



President for strict action against criminals in Sindh
President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday urged Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to take strict actions against the criminals in Karachi, dacoits in Kacha area and the drug traffickers in close collaboration with the federal government and other provinces to ensure law and order situation in the province. (Details on Page 8)



'Chinese president's upcoming visit to bring new hope to Serbia's development'
Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Tuesday that Chinese President Xi Jinping's upcoming state visit is not only a major diplomatic event for Serbia, but also a major event that is worthy of the joy of all Serbian people. While expressing his belief that Xi's visit will bring new hope to Serbia's development, the president said: "I am very much looking forward to President Xi's visit." (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Regional stabilization

Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Asim Munir meets United Kingdom's Chief of the General Staff General Patrick Sanders at the Generals Headquarters in Rawalpindi.



Photo: ISPR

General Asim COAS, meets top UK generals at regional stabilization conference

City Desk
RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), COAS, Pakistan Army and General Sir Patrick Sanders, CGS UK Army addressed the opening session of 6th Pakistan-UK Regional Stabilization Conference at National Defence University, Islamabad on 30th April 2024. General Sir Roland Walker, designate CGS UK Army also attended the session.
Pakistan-UK Stabilization Conference is the flagship defence and security dialogue between the two countries, held alternately in Pakistan and UK, bringing together a formidable corpus of subject matter experts in diverse domains including diplomats, defence officials, intellectuals and civil society representatives.
In connection with this conference, a 30-member UK delegation, is visiting Pakistan from 29 April to 3 May 2024, led by Major General Tom Bateman, Standing Joint Force Commander. During the Conference, delegations from both sides will exchange perspectives on global and regional environment and its impact on national security, and, regional peace and stability.
This year, the scope of discussion has been expanded from bilateral to regional issues and defence officials of both countries from the region are also participating in the conference.
Separately, COAS also held a meeting with CGS and designate CGS UK Army. Both sides discussed matter of professional interest and measures to further elevate bilateral defence relations. COAS thanked General Patrick Sanders for his services in enhancing bilateral military ties and felicitated General Roland Walker on his nomination as the next CGS of UK Army.

PM wants wealthy, businessmen, industrialists to prioritize improving conditions of labour class

Bureau Report
LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that they were fully cognizant of the value of the labourers and workers in the national economy and stressed upon the wealthy, businessmen, investors and industrialists to prioritize improving the conditions of the workers. Addressing a gathering of labourers and workers from different sectors at his residence in connection with the observance of International Labour Day, the prime minister said that country's economic situation was challenging but they were striving to turn it around, with collectively efforts and sincerity.
He said that Pakistan would soon become a powerful country through a functioning of a fair system and on the basis of hard work by the employers and the employees including workers. The prime minister said that the government was striving to bring about substantial

changes in the national economy and to recover billion of rupees being wasted due to corruption. Referring to his recent visit from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he said that the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other leadership desired to see Pakistan moving on the path of progress. The Saudi business and investors' delegation would soon visit Pakistan which would increase businesses and job opportunities in the country, he added. The prime minister said that in the upcoming fiscal budget, they would try to provide further relief to the the labour class. Calling upon the business people and well to do class, the prime minister said that they should also think beyond their families and businesses and invest in certain education and health projects for the deprived classes like those established in the developed countries. "It was not an objective behind the creation of Pakistan that there would be a difference between the rich and the poor. Quaid-e-Azam



Muhammad Ali Jinnah led the massive movement in which the

people had offered huge sacrifices. The motive was the establishment of a welfare state in which everyone would have the equal opportunities to excel in life on the basis of one's capacity and ability and take the country forward," he added. The prime minister reiterated that they were striving to end corruption and promised that all the organs of government and other state institutions, with their collective efforts, would carve a niche for Pakistan among the comity of nations.
He said that the labourers and workers worked hard in the most difficult conditions and helped their employers generate their businesses. Both were like the wheels of the same carriage and their work lead to progress and prosperity of the nation and country. He said if the workers were deprived of their due rights, a country could not achieve progress. The prime minister opined that due to price hike and inflation, the life for the common man had become hard.

Deputy PM Dar arrives in The Gambia to represent Pakistan at 15th OIC Summit



News Desk
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that he had arrived in The Gambia to represent Pakistan at 15th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit being held in Banjul on 4-5 May.
On his X account, the deputy prime minister/foreign minister said that earlier, he had participated with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Riyadh.
He was received by the Gambian Minister of Petroleum and Energy Nani Juwara, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Ambassador of Pakistan to Senegal accredited to the Gambia Saima Maymunah Sayed, a post on X said.
Ishaq Dar, in his post, further said that besides attending the Summit, he would also hold bilateral meetings with dignitaries from the member countries.
The Foreign Office Spokesperson in a press release said that at the Summit, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister would speak about Pakistan's perspective on the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, imperatives of solidarity and unity of the Ummah, rising Islamophobia, issues of climate change, terrorism and other contemporary global challenges. He will underline the need to find collective solutions to challenges confronting the Muslim Ummah, it was further added.
On the sidelines, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister will hold bilateral meetings with leaders and foreign ministers participating in the summit.

Pakistan strongly condemns terrorist attack in Herat, Afghanistan

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned yesterday's heinous terrorist attack at a mosque in Herat, Afghanistan, resulting in loss of lives and injuries. The people and government of Pakistan extend their heartfelt condolences to the people of Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families in this hour of grief, a Foreign Office statement said.
"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including despicable attacks on places of worship", it added.

Tanveer Ilyas booked for forcibly trying to take over Centaurus office

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: A case has been filed against former Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas for an armed attack on Centaurus Mall in Islamabad.
The case was filed by the mall's deputy security incharge Colonel (r) Tipu Sultan in the Margalla Police Station.
The FIR states that Ilyas stormed Centaurus with Aneel Sultan, Rizwan and 20-25 other men. They tried to forcibly take over an office belonging to Arshad Ilyas, who is Tanveer's brother. While the security staff resisted, Tanveer Ilyas allegedly fired at the deputy security incharge and missed.
The FIR also accuses the former PM of instructing his men to shoot his brother on sight. However, the security staff managed to hold off the armed party until the police came. Sultan told the police that this is not the first such instance where a Tanveer Ilyas had tried to storm offices by force.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar's name emerges in wheat scandal investigations

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: A shocking revelation has emerged from the ongoing investigation into the wheat import scandal, indicating a potential loss exceeding 300 billion rupees to the national exchequer.
The initial report suggests a deliberate scheme where the private sector was granted unrestricted access to import wheat during the caretaker government's reign, leading to excessive imports and massive financial repercussions.
The investigative committee's report has exposed a concerning situation where the Ministry of Finance, under the caretaker government, recommended an open-ended allowance for wheat imports by the private sector, surpassing the established limits. This move allowed wheat traders to exploit the system and amass significant profits.
Further investigation revealed that customs duty and GST were also waived on these imports, a decision seemingly influenced by the approval of caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar and a subsequent summary forwarded by the Ministry of National Food Security.

Interior Minister visits Coast Guards HQ, lauds PCG performance

Bureau Report
KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Pakistan Coast Guards (PCG) Headquarters here on Wednesday. The Director General Pakistan Coast Guards Brigadier Ghulam Abass received the Minister on his arrival at the Headquarters.
Interior Minister laid floral wreath at martyrs monument and presented solute to the martyrs for their supreme sacrifice for the defence of the motherland.
The Interior Minister was briefed on the professional affairs of Pakistan Coast Guards, in which the efforts to fulfill the responsibilities of Coast Guards and prevent all kinds of smuggling, especially anti-narcotics activities.
Mohsin Naqvi was informed about the professional training of Pakistan Coast Guards and the measures taken to prevent smuggling and the details of the seized drugs, alcohol and other general items, including the process of burning the seized drugs.

Privatization Minister expresses resolve to facilitate labor force

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday reiterated the firm commitment of the government to take appropriate measures to provide maximum facilities to the labor force in the country and to include them in the national mainstream.
In his message on World Labor Day, the Minister said that he salutes the high morale of every hard worker, laborer, and skilled person who is serving this country.
One who is performing his duties even in the most difficult situations is praiseworthy and we must acknowledge such services not only on 1st May but every day, he remarked.
Abdul Aleem Khan said that there is no doubt our labor community has a great share in the country's economic system and keeps it alive and active.
The Minister expressed his good wishes for every laborer living in this country and prayed for their success.

Balochistan cadets visit Line of Control in Azad Kashmir

Bureau Report

CHAKOTHI: Balochistan Civil Service Academy Govt Balochistan officials visited Chakothi Sector of Line of Control. The delegation was led by Chief Instructor Dr. Khalid.

On this occasion, the local Brigade commander welcomed the delegation at the LoC and gave a detailed briefing on the current situation of the Line of Control and the aggression and brutality of the Indian occupation forces in the occupied valley.

He said that the Indian Army has been heating the market of cruelty and brutality against innocent and oppressed Kashmiris for the past 76 years and innocent Kashmiris are being martyred day by day. Indian occupying forces have not left any tactic of cruelty and coercion which has not been tried on the innocent Kashmiri people, but the Kashmiri people are standing on their stand with courage and bravery and high morale.

He also briefed the delegation about Kashmiri culture history. He said that there is a big scope of tourism in Azad Kashmir. The Kashmir government and the Pakistan Army



are trying to provide employment to the people here due to tourism, and a lot of interest is being taken in the agriculture sector. He also informed

the delegation about the free health facilities for the Pakistan Army and the people of the area along the Line of Control. A gift was also given to

Mr Khalid head of delegation. Later, the delegation visited the command bridge along with the brigade commander.

Labour Day

FAISALABAD: PPP workers taking out a rally on the occasion of May Day at District Council Chowk.



Photo: Online

Rubina Akhtar says 'fake mandate' of PM to end May 19

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: National Assembly Constituency NA-148 candidate Doctor Rubina Akhtar has said that the Government formed through the election on February 8 has come to power with a fake mandate. The reason is that there is still political instability and economic improvement. The rulers do not see any hope anymore, this government, tied to the IMF, has lost the sympathies of the people and May 19 will be the day to end the fake mandate. Support and create a new history by making successful woman leader Dr. Rubina Akhtar addressed a gathering



of women in Basti Khairpur Multan and participated in door-to-door Election campaign in which she was accompanied by Nargis Jabeen, Kausar Sultana, Hussain Bibi and Sharifan Bibi. On

this occasion, Dr. Rubina Akhtar said that the caretaker government and the PDM-1 government import ordered large quantities of wheat from all over Pakistan to increase their personal bank

balance and ordered cheap Rate wheat Provided to the public at the rate of Rs. 4500 per maund, which led to caretaker government and PDM1 rule Farmers earned a profit of 85 billion rupees, due to which the poor and middle class have been burdened with inflation. Dr. Rubina Akhtar further said that this year bumper crop of wheat has been produced, but the farmers paid high prices despite severe inflation. Fertilizer Electric City For Used the Tube wells were used for seeds but the government did not purchase wheat from the farmers at the official rate even by increasing the rate of wheat to 3900, due to which the farmers of Pakistan were forced to protest.

International Labor Day Celebrated

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Power Workers Union CBA Mepco Region on the instructions of the central leaders under the leadership of Regional Chairman Mepco Chaudhry Ghulam Rasool Gujjar in Bakhtiar Labor Hall Shah Rukn Alam Colony on May 1st International Workers Day 1886. To the great sacrifice workers in Chicago America Homage was offered. The ceremony started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Irshad Sanghera. Addressing the employees and officials, Regional Chairman Chaudhry Ghulam Rasool Gujjar, Regional Secretary Chaudhry Mahmood Amjad said that feudalism, capitalism, monopoly in the country. A system based on Islamic equality was established by abolishing the outdated system of Full four agricultural reforms should be implemented in the country. All employees working on daily and contract basis in Mepco should be made permanent on war footing.



The participants prayed for forgiveness for Ashiq Dogar, Chairman Gulbarg Sub-Division, who passed away a few days ago. Alvi, Chaudhry Azhar, Usman Raan, Ishrat Alvi, Mazhar Abbas, Rana Tayyab, Rao Aslam, Chaudhry Zahid, Akram Ghorri, Qazi Aftab, Salim Shah, Malik Amir, Asif Sajjad, Muhammad Saleem, Amjad

Dogar, Salman Baloch, Anwar Gujjar, Rana Fanwak Ahmed, Ali Waqas, Rana Atiq Anjum, Shafiq Gujjar, Asad Rana, Rana Hasnain, Ghulam Ali, Shahzad Ali, Asif Rashid, Babar Malik, Saeed Syal, Altaf Hussain, Khalid Sahoo, Chaudhry Shafaqat, Ghaffar Baloch, Yousuf Mahni, Mian Aziz, Chaudhry Rashid Ijaz, Imran Kazmi, Chaudhry

Naeem, Kamran Zaki, Ahsan Nandila, Zahid Mahni, Fayyaz Raan, Salman Wahab, Mehr Shakeel Nawaz, Afzal Vatto, Rao Taslim, Kashif Shah, Asadullah, Ayub Abbas, Rana Ali Hussain, Rao Iqbal, Muhammad Mumtaz, Abdul Majeed. And other Mepco employees were present in large numbers in the rally

Azad Kashmir minister lands in Gambia on OIC invitation, to attend summit

Abdul Majeed Tahir

BENJUL_GAMBIA/MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Minister Small Industry and Trade and Travel Authority Professor Taqdees Gilani arrived in Gambia from Turkey's capital Istanbul along with Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Pakistan Ishaq Dar on the invitation of OIC Secretary General Hussain Ibrahim Taha. She will attend the OIC conference to be held in Benjul, the capital of Gambia, along with the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif. Professor Taqdees Geelani had arrived in Turkey from Islamabad yesterday, where after a one-day stay, he reached Benjul along with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. The government minister will stay in Gambia for seven days where she will attend the important meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in the context of the current international situation. Professor Taqdees Gilani has extensive experience in highlighting the Kashmir issue at the international level, based on which OIC Secretary General has invited him to attend the conference.



Bilal Murtaza sentenced to death in Tararkhal murder case

Bureau Report

PALANDRI: District and Sessions Judge Siddhanuti Arbab Azam Khan and District Qazi Sardar Muhammad Arif Khan convicted the accused Bilal Murtaza in the famous murder case of Tararkhal and sentenced him to death according to section APC-302 (a). The court order has been issued by District and session judge here yesterday. While the other accused were acquitted of the above crimes by giving benefit of doubt.

According to the details, the District Criminal Court Sidhanoti, while pronouncing the verdict in the murder case of a person named Adil Nazir of Tararkhal Kotaria in the case No. 2022/20, has declared the accused Bilal Murtaza guilty and ordered the death penalty for the affirmative crime APC302(a). Whereas in the affirmative offense (2) 15 AA, five years imprisonment and a fine of fifty thousand rupees have also been ordered. Non-payment of fine, the offender will suffer two months imprisonment only. Criminal Bilal Murtaza has also been ordered to pay compensation of eight lakh rupees under section (a) 544 ZP to be paid to the shari'a heirs of the deceased Adil Nazir. Criminal Bilal Murtaza has also been given the benefit of Section (B) 382 ZF. Other named accused in the case, Mudassar Akhtar, Fazail Bashir and Shiraz Hafeez, have been acquitted of all the above crimes by giving benefit of doubt. The execution of the death sentence of the criminal Bilal Murtaza will be done with the approval of the honorable Supreme Court Shariat Appellate Bench of Muzaffarabad.

2 terrorists of TTP killed in police Encounter Near Bahawalpur

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Two terrorists of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed during a police encounter last night, in Bahawalpur; a statement by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of police said on Wednesday.

The CTD spokesman said that two terrorists named, Adeel alias Saifulah Khorasani and Zain alias Asadullah Khorasani were arrested a few days ago during the investigation of a murder case in Hasilpur, and they were under the custody of the police. Last night both terrorists were brought to identify the hidden weapons, when their accomplices opened the fire on the CTD team in ambush, during the retaliation both arrested terrorist were killed by the firing of their own accomplices, while the other were managed to flee, he added.

The spokesman said that the kill terrorist formed a four-member TTP network, and they had planned to kill the Federal Minister Riaz Hussain Pirzada. The search operations is going on to arrest the terrorists who opened the fire at CTD team, he said.

The spokesperson further said that the Counter Terrorism Department Punjab is diligently pursuing its goal of a safe Punjab and is determined to root out the scourge of terrorism.

Majlis Shura of Pakistan Ulema Council meeting will be held on 4th

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The meeting of the Central Majlis Shura of Pakistan Ulema Council will be held in Lahore on the 4th.

Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Quaid Millat Islamia Allama Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi will preside over the meeting.

Central Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan Ulema Council Allama Tahir Al Hasan said this in his special statement and added that important decisions will be taken in the meeting and the current situation and future plan of action will be announced. It will announce its policy for effective measures against aggression and for the protection of the Muslim Ummah and the Pakistan Ulema Council has always played

its role for the security and prosperity of Pakistan and will continue its support for the development of Pakistan in the future. We are standing with our Pakistan army and security institutions against terrorism and to end it and together we will make Pakistan a peaceful and prosperous state and the whole nation is united to end foreign conspiracies. will do what is in the interest of the nation and the government should also take steps to end obscenity.

Jamaat-e-Islami demands end to injustice of Punjab govt in support of farmers

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Punjab government should not engage in politics of fascism and oppression. Jamaat-e-Islami has become the language of farmers. The Punjab government is another name for cruelty and injustice. Farmers are worried. Farmers are being oppressed in the purchase of wheat. Those responsible should be brought to justice who ordered wheat from outside at the time of wheat harvest. The Punjab government is responsible for this. Atrocities on farmers should be stopped. Sometimes fertilizer is expensive, sometimes electricity is expensive and sometimes for grain, despite these atrocities, the farmer cultivates in the country, but the government always abuses and oppresses. Dr. Safdar Hashmi expressed these views in his address to the participants of the demonstration in favor of the farmers. He said that the farmers are worried, the government has fixed the price of wheat, but the office for buying is closed and the staff is missing. The loss of which is happening to the farmer and the profit to the capitalist. Who will buy wheat at cheap prices and sell it at high prices. He said that Jamaat-e-Islami is with the farmers, we will never leave the farmers alone. Dr. Safdar Hashmi said that Jamaat-e-Islami announced protests across the country on April 30. Dr. Safdar Hashmi said that Punjab government oppression, corruption is another name for injustice, PML-N is a group of capitalists and landlords who come to power and do business and build their palaces with people's taxes.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings
Fajr 3:47 am
Zohr 12:05 pm
Asr 4:53 pm
Maghrib 6:51 pm
Isha 8:23 pm

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

Women Police Stations
Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

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

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

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

COMPLAINTS
Water Tanker Service
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

Govt employees facing difficulties in payment of salaries

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: After the establishment of a separate district of Lower South Waziristan, payment of salaries to employees became a major problem despite the District Accounts Office being in tank.

However, due to the slowness of the process of bifurcation, further problems started to arise and despite which District Accounts Office staff are not ready to work in their own district.

While, unfortunately, the District Accountant Officer of Lower South Waziristan is preferring to work in Tank District, 160 km away, instead of Wana, where he is dealing with treasury and office affairs along with his staff.

Due to the District Accountant Officer sitting away, on the one hand, other government employees all line departments including the police are facing serious difficulties.

Ayaz Wazir said that it is the biggest regret that the accountant officer of one district is sitting in another district to deal with office matters, so why doesn't it come here? The caretaker provincial government is treating us like a step-mother.

He strongly demanded Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and provincial government that our District Accountant Officer of Lower South Waziristan should be immediately shifted, formal orders should be issued to deal with office affairs.

Ayaz Wazir said that if the demand is not accepted, he will be forced to protest strongly therefore, Accountant General KP, Finance Department and Provincial Government should take measures on emergency basis in this regard, so that government employees including common people do not have to go to other district tank.

Int'l Parliamentarians Congress keen to take delegation of observes to Romania in next election

PPA
ISLAMABAD: International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) has invited the Parliament of Romania to observe the next election there.

This was stated by General Secretary IPC Ms Sitarah Ayaaz in her meeting with Ambassador of Romania, H. E. Eduard Robert PREDA who visited the headquarters of (IPA) in Islamabad. General Secretary IPC Ms Sitarah Ayaaz received the

Ambassador warmly at her office and apprised him of the composition and working of the association.

The meeting was coordinated by Pak Romania Friendship Association. Chairman Zaildar Ahsan Shah and other members of the association were also present.

IPC is a transcontinental platform of individual members of national Parliaments across the globe united in purpose to jointly resolve global and regional issues that invariably impact the whole humanity. Constituted through a Resolution adopted by the Senate of Pakistan on 29th August, 2019 to bring together parliamentarians

of different countries to achieve peace, prosperity and progress through cooperation, mutual understanding, sharing and exchange of ideas as well as experiences.

Ms Sitarah Ayaaz briefed the Ambassador about the membership of the Congress. Presently more than 200 international parliamentarians are members of this org. The membership is on individual basis. It is not as for the whole Parliament. She invited parliamentarians of Romania to join the Congress.

Ambassador shed light on the parliamentary system in Romania. He took keen interest in the working of IPC and asked questions in



this regard. He appreciated the initiation of this platform by Pakistani parliamentarians and maintaining its head office in Islamabad.

E PREDA assured that he would share the information and the invitation to join the organization to the parliamentarians of his country through proper channels.

Persevering

ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist heading to his destination along with cotton candy and other items on 9th Avenue in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Multan Unveils Rumanza by Pearl-Continental

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Multan, a historic city famed for its shrines, bazaars, and blue pottery, also boasts another distinction as the host of Rumanza, Pakistan's largest and only 18-hole, 72-par golf course. Designed by the renowned Sir Nick Faldo, this signature course is situated in the heart of DHA Multan.

In collaboration with Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts, this golf course has been transformed into a 5-star golf resort, offering a premium gaming facility for golfers with exceptional hospitality services and amenities for recreation and relaxation under one roof.

Guests seeking relaxation can indulge in a dip in the beautifully designed swimming pools or refresh their mind, body, and soul at the world-class spa, featuring expert therapists trained in the art of rejuvenation. Sauna and steam facilities are also available. Additionally, the resort boasts a sophisticated cigar lounge, where guests can enjoy a selection of premium cigars and beverages in opulent settings.

Rumanza is the perfect backdrop for extravagant weddings, formal corporate conferences, and memorable celebrations. Its state-of-the-art Crystal Hall and Foyer Hall, with sleek, contemporary interiors and modern amenities, set the stage for any spectacular event. The resort's dedicated team is on hand to help guests craft and execute their events with precision and flair, ensuring every detail is managed to perfection.

Discover the pinnacle of hospitality at Rumanza by Pearl-Continental, Pakistan's premier golf resort. Book your stay or event today and experience luxury, leisure, and a legendary golf course all in one place!

NAVITC Certifying FF Steel Labour Force through a process of RPL

PPA

LAHORE/PESHAWAR: FF Steel, in collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVITC), organized an event on May 1st, 2024, to recognize and applaud the dedication of its labour force across both Lahore plant and Peshawar plant. This collaborative endeavour signifies a groundbreaking initiative in the industry's commitment to nurturing and valuing its workforce.

Amidst an atmosphere of celebration and gratitude, NAVITC conducted a comprehensive assessment of the labourers' skill sets through the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This approach acknowledged and validated the expertise that the FF Steel labour force brings to the table. The ceremony was graced with the presence of Ms. Asfa Maqbool DG NAVITC Punjab at Lahore Plant where 167 certificates were awarded and Director General NAVITC Dr. Fida Bazai along with Mr. Irfan Aman DG NAVITC KP awarded 73 certificates at Peshawar plant to those who demonstrated exceptional proficiency as pipe fitter, industrial electrician, crane operator, welder, turner machinist, machinist fitter, furnace operator and machinist rolling mill, marking a significant milestone in their professional journey. The ceremony at both plants combined hosted more than 1000 work force of FF Steel to celebrate the essence of Labour Day.

FF Steel operates a fully automated plant managed by engineers who hold PEC certification. Additionally, its labour force has now achieved certification from NAVITC, resulting in approximately 90% of the workforce being certified. FF Steel stands as a beacon of excellence, poised to lead the industry towards greater performance and productivity.

Jamaat-e-Islami in Attock demands 100% purchase of wheat from farmers

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The government should ensure 100% purchase of wheat from farmers. Buying wheat from abroad at expensive prices is not only anti-farmer but also anti-people. Farmers should not be exploited economically. 3.6 million tons of wheat is imported from abroad. The perpetrators are national criminals and should be exposed and punished accordingly. The Punjab government should give subsidy to the farmers per 40 kg while setting the purchase price of wheat at 3900 rupees and causing a direct loss of 30 billion rupees. Has been halved and the policy of providing wheat bag has not been clearly defined due to which the farmer has failed to get wheat bag due to which the government has interfered in it. Iqbal Khan, secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami Punjab North and candidate for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP 03 Mian Muhammad Junaid Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Tehsil Attock while addressing a crowded press conference at the local restaurant, made an appeal to Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Hafiz Naeemur Rahman. But on this occasion as sympathy and solidarity with the farmers. Deputy Secretary District Hafiz Ashfaq Ahmed, Waqaruddin, Syed Sanaullah Bukhari, Muhammad Iqbal Malik, Waheed Akhtar and Liaquat Umar were also present.



Workshop on Islamic Journals held at AIOU

PNP

ISLAMABAD: A training workshop on "Islamic Journals: Integrity and Editing Standards" was organized by the Islamic Research Index, Department of Islamic Thought, History and Culture, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Allama Iqbal Open University yesterday. Purpose of the training was to train editors and improve the quality of journals. Chairman, National Rahmatul-lil-Alameen Wa Khatam an-Nabiyyin Authority, Khurshid Ahmad Nadeem was the chief guest of the inaugural session while Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi presided. Other speakers included Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Sajjad, Dr. Shah Moinuddin Hashmi and Dr. Muhammad Riaz.

Addressing the ceremony, Khurshid Nadeem emphasized the importance of research for any institution. He stated that the quality of an institution can be



determined by its research work, making it necessary to pay special attention to the quality of the research conducted.

Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi said that faculty will be publishing six research journals this year, with three already

being published and the other three almost ready for publication. During his speech, he emphasized the importance of incorporating creativity in research, as research without a creative process is meaningless.

Youth Against Tobacco: Healthier Generation-Thriving Economy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) launched a month-long campaign to raise awareness about the threats of tobacco consumption in Pakistan. The campaign, titled "Youth Against Tobacco: Healthier Generation-Thriving Economy," was inaugurated during an event held on Tuesday at the Punjab Group of Colleges.

During this campaign, SPARC, with the support of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), will engage youth in anti-tobacco control activities for the entire month instead of just one day. The young participants will engage in various



activities, including forming clubs, participating in speech competitions, designing posters, conducting social media campaigns, and creating video messages, leading up to the grand celebration of World No-Tobacco Day on May 31, 2024.

Dr. Maheen Malik, Regional Director South Asia at Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, emphasized the urgent need to empower youth for a healthier generation and its direct impact on the economy, stating, "Empowering our youth for a healthier future is

not just a moral imperative; it's an economic necessity."

Ms. Mahnoor, Member of Anti Tobacco Youth Club, delivered a poignant message, highlighting tobacco consumption as the biggest threat to the youth of Pakistan, declaring, "Tobacco not only steals our health but also our future. We must unite to protect our youth from this menace."

Ch. Muhammad Akram, Director of Punjab Group of Colleges, Rawalpindi/Islamabad, emphasized the pivotal role of academic institutions, stating, "Educational institutions must lead the charge against tobacco consumption, shaping healthier habits and brighter futures for our students."

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Labour Day - A reminder for better facilities to workers

Fakhar e Alam

When international labor community was observing International Labour Day, scores of illiterate laborers in Pakistan were totally unaware of this global phenomenon.

Although rallies and processions were taken out in different parts of country yet many preferred to remain at their job place on this day despite being a public holiday, to earn living for their families whether in convenient or exploitive environment. Like many parts of Pakistan, May First is observed the world over as International Labor Day to pay homage to the sacrifices of 1886 Chicago workers who sacrificed their lives demanding eight hours duty a day.

People gathered at roads and streets to renew their pledge sending a message to employers to provide proper wages and healthy environment under this year's theme of "ensuring laborers' safety and health at work place." But, there are many like Irshad Ullah, a marble miner of Warsak Road, who was busy cutting raw marble slabs in his factory even on this holiday exclusively announced for him. Enjoying the national song "A jawan Jeet Hai Tera Nishan" from his mobile, this miner woke up early in the morning even on May Day to support his two

assistants in fulfilling the orders placed by customers.

"No one can understand the pain of a married unemployed person other than me. Had my father not sold a piece of land for setting up my marble business; today I may have become a stigma for my family," he remarked remembering the gone hard days. Hailing from Amankot Nowshera district, Irshadullah once faced a great financial crisis, anxiety and depression, before his fortune turned around through the marble and granite business.

"My family financially supported me by establishing a small-scale business and today I am living a respectable life," he remarked. "All this happened with the benediction of Allah Almighty and my hard work."

Many like Irshadullah who was once a hard-working laborer, opt for going to work only because a day missed of working means for them to bring hardship to their families. "Labor Day is not just about paying tributes to workers but also teaching them about their rights and stopping them from being exploited," said a labor laws expert advocate Asif Yousafzai.

He said the 1973 constitution protects the rights of laborers and the working class in Pakistan and country's labor policy ensures social security network, old age benefit schemes and welfare fund for laborers. "Pakistan being a member of the International Labor Organization

(ILO) is mandated to protect all rights of laborers like right to trade union, assembly, job protection and retirement benefits," Asif Yousafzai said. Since, Pakistan ratified numerous ILO conventions its respective governments do their bit to protect the rights of laborers like health, residence, education and wages to make them a productive segment of society.

As labour ministry was devolved to provinces under 18th constitutional amendment, labor laws and policies are now framed and implemented at a provincial level in line with Pakistan's commitments to international laws and frameworks and circumstances internally. However, the existing circumstances necessitate re-visiting these policies and salary packages of labour class to make them meet their ends as the economic recession of recent past had it difficult for them to survive.

"What we earn is quite insufficient for our survival. Our working hours are unlimited and wages too minimal to feed our children," remarked an agricultural worker in Faisalabad, a city in Punjab province. "Since, there are no working hours for us like factory workers or other regular or certified labor, there is no discrimination of dawn or dusk for us," said Muhammad Imran, a field worker.

"Similarly our nature of job is also not specified as we have to perform all agriculture-related tasks during the day and sometimes even during the night," he narrated. "And what we earn for it is too

less to factory workers performing eight hours duty." Similar is the case with field workers (Harees) in rural Sindh whose lives are pathetic as they survive on the mercy of land owners.

Then there are irregular workers working at small shops, stores, warehouses, shopping centers and factory outfits. "We cannot ask freely for desired wages as employers try to pay us the minimum and often than what announced by the government. But, since we need some money for our families, we cannot argue with them," said a Karachi-based loader, Muhammad Waseem.

"Working at a warehouse and loading vehicles for delivery sometimes become too taxing. But, we have to live with it." The situation may also not be different for workers and laborers in Balochistan, especially the shepherds whose whole day passes at pastures and grazing fields. But, many among them are paid a meager amount bi-annually or annually that is when calculated on a daily basis feels like nothing.

Although, provincial governments and some federal institutions ensure during employment and post-retirement facilities for laborers, yet majority of the irregular workforce is deprived of these privileges.

Therefore, it is imperative for all governments to fully protect the rights of laborers as they provide for a better economic basis of any economy and play an important role in national progress.

Experts for ending child labour

The children rights activists on Wednesday in connection with the world labour day demanded the government to take steps to abolish child labour at kilns.

Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) Secretary Ahmed Ghulam Naveed demanded the government to implement the Child Protection Law in letter and spirit.

He said employment of children remained undressed, particularly in sectors like agriculture, factories, workshops, shops, hotels, brick kilns, weaving, packing and construction.

Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) Executive member Muhammad Khalil said brick-kiln workers were facing wages payment problems, adding that children of labourers and workers should be given top priority who played a key role in strengthening the national economy.

Former Project Manager for Child-Labour-Elimination Programme Punjab Labour & Human Resource Department Sargodha region Sajid Khan said the Punjab government had given labourers their due rights by taking measures for their welfare.

He said 90,000 children of brick-kiln workers had been enrolled in different government-sponsored schools for providing them free education who were previously working in brick-kilns.

Besides, children had also been provided financial assistance of more than Rs 390 million, he added.

He said that establishment of quality educational institutions for children of labourers besides social security hospitals and labour colonies were a proof of labour-friendly policies of the Punjab government.

"An amount of Rs 80 billion has been spent on special initiatives taken for prosperity of labourers and their children during last three years," he said.

To a query, Sajid Khan said that labourers were being provided quality health facilities in Punjab Social Security Hospitals at the cost more than Rs 34.14 billion.

He said that 49,000 children of workers were being educated free of cost at Punjab Workers Welfare board Schools, including 3,800 children in Sargodha region. Moreover, Rs 3.12 billion talent scholarships had been disbursed among children of workers, he said and added that Rs 2.55 billion marriage grants had been given to children of workers besides Rs 2.74 billion death grants.

Residential colonies at the cost of Rs 12 billion had been established for workers in different cities of Punjab including Sargodha.

The Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act was also an achievement of the Punjab government, he added.

To a question, he said that child labor would be eliminated from petrol pumps, workshops and hotels as well, adding more concentration on education and training of children would lead the nation to progress.



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

Joint Civil-Military Endeavors for Enhancing Laborers Conditions - I

Within the intricate fabric of society, laborers stand as vital threads that bind communities together. From erecting towering skyscrapers to cultivating crops in fertile fields, the efforts of laborers serve as the very foundation upon which civilizations thrive. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, it becomes imperative to acknowledge and value the profound role of laborers in shaping our collective welfare.

At the core of every flourishing economy lies the labor force, whose unwavering diligence propels progress forward. Whether involved in manufacturing, services, agriculture, or technology, laborers form the bedrock of productivity and innovation. Their skilled craftsmanship and steadfast dedication drive industries, create wealth, and foster economic growth, paving the way for prosperity and advancement.

Laborers are instrumental in constructing the physical infrastructure that sustains society, from roads and bridges to schools and hospitals. Through their dedicated work, they translate blueprints into tangible structures that serve communities, fostering connectivity, accessibility, and progress. Additionally, laborers contribute to the development of vibrant neighborhoods and cultural hubs, enriching society with their creativity and expertise.

Central to recognizing the importance of laborers is the acknowledgment of their inherent rights and dignity as individuals. Upholding principles of fair wages, safe working conditions, and the right to organize, societies affirm the value of laborers as equal members of the

community. By advocating for labor rights and combating exploitation, societies uphold principles of justice and equality.

Moreover, laborers play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and traditions through their craftsmanship. From artisans crafting pottery to weavers creating textiles, their work reflects the diverse tapestry of human culture. By passing down traditional knowledge through generations, laborers ensure the continuity and vitality of cultural heritage for future generations.

Labor Day, often marked by events and parades, holds a deeper significance rooted in the struggles and triumphs of the labor movement. Celebrated in many countries, it serves as a tribute to workers' contributions and the progress made in securing their rights and fair treatment. Exploring its rich history reveals its origins in the late 19th century United States, amidst rapid industrialization and labor exploitation. The working conditions

endured by the laboring class were frequently appalling, characterized by extended work hours, meager wages, and perilous work environments as the standard. In reaction to these injustices, labor unions began to emerge, advocating for improved working conditions, equitable pay, and the right to collective bargaining. A pivotal moment in the history of Labor Day unfolded in 1882, in New York City, when the Central Labor Union orchestrated the inaugural Labor Day parade. Tens of thousands of workers representing various trades took to the streets, demanding reduced work hours and better compensation. The parade served not only as a demonstration of solidarity but also as a proclamation of the workers' determination to assert their rights. The momentum generated by the inaugural Labor

Day parade contributed to a growing acknowledgment of the significance of the labor movement. In 1887, Oregon became the first state to formally recognize Labor Day as a public holiday. Other states swiftly followed suit, and by 1894, with the backing of labor unions and workers nationwide, the U. S. Congress enacted legislation establishing Labor Day annually. Over time, Labor Day has transformed into a day marked by both commemoration and contemplation. While it serves as an occasion to celebrate the accomplishments of workers and the labor movement, it also offers a chance to evaluate the current status of labor rights and identify areas where advancements are still required. Persistent issues such as income disparity, workplace safety, and the pursuit of a living wage continue to be central to the ongoing fight for workers' rights.

Beyond the confines of the United States, Labor Day takes on various forms across the globe. In numerous countries, it is observed on May 1st and is recognized as International Workers' Day or May Day. This day carries significant historical importance for the labor movement, honoring the Haymarket affair of 1886 in Chicago, where workers were advocating for an eight-hour workday.

In developed and welfare-oriented nations, there exists no inherent superiority of the wealthy over the poor. Laws are applied equally to all, and meritocracy prevails, ensuring equal rights for all individuals regardless of their economic status. Public funds are allocated towards providing amenities for the populace, with measures taken to prevent unjustified and sudden increases in inflation and commodity prices. Minimum wage rates are adjusted in accordance with inflation rates. These societies have established systems in which there is minimal disparity in the lifestyles, food, and daily necessities between the poor and the affluent.

To be continued

A Case of Increasing Solarization in Pakistan

From an Economic point of view, the current skyrocketing surge in the demand and equally soaring supply of Solar Panels across Pakistan will give birth to multidimensional economic challenges. This anomaly is alarming. To understand this anomaly and long-term effects following determinants are vital.

The current installed capacity of electricity generation through different sources i.e. Hydel, Oil, Gas, LNG, Local Coal, Important Coal, Nuclear, and other Renewable sources hovers around 35,000MW. Whereas the Power Generation from these sources staggers around 120,000Gwh.

Similarly, the consumption pattern of electricity concentrated in domestic, Commercial, Industrial, Agriculture, and other remains around 100,000Gwh.

On the other hand, Power Sector Circular debt is growing at a monthly average of Rs. 66.14bn to cross Rs. 2.172tr (June 2023).

Remember, the deals/Agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) stuck on unfavorable terms which crippled the whole system. The incentive structures offered were returns guaranteed to be indexed to the US dollar, and indexed to US inflation rather than the inflation in Pakistan. At that time, the juicy return on equity (ROE) of 17% was cherry on top of many favorable terms.

Apart from this, different surcharges, Capacity Charges, and other Taxes made inevitable parts of Power Tariffs to be bear by the domestic consumers and subsequently accommodate the IPPS.

Now, the electricity Tariffs for domestic, commercial, industrial, Agriculture, and other consumer are all-time high and are unaffordable which compels many domestic and affluent consumers to convert from indigenous/conventional sources of energy to the Solar System.

Considering the mammoth transition from conventional Sources of energy to Solarization will create multidimensional economic repercussions. For example, the indigenous hydel sources including IPPS will be largely affected due to the supply and demand gap of energy. More importantly, it will incur losses to the economy and SOEs in the energy sector due to the abandoned utility. Additionally, IPPS will manipulate and force the Government by referring to the terms of contracts made with them despite the dysfunctionality of the Power Production System and energy demand.

Domestic consumers of WAPDA who are changing their course of electricity consumption from WAPDA to Solar Systems will work on export and import-based mechanisms to compensate themselves and save their money. This approach can bear fruit in the short term but in long run, this isn't going to be a successful approach. Because in the long run, the Government has to charge multifaceted taxes to address the circular debt, electricity losses, and losses generated as a result of the demand and supply gap.

In a nutshell, the consumers of the Solar System will be levied manifold taxes. In this case, it is advised for the domestic users to stay rational and opt for go slow strategy.



Abdul Basit Alvi



Suhail Kamran Maitta

Chinese president's upcoming visit to bring new hope to Serbia's development: Vucic

BELGRADE (XINHUA) : Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Tuesday that Chinese President Xi Jinping's upcoming state visit is not only a major diplomatic event for Serbia, but also a major event that is worthy of the joy of all Serbian people.

While expressing his belief that Xi's visit will bring new hope to Serbia's development, the president said: "I am very much looking forward to President Xi's visit."

Vucic made the remarks when meeting with visiting President of Xinhua News Agency Fu Hua in Belgrade.

Noting that China is Serbia's "iron-clad friend" and the exchanges between the two countries are fully candid and open, Vucic said Serbia will never forget the assistance from the Chinese people, adding that he believes Xi will feel the warmth and friendliness of the Serbian people during his visit.

The Serbian president spoke highly of the contributions made by the HBIS Serbia steelworks in Smederevo to Serbia's economic development, China's assistance to Serbia in the fields

of medicine and healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic and China's support for Serbia on international multilateral occasions.

Serbia firmly supports China's position on safeguarding its core interests and major concerns, Vucic stressed.

On the Taiwan question, Vucic said Serbia firmly upholds the one-China principle and supports China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Regarding media exchanges, Vucic highly valued the cooperation between Xinhua News Agency and Serbia's Tanjug News Agency and other media outlets, saying that such exchanges enable the Serbian media to learn from the experience of their Chinese counterparts and allow the Serbian people to better understand China, so as to promote mutual learning and experience sharing between the two countries.

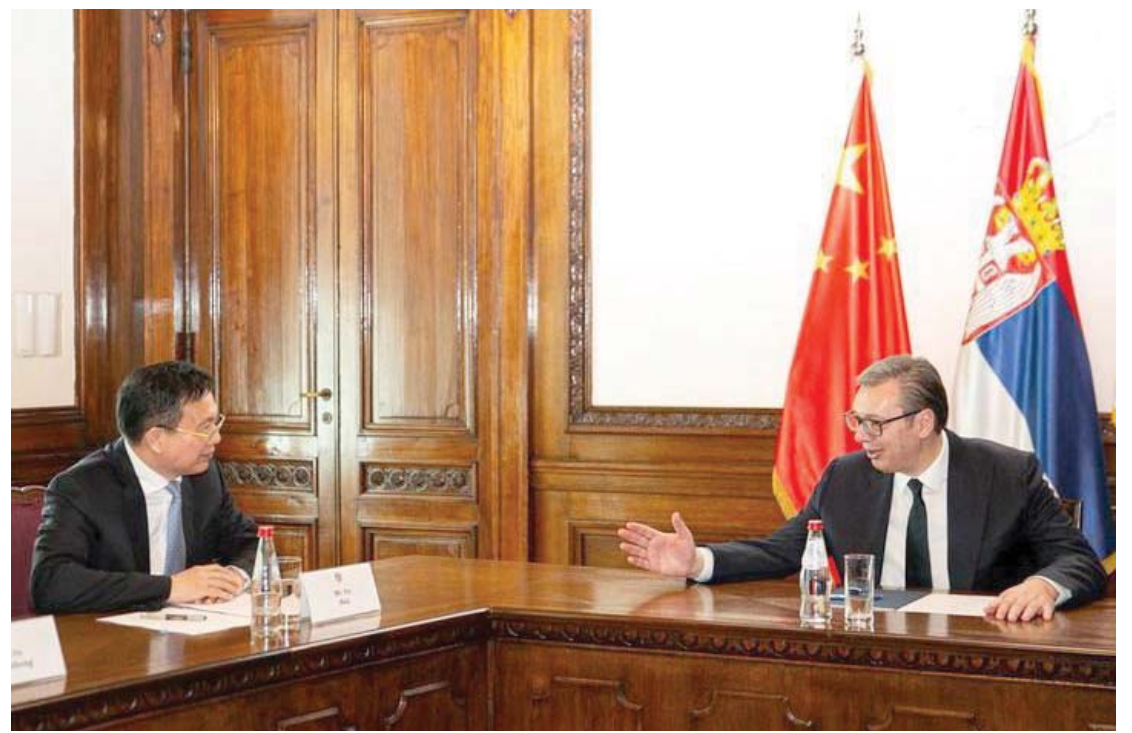
Fu said that under the strategic guidance of President Xi and President Vucic, China-Serbia relations have witnessed vigorous development

despite changes in the international landscape, setting a good example of friendly relations between China and European countries.

He also said he expects the meeting between the two heads of state to draw a new blueprint for China-Serbia exchanges and cooperation and to add new luster to the "iron-clad friendship" between the two countries in the new era.

Moreover, Fu said Xinhua stands ready to work with its Serbian counterparts to further deepen exchanges and cooperation, tell well the stories of China-Serbia friendship and comprehensively showcase the bright prospects of bilateral relations in the new era through high-quality and multi-dimensional news reports and think tank research.

Xinhua will also firmly act as an envoy of China-Serbia friendship and create a positive public opinion atmosphere for deepening bilateral cooperation in various fields to better benefit the peoples of the two countries, Fu added.



China-Serbia forum highlights community with shared future for mankind

BELGRADE (XINHUA): China and Serbia should actively leverage their advantages of exchanges and cooperation at all levels to contribute wisdom and strength to the development of bilateral relations and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, agreed participants at a China-Serbia media and think tank forum held here on Tuesday.

Jointly organized by China's Xinhua News Agency and Serbia's Tanjug News Agency, the forum brought together around 200 participants, including government officials as well as representatives from mainstream media and think tanks of both countries.

At the forum, Xinhua News Agency also launched the Serbian version of the report "Fostering a Global Community of Shared Future: Contemporary Significance and Tangible Achievements."

The report interprets the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind from multiple perspectives such as history, theory, culture and practice, representing the latest achievement of Xinhua's studies of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.

The theme of the forum read as "Deepening China-Serbia comprehensive strategic partnership following the vision of a global community of shared future."

Addressing the forum, President of Xinhua News Agency Fu Hua said building a community with a shared future for mankind, a core concept of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, has contributed oriental wisdom to addressing global challenges. It is a concentrated expression of the common value pursuit of all mankind and has delivered tangible benefits for people of all countries.



China and Serbia are "iron-clad friends" who have stood together through thick and thin, Fu said, noting that as both countries move forward towards modernization, their collaboration vividly exemplifies promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Fu, also chairman of the academic committee of New China Research, said Xinhua attaches great importance to exchanges and cooperation with Serbian media and think tanks, and is willing to work with the Serbian side to continue telling well the story of China-Serbia friendship.

He said that through high-quality, multidimensional news coverage and think tank research, Xinhua aims to comprehensively showcase the bright prospects of China-Serbia relations in the new era, build a communication bridge and provide intellectual support for bilateral cooperation in various fields,

and continue to act as an envoy for the China-Serbia friendship to bring more benefits to the two peoples.

Ji Zhengju, vice-director of the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, said the sustained and stable development of sound relations between China and Serbia plays an important role in better building a community with a shared future for mankind.

From this perspective, it is of great significance to strengthen cultural exchanges so as to jointly promote high-quality construction of the Belt and Road Initiative through people-to-people connectivity and lay a solid foundation for enhancing the friendship between China and Serbia, added Ji, who is also director of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau.

Chinese Ambassador to Serbia Li Ming highlighted the special signifi-

cance of the forum held on the eve of Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Serbia. He said he believes the forum and the report will provide strong intellectual support for the development of China-Serbia relations and make positive contributions to the spread and implementation of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Manja Grcic, director general of Tanjug News Agency, said Tanjug, since its establishment, has always focused on China. Noting that cooperation between Serbia and China in jointly building the Belt and Road has achieved fruitful results and thus provided abundant resources for news reporting, Grcic said her agency will continue to focus on such cooperation with objective and truthful reports so as to enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples and contribute to the development of bilateral relations.

Goran Vesic, Serbia's minister of construction, transport and infrastructure, told the forum that the Serbian economy has developed rapidly in recent years, which is indispensable from China's support, and Chinese investments are highly welcomed in Serbia.

Serbia hopes to initiate higher-quality infrastructure cooperation with China, and promote the construction of smart roads, said the minister, adding that he believes pragmatic cooperation between the two countries will reach a higher level under the guidance of the two heads of state.

Following the event, Xinhua News Agency and Tanjug News Agency signed an agreement on news exchange and agreed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in news reporting and communication.

Xi replies to letter from steelworkers in Serbia's Smederevo

BEIJING, MAY 1 (XINHUA): Chinese President Xi Jinping has replied to a letter from Serbian workers in HBIS Smederevo Steel Plant.



In a letter dated Monday, Xi encouraged them to make new contributions to the China-Serbia friendship.

Xi said during his state visit to Serbia in 2016, he met with the workers face to face at the Smederevo Steel Plant and deeply felt their support for the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Serbia, and their high expectations for a bright future of the steel plant.

He said from their letter, he learned that with the joint efforts of the management teams of both sides and the workers themselves, the steel plant has taken on a new look, providing strong support for the development of Smederevo City.

It is a great pleasure to learn that the steel plant has turned losses into gains quickly after the investment of a Chinese-funded enterprise, with the jobs of more than 5,000 employees guaranteed, and thousands of families enjoying a peaceful and happy life, said the Chinese president.

The development of the steel plant, he said, cannot be achieved without the dedication and hard work of the workers, who have been working diligently for the quick growth of the steel plant and have written a new chapter for the iron-clad friendship between China and Serbia.

I give you "the thumbs up," Xi said.

Students protest outside US consulate against Israeli aggression in Palestine

LAHORE: Hundreds of students from different universities on Tuesday held a protest demonstration outside the US consulate against Israeli aggression in Palestine.



Male and female students were wearing keffiyehs (a Palestinian national symbol) to express unwavering solidarity with Palestinians and condemn the ongoing genocide perpetrated by the state of Israel with the support of the US.

Baiterek Tower

Symbol of independent Kazakhstan—the world's most recognizable monument



Naveed Ahmad Khan

If you already can't imagine Islamabad without the Faisal Masjid, the same thing with the symbol of the modern capital of Kazakhstan is Baiterek Tower. It is the right place for your starting point of your tour around the city. The monument symbolizes the idea of the Kazakh people related to the structure of the universe.

It has been my dream to visit Astana and see the Bayterek Tower, recently I visited Astana and was very impressed to see the construction of the tower. It is in the center of the city and you must enjoy if you see the city from the top of the Bayterek Tower

According to the experts, Baiterek is the tree of life, the destination of the sacred bird, Samruk. The height of the tower—105 meters. At the height of 97 meters there is an observatory—a



platform that allows you to see the city from a bird's view.

Baiterek monument is one of the most recognizable monuments of the capital of Kazakhstan. The idea of erecting the monument belongs to the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Nursultan Nazarbayev. The idea of building the monument arose from N. Nazarbayev on Board the presidential plane, during the flight. The plan of the futuristic structure was depicted on a paper napkin. The monument itself contains a deep philosophical meaning that interprets the views of ancient nomads.

Visitors to the monument believe that if you make a wish, while putting your hand in the print, it will certainly come true.

Baiterek is a symbol of independ-

ent Kazakhstan, the main attraction of the capital of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the flow of people wishing to visit Baiterek does not decrease, and queues arise. With a smart card Astana PASS You pass the queue at the checkout, but unfortunately have to wait in the queue.

The construction took place under the supervision of domestic architects B. Islamov and A. Rustembekov. Gathering a talented team of designers, engineers and designers, they erected a magnificent structure that became not only a symbol of the capital, but also of the entire country. The construction of the Baiterek monument took 6 years and lasted from 1996 to 2002.

Immediately after the opening, the monument "Astana-Baiterek" was



awarded the prestigious Grand Prix award in a competition organized by the international Association of the Union of Architects (MASA) of the CIS countries.

Inside, the monument is divided into three zones, which corresponds to the idea of the Tree of Life, which represents the Universe. On the first, so-called underground level, there are aquariums, cafes and an exhibition gallery, which presents art objects of talented Kazakh artists.

The second level, called the ground level, is a tower, inside which the high-

speed elevators move. The third level is called the sky, this is the glass ball itself, which offers tourists a panoramic view of the beauty of the young capital.

The monument "Astana-Baiterek" is not only an architectural monument or a high-class engineering structure, it is the embodiment of the ideology of the entire state, which is proud of its past, frozen in the roots of the Tree, values its present, which has become a solid support for the future, to which Kazakhstan is taking a firm and confident step.

The Baiterek monument is one of the main attractions of the capital that every tourist should visit, so every day many tourists climb to the top of the monument, sometimes creating queues to buy tickets at the ticket office. On average, about 500 thousand tourists visit Baiterek every year.

The monument created everything for a comfortable stay, along with an amazing atmosphere and magnificent views of the capital, for guests there are cozy cafes and bars, a shop with Souvenirs, and polite staff who are always ready to help you.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
71,102.54	71,695.03
Day's High	Day's Low
72,119.65	71,059.62
Index Value	Change
15,336,124,599	-592.49
Percentage	Time
-0.83%	30 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,121.24	-22.89
Percentage	Time
-0.28%	1 May, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,932.70	+116.78
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	1 May, 12:51 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,274.05	-131.61
Percentage	Time
-0.34%	1 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	179.2	181
Bahrain Dinar	740.35	748.35
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.49	38.89
Danish Krone	40	40.4
Euro	293.5	296.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.57	35.92
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	904.08	913.08
Malaysian Ringgit	58.33	58.93
New Zealand \$	166.25	168.25
Norwegians Krone	25.32	25.62
Omani Riyal	722.99	730.99
Qatari Riyal	76.48	77.18
Saudi Riyal	73.35	74
Singapore Dollar	204.5	206.5
Swedish Korona	25.46	25.76
Swiss Franc	305.64	308.14
Thai Bhat	7.52	7.67
U.A.E Dirham	75	75.75
UK Pound Sterling	344.45	347.85
US Dollar	277.35	280

We have set fire to economy; we will have to put it out, says Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) disbursement of the \$1.1 billion tranche deserves praise.

SBP's decision to keep interest rates unchanged has disappointed the business community, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that we are responsible for the devastation of the country's economy and will have to fix it as no one else is going to do it for us.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the IMF decision is a reason for satisfaction. This shows that the confidence of lenders is increasing in Pakistan, which will also increase the confidence of

friendly countries and other creditors.

The business leader said that the IMF's move would also pave the way for a new three-year loan from the IMF as the lender is satisfied with the government's policy and financial measures.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the economic condition of Pakistan is improving, inflation is also decreasing, and in these circumstances, it would have been better if the interest rate had been reduced.

However, the Central Bank was afraid that inflation could bounce back therefore the interest rate was maintained, which has disappointed the business community.

He demanded that the SBP reduce policy rates in the following review. Mian Zahid Hussain said that we have set fire to the country's economy, and we have to put it out. International organizations and friendly countries cannot do anything in this regard.

To improve the economy, painful reforms



and improvements in the tax system need to be done in order to get out of the chronic payments crisis.

Due to the ignoring merit, the influential are

getting richer; the people are getting poorer while the country's economy is getting weaker, he observed.

He warned that now is the time to rectify the situation; otherwise, it will be impossible to run the country. Mian Zahid Hussain said that right now, our growth rate is less than two per cent, which is impossible to increase under the supervision of the IMF.

Economic prosperity is only possible with debt relief. Next year, we have to pay 24 billion dollars in debt and interest, which is three times more than the current reserves of the central bank, while we have to pay more than 8000 billion rupees in interest on domestic debt, which is 90% of our total revenue.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the failed institutions that are facing difficulties in privatization should be closed immediately because trillions of rupees are being wasted year after year running them. Still, it has become difficult to run them now.

Harvesting crops

ISLAMABAD: Farmers driving machines to harvest wheat in a field in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

IGATEX PAKISTAN mega textile event opens with worldwide participation

PPA

LAHORE: IGATEX PAKISTAN - Country's Largest Garment, Textile & Digital Printing Machinery and Accessories Exhibition organized by Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. opened its doors on 1st May 2024 at Expo Centre Lahore.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Guest of Honors Mr. Zaki Aijaz, Regional Chairman - The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, H. E. Mr. Ladislav Steinhübel - Ambassador of Czech Republic, Dr. Salvatore Parano - Trade Commissioner of Italy, Mr. Saleem Khan Tanoli - CEO Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. and other renowned names of the industry.

On this occasion, the Guests stated that "Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. has taken a wonderful initiative by organizing IGATEX PAKISTAN Exhibition, which provides a worthy opportunity for the textile industry to showcase their innovative technology and services. The event has played a pivotal role in strengthening the economic ties between Pakistan and rest of the world."

Speaking on the occasion, Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO of Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd. stated, "We are glad to see such an over-



whelming response for IGATEX PAKISTAN 2024. The massive turnout and positive feedback from exhibitors and visitors reaffirm the importance of this event as a catalyst for innovation and growth for the textile industry. IGATEX PAKISTAN has brought together industry leaders, innovators, and stakeholders to unlock unlimited opportunities for growth and collaborations."

IGATEX PAKISTAN the pioneer event of its kind has continually set the benchmark

for excellence over its 22-year history. This year's edition has surpassed all expectations, showcasing cutting-edge garments, textiles, digital printing machinery, and technology. Over 500 companies from 30 countries, including Austria, Belgium, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, and the USA are showcasing their latest innovations, technologies, and next-generation solutions aimed at transforming the textile industry.

Pakistani textile firms shine at Textile and Tex process 2024

PPA

KARACHI: Over 10 Pakistani exhibitors participated in the "Techtextil and Texprocess 2024 Exhibition" held in Frankfurt, Germany from April 23 to 26.

The events, co-located at the same venue, showcased the latest innovations in garment and textile manufacturing machinery and services alongside cutting-edge advancements in technical textiles.

10 Pakistani exhibitors prominently featured their innovations at Techtextil and Texpro-

cess, including Lucky Textile, Master Textile Mills, Midas Safety, Nishat Fabrics, and Sapphire Finishing Mills, while Triple Tree Solution participated in Texprocess.

The combined exhibitions drew 1,700 exhibitors from 53 countries and welcomed 38,000 visitors from 102 nations, marking an impressive 29 percent increase in attendance compared to previous editions.

The presence of Pakistani exhibitors underscored the country's global engagement and highlighted its advance-

ments in textile technology and partnerships, potentially raising Pakistan's profile, driving growth, and promoting sustainability.

Texprocess and Techtextil served as crucial platforms for discussions, networking, and partnerships, with a focus on sustainability and digitalization in the textile industry.

The participation of Pakistani exhibitors underscores their commitment to diversifying its export markets and fostering sustainable growth within the textile sector. By engaging with a global audience at Techtextil

and Texprocess, these companies aim to forge lucrative partnerships and solidify Pakistan's position as a key player in the international textile arena.

Mr. Ikhtlaq Ahmed, Sales & Marketing Manager at Nishat Mills Ltd, shared his positive sentiments regarding the exhibition's progress, expressing satisfaction with the outcomes achieved thus far. He highlighted the promising trajectory of developments, stating that "things are looking up" for the company in light of the opportunities and connections fostered at the event.

FPCCI appoint Shaikh Rashid Alam as Convener Standing Committee on 'Youth Empowerment and Recognition'



PPA

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Shaikh Rashid Alam as the Convener of its Standing Committee on "Youth Empowerment and Recognition", effective immediately. This prestigious appointment was made by FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, in recognition of Shaikh Rashid Alam's extensive experience and outstanding leadership in the field of entrepreneurship development.

The notification of this appointment was issued by FPCCI on Monday, April 29, 2024, marking a significant milestone in Shaikh Rashid Alam's distinguished career. This appointment under-

scores his substantial influence and commitment to empowering the youth sector in Pakistan.

As Convener of the Standing Committee on "Youth Empowerment and Recognition", Shaikh Rashid Alam will be responsible for leading efforts to address the pressing challenges faced by the youth sector in Pakistan. He will work closely with stakeholders, including government agencies, industry leaders, and civil society organizations, to develop prompt recommendations and solutions that can be presented to the government.

FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh expressed his confidence in Shaikh Rashid Alam's leadership and hoped that his vast experience and expertise in entrepreneurship development will be instrumental in helping us develop targeted solutions to address the challenges faced by the youth sector. We are confident that under his leadership, we will be able to present concrete recommendations to the government, which will have a positive impact on the lives of young people in Pakistan.

SRB tax collection surges 29% to Rs 185.2 billion

PPA

KARACHI: Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) has collected Rs185.2 billion during the first nine months of fiscal year 2023-24 depicting an increase of 29 percent over the corresponding period of last year.

Chairman SRB Wasif Memon called on Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday and briefed him about the revenue collections of the SRB, said a statement issued here.

The Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) collected a record revenue of Rs185.2 billion during the first nine months of the fiscal year 2023-24 while in

the corresponding period of the previous financial year 2022-23, the tax collection stood at Rs143.3 billion, it said adding that the achievement signified a year-on-year growth of 29 percent.

The CM said at the occasion that despite encountering various challenges, including the broader economic slowdown, the SRB has demonstrated resilience and efficiency in revenue collection.

The monthly tax collection by SRB during April 2024 has remained Rs18.8 billion which shows 23 percent growth as compared to tax collection of Rs15.2 billion in April 2023, it said.

Punjab to support farmers for solar powered tube-wells

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The solarisation of tubewells has been planned amid reports that residential power consumers were likely to face a government tax or a cut in a net metering tariff because the rapid pace of solarization in the country was disrupting the government's energy plan.

This initiative to help farmers power their tubewells using renewable energy will contribute to environmental sustainability, sources in the government said on

Wednesday. The government will provide a subsidy of up to 50% per tubewell for the transition to solar power.

There will be substantial financial support of Rs12 billion for farmers across the province.

The scheme allows each farmer to convert their fossil fuel-powered tube-wells to solar-powered ones, up to a capacity of 20 kilowatts.

This shift is expected to significantly reduce electricity costs for farmers, who often bear the brunt of high power bills.

Pakistan Women's Squad Announced for England Tour: PCB Official

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The newly-appointed seven-member women's national selection committee has named a 17-player Pakistan women's squad for this month's tour to England.

Nida Dar will continue to lead the side, which will feature in three T20Is from 11-17 May and three ODIs from 23-29 May. The ODIs are part of ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 and this will be Pakistan's eighth and final series in the current event cycle.

Pakistan are currently sitting in fifth position with 16 points in the 10-team ICC Women Championship 2022-25 standings.

The top five teams from this championship, along with hosts India, will directly qualify for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.

In addition to the six white-ball international matches, the tourists will also play two warm-up games (T20 and One-Day) against ECB Development XI on 9 and 21 May. For their first



England tour since 2016, the national side will leave on Sunday, 5 May.

Pakistan women squad: Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz,

Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar

Player support personnel: Nahida Khan (manager), Mauhtashim Rashid (interim head coach), Saleem Jaffar (bowling coach), Taufeeq Umar

(batting coach), Hanif Malik (fielding coach), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager), Rabia Siddiq (physiotherapist), Zubair Ahmed (analyst) and Hina Munawar (chief security officer)

Tour schedule:

9 May – T20 warm-up game v ECB Development XI, Uptonsteel County Ground (11.00am local time)

11 May – 1st T20I, Birmingham (2.30pm local time)

17 May – 2nd T20I, Northampton (6.30pm local time)

19 May – 3rd T20I, Leeds (1.00pm local time)

21 May – One-Day warm-up game v ECB Development XI, Northampton (11.00am local time)

23 May – 1st ODI, Derby (1.00pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

26 May – 2nd ODI, Taunton (11.00am local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

29 May – 3rd ODI, Chelmsford (1.00pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

UK Media XI beat SJAL XI in rain-hit exhibition cricket match

Tahir Amin Malik

The match, part of the Pakistan-UK Journalists Friendship Series, showcased not only cricketing skills but also the spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship. The match was successfully hosted by Sports Journalists Association of Lahore (SJAL).

UK Media XI, batting first, managed to 102 runs for the loss of six wickets in their allotted overs. The main contributions came from Ghufuran Ashraf, who scored a 25 runs while Abbas Awan struck 19, Faizan Abbasi adding 15, and Amir Khan 11 runs. On the bowling side SJAL XI's Sanaullah Khan and Ehtesham-ul-Haq captured two wickets each while Imran Sohail and Usman Khan claimed one wicket apiece.

In reply the SJAL XI had a promising start, racing to 37 runs without loss in just 3.2 overs before the skies opened up. Qadir Khawaja was particularly



aggressive, scoring a swift 31 off just a few deliveries, alongside Abdul Rauf who made unbeaten 6 runs. The match had to be called off as the rain persisted, leaving the ground waterlogged and unplayable. Despite the anti-climactic end, the short burst of cricket was enjoyed by players and cricket enthusiasts.

At the conclusion of the match, Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayyub Khokhar, along with dignitaries including PCB Director Media Sami ul Hasan Barni, Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana, former Pakistan cricket team manager Azhar Zaidi, Shaukat Dar and Naeem Tahir, presented awards to the winner and players.

Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayyub Khokhar shared his enthusiasm, saying: "Typically, we watch athletes perform on the playing fields. However, today it was a delight to see sports journalists in action at the Gaddafi Stadium and taking part in a healthy sporting activity. I extend my appreciation to the SJAL family, UK Media Persons, Pakistan Cricket

Board, and all other stakeholders for initiating this splendid event. I eagerly anticipate the next match, where I hope to demonstrate my own cricketing skills."

SJAL President Aqeel Ahmad expressed gratitude to the UK Media XI for participating in an exhibition cricket match at the historic Gaddafi Stadium. "Despite the match being washed out, both teams played impressively, making it a thrilling encounter that was enjoyed by everyone. I am also grateful to PCB for providing the venue," he added.

UK Media XI Captain Ghulam Hussain Awan praised the enthusiasm and performance of the SJAL XI and thanked all the stakeholders for facilitating this remarkable event. "The players from the UK thoroughly enjoyed participating, and we are now eager to host the SJAL XI for an exhibition match in the UK soon," he said.

Babar closes gap with top-ranked Suryakumar in ICC T20I Batting Rankings

A Sports

DUBAI: Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam climbed one spot and closed the gap with top-ranked Indian batter Suryakumar Yadav in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20I Batting Rankings.

Babar Azam jumped to the fourth spot with 763 rating points on the back of his impressive showing during the recently concluded T20I series against New Zealand.

The right-handed batter finished the series with 125 runs in four games, including a half-century in the last game, only behind New Zealand's Mark Chapman (126).

Yadav continues to lead the T20I batting rankings with 861 rating



points, followed by England's Phil Salt with 802 points and Pakistan's

Mohammad Rizwan with 784 points.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi climbed three places to joint 14th in the ICC T20I Bowling Rankings after ending the New Zealand series as the highest wicket-taker with eight scalps.

New Zealand bowlers also earned rewards for their gutsy performance against Pakistan as Michael Bracewell rose 13 spots to 55th and Ben Sears jumped 29 places to 60th.

Meanwhile, Pakistan all-rounder Imad Wasim climbed 10 places to 22nd spot in the ICC T20I all-rounder rankings.

Notably, Wasim reversed his international retirement before the New Zealand series and declared his availability for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup.

All Karachi Mixed Martial Arts Championship



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Sindh Mixed Martial Arts Association in collaboration with Pakistan Sports Adventure has organized All Karachi Mixed Martial Arts Championship at Gulshan-e-Maymar other day. Wherein boys and girls players were participated from all towns of the city. On the occasion the Chief Guest, Member Sindh Assembly, Mr. Ali Ahmed Jan and former Chairman Fisheries Mr. Abdul Berr distributed the prizes among the winners. The Town Chairmen and UC-12 Chirman Mr. Hilal Saeed Rehmani, President Sindh MMA Qutubuddin Zerrini, Secretary Sindh Gohar Gul, Asrullah Kakar and the CEO Pakistan Sports Adventure Mr. Nadeem Khan, Saima Sheikh, Hasan Musaddiq sports personalities and large number of area spectators and sports lovers were also presented.

According to detail the fights in 20 kg fight, Abbas beat Muhammad and Asmat beat Qasim by knockout. In 29 Kg fight, Ayan defeated Talha and Jazeb beat Arshmun. In 35 Kg fight, Zayan beat Rafeeq, In 38 Kg fight, Sameer beat Shah Din, 42 Kg fight, Noorullah beat Islamuddin while Bismillah Khan beat Mustafa. 49 Kg fight, javad beat Hamza and Hameedullah beat Noman, 50 Kg fight, Javed beat Atifand Samrez defeat Mohad, 51 kg fight, Zafraan beat Ismail and Faheem beat Saud, Kumail beat Ali Hyder. 60 Kg fight Ataullah beat Irshad and Sarwar beat Mohibullah. 65 Kg fight Shah Hussain beat Noman, In 69 Kg fight Junaid Khan beat Zain and Istijab beat Shah Meer. Girls 35 Kg fight, Hoorain beat Dua, in 42 Kg fight Saima Abro beat Ruqayya. In 52 fight Fouzia beat Bisma.

Punjab, KP leading National Table Tennis League

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were dominating the Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth National Table Tennis League here at the Rodham Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex. This six-day event features talented players from all over the country competing against each other.

The closing ceremony and awards presentation would be held on May 3. Mohib Rehman, the league's brand ambassador and an international table tennis player from Balochistan, has lauded the initiative as a vital platform for discovering new talent. The league was a joint effort between the Higher Education Commission and Government College University Lahore. "We are thankful to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif for his Talent Hunt Youth Program," expressed Mohib, who was also a PhD scholar. "This program not only promotes sports but also provides athletes with opportunities to progress, ultimately strengthening our national teams. It empowers young men and women to strive for future representation of our country." The Higher Education Commission was hosting competitions throughout Baluchistan, showcasing the region's wealth of talent. Mohib stressed the importance of more opportunities through the Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Program, as players from Baluchistan are eager to participate in the national league. "The Prime Minister Talent Hunt Program is praiseworthy. It boosts the morale of our youth and supports their development. The more programs like this we have, the more exceptional athletes we will discover across all sports," he said.



Champions Trophy 2025: PCB proposes 'least travelling plan' for Indian team

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has strategically proposed less travel for the Indian cricket team during their stay in Pakistan for the scheduled ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

As per the proposal, the PCB suggests hosting all the group matches involving the Indian team within a single city.

Last week, the PCB sent draft schedule of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The proposed schedule outlines matches for all eight participating teams, slated to be played across three venues in Pakistan — Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi.

Reliable sources close to the matter told Geo News that the thought behind the PCB's proposal is to streamline logistical operations.

The likely city to host India's all group matches is Lahore, though a final decision would be made after ICC receives feedback from the participating boards on the draft schedule.

It is, however, unclear if Indian team will be touring Pakistan for the mega event or not. A source from India told this correspondent that to say anything will be premature at this stage.

"Any decision on touring Pakistan will be around the proposed tour only, when the BCCI will seek government's approval, we will know only around later this year the mood of Indian government regarding relations with Pakistan," the source said.

Real Madrid eye Champions League final after snatching draw at Bayern Munich

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior scored a double, including an 83rd-minute equalising penalty, to snatch a 2-2 draw at Bayern Munich on Tuesday that puts the Spanish side in the driving seat for the return leg of the Champions League semi-final.

Vinicius gave Real the lead after 24 minutes of the first leg but Bayern scored twice in four second-half minutes to wrestle back control, Leroy Sane with a stunning opener and Harry Kane converting a penalty.

Kim Min-jae fouled Rodrygo in the box with eight minutes remaining and Vinicius stepped up, drowning out a chorus of boos and whistles to blast home.

"In this competition, it's important not to lose, and we're here because we

haven't lost yet," said Vinicius.

"I'm very happy that I was able score two goals, and now we need to have a magical night at home," he added.

The draw makes Madrid favourites to progress in next week's return leg at the Santiago Bernabeu but Bayern, who dominated large parts of the match, will still have hope of making it to the final at Wembley in June.

"It's a good result for the second leg," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "But nothing has been decided yet."

"Bayern have high quality. They have players like Musiala or Sane who can hurt us."

"It feels a bit strange," said Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel.

"But the situation is very clear. Win in Madrid, then off to Wembley. The winner takes it all."

"We will be ready and we accept the

fight. We will go to Madrid with self-confidence. We have to be brave."

Before the match, the Bayern fans unveiled a giant banner depicting Franz Beckenbauer which spanned from the grass to the rafters. It was a fitting tribute on a night featuring the most-played fixture in European Cup history.

Famed for their composure on the biggest of stages in this competition, 14-time winners Real struggled early on as Bayern dominated possession while spurred on by a ferocious home crowd.

Madrid's success in this competition this season, including in their quarter-final win over Manchester City, has been built on absorbing pressure before striking.

The visitors repeated the trick for the opener, breaking Bayern's dominance in a ruthlessly simple fashion while showing the hosts how easy scoring goals can

be.

Toni Kroos collected the ball from a corner and drilled a defence-splitting pass along the ground which found Vinicius galloping in acres of space on the edge of the area.

Without a Bayern player in range, Vinicius calmly slotted the opener past a helpless Manuel Neuer, changing the complexion of the match completely.

Bayern, who have six European Cups of their own, were not awed and continued to push but could not break through; their best chance of the remainder of the half came through a free kick, with Kane finding a huge gap in the wall but blasting wide.

With Real seemingly in cruise control, Bayern grabbed hold of the match early in the second half, scoring twice in four minutes. Eric Dier found Sane down the right flank. The Germany winger,



who had missed several chances in the first half, dribbled into the box before unleashing an unstoppable shot. It was his first goal for Bayern in any competition since October.

The hosts' next attack came down the left, with the ever-dangerous Jamal Musiala felled by Lucas Vazquez in the box. Referee Clement Turpin pointed straight to the spot and Kane duly sent

Andriy Lunin the wrong way to take the lead.

With Bayern in control, Real went on the counter-attack and it was Kim's turn to give away a clumsy penalty, with Vinicius confidently slotting in the equaliser.

"We have to continue with cool heads, rest until next week, and we will give everything to leave the Bernabeu qualified for London," Vinicius said.

Meeting

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari being briefed about the overall security, law and order situation of the Sindh province, at the Chief Minister's House on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

President for strict action against criminals in Sindh

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday urged Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to take strict actions against the criminals in Karachi, dacoits in Kacha area and the drug traffickers in close collaboration with the federal government and other provinces to ensure law and order situation in the province.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting here on security, and law and order situation in Sindh Province. The representatives of the law enforcement agencies briefed the president about the crimes in Karachi, the Kacha area, and the overall security situation of

the province.

The president called for devising a system for effective monitoring of the city's all entrances and exits. Emphasizing the need to complete the Karachi Safe City Project on an urgent basis, he said Police should ensure effective tracking of stolen property and take appropriate legal action in this regard.

He said all kinds of support should be provided to ensure the security of Chinese citizens. Besides, the president also stressed the need to continue the ongoing operation in the Kacha area with full force. He also directed the establishment of more Police check posts to improve the security situation

of the Kacha area.

President Zardari also asked to ensure the provision of the necessary equipment to the Sindh Police with the support of the federal government. The president, emphasizing the need to expedite work on the development projects in various areas of Sindh province said, development projects on both sides of the River Sindh should be launched.

He instructed to take support from the local leaders and the community members to solve the issues of tribal and Kacha areas. He said a system should be evolved for effective communication between Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan to prevent crimes in the coun-

try.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, briefing the president about the overall security situation in Karachi and the rest of the province, said that after strict actions taken by the provincial government against street crimes in Karachi, and operations against dacoits in the Kacha area, the law and order situation had significantly improved.

He informed that the number of crimes had significantly reduced during the current year as compared to the previous year. The president was told that crimes in Karachi were less than those recorded in the big cities across the world. The Sindh CM pointed out

that the law and order situation across the province was being reviewed regularly.

He said the Sindh government was ensuring the provision of necessary equipment to enhance the capacity of the Police. Sindh Police, he said had taken important steps to control street crime besides the law enforcement agencies were also conducting operations in the Kacha areas.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui participated in the meeting. While provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah and Ziaul Hasan Linjar also attended the meeting.

Shaza Fatima holds virtual meeting with Asia Internet Coalition team

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja held virtual meeting with Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) member companies' representatives led by its Managing Director Jeff Paine. The meeting discussed matters related to digitalisation, responsible use of social media platforms, digital rights and e-safety in details said a news release.

AIC's membership includes Facebook, Google, Apple, Amazon, X, Yahoo, LinkedIn, and others. While talking to AIC's member companies representatives, Minister of State for IT & Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that steps underway for the digitalization in the country, adding that the government is committed for the digital transformation. She said that under the vision of the prime minister of Pakistan private sector is being fully supported. Public-Private



dialogue platform will be launched very soon, she added. Shaza Fatima said that work is going on different policies. She said that government is focused on the development of the youth and their capacity building by equipping them with digital skills. Shaza Fatima said that responsible use of social media platforms is utmost necessary. The meeting was also attended by Additional Secretary MoIT, Ms. Aisha Humera Moriani, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam and Member Telecom Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim.

Pak tourism symposium & expo on 27-28 May

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in partnership with World Bank Group has planned to organize Pakistan Tourism Symposium and Expo as a high level event of tourism industry from 27 to 28 May at Serena Hotel Islamabad.

According to official sources, this tourism symposium will be a two-day event focused on the theme of Building National Economy Through Tourism.

On this occasion, a tourism expo will also be organized to showcase Pakistan's rich tourism potential and

create G2G, B2B and G2B linkages among the industry stakeholders. PTDC intends to bring together more than 400 national and international tourism professionals, industry experts, and decision-makers to share their ideas for the development of a future road map for the sustainable growth of tourism industry of Pakistan.

All those who are interested to attend this high level event as a delegate are request to register online at <https://bit.ly/4a512GH>.

For further details click on the below mentioned link to find more details and register as a delegate of this conference

As wheat falls, flour prices drop by Rs800 per bag

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As the price of wheat decreased in the Punjab province due to the government dragging its feet on the purchase of the commodity from farmers, a significant reduction in the prices of flour was registered.

In Lahore, the price of a 20kg bag of flour has fallen by Rs 800 in a few

days, from Rs 2800 to Rs2000.

Flour mill owners are purchasing wheat from farmers at lower rates, which has allowed them to reduce the price of flour.

The Chairman of the Flour Mills Association, Asim Raza, confirmed the price reduction and stated that the new price of a 20kg bag of flour is Rs2000.

Talks with establishment to be held in the open: Gandapur

Bureau Report



PESHAWAR: PTI leader and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has said that the PTI will hold talks with the establishment in the open and nothing will be kept hidden.

PTI Founder Imran Khan this week named three party leaders, including Gandapur, for holding talks with the powers that be.

Speaking to Aaj News on Wednesday, Gandapur confirmed that Imran Khan had tasked him and others with

holding talks with the establishment.

Asked how long he thinks it will take to win freedom for Imran Khan, Gandapur said, "Khan sb has given the task now. He has named the people [for negotiations]. When it happens it will come before everyone. Nothing will happen in secret."

Gandapur also commented on the possibility of PTI reaching out to JUIF Chief Fazlur Rehman.

He was it was heartening that Fazlur Rehman was now speaking the truth and if he had come to the right path we would welcome it.

Gandapur said PTI's mandate was stolen not that of Fazlur Rehman but still he was ready to open any constituency for a vote recount.

India's Hyper-nationalism and Pakistan's Water Security Challenges

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled 'Navigating the Indus Water Treaty: India's Hyper-nationalism and Pakistan's Water Security Challenges'. The event focused on the heart of Pakistan's socio-economic wellbeing - its water resources, and the challenges the Treaty faces due to the changing political dynamics in India.

The seminar commenced with opening remarks by Dr Bilal Ghazwanfar, Associate Senior Researcher at CASS, Lahore, who emphasised that cooperation, not conflict, is the key to securing a shared water future for the region. This was followed by a keynote address by Engineer Suleman Najib Khan, Convener, Water and Resource Development Council, who spoke about India's



water aggression and termed it as an ecocide in motion. He added that there is no silver bullet and Pakistan must build the Indus Cascade for its water security. Mr Ahmed Rafay Alam, an environmental lawyer, discussed the legal perspective on the Indus Water Treaty and highlighted

the need for Pakistan to take a robust stance in defending its water rights and seeking international support to resolve disputes and ensure the implementation of the accord. The last speaker, Dr Hassan Abbas, a renowned hydrologist, framed the Indus Water Treaty as a catalyst for envi-

ronmental peacebuilding. He promoted a holistic approach to water management, emphasising cooperation, sustainability, and regional stability in the face of climate change and geopolitical challenges.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS

Lahore, reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast dedication to upholding the fundamental principles enshrined within the Indus Water Treaty. He emphasised that as Pakistan's eastern neighbour, India shares the responsibility for maintaining peace in the region. Therefore, he urged India to reaffirm its solemn commitment to international agreements and cautioned against any unilateral measures that could potentially jeopardise the Treaty's integrity. Furthermore, he said that international institutions that played a pivotal role in formulating the Treaty must step forward to safeguard its sanctity and ensure its continued efficacy.

The speakers pointed out that India's hyper-nationalism and unilateral measures on the Indus Water Treaty threaten Pakistan's water security and peace, endangering the lives and livelihoods of millions in

Interior Minister...

Continued from Page 1

The Federal Minister while appreciating the professional performance of the institution, the high determination, courage and efforts of the officers and jawans of the Coast Guards, said Pakistan Coast Guards, is the only one that performs its duties simultaneously on land and sea. This is a force which has an important role not only in peace time but also in any difficult and war situation, Naqvi said.

He expressed best wishes for the Pakistan Coast Guards by assuring the provision of all possible support and resources to make it more active and strong.

Israel supporters attack pro-Palestinian camp in LA

News Desk

NEW YORK: Supporters of Israel attacked a pro-Palestinian protest camp at the University of California in Los Angeles on Wednesday, while New York's mayor said a pro-Palestinian protest at Columbia University broken up by police had been led by outsiders.

Witness footage from UCLA, verified by Reuters, showed people wielding sticks or poles to hammer on wooden boards being used as makeshift barricades to protect the pro-Palestinian protesters before police were deployed to the campus.

On the other side of the country, New York police arrested pro-Palestinian demonstrators holed up in a building at Columbia University and removed a protest encampment on Tuesday night.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams said about 300 people had been arrested and he blamed the protests on outside agitators, but without offering concrete evidence.

The Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel by Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip and the ensuing Israeli offensive on the Palestinian enclave have unleashed the biggest outpouring of U.S. student activism since the anti-racism protests of 2020.

As student rallies have spread to dozens of schools across the U.S. in recent days expressing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza, police have been called in to quell or clear protests.

About 1,200 people in southern Israel were killed in the Oct. 7 attack but the Israeli retaliatory assault has killed nearly 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health ministry figures, oblit-

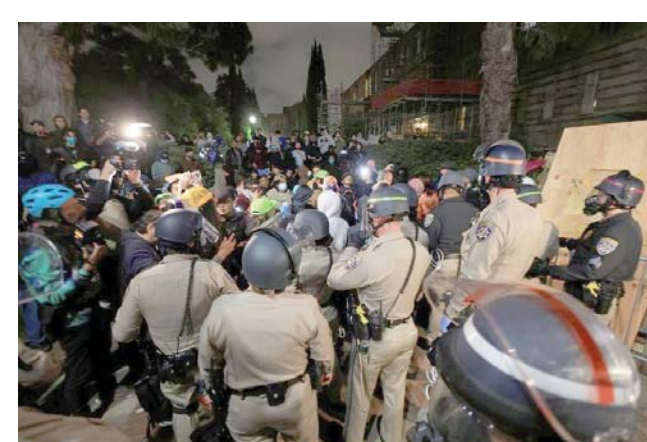
erated much of the enclave's infrastructure, and created a humanitarian crisis verging on famine.

The student protests in the United States have also taken on political overtones in the run-up to the presidential election in November, with Republicans accusing some university administrators of turning a blind eye to antisemitic rhetoric and harassment.

UCLA protesters report violent attack

On Tuesday, UCLA officials announced that the encampment was unlawful and violated university policy. UCLA Chancellor Gene Brock said it included people "unaffiliated with our campus", though he, like Adams, provided no evidence of the presence of outsiders.

Footage from the early hours showed mostly male counter-demonstrators, many of



them masked and some apparently older than students, throwing objects and trying to smash or pull down the wooden and steel barriers erected to shield the encampment.

Some screamed pro-Jewish comments as pro-Palestinian protesters tried to fight them off.

"They were coming up here and just violently attacking us," said pro-Palestinian protester Kaia Shah, a researcher at UCLA.

"I just didn't think they would ever get to this, escalate to this level, where our protest is met by counter-protesters who are violently hurting us, inflicting

pain on us, when we are not doing anything to them."

Demonstrators on both sides sprayed each other and fights broke out.

Another pro-Palestinian student protester, Sophia Sandino, said: "We had people (spraying) us, beating us with bats and sticks, throwing whatever they could to us and none of this law enforcement was here at all. So it's kind of disappointing that we're seen as the perpetrators here."

Police said they had responded to a request from UCLA to restore order and maintain public safety "due to multiple acts of violence" within the encampment.

Broadcast footage later showed police clearing a central quad beside the encampment. They erected a metal crowd barrier in front of the encampment and the area was quiet at daybreak.