

Air Ambulance is just showpiece project

New hospitals needed in Saraiki Wasaib: Chairman: Rana Faraz Noon

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chairman Saraiki Democratic Party Rana Faraz Noon Said Air Ambulance is a showpiece and Exhibition project, new hospitals should be built in Saraiki Wasib including Multan. With a shortage of beds in Saraiki Wasaib hospitals, patients are checked in like sheep lying on the ground. Show projects should be kept aside and new government hospitals should be built to give real relief to the people.



South Punjab in Multan Institute of Cardiology.

These views were expressed by the Chairman of the Saraiki Democratic Party, Rana Muhammad Faraz Noon, who said that the District Jail and Central Jail of Multan should be shifted to Mati Tall Road outside Multan city. Multan Institute of Cardiology phase two should be built in place of District Jail Multan including Nish-tar Medical College Part 2. Apart from

Four province Patients Including South Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province come to Multan for Heart Disease treatment. Due to the wrong planning of PDMA and then the caretaker government, the new block of Multan Institute of

Cardiology, which was built at a huge cost of nine and a half billion Rupees, has been allocated only for outdoor patients. While there are only 40 beds for emergency treatment in Multan Institute of Cardiology, emergency heart patients are treated on wheelchairs due to lack of extra beds and emergency equipment. Rana Faraz Noon further said that there is a severe shortage of Doctors, paramedical staff, staff nurses in the government hospitals of South Punjab including Multan. Rana Faraz Noon further said that 2.2 patients per bed in government hospitals, when there is no space, patients are checked by lying on the ground and due to shortage of doctors and staff, many people do not get checked up. Lives are lost.

New hospitals are needed in Saraiki Wasaib while Air Ambulance is only a demonstration project. Hungry people need cheap wheat, not pizza. People

need cheap wheat bread. More important than the Air Ambulance demonstration project is improving the condition of hospitals. He said that it is a sign of filth in hospitals that the sick leave with more diseases. The shortage of doctors and staff should be met and the need for new hospitals should be met.

Air Ambulance will benefit not the poor but the rich. Proper use of national resources is the real good governance. If the resources of Saraiki Wasaib are used in the same region, then the deprivation of our Wasib will end. Rana Muhammad Faraz Noon said that billions of projects for Lahore and empty funds for Saraiki Wasaib, this joke should be stopped. The people of Wasaib come out for the province of Saraiki, otherwise the throne of Lahore will not save anything. They will protest if the chain of spending resources on Lahore is not stopped. There will be sit-ins and long marches.

Make the best arrangements for wheat procurement and cotton cultivation in Multan Division

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Public Relations Officer To Commissioner Multan Division Miss Iram Salimi Said Commissioner Multan Division Miss Maryam Khan ordered the best arrangements for wheat procurement, cotton cultivation and said that shaded waiting room, clean drinking water at all centers. To be stopped. The Punjab government has set a purchase price of 3900 rupees per maund of wheat.



Applications are being received on the introduced Bardana app for obtaining Bardana. Bardana app will be closed at 12 pm on April 17, Punjab Land Record Authority will check the land ownership of the applications received from PITB. The farmers who received the message will start providing 6 bardana of 100 kg per hectare from April 19. Will be. Wheat procurement will be started on April 22. Wheat will be purchased from the farmers of 6 acres and less, Commissioner Maryam Khan ordered the Agriculture Department to fulfill the target of early cotton cultivation, saying that cotton cultivation is indispensable for the recovery of the country's economy. Deputy Director Food Shahid Khokhar said that 45,604 farmers in the division have so far been registered for purchasing wheat.

Director Agriculture Shahzad Saber said that the target of cotton cultivation in the division has been set at 943 thousand hectares. Cotton cultivation has been completed on 2 lakh 10 thousand acres in the target of Agiti cultivation. Deputy commissioners, officers of related departments were present in the meeting.

Asifa Bhutto Zardari, there is an addition of a resourceful parliamentarian: Ch Yasin

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD/MUZAFFARABAD: President of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir and senior parliamentarian Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that in the form of Benazir Asifa Bhutto Zardari, there is an addition of a resourceful parliamentarian in the political field and parliament, who is a member of the Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. They will



serve the country and the nation hand in hand and step by step and will establish proud traditions for the members of the Pakistan People's Party like the first female Prime Minister of the Islamic world Ms. Benazir Bhutto to Shaheed, He expressed these views. Yesterday, while talking about Ms. Asifa Bhutto Zardari's swearing in ceremony, did she say that the so-called Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Barrister Gohar, cannot take a word out of his mouth without permission, so keep your comments to yourself, otherwise they will be eaten. He knows how to answer everything. He said that Asif Ali Zardari, a candidate from Nawab Shah, won with a lead of one and a half million votes. Who could compete with Benazir Asifa Bhutto Zardari? And for the sake of democracy, our leaders have kissed the gallows and have also drunk martyrdom in Liaquat Bagh, so the Chairman of Adhar should keep his advice to himself. Following in the footsteps of and under the guidance of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will serve the nation he added.

Central Library of Sindh Agriculture University completes

AG Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Central Library of Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) has completed the initial phase of its digitization project. Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Marri inaugurated the system by opening his digital library account through barcode scanning. The library has integrated an online library, book bank, and digital references through its library management system.



An inauguration ceremony was held at the Central Library on Tuesday, attended by the Vice Chancellor, deans, and heads of academic and administrative departments.

During the ceremony, Dr. Fateh Marri highlighted the role of information technology in simplifying access to research and innovations globally, emphasizing the digital library's critical support in academic and research for students, faculty, and researchers.

He expressed concern over the declining trend of book reading among youth, stressing the need to enhance the effectiveness of online systems to facilitate easy access to books on mobiles and computers.

Dr. Mohammed Bachal Bhutto, chairman of the Library Management Committee, informed that so far, 15,000 titles have been uploaded, with plans to include researchers' theses in the future to streamline book searches and secure record keeping. He also mentioned the development of a modern reference system and the impending launch of a sub-domain on the library's website.

The event also marked the distribution of books worth 2.4 million rupees for different faculties, Institute of Food Science and Technology, Information Technology Center, SAU Sub-Campus Umerkot, and the Bukhari Model School of staff residential colony of the University.

Among others, Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. Jan Muhammad Marri, Deans Dr. Inayatullah Rajpar, Dr. Syed Ghiasuddin Shah, Dr. Altaf Siyal, Dr. Manzoor Ali Abro, Registrar Ghulam Mohiuddin Qureshi, Dr. Mir Sajjad Talpur, Dr. Abdul Mubeen Lodhi, librarian Ghulam Hyder Joyo, Dr. Mahmood ul Hassan Mughal, and heads of various departments attended the ceremony.

APHC AJK congratulate to Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on unopposed as Chairman Senate

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD / MUZAFFARABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) AJK and Pakistan Chapter congratulated Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on his election as Chairman Senate.

In a letter written by Convener APHC Mehmood Ahmed Saghar to newly elected Chairman Senate, the Hurriyat leadership stated, "On behalf of the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), the APHC wish to extend heartfelt felicitations to you on your election as chairman senate of Pakistan.

Your appointment to this responsible position reaffirms your high political reputation, as well as the broad support for your party's policy of political reconciliation, which seeks to effectively deal with the social and economic challenges facing Pakistan" the Hurriyat leadership added.

They also added, "We hope that under your dynamic leadership Pakistan will continue to prosper and reach new heights of success.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Pakistan for its all-out support to our freedom struggle. The Pakistani nation has always stood with us through every thick and thin despite facing daunting internal and external challenges, Convener said in the letter.

Empowerment of women

ISLAMABAD: Women traffic wardens stop vehicles in which people driving without wearing safety belt, at 9th Avenue in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Three-Days 39th annual Urs of Hazrat Allama Syed Ahmad Saeed Kazmi celebrated

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The three-day celebrations of the 39th annual Urs of Hazrat Allama Syed Ahmad Saeed Kazmi of Ghazalai Zaman ended at Shahi Eidgah Khanewal Road, Multan. Islam, the freedom of the first Qibla and the establishment of peace in the country.



In the concluding session, former Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Allama Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi, Allama Syed Arshad Saeed Kazmi, Syed Tahir Saeed Kazmi, Dr. Syed Athar Saeed Kazmi, Syed Javed Saeed Kazmi, Syed Ahsan Saeed Kazmi, Syed Ahmad Saeed Kazmi, Syed Moham-

mad Saeed Kazmi, Syed Mohammad Ahad Saeed Kazmi, Syed Ruh Al Quds Kazmi, Mufti Ghulam Mustafa Rizvi, Mufti Abdul Sattar Saeedi, Mian Hussain Ahmed Qadri, Mian Shoaib Hasan Qadri, Pir Muhammad Arshad Shah Naqeibi, Mufti

Muhammad Zaman Saeedee Rizvi, Pir Habibullah Naqshbandi, Mufti Muhammad Sharif Saeedee Ashrafi, Maulana Muhammad Farooq Khan Saeedee, Wasim Mumtaz Advocate. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Siddique Khan Qadri, Engineer Abdul Rashid

Arshad, Dr. Taslim and Thousands of devotees including Qureshi Family participated, most of them Sahibzada Syed Muhammad Ahad Saeed Kazmi offered Khatam Sharif and Qari Salman Umar Saedi presented the Darood Pak

Punjab Police more effective in rural and border areas: IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar

Asim Tanveer / Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Important meeting chaired by IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar, Additional IG South Punjab, DG Khan and RPOs, DPOs of Bahawalpur Ranges participated.



The steps taken to make the operational efficiency of the Punjab Police more effective in rural and border areas were reviewed.

Inspector General Punjab Police Dr Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police is a symbol of fear for dacoits, terrorists, evil elements in the slums and border districts.

In the border districts including Rajanpur, Rahimyar Khan, Muzaffargarh, there is a strong crackdown against dacoits and criminals.

In border districts, Punjab Police will be strengthened in terms of human resources, transport, logistics.

IG Punjab directed to complete construction of 20 new checkpoints at Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan as soon as possible.

Effective strategies are being formu-

lated to prevent smuggling, hoarding, in inter-provincial border areas Inspector General Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar said during the important meeting that

New APC, Thermal Cameras, Night Vision Goggles and Binoculars, Quadcopters will be given to Punjab Police

to suppress terrorists in Patti River and border districts across Punjab, said Dr. Usman Anwar.

Access to secret shelters of robbers, miscreants, use of quadcopters in operations should be ensured.

The scope of intelligence-based operations against criminal gangs, dacoits, miscreants is being expanded, Additional IG South Punjab's briefing.

RPOs and DPOs of Bahawalpur and DG Khan Range gave a briefing on ongoing operations, resources and infrastructure.

Additional IG Punjab Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry, Additional IG Operations Shahzada Sultan, AIG Development Sahibzada Bilal Umar, AIG Logistics Ismail Khadi and AIG Operations Dr. Asad Ejaz Malhi and other officers were present in the meeting.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:08 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 4:47 pm
Maghrib 6:40 pm
Isha 8:08 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

DDA warns of glacier risk in upper and northern regions from 18 to 22 April 2024

Bureau Report

NEELAM: The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) has predicted rain and thundershowers in the upper and northern regions of the country from 18 to 22 April 2024. In this regard, Chairman District Disaster Management Authority/Deputy Commissioner Raja Arif Mehmood appealed to the public and said in his message that they should avoid going to unsafe places where there is a risk of flooding in glaciers and rivers and take precautionary measures.

Deputy Commissioner/Chairman DDMA Neelam has said that recently the information of glaciers has been received at Lovat Bayari.

The general public should never go to the areas where there is a risk of glaciers coming. Take precautions and do not go to dangerous places during the afternoon to evening hours because the risk of glaciers coming during these hours is relatively low. There is more possibility

Al-Shifa Trust to build an eye hospital in Haveli Lakha

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Al-Shifa Trust will build a primary eye hospital in Haveli Lakha, Okara, with the intention of providing high-quality eye care services to the residents as well as people who come from the surrounding areas.

In addition to the residents of Haveli Lakha and Depalpur, the facility will also serve the residents of Pakpattan, Sahiwal, and Bahawalnagar, which are neighbouring districts.

Briefing the media persons, the President of Al-Shifa Trust, Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan said a doctor had donated two acres of land to the trust close to the city.

The donor will also bear the construction cost, and the trust will provide equipment and expertise and will be responsible for managing the facility.

Rehmat Khan said this project would help the people of South Punjab, but the magnitude of the problem demands a full-fledged eye hospital in Multan.

He said that Haveli Lakha Hospital



will be operational by the end of this year and that basic eye care hospitals are vital to eradicate blindness.

On this occasion, the project director, Brig. (ret.) Arshad Mahmood shared the details of the trust's expansion plan and informed that the extension block in Chakwal Eye Hospital will start functioning by next month.

He added that a local family donated Rs 150 million to complete the new block at Chakwal Eye Hospital, which is highly

commendable.

The trust is also constructing a hospital in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), for which the government has allotted a piece of prime land near Aga Khan Hospital, accessible to people.

The hospital would be able to treat 150 OPD patients per day and conduct 50 surgeries daily, he added.

The Rupani Foundation Pakistan is helping to construct the first state-of-the-art hospital in GB, costing around Rs 220 million. The foundation will bear half of its cost, while the trust will arrange the remaining costs through donations.

He said we are also awaiting for a suitable piece of land from the provincial government to construct a hospital in Quetta.

However, he added that we have already started serving the patients in Balochistan, and a series of camps are being organized.

It may be mentioned that the Al-Shifa Trust provides quality eye care services to eighty percent of patients free of cost.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Families enjoying a model of moving dinosaur at Multi Zoo, in B-17 in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

President FPCCI Appoints Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed as Advisor Industrial Development ICT

PNP

ISLAMABAD: President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh has appointed Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed as Advisor to the President FPCCI on Industrial Development ICT for the year 2024-25. The appointment of Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed was made in view of his vast experience in the field, a notification in this regard issued.

Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed newly appointed Advisor To President FPCCI on Industrial Development ICT belongs to Chinot Family and a Commerce Gradu-



ate B. Com (Hons) from University of Punjab. With extensive experience in the Cotton Business, he has been elected twice as the senior vice President Islam-

abad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He will keep close liaison / coordination with the President FPCCI and the Secretary General of FPCCI for any

assistance.

The FPCCI president hoped that under the leadership of Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed, prompt recommendations will help FPCCI to address industry problems before the government.

Sheikh Pervaiz Ahmed, Advisor President FPCCI on Industrial Development, said that the Government must focus on rapid industrialisation and take bold steps to speed up economic growth by restoring the confidence of foreign and local investors. Trillions of rupees are hidden as undocumented money, which could be injected in the industry in order to generate millions of jobs.

IIUI ranked among top 51-100 in QS world subject rankings

PPA

ISLAMABAD: International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) has been named as one of the world's top universities and placed among 51-100 in the subjects of Theology, Divinity & Religious Studies and is placed at 351-400 in Mathematics across the world in the latest 2024 edition by the world's top most university rankings agency QS (Quacquarelli Symonds).

In addition, for the first time the university is placed in Physics at 601-640 across the world in the latest edition by the world's top most university rankings agency QS.

Earlier, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) was ranked on 249 position in QS Asia University Rankings 2024 as well as IIUI was placed at 49th position in QS Southern Asia University Rankings 2024 by QS.

IIUI Rector, Dr. Samina Malik and President, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi while expressing gratitude for the achievement congratulated the academic and administrative staff of the institution and hoped that they would remain committed to the university in the future by continuing their hard work so that the institution gets the top slot in all world rankings in the future. They especially appreciated the hard work of the Director Quality Assurance Department (QAD) and his team.

The university leadership has also lauded the efforts of all relevant quarters including Departments from the Faculty of Usul uddin, Mathematics and Physics as well as other faculty members and research scholars publishing in cross-cut/overlapping areas from IRI, Dawah Academy, Faculty of Shariah & Law, Faculty of Arabic, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering and CAEPE contributing towards the Research citation per paper, H-index and International research network by broad faculty area.

NDMA and IRC Pakistan emerge as Strategic Partners for shaping Resilience

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan faces

some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world, ranked 11 out of 193 countries by the 2023 World Risk Report. Pakistan also has high exposure to flooding, including flash, and urban coastal, as well as exposure to tropical cyclones and droughts. The Disaster risk in Pakistan is further exacerbated by its social vulnerability (37 out of 191) which is driven by its high rates of multidimensional poverty.

In his remarks, Chairman NDMA informed that NDMA's NEOC shared a comprehensive outlook on potential hazards and emergencies expected in the next 6 months. This crucial information serves as a foundation for these organizations to strategize and outline their response plans effectively, ensuring readiness and swift action in the face of adversity. He called for the incorporation of anticipatory actions for resilient interventions in humanitarian organization's annual plans.

In a joint statement, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik (Chairman NDMA), and Ms. Shabnam Baloch, Country Director (IRC-Pakistan), conveyed their resolve to the newly formed partnership. They stressed upon the critical significance of collaborative initiatives, tackling the multifaceted challenges presented by climate change and natural disasters specifically within the context of Pakistan. Lt Gen Inam and Ms. Baloch expressed their resolve to advance the resilience agenda through tri-party partnerships involving relevant state institutions, civil society, and community voices into decision-making processes.

Through this partnership, NDMA and IRC are committed to share learning resources, technical expertise, and efforts to address the impacts of climate change and disasters. Their collaborative endeavors aim to foster a more resilient society in Pakistan, ensuring better preparedness and response mechanisms for future challenges.

Three-day training program on AI in teaching practices kicks off at AIOU



PNP

ISLAMABAD: A three-day faculty training program on "Empowering Educators: Integrating AI into Teaching Practices" has started in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The program is being organized in collaboration with the Directorate of Academic Planning and Course Production, AIOU and Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA). This program aims to educate teachers about artificial intelligence tools and technologies and how to use them effectively in teaching methods. The inaugural session was presided over by Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof. Dr. Fazal ur Rehman, while Director, CEMCA, Dr. Basheerhamad participated online as the Chief Guest.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Basheer said that while there are negative uses of artificial intelligence, it also has positive and useful benefits. In the process of learning and teaching, a lot of work can be completed in a short time if technology is used properly. The use of artificial intelligence and its role in the field of education has now become inevitable. Dr. Fazal ur Rahman said that this training workshop on artificial intelligence will increase the abilities of teachers, teaching and learning process will be strengthened.

Senator Nasir Mehmood Butt says workers have big hand in success of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N leader and newly elected Senator Nasir Mahmood Butt said that sincere workers have a big hand in the success of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. And the credit of our success in Rawalpindi goes to the hard workers. Sincere workers of Rawalpindi Cantt worked day and night. I salute those who serve the party selflessly and campaign without greed.

These views were expressed by the newly elected Senator Nasir Mehmood Butt, Senior Vice Pres-

ident of Pakistan Muslim League District Rawalpindi Malik Nasir Awan, Senior Leader of Muslim League Rawalpindi Muhammad Saeed Khan, Additional Secretary of PP 15 Malik Farooq, Basit Khan, Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Labor leader Mubarak Hussain and Mubarak Ali on the occasion of the meeting. The delegation congratulated Nasir Mehmood Butt on his election as senator and expressed the hope that he will play an important role in the development of the country in the Senate.

On this occasion, Senator Nasir Mehmood Butt said that

my Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif is proud of me. Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Ms. Maryam Nawaz and our cabinet members will take Pakistan out of the economic crisis. Pakistan has always been brought out of problems by the Muslim League government and has served the people to the fullest. Our asset is the people and youth of Pakistan. I am a party worker and will serve the people of my constituency.

Senator Nasir Mehmood Butt said this in his main office, Haji House, Milad Nagar Dhoke Ratta. Where he met railway labor leader Mubarak Hussain and social and

political workers of other railway colonies, Kamran Qureshi, Mushtaq Ahmed, Muhammad Arif, Ali Zaman, Khawar Khan, Muhammad Azim, Muhammad Shafiq, In a meeting with Muhammad Younis, Mutahar Ahmed, Waqar Mubarak, Muhammad Hamza, Umeer Rahim, Younis Khan, Mushtaq Khan, Muhammad Ali, Fahad Ahmad Qureshi, Shahid Iqbal and others. He said that I will fulfill the expectations of the people. I will play a positive role in the Senate and continue to work for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Sharif and the people. Earlier, railway labor leader



er Mubarak Hussain and others informed the senator about the problems of railway colonies and demanded that the water problems in railway colonies should be solved. The park should be constructed. The filtration plant

should be repaired. Primary school and dispensary should be opened for the public. Street lights should be installed.

The sanitation system should be improved. The law and order situation in the railway colonies

should be further improved. Nasir Mehmood Butt assured the delegation that these problems will be resolved. On this occasion, the delegation presented bouquets of flowers to the newly elected senator.

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Prime Minister should activate PMDU immediately to gain public confidence

People of Pakistan were fed up with bureaucracy, red tape and fictitious functioning of public offices for years, the accountability of the officers sitting in the offices and their performance audit was not done even after years. Realizing this situation, the trust of the public lies not in the open courts of the administration but in the performance. For public trust and getting rid of red tape; in 2019, The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government has taken a number of innovative initiatives to improve the quality and efficiency of public services in the country. Besides proposed reforms in the stale, pathetic and grossly inefficient bureaucracy and tax collecting administration, the Federal Bureau of Revenue, it introduced a simple application by the name of Citizen Portal for redressing citizens' grievances. For decades, complaints by ordinary citizens have fallen on deaf ears, owing to a non-responsive bureaucracy, which no political government has succeeded in holding accountable for its many failures.

No doubt, the Citizens Portal app has been the most successful of the steps taken by the PTI government, as it is evident from the fact that more than forty-five thousand citizens have voted and rated it at 4.1. The App was declared the second best in the world moot on governance. Citizen who have used the applica-

tion say it is easy to register oneself and lodge a complaint against any department anywhere in Pakistan. It does not limit the scope to the federal government departments or agencies; it also includes provincial subjects and private enterprises and businesses that are regulated by the federal and provincial governments. If not resolved, the complaint stays on the web and also in the account of the citizen that has registered it. He or she can check the status and see if the complaint has been resolved or remains pending. Everything in Pakistan is presented in the best way in the beginning. But with the passage of time complications are created in it. Just like this present government has failed the Pakistan Citizen Portal. Bureaucracy is involved in deactivating PMDU.

Our bureaucracy does not want rule of law, nor does it want complaints about its institutions to come before the rulers. Hence this best public interest app has been disabled. There is another reason why the enthusiasm for the Citizens Portal is dying down: the long delays and the conventional bureaucratic method of passing the buck to other departments and agencies or stating lack of funds. The old-fashioned bureaucracy has found new ways to make this system fail. Many of the complaints that were not fixed, showed resolved in the status. Many citizens have begun losing trust in the portal for the reason that officials responsible for handling complaints have started faking their resolution.

Now a days despite being a well-intended initiative, the Pakistan Citizen's Portal (PMDU) is failing to serve the envisioned purpose as its administrators have themselves adopted the dismissive culture of the bureaucracy which habitually turns a blind eye to citizens' woes. Each time a complaint is registered on the portal, it is referred to the relevant department, following which the complaint is either closed or dropped for vague reasons. There seems to be no accountability on how the system works and that makes it frustrating for citizens who reach out to the portal with genuine concerns.

The biggest problem for Pakistan is not the lack of resources or human skills: it is bad governance. Experts on governance and public administration have known for decades that bureaucracies cannot function well without a vigilant public, having access to relevant officials and registering their complaint with the confidence that they would be resolved.

After decades of political and bureaucratic corruption in Pakistan, the public in general has lost faith both in politics and public administration. Year after year, they have found that complaints go unaddressed, and if they have to get things done in their favor they have to grease someone's palm. We all know that through modern technology, serious and civilized countries have overcome their problems and their solutions. But we are forced to go round open courts and public offices with handwritten complaints in the old fashioned way because our rulers are mostly illiterate and their policies are not in the public interest. They are not aware that citizens visiting government offices leads to problems like wastage of time and overcrowding in offices. We are a nuclear power. Therefore, rulers and bureaucrats should enable e-complaint system to restore better public confidence in the country.

Public trust is a huge asset for any government. We know that the present government cannot control the rates of electricity, gas, water and oil, take measures to make the bureaucracy a true servant of the people. For this Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif should take notice of this in view of the better performance and accountability system of his government and restore the Pakistan Citizen Portal immediately.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

'Wholesale reform'

The United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the UN General Assembly Monday led the clarion call for urgent reform of the global financial system, notably how to approach debt relief on behalf of the billions of distressed citizens living in the developing world. Addressing a high-level meeting of the 193-member Assembly on debt sustainability, Antonio Guterres, the UN chief, outlined the crippling impact of debt on developing economies.

"No example of the international financial architecture's failure is more glaring than its handling of debt. The last four years have been nothing short of a debt disaster," he said. He noted that the burden of servicing external debt leaves many countries with little to invest in their own people. According to UN figures, in 2023, global public debt reached \$313 trillion, with the situation particularly alarming in developing economies. Over a fifth of the tax revenue in 25 developing countries went towards servicing external debt, while extremely high borrowing costs left countries with about 3.3 billion people in total — around 40 per cent of the global population — spending more on interest payments than on health or education initiatives. "Instead of a safety net, developing countries are faced with an outdated, dysfunctional, unjust system that isn't meeting their needs," he added. Convened by the President of the General Assembly, Dennis Francis, the debate on debt sustainability and socioeconomic equality for all, marked the first high-level discussion as part of the world body's first ever Sustainability Week. Other highlights include dedicated discussions on sustainable transport, tourism and energy. Also addressing the General Assembly, Francis, the President of the body's 78th session, emphasized the worsening inequalities between richer and poorer nations.

"By 2030, an estimated 600 million people will still remain impoverished — indicative of the glacial pace of 'progress' that falls far short of our SDG goals," he said, noting that 10 per cent of the world's population owns 76 per cent of the global wealth. And while, the world is on track to see its first trillionaire by 2030, it will take another 229 years to eradicate poverty. "It is clear that the gap between the wealthy North and the Developing South is widening, increasingly limiting the life chances of people living there," he said. He outlined the impact of such disparities on youth, women, persons with disabilities and those living in rural areas.

"If nothing is done to correct this situation, they will literally be left behind, denied from enjoying the fruits of development and ignored. Clearly, this is neither acceptable nor sustainable," Francis warned. Secretary-General Guterres underscored the need for a lifeline so developing countries can pull themselves out of the "quicksand of debt". He said the SDG Stimulus programme which he proposed last February, must now be brought "to life". The Stimulus aims to secure \$500 billion annually in extra financing from the world's most developed nations, to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "We must dramatically scale-up affordable, long-term financing, primarily through Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)," he said, also urging global

Alongside, the global financial architecture requires "wholesale reform", he said, notably their approach to debt. This included enhancing debt transparency, scaling-up lending in local currencies and developing new debt instruments. "Above all, we must increase developing countries' representation across the system and every decision that is made. They need a seat at the table. They deserve a seat at the table," Guterres said.

Iran's Operation, 'The True Promise'...-I

Israel, the US, UK, and France mobilized their diplomatic, military, and reconnaissance assets in response to potential retaliation from Iran following Israel's direct attack on the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, resulting in its destruction and the deaths of seven high-ranking officials from Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Sensing a retaliatory threat, prompted Joe Biden and other world leaders to issue public warnings and threats to Iran, urging it to refrain from any retaliatory actions. Biden emphasized the ironclad alliance between the US and Israel, warning Iran against attacking Israel and pledging full support and defense. To demonstrate seriousness, the US redirected its naval assets towards the Middle Eastern theater.

But Iran had had enough and its resolve to punish Israel for orchestrating several attacks on Iran which left the entire Iranian nation wounded, bruised and angered, brushed aside all the warnings and intimidations and both spiritual and formal leadership in Iran vowed revenge, declaring that the time had come to punish Israel for his acts of aggressions.

Iran mobilized its strategic military assets, preparing to turn threats into action. Both civilian and military leaderships named the retaliatory strikes "Operation True Promise." Iran's military and defense experts convened to strategize and outline the objectives, scope, impact, and expected outcomes of Operation True Promise.

On the other side of the isle, the combined reconnaissance and intelligence assets of Israel, the US, UK, France, and their allied countries

in the Middle East—including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other nations hosting US military assets—were mobilized. Military strategists collaborated to accurately assess the

scope and scale of the potential retaliatory attack. Air, land, and sea assets were placed on high alert and fully prepared to neutralize any impending threats.

Iran's military strategists knew very well the formidable challenge its operation was faced with from the combined airpower of Israel and its allies including US, UK and France in particular. Acknowledging their collective destructive and defensive power and their overwhelming and vastly superior capabilities, the operation "True Promise" needed to be carefully orchestrated, and the launching of varied aerial assets needed to be timed carefully to challenge the air superiority of Israel and its allies to achieve the intended objectives.

Iran first launched 170 suicide drone, knowing very well that they being slow moving will most likely be intercepted and destroyed even before reaching to their intended targets. As anticipated, as soon as the drones entered into the middle east airspace, they were intercepted by the pilots of Israel, US, UK, who, sitting in their sophisticated fighter jets, with precise weapons systems relished bringing these drones to the ground. As a Result, hardly any drone successfully penetrated the Israel air defense.

While successfully engaging them with drones, Iran put to test their ground to air and sea to air defense system. It fired additional 120 ballistic missiles, and 30 cruise missiles simul-

taneously launched from the militias in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. As expected and as claimed by the Israeli defense forces commander, more than 99% of these threats were neutralized, but admitted that the Iranian attack was "unprecedented" and was thwarted by unprecedented accuracy. It also admitted that Nevatim air force base in Israel's southern Negev desert was hit, one 7 year old girl died and 12 people in southern Israel received hospital treatment.

Iran asserted that it had achieved all of its set objectives. First and foremost, Iran aimed to demonstrate to Israel and its allies that there exists at least one country willing to challenge their perceived invincibility and pose a credible threat to their security. The second objective focused on ensuring there were no civilian casualties on the Israeli side during the retaliatory strikes.

This strategic choice aimed to position Iran on higher moral ground, even amidst conflict, by demonstrating a commitment to minimizing harm to civilians. Additionally, by avoiding civilian casualties, Iran aimed to differentiate itself from Israel, which has been criticized for civilian casualties during ongoing operations in Gaza since October 2023. Iran's this strategy had successfully prevented Israel from leveraging such casualties to justify its actions or sway international public opinion against Iran.

The third objective was to limit the extent of damage inflicted during the retaliatory strikes to prevent providing Israel and its allies with justification or leverage for a counter-attack on Iranian assets and thereby has successfully minimized the risk of further escalation or retaliation, thus safeguarding its own assets and strategic interests.

To be continued



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

The question of Iran for Saudi Arabia

Ali Shihabi

As Iran and Israel enter an era of direct confrontation, a lot of attention is now being paid to the position of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Cooperation Council states, particularly to where they stand on this crisis and how they will behave if it escalates, as it may.

The Iranian regime, with its ongoing support of proxies hostile to the Kingdom, has failed to build trust about its good intentions in the GCC. Because of this, it cannot expect the GCC states to avoid further integration into a US-led defensive alliance against Iran, despite serious criticism of Israel's actions.

Israel, with its horrific behavior in Gaza and its shortsighted failure to put in place any building blocks toward a two-state solution in Palestine, is a source of grave concern for the Kingdom. Unless material progress is made toward a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, it is difficult to imagine a breakthrough in relations between Riyadh and Tel Aviv.

At the same time, Iran is an aspiring regional hegemon that is very difficult to trust despite a recent diplomatic detente that saw a Chinese-sponsored reestablishment of relations between the Kingdom and Iran. Iran has worked since the revolution in 1979 to export its ideology and expand its influence throughout the region. It has had the GCC in its crosshairs despite public claims to the contrary.

GCC countries have long since learned to watch Iranian actions, not listen to its words, when judging its behavior. And Tehran's actions in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and particularly in Yemen, even after the reestablishment of diplomatic ties, have confirmed its malign intentions toward the Gulf. Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei have often and directly criticized the governments of

the GCC as being illegitimate, as do their proxies across the Arab world.

Moreover, Iran's pretensions of supporting the Palestinian cause are recognized in the Gulf for what they are: a naked attempt to grab Sunni market share in public support, while enabling Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to act as continuous spoilers (with the tacit cooperation of Israel's right wing) of any attempt by the Palestinian Authority to move forward on a two-state settlement.

Hamas' attack on Oct. 7 — one it knew would rain terror and destruction down on Gaza's unprotected and exposed population by an Israeli government that has no compunction about committing war crimes or even ethnic cleansing — is just the latest example of Iran empowering spoilers that gain nothing for the Palestinians but misery and suffering.

Ultimately, the Kingdom and the other GCC states see Iran as a dangerous adversary that dreams of bringing down the ruling order in the Gulf, establishing its hegemony over the region and cynically using the Palestinian cause to foment instability and anger throughout the region toward that final objective. Iran does not want to, and it knows it can never, "liberate" Palestine, as it loudly and noisily claims. Rather, it cynically wants to liberate the GCC of its US presence and establish its own hegemony over the Gulf and its oil wealth.

Until Iran's actions show otherwise — such as, for example, its complete termination of support for the Houthis in Yemen — all its pretensions of friendship and cooperation toward the Gulf will be taken for what they are: cynical attempts to disguise wolfish behavior in sheep's clothing. As it does this, Iran should expect the GCC states to move ever closer to the US-led alliance, with all that entails. They will do so to protect themselves from what they see as Tehran's malign intentions and to ensure their own national security.

Projects in the field of transport and construction were presented

News Desk

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev got acquainted with the presentation of projects in the field of transport and construction on 16 April.

Thanks to an active foreign policy, our country's international relations are increasingly expanding. Tashkent is becoming a center of business activity and tourism. For this reason, special attention is paid to the development of transport infrastructure.

In recent years, Tashkent International Airport named after Islam Karimov has been modernized, which has improved conditions for passengers. The service has expanded, the number of check-in counters and boarding gates has increased. As a result of a three-year reconstruction, the area of the departure terminal building increased from 56 thousand to 80 thousand square meters.

The reconstruction of the departure terminal is currently ongoing. The work will be carried out in three stages, resulting in expanded capabilities

for registration, customs control and security. Capacity will increase from the current 1.2 thousand people to 2.4 thousand passengers per hour.

It is also planned to build a new cargo terminal at Tashkent International Airport. This will increase the cargo handling capacity to 300 tons per day.

As you know, on 29 August 2022, the first stone was laid in the foundation of the town of Al-Khorezmi in the city of Urgench. Multi-storey buildings, schools and kindergartens, sports and cultural centers, parks, a technology park and other complexes will be built here. In particular, Al-Khorezmi University will be built in the center of the town.

According to the project, the university will include the faculties of mathematics and natural sciences, computer science, engineering, and 4 thousand students will study here. The university will also have a specialized school for gifted children. Thus, an educational cluster will be created here with the integration of education, science and production.

An exchange of views took place on filling the university concept with new content. The importance of creating modern laboratories for youth research, commercializing start-up projects, and opening areas in digital technologies and e-sports was emphasized.

Our people are rightfully proud of another great scientist, Abu Rayhan Beruni. To perpetuate the life of the thinker and his invaluable contribution to world science, on the initiative of the President of our country, it is planned to create a museum in the center of the Beruni district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The two-story building will be equipped with the most advanced museum equipment, and interactive methods will be used to design the exhibitions. A majestic monument to Beruni will be installed in front of the museum.

During the presentation, several options for project implementation were considered. Responsible persons were given instructions on finalizing projects and further improving the quality of construction and service.



Pakistan's envoy holds meeting with biosafety, biotechnology team in Brussels



BRUSSEL: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union Amna Baloch on Tuesday visited the facilities at Sciensano in Brussels. During her visit, she held a meeting with the Biosafety and Biotechnology team at Sciensano. In the meeting existing regula-

tory procedures in Belgium and the EU came under discussion. Collaborative platforms were also explored in the meeting.

tory procedures in Belgium and the EU came under discussion. Collaborative platforms were also explored in the meeting.

Measures to develop the textile industry of Uzbekistan were discussed

News Desk

TASHKENT: On 16 April, a video conference meeting was held under the chairmanship of President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on issues of increasing exports and investments in the textile industry.

The textile industry is widely represented in all regions of the country and is one of the sectors with the largest number of jobs. Today, over 6 thousand enterprises provide employment to 570 thousand people.

In recent years, due to the active attraction of investments and new technologies, productivity in the industry has increased significantly. For example, last year textile, clothing and knitwear products worth US\$8.2 billion were produced, which is 4.2 times more than seven years ago.

Also in 2023, the industry's exports amounted to US\$3.1 billion. This year, the industry entered three new markets, exporting to 83 countries.

However, an analysis of the export structure shows certain shortcomings. For example, in the export of finished goods the share of products with high added value is low.

Almost 80 percent of exports still go to traditional partner markets. Exports to Europe do not meet expectations.

To increase exports to developed country markets or brands, international standards and certifications are required.



However, only 175 enterprises meet these requirements. In 18 regions, the annual production of textile products does not reach a million dollars.

At the meeting, problematic issues were analyzed and the enormous opportunities available in the industry were listed.

An analysis by the consulting company Boston Consulting Group shows that our country's raw material base allows to produce products worth at least US\$15 billion and create 500 thousand new jobs.

For example, in our country the cost of one kilogram of yarn is 28 percent cheaper than average world prices. This represents a major opportunity to increase finished product production and competitive advantage.

In addition, the industry is provided with financial support. At the beginning of last year, US\$50 million was allocated for projects in the production of fabrics, dyeing and finishing, as well as the production of finished garments and knitted products. After using these funds, it is planned to allocate another

US\$100 million. The head of state emphasized the need to wisely use these opportunities to increase projects and jobs in the regions.

"Our only true path in this industry is the complete processing of existing raw materials to create high added value and the reorientation of exports from traditional cheap markets to new, more expensive ones," said Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

One of the best ways to increase production is to open branches of large enterprises in mahallas. For example, the Zarafshon Textile factory in the city of Samarkand opened 11 regional branches. The advantage of this is that there is no need to spend extra time and money on implementing standards or obtaining certifications. Therefore, it is necessary to expand this practice, it was noted at the meeting.

One of the most pressing problems for textile enterprises is access to raw materials. Our country has the capacity to process 1 million 300 thousand tons of cotton fiber, but at the moment about 1 million tons of fiber are produced. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the cost of growing cotton and increase field productivity.

The activities of cotton-textile clusters were also discussed, and proposals to ensure their stable activities were considered.

More than 100 industry entrepreneurs attended the video conference call. The President held a dialogue with them.

Attraction

Siran Valley: An emerging tourists' destination

Quratul Ain

Mountain regions and hilly areas of Pakistan are great attractions for the nature lovers. In the summer vacations, tourists across the country flow into these areas. Some of such destinations allure tourists more than the capacity they bear to host such tourists properly. The young frequent travellers satiate their thirst of new landscapes by exploring new destination in the remote regions of Pakistan. Later on, investment in infrastructures is attracted. There is a dire need to explore, develop and promote new mountain destinations for sustainable tourism. The proper planning of new tourist destinations would not only regulate tourists but also generate economic activities for the marginalized communities who are unable to benefit from the urban employment opportunities. Ganga Choti, Toli Peer, Lasdana, Kumrat are some of the examples increasing flow of tourists day by day but a little planned infrastructure development is witnessed. However, reasonable tourist facilities are developed to accommodate tourists visiting across the country.

Siran Valley is one of the emerging such tourists' destinations. It is situated in the district Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Siran valley's name comes from the Siran river, which flows through the valley. The older name of this beautiful valley was Dara Bhogarmang, after the name of Bhogarmang village, located in the center of the valley.

In this valley, one may enjoy the most serene experience of the life; surrounded by lush green hills and mountains. The climate of this valley remains mild and pleasant throughout the year, but due to its higher altitude, winter become pretty cold here, with temperatures falling below the freezing level.

Siran Valley can be approached



through Hazara Expressway and Dadar can be considered as the base camp for the trip. You can exist from Shinkiari and move to Siran Valley via Dadar. Dadar is about 180 kms. from Islamabad via Hazara Motorway. It is the best place to stay as reasonable and affordable hotels are available, here. You can walk or hike around the areas in lush green forest, fields, bank of the River Siran. You can explore the ancient villages and take in the culture of this majestic place.

There is a Siran Lake Resort where zipline, boats, swings and other recre-

ational activities can be enjoyed. A lot of local tourists are witnessed to visiting this Park. We also saw reasonable domestic tourists flow pouring into the valley by their own vehicles and even through public transport. The public transport runs from Shinkiari to Mudaghucha and charge Rs.200/-.

It is a perfect tourist spot for those who enjoy nature; one can explore a lot and have the best time in this valley. The valley is considered one of the most charming places, with famous spots like Chukro Peaks, Baleja Meadows, Aram Gali, and much more. Siran Valley offers



many activities that can keep you busy during your visit. You can go trekking to explore the rich forests, hike through the meadows, and camp in nature's lap.

Accommodation: If you are looking for comfortable accommodation, there are several hotels in nearby towns. About 9 kms from KKH Dadar has reasonable accommodation facilities. It can be considered gateway to this valley. I stayed in Al-Shola Tourist Hotel (0341-0253336) which has recently been built. A good place specially for the families. It has large family rooms from 3 to 5 beds with lobby, kitchen, lawn and wide parking facilities. They do not charge for additional mattresses. The staff is co-operative. Service-man is available. During off season it charges Rs.5000/- and during season upto R.8000/- per night. It is an excellent place to stay. We enjoyed our stay here. Nearby hotels are: Lahore Guest

House (0349-6016929), Summer Land Hotel (0315-4145473). These hotels have standard rooms of twin and double beds and they also charge Rs.5000/- to Rs.6000/-. These two hotels are better furnished but room, lobby and lawn areas are smaller when we compare it with Al-Shola Tourist Hotel. There is a Rest House of Forest Department, available for tourists, as well (0341-9221420). They charge Rs.3000/- to 4500/-. As you move forward, you will find Pine Valley View Hotel in Bhogarmang village (0300-5870333). They price also range from Rs.3000/- to Rs.4500/- per night.

On the way to Munda Guchah, the metaled road, you can witness awesome views. About an 45 minutes drive from Dadar, you will reach Munda Guchah. There are three small guest houses namely Ali, Gill and Basaira and with small size rooms and common wash-

rooms. Usually, trekkers stay while going to trek Musa Ka Musla and explore more beautiful valleys. These hotel charge around Rs.1500/- for a room and discount if group is of bigger size.

In short, Siran Valley is a good place for tourists to be visited in Summer. Investors are also being attracted and they have bought thousands of kanals land in this valley to build a tourist resort. This investment would bring bounties for the local community as tourism boost local economic activity. However, planned development of tourism infrastructure will ensure sustainability and will attract more tourists. I strongly recommend families to visit this valley. Youth found of hiking, trekking and adventure will also find a lot of valleys and treks to be explored and enjoyed. So plan your trip to Siran Valley.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Current | Prev. Close |
| 70,483.66 | 70,544.58 |
| Day's High | Day's Low |
| 71,092.61 | 70,405.24 |
| Index Value | Change |
| 13,403,041,470 | -60.92 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.09% | 16 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm |

| Europe: FTSE 100 Index | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 7,820.36 | -145.17 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -1.82% | 16 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1 |

| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 37,833.57 | +98.46 |
| Percentage | Time |
| +0.26% | 16 Apr, 1:02 pm GMT-4 |

| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 38,471.20 | -761.60 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -1.94% | 16 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+ |

Open Market Forex Rates

| Currency | Buying | Selling |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Australian Dollar | 181 | 182.8 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 739.3 | 747.3 |
| Canadian Dollar | 201 | 203 |
| China Yuan | 38.4 | 38.8 |
| Danish Krone | 39.66 | 40.06 |
| Euro | 293.15 | 296.1 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 35.51 | 35.86 |
| Indian Rupee | 3.33 | 3.44 |
| Japanese Yen | 1.86 | 1.94 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 902.26 | 911.26 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 58.24 | 58.84 |
| New Zealand \$ | 164.75 | 166.75 |
| Norwegians Krone | 25.42 | 25.72 |
| Omani Riyal | 722.07 | 730.07 |
| Qatari Riyal | 76.37 | 77.07 |
| Saudi Riyal | 73.3 | 74.05 |
| Singapore Dollar | 204.5 | 206.5 |
| Swedish Korona | 25.56 | 25.86 |
| Swiss Franc | 304.22 | 306.72 |
| Thai Bhat | 7.56 | 7.71 |
| U.A.E Dirham | 75.4 | 76.15 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 344.25 | 347.6 |
| US Dollar | 277.5 | 280.25 |

ICCI President lauds PM's directions for robust renewable energy management to cut \$27b oil import bill

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has applauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directions to authorities concerned for robust renewable energy management to cut the country's \$ 27 billion oil import bill and improve the existing electric distribution system.

It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister while chairing a meeting to review power sector performance directed the energy ministry to maximize the utilization of renewable energy resources to reduce the country's oil import bill saying that the oil import worth billions of dollars can be controlled by using alternative resources like solar, wind and hydel.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Prime Minister's direction that in future only clean, cost effective and renewable power plants should be set up in the country will not only



go a long way in saving the country's hard earned foreign exchange but boost its social and economic development.

Bakhtawari said that for country's rapid economic and industrial development a well strengthened and reliable power transmission system is need of the hour and to meet this demand Pakistan has a tremendous opportunity to cost-effectively tap its abundant solar, wind and hydropower resource potential which in turn would support national prosperity and job creation.

ICCI President expressed the hope that such concrete measures would surely bear fruit and pave the way for the industrial development, expansion of businesses in the country and fascinate foreign investments.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari went on to say that the Chambers in general and ICCI in particular would extend all out support to the government for the country's rapid growth and prosperity.

Wire Art

ISLAMABAD: An artist's making sculpture with wire title "Wire art" at Fatima Jinnah Park in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

CCP issues policy note recommending mandatory disclosure of manufacturing and expiry dates on cement packaging

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued a Policy Note under Section 29 of the Competition Act, 2010 to the Ministry of Science and Technology and Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). The Policy Note recommends them to amend the Pakistan Standard Specification for all five types of cement and make it mandatory for the cement manufacturers to disclose the 'manufacturing/packaging and expiry/best before' dates on their cement bags.

CCP observed that cement is inherently hygroscopic and begins to significantly lose its strength after 4 to 6 weeks of storage in bags in normal conditions and considerably sooner under adverse weather conditions or high humidity. The CCP has, therefore, noted with great concern that the cement manufacturers do not voluntarily print the manufacturing/packaging and expiry/best before dates on their cement bags.



The non-disclosure of such material information can mislead consumers and put them at risk of purchasing expired cement, which may compromise the strength and effectiveness of construction projects. The Policy Note suggests aligning Pakistan's standards with international labelling practices to ensure consistency and transparency in the domestic market as Pakistani cement exporters comply with marking requirements for exported quantities, creating unfair information disparity discriminating against domestic consumers.

Currently, all types of cement in Pakistan

must adhere to packaging standards set by the PSQCA. Printing manufacturing and expiry dates on cement bags is expected to empower consumers to make informed choices and enhance competition among brands. Additionally, it would facilitate just-in-time inventory management and improve consumer confidence in the quality of cement purchase.

The CCP emphasizes that the practice of omitting material information amounts to deceptive marketing, as it impairs consumers' ability to make informed decisions. Therefore, the Commission advocates for the mandatory printing of expiry dates on cement bags to protect consumers' interests and promote fair competition in the cement industry. As advisory has been accordingly sent to the All Pakistan Cement Manufacturers Association (APCMA) and its members requiring them to prioritize consumer safety and satisfaction by ensuring that all packaging clearly displays the 'manufacturing/packaging and expiry/best before' dates of their products.

Dawlance and UNIDO's Safety-Training on HFC R-32 Refrigerant & Equipment

PPA

KARACHI: Dawlance is the leading manufacturer of high-quality refrigerators, Air-Conditioners and other Home-appliances in Pakistan. Recently, a professional training program on "Safe Handling Practices of HFC R-32 Refrigerant and Equipment" was organized by the 'National Ozone Unit' with the 'Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination' (MoCC&EC), Government of Pakistan. The 'United Nations Industrial Development Organization' (UNIDO) and its RRR (Recover, Recycle & Reclaim) project (for proper end-of-life disposal of refrigerants) also contributed to make this program successful, in collaboration with Dawlance.

This training program is developed under HCFC's (Hydrochlorofluorocar-



bons) Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP), Stage-II in Pakistan. These sessions were conducted at Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Islamabad. It engaged more than 850 participants (dealer installers, authorized workshops, service branches network) all over Pakistan.

The Chief Executive Officer of Dawlance - Umar Ahsan Khan stated: "We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of the community and our consumers. Modern R-32 Service equipment has also been installed at the Dawlance Service Centers for recovery, because releasing it in the air causes pollution & depletion of the Ozone layer—a fragile shield of gas, protecting the Earth from the harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun."

Pakistan has no future sans tax policy reforms

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, the founder and President of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI), said on Tuesday that Pakistan's future appears to be dismal if significant improvements to the country's tax policy are not implemented.

She went on to say that the harmful impacts of inflation and the sharp increase in energy prices can be ascribed to the failure of a large number of small and medium-sized businesses.

As a result of the possibility that allowing sugar exports would lead to an increase in inflation, she urged that this practice be prohibited.

During her address to the business community, Samina Fazil stated that Pakistan could not continue to exist with the current tax system, dismally low revenue and irresponsibly

ble spending which results in continuous borrowing.

Therefore, the county needs short-term and long-term tax policy reforms while taxes on non-essential and luxury items should be increased.

The government must make tough decisions to fix economic problems and implement recommendations of lenders to come out of the current economic mess.

However, she regretted that so far, the elite have been spared from the impact of the IMF wish list, and the whole burden has been placed on the masses, who are reeling under unprecedented inflation and unemployment.

Critical flaws within Pakistan's tax system have caused an estimated loss of Rs567 billion during the last seven years in only one sector, which politicians dominate.

Lashing out on the energy policy,

the business leader said that Pakistan has one of the world's lowest per capita electricity consumption and the lowest outside of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Pakistan is plunging further into the energy poverty zone due to the wrong policy of increasing energy prices very frequently.

Despite rising urbanisation, the average consumption per electricity connection in Pakistan sits at a 20-year low, which is a real threat to prosperity.

Pakistan's per capita income is dwindling, and unemployment is rising. Still, the effective electricity tariff for use beyond 300 units is now comparable to the USA, already higher than the UAE, and inching closer to Singapore, which is unacceptable, she said.

Samina Fazil said the country can only develop with the unending practice of so-called energy tariff



rationalisation.

She said that despite increasing tariffs, many DISCOS are involved in overbilling to the tune of billions of rupees, which should be stopped.

She said a larger, medium-term IMF bailout, with complementa-

exceeded 35 thousand.

He said that Lahore Chamber provides business opportunities through meetings with heads of diplomatic missions, various federal and provincial departments and ministries.

It remains busy in finding the trade and investment opportunities and is also playing the role of a bridge between the stakeholders and the state.

LCCI President tells NIM that chamber plays role to promote trade and economic activities



PPA

LAHORE: The LCCI President informed the NIM delegation that Lahore Chamber is playing its role to promote trade and economic activities. Kashif Anwar said that the history of Lahore Chamber covers a century. This chamber was established in the name of Northern India Chamber in 1923. The number its members have

exceeded 35 thousand.

It remains busy in finding the trade and investment opportunities and is also playing the role of a bridge between the stakeholders and the state.

SECP publishes report on Pakistan's potential for micro and inclusive insurance

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan has issued a report titled "Unlocking the Potential of Micro and Inclusive Insurance in Pakistan," which provides an overview of the current landscape and vast untapped potential market for inclusive insurance. The report's draft version and synopsis were presented at the International InsureImpact Conference, 2023, held in Karachi.

This report explores inclusive insurance in Pakistan, highlighting its untapped market potential, comparing it to other jurisdictions, analyzing gaps, and proposing a future course of action.

The data collected indicates a concerning status of inclusive insurance market in Pakistan. A total of 12.56 million insurance policies were sold through microfinance banks/institutions. Out of these, 89 percent are credit life insurance, indicating a primary focus on covering the underlying credit risk. Moreover, of the 20 insurers offering inclusive insurance, only 4 are actively involved in digital distribution of small ticket products.

Commissioner Insurance, Aamir Khan in his message for report said that "inclusive insurance is of paramount importance for growth of the overall insurance penetration as it will assist and encourage insurers and other stakeholders in developing products and services that foster greater financial inclusivity".

Acknowledging, the urgency of this matter, collaborative efforts are required to bridge regulatory gaps, streamline processes, enhance awareness and improve product accessibility through focusing on digital distribution. By partnering with Mobile Network Operators, microinsurance providers can leverage their extensive network and digital infrastructure. The way forward to make inclusive insurance accessible to the target market is through amendments in Microinsurance Rules 2014 and leveraging technology to the fullest.

ry financial support from friendly countries, is imperative to address its balance-of-payments troubles.

The key to unlocking fresh IMF funds is convincing the lender that Pakistan is ready to undertake real reforms.



Fully prepared against West Indies, says Sidra Amin

She said that the results will be good and the performance of the spinners will be important.

Talking to media persons on the sidelines of the practice session at the National Bank Stadium on Tuesday, she said that they could not perform well in the previous home series against the West Indies.

She said that their spin attack is very good. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Women's

Cricket Team conducted a training session at the National Bank Stadium, in which they also conducted physical training under the supervision of their trainer in batting, bowling and fielding.

The series of three ODIs and five T20I matches between Pakistan and West Indies Women's cricket teams will begin at the National Bank Stadium from April 18.

The three ODIs are part of the ICC Women's Championship.

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan women cricket-

er Sidra Amin has said that Pakistan Women Team is fully prepared against West Indies.

Mushtaq Ahmed appointed as Bangladesh's spin bowling coach

A Sports

LAHORE: Former Pakistan leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed is set to join the Bangladesh cricket team as the spin bowling coach, confirmed by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Tuesday.

The 1992 World Cup winner will join the Bangladesh team later this month ahead of the T20I series against Zimbabwe and will work with them until the end of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

BCB announced the appointment of Ahmed as the spin bowling coach through a press release.

"Former Pakistan leg-spinner and World Cup winner Mushtaq Ahmed has



to be a part of the Bangladesh cricket team as a spin bowling coach," Mushtaq Ahmed said in a statement released by BCB.

"I am looking forward to the role and want to pass my experience to the players because they are very coachable and I always believe that they are one of the most dangerous teams around.

"They can beat anyone because they have the capability, the resources and the talent. I will try to instil that belief into them. I am very excited at the opportunity to work with the team," he concluded.

The right-handed bowler took 185 wickets in 52 Tests and 161 wickets in 144 ODIs for Pakistan.

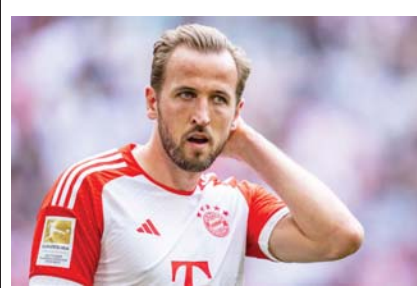
been appointed Bangladesh National Team Spin Bowling Coach," the press release stated.

"He will join the side ahead of the preparation camp later this month for the T20 series against Zimbabwe and will work with the Bangladesh

team until the end of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the USA."

Ahmed has previously served as the spin bowling coach for England (2008-2014), West Indies (2018-19) and Pakistan (2020-22). "It is a great honour for me

'Great season' still possible for Bayern Munich, says Harry Kane



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Striker Harry Kane said Tuesday that Bayern Munich still has a chance of a "great season" by winning the Champions League, before Wednesday's home quarter-final second leg against Arsenal.

Bayern Munich officially ceded the title to Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday, breaking their 11-year streak as champions. They are now starting at a first trophyless season since 2012.

The England captain, still without a trophy in his career despite an array of stellar personal records, said Champions League glory would give the season a different face.

"It's no secret here that the club sets out to win the Champions League every season," the 30-year-old told reporters.

"You know, from the club's point of view, it will be a failed season if we don't win anything this year because we're expected to win," Kane said, describing it as the "harsh reality of winning and losing."

"We still have the opportunity to turn the season into a great season if we win the Champions League.

"The motivation is still there for us as players. If we can do something special tomorrow night of course that keeps that hope alive."

Bayern Munich and Harry Kane returned from North London after a 2-2 draw at the Emirates.

The abolition of the away goal rule means one team needs to win on Wednesday to reach the final four.

Harry Kane moved to Bayern in the summer from Tottenham, Arsenal's north London rivals. He played his entire career at Spurs, having been released from the Gunners academy as a child.

At Tottenham, he scored 14 goals in 19 games against Arsenal and added another in Bayern's visit last week.

"Maybe it is in the back of my mind that I was released at a young age (by Arsenal) there was a point to prove and I'm the kind of player who has had points to prove throughout my career.

"I don't think that ever leaves you. That will always be in my DNA until I'm retired.

"Now I'm here at Bayern Munich and of course, I have a history with them (Arsenal) but all I can try and do is help Bayern Munich qualify for the semi-finals of the Champions League."

GSP CM Punjab Baseball League Day 2 Highlights

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The 2nd day of the GSP CM Punjab Baseball League, organized by the Pakistan Federation Baseball, saw a remarkable turnout of professional male and female athletes eager to refine their skills. Held at the FC Baseball Ground, the camp featured an exceptional lineup of foreign coaches, adding invaluable expertise to the training sessions.

Notably, the day's training session was graced by esteemed coaches: Mikey Veston, MLB Pitching Coach; Justin, specializing in batting techniques; Brian Furches, focusing on fielding skills; and Bow, enhancing strength and conditioning regimes.

Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, the General Secretary of the Pakistan Federation Baseball, welcomed the foreign coaches, with special acknowledgment for Mikey Veston, the MLB pitching coach. Shah highlighted the historic significance of having a professional pitching coach join the camp, emphasizing their role in elevating Pakistan's baseball standards and nurturing talent.

Shah also thanked all officials and organizers, particularly recognizing the contributions of Amjad Nawaz Khan and Ahsan Omer. Additionally, the dedication of local coaches including Nisar Ahmed, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Nadeem Shirazi, Tariq Pasha, Saqib Butt, Zoab Malik, Asif Mushtaq, Umer, and Umair Bhatti was acknowledged.

As the GSP CM Punjab Baseball League progresses, the collaboration between local and international expertise promises to elevate Pakistani baseball to new heights, inspiring athletes and fans alike.

Pakistani Chess Prodigy Ashaz Merchant Achieve FIDE Arena Candidate Master Title



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Ashaz Merchant, a rising star in the world of chess, has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first player under 12 in Pakistan to attain the esteemed title of FIDE Arena Candidate Master. This remarkable accomplishment not only highlights Ashaz's exceptional talent but also underscores his dedication to the game.

Ashaz's journey in the realm of chess has been nothing short of impressive. In 2022, he proudly represented Pakistan at the Western Asian Chess Championship held in Maldives, showcasing his skills on an international platform at a young age. The following year, in 2023, Ashaz further demonstrated his prowess by participating in the 2nd Asian Youth Chess Championship.

His dedication to the game was evident as he contributed to Pakistan's presence in the World School Team Chess Championship held in Kazakhstan, following his victory in the National School Championship. Ashaz's journey serves as an inspiration to aspiring chess players worldwide, highlighting the rewards that come with hard work, dedication, and a passion for the game.

Which Premier League players do Cristiano Ronaldo think Al Nassr should sign?

Cristiano Ronaldo has reportedly requested his Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr to sign two greatest players from the Premier League, Sportskeeda reported.

The 39-year-old has urged his club to get their hands on Liverpool's Luis Diaz and Manchester United's midfielder and his Portuguese teammate Bernardo Silva, to boost his team's capability after their tragic loss to Al Hilal in the Super Cup semi-final.

According to the outlet, Al Nassr may face difficulty signing Diaz as the Colombian footballer is signed to the Reds in a contract that ends in 2027.

Diaz, 27, is an important part of the Liverpool squad with 44 appearances this season with 13 goals and four assists in his bag. However, Liverpool might be able to cash in on Diaz as the team has enough players including Cody Gakpo and Darwin Nunez, to cover his spot.

Furthermore, Silva, who shared the pitch with Ronaldo 65 times, could be attainable for Al Nassr as he has only two years left on his deal at the Etihad.

Silva is an essential asset to Pep Guardiola and has played 40 matches this season, netting 10 goals and five assists.

The 29-year-old could possibly move amid the emergence of youngster Phil Foden, who also looks to take on the midfield.

Mohammad Rizwan close to surpass Virat Kohli, Babar Azam's record

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan is close to breaking a significant T20I record, currently held by teammate Babar Azam and Indian star batter Virat Kohli, during the upcoming New Zealand series.

Kohli and Azam are the joint-fastest to score 3000 runs in T20I cricket, taking 81 innings each, followed by Australia's Aaron Finch who took 98 innings.

However, Rizwan needs only 19 runs in his next two innings to become the fastest to reach the milestone. He has scored 2,981 runs in 78 innings so far.

Meanwhile, Babar Azam is closing in on Virat Kohli's record for the most runs in T20I cricket.

Azam has scored 3,698 runs in T20I cricket and is third among the highest run-scorers in the format.

Kohli tops the list with 4,037, followed by his teammate Rohit Sharma, who has amassed 3,974 runs.

Azam needs 340 runs in five games to become the highest-scorer as well as the second batter to surpass the 4000-run mark in T20I cricket.

For the unversed, Pakistan will host New Zealand for a five-match T20I series, scheduled to run from April 18. Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium



will host the opening three T20Is between Pakistan and New Zealand on 18, 20 and 21 April before action shifts to Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium where the last two matches will be played on 25 and 27 April.

Pakistan squad

Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saim Ayub, Usman Khan, Ifkhar Ahmed, Azam Khan (wk), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Amir, Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Fakhar Zaman, Irfan Khan Niazi, Usama Mir, Zaman Khan

Reserves: Haseebullah, Mohammad

Ali, Agha Salman, Sahibzada Farhan, Mohammad Wasim Jr.

New Zealand squad

Michael Bracewell (c), Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Ben Lister, Cole McConchie, Jimmy Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert (WK), Ish Sodhi, Tom Blundell, Zak Foulkes.

Pakistan vs New Zealand T20I series schedule

April 18 — 1st T20I, Rawalpindi
April 20 — 2nd T20I, Rawalpindi
April 21 — 3rd T20I, Rawalpindi
April 25 — 4th T20I, Lahore
April 27 — 5th T20I, Lahore

Pakistan cricketers extend support for touring London club cricketers

Sports Desk

LAHORE: From master blaster Shahid Afridi to wicket-knocking Shaheen Shah Afridi, many former and current cricketers from Pakistan have pledged their support for the touring London cricket team.

The theme of their tour is "Love for Club Cricket," as they hope their tour will ignite more passion and competitiveness at the club level.

Cricket is the number one sport in Pakistan and to say this about the United Kingdom (Great Britain) must be an understatement. The British were the pioneers of the game and they have made it pervasive to an extent that now more than 100 countries play the game globally.

The pace giant Waqar Younis led the good wishes for the London CC. "I wish London boys the best of luck. Pakistan is the best place for cricket, enjoy the visit,"

was Waqar's message for the tour.

Pakistan's pace sensation Shaheen said he was praying for the best results on the tour. "My best wishes and prayers for London Cricketers CC. play good cricket and enjoy the tour," was what Shaheen had to say.

Former England batting great David Gower advised the London Club to enjoy the tour to the hilt.

"You are going to Pakistan for a tour, so that should be the most fantastic experience. I have been there a couple of times, in fact, a couple of times in the last few years as well, and I tell you straight away that this is the most welcoming country," said Gower.

"They love their cricket and the hospitality is always outstanding. There is so much to enjoy when you go to Pakistan; the culture, the food, the people, everything is there to be experienced.

"All the venues are great. So the trick is this: play as well as you can, that's always a given on a crick-

et tour but, look, enjoy the hospitality, the people and the country and it will be the most magnificent experience."

The British High Commissioner in Pakistan Jane Marrotte has also pitched the tour as a "wonderful opportunity" for the London Club.

"No doubt that you are going to have a wonderful trip in this peaceful and diverse country," said Jane Marrotte in a message.

"The UK and Pakistan share a love for cricket that strengthens our friendship. Your visit is excellently timed ahead of Pakistan's women and Men touring the UK for international matches in May.

"As you tour a country you will find Pakistan hospitality unmatched. I hope you will share these stories when you are back in the UK... wishing you the best of luck."

The 22-man squad is led by an affable person in Irfan Akram. Those who have toured England

with the Pakistan cricket team are familiar with Irfan.

He is the perennial liaison officer for the Pakistan team, showing an infectious smile all the time during his coordination and working out various matters for Team Green.

The squad played a match against Aleem Dar Academy at Aleem Dar Cricket Ground on April 14 while the next day's opponents were the famous P&T Gymkhana on the next day (April 15).

The matches against Azhar Ali Academy and Abdul Qadir Cricket Academy are scheduled for April 17.

The visiting players will also go to Sialkot where a match will be played against the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry team.

A match against Hasan Raza Cricket Academy in Islamabad is also a part of the program. They will also play in Abbottabad and



Murree on this tour.

The team that is visiting Pakistan includes Haris Usman, Abdullah Akbar, Zoraiz Saeed,

Herath Wajid, Sahar Akbar, Faheem Aziz, Stephen Ramidal, Zain Shehzad, Soha Iqbal, Jan Sher Akbar, Irfan Akram, Haris

Raza, Hasan Ali Iqbal, Ehsan Shah, Anthony Smith, Scott Emmons, Shahid Akbar, Adnan Akram and Dave Ramidel.

Investment Conference

ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Pakistani and Saudi delegation with Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud on the occasion of Saudi Arabia - Pakistan Investment Conference, held, on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia finalise implementation mechanism to execute investment matters

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday finalized a bilateral implementation mechanism to closely coordinate and execute investment related matters at the functional level to turn the sovereign commitments into tangible economic outcomes. The matters related to the investment opportunities in Pakistan's multiple sectors were discussed at Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Conference held here

and attended by the visiting high-level Saudi delegation led by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, according to a Foreign Office press release. Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar warmly welcomed the Saudi delegation at the SIFC emphasizing the deep-rooted ties and mutual strategic interests between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He highlighted the significance of enhanced bilateral strategic and economic partnership and the crucial

role of Saudi investments in nurturing this relationship. He explained how Pakistan through the SIFC platform aimed to streamline investment processes and ensure rapid decision-making, fostering a flourishing investment-friendly environment in Pakistan. The foreign minister showcased Pakistan's abundant opportunities in agriculture, IT, and mining sectors, inviting Saudi investors to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships. He expressed confidence in the

strengthened bonds between the two countries, envisioning significant economic growth and lasting benefits. Dar concluded with a call for constructive engagement and collaboration towards mutual prosperity and development. The SIFC officials gave comprehensive briefings encompassing the potential and investment opportunities in key sectors of Pakistan's economy. Both sides held exhaustive deliberative sessions at functional level to crystallize invest-

ment opportunities in Pakistan. The Saudi side expressed great significance and interest in the improving investment ecosystem in Pakistan, appreciated SIFC's role in amicable resolution of Saudi Arabia's legacy investment/business related issues, and showed keen interest to invest in key sectors of Pakistan. The Pakistani side assured the Saudi side of maximum support and facilitation in fast-tracking the Kingdom's prospective multi-billion dollars investments in Pakistan.

COAS Munir, Saudi FM discuss matters of bilateral cooperation



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in a meeting with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir emphasized the importance of strategic relations between the two countries. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the Saudi foreign minister and the Army Chief held a meeting in which matters of mutual interest and devel-

opment were discussed. The military's media wing added that Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud also stressed on further expansion of cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in various fields. Chief General Syed Asim Munir appreciated the exemplary relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as well as the brotherhood among the people of both countries. The Army Chief assured the Saudi delegation of all possible cooperation.

Chinese, Iranian FMs hold phone talks on Israel-Iran tensions

Xinhua

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, held phone talks on Monday regarding the tensions between Israel and Iran.



Amir-Abdollahian briefed Wang on Iran's position on the attack on the consular section of the Iranian embassy in Damascus, Syria, saying that the UN Security Council did not make a necessary response to this attack, and that Iran has the right to self-defense in response to the violation of its sovereignty.

Noting that the current regional situation is very sensitive, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran is willing to exercise restraint and has no intention of further escalating the situation.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said China strongly condemns and firmly opposes the attack on the consular section of the Iranian embassy in Damascus, regarding it as a serious violation of international law and unacceptable.

China has noted Iran's statement that its action taken was limited and was an act of self-defense in response to the attack against the Iranian consulate in Syria, Wang said.

Rana Tanveer directed to Ensure availability of Urea and DAP fertilizer to farmers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A review meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee was held under the chairmanship of Rana Tanveer Hussain Federal Minister for M/o Industries & Production and M/o National Food Security & Research. Federal Secretary M/o National Food Security & Research Capt (R) Muhammad Asif and Federal Secretary M/o Industries & Production Mr. Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry also attended.

Purpose of the meeting to evaluate the demand and supply of Urea and DAP fertilizer for Kharif season.

Federal Minister Rana Tanveer was informed that Demand for Urea fertilizer for Kharif season 2024 is 3.6% higher than last year. The Minister directed that to ensure availability of Urea and DAP fertilizer to the farmers. It was shared that Ministry of Industries & Production is monitoring the availability and production of fertilizer with the provincial governments.

The Minister said the government is committed to the welfare and improvement of agriculture and is ensuring integrated measures for agricultural development and prosperity of farmers. All resources will be utilized. Gas supply will be ensured for fertilizer plants. Fertilizers manufacturing industries will increase production of fertilizers on priority basis, the meeting was informed.

CM Maryam Reprimands MS Tehsil HQs Hospital Murree

Bureau Report

MURREE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed indignation on seeing long queues of patients in OPD, when she suddenly reached Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Murree. She reprimanded the MS for making patients wait, and warned him, "Fix the hospital system, patients are dying."

Chief Minister visited various departments and wards of the hospital including

OPD, Emergency, Medical Ward, Gynecology and Nursery. She consoled a sick mother and her daughter, "Do not panic! Insha Allah will be fine." The Chief Minister expressed her love and compassion for a little child under treatment there, and directed the doctor to provide him best treatment facilities. She also visited patients in the emergency ward one by one and prayed for their speedy recovery. Madam Chief Minister directed to ensure better care of patients in the Emergency.

The Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif interacted with the patients and their families and inquired them about facilities in the hospital. She also inquired them about the provision of free medicines and medical tests in the hospital. She inspected the PCU center, and reviewed treatment facilities there.

An elderly patient told Madam Chief Minister, "Medicines are being received, there is no problem."

Chief Minister on her return from the hospital, posed for a picture and hugged a female security guard on her request.

Pakistani culture, cuisines attract audience at Nowruz festival in China

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan's rich culture coupled with regional costumes and traditional cuisines drew attention of participants at a reception held to mark the International Nowruz Day at the Secretariat of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) here on Tuesday.



Pakistan Embassy in Beijing set up a stall to showcase Pakistani culture, food, traditional dresses giving the audience a rare glimpse of rich Pakistani culture and traditions.

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, SCO Secretary General, Zhang Ming, ambassadors of SCO countries and representatives of international organizations, as well as prominent public figures, journalists, and cultural representatives of the SCO family attended the reception.

Addressing the participants, Secretary General, SCO, Zhang Ming welcomed the distinguished guests

and expressed gratitude to the heads of diplomatic missions of the Shanghai family for their assistance and active participation in the celebration of Nowruz.

He said that Nowruz is a traditional festival in many SCO countries like Spring festival of China, it symbolizes the return of spring, the passing of the old year and the beginning of the new year.

With its long history, it is a festival filled with philosophical insights, and a combination of traditional virtues and fold wisdom. It embodies an attitude

of equality, inclusiveness, optimism, sincerity, kindness, respect for nature and love for life.

Zhaning Ming said that the celebrations of the festival are of great significance for many countries in the SCO family, especially this year as the secretariat celebrates its 20th anniversary of its establishment.

Fortunately, the joyous atmosphere stays unchanged, and now Beijing has warmer weather and spring blossoms. It is the most beautiful time of the year, he added.

The secretary general appreciated the national handicrafts and gourmet food prepared and showcased by countries of the SCO family on the occasion.

On behalf of Kazakhstan chairmanship of SCO, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Shakhmat Nuryshev expressed congratulations to all attendees and said today Nowruz has become one of the brightest and favourite holidays of many people of the world.

It symbolizes the desire for peace, harmony with nature, mutual understanding between people, traditions and continuity between generations, he added.

He said that Nowruz play an important role in preserving cultural diversity and strengthening good neighbourly and friendly relations between the SCO member states.

During the festival, Russia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iran, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Bahrain, Kuwait and UAE also set up stalls and showcased their culture and traditional food.

Nowruz is an international holiday that has been celebrated for thousands of years by people living in various countries covering the large territory from the Balkans and South Caucasus to Central and South Asia, as well as Russia and Western China.

Nowruz is usually observed on March 21-22 and is celebrated by more than 300 people in the world.

WHO warns of falsified cough syrup ingredients seized in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization issued an alert on Monday warning drug makers of five contaminated batches of propylene glycol, an ingredient used in medicinal syrups, that appear to have been falsely labelled as manufactured by Dow Chemical units in Asia and Europe.

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) issued three alerts between January and March over high levels of ethylene glycol (EG), an industrial solvent known to be toxic, found in drums purportedly made by subsidiaries of Dow Chemical in Thailand, Germany and Singapore.

DRAP sent suspect drums of propylene glycol, a sweet-tasting alcohol used in over-the-counter medicines such as cough syrups, for testing. The samples were found to have EG contamination of 0.76-100%, according to the WHO. International manufacturing standards say only trace amounts of EG, below 0.1%, can be considered safe.

Azerbaijani ambassador calls on Defence Minister



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday. Welcoming the ambassador, the minister said Pakistan viewed Azerbaijan as an important country due to its strategic location, immense resources, progressive outlook and fast growing economy.

The minister highlighted the importance of bilateral brotherly relations between two countries which were based on historical, cultural and religious commonalities, a Defence Ministry news release said. Khawaja Asif expressed the desire to enhance defence relations, which had immense potential to grow to the benefit of both countries. He stressed the need for continued interaction between higher military and defence level leadership of the two countries. During the meeting, the prospects of holding the 8th Meeting of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Joint Commission in Islamabad was also discussed. Both sides appreciated the launching of Baku-Karachi-Baku flight after Lahore and Islamabad cities, by the

Terrorist groups operating from...

Continued from Page 1

acting as proxies against Pakistan and its economic interests, especially the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Pakistan has been dealing with an increase in terrorist activities and insurgency. These are some of the problems the country is facing along with the struggling economy.

The forum expressed serious concern over the ongoing Indian aggression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, reit-

erating that "Pakistan will continue to provide political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters."

The military's top brass expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious "human rights violations, war crimes and genocide being perpetrated in Gaza."

COAS Munir directed field commanders to ensure the highest standards of operational preparedness and motivation within their outfits and to pursue professional excellence through objective training.