



Pakistan, China sign cooperation agreement on sustainable development of rivers: Ambassador Hashmi

Pakistan and China have signed a cooperation agreement focusing on the Indus and Yangtze rivers to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by river cultures, ecosystems and economies and engage in discussions on sustainable development of major rivers, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said. (Details on Page 8)



Vladimir Putin took part in a session of the Collective Security Council

Vladimir Putin took part in a session of the Collective Security Council of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation in Minsk. Also participated in the summit President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, and Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation Imangali Tasmagambetov. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Waiting for assistance

GAZA: Volunteers from the UNRWA charity Al Nuseirat camp in central Gaza distribute food to refugee families in schools.



Photo: via Social Media

Projects with 'sizable' investment under SIFC to be signed before elections: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday said that projects with 'sizable figure' of investment under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would be signed before end of the current caretaker setup. "In the coming weeks, the nation will hear good news as we are soon going to Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and to other countries to sign Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) of the projects worth billions of dollars," the prime minister said in an interview with a private news channel. Pakistan and Kuwait will sign seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for investment worth \$10 billion in Pakistan through seven projects in multiple fields including environment, mining and food security during the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar to Kuwait.



PM Kakar said SIFC was a fully professional initiative that was being run under best international practices. "I see a natural and organic growth in it." To a question, the prime minister explained that the investment never came so early. He said first the government had to pass through a negotiation process on bankable projects, then there came the feasibility stage, then MoUs are signed and then it transformed into tangible projects. He said the SIFC had the institutional support, and changes of governments would not affect the progress

of the projects under the Council. PM Kakar said some segments were misleading the people that all the estimated investment amount worth \$70 billion would at once be deposited in the Pakistani banks by the friendly countries. To a query, the prime minister pointed out that the caretaker setup with the support of the state, had successfully halted the cross-border smuggling of dollars and other goods that would continue in future as well. As regards upcoming general elections in the country, he said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was fully prepared to hold general elections on the given date. He said the caretaker government was also well aware of its role to assist the ECP in ensuring transparent and secure election process. To a question about the security situation in the coun-

try, the prime minister maintained that there were serious security threats, especially in Balochistan which were expected to increase in the days to come. However, he said he did not want to relate these security concerns with elections. To another question about complaints by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for not being given level playing fields for the election campaign, PM Kakar clarified that the government was not denying the field to any political party. "Normally, the political parties use multiple tactics to attract the sympathies of their voters, and the victim card is quite common among those tactics," he said. The prime minister said the government was neither discriminating any party nor giving undue favour to any other. He said the caretaker government was not imposing restrictions to hold political rallies or gatherings in

Islamabad or any other part of the country. However, he said the caretakers were bound to restrict those involved in the 9th May incidents as per the law as their matter was under trial in the courts. He said the basic role of the ECP is to give equal opportunities to all the political parties in general election. As regards, the missing persons in Balochistan, the prime minister made it clear that no institution was involved in enforced disappearance in the country. He said the people involved in terrorism should be presented in the courts. "Our view is that this is a campaign by some activists to malign the state institutions," he added. As regards trial of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the Judicial Complex, the prime minister said the government would follow the court order in this regard.

Shamshad-Economy

All out measures being taken to reduce debt stress, improve growth rate: Dr Shamshad

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister of Finance Dr Shamshad Akhtar on Friday said that the government is taking all-out measures to reduce debt stress, and circular debt and enhance the economic growth rate of Pakistan. There is a need to reduce borrowing and enhance efficiency in public sector departments, she said while talking to a private television channel. We have increased tariff rate in the power and gas sector to control circular debt which is a big burden for Pakistan's economy, she said. Institutional reforms are necessary to address the challenges being faced by the country, she said. In reply to a question about privatization, she said that a comprehensive strategy is being made to privatize non-profit entities, adding that a scheme is being prepared to launch Sukuk Bond through the Stock Exchange.

Court Martial

Army court sentences two ex-senior officers for sedition over 'Pakistan Army secrets'

Spokesman Report



RAWALPINDI: Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja and Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi, both retired officers of Pakistan Army, were convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel from discharge of duties and violation of the provisions of Official Secrets Act, 1923 related to espionage and acts prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State. The court of competent jurisdiction convicted and adjudged both the individuals on the date of 7th and

9th October 2023, through due judicial process, with the punishments awarded as:- Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja; awarded 14 years rigorous imprisonment. Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi; awarded 12 years rigorous imprisonment. Pursuant to the awarded sentence, the Ranks of both officers have been forfeited on 21 November 2023.

Conference

Ashrafi seeks early punishment to May 9 rioters



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has said those who betrayed their motherland and harmed it should be hanged at Minar-i-Pakistan. Addressing an inter-faith harmony conference and talking to media on Saturday, he said traitors like Adil Raja and Captain Mehdi had lesser sentences of 14 and 12 years respectively. "It has been many months since then but the perpetrators have not been punished."

military courts or punishing the accused," he regretted. He added, "Courts of Pakistan have sentenced traitors like Adil Raja and Captain Mehdi to 14 and 12 years respectively. We think that these are less punishments for those who betrayed their homeland, soil and religion. They should be hanged at Minar-i-Pakistan. The country that gave them everything, the country that gave them recognition; the traitors should not stay on earth again. Since they were retired soldiers, the army has done it, but my question is to the judiciary and the administration. We all sitting here have seen the devastation in Jinnah House during the events of May 9. It has been many months since then but the perpetrators have not been punished."

Pakistan's economy battered by sit-ins: Nawaz Sharif



Bureau Report

SIALKOT: Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) head and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said that the country's economy was battered by sit-ins. Addressing the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce, PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif questioned if governments are not allowed to complete their tenure how will the country prosper? He claimed that PML-N had already won the 2018 election despite the closure of RTS but raids were conduct-

ed to arrest party workers. The PML-N supreme said that he and his daughter Maryam Nawaz were in jail on election day but he did not still stand with the people of Pakistan despite the hardships. Earlier today, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said while addressing the party workers in Sialkot, that the country suffered heavy loss, we have no margin of error and to learn the lesson now. During his visit to Sialkot PML-N supreme said that a sequence of sentences against his party since 2017 has come to an end just few days ago. He said the country was prospering and the currency was strong in 2017. There was no inflation and price hike while the dollar's exchange rate was at 104 rupees.

PTT's convention turns violent as workers, police clash

Correspondent

DIR BALA: Panic and tension gripped Dir Bala district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers and police clashed over holding a party's convention in the area. According to details, the PTI workers were arriving at the site to participate in the workers' convention in Sahibabad area of Upper Dir district. However, the district administration had imposed Section 144 - under which the gathering of more than five people is banned - and blocked roads leading to the site of the gathering.

ECP contempt plea against PTI chief fixed for hearing

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) contempt cases against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan have been fixed for hearing. As per details, the ECP and CEC contempt cases against the PTI chief will be heard on November 30. During the hearing, the indictment process of the former prime minister will be initiated. Additionally, the hearings of the ECP contempt case against former federal ministers Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry will also be conducted on the same day as they are summoned in personal capacity.

The incarcerated PTI chairman at Adiala Jail was not produced before the ECP in the previous hearing due to security reasons. Whereas, Fawad Ch and Asad Umar also did not appear before the court on the last hearing. Earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan on deferred the indictment of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and former party leaders Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry in the ECP contempt case. It is important to mention here that in August 2022, the ECP issued notices to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against CEC Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral watchdog.

بل کو پروٹیکٹڈ بنانے کا راز جانیں!

4hm³ 3hm³ 2hm³ 0.9hm³ 0.6hm³ 0.3hm³

سردیوں کے 4 مہینے گیس کا ماہانہ استعمال 0.9hm³ سے کم کریں اور سال کے 12 مہینے گیس کا ماہانہ استعمال 0.9hm³ سے کم ادا کریں

گیس کا استعمال 0.9hm³ تک کیسے رکھا جاسکتا ہے

- روزانہ گیز میٹر سے روک ٹوک کرنا
- گیس میٹر کے کوریجنگ اور کالیبریشن کروانا
- گیس میٹر کے کوریجنگ اور کالیبریشن کروانا

PHD(U)1685-D

CBD Punjab launches Miyawaki Forest Initiative to combat smog and foster sustainability

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), a leading development entity in the province of Punjab, also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has marked a significant leap towards combatting smog and environmental conservation with the initiation of a Miyawaki Forest plantation with the collaboration of Carbonwise and Deliver Tree.

The ceremony hosted esteemed guests, including the top leadership of CBD Punjab, Carbonwise, and Deliver Tree, alongside government dignitaries such as CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, COO CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, Additional Secretary Environment, Additional Secretary Transport, Managing Partner Carbonwise, Deliver Tree, Arif Paraha, and representatives from the Forest department. Among those in attendance were also the Executive Director, Directors, and senior officials from CBD Punjab.

The designated site for the forest, spanning 4 kanals within the CBD



Punjab Bab District, is poised to become a beacon of sustainability, set to accommodate nearly 12,000 plants. Already, 800 plants have found root in the rich soil, laying the foundation for a thriving green ecosystem.

The Miyawaki Forest, known for its dense and diverse vegetation, aligns

with CBD Punjab's broader commitment to corporate social responsibility. The initiative not only contributes to carbon offsetting but also fosters biodiversity and strengthens the local ecosystem.

While sharing his views on the occasion CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin,

said "CBD Punjab recognizes the pivotal role businesses play in environmental stewardship. Our Miyawaki Forest is a testament to our dedication to sustainable practices and a greener future. This initiative will also play an important role in combating smog. We believe in the power of collective action for a healthier planet."

Arif Piracha stressed the critical importance of increasing green spaces in Lahore to tackle smog-related issues and enhance the city's air quality. He highlighted the necessity for constructing eco-friendly buildings that are self-sufficient. Additionally, he requested the CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, to allocate additional land, enabling increased efforts in carbon offsetting initiatives.

CBD Punjab's venture into eco-friendly endeavors reflects a growing trend among businesses to integrate sustainability into their core values. The authority's multifaceted approach, encompassing environmental, social, and economic aspects, underscores its holistic commitment to responsible business practices.

Sit-in of Angoor Ada border people for their legitimate demands enters into 12 days.



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: The different tribes of Pak-Afghan border Angoor Adda in South Waziristan Lower entered the twelfth days of protest in favour of their legitimate demands. The organizers of the sit-in have closed the Pak-Afghan Angoor Adda main highway for all traffic.

The sit-in were attended by leaders of political parties, Ullamas, tribal elders and youths besides people of different schools of thought. The organizers said that in this modern era, thousands of families deprived of basic facilities are facing severe difficulties.

The sit-in participants said that they were forced to sit-in due to the lack of attention of the government.

The protesters demanded the government to make schools functional for the promotion of education in Angoor Adda, while all health centers should be activated for the convenience of patients.

Angoor Adda border residences should be allowed to carry food items at the border gate. Electricity transmission, mobile network and DSL facilities should be provided.

A special quota should be allocated for the disabled people affected by terrorism and employment opportunities should be provided for the people of Angoor Adda.

The sit-in organizers said that the need of the hour is to provide employment opportunities for the local residents at the Angoor Adda border. TMA should start operational work in Angoor Adda bazar and NADRA Center should be sanctioned immediately.

Pakistan People's Party South Waziristan Lower General Secretary Imran Mukhlis Wazir addressed the sit-in participants and said that since the twelfth day, the poor people of Angoor Adda area of Birmal Tehsil have been sitting on the road in the darkness of the night.

They are demanding their legitimate rights, yet the government has not taken any practical steps.

He said that the sacrifices of the residents of Angoor Adda border cannot be forgotten. They have made immense sacrifices for the country and the region, they have been forced to sit on the streets for their rights in this cold weather.

International Day against Violence against Women



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: President of Jamaat-e-Islami Women Wing Pakistan Dr. Humira Tariq, President of Women and Family Commission Dr. Rukhsana Jabeen, Vice President of Women Wing Dr. Samiha Raheel Qazi, Vice President of Women Wing Samina Saeed, President of South Punjab Women Wing Tasneem Sarwar, Shamaila while holding a joint press conference at the Multan press club said that the International Day against Violence against Women is celebrated every year on November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about the psychological, physical and emotional violence faced by women worldwide. Every eleven minutes, a woman or girl is killed by a close friend or relative. 19 Physical and verbal abuse has intensified due to many conditions of stress, from epidemics to economic downturns.

Violence limits the participation of women and girls in every sphere of life, deprives them of their basic rights and freedoms, and prevents the equitable economic recovery and sustainable development that our world needs. So the International Day against Violence against Women is being celebrated, the slogan of which is to unite, invest to prevent violence against women and girls, there is no excuse, and on the other hand, pictures of women and children being killed in Palestine. And the weary sighs of the survivors are shaking the global conscience, in this situation all the words of condemnation, regret and condolence, all the ways of expression and all the ways of regret are losing their meaning.

Likewise, Kashmiri women in Occupied Kashmir are victims of the worst violations of human rights by Indian soldiers and police officers. In a special media report, it has been stated that Indian soldiers have martyred 2201 women in Occupied Kashmir since January 1989. So far, at least 700 women have been martyred. Since the beginning of the freedom struggle from India in 1989, women in Kashmir have suffered irreparable losses.

Incident

KARACHI: Search and rescue works are conducted after a fire broke out at a commercial high-rise building at RJ Mall on Rashid Minhas Road in Provincial Capital as at least 10 people killed and several injured in fire.



Photo: Online

Violence against women is against Islam, law and human values

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Leader of social and human rights Activist Maryam Idris says that violence against women is an act against Islam, law and human values. It can be stopped and women can be protected, unfortunately we have laws only on paper and not implemented due to which women are also seeking justice



where they are facing violence and suffering. We all have to play a role to stop the abhorrent acts of violence against women, women should be given opportunities to advance and should be represented in every sector, she expressed these views on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In her messages on the occasion,

social leader Maryam Idris says that women have an important role in the formation of any good society and the development of the country and nation, which cannot be forgotten, to become a dignified and civilized society. The respect and protection of the rights of mother, sister, daughter and wife is the basic condition. Today, women are

playing roles in various fields in the society, which is admirable. And are facing the worst cruelty and violence of Israel. Instead of being silent spectators, international human rights organizations should take notice of the atrocities. I want to give a message to women that instead of being silent, take courage and raise your voice against violence.

Azad Government holds awareness walk on violence against women in Muzaffarabad

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Under auspices of Women Development, Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir, in the context of the global 16 days of Activism for no violence against women campaign, conducted an awareness walk held at the Social Welfare and Women Development Complex Muzaffarabad to highlight the rights related to the prevention of violence against women and the protection of vulnerable women. In the awareness walk, Director Women Development Department Dr. Qudsia Batool, Focal Person World Health Organization Azad Kashmir Dr. Bushra Shams, Deputy Director Women Development Department Ms Nusrat Shaheen, Deputy Director Women Development Department / In-charge Shelter Home Rukhsana Aziz, Principal Girls Vocational Center Muzaffarabad Sana Gilani along with

Representatives of Islamic Relief Canada, students, civil society and women from different walks of life participated.

The women participating in the awareness walk carried banners and placards with slogans against social violence of women. Addressing the participants of the awareness walk, Director of Women's Development Department Dr. Qudsia Batul said that only a society free from violence can make a woman dignified and empowered who can play a positive role in the home and society. Our commitment is to establish a society free from violence on the vulnerable.

He thanked Islamic Relief Canada and World Health Organization for participating in the awareness walk. He said that the religion of Islam emphasizes the rights of women. It is very important for us to be aware of the injunctions related to women in the Qur'an in order to lead the best life.

The elimination of all problems like violence against women and violation of rights in the society is possible only thanks to awareness.

He said that every day is a woman awareness day. The Department of Women's Development is working fully within its resources for women's social empowerment and economic strength. Only a strong woman can play a role in the formation of a strong society at the economic and social level.

She emphasized that the Department of Women's Development is taking all possible steps to protect women from violence and strengthen them at the social level. In this regard, women need to be aware as well as sensitized. He said that women should be economically strong to make themselves a weak unit in the society.

The Director of Women's Development Department said that different types of events are being organized in



the district centers of Women's Development Department in Azad Kashmir to raise awareness about the protection of children and women in the 16 days of World Days. She said that The Department of Women's Development is taking practical measures in collaboration with private and international organizations to prevent violence against women and children.

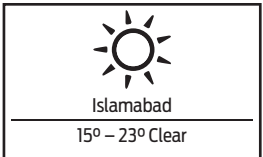
Addressing on this occasion, Focal Person World Health Organization Azad Kashmir Dr. Bushra Shams said that women should understand their potential and change themselves with the changing currents of time, a brave woman can be the reason for the best

society. Violence against women is the cause of psychological problems, women should strengthen themselves economically, move forward and play their role in building a strong and just society.

While speaking on this occasion, Deputy Director Nusrat Shaheen said that we have to stop the incidents of violence and mistreatment of women, women are facing problems due to economic inequalities, but women need modern skills to lead a dignified life. I am happy. He said that the government of Azad Kashmir has established 45 vocational institutes to make women skilled under the auspices

of the Women's Development Department. He said that where women are trained to make them skilled.

He said that violence against women Effective measures are being taken to prevent, violence-free society is the basis of development. Later, Walk Director Women Development Department Dr. Qudsia Batul along with Deputy Director Women Development Department Nusrat Shaheen and Deputy Director Women Development Department / In-charge Shelter Home Rukhsana Aziz visited the shelter home established in Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Development Center Muzaffarabad.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:21 am
Zohr	11:54 am
Asr	3:23 pm
Maghrib	5:01 pm
Isha	6:28 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

DC Faisalabad inaugurated the 10th Faisalabad Literary Festival



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Describing the festival as a good initiative for the promotion of science, literature and arts, the Deputy Commissioner said that this festival will best satisfy the scientific taste of science and literature lovers.

While welcoming the organizers of the Faisalabad Literary Festival and the famous literary intellectuals of the country, the Deputy Commissioner said that Faisalabad is a fertile region in the field of knowledge and literature which has produced reliable names in various genres of literature.

The members of the organizing committee said in the opening remarks that the continuous holding of Faisalabad Literary Festival is a recognition of the fact that Faisalabad is prominent in the literary scenes of big cities and the full participation of the sophisticated audience of this city gives a sense that This festival should be more unique every year.

He said that Lyallpur is the inheritor of literary history which has achieved unprecedented achievements on the literary horizon.

He thanked the Deputy Commissioner for inaugurating the festival.

Imperative to use Modern technology in Gender Inclusivity & Women Empowerment: Mushaal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that it is important to use modern technology for the promotion of Gender Inclusivity and Women Empowerment. Mushaal said this in a meeting with the delegation of renowned IT company, Infocomm Technology Pvt. Ltd. The company works on the use of Cloud based technology for Women Protect IoT Bands, Women Health Monitoring via centralized application to address multi-purpose one window solution. Ms. Sabien Hussein Mullick (Focal Person to SAPM), Sam Dada (Advisor to SAPM on Gender Inclusion), Sam

Anza Akhund Consultant Education Parliamentarians Caucus Senate of Pakistan (EPC), Salma Ashraf (EPC), Ashraf Ghaus (EPC), Saad Arshad Chief Operating Office Infocomm Technology, Minhul Suleman and Mustafa Ali, (a special athlete) were in attendance. Mushaal discussed in length with the delegates topics of mutual interests such as Elimination of Violence Against Women, Diversity & Inclusion, Financial Literacy, introduction of e-Commerce platform to support women led businesses, one-window solution for payment collections and disbursements, healthcare & travelling. SAPM was apprised about the work done on the planned summit under the leadership of the SAPM Mushaal Mullick on Gender Inclusion

and Women Empowerment via Technology enablement. Special Assistant to Prime Minister appreciated the good work of the Infocomm in the fields concerning Women rights and Women empowerment. Special Assistant to Prime Minister also lauded the efforts of Mustafa Ali, a special athlete, who is going on a motor bike journey across borders carrying the message of Soft Image of Pakistan, Women Empowerment across the Globe and Polio awareness campaign. Focal person to SAPM, Sabien Hussein Mullick also appreciated the efforts of the infocomm for women empowerment and for building the positive image of Pakistan across the globe through various initiatives and events.



Protest

RAWALPINDI: Students of different Medical Colleges hold placards during protest rally outside Press Club to show solidarity with the oppressed Muslims of Palestine in City.



Photo: Online

SUN Civil Society Alliance Pakistan Commits to Combat Malnutrition and Hunger

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In its Annual General Meeting, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Civil Society Alliance Pakistan made a collective pledge to eliminate hunger and reduce all forms of malnutrition in Pakistan. The alliance reaffirmed its commitment to the 'Declaration of Commitments on Nutrition' recognised by the Government of Pakistan, UN agencies, and CSOs during the SUN Movement's launch on December 17, 2013. This reaffirmation aligns with the constitutional right to an adequate standard of living, including food, as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Comprising over 250 Civil Society Organizations under the SUN Movement, SUNC-



SA Pakistan aims to enhance Pakistan's nutritional well-being sustainably. By uniting as a robust, coordinated civil society constituency, the alliance advocates for continual progress in nutrition initiatives. During the meeting, Mr. Mubarak Ali Sarwar, Chairperson of SUNCSPA Pakistan, expressed appreciation for the Government of Pakistan's commitment to improving the

nutritional status of the people. He highlighted the recent launch of the 'National multi-sectoral nutrition' program. Dr. Nazeer Ahmed, Chief Nutrition and SUN Government Focal Point Pakistan, Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiative, emphasized the importance of recognizing the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing the malnutrition

challenge in Pakistan. Dr. Shabina Raza, Nutrition International's Country Director, emphasizes Pakistan's urgent need for collective action against malnutrition and hunger. Highlighting the country's staggering malnutrition rates, she urges collaboration among government, partners, civil society, and the private sector to pave the way for a healthier and more resilient Pakistan.

Technological solutions and customer awareness can reduce financial crimes: Sirajuddin

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Technological solutions and customer awareness are two crucial aspects of combating the rising incidents of financial crimes across the country, said Federal Banking Ombudsman Sirajuddin Aziz.

Speaking as a chief guest at the conference "Financial Crimes in the Digital Age" organized by Eastnets and managed by Dellsons Associates here on Saturday, he said the banks should continue to upgrade their systems towards strengthening the data security of their customers, besides bringing reforms to plug the loopholes in the practices and mechanisms that made the data of customers accessible to white collar criminals.

Nadeem Hussain, Chairman of Pakistan Fintech Network, said the banks should have a prime responsibility to build a culture of awareness on data privacy within the system and then among customers on a priority basis with investment in technology and education.

Hazem Mulhim, Founder and CEO Eastnets said the fourth industrial revolution is emerging in the world, with Artificial Intelligence is transforming every industry including the financial sector.

The financial institutions need Rs. 400 billion worldwide to revamp its system through the acquisition of cyber security technology and capacity building of the workforce. Organized financial crimes are increasing worldwide constituting 2% of the global GDP.

The banking regulator imposed huge penalties on financial institutions for failure to compliance with regulations to prevent the loss of money at the hands of criminals, but regulatory measures are not enough to stop the menace.

Mobilink Bank secures Best Bank for Inclusion Award at PBA 2023

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank has won the prestigious title of Best Bank for Inclusion at the Pakistan Banking Awards (PBA) 2023, held at Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi, on Friday, November 24. The accolade highlights the Bank's outstanding contributions in promoting inclusive financial practices, championing accessibility to banking services and demonstrating a commitment to serving a diverse clientele. Committed to fostering financial inclusion, supporting SMEs and leveraging digital advancements to cater to the evolving banking needs of underbanked communities, this award is a testament to the Bank's dedication to ensuring greater financial inclusivity and empowerment, particularly for women.

Commenting on the achievement, Ghazanfar Azzam, President and CEO Mobilink Bank, said, "The Best Bank for Inclusion Award highlights Mobilink Bank's unwavering commitment to excellence. Dedicated to innovative solutions, we at Mobilink Bank challenge industry norms, delivering premium digital and financial services.

Also sharing his thoughts, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mobilink Bank, said, "Securing PBA's Best Bank for Inclusion Award highlights Mobilink Bank's success in digital banking, women empowerment and inclusivity. Our resilient and forward-thinking strategy enables us not only to meet but surpass the evolving financial needs of our valued customers.

Sindh Agriculture University Board meets and takes decisions on academic, financial matters

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The 115th Syndicate meeting of Sindh Agriculture University was held in the committee room of the university, on Saturday, which was presided over by Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Marri, the 13-point agenda were considered in the meeting, and various decisions were taken. In the meeting, the minutes of the 114th meeting of the Syndicate were confirmed, and the action report of the resolution passed in the same meeting was approved, the Post Graduate Admission Policy for the academic year 2023-24, and the Admission Policy of the Undergraduate Degree Program for the academic year 2023-24 were approved, the House approved the recommendations of the 67th meeting of the Finance Planning Committee. Various decisions were also taken on the budget and financial matters of Sindh Agriculture University and Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Agricultural College, Dokri, and the appointment of the chairman of the departments, and two vacant posts of 'Person of Eminence' for the selection board, the house discussed and taken decisions were taken regarding administrative matters and the budget, as well as a committee was also formed regarding the financial affairs of the university. On this occasion, the nominated member of the Higher Education Commission Islamabad Prof. (Emeritus) Dr. A. Q. Mughal, Provincial Secretary of Universities and Boards Noor Ahmed Samo, a nominee of the College Education Department of Sindh Government, Ahsanullah Laghari, a nominated member of Sindh Higher Education Commission Intiaz Qazi, Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Jan Muhammad Marri, Member (Women) Ms. Sadiqa Salahuddin, Member Dr. Sarfraz Solangi, Members from Sindh Agriculture University Dr. Ajjaz Ali Khooharo, Dr. Syed Ghiyasuddin Shah Rashidi, Dr. Inayatullah Rajpar, Dr. Bachal Bhutto, Dr. Shabana Sartaj Tunio, Dr. Fahad Nazir Khoso and Registrar Ghulam Mohiyuddin Qureshi participated.

LCCI awards best Performance Certificates to 150 standing committees

Bureau Report

LAHORE: President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Kashif Anwar Saturday awarded Best Performance Certificates to the Conveners of 150 Standing Committees who played proactive and vibrant role for the cause of business and economic activities.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar highlighted the pivotal role played by the Standing Committees of the LCCI, serving as the intellectual hub through their invaluable economic feedback derived from extensive brainstorming sessions.



Addressing a Certification distribution ceremony among Conveners of LCCI Standing Committees on Saturday, LCCI President Kashif Anwar emphasized the committees' function as a collective brain trust. These committees, through rigorous deliberations, contribute crucial economic insights that

shape the chamber's stance on pertinent issues. The ceremony acknowledged the dedication and expertise of the Conveners and underscored their role in fostering informed decision-making within the LCCI. "Soon after formation, the Standing Committees were given the task of preparing sector specific research/market

reports and compilation of data, LCCI President said and added that LCCI Standing Committees have been given to the brainy and experienced businessmen who have the abilities to draw a good revival plan for the national economy. The LCCI President said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is

committed to play an instrumental and supportive role to eradicate the challenges being faced by the trade, industry and economy which cannot be tackled by the government alone.

Kashif Anwar said that the export sector, foreign exchange reserves, high cost of doing business, tax-to-GDP ratio, growth of manufacturing sector and public sector entities (PSEs) need immediate attention.

He said that there was no second opinion about it, that if policies were formulated with the consultation of stakeholders, they are bound to yield results.

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 (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

Trial and retribution of PTI chairman - I

The PTI chairman faced relentless trials and retribution, enduring a staggering number of approximately 200 cases and imprisonment since August 2023. Isolated from the world, denied adequate treatment befitting a former prime minister, and continuously shifted between prisons, his plight seemed unending. The party he painstakingly built crumbled like straw in a tempest, with close associates forcibly distanced from him. His philanthropic endeavors, including the Shaukat Khan Cancer Hospitals, which he passionately initiated and nurtured to deliver invaluable services, were turned against him. Allegations of corruption and misappropriation of donations struck at the core of his efforts, tarnishing his reputation. Even projects like the Al-Qadir Trust, established solely for noble purposes, teaching Islamic values and nurturing future leaders regardless of background, were used to intensify the scrutiny against him. Accusations, like the Cypher received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were manipulated to threaten him, despite lacking lawful substance or contradicting national interests, serving as tools to suffocate his standing.

The chain of trials and retribution for the PTI chairman began long ago with the heart-wrenching separation from his beloved wife, the daughter of one of the wealthiest individuals globally. Their parting wasn't due to a loss of affection but stemmed from the relentless pursuit

by fanatics targeting Jemima. Before their marriage, Jemima, who converted to Islam and took the name Haiqa, faced persecution due to her Jewish background. Despite her unwavering support for her husband, the looming threat to her life led her to urge Imran Khan to migrate to England, offering a life of luxury unbound by financial worries, given her substantial wealth amounting to 22 million pounds. At one point, she was recognized as the 20th richest young woman globally in 2002.

Resolute and steadfast in his convictions, he declined the offer to migrate, driven by his profound love for the country and an unwavering aspiration to lift his fellow citizens from dire poverty. His refusal stemmed from a deep-seated desire to grant the unfortunate people of this country a life of dignity, honor, and prosperity. His vision was to mold Pakistan into a modern-day embodiment of the Riasat Madina, inspired by the principles established centuries ago by our revered Prophet (Peace be Upon Him). This envisioned state would be founded on principles of unity, justice, and the rule of law, fostering a culture of meritocracy, fortified by robust moral and ethical values. It would embrace all humanity in progress and prosperity while nurturing a relentless pursuit of knowledge.

Similar to his first wife, it now was the turn of his third wife to face a similar fate. Initially lauded as the epitome of piety by her former husband extolling Imran Khan as a gentleman, the same narrative took a drastic turn. In orchestrated interviews, her ex-husband resorted to hurling accusations against her and Imran Khan across all media channels, shattering norms of decency and ethical values. She stands accused of various allegations, including bribes on behalf of Toosha Khana, accepting bribes on behalf of Imran Khan, and implication in the Al-Qadir Trust case as a trustee. Facing relentless interrogation by entities like the NAB, Special Courts, or regular courts, it appears to be an unending punishment simply for being the wife of the PTI Chairman.

Even in the world of politics, it's not right to drag a politician's family into accusations. It's like barging into someone's private life, which isn't fair or respectful. Instead of talking about important matters like policies and how to run the country, bringing in personal matters just distracts everyone. It's not fair to blame a politician's family for their actions either. Doing that doesn't help real political talks; it just makes things messy. Politics should be about ideas and actions, not gossip or personal matters,

to keep things fair and respectful. That's how we should keep political discussions honest and worthwhile but these noble principles are long forgotten by us as a nation.

The PTI Chairman had a choice, like many other politicians, to flee to a foreign country when faced with trials and retribution. However, he chose differently. He stayed firm, expressing that this country is his home, where all his assets, past, present, and future are tied. He vowed not to flee, no matter how tough things got. Consequently, he has been in jail since August 5, 2023, after being arrested at his Lahore residence, sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Despite the Islamabad High Court's order for him to serve his term in Rawalpindi, he was taken first to the notorious Attock Jail and later transferred to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where he has remained since then.

Remarkably, eyewitnesses describe him as an embodiment of composure, exhibiting an unparalleled sense of calmness even in the most challenging jail conditions. Notably, he refrained from voicing any grievances about the harsh treatment he endured behind bars. He remained silent when denied the basic right to speak with his sons in London, and even in the face of the strict prohibition on visits from close relatives, friends, and family members, he chose not to protest. His resilience and quiet strength under such circumstances are nothing short of extraordinary.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

India's expanding covert global operations heightening concern

A leading American newspaper Friday highlighted India's growing covert global operations, including espionage and extraterritorial assassinations, that have set off alarm bells around the world. "For the second time in recent months, the Indian government is facing questions about whether it was involved in an assassination plot on Western soil, as American officials said they had expressed concerns to New Delhi about a thwarted plan to kill a dual U. S.-Canadian citizen," The New York Times reported.

Noting that U. S. officials did not publicly accuse India of trying to orchestrate the killing of the dual citizen, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a lawyer for the Sikhs for Justice (SJ), the report pointed out that the revelation of a foiled plot comes just months after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused the Indian government of involvement in the killing of another Sikh separatist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, on Canadian territory. In the case of Pannun, news outlets, led by The Financial Times, reported on Wednesday that the Biden administration had told the Indian government it had information possibly linking New Delhi to the plot against him. On Thursday, Intercept, an American online news outlet, reported that the Indian government's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, or RAW, has been planning assassination targeting Sikh and Kashmiri activists living in foreign countries. Citing intelligence documents, Intercept said that RAW was reportedly working in conjunction with local criminal and dissident networks to carry out assassinations and other attacks. RAW, according to the documents, is targeting individuals and religious institutions allegedly supporting an insurgency in the disputed Kashmir region, as well as Sikh activists living elsewhere. The Times dispatch said that in response to those reports, the Indian foreign ministry issued a "vaguely worded" statement acknowledging discussion with the United States on the matter. "The U. S. side shared some inputs pertaining to nexus between organized criminals, gun runners, terrorists and others. The inputs are a cause of concern for both countries, and they decided to take necessary follow-up action," the statement said. In its own statement on Wednesday, the White House's National Security Council said: "We are treating this issue with utmost seriousness, and it has been raised by the U. S. government with the Indian government, including at the senior-most levels. Indian counterparts expressed surprise and concern. They stated that activity of this nature was not their policy." When Trudeau, the Canadian leader, made his bombshell allegation in September, it sent already prickly relations between India and Canada to a new low and set off a series of tit-for-tat retaliatory actions, including expulsions of diplomats. "U. S. officials, by contrast, expressed their concern in the Pannun case privately, highlighting the importance the Biden administration places on its growing relations with India," he New York Times said.

Regional Implications of Israel-Hamas War

The Palestine-Israel conflict is almost seven decades old; it all started with the Nakba event and the initiation of an Eurocentric-colonial project in the heart of Middle East, back in 1948. Today, almost seven million Palestinian refugees, victims of colonial settlement by the project-Israel, live across the Middle East in inhumane conditions with less or no citizenry rights. These families, alongside their children were expelled from their home just like Moses was forced to leave the same place. It is quite astonishing that the role of Pharaoh, who use to kill infants, is now been taken up by the project-Israel, which mercilessly targets innocent women, children and elderly to create fear in the hearts of Muslim. In a recent statement, the Prime Minister of project-Israel said that a "cultural change" is needed in Gaza, similar to the change that occurred in Japan and Germany after the World War Two. It is to be mentioned that the warrior class of Japan and Germany was tamed and their prongs were removed through cultural indoctrination of their history, literature and values. This is near impossible with the case of Palestinian Muslims who possess their own unique identity, religion and culture and around two billion other Muslims resonate with them, which neither Japan nor Germany had such civilisational identities or cultural associations.

Coming towards the subject of discussion, this war has regional implications and the Chinese and Pakistanis are the biggest beneficiaries of this conflict. Firstly, during the UNGA session is September, the Israeli prime minister talked about the IMEC (India Middle-East Corridor). This project's aim was to open new trade routes across the Middle East, connecting India with Europe through land and sea routes between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Ships from India were to dock at Dubai and from there goods were to be transported to Saudi Arabia-Jordan and finally Israel through trucks and again from Israel to Europe via shipping routes. This project was being championed by US as a counterweight of the Chinese BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) or commonly known as the CPEC, as US perceives India as a counter player to China in its Indo-Pacific Strategy. However, after the Hamas' attack on Israel, the normalisation of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia were put off the plate due to public pressure from the Muslim world in general and also from within the Saudi Arabia, which did not wanted to look as betrayer of Muslims, especially when its the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. If there is no normalisation between the Israelis and Saudis, the IMEC will remain a distant dream for India: No ties, no trade route; thereby, benefiting the interests of Pakistanis and Chinese in the region. Moreover, there is another benefit for Pakistan

in the context, that if Riyadh does not establishes diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv, pressure on Pakistan to recognise Israel will also remain off the table. Some scholars of International Relations are even of such an opinion that its the Chinese who are the real perpetrators of assisting Hamas to carry out such attacks to serve their regional interests.. Moreover, this war, though fifteen thousand people lost their lives but still it has damaged the interest of Washington and Tel Aviv in the region. Similarly, growing domestic pressure on Joe Biden for his indecisiveness to resolve the conflict will also cost him the election. He was unpopular for his old age before, and now he is further uncherished for his indecisiveness. This conflict has put the last nail in his political coffin. However, having discussed the bright side of the picture, there is still some grey area which needed a just attention. Saudis are in a mood of desperation, as their oil reserves are depleting and they want to diversify their economy, that is why they are investing heavily in other sectors. It is true that they earn a lot through religious tourism; however, that money alone cannot bear the luxury lifestyles of Al-Saud family; therefore, they will be pushing for materialisation of IMEC and establishing ties with Israel to secure much needed financial investments in the fiefs of technology, defence and urban development and tourism. And also to use the Jewish Lobby in US to pressure the Congress to serve financial and strategic objectives in Yemen, Syria and Iraq to counter Iranian influence in the region.

Writer can be reached at Email: malikzohaibtariq786@gmail.com

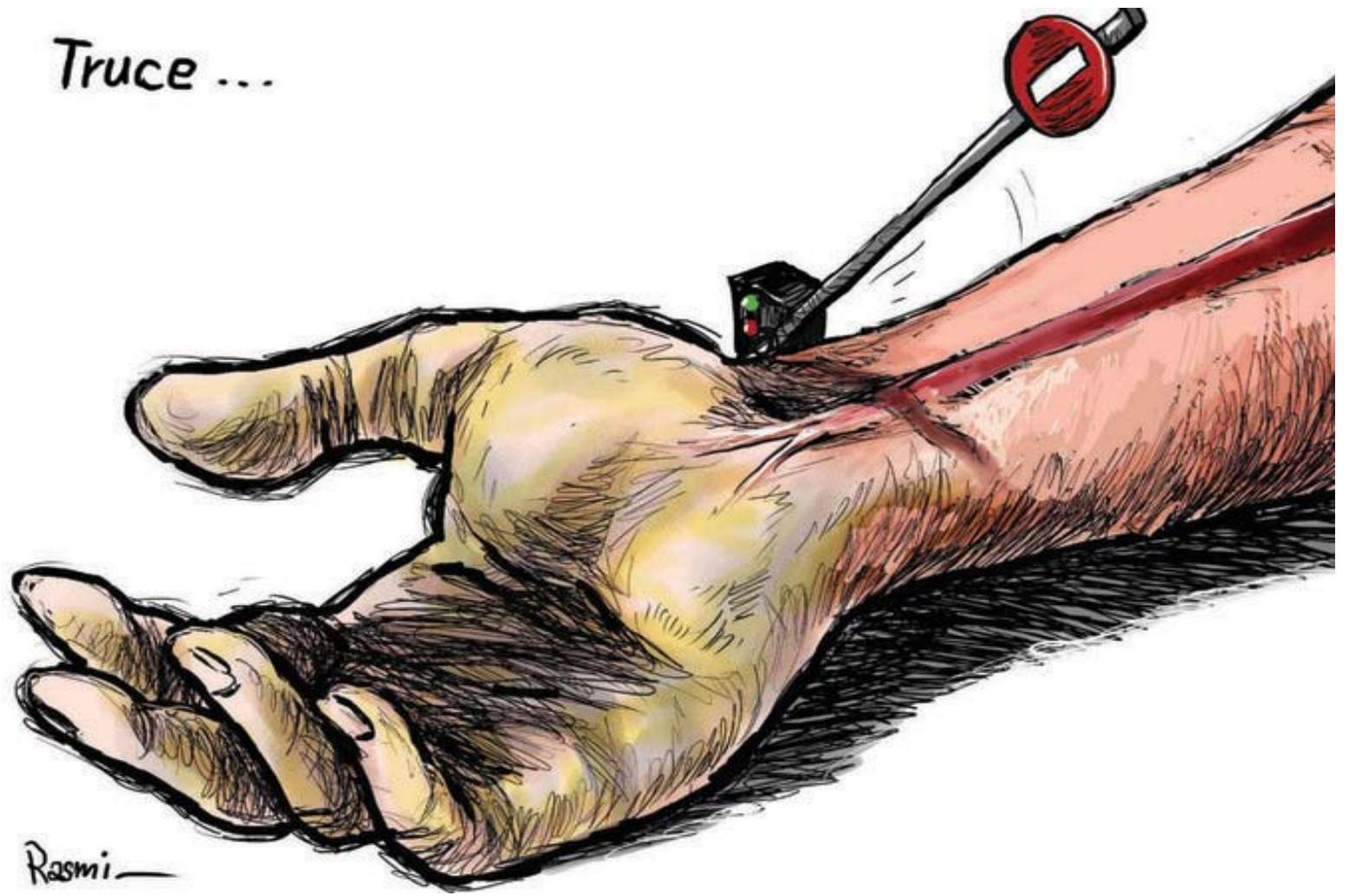


Analysis

Zohaib Tariq

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Truce ...



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

Today's Reader, Tomorrow's Learner

Tabinda Qamar

Reading as the procedure of recalling, thinking and linking abstracts according to the functions of the written words. From the evolution of human beings, the medium of reading has also evolved from clay tables, stones to the digital media. In the present days, the reading material is vastly available in paper form as well as digital. The online and print media in Pakistan have already highlighted the declining and changing reading habit trends such as government reports, newspapers and various websites (Rahman and Amir, 2019) Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (M/o FE&PT), Islamabad has organized 3 days long Foundational Literacy Summit in Pakistan from 25-11-2023 to 27-11-2023 at Pak China Friendship Center, Islamabad. The panelist will discuss the key aspects of the learning crisis in Pakistan. The facts, reasons behind them and areas of improvement to support learning, especially in regards to literacy, and suggest ideas to move towards a roadmap to improve foundational literacy nationwide This will involve inspired efforts across many aspects of learning including better educational learning data, early childhood education, improved teaching, aligning curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and much more. For this we need a whole-of-society Pakistan Learning Movement! Building on the Prime Minister's support for foundational learning at the Transforming Education Summit, the Pakistan Learning Conference 2023 and the formation of the M/o FE&PT Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub, this conference will build momentum towards a Pakistan Learning Movement to improve foundational learning. The rise of digital technology, smart phones, and other electronic devices has led to a shift in how people consume information. With the advent of e-books, audiobooks, and online content, traditional printed books may face competition for readers' attention. Limit-

ed access to libraries, economic factors, cultural factors and technological paradigm shifted the book reading culture to digitalization.

Book reading offers a multitude of benefits, encompassing various aspects of personal development, mental well-being, and intellectual growth. Here are some key advantages of cultivating a habit of reading:

1. Knowledge Acquisition: Reading exposes individuals to a vast range of information, facts, and ideas. It is a primary source of acquiring knowledge on diverse subjects.
2. Mental Stimulation: Engaging with written material stimulates the brain, keeping it active and engaged. This can help prevent cognitive decline as individuals age.
3. Vocabulary Expansion: Regular reading exposes readers to new words and phrases, contributing to the expansion of vocabulary and language skills.
4. Improved Focus and Concentration: Reading requires concentration and focus, helping individuals develop and enhance these cognitive skills over time.
5. Enhanced Critical Thinking: Analyzing plotlines, characters, and themes in books encourages readers to think critically and make connections between different concepts.
6. Stress Reduction: Reading, especially fiction, provides an escape from the stresses of everyday life. Immersing oneself in a book can be a form of relaxation and stress reduction.
7. Empathy Development: Reading fiction, in particular, allows readers to step into the shoes of characters with different perspectives, fostering empathy and understanding.

It is hoped that these three days long National Reading Conference from 25-11-2023 to 27-11-2023 will be a mile stone to promote reading culture, passion of learning and tolerance. This will lead Pakistan towards a better literate Pakistan.

Writer is senior analyst and she can be reached at tabqmar@gmail.com

CSO summit

Vladimir Putin took part in a session of the Collective Security Council

News Desk

MINSK: Vladimir Putin took part in a session of the Collective Security Council of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation in Minsk. Also participated in the summit President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, and Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation Imanali Tasmagambetov.

A plenary meeting of the CSO's Collective Security Council took place following talks in a restricted attendance format.

The following Russian officials attended the meeting: Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office, Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Pankin and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Belarus Boris Gryzlov.



A package of documents was signed following the summit.

The participants discussed key aspects of the interaction between CSO members, including further

improvement of the collective security system, as well as current international and regional problems.

Social Solidarity

Young activists in Gaza have conducted many volunteer campaigns to alleviate the suffering of displaced people in UNRWA schools.



Photo: via Social Media

China holds military drills along violence-hit Myanmar border

AFP

BELJING: China began military exercises along its border with Myanmar on Saturday and urged its citizens to leave the north of that country, which has been beset by fighting since last month.

Clashes have intensified in large areas of Myanmar's northern Shan state, close to the Chinese border, forcing more than 80,000 people to leave their homes, according to the United Nations.

An armed alliance of ethnic minority groups in October launched a major

offensive against the army in regions close to the Chinese border, displacing more than 332,000 people, the United Nations has said.

The groups have seized dozens of military positions and a town that is important for trade with China.

Against this backdrop, the Chinese army has launched "combat training activities" along the border with Myanmar, Beijing's Southern Theatre Command said Saturday in a statement that did not specify the duration of the exercises, or the number of soldiers involved.

The aim of the drills is to "test the ability of troops... to control and close borders and to strike with firepower", the army said, adding that it was "ready to respond to all kinds of emergencies".

Beijing informed Myanmar's ruling junta about the exercises, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said Saturday, adding the military would "cooperate with China to work for peace and border stability".

On Friday, state-owned Myanmar media reported that the military's opponents had used drones to

drop bombs on vehicles in Muse, a border town opposite China's Ruili city.

The attack, which took place on Thursday, destroyed 120 vehicles "carrying household goods, consumer goods, clothing and construction materials", according to the Global New Light of Myanmar. A significant proportion of Myanmar's trade with China transits through this region. The blockage of the trade route has dented the junta's finances, compounding the economic problems the military has faced since the 2021 coup.

Israeli-managed vessel hit by suspected Iran drone: US official

Reuters

A container ship managed by an Israeli-controlled company was hit by a suspected Iranian drone in the Indian Ocean, causing minor damage to the vessel but no injuries, a US defence official said on Saturday.

The Malta-flagged CMA CGM SYMI, recently renamed Mayet, was struck on Friday by an unmanned aerial vehicle, which appeared to be an Iranian Shahed-136 drone, in the northeast portion of the Indian Ocean, the official said, asking not to be named.

Iran has supplied Shahed-136 "kamikaze" drones to Russia for use in Ukraine. They carry a small warhead that explodes on impact.

The incident comes amid heightened maritime security tensions due to the Israel-Hamas war and follows the seizure of an Israeli-linked cargo ship by Yemen's Houthi, an ally of Iran, in the southern Red Sea earlier this week. Israel called the vessel's seizure an "Iranian act of terrorism". Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping (EPS), which had rented Mayet, said it was aware a container ship was targeted in a possible security incident on Friday.

"The vessel in question is currently sailing as planned. All crew are safe and well," EPS said in a statement sent to Reuters.

EPS is controlled by Israeli billionaire Idan Ofer and its ships have previously come under similar attacks.

There was no immediate comment from Iranian and Israeli officials.

Mayet switched off its transponder on Tuesday after leaving Dubai's Jebel Ali port, LSEG data showed. It was unclear if it made a scheduled stop in Oman's Sohar port on Wednesday.

The United States has blamed Iran for unclaimed attacks on several vessels in the region in the past few years. Tehran has denied involvement.

Kazakhstan to Introduce Special Economic Zones in Six Airports

News Desk

ASTANA: The Kazakh Ministry of Transport announced plans to introduce special economic zones (SEZs) on the airport premises in Astana, Almaty, Shymkent, Aktau, Aktobe, and Karagandy, reported the ministry's press service on Nov. 23.

Kazakh Transport Minister Marat Karabayev met with representatives from akimats (local administrations) and aviation enterprises to address the SEZs establishment and to identify other regional airports needing to create a special economic regime.

The decision is driven by the readiness to stimulate airport cargo flows and improve the country's national transport infrastructure. "The creation of SEZs in airports is a common international practice, which has proved itself well in the air harbors of Dubai, Singapore, Shannon, and Riyadh," reads the ministry's statement.

Kazakhstan has 14 SEZs with different industry orientations in 12 regions nationwide, particularly in the Khorgos-Eastern Gate logistics hub, Turkistan, a center of international tourism and pilgrimage, and the Aktau Seaport, which has incorporated the ports of Aktau and Kuryk this summer.

SCO Year of Tourism 2023 Forum Kicks Off in China



News Desk

URUMQI: The Year of Tourism 2023 forum kicked off on Nov. 23 in Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China, reported the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) press service.

The program, which will last until Nov. 26, will address the potential of tourism in the SCO space, the travel industry's sustainable development, and poverty reduction.

It is the first forum held by the SCO Secretariat to increase the appeal of cities and regions in the SCO space as tourism destinations.

The major event is the plenary session on the tourism potential of the SCO countries. The program also includes panel discussions, meetings between travel agencies and business circles, and visits to Xinjiang tourist attractions.

It will gather government officials, representatives of international organizations, observers, and dialogue partners.

SCO member states declared 2023 the SCO Year of Tourism during the 22nd Summit of the Council of Heads of SCO member states held in the Uzbek city of Samarkand.

Kazakhstan chairs SCO from July 2023 to July 2024, and Almaty was announced as the SCO cultural and tourism capital for this period.

Third King Salman Royal Reserve Festival begins

Spokesman Report

JEDDAH:

The third King Salman bin Abdulaziz Royal Reserve (KSRNR) Festival started on Saturday. The five-day event has



been organized by the wildlife reserve in collaboration with the Al-Jouf Municipality at the Prince Abdullah Urban Center in Sakaka.

The festival offers a diverse range of activities, including handicrafts, a traditional market, children's activities, and afforestation and agriculture events, as well as restaurants and cafes.

The festival, according to the organizers is "aligned with the primary goals of KSRNR regarding community welfare and national economic development" and "seeks to familiarize tourists and visitors with the reserve's tourist and entertainment sites."

It also aims to boost local community involvement in the reserve's activities, fostering community well-being, and making a positive contribution to national economic development.

The festival is free to visitors and is open from 4:00 p.m. to midnight. KSRNR is the largest wildlife reserve in the Middle East, covering an area of over 130,000 square kilometers, and is home to a diverse range of wildlife including 350 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians.

It works to protect and encourage wildlife by conserving biodiversity and reintroducing endangered species back into their natural habitats.

Extending across four regions, Al-Jouf, Hail, Tabuk, and the Northern Borders, the reserve also contains some UNESCO-registered archaeological sites.

Strengthening regional cooperation is the key to Central Asia's economic prosperity

Spokesman Report

BAKU: On November 23-24, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited Azerbaijan on a working visit and take part in a meeting of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which was held in Baku.

The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established on 26 March 1998 by the Tashkent Declaration signed by the participating countries—Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The main objective of SPECA is to promote the development of economic interconnections in the

region, integrate member countries into the world economy and provide a platform for cross-border co-operation to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The highest decision-making body of SPECA is the Governing Council, composed of the national focal points at the ministerial or vice-ministerial level, and the Executive Secretaries of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The Steering Board is chaired by one of the SPECA participating countries. The chair country is elected annually on a rotating basis, usually for a one-year term. Decisions are taken by consensus. Azerbaijan currently holds the

chairmanship of SPECA.

The SPECA Economic Forum is organized annually and focuses on selected strategic issues of economic development and cooperation in the region that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The Forum serves as a platform for high-level policy dialogue among all stakeholders and produces concrete recommendations for the SPECA Governing Council.

The 16th meeting of the Steering Council was held in Tashkent from 17-19 November 2021 in a hybrid format, resulting in more than a dozen decisions covering a wide range of SPECA issues.

The SPECA Economic Forum on the theme "Sustainable transport and trade for a «green» and inclusive post-pandemic econ-

omy" was also held during this period.

The Economic Forum resulted in the adoption of the Tashkent Statement on Strengthening Sustainable Transport, Trade and Connectivity for a Greener, Circular and Inclusive Post-Pandemic Economy. Recommendations were made to enhance the economic connectivity of the SPECA subregion, create conditions for its emergence as the center of a sustainable transport system, further facilitate intra regional trade, and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

The 27th meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Transport and Logistics Connectivity Development was held in Tashkent on 26-27 October 2022. The participants discussed



the issue of accession of SPECA member countries to international conventions and agreements in the field of foreign trade, transport and transit. As a result of the meeting an agreement was reached on the development of existing and new transport corridors in the region of Central Asia and South Caucasus, as well as on the establishment of the Regional Centre for Transport and Communications Development in Tashkent.

At present, the Programme countries continue to work on the establishment of SPECA Secretariat, as well as on the establishment of SPECA Fund on the basis of the UN Multi-partner Trust Funds.

It should be noted that during the SPECA Ministerial Meeting in April 2023 in Geneva, a Joint Statement was adopted in which an agreement was reached on the establishment of the Trust Fund.

The strong ties between the countries of the region, the proximity of traditions, customs and cultural values of the people of the participating countries in symbiosis with the active foreign economic policy of Uzbekistan in recent years has brought significant results in the development of trade, economic and investment cooperation.

In recent years, trade turnover between Uzbekistan and SPECA member countries has doubled, reaching \$9.2 billion.

The number of enterprises in Uzbekistan established jointly with companies operating in the region has increased fivefold to 2212 units since 2017.

Taking into account the trade and economic potential, significant natural and human resources and favorable geographical location of the region's countries, priority areas for realizing this potential have been identified. These include the creation of favorable conditions for strengthening and increasing mutual trade through the use of competitive advantages, elimination of existing trade barriers, simplification of technical regulations, digitalisation of customs and border procedures.

UNIDO Drives Economic Transformation in Sindh with PAIDAR Grant Fund



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a dedicated effort to combat poverty and advance inclusive development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) convened a pre-bid conference under the Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development across Rural Sindh (PAIDAR) programme, which is funded by the European Union (EU).

The event, held in Karachi, served as a pivotal platform, offering crucial insights and guidelines to potential applicants interested in the grant opportunities presented by the PAIDAR programme.

Mr. Badarul Islam, National Programme Coordinator for PAIDAR, set the tone for the conference with a warm welcome, underlining the collaborative effort needed for sustainable development. He shed light on the significance of the PAIDAR Grant Fund in supporting poverty graduation and communal infrastructure development.

Ms Natalie Maabdi, Contracts Officer at UNIDO, provided a comprehensive walkthrough of the step-by-step process for submitting grant applications. A dynamic Q&A session followed, allowing participants to seek clarification and deepen their understanding. Mr NimaBahramalian, Executive Officer PAIDAR, shared valuable insights, setting the stage for the PAIDAR programme's commitment to sustainable poverty graduation and inclusive development.

Mr Farooque Siddiqui, the Director General for the Directorate of Urban Planning, Policy and Strategic Planning (URP&SP) and the Planning and Development Department at the Government of Sindh also graced the conference with his presence. While addressing the participants, he said, "The Sindh Government is focused on tackling poverty as a top priority and the EU-funded PAIDAR programme implemented by UNIDO addresses a key gap in economic development through grants to empower MSMEs (especially targeting youth and women-led enterprises). The ongoing collaboration between EU, the Government of Sindh and UNIDO under the PAIDAR programme is expected to positively impact poverty reduction efforts in the province."

Govt increases LNG prices

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Friday notified increase in the prices of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

According to a notification, OGRA increased the prices of imported re-gasified liquefied natural gas (LNG) for both gas companies, Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) for the rest of October.

For SNGPL, the price of liquified gas has been increased by \$0.15 per mmbtu while for SSGC consumers the rate has been hiked by \$0.16 per mmbtu.

According to the notification, the new LNG price for SNGPL has been set at \$13.49 per unit while the prices for SSGC have been set at \$14.03 per MMBTU.

Last month, Pakistan inked a framework agreement with Azerbaijan for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) procurement on flexible terms.

The agreement signed between Pakistan LNG Limited and Azeri Company SOCAR in Lahore was witnessed by the then-Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Shehbaz Sharif said the tenure of this agreement is one year which is extendable to one more year.

Petroleum prices to be revised weekly?

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has decided to revise the prices of petroleum products weekly, switching from its fortnightly pricing mechanism.

The government has sought recommendations from stakeholders and Petroleum Dealers Association regarding its decision to switch the revising of petroleum products pricing from fortnightly to weekly.

In a letter, the government has asked the stakeholders to submit "meaningful views/comments, including pros and cons, of switching from fortnightly to weekly pricing, if any, within five working days".

Shahid Butt says economic conditions directly affect people, small business

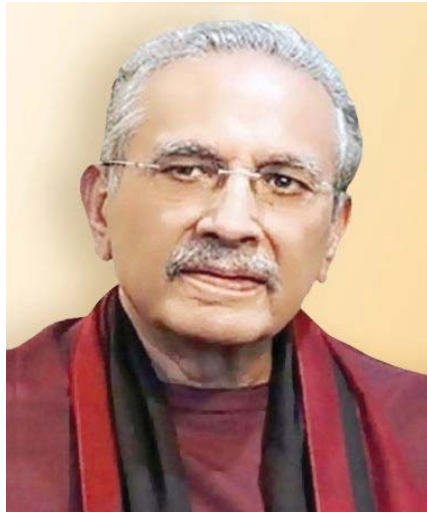
Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Saturday that the prevailing economic conditions solely affect individuals and small business owners. Still, the circumstances are highly favourable to powerful companies.

Under the guise of the IMF program, the entire burden has been placed on the people, while no responsibility has been placed on the rich, which is unjustified, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the IMF is content with increased tax collection. However, it is not the outcome of efforts of any department but the result of unsustainable inflation.

He said that the economy is currently shrinking; the people are not getting their due share



while many sectors are getting their rights, including those who are getting more than they deserve, which needs to be balanced.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that in July, August and September, the corporate sector earned 417 billion rupees, breaking the previous record of earnings, in which the profit of banks was 149 billion rupees.

Apart from this, almost all the listed companies earned huge profits. In contrast, the gains made by the cement fertilizer and automobile industry in these three months were unprecedented in the last two years.

The business leader informed that these companies distributed profits of 97 billion rupees to their shareholders, in which banks gave away 51 billion rupees to shareholders, which was thirteen per cent higher than the same quarter last year.

He noted that a twenty-four per cent increase

in tax collection was recorded, forcing IMF to express satisfaction. Still, all the credit for increased tax revenue goes to the incredible inflation, which has made life very difficult for the majority.

Presently export sector is underperforming, imports are restricted, and the health and education sectors are frustrating the masses, but the authorities have yet to pay attention to it.

A seemingly tiny but significant surplus of 0.4 per cent of GDP has been recorded in the primary balance. In terms of fiscal performance, the government might have exceeded the quarterly targets, but at what cost, he questioned.

He said that the policy of improving the economy by breaking the backs of low-income people would never work, as this recipe has been tried many times with no results.

Meeting

RIYADH, KSA: SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik meets with CEO Dallah Healthcare and VP (HR) of Dr. Sulaiman Al-Habib hospitals, Mr. Badr Al Rowaili.



BMP to win apex trade body's polls for fourth consecutive time: FPCCI Presidential Candidate

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's (FPCCI) presidential candidate Muhammad Ali Sheikh has expressed the hope that the BMP would win apex trade body's elections for the fourth consecutive time with a big margin on the basis of its excellent performance amidst worst economic crisis in the country.

FPCCI Presidential candidate by the BMP said that the Businessmen Panel is the representative group of the business community of the whole country and we will participate in the next elections to the best of our ability and ensure the success of our group.

He said that during past four years not only all departments of the federal government recognized the FPCCI, but the Prime Minister also met the president FPCCI many times to discuss issues of the business community.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that the many strong groups of several chambers have joined the BMP, saying that the group has already started the election campaign. He said that the Businessmen Panel team regularly pursued the government including the Prime Minister and got many critical issues resolved, which include expediting processing of tax refunds, he claimed.



He expressed his profound confidence that the environment in the business community across Pakistan is such that his group would clean sweep the upcoming elections; as they have earned the reputation of the true representatives of trade, industry and services across all sectors.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that Islamabad and Rawalpindi have been key players in the political, cultural and social life of the country and now the Islamabad Chapter would play an active role within the BMP.

He said that during the past tenure, the members of the rival group had ruined the FPCCI, while the BMP has not only improved its finances but also contributed millions to the exchequer of the federation during the last four years.

FPCCI Presidential candidate resolved to make the best use of this supreme trade forum for the good of the country by promoting trade and industry through getting solved all their genuine issues to ensure a level playing field and make Pakistan's private sector cost competitive.

7th Pakistan Industrial Expo inaugurated by Punjab Minister

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Transport and Livestock Ibrahim Hassan Murad has said that the present caretaker setup is taking extra-ordinary steps to attract foreign investment which is critical to face the challenges being faced by the country.

He said contracts were being signed with different countries especially with China to promote bilateral trade and investment. He said Pakistani nation respect the great project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which will lead to investment of over US\$ 100 billion in Pakistan.

Ibrahim Hassan Murad was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of 7th Pakistan Industrial Expo being held at the Lahore Expo Centre. Around 100 Chinese companies and over 150 Pakistani companies were taking part in this exhibition being arranged by the Everest International Expo.

Chinese Deputy Consul General Lahore, Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha Dr. Qaiser Abbas, Everest Expo International's Yousaf Fa, Steve Zho, Zishan Hashmi and Chairman Daroghawala Industries Owners Association Ch. Mansha were also present on this occasion.

The Punjab Transport Minister Ibrahim Murad who also enjoys the portfolio of Mines and Minerals said that Pakistan was an important country of the South Asia



offering vast opportunities of investment with all the facilities needed. He said that China was an old friend of Pakistan and both enjoyed cordial relations all the time.

The Minister also termed the exhibition as a big success both for the industrial and educational sectors bringing together businessmen of both the countries.

Mr. Wang of the Everest Expo International while speaking on this occasion said that the China regard Pakistan as the most important country of South Asia and investing heavily in up-gradation of infrastructure and other facilities.

He expressed the hope that this investment would further grow with the passage of time.

Later the Minister visited different stalls setup by the Chinese and Pakistani companies also held dialogues with the representatives of different companies on this occasion. Different projects and opportunities of export and import were also discussed.

The exhibition will continue on Sunday and Monday showcasing different CNC machines, hardware machines, laser cutting machines, agricultural machines etc.

ICCI for harnessing Pak-Thailand untapped trade potential

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President visited Thailand and held meetings with the office bearers of Thai Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Pakistan Business Council to explore the business opportunities between the two countries.

The delegation was representing various sectors including pharmaceuticals, textiles, construction, edible oil, marble, light engineering, hospitality, retail sector, importers and exporters.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan and Thailand have immense potential for bilateral trade, which should be exploited to achieve beneficial results for both economies.

He said that the current trade volume between the two countries is relatively low, however, there are numerous opportunities for growth and expansion that remain untapped.

He said that both countries can complement each other in many areas as Thailand is a significant exporter of electronics, automobiles, and machinery while Pakistan is a huge

market of over 240 million consumers with abundant natural resources like cotton, rice, and textiles.

The Office Bearers of Thai Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Pakistan Business Council welcomed the ICCI delegation and assured their full cooperation to promote business linkages between the private sectors of Thailand and Pakistan to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation between the two countries.

They said that Thailand and Pakistan can benefit from increased trade and investment, therefore, it is important for both countries to work together to encourage frequent exchange of trade delegations in



Photo shows President and CEO Mobilink Bank, Ghazanfar Azzam (center) receiving the Best Bank for Inclusion Award from Jameel Ahmad, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)



order to identify new areas of improving business and investment relations.

Ameer Hamza, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Shahbaz Majeed Sheikh, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Faizan Shehzad, Akhtar Hussain, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry and Malik Mohsin Khalid are in the ICCI delegation.

PFF NC Chairman Haroon Malik signs an MoU with the President of the Saudi Arabia Football Federation, Yasser Al Misehal

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Haroon Malik, Chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalisation Committee (NC), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Yasser Al Misehal, President of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF).

The significant occasion witnessed the presence of SAFF's General Secretary, Ibrahim Alkassim and NC member Saud Hashimi. This MoU marks a historic milestone in Pakistani football, signifying the first-ever collaboration of its kind. The agreement comes to fruition after six months of dedicated efforts of NC led by Chairman Haroon Malik.

The MoU aims to establish a collaborative framework between the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) and the Saudi



Arabia Football Federation (SAFF). The primary object is to foster strong ties for the mutual benefit, promotion, growth and success of football in both federa-

tions. Both the federations plan to present a comprehensive calendar for 2024, focusing on the Women's National Team and

Men's Youth National Teams. The goal is to explore opportunities for playing friendlies in either Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, enhancing international exposure and competitive experience. They commit to coordinating virtual calls between their respective sporting departments. The exchange will cover various areas like Marketing, Referees, VAR, Women's Football, Youth Football, Sports Science and Football-related technologies.

Sharing his views, NC Chairman Haroon Malik said: "I want to thank the Saudi Federation for the MoU and their wholehearted support in improving football in Pakistan. This marks a significant milestone as Saudi Arabia is now making its first-ever engagement in Pakistan football. It is indeed to reshape the future of football in our country."

Marathon

ISLAMABAD: Winners receiving cheque during prize distribution ceremony for Marathon Race organized by NAB Rawalpindi to commemorate Anti-Corruption Week.



Imad Wasim should take back his retirement: Rashid Latif

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Pakistan cricketer Rashid Latif shared his views on compatriot Imad Wasim's retirement from international cricket.

The former all-rounder played 121 matches in which he scored 472 runs and took 109 wickets for Pakistan. He was part of the victorious ICC Champions Trophy 2017 squad.

Rashid Latif has commented on Imad Wasim's retirement. He said the latter should make his return to international cricket.

The former wicketkeeper said the all-rounder is Pakistan's best spin bowler and a handy batter. He said the country would suffer in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in the United States and the West Indies if its best player is not part of the team.

Rashid Latif said Pakistan Cricket Team's Director Mohammad Hafeez should convince Imad Wasim to play for Pakistan again.

Shan Masood hits ton on Day one of scenario-based practice match

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's newly-appointed Test captain Shan Masood scored a brisk century on the first day of the scenario-based practice match amid the team's training camp for the upcoming Test tour of Australia.

Pakistan's batting prodigy Saim Ayub depicted his sublime form and laid a solid foundation alongside Shan despite the early dismissal of Abdullah Shafique.

Saim and Shan batted with utmost domination but the former failed to convert his brilliant knock into a big one and walked back after scoring 35.

Shan Masood was then joined by Babar Azam and the pair found themselves among runs. The left-handed batter went on to score a century before opting to retire on 101.

Babar, on the other hand, scored a well-crafted 71 before

also opting to retire to pave the way for the other batters to seize the opportunity to boost their preparations.

The middle-order batters responded well by adding valuable runs in the middle with Saud Shakeel scoring an unbeaten while the experienced wicketkeeper batter Sarfaraz Ahmed remained not out on 19.

Pakistan batters finished the day at 298/2 in just 63 overs at a decent run rate of 4.7.

The two wickets to fall on the day belonged to Khurram Shahzad and Aamer Jamal.

For the unversed, this was the third day of Pakistan's training camp for the upcoming three-match away series against Australia.

The week-long camp will run until November 28 while the team will take off for Australia on November 30th.

Opening batter Imam-ul-Haq and all-rounder Faheem



Ashraf will miss the entirety of the training camp due to their wedding festivities.

They are expected to join the squad in Lahore just before the team's departure to Australia.

Pakistan's quest for their first Test series victory over Australia in their backyard will

commence on Dember 14.

It will be a tough challenge for left-handed opener Shan Masood, who became the Test captain after Babar Azam relinquished the role from all formats after his side's dismal show in the recently concluded ICC World Cup 2023.

The Green Shirts will get an opportunity to get used to the testing Australian conditions as they will take on the Prime Minister's XI in the four-day red-ball fixture at Manuka Oval from 6-9 December 2023.

Pakistan squad

Shan Masood (c), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafiq, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Nauman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Sarfaraz Ahmed

Schedule of Pakistan's Test tour of Australia

First Test: December 14-18, Perth Stadium

Second Test: December 26-30, Melbourne Cricket Ground

Third Test: January 3-7, Sydney Cricket Ground

Provincial level badminton tournament

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The provincial level badminton tournament has come to an end in Sukkur. In the last day's competition, Karachi won first, Hyderabad second and Larkana team won third position. The finals of the Sindh Provisional League Badminton Tournament held from November 21 to November 25 for girls and boys under the Iqra University and IBA Universities Prime Minister Youth Program were held yesterday. Commissioner Sukkur Sami Uddin Siddique participated as a special guest in the closing ceremony of the tournament. In the finals, the teams of Karachi girls and boys won the first position, while the team of Hyderabad girls got the second position, the girls team of Larkana won the third position, and the team of Hyderabad got the third position in the boys competitions. In this regard, the coach of Hyderabad girls team Nirmala Nihal Sharma said that she is happy about the successful tournament in Sukkur and the success of the girls. The girls have a lot of talent. It has become prominent throughout Sindh.

Mohammad Abbas speaks up about Australia-tour snub

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan will be touring Australia for the five-day matches in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney under the leadership of the top-order batter Shan Masood.

Mohammad Abbas - who has impressed cricket fans, experts and former cricketers with his County cricket performances in England - was not picked in the 18-member squad.

The 33-year-old talked about his snub from the side in the ARY News sports show 'Bouncer'. The pacer expressed his disappointment in not being given a chance to make the country proud despite putting in the effort.

Mohammad Abbas recalled receiving phone calls from the management. He said the first call he received was when former batter Mohammad Waseem was the chief selector. He claimed that the former chief of the selection committee had told him that his performances were being looked at despite him not being in the national team.

Mohammad Abbas said Mohammad Waseem did not tell him the reason for his exclusion from the side. He added that he was informed about getting was stripped of his central contract in the following interaction.

The cricketer said the management told him not to worry and continue putting in hard work.

Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan's hilarious video goes viral



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's star cricketers Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan were caught on camera sharing a hilarious moment during a practice match in Rawalpindi ahead of the three-match Test series against hosts Australia.

Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan are part of the 18-member squad that plays the bilateral series in the Land Down Under. The batter and the wicketkeeper are undergoing a fitness training camp before the tournament gets underway on December 14 at Perth's Optus Stadium.

The players are taking part in a scenario-based two-day practice match.

According to the Pakistan Cricket Board, Pakistan batters scored 298-2 in 63 overs of the opening day.

Pakistan's Test captain Shan Masood was the standout performer with the bat as he scored 101 retired. Babar Azam scored 71 runs whereas Saim Ayub struck 35.

Saud Shakeel and Sarfaraz Ahmed were unbeaten at 44 and 19 respectively at stumps.

Pacers Khurram Shahzad and Aamir Jamal bagged a wicket each.

During the fixture, a hilarious moment involving the star duo left their fellow teammates and cricket fans in splits.

Mohammad Rizwan hit the ball at the stumps when Babar Azam was outside the crease. He appealed to the umpire for a dismissal.

Babar Azam playfully started running after Mohammad Rizwan and threatening to hit him with a bat.

It is not the first time that Babar Azam has made news for a funny reason during the training camp. Earlier, a hilarious video of him calling Saud Shakeel "Chota Don" had broken social media.

Sialkot clinch super-over win over Multan in National T20 Cup

A Sports

Shoab Malik stole the show with his bowling exploits and led Sialkot to register a super-over victory over Multan on the opening day of the National T20 Cup 2023/24.

In the Group D clash of the ongoing 18-team tournament, Sialkot and Multan went hard at each other and could not be separated after two innings as both drew level on 148 each.

Sialkot's captain Malik stood up for his side and bowled the super over which saw him take both wickets for just three runs after which Sialkot got over the line in four deliveries.

Multan had notable performers in Zeeshan Ashraf (61, 45b, 4x4s, 4x6s) and Tahir Hussain (4-26) while Sialkot opener Mirza Tahir Baig had made a

48-ball 66 in the first innings.

FATA right-arm pacer Shahid Aziz rattled the AJK batting with a four-fer as the latter fell short by 40 runs in the other Group D encounter of the National T20 Cup at HPC Oval Ground.

In the first innings, Khushdil Shah (54, 40b, 3x4s, 3x6s) and Mohammad Sarwar Afridi (44 not out, 30b, 2x4s, 4x6s) set the tone for FATA reaching the match-winning total of 153-8 in 20 overs.

Rawalpindi claimed a sensational three-wicket win over Abbottabad in the Group C clash of the National T20 Cup.

Wicket-keeper Mohammad Raza-ul-Mustafa fired an unbeaten 42 off 18 balls to power the side to glory while Fakhar Zaman's feisty 72 to help Abbottabad post 177-5 went in vain as Raza's boundary-laden

cameo saw Rawalpindi win on the penultimate ball.

Asif Ali-led Faisalabad delivered a thumping all-round performance to register a comprehensive eight-wicket win over Bahawalpur.

Faisalabad pacer Asad Raza's three wickets and contributions from Waqas Maqsood (2-24) and Shehzad Gul (2-15) saw Bahawalpur muster only 117-9, which seemed insufficient in front of Mohammad Faizan's brilliant 76 not out off 55 deliveries.

Karachi Whites and Dera Murad Jamali emerged victorious in the Group B matches of the National T20 Cup against Islamabad and Hyderabad respectively.

Karachi Whites captain Asad Shafiq led from the front with a solid 59 against Islamabad at UBL Sports Complex to help his side complete a four-wicket win

with nine balls to spare. Earlier, leg-spinner Arif Yaqoob took four wickets to restrict Islamabad to 119-7 in 20 overs.

Dera Murad Jamali held onto a tight one-run victory over Hyderabad, managing to successfully defend a low target of 118 at UBL Sports Complex.

An all-round bowling performance spearheaded by an economical spell from Nasir Khan, who gave away just eight runs in his four overs and took a wicket, kept Hyderabad to 116-8 in 20 overs.

Meanwhile, in Group A Karachi Blues stunned Peshawar while Lahore Whites humbled Larkana to register their maiden victories in the National T20 Cup.

Syed Waleed Azeem and Mohammad Taha took three wickets each to bundle out Peshawar for 101 as Karachi Blues



romped to the 102-run target for the loss of just three batters and 10 balls remaining.

Opening batter Fazal Subhan made 50 not out of 48 balls to steer the chase.

Ahmed Shehzad and Muhammad Akhlaq showcased their batting heroics with a 113-run opening partnership led Lahore Whites to secure a seven-wicket win over Larkana at NBP Sports

Complex.

Mohammad Irfan fronted Lahore Whites' well-rounded bowling effort with 3-12 to contain Larkana to a modest 137-8.

Subsidized

CHINIOT: A lengthy line of women patiently wait for their turn to buy flour and ghee at subsidized rates from the Government at Katchery Road Utility Store.



Photo: APP

'Relief' in war-shattered Gaza as truce takes effect in Israeli-Palestinian fighting

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Trucks with relief supplies were entering war-torn Gaza through the Rafah crossing from Egypt on Friday after the entry into force of a four-day pause in Israeli bombardments, UN agencies said. They reiterated calls for access to all parts of the ravaged Palestinian enclave where the death toll inched towards 15,000 and many displaced people were sleeping in the streets.

UN humanitarian affairs coordination office (OCHA) spokesperson Jens Laerke told reporters in Geneva that the hope regarding the agreement

between Israel and Hamas announced earlier this week was "that the pause is respected, that it enables us to reach the people who need us and that it will be extended into an actual humanitarian ceasefire in the long run".

Besides the 96-hour humanitarian pause in fighting, the agreement, which was facilitated by Egypt, Qatar and the United States, stipulates the release of Israeli hostages taken by Hamas fighters on October 7 as well as of Palestinian detainees from Israeli prisons.

"We hope the agreement... will bring respite to the people of Gaza and Israel and some

relief to the hostages and detainees who will be released, and to their families," Laerke said.

The OCHA spokesperson underscored the "volatile, intense situation" unfolding in the first hours of the truce, stressing that "the pipeline is quite long for relief and parts of it - a lot of it in fact - is beyond our control and has to do with verification of the consignments".

Speaking of the urgency to reach people in need "wherever they are", he highlighted the pressing need for access to northern Gaza "where the damage and humanitarian needs are the greatest" and

which had long been cut off from the south of the enclave and from aid by Israeli military operations.

Joining his voice to hopes for the pause to extend into a sustained ceasefire, the World Health Organization (WHO) Spokesperson, Christian Lindmeier, highlighted the plight of patients and health workers trapped in north Gaza's hospitals and said that planning and efforts towards further evacuations, notably from the Indonesia and Al-Ahli hospitals, were under way.

On Wednesday, in a joint effort between UN agencies and humanitarian partner organization the Palestine Red

Crescent Society (PRCS), 151 wounded and sick people, their family members and medical workers were evacuated from the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City and transported in an ambulance and bus convoy to the south.

Lindmeier said that WHO was "extremely concerned about the safety of the estimated 100 patients and health workers" remaining at the hospital.

Out of 24 hospitals operating in the north prior to the war, 22 are either out of service or unable to admit new patients, while of the 11 medical facilities in the south, eight are functional.

CM reviews work on Bund Road Corridor project

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi along with the Provincial Cabinet conducted a surprise visit to the Bund Road Controlled



Access Corridor project. The CM visited the project route from Babu Sabu up to Saggian. The labour shift working on the project from Babu Sabu up to Saggian was absent. He expressed his indignation over the absence of labourers from the site, supervi-

sors of contractors, LDA staff and expressed his anger with the LDA DG as well.

CM Mohsin Naqvi issued a stern warning to the Chief Engineer and the company working on the project from Babu Sabu up to Saggian.

He immediately summoned the LDA DG, Chief Engineer LDA, contractor and LDA staff on the spot. He stated that he felt deeply grieved over seeing absence of night shift working on the project, adding that seeing the state of affairs by paying a surprise visit was highly intolerable. Provincial ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Doctor Jamal Nasir and Ibrahim Hassan Murad also accompanied him.

Saudi-Pakistan friendship accord marks 72 years, continues to foster positive impacts: Dr. Naif



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The friendship agreement inked between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan on November 25, 1951 continues to yield positive and evolving impacts on both nations in a testament to enduring brotherhood. On the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of this significant milestone in the diplomatic relations between two fraternal nations, Saudi Press Attaché Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi shared the momentous development on his social media account on 'X'.

He said this historic accord, signed by the then Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz, and Pakistani Plenipotentiary Minister Abdul Sattar Sait, laid the founda-

tion for a robust and lasting alliance.

He said the positive impacts of this longstanding friendship were particularly evident in the economic realm as both countries had engaged in fruitful collaborations, with Saudi Arabia emerging as a key investor in various sectors of Pakistan's economy. He mentioned that the signing of numerous economic agreements and the establishment of joint ventures had further strengthened economic ties, contributing to the prosperity of both nations.

Dr. Naif said the strategic dimension of this friendship had also played a pivotal role in maintaining regional stability. He said collaborations in defense and security had been paramount, with joint military exercises and the exchange of expertise enhancing the capabilities of both nations. He said this cooperation had not only ensured the security of each country but had also contributed to broader efforts aimed at fostering peace and stability in the region.

Dr. Naif said beyond the realms of politics and economics, the Saudi-Pakistan friendship had fostered rich cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties. He said the cultural affinity between the two nations had been celebrated through various events, promoting a better understanding of each other's traditions, customs, and heritage from time to time.

Pakistan issues guidelines for Afghanistan flights

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Saturday issued new guidelines for flights originating from Afghanistan and entering Pakistan's airspace.

Under the new directives, all flights entering Pakistani airspace from Afghanistan are required to provide a minimum of 15 minutes advance notice.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has also issued a frequency for flights entering from Afghanistan to Pakistan which will provide guidance to flights.

Pakistan, China sign cooperation agreement on sustainable development of rivers: Ambassador Hashmi

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Pakistan and China have signed a cooperation agreement focusing on the Indus and Yangtze rivers to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by river cultures, ecosystems and economies and engage in discussions on sustainable development of major rivers, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said on Saturday. Both countries have learned from the historic role that all these rivers and river systems have played for the civilization, human



settlements and cultures, he said while talking to APP on the sidelines of the Yangtze Culture Forum held in Nanjing, China.

The forum brought together guests from all over the world to discuss and promote the shared values of humanity and establish a global network for dialogue and collaboration among major river cities. Ambassador Hashmi acknowledged the theme of the forum that focused on the Yangtze River and its connections with humanity, cities and civilizations. As the largest river in China, Yangtze has played a significant role in economic and cultural development of several big cities along it, he added. There are a number

of ports along the Yangtze River and China has significantly preserved and used this river for not only the development of human life but also for food security and connectivity. Pakistan, he informed, has also launched a big project called Living Indus Initiative that mainly deals with environmental protection and climate change. The forum, jointly hosted by UNESCO and other partners, fostered exchange and mutual learning in river basin areas, eventually constructing a shared human destiny community.

Aniq advocates global interfaith dialogue for lasting peace



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aniq Ahmed stressed the crucial need for dialogue among religions and cultures globally to establish lasting peace.

In his address at the Interfaith Harmony Conference held at the Badshahi Masjid here on Saturday, he highlighted the government's commitment to promoting interfaith harmony in Pakistan, emphasizing the prevailing unity among different religious denominations.

He underscored the importance of tolerance and respect, integral to Islamic teachings, and assured that minorities in Pakistan enjoy complete

religious freedom. He called for collective efforts to foster interfaith harmony, citing Islam's principles and Prophet Hazrat Muhammad's (PBUH) legacy of dialogue with Christians and Jews.

Highlighting Pakistan's diverse society, he announced his visit to Karachi during the Hindu festival of Diwali and issued directives for guidelines to resolve issues facing minorities. Bishop of Lahore Nadim Kamran and Pastor Asher Nazir praised the government's initiatives for minorities, expressing commitment to contributing positively to the country's peace.

The conference, attended by prominent figures including Prime Minister's Special Representative Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, aimed to strengthen religious harmony, mutual brotherhood, and collaborative roles for the progress of the nation. Participants praised the government's efforts and expressed dedication to fostering a harmonious society.

Best medical care to be ensured to injured children: Dr Nadeem

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The children injured in the bus accident at Shahdara Picnic Point have been admitted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Federal Government Polyclinic (FGPC) hospital. According to a spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan issued instructions to the management of PIMS and Polyclinic Hospital for proper care of accident victims.

Dr. Nadeem Jan directed that the best medical facilities should be ensured to the injured children. He



said that the government is ensuring all the necessary measures for the treatment of children.

Student killed, several injured as school bus plunges into ravine in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A student was killed and more than a dozen others were injured when a school bus fell into a gorge in Shahdara area of Islamabad on Saturday.

The schoolchildren and their teachers from Sheikhpura were on a picnic trip when their bus met with the horrific accident. Rescue officials shifted the body and injured students to Poly Clinic Hospital where an emergency has been declared.

The bus was carrying more than



40 children. The incident left 14 or so students injured and the loss of one life has been reported by rescue sources, casting a pall of sorrow over the affected families.

Lahore DHA accident: Afnan confesses to car drifting, over-speeding

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Afnan Shafiq, who was involved in a horrific car accident in Lahore's Defence Housing Authority (DHA), confessed to car drifting and over-speeding.

According to sources, several tests have been conducted to determine the age of Afnan however the results will come out in three to four days.

Meanwhile, Afnan's Polygraphic and Photogrammetrical test will be conducted in the forensic lab on November 29 and police will seek further physical remand of the accused.

Moreover, the father of the accused who recorded the statement of his absence from the spot of accident, will be presented before the DIG investigation on November 27.

On November 23, an anti-terrorism court in Lahore handed over underage driver Afnan Shafiq to the police for five days on physical remand. During the hearing, the investigation officer (IO) of the case told the court that the age of suspect was over 17 and a medical test was required to determine his actual age.

Smart lockdown: Educational institutions remain closed on second consecutive day



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The educational institutions remained closed in 10 districts of Punjab on the second consecutive day (Saturday) in connection with smart lockdown imposed by the provincial government to prevent smog.

The smart lockdown has been imposed in Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Sahiwal and Sargodha divisions where all private and public educational institutions are closed on Saturday.

The traders are allowed to open their businesses after 3pm. All businesses will remain closed on Sunday in accord with direction of the Punjab government.

In a significant move, only cyclists are allowed to come on Mall Road on Sunday as no other vehicle will be allowed.

According to the meteorological department, heavy rains are expected in several cities of the country including Karachi. Rain with strong winds is expected in Balochistan today (Saturday). The Met office also said smog and fog would prevail in Punjab.