elements armed with such advanced weaponry.

In conclusion, Pakistan's approach reflects a commitment to safeguard its national interests while seeking peaceful resolutions to complex challenges. In a rapidly evolving regional landscape, Pakistan's clarity and pragmatism are key to ensuring stability and prosperity for its people and the broader region.

Addressing these root causes requires a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach, including efforts to improve governance, economic development, education, and security in the affected regions.

Diplomatic initiatives that aim to reduce the conflict in Afghanistan and enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan are also crucial.

Additionally, international collaboration to disrupt external support for militant groups and strengthen border security measures is essential to mitigate the threat posed by TTP and similar organizations.

The author is former press secretary to the President, former press minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC



Qamar Bashir

Hangzhou Asiad 'sets new standards' for future hosts, says IOC president Bach



Xinhua

HANGZHOU: The Hangzhou Asian Games has set an example for future Asian Games in many different ways, International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach said here on Friday.

Bach made the remarks during an exclusive interview with Xinhua, one day before the 19th Asian Games officially opens in Hangzhou.

Around 12,500 athletes from 45 countries and regions are taking part in the Hangzhou

Asiad, a record high in Asian Games history.

"First of all, it will be the biggest ever with more than 12,000 athletes. Secondly, it will also set new standards with regards to the sustainable organization of such great Games, carbon emission, zero waste policies and many other efforts," Bach said.

"It will also benefit from the enthusiasm of the sports-loving Chinese people. The athletes can be very, very happy to enjoy China as such a great host for a big sports event in such a short

period of time."

The Hangzhou Asian Games, which was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marks the third time that China has hosted the Asiad, after Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010. It is also the largest international sporting event held in China since the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

Bach acknowledged China's importance and ever growing commitment to the Olympic movement.

"The truly exceptional Beijing



2022 Olympic Winter Games has brought the Olympic Winter Games to new heights with regard to the participation, and made more than 300 million Chinese people familiar with winter sports," he noted. "This is unique."

Bach highly commended China's contribution to the global Olympic movement.

"The cooperation with the Chinese Olympic Committee is going very well. And in many international federations, China is playing an ever growing and

more important role," he said. "This is greatly appreciated because we see an overall shift in the world towards Asia in sport, but not only in sport. China is the leading nation, and this is why we appreciate our close partnership with China

on the field of sport so much." The IOC chief also expressed his appreciation about how the Hangzhou Asian Games has welcomed new sports, as breakdancing is set to make its debut as an official sport at the coming Asiad.

Pope Francis says migrants 'do not invade' Europe

News Desk

MARSEILLE, FRANCE: Pope Francis on Saturday hammered home his message that European governments must do more to care for migrants crossing the Mediterranean, saying "those who risk their lives at sea do not invade, they look for welcome".

Closing a meeting of bishops and young people from around the Mediterranean in French port city Marseille, he added that migration is "a reality of our times, a process that involves three continents around the Mediterranean and that must be governed with wise foresight, including a European response".

The pope's remarks — given in front of President Emmanuel Macron, whose government plans



tougher measures to control migration — follow his insistence on arrival in France Friday that "people who

are at risk of drowning when abandoned on the waves must be rescued". The way Europe addresses large

numbers of arrivals from the Middle East and North Africa has shot up the political agenda since last week, when thousands of people landed on the Italian island of Lampedusa over just a few days.

The pope also appeared to weigh in on French domestic politics, targeting two of Macron's projects in assisted dying and inscribing the right to abortion in the constitution.

Old people risk being "pushed aside, under the false pretences of a supposedly dignified and 'sweet' death that is more 'salty' than the waters of the sea," Francis warned.

He also spoke of "unborn children, rejected in the name of a false right to progress, which is instead a retreat into the selfish needs of the individual".

Mohammed Shami says India's rotation policy is having positive impact

News Desk

India seamer Mohammed Shami says the team's rotation policy is working well and will prevent players from being overloaded as they prepare for the World Cup on home soil next month.

Mohammed Shami took career-best One-Day International (ODI) figures of 5-51 to restrict Australia to 276 in 50 overs in Mohali on Friday, laying the platform for a five-wicket victory.

But with India likely to pick Mohammed Siraj to partner pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, and Shardul Thakur offering additional batting support, Shami knows he is not guaranteed a place in the team for every game.

"When you build a team, the coach plays an important role in rotating



the players depending on the conditions, the situations or the opposition," Shami told reporters.

"We've had good results in the previ-

ous few series and the rotation policy is working well. I don't think we need to take on a big load playing back-to-back games before the World Cup.

"It's good for us because rotating pace bowlers is key in such conditions. It's more important for bowlers, not that it's easier for batters but still. Rotation is important before ICC tournaments. It helps players who need to get into rhythm."

Mohammed Shami took a much-needed break following the World Test Championship final in June but said he kept himself busy.

"It was very important to take that break, because I had played back-to-back for seven-eight months without rest," Shami said.

"It wasn't exactly rest because I have everything set up at home for practice. I end up practising more than I do when I'm with the team."

India begin their World Cup campaign on Oct. 8 against Australia in Chennai.

Rishi Sunak may ban cigarettes in UK

News Desk

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is considering introducing measures that would ban the next generation from ever being able to buy cigarettes, The Guardian reported on Friday, citing government sources.

Rishi Sunak is looking at anti-smoking measures similar to laws New Zealand announced last year, which include a ban on selling tobacco to anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 2009, the report said. "We want to encourage more people to quit and meet our ambition to be smokefree by 2030, which is why we have already taken steps to reduce smoking rates," a British government spokesperson said in an emailed response to Reuters.

Those measures include free vape kits, a voucher scheme to incentivise pregnant women to quit, and consulting on mandatory cigarette pack inserts, the spokesperson added.

The spokesperson declined to comment further on The Guardian report. The policies under consideration are part of a new consumer-focused drive from Sunak's team before next year's expected election, the report said.

Britain in May announced it would close a loophole that let retailers give free samples of vapes to children in a clampdown on e-cigarettes.

Separately, councils in England and Wales in July called on the government to ban the sale of single-use vapes by 2024 on both environmental and health grounds.



Pakistan, China sign MoU to establish mechanism for academic exchanges, joint research

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The National Defence University Pakistan and Grandview have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish mechanisms for active collaboration for academic exchanges, joint research and sharing of experiences. Pakistan Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Moin Ul Haque and Mr. Ren Libo, Founder and President of Grandview Institution, Ren Libo signed the agreement at a ceremony held at the Grandview Institute. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Haque said that National Defence University (NDU) is a prestigious institution of higher learning and strategic thought providing key inputs for shaping Pakistan's defense and foreign policies. He also appreciated the Grandview Institution as a vanguard of scholarship and diplomacy which contributed significantly to global affairs. Ambassador Haque noted that this MOU was part of the two countries' efforts to build linkages between think tanks and universities, which would serve as platforms for further strengthening relations between the two countries.

In his speech, Ren Libo expressed his desire to enhance engagement with the Pakistani side. He further reiterated that the two sides should plan and execute joint projects under the agreement for practical cooperation in this regard.

USD: US Dollar up as data highlights economic resilience

News Desk

The US Dollar (USD) advanced against a basket of currencies on Friday as the latest batch of data on business activity from around the globe highlighted the superior position of the United States relative to other major economies.

S&P Global said its flash U. S. Composite PMI index, which tracks the manufacturing and service sectors, dipped to a reading of 50.1 in September from a final reading for August of 50.2. September's result was barely above the 50 level that separates expansion and contraction.

Still, the U. S. economy so far this year has defied projections for sliding into a recession that most economists had expected would be triggered by the Federal Reserve's aggressive interest rate increases aimed at quelling inflation.

The data comes on the heels of disappointing data from Europe, which

showed that economic activity in France fell much more quickly than expected in September.

Separate survey data covering the whole euro zone showed that the economy likely contracted in the third quarter.

"The U. S. is continuing to outpace the rest of the world and I think it will continue to do so for some time," Michael Brown, market analyst at Trader X, said of the U. S. data.

"Unless we see a sustained pickup in growth in the rest of DM (developed markets), I struggle to take a bearish view on the buck over the medium-term, as the FX market's focus increasingly shifts to which central bank will spend the longest time at its terminal rate," Brown said.

The U. S. Dollar index — which measures the currency against six major counterparts — was 0.2% higher at 105.6 after having risen as high as 105.78 earlier in the session. That puts the index on pace for a weekly gain of

about 0.3%, its 10th straight week of gains, its longest winning streak in nearly a decade.

The U. S. central bank needs to raise interest rates further to control inflation in a "timely way," Federal Reserve Governor Michelle Bowman said on Friday in remarks that sketched out a hawkish argument based on a potential rise in energy prices and a possibility the inflation battle may take years to complete.

The Federal Reserve left interest rates at 5.25% to 5.5% on Wednesday but stressed that it would hold them at that level for as long as needed to push inflation back to 2%.

The yen fell on Friday after the Bank of Japan (BOJ) kept interest rates in negative territory days after the Federal Reserve signaled U. S. borrowing costs would stay high, piling pressure on the Japanese currency.

The BOJ held interest rates at -0.1% on Friday and reiterated its pledge to

keep supporting the economy until it is confident inflation will stay at the 2% target.

"We have yet to foresee inflation stably and sustainably achieve our price target," BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda told a press conference.

The yen dropped as low as 148.42 to the dollar, nearing the 150-mark at which analysts have said government intervention to prop up the currency is likely. The dollar was last up 0.53% at 148.375 yen.

"I think it's rather dovish, and that's why we've seen the yen go past 148," said Alvin Tan, head of Asia FX strategy at RBC Capital Markets.

Speculation that Tokyo could intervene to support the yen gathered steam. Japan's finance minister, Shunichi Suzuki, said on Friday he would not rule out any options, warning against a yen sell-off that would hurt the trade-reliant economy.

Meanwhile, sterling was 0.47% lower



at \$1.2237 after data showed that the UK economy slowed sharply in September and is likely on the brink of recession.

It was near the roughly six-month

low of \$1.22305 it hit on Thursday when the Bank of England (BoE) halted its long run of interest rate increases, a day after Britain's fast pace of price growth unexpectedly slowed.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
46,421.15	46,202.12
Day's High	Day's Low
46,500.45	46,181.99
Index Value	Change
4,936,829,125	+219.03
Percentage	Time
+0.47%	22 Sept, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,683.91	+5.29
Percentage	Time
+0.069%	22 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
34,118.52	+48.10
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	22 Sept, 12:22 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,402.41	-168.62
Percentage	Time
-0.52%	22 Sept, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198	200
Bahrain Dinar	781.13	789.13
Canadian Dollar	220	222.20
China Yuan	40.22	40.62
Danish Krone	42.35	42.75
Euro	317	320
Hong Kong Dollar	37.93	38.28
Indian Rupee	3.57	3.68
Japanese Yen	1.92	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	951.03	960.03
Malaysian Ringgit	62.62	63.22
New Zealand \$	174.23	176.23
Norwegians Krone	27.87	28.17
Omani Riyal	762.72	770.72
Qatari Riyal	80.69	81.39
Saudi Riyal	78.55	79.3
Singapore Dollar	217	219
Swedish Korona	26.62	26.92
Swiss Franc	325.12	327.62
Thai Bhat	8.31	8.46
U.A.E Dirham	81.5	82.3
UK Pound Sterling	372.5	376
US Dollar	292.1	295

Kazak President to visit Pakistan for strengthening economic ties: Ambassador Kistafin

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan on Saturday said the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is scheduled to visit Pakistan in the near future for further strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations.

A business delegation of Kazakhstan led by Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and showed interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan, said a press release issued here by the ICCI here.

The delegation was representing food and beverages, oil and gas, minerals, precious stones, fertilizers, chemicals, textiles, autoparts, wholesale and retail sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country wants to further strengthen trade relations with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items.

He said that last year, a trade delegation of Kazakhstan was organized to Pakistan and hoped that the visit of another Kazakh delegation would contribute to promote business



relations between the two countries.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that both countries should set at least US\$ 1 billion bilateral trade target as the current level of trade is not matching with their actual potential.

He said that Kazakhstan is a big landlocked

country and Pakistani ports provide it the shortest route through Arabian Sea to access other markets.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food items, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance.

He said both countries should explore road and railway links that would boost trade and economic relations between them.

He said that ICCI is planning a delegation to Kazakhstan to explore new avenues of business partnerships increasing bilateral trade ties between the two countries.

Yessentayev Arman, Head of Kazakh delegation said that Pakistan is a huge market for business and investment and they have come to explore business opportunities in many sectors in Pakistan including oil & gas, surgical instruments, juices, textiles, rice, sugar, fertilizers and others.

He said that both countries should open bank branches in each other's market that would facilitate bilateral trade promotion.

He said that there is a lack of information in private sectors of both countries about potential areas of business cooperation and hoped that their visit to Pakistan would bridge this gap.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that both countries should sign a transit trade agreement to provide a legal framework to the private sectors for trade promotion.

He said that Pakistan can also get easy access to Central Asian markets by developing close cooperation with Kazakhstan.

Adnan Butt emphasised the immense potential of Pakistan's software industry

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Vice President, Adnan Khalid Butt, emphasised the immense potential of Pakistan's software industry, valuing it at a staggering 1.2 trillion rupees. In a meeting with a delegation representing software companies, including MEPTICS Software House CEO Shah Hassan and My Impact Meter CEO Kanwal Cheema, Adnan Khalid Butt underscored the urgent need for government support in establishing Special Technology Zones (STZ) to foster the growth of this burgeoning sector.

Speaking at the meeting, Adnan Khalid Butt emphasized that Pakistan's software industry had the potential to become a major player on the global stage, contributing significantly to the country's economy and job creation. He highlighted the need for a conducive business environment that includes tax incentives, infrastructure development, and streamlined regulations to attract foreign and domestic investment in the software sector.

Shah Hassan, CEO of MEPTICS Soft-



ware House, echoed Adnan Khalid Butt's sentiments, stating that the software industry is brimming with talent and innovation. He emphasized the need for government policies that promote research and development, as well as provide financial incentives for startups and tech compa-

nies. Kanwal Cheema, CEO of My Impact Meter, added that the software industry has already demonstrated its resilience and growth potential, even in challenging times. With the right support and strategic partnerships, Pakistan's IT sector can compete on a global scale, creating a positive impact on the nation's economic landscape.

Adnan Khalid Butt also highlighted the importance of creating Special Technology Zones (STZ) where software companies can thrive. These zones would offer state-of-the-art infrastructure, tax breaks, and a supportive ecosystem to encourage the establishment and growth of IT businesses.

In conclusion, Adnan Khalid Butt's vision for Pakistan's software industry as a trillion-rupee powerhouse is not only ambitious but also attainable with the right support and policies in place. Collaborative efforts between the government, industry stakeholders, and IT companies can unlock the sector's full potential, leading to substantial economic growth and job opportunities for the nation.

FIA tightens noose around car showroom owners

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) has tightened its noose around car showroom owners, ARY News reported.

According to sources, FIA has launched trade-based money laundering investigation against owners of car showrooms and a special team of FIA has kicked off the investigation from Khalid Bin Waleed Road Karachi.

Sources said that initially notices have been issued to four showroom owners and summoned them on September 26.

The FIA special team has also summoned a complete record of car imports from January 1, 2021 till today.

Sources within FIA revealed if the car showroom owners do not abide by the notice then legal action will



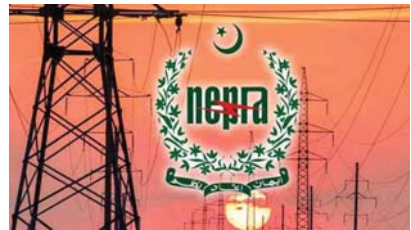
be taken against them.

Earlier, it was revealed that over Rs 69.5 billion over-invoicing was unearthed in the import of solar panels during 2017-2022.

According to the FBR report, a clear pattern of over-invoicing was revealed on 6,232 Goods Declarations (GDs) from 63 importers, and Rs 72 billion was transferred from two private companies however solar panels worth Rs 45 billion were imported.

The Senate standing committee on finance was briefed by chairman FBR on the matter related to over-invoicing.

Nepra approves Rs3.28 per unit increase in power tariff



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has approved Rs3.28 per unit increase in power tariff on the account of fuel cost adjustment for fourth quarter of fiscal year 2022-23. The regulatory body has sent his decision to the federal government for final approval. The increase in electricity prices will come into effect immediately after it is approved by the government.

The distribution companies (Discos) would recover Rs159 billion from consumers during the period of six months (October 2023 to March 2024).

The revised rate will be applicable on all customers.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Saturday issued a power suspension programme for Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 am to 01:00 pm, at NTDC 500 KVA Rawat Grid Station, 250 MW load management is done as per the weather condition.

From 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Chakwal Circle, Mulhal Mughlan Feeder, Attock Circle, PM Housing Colony, Air University Feeders and surrounding areas.

Pakistani economy is tanking while global economy is picking up

Asrar Raouf

It is indeed ironic to observe that while the global economic situation is recovering from the setbacks of Covid pandemic and Ukraine war yet Pakistan's economy is sliding consistently. A new world trade report released by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) points out that negative headlines are obscuring a more optimistic global trade picture as even trade reached the United States and China reached its highest-level last year despite escalation of trade tensions between them since 2018.

Trade tensions that began in 2018 between the world's two largest trading partners saw tit-for-tat escalation of import tariffs but the report noted that despite all obstacles bilateral trade increased. Unilateral trade-related measures are generating an increasing number of trade measures that are raised by WTO members in different bodies. The nature of these concerns is also changing as re-globalisation through increased international cooperation and broader integration is assisting trade, inclusiveness and environmental sustainability.

On the other hand, Pakistan is sinking deep in economic mire as it is now reported that the country's interest payments last month increased alarmingly to Rs.537 billion while its income stood at Rs.381 billion surpassing the federal government's net income for the month by Rs.156 billion that constitutes 41 per cent shortfall. This has raised concerns that the annual debt servicing cost may exceed budget allocations due to rising interest rates. Provisional federal fiscal operations for July, marking the beginning of fiscal year 2023-24 have indicated that Pakistan's debt situation is no longer

sustainable. The country is now borrowing primarily to meet interest payments that is contributing to an elevated debt burden. Intriguingly, just a year ago, the net income was sufficient to cover interest payments, but this is not the situation currently.

Moreover, the ever-increasing interest rates has forced the federal government to borrow Rs.1.3 trillion at a rate of 24.5% for three months, a rate that was 2.5% higher than the key policy rate. Market sentiment appeared reluctant to lend money to the government due to reports that the central bank was considering increasing the key policy rate to 25%, although the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) denied these reports.

The federal government had no choice but to secure these costly loans due to its cash buffers being nearly Rs.1.5 trillion less than emergency needs as against the available cash buffers, the government was scheduled to make Rs.2.05 trillion in debt repayments. Similarly, Rs.310 billion in interest payments were due within this week including on external loans. Additionally, around Rs.80 billion was due to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiaries. It must be kept in view that for the current fiscal year, the government has allocated Rs.7.3 trillion for debt servicing though this figure may go up to Rs.8 trillion.

In the previous fiscal year, the federal government missed its budget targets and failed to restrict fiscal operations to the level agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the coalition government went entirely off line leading to a substantial increase in public debt from Rs.44 trillion in March 2022 to Rs.61.8 trillion by July this year.

It happened because the federal government's total expendi-

tures surged by 20% compared to the same month the previous year, reaching Rs.645 billion. It was left with no option but to borrow even for defence expenditure. It was mentioned that taking a questionable action the government undertook the responsibility of polio eradication programme entailing an expenditure of \$1.8 billion. Additionally, development spending also witnessed significant growth rising to Rs.16 billion from Rs.5 billion from previous year indicating preparation for election for the parties of coalition government.

Another serious difficulty faced by the financial decision makers of Pakistan is the reservation exhibited by Saudi Arabia with respect to protection of its investments and rights in Pakistan prompting an immediate wholesome review of the situa-

tion and oversight committees of the Reko Diq project for negotiations with Saudi Arabia are constituted. SIFC has also directed that ministries concerned would devise and upgrade existing brownfield investment opportunities through the platform provided by the SIFC to ensure new investment in these projects. The SIFC has also approved to exempt the hiring of financial advisers by Pakistan from the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules aimed at achieving the deadlines set to dilute Reko Diq shares in favour of Saudi Arabia.

The finance ministry and the SBP had been instructed by the SIFC to facilitate foreign currency payment by the Pakistani shareholders of the Reko Diq project to make payments to the advisers. The SIFC also allowed the energy ministry to engage local legal advisers, technical consultants and financial advisor for the Reko Diq project along with specifying future course of action for them.

On the other hand, the caretaker government is under pressure both from the public and the establishment to improve the financial position. Deeply conscious of the public outcry on receiving inflated electricity bills the caretakers resorted to a crackdown on power theft and it was reported that eight million units of power theft detected fetching fine of Rs.352.4 million out of which Rs.27.25 million recovered from them so far.

These consumers were involved in theft of electricity by direct supply, punching holes in the meter body, shunt system, tempering of the meter body and various other methods. All electric supply companies known as DISCOS are involved in this nationwide crackdown and it was reported that LESCO and MEPCO are doing better than other companies.



Under the aegis of SIFC, negotia-

tion and setting of tight deadlines by Pakistani authorities to materialise the much-needed investment in Reko Diq gold and copper mines. Saudi Arabia has shown interest in making multibillion-dollar investment in the Reko Diq project and the Saudi leadership is interested to capitalise on it at the earliest but the project's bankable feasibility study has not yet been completed. In this context, it was reported that a Saudi Arabian delegation visited Pakistan last month evincing inter-

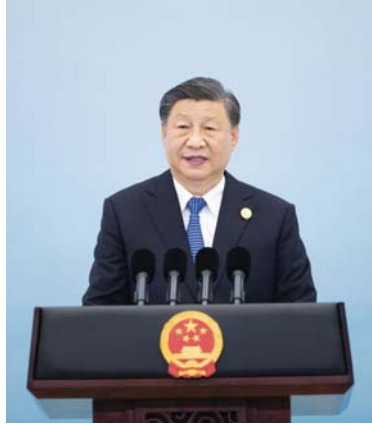
Xi calls for promoting peace, solidarity, inclusiveness through sports

Xinhua

HANGZHOU: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for promoting peace, solidarity and inclusiveness through sports at a welcoming banquet ahead of the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games on Saturday.

As members of a community with a shared future, Asian countries should adhere to good neighborliness and mutual benefit, reject the Cold War mentality and camp-based confrontation, and make Asia an anchor for world peace, Xi said when addressing the banquet in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou.

On solidarity, Xi said as humanity is faced with unprecedented global challenges, Asian people must seize historic opportunities and work together to tackle these challenges so that Asia can embark on a broader path of common



development, openness and integration.

On inclusiveness, Xi said the Asian Games, with many unique sporting events of Asia, offers a stage where sports and cultures enrich each other, and vividly shows how Asian cultures



learn from one another and beam with vitality.

He stressed the efforts to promote inclusiveness through sports, enhance

confidence in Asian civilizations, uphold communication and mutual learning, and add new glory to Asian civilizations.

Pakistan aiming high with hockey in Hangzhou Asian Games

Sports Desk

BELJING: Pakistani national men's hockey team is making final preparations to show their best at the 19 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

"There is a brand new team, young but competitive," Shehnaz Sheikh, Head Coach of Pakistan's hockey team told China Economic Net.

He expressed his confidence in the team and their abilities, saying that even though they know that medaling in China will not be easy, they are fighting for honour.

Umar Bhutta, the captain of Pakistan's hockey team, has voiced his aspiration to produce a good result in Hangzhou.

"The 2010 Asian Games were held in China in which Pakistan won the gold medal in hockey," he said, adding "We are hopeful that the team will be successful in winning medals in this year's game and make the country famous." The team also spoke highly about



China's excellence in organizing mega events, saying the previous two editions of the Asian Games, in 1990 in Beijing and 2010 in Guangzhou, have been a resounding success.

Pakistani hockey team has been assigned to Group A along with bitter rivals India, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Uzbekistan,

according to the schedule that has been made public. The much-anticipated Pakistan vs India hockey match is scheduled for September 30.

The Indian men's hockey team are two-time Asian Games champion while Pakistan has won the gold medal at the continental showpiece a record eight times.

According to Pakistan's sports board, over 250 Pakistani athletes will participate in the 19th Asian Games, which begins on September 23.

This edition is set to be the largest ever, with around 12,500 athletes from 45 countries and regions competing in 40 sports, 61 disciplines, and 481 events.

Mohammad Asif opens up on Hasan Ali's World Cup selection

Sports Desk

Former cricketer Mohammad Asif shared his views on all-rounder Hasan Ali's selection in Pakistan's ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 squad.

Hasan Ali was a surprise selection for the side in the world championships scheduled to be played in India from November 5th till November 19th. He replaced star pacer Naseem Shah, who was sidelined from the tournament because of a right shoulder injury.

Chief selection of the Pakistan Cricket Team Inzamam-ul-Haq said it was a "forced" introduction to the side.

Mohammad Asif was not pleased with Hasan Ali's selection in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 squad. During Twitter Space, He claimed that the all-rounder was picked because he is captain Babar Azam's friend and part of a "Roti Lobby (bread lobby)", referring to him having meals with a selected group of players in the circuit.

"Hasan Ali is part of the lobby, he eats with Babar Azam and other players," he said. "He is in the team because he is part of the lobby, this used to be the case when we used to play too. A lobby doesn't select players from outside."

The former pacer also hit out at captain Babar Azam's approach in the game. He said he rates the prolific batter but he doesn't score runs in the power-play, and puts pressure on the wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan.

PCB confirms team management for ICC World Cup 2023

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday, confirmed the team management for the ICC World Cup 2023 that will be played in India in October and November.

For this year's mega event, the PCB confirmed retaining the team management, led by the director of Pakistan men's cricket Mickey Arthur and manager Rehan-ul-Haq.

Additionally, the coaching staff for the Pakistan men's cricket team was also retained with Andrew Puttick and Morne Morkel continuing in their roles as batting and bowling coaches, respectively, and Grant Bradburn serving as head coach with Abdul Rehman acting

as his deputy.

Pakistan's ICC World Cup 2023 bound contingent is scheduled to depart for Hyderabad in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Team director Mickey Arthur will join the side by 30 September.

Pakistan squad for ICC World Cup 2023

Babar Azam (c), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, M Wasim Jnr, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha.

Travelling reserves: Mohammad Haris, Abrar Ahmed, Zaman Khan
Pakistan's warm-up matches schedule:

September 29 — vs New Zealand in Hyderabad

October 3 — vs Australia in Hyderabad
Pakistan's schedule for the ICC World Cup 2023:

October 6 — vs Netherlands in Hyderabad

October 10 — vs Sri Lanka in Hyderabad

October 14 — vs India in Ahmedabad

October 20 — vs Australia in Bengaluru

October 23 — vs Afghanistan in Chennai

October 27 — vs South Africa in Chennai

October 31 — vs Bangladesh in Kolkata

November 4 — vs New Zealand Bengaluru (Day match)

November 11 — vs England in Kolkata

The day matches will start at 10:00 am Pakistan Standard Time (PST) while all other matches will be day-night fixtures, starting at 01:30 pm (PST).

Player support personnel: Rehan-ul-Haq (team manager), Mickey Arthur (Director — Pakistan men's team), Grant Bradburn (head coach), Andrew Puttick (batting coach), Morne Morkel (bowling coach), Aftab Khan (fielding coach), Abdul Rehman (assistant coach), Dr Sohail Saleem (team doctor), Drikus Saaiman (strength and conditioning coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi (media and digital content manager), Usman Anwari (security manager), Maqbool Ahmad Babri (psychologist), Talha Ejaz (analyst) and Malang Ali (masseur).

QEAT: Ali Shafiq's four-fer lifts Lahore Blues against Faisalabad

A Sports

RAWALPINDI:

Right-arm pacer Ali Shafiq's four-wicket haul powered Lahore Blues to restrict Faisalabad to 211/8 despite Mohammad Abubakar Khan and Ali Shan's half-centuries on Day 2 of the third-round fixture of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (QEAT) 2023/24.



Faisalabad started their day at 53 for three. Mohammad Abubakar Khan and Ali Shan recovered the loss incurred by their side for losing their top three cheaply; the two batters scored 115 runs together.

Both Abubakar and Ali got half-centuries to their name which lent the side some confidence and stability. However, once the partnership was broken, Faisalabad's woes continued, as they lost three wickets after that.

Lahore Blues' bowlers had a proactive day; Ali Shafiq returned with four wickets while Kashif Bhatti and Nisar Ahmed had two wickets each.

Faisalabad ended the day at 211 at the loss of eight wickets.

In another QEAT fixture, Peshawar acquired a valuable 29-run lead against Rawalpindi, courtesy of a five-wicket haul by Niaz Khan and an unbeaten 93 by Waqas Ahmed Snr.

Rawalpindi started the day at 46 for three. The difficulty they saw during batting the previous day continued and none of the batters could hold their ground long enough to sustain any significant damage towards the opposition bowlers.

The highest score of the innings came from Syed Aqib Shah's bat who scored 37 runs. Peshawar bowlers, particularly Niaz Khan who had five wickets to his name, troubled Rawalpindi who were eventually bowled out for 137 runs only.

A 59-run-stand between Waqas Ahmed Snr and skipper Sahibzada Farhan gave Peshawar a solid start after they lost their first wicket for just 30 runs. After this partnership was broken and two new batters — Kamran Ghulam and Abuzar Tariq — too were removed cheaply, Peshawar lost some of their momentum.

However, it was recovered by an unbeaten 79-run-stand between Waqas and Abbas Ali. Both of them remained at the crease, taking the side to 186 runs when stumps were called.

After Day 1 of the third-round QEAT fixture between FATA and Karachi Region Whites was washed out due to persistent rain in Rawalpindi. FATA won the toss and elected to bowl first on Day 2.

Karachi Whites had an abysmal start to their innings, as they lost four important wickets very early in the innings.

Khurram Manzoor scored just six runs, while the three batters next on the list were all dismissed without scoring a run. Karachi found themselves in an extremely sticky situation, having lost four wickets for just eight runs.

Rameesh Aziz and Danish Aziz took to the crease and began the rebuilding for their side. Between the two, Karachi managed to add 56 runs to their total.

Karachi ended the day at 64 at the loss of four wickets.

The second day of the 11th match of the ongoing QEAT between Lahore Region Whites and Multan was washed out.

Ish Sodhi recalled by Bangladesh after being run out at non-striker's end

A Sports

MIRPUR: Bangladesh Men's cricket team displayed great sportsmanship as they recalled New Zealand's Ish Sodhi, who got run out at the non-striker's end during the second ODI of the three-match series here on Saturday.

The incident occurred in the 46th over of New Zealand's first innings when young pacer Hasan Mahmud noticed Ish Sodhi marching out of the crease.

Consequently, Mahmud, while bowling the third delivery of his last over, unhesitatingly dislodged the bails off in his run-up and appealed for the runout.

Replays showed Ish Sodhi well out of his crease and was deemed out. Sodhi then started to walk back to the pavilion with a smile and clapped sarcastically.

Bangladesh captain Litton Das then engaged in a conversation with the on-field umpire Marais Erasmus and opted to withdraw from the runout appeal.

The Bangladesh skipper, alongside umpire Erasmus, simultaneously signalled Ish Sodhi to come back.

Upon his return, Sodhi gave a heartfelt hug to young pacer Mahmud, which caught the attention of cricket fans, who praised the Bangladesh cricket team for their sportsmanship.

Giving a second life to Ish Sodhi, however, came back to haunt Bangladesh as he added 18 runs to his tally before finally getting dismissed in the final over, scoring 35 off 39 deliveries with the help of three sixes.

His crucial knock lifted New Zealand to set a commendable 255-run target for Bangladesh.

Wicketkeeper batter Tom Blundell top-scored for New Zealand with a 66-ball 68 which featured six boundaries and a six.

Blundell was also involved in an anchoring 95-run partnership with left-handed batter Henry Nicholls, who scored 49 in 61 deliveries with the help of six boundaries.

When this story was filed, Bangladesh were 72/4 in 15 overs with set-batter Tamim Iqbal (40) and Mahmudullah (1) at the crease.

Pakistan reach SAFF U19 Championship semi-final with Maldives stalemate

A Sports

KATHMANDU: Pakistan came from behind to hold Maldives for a 1-1 stalemate to qualify for the semi-finals of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) U19 Championship 2023.

The Green Shirts started their second SAFF U19 Championship 2023 fixture on a high as he dominated the possession for a notable period but failed to convert into a goal.

Pakistan's error in conversion allowed the Maldives to capitalize on the situation and they successfully netted the opener in the 39th minute, courtesy of a brilliant outside-of-the-box finish.

Maldives went into the break with a 1-0 lead over Pakistan.

In the second half, Pakistan made

numerous efforts but were denied the equalizer by the strong Maldives defence.

Pakistan, however, finally got luck in their favour when Shah Jahan netted the equalizer late into the game before pulling off an animated celebration.

Earlier this week, Pakistan scripted a triumphant start to their SAFF U19 Championship 2023 campaign with a thrilling 1-0 victory over hosts Nepal.

Pakistan and Nepal went hard at each other in their SAFF U19 Championship fixture and showcased thrilling skills and tenacity before the former prevailed.

With a thrilling victory over Nepal, Pakistan ended a 12-year-long victory drought in an international match.

Pakistan's U19 team last secured a victory on the international stage

in 2011, when they defeated India's U19 team.

Midfielder Ali Zafar netted the lone goal in the 74th minute, which turned out to be the difference maker between the two sides, who appeared inseparable in the first half.

Besides Ali Zafar, Pakistan's goalkeeper Sahil Gul played a pivotal role in his team's triumph over Nepal, denying several threatening efforts from the home side.

The ongoing SAFF U19 Championship 2023 is being held at the Dashrath Stadium here from September 21 to 30.

For the unversed, this is the fifth edition of the SAFF U19 Championship, a highly competitive international football tournament for men's under-19 national sides, organised by the SAFF.

India are the defending champions, having won their second title in 2022 by defeating Bangladesh in the final.

Pakistan Squad for SAFF U19 Championship 2023

Goalkeepers: Sahil Gul, Mohsin Khan and Muhammad Abdullah
Defenders: Muhammad Sadam, Muhammad Adeel, Asad Nasir, Ans Amin, Khurshid Alam, Muhammad Raheel, Shayan Ali, Kamil Ahmad Khan, Abid Ali, Hannan Naveed and Najeed Ullah

Midfielders: Ali Zafar, Muhammad Azan and Awais Khan

Forwards: Shahjahan, Muhammad Hassan, Faisal Ahmad, Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Haroon Zafar and Muhammad Adeel Younas

Team Officials: Shadab Iftikhar (Head Coach), Mohsan Ul Hussain (Assistant Coach), Khurram Shahzad



(Goal Keeper Coach), Aamna Muhammad Samama (Physio) and (Media), Muhammad Abdullah and Zohair Gondal (Team Manager).