

**Federal govt seeks 'balance' in appointment of judges: law minister**

Hinting at bringing constitutional amendments to change the traditional approach to selecting judges for the Supreme Court as well as high courts, Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday said that they wanted to establish a "balance" in the system. His remarks came as a meeting of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) was held today with Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa in the chair to discuss proposed amendments to its 2010 rules.



**Donald Trump lands into yet another trouble**

New trouble is brewing for the Republican presumptive nominee Donald Trump even after a massive rise in his net worth since last month as his company Trump Media & Technology Group went public in March. The former president's stake in his public company is now worth \$6 billion, despite his venture's low revenue. Recent data released by an intelligence company Similarweb may also raise an alarm regarding the future of the company.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**ICUBE-QAMAR**

Chang'e6 carries Pakistan's miniature satellite ICUBE-QAMAR: Institute of Space Technology has built ICUBE-Q in collaboration with Shanghai University and SUPARCO.



**Pakistan's 'historic' lunar mission launched**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's historic lunar mission, known as ICUBE-Q, was launched on Friday (today) on board China's Chang'e 6 lunar probe from Hainan, China.

The broadcast of the launch was live telecast on the IST website and IST social media platforms.

Chang'e-6 aims to collect around two kilograms of lunar samples from the far side of the Moon and bring them back to Earth for analysis. Chinese state news agency Xinhua hailed it as "the first endeavour of its kind in the history of human lunar exploration".

"Chang'e-6 will collect samples from the far side of the Moon for the first time," Ge Ping, vice director of China's Lunar Exploration and Space Engineering Center, told journalists.

The satellite ICUBE-Q was made by the Institute of Space Technology (IST). On Chang'e-6, China also carried payloads from France, Italy, and Sweden, while Chang'e-7 will bear payloads from Russia, Switzerland and Thailand.

The organization partnered with China's Shanghai University SJTU and Pakistan's national space agency SUPARCO, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan.

Pakistan's ICUBE-Q orbiter is poised to capture stunning images of the lunar surface and is equipped with two advanced optical cameras.

ICUBE-Q has successfully integrated with China's Chang'E6 mission after successful testing, making it the sixth chapter in China's ongoing lunar exploration program.

The mission will gather samples regarding soil and rocks that as more preserved materials from the early formation of the moon since it lacks volcanic activity to research on it.

Chang'e-6 plans to land on the northeastern side of the South Pole-Aitken Basin, the oldest known impact crater in the solar system.

This mission could provide valuable insights into the moon's evolution and the inner solar system.

It will carry the iCube-Q CubeSat which are small, standardized, cubic-shaped satellites that weigh only a few kilograms and it serves as platforms for testing new technologies, promoting collaboration within the space community, and enabling access to space for a broader range of users.

**President condoles over deaths in Chilas bus accident**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in a bus accident that took place near Chilas. According to media reports, at least 20 people were killed and many others sustained injuries when a passenger bus careened off the road, plunging into a ravine.

The president prayed for peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to bear the loss. He also prayed for the quick recovery of those injured in the accident.



**PM assures govt support for media industry uplift**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday assured that the incumbent government would make all-out efforts to uplift the media industry and resolve the issues confronting it. The prime minister, in his message on World Press Freedom Day annually, also reiterated the resolve for government's maximum cooperation to protect the rights of media industry as well as the media workers.

He paid tribute to the journalists, media workers, writers and cameramen and lauded their fight for truth. He said the male and female journalists who sacrificed their lives during coverage in Gaza were the heroes of humanity. The prime minister said that fighting oppression and digging out the truth was the message of World Press Freedom Day as well as the lesson from the history. He said the freedom of press and expression were the foundation of democracy and protection of civil rights as well as the voice of truth in the society. Prime Minister urged the collective role of media and other stakeholders to create a conducive atmosphere to ensure smooth media functioning.

He said the government firmly believed that freedom of media and expression provided guarantee for democratic durability. The prime minister said that during his precious 16-month government, Pakistan had improved by seven points in the World Press Freedom Index.

He recalled that at that time, the government had taken steps including legislation for media protection, health insurance, and payment of billions of rupees to media and insurance amount worth millions of rupees to media workers through the NIRC.



**Deputy PM meet with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Yemen in Banjul, The Gambia**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Yemen, Dr. Shaya Mohsen Al-Zindani on the margins of 15th OIC Islamic Summit in Banjul, The Gambia. They discussed bilateral relations and regional developments.

Deputy Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's principled support for national reconciliation and political transition in Yemen. He also shared Pakistan's desire to explore avenues for cooperation with Yemen in various sectors such as education.

**Pakistan, Azerbaijan to extend economic cooperation**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are bound with each other in religious and cultural ties while Pakistan and the Central Asian States enjoyed close affinities expanding over centuries.

He was talking to ambassador of Azerbaijan in Pakistan Khazar Farhadov at Ministry of Communications here. On his arrival, a warm reception was given to the visiting guest.

Khazar Farhadov expressed desire to work hand in hand with Pakistan in various sectors including Communications and Transport in particular. The investors of Azerbaijan are interested in realizing vast ranging investment in Pakistan.

During the meeting, Abdul Aleem Khan told the envoy that Azerbaijan may seek investment opportunities in energy, health, information technology and Communications sectors of the country.

The minister disclosed that a visit of Pakistani working group on trade is being scheduled to Azerbaijan with objective to determine the targets of trade and investment. Secretary Board of Investment will also be a part of upcoming visit.

Khazar Farhadov also emphasized promotion of tourism between the two countries. The minister assured to participate in International Transport Forum of Azerbaijan.

Both the sides agreed on holding joint meeting among ambassadors of Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan with the view to forge understanding with reference to promotion of trade, culture and tourism among the three brotherly States.

Aleem Khan said that Pakistan will welcome investors and industrialists of Azerbaijan here to expand range of economic cooperation in various sectors.

**Minister Sheikh lands in Gwadar to assess port's progress**

**Bureau Report**

GWADAR: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, along with Additional Secretary Maritime Affairs, embarked on a significant three-day visit to Gwadar. Upon arrival, they were warmly received by Chairman Gwadar Port Pasand Khan Baldi, CEO of China Overseas Port Holding Company Limited, Mr. Yu Bu, and other distinguished officials from GPA and China.

The Minister's first day in Gwadar was filled with engagements, starting with a meeting at GPA head office chaired by Minister Maritime, where senior officials from Chinese and Gwadar Port Authority discussed various matters.



Continued on Page 8

**Finance Minister chairs a meeting at FBR Headquarters**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb visited the Federal Board of Revenue Headquarters today and held a meeting with Chairman FBR and Members of the Board to review revenue collection performance of FBR. Attorney General Mr. Mansoor Usman Awan was also present on the occasion.

During the meeting, Chairman FBR gave a detailed briefing to the Minister about the revenue collection efforts of FBR for the current financial year 2023-24. The Chairman also briefed about measures being taken for digitalization of FBR to further improve its performance.

The Finance Minister emphasized on devising strategies to enhance tax-to-GDP ratio and broaden the tax base to maximize revenue collection. The Minister called for making all-out efforts to achieve the ongoing year's revenue collection target.

Various other issues including pending legal cases also came under discussion during the meeting.

It was decided to devise a holistic strategy to actively pursue all the pending legal cases for early recovery of stuck up revenue.



**Women, children among 20 dead as Hunza-bound bus falls into ravine in Chilas**

**Correspondent**

CHILAS: At least 20 were killed, including women and children, when a passenger van fell into a ravine from the Karakoram Highway in Gilgit Baltistan's Chilas on Friday, said rescue officials. At least 21 passengers were wounded.

It was a Hunza-bound bus which started its journey from Rawalpindi but fell into a ditch.

The northern region is famous for its serenity and high mountains, but such incidents have been reported in the past as well. Many people have blamed the dangerous roads, landslides, lack of street lights, and reckless driving for the accidents.

Over 30 passengers were on the bus, officials said as rescue teams reached the site of the accident. The government officials declared an emergency in the Chilas hospital.

Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan was grieved over the incident and called for immediate relief for the wounded.

A combination of two stills from a video shows locals around the passenger bus and rescue workers shifting the casualties from the site on May 3, 2024. Screenshot via Aaj News

"Suddenly I heard a noise from the back tyre of the bus, the driver tried to control it and turn the vehicle towards the mountain but the bus lost its control and we heard a loud noise," one of the survivors said.

# U. S. Ambassador meets Punjab officials and Supports Health, IT and Cultural Collaborations

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: During a May 1-3 visit to Lahore, U. S. Ambassador Donald Blome met with new Punjab officials to explore opportunities to strengthen the U. S.-Pakistan partnership in Punjab province. He also held meetings and events focused on U. S.-Pakistan collaboration in the fields of IT, health, and culture. U. S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin Hawkins joined Ambassador Blome for his series of engagements.

As part of his routine interactions with Pakistani officials, Ambassador Blome met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Acting Governor and Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, and Punjab Assembly Leader of the Opposition Malik Ahmad Khan



Bhachar. The Ambassador highlighted U. S. interest in strengthening our trade and investment relationship with Pakistan, discussed the positive impacts of initiatives under the U. S.-Pakistan Green Alliance framework, and explored additional areas for future

collaboration.

The Ambassador visited the offices of Systems Limited and Remington Pharmaceuticals to learn more about ongoing U. S.-Pakistan collaborations in the IT and health sectors. "The U. S. government is providing nearly \$85

million in funding to address the issue of malnutrition in Pakistan, including \$12 million to treat severely malnourished children," Ambassador Blome said. "I appreciated the opportunity to hear about the work Remington Pharmaceuticals is doing to combat malnutrition and other global health challenges, including in collaboration with U. S.-based partners."

The Ambassador visited Forman Christian College to see a USAID-constructed women's dormitory and to visit the U. S. government-funded EducationUSA office, which provides free advising services on study abroad opportunities in the United States. Another highlight of his trip was attending a concert at the Lahore Fort by Raining Jane, a band comprised of four American women.

## Scholars of all religions living in Pakistan are struggling hard for social and religious harmony



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman of the Catholic Commission for Inter-religious and Inter-Church Dialogue of Pakistan, Bishop Yusuf Sohan, has said that for the establishment of sustainable peace in the society, people of all religions need to make joint efforts. "I, we celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, Christmas, Diwali, and join in each other's happiness. Come out of extremism and come towards pacifism and make your country a cradle of peace. He expressed his views yesterday while addressing the ceremony organized by the Catholic Commission for Interfaith and Inter-Church Dialogue Pakistan at the Catholic Church Bishop House Multan on the occasion of the creation of Diocese Harmony Forum. Religions and interfaith dialogues Samuel Clement, Father Daniel Taj, Allama Dr. Muhammad Arshad Ali Baloch, Professor Abdul Majid Wato, Shahbaz Nazim. Others also participated while speaking on the occasion National Executive Secretary Catholic The Commission for Interfaith and Interfaith Dialogue, Samuel Clement, has said that the Decision Harmony Forum will play an active role in making Pakistan a cradle of peace. The persons holding will also be included. Through the forum, various training programs will be organized to make the youth peaceful, patriotic and responsible citizens.

## NAEAC Pre-accreditation Zero Visit at Ziauddin University Education City

PPA

KARACHI: A delegation of three members of the National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) visited Ziauddin University, Education City, Link Road Site to conduct an accreditation assessment. The visit aimed to assess the academic programs in the Departments of Food Science & Technology and Human Nutrition & Dietetics.

The committee was led by Prof. Dr. Fayyaz-ul-Hassan, Chairperson of the National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) and Convener of the Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC), and included esteemed members such as Prof. Dr. Saghir Ahmed Sheikh from Hamdard University in Karachi and Dr. Syed M. Ghufraan Saeed from the University of Karachi. Ziauddin University was represented by key personnel including Prof. Dr. Inayatullah Khan, Vice Chancellor; Prof. Dr. Fahad Azim, Director Campus and Dean Faculty of Engineering, Science, Technology and Management; Prof. Dr. Sumaira Imran Farooqui, Dean Faculty of Allied Health Sciences alongside Mr. Mirza Amin as Additional Registrar; Prof. Dr. Saad Jawaid Khan, Chairperson of Department of Biomedical Engineering; Dr. Bakht Ramin, Principal, College of Human Nutrition and Dietetics; Mr. Adnan Fuzail, Director of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC), and Mr. Ali Abbas, Director of Student Affairs, collectively ensuring the seamless facilitation and coordination of the accreditation.

Professor Dr. Inayatullah Khan highlighted the university administration's commitment to following NAEAC's recommendations emphasizing the tremendous progress made this far in carrying out their plans. He told the visiting group that they would see real changes in both departments, highlighting the positive effect of NAEAC's involvement in improving the quality of teaching and research at the institution.

The team was split into three different groups. The Chairperson of the Department of Biomedical Engineering presented the BS Food Science and Technology program to one evaluator, while the Principal of the BS Human Nutrition and Dietetics program did the same for the other.

The Chairman NAEAC was accompanied by the Director of Campus, who showed them the campus infrastructure and university amenities. Following the departmental presentations, the assessors toured the laboratory and interacted with students and teachers.

On this occasion, the visitors informed Ziauddin University members that NAEAC sponsored internships in collaboration with firms for graduates from all institutions, as well as other initiatives for universities, faculty, and students themselves.

## Faisalabad businessman kills his wife, four children in Sargodha Road

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In Faisalabad's Sargodha Road area, Gulshan Madina, a man who owed hundreds of rupees to traders and a domestic dispute, shot and killed his two wives and four children and committed suicide by shooting himself.

According to police sources, 55-year-old Kazim Jawad, a businessman of Yarn Market, often quarreled with his two wives. Last night, he killed both his wives, 45-year-old Umbrian and 30-year-old Faza, and their children, 22-year-old Yamna, 19-year-old Urooj, 8-year-old Ruma, and 6-year-old son Musa Kazim. He committed suicide. 55-year-old Kazim Jawad used to do business in Sutra Mandi, which had to pay crores of rupees to Sutra Mandi traders, and he often quarreled with his wife and children because of this. The traders of Yarn Market kept 55-year-old Kazim sitting in various panchayats to recover their money, but they could not get their money.

Incident notice by CPO Faisalabad, DIG Kamran Adil visit to the incident site. SSP Operation Hasan Javed Bhatti was also with him. The police have started investigation from all aspects of the tragic incident. DIG Kamran Adil has tasked the police force in this regard. Police and forensic teams are collecting all the evidence.

## WUJ celebrated 3 May as World Press Freedom Day

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Wana Union of Journalists (WUJ) Chairman Adam Khan Wazir has said in a statement after the meeting held with the cabinet members on Friday.

He said in a statement, May 3rd is being celebrated as World Press Freedom Day all over the world. Journalism is one of the most dangerous professions in the world, Pakistan is the fifth most dangerous country in the world for journalists.

Chairman said at the same time, a journalist has dozens of enemies, be it government, administration, other institutions and politicians.

He said although the journalist is the only person who highlights the problems in the area, exposes the corrupt people.

He said that journalists convey the voice of the people to the higher authorities, working day and night on different issues and problems in the area but despite this, they have hundreds of enemies.

Chairman further said that doing journalism in the merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is like playing with life but despite this, the efforts of our journalists for the nation and the region continue.

## Palestine conference

ISLAMABAD: Senator of Jamaat-e-Islami Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, addressing during Palestine Youth Conference at Jinnah Convention Center, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

# Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet approves formation of law and order committee

Bureau Report

MUZAFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet meeting was held here with Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq in the chair.

The cabinet meeting, while expressing its full confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister, approved to form a cabinet committee to oversee and improve the overall law and order situation in the liberated territory.

The committee comprising of members including Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Diwan Ali Khan Chaghtai, Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Dawood Muhammad Barich and Inspector General of Police Sohail Habib Tajik would be headed by senior minister Col. (ret'd) Waqar Ahmed.



The committee shall have all the powers to take necessary measures it deems to improve the law and order situation in the region.

Of those who were present in the meeting included senior minister Colonel (Ret'd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Government Ministers Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Chaudhry Muhammad Rashid, Abdul

Majid Khan, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Raja Muhammad Siddique, Ms. Nisaran Abbasi, Ms. Nabila Ayub, Ms. Imtiaz Naseem, Sarda Aamer Altaf, Javed Butt, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Mian Abdul Waheed, Dewan Ali Khan Chaghtai, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Sardar Zia Qamar, Sardar Mohammad Javed Ayub Khan,

Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, Chaudhry Amir Yasin, Chaudhry Yasir, Sultan, Muhammad Akmal Sargala, Asim Sharif Butt, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Ahmed Raza Qadri, Chairman Prime Minister's Inspection Commission Maulana Mazhar Saeed, Chief Secretary Dawood Muhammad Barich and IGP Sohail Habib Tajik

The Prime Minister said that the government won't allow anyone whosoever to challenge the writ of the state or take the law into their hands.

The PM said that holding peaceful protest was no doubt everyone's right, but if there was any attempt to disrupt the peace, the AJK police was sufficient enough to deal with it.

The Prime Minister made it clear that FC has been deployed to protect the foreigners posted in different areas.

# Making Saudi investment a success is critical

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Friday that Pakistan has lost numerous chances to grow economically.

Politicians and bureaucracy tend to scare away investors, which should be changed; that is critical for the success of Saudi investment, he added.

In a statement issued today, Dr Muhammad Hanif Mughal said that no other country has as many opportunities as Pakistan to boost the economy, but all such opportunities have been wasted due to vested interests.

He observed that our politicians and bureaucracy are experts in driving away investors, a major obstacle to investment and national development.

He said that now, the friendly country of Saudi Arabia wants to invest billions

of dollars in Pakistan, which should be allowed to succeed.

Riyadh is particularly interested in investing in the agricultural sector; nevertheless, energy projects were also addressed during the discussions between the high-ranking officials of both countries.

He said Saudi investors and investments should be protected and allowed to work freely so other countries could also follow suit to invest in Pakistan.

Apart from this, people and institutions who have stopped investments in Pakistan should be consulted to find and correct the problems discouraging investors.



He said Saudi investors and their investments should be protected from problems, which is crucial for the economic stability of Pakistan.

With Saudi investment, the relations between the two countries will be more stable, while the reputation of Pakistan will grow, the economy will prosper, and employment opportunities will increase.

He noted that some hostile countries and negative elements are worried about Saudi investment in Pakistan. They may target Saudi investors like the Chinese working are targeted.

Therefore, the foolproof security of investors be ensured so they can work

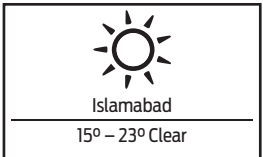
with peace of mind, he demanded.

Hanif Mughal observed that there is a realization at the top in Pakistan that we need to modify our internal dynamics to attract foreign investment.

The government is trying to make Pakistan an attractive destination for capital from other countries. Still, much must be done before making the country an investment destination.

He said that Pakistan is facing revenue, energy, and security issues, which require attention. It is also essential to put an end to corruption and bureaucratic red tape and establish a regulatory and administrative environment that emphasizes the simplicity of conducting business.

In the meantime, the Saudi offers are likely to be realized shortly and additional foreign investors from the Gulf region and beyond may start to investigate the investment potential in Pakistan.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:45 am  
Zohr ..... 12:05 pm  
Asr ..... 4:54 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:53 pm  
Isha ..... 8:26 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**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

# Minister for Maritime Affairs agrees to FPCCI demands

**PPA**

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, federal minister for maritime affairs, has in principle agreed to FPCCI's demand that there should be a strong and effective authority to regulate ports, terminals, shipping lines and allied matters in order to protect, facilitate and promote country's trade, logistics and commercial activities.



Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh extended his full support to the ministry for the consultative process in establishing the aforementioned authority – and, demanded that FPCCI representatives should be included from the very beginning to align the process with ground realities.

It is pertinent to note that the minister of maritime affairs called a high-profile meeting of all stakeholders on the subject of shipping companies regulations; where FPCCI represented the collective grievances and concerns of the entire business,

industry and trade community of Pakistan being the apex body.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, pointed out that Netty Jetty interchange is the only route to country's largest and the busiest port, i.e. Karachi Port – and, in case of any eventuality, country's trade will be on a standstill. Therefore, there is a glaring need to build an alternative route to divide the traffic to Karachi port. He added that ports and connected infrastructure of Paki-

stan needs a major overhaul and expansion.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, stressed upon the need to implement SRO. 450 letter and spirit to give fair treatment to the trading community. He added that while custom officers are exercising their authorities in this regard; but they should be enabled to fully facilitate the traders through removal of any ambiguities or anomalies.

Mr. Aman Paracha, VP FPCCI, demanded that the ports and terminal charges should be rationalized and made regionally-competitive. Business community is already under tremendous pressure due to the exorbitant and unbearable cost of doing business because of power & gas tariffs; petroleum prices; 22 percent policy rate and volatile economic environment.

Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, federal minister for maritime affairs, assured FPCCI delegation that his ministry will keep close liaison with the apex body; and, industrialists and exporters will be incentivized for their contributions and will be given fair treatment.

## PM Youth Program Chairman visits National Information Technology Board (NITB)



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Youth Program Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan visited the office of National Information Technology Board (NITB) along with a delegation. During the visit, a detailed discussion was held regarding issues of mutual interest and equipping the youth with professional and digital skills. During the visit Profad was briefed on various applications and portals developed by NITB. Rana Mashood congratulated NITB CEO Dr. Babr majeed Bhatti for providing excellent services in the IT sector. On the occasion of a detailed visit to the IT Board, Rana Mashood said that the Pakistan IT Board will soon make a name for itself in the IT sector in Pakistan. Rana Mashood presented his reforms and suggestions for the Prime Minister's Youth Program and requested to implement them at the earliest. On this occasion, Rana Mashood appreciated the work of NITB and said that Babar Majeed Bhatti has done immense services in the field of IT.

## MNA's meeting with DG Passport, Chairman PTA, stressed on restoring 3G, 4G & solving passport issue



Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: MNA Zubair Wazir held a detailed meeting with Chairman PTA Islamabad and DG Passport and Immigration Islamabad on Friday.

In the meeting, restoration of mobile 3G and 4G services in Waziristan and early issuance of pending passports of local tribes were discussed.

According to details, Constituency NA-42 South Waziristan Lower and Upper MNA Zubair Khan Wazir visited Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Friday.

MNA discussed internet service in detail with Chairman PTA Major General (retd) Hafeez Ur Rehman.

PTA Chairman assured to provide Internet service in South Waziristan (Upper and Lower).

In the meeting, the MNA also emphasized on fixing poor mobile signal, cellular data (3G-4G) and fiber uptake in South Waziristan Lower and Upper.

MNA Zubair Wazir told Dawn that in the present era, internet facility will be brought to every house and will prepare the young generation to join the world.

On the other hand, MNA Zubair Khan had a detailed meeting with Director General Passport and Immigration Islamabad Mustafa Jamal Qazi.

On this occasion MNA Zubair Khan emphasized to resolve the issue of passport renewal at Dera Ismail Khan Passport Office of local residents of Waziristan, and the DG on the spot issued orders to resolve the issue immediately.

Apart from this, issuing orders for printing of all pending passports of Wana Passport Office for January, February and March.

DG said that all the passports of Waziristan Wana Passport and Immigration Office will be printed by tomorrow and they will be delivered in a few days.

## Echoes of Freedom: Navigating Press Challenges in Pakistan

Adnan Hameed

World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3rd globally, serves as a poignant reminder of the indispensable role a free press plays in upholding democracy and safeguarding fundamental rights. In Pakistan, however, the landscape of press freedom presents a complex narrative marred by financial struggles, unequal treatment, and grave risks faced by journalists.



The backbone of journalism, comprising beat reporters, camerapersons, and supporting staff, often grapple with dire financial crises as media houses withhold salaries and neglect their rights. While prominent media figures enjoy preferential treatment and hefty compensations, the vast majority toil in obscurity, their contributions sidelined and undervalued.

It is imperative that we break free from this dichotomy. The time has come for media institutions to recognize the equal worth of all journalists and afford them the rights and respect they deserve. There must be an end to the discrimination that perpetuates disparities within the industry.

Moreover, the establishment of robust platforms for the protection of journalists and their families is paramount. Existing media unions and organizations, dispersed across Pakistan, must unify their efforts and speak with one voice to amplify their demands. Only through collective action can they effectively advocate for their rights and confront the challenges they face.

In Pakistan, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders alike must adhere to both international and national press freedom laws. Concrete steps must be taken to address the identified issues plaguing the journalistic community, ensuring their safety, security, and well-being.

On a global scale, the plight of journalists in conflict zones, such as Palestine, serves as a stark reminder of the dangers inherent in their profession. The staggering number of journalists killed and detained underscores the urgent need for enhanced protections. Journalists are not mere targets but invaluable conduits of truth, combating disinformation and documenting reality amidst adversity.

## Graduation ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Children are performing tableau during Graduation ceremony of Pak-Turk school in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Pakistan Muslim League-N to repel every conspiracy against Pakistan'

Member Provincial Assembly and Senior Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Rawalpindi City Begum Tahseen Fawad said that the purpose of the existence of Pakistan Muslim League-N is to serve the people and build and develop Pakistan. They will repel every conspiracy against Pakistan. Under the leadership of Leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Punjab Ms. Maryam Nawaz, they will take their breath by taking Pakistan on new roads of development.

She said this on the occasion of opening the office of Member National Assembly Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry in Jhanda Chichi Rawalpindi for public complaints and their resolution. On this occasion, members of National Assembly Zehra Fatemi and a large number of workers were present with her. Under the supervision of Begum Tahseen Fawad, Member Provincial Assembly and Senior Vice Presi-



dent of Pakistan Muslim League-N Rawalpindi City, recitation of Quran was done. A collective prayer was offered for the completion of the projects initiated for the security of the country and the welfare of the people of Pakistan Muslim League-N. Mna Zahra Fatemi and others appreciated the good feelings of Begum Tahseen Fawad. All the leaders vowed that the problems of the people will be solved on priority basis. Member Provincial Assembly and

Senior Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Rawalpindi City Begum Tahseen Fawad further said that Pakistan Muslim League-N is a Democratic party. We do not make claims, but we are among those who fulfill our promises. The welfare of the people of Pakistan and the development of Pakistan is the motto of our party. The purpose of opening the office is to listen to people's problems and take practical steps to solve them.

## Congratulations to the nation on the departure of first space mission "IQB" Mrs. Farrukh Khan's



ISLAMABAD: The central leader of Pakistan Muslim League, Working National Assembly Mrs. Farrukh Khan has congratulated the nation on the departure of Pakistan's first space mission "IQB". It is the day of putting, we pay tribute to the pioneers, in the future we will have to count the light instead of measuring the darkness. Mrs. Farrukh Khan said that this wonderful achievement is due to the dedication, skill and vision of our scientists, engineers and technicians. It is a proof that today Pakistan has also turned this dream into reality. He said that it is a sign of progress and innovation of our nation. The member of the National Assembly said that this success will start a new era in space exploration, scientific research and technological development. He said that the appreciation of Pakistan-China friendship. The China-Pakistan partnership not only underlines the strength of our diplomatic ties but also highlights the role of unity in achieving extraordinary goals.

# Trade unions indispensable for betterment of country: Prof. Qadir

The Patron-in-Chief of the Railway Workers Union Professor Dr. Qadir Khan Mandukhel said that solving the problems of the workers is one of the first duties of the government. This right should be in legal form. The activities of trade unions are part of the constitution, which cannot be ignored. In all the federal, provincial, small or big institutions where labor is present, the existence of trade union is indispensable. The trade union is performing its duties for the betterment of the country, institutions and workers. Who is the representative of the fundamental rights of the workers. No country can develop without fulfilling the rights of workers. Employee preferences are the primary responsibility of organizations. He said this in a function organized under the title of "Labor Convention" on the occasion of International Labor Day at the Rawalpindi Press Club organized by the Railway Workers



Union Open Line. On this occasion, representatives of International Labor Organization Zahoor Awan, Zamir Bukhari, Central Leader of Railway Workers Union Junaid Awan, International Social Worker Amar Lal, President Anwar Gujjar, Senior Journalist Haji Nawaz Raza, Information Secretary Mubarak Hussain, leader of Pakistan Mazdoor Itehad Shaikat Ali, Tahir Mahmood Bhatti, Ghulam Nabi Prohi, Zafar Ejaz, Riyaz Kashmiri, Imtiaz Khan, Zulfikar Khan, Sharafat

Hussain, Fakir Abbas, Waheed Ahmed, Mohd Waqar, Raja Nazir Advocate and others were also present.

The leaders saluted the greatness of the laborers and pledged to continue the lifelong struggle for the rights of the workers. The representative of different trade union further said that if the leaders of labor unions across the country unite on one platform, no power in the world will be able to stop Pakistan from developing.

On this occasion, the Patron-in-

Chief of the Railway Workers Union, Professor Dr. Qadir Khan Mandukhel, said that May 1 is a day of solidarity with the laborers. It has been said in our religion that the laborer is the friend of Allah Ta'ala. It is the duty of the government and institutions to fulfill the rights of workers irrespective of religion or country. Today, everyone pledges that they will respect the rights of the laborers in all circumstances. Labor leader Mubarak Hussain said that Pakistan Railways is a defense, welfare and public institution. Its privatization is an unconstitutional move. The government and the International Labor Organization have to work together for the welfare of the workers. The secret of the success of the institutions lies in the rights of the workers and the activities of the trade unions. Laborers will be prosperous then country and institutions will develop.

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# Joint Civil-Military Endeavors for Enhancing Laborers Conditions - III

Confronted with fiscal challenges, Pakistani authorities have implemented austerity measures and embraced fiscal discipline to streamline government expenditures and curb budget deficits. Both civilian and military leadership have showcased their commitment to fiscal responsibility through endeavors such as the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act (FRDLA) and the Public Financial Management Reforms (PFMR). These initiatives seek to enhance fiscal transparency, accountability, and sustainability, thereby ensuring the judicious allocation of resources and the preservation of macroeconomic equilibrium.

Recognizing the intrinsic link between national security and economic advancement, civilian and military leaders in Pakistan have forged close collaborations to address security threats while concurrently fostering economic progress. Exemplifying this synergy are initiatives such as the National Action Plan (NAP) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which aim to combat terrorism, bolster regional connectivity, and spur economic activity through infrastructure development and investment. By addressing security challenges and promoting economic cooperation, these endeavors contribute to stability

and prosperity within Pakistan and the wider region.

In order to mitigate the adverse effects of economic downturns on vulnerable segments of society, both civilian and military leadership have initiated social protection programs and poverty alleviation efforts. Programs like the BISP Cash Transfer Program are designed to offer targeted assistance to low-income households, widows, orphans, and individuals with disabilities, enabling them to meet their basic needs and improve their socio-economic circumstances. Through a focus on social welfare and inclusivity, these endeavors play a pivotal role in diminishing poverty and fostering social unity in Pakistan. Tackling economic crises necessitates robust institutional capabilities and efficient governance structures. Pakistani authorities have cooperatively endeavored to bolster institutions like the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). These efforts aim to bolster regulatory supervision, advance financial stability, and combat corruption.

Through investments in institutional reforms and governance frameworks, both civilian and military leadership aim to cultivate an environment conducive to economic growth and the development of the private sector.

Unemployment remains a critical challenge for Pakistan, with millions seeking sustainable livelihoods. Recognizing this imperative, the Pakistani government has established the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a strategic initiative to attract investment, stimulate economic growth, and foster job creation across various sectors. Both the government and Army Chief are deeply involved in driving revolutionary change through the SIFC. This collaboration exemplifies a concerted effort between civil and military sectors for Pakistan's development and the betterment of its workforce.

The establishment of the SIFC underscores Pakistan's commitment to fostering an investor-friendly atmosphere conducive to business expansion and job generation. By streamlining investment procedures, expediting approvals, and offering supportive services to investors,

the SIFC aims to eliminate investment hurdles and instill confidence in Pakistan's business environment. This proactive approach not only draws domestic and foreign investment but also spawns job opportunities across diverse industries.

The SIFC concentrates on pinpointing sectors with significant growth potential and facilitating targeted investments to fuel job creation. Leveraging Pakistan's strengths in areas like agriculture, manufacturing, technology, and infrastructure, the council identifies strategic projects capable of generating substantial employment. Furthermore, by advocating for public-private partnerships (PPPs) and engaging with international collaborators, the SIFC amplifies the impact of investments on job generation.

In parallel with investment promotion, the SIFC prioritizes skill development and training initiatives to enhance the employability of the Pakistani workforce. Collaborating with vocational training institutions, universities, and industry partners, the council fosters the acquisition of relevant skills aligned with emerging sector demands. These efforts not only bridge the gap between education and employment but also empower individuals to seize opportunities in a dynamic job market.

*To be continued*



Abdul Basit Alvi

## Lunar mission good example of Pak-China cooperation

Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi on Friday said that launch of Pakistan's historic lunar mission (ICUBE-Q) on board China's Chang'e-6 lunar was a good example of Pakistan-China bilateral cooperation in space exploration and research.

Pakistan's lunar mission (ICUBE-Q) was launched on board China's Chang'e-6 from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in south China's Hainan province.

While congratulating the China National Space Agency, SUPARCO and everyone involved in making this happen, the ambassador said that it signified yet another milestone and he looked forward to many more such milestones.

Ambassador Hashmi said that it was an important day for China because launch of Chang'e-6 demonstrated an important landmark in the country's space exploration journey.

After completion, the mission would bring back samples from far side of the moon, he added.

Termining the launch an important day for Pakistan as well, he said that it was an excellent example of international cooperation where countries and organizations were coming together with China.

The European Space Agency, France, Italy and Pakistan's SUPARCO "have joined hands and are going on this exploration together", he added.

About further cooperation between Pakistan and China in space, he said that it was an excellent example of international cooperation as well as absolute example of Pakistan-China collaboration for peaceful purposes in the space.

Ambassador Hashmi pointed out that Pakistan and China had been cooperating in the past.

"We have launched satellites before for communications and are working with China to launch another satellite," he added.

He said that the ICUBE-Q was designed for research and exploration. Incidentally, the satellite was developed jointly by the Shanghai Jiaotong University and Pakistan Institute of Space Technology.

"Pakistan and China are working closely on unmanned flight of spacecraft and certainly we will look forward to many more such examples in the future," he said.

Responding to a question about the impact of cooperation in space exploration on Pak-China all-weather friendship, he said that the two countries were old friends, very unique friends, and they had been cooperating on a number of matters such as diplomatic, multilateral cooperation, bilateral economic and defense and space.

"So, it's a very wide ranging partnership and space cooperation is an important facet of this partnership. We see it as a platform to promote development objectives, and we are grateful to the government of China, the China National Space Agency providing this opportunity to launch the ICUBE-Q."

Sharing his personal feelings about the launch, the ambassador said that he was very excited to witness the launch because it was his first time that he was going to witness a lunar mission.



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

## A Comparative Analysis of Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif Governments - II

By expanding access to healthcare, education, and financial assistance, Ahsaas has become a beacon of hope for millions, offering a lifeline to those in need.

4. Minimum Wage Increase: In a move to address income inequality and uplift the working class, the government has consistently raised the minimum wage, ensuring a more equitable distribution of wealth.

5. Worker Protection: The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the vulnerabilities of Pakistan's labor force, with millions of workers facing job losses and economic hardships. In response, the government launched various relief measures, including cash assistance and food distribution programs for the most marginalized laborers, such as daily wage earners and informal workers.

In addition to these initiatives, the government has taken strides to enhance labor rights and ensure fair treatment in the workplace. The introduction of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) 'Labor Policy' underscores a commitment to promoting decent work conditions, minimum wage enforcement, and social security provisions, thus safeguarding the rights and dignity of workers across the country.

Shahbaz Sharif's Legacy: A Tale of

Neglect and Betrayal

In stark contrast, the tenure of Shahbaz Sharif paints a grim picture of neglect and betrayal for the laboring class. During his time in power, laborers were subjected to exploitation and disenfranchisement, with promises of prosperity giving way to a harsh reality of broken dreams. Despite rhetoric espousing support for workers, the reality painted a starkly different picture:

1. Kissan and Mazdoor Cards: One of the most egregious examples of this betrayal is the arbitrary snatching of essential welfare cards, such as the Kissan Card and Mazdoor Card, which served as lifelines for countless families. These cards, meant to provide access to subsidized food, healthcare, and education, were callously stripped away under the Shahbaz Sharif regime and it left countless farmers & laborers devoid of crucial financial assistance, exacerbating their already precarious livelihoods.

2. Shelter Houses Closure: The closure of shelter houses for the poor under Shahbaz Sharif's administration stands as a stark reminder of the government's indifference to the plight of the homeless and destitute. By shutting down these shelters, the government turned a blind eye to the suffering of those most in need, exacerbating the cycle of poverty and despair.

3. Lack of Reforms: The Shahbaz

Sharif government's tenure was characterized by a lack of meaningful labor reforms, with little to no progress made in addressing the systemic challenges faced by workers.

A Tale of Two Administrations: The dichotomy between the approaches of the Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif governments towards labor welfare underscores a broader narrative of governance and accountability. While the former has demonstrated a commitment to progressive policies and tangible reforms, the latter's legacy is marked by a failure to prioritize the needs of the working class.

A Call for Accountability and Reform: As we reflect on these contrasting narratives, it becomes evident that the fate of the laboring class is intricately linked to the policies and priorities of those in power. While the Imran Khan government has shown a commitment to empowerment and reform, the legacy of Shahbaz Sharif serves as a cautionary tale of neglect and betrayal.

As Pakistan stands at a crossroads, the choice between these divergent paths is clear. The imperative lies in building upon the strides made by the Imran Khan government, while learning from the mistakes of the past to ensure a more inclusive and equitable future for all. Only through sustained efforts and genuine dedication can the plight of laborers be truly alleviated, ushering in an era of prosperity and dignity for the backbone of the nation's economy.

## Indispensable Role of Press Council of Pakistan

May 3rd marks World Press Freedom Day, a global celebration of the fundamental human right to freedom of expression and the essential role of a free press in shaping democratic societies. In Pakistan, this day holds significant importance, as the country's media landscape has faced numerous challenges and threats to press freedom. The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) plays a vital role in promoting and protecting press freedom, and this article explores the significance of World Press Freedom Day and the PCP's indispensable contributions.

Importance of World Press Freedom Day:

1. Recognition of Press Freedom: World Press Freedom Day acknowledges the crucial role of a free press in fostering democracy, accountability, and transparency.

2. Tribute to Journalists: The day honors the sacrifices and bravery of journalists who risk their lives to uncover truth and report from conflict zones.

3. Awareness and Advocacy: It raises awareness about press freedom violations, promotes media literacy, and advocates for a free and independent press.

Role of Press Council of Pakistan:

1. Regulation and Self-Regulation: PCP ensures ethical journalism standards, investigates complaints, and promotes self-regulation among media outlets.

2. Protection of Journalists: PCP works to safeguard journalists' rights, provides support to victims of harassment and violence, and advocates for their safety.

3. Promotion of Media Literacy: PCP conducts workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns to enhance media literacy and critical thinking.

4. Encouraging Diversity and Inclusivity: PCP promotes diversity in media ownership, content, and representation, ensuring a more inclusive and representative media landscape.

5. International Cooperation: PCP collaborates with

global media organizations, sharing best practices and advocating for press freedom worldwide.

Challenges to Press Freedom in Pakistan:

1. Censorship and Intimidation: Journalists face pressure from government agencies, political groups, and extremist organizations.

2. Physical Attacks and Killings: Pakistan remains one of the deadliest countries for journalists, with many fallen in the line of duty.

3. Legal Restrictions: Outdated laws and regulations hinder press freedom, and journalists face criminal charges for reporting on sensitive topics.

4. Economic Pressures: Media outlets struggle financially, leading to layoffs, closures, and reduced editorial independence.

Way Forward:

1. Strengthening PCP: Empowering the Press Council of Pakistan to effectively regulate and protect the media industry.

2. Reforming Laws and Regulations: Updating laws to align with international standards, ensuring press freedom and protection for journalists.

3. Enhancing Media Literacy: Promoting critical thinking and media literacy among citizens to combat disinformation and promote a more informed public discourse.

4. Supporting Journalists: Providing resources, training, and protection to journalists, particularly in conflict zones and sensitive regions.

In conclusion, World Press Freedom Day serves as a poignant reminder of the indispensable role of a free press in shaping democratic societies. The Press Council of Pakistan plays a vital role in promoting and protecting press freedom, and addressing the challenges that threaten the very fabric of Pakistan's media landscape. By strengthening PCP, reforming laws, enhancing media literacy, and supporting journalists, we can ensure a more robust and independent press, essential for Pakistan's progress and prosperity.



Czechangez Khan Jadoon

Reform Priorities for Pakistan

# World Bank and PIDE set to debate fiscal and governance reforms for sustainable growth

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A collaborative event between The World Bank Group (Pakistan) and the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) concluded successfully, bringing together an array of stakeholders committed to shaping Pakistan's economic endeavours. This pivotal gathering, designed to support the nation's new economic development agenda over the next five years, was marked by rich discussions and a shared commitment to actionable reforms.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), spearheaded a pivotal economic reform initiative titled "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda-IMF and Beyond," beginning with his opening remarks at this significant event.

This strategy emerges in response to Pakistan's pressing need for substantial external financing, highlighted by an IMF report which necessitates over USD 120 billion in the next five years. Dr. Haque's comprehensive reform agenda addresses crucial sectors including regulatory modernization, tax reform, market liberalization, energy efficiency, and enhancements in agriculture and banking.

While talking on "Reforms for a Brighter Future: Time to Decide," Mathew Verghis, Regional Director of the World Bank Group (South Asia) stated that Pakistan's economic model is unsustainable due to its reliance on borrowing to finance its fiscal and current account deficits, leading to a growing debt level, which has reached 80% of GDP. He further added that Pakistan's spending exceeds its

revenue, and it imports more than it exports, resulting in increased domestic and external borrowing. However, he also noted that Pakistan has the potential for a brighter future, leveraging its youth, natural resources, and strategic location to achieve 7-8% annual GDP growth, and emphasized the need to prioritize reforms addressing the current economic crisis.

Dr. Durre Nayab, Joint Director, PIDE talked about "Public Administration for the 21st Century". She addresses critical inefficiencies in Pakistan's governance system, proposing comprehensive reforms across various sectors including the cabinet, civil bureaucracy, judiciary, and local government. It highlights the necessity to reduce the size of the federal cabinet, limit political appointments, and

emphasize expertise and performance in governance roles. The reforms aim to professionalize and streamline public administration by eliminating outdated practices, introducing competitive hiring processes, digitalizing operations, and enabling greater autonomy at the local government level.

Mr. Derek H. C. Chen, Senior Economist at the World Bank, outlines a comprehensive review of Pakistan's federal tax system, aiming to enable a modern and efficient tax structure. It discusses the need for substantial reform due to Pakistan's low revenue collection compared to international standards and the complexities within the current tax system marked by numerous special provisions and concessional rates. The review provides detailed analyses of specific taxes such as sales tax,



personal income tax, and corporate income tax, revealing inefficiencies and the potential for broadening the tax base.

Dr. Ahmad Waqar Qasim, Senior Research Economist, PIDE extensively critiques the existing regulatory framework in Pakistan, highlighting it as a significant impediment to economic activity due to its

complexity and the burdensome nature of obtaining permissions. It identifies the pervasive regulatory burden as an "invisible tax" that stifles economic initiatives across all sectors. The review underscores the necessity of a "Regulatory Guillotine" approach, which has been successful in various countries, to streamline regulations by eliminating unnecessary permissions and simplifying the process through digital governance.

Ms. Maliha Haider, Education Specialist at the World Bank, highlighted significant strides made in Pakistan's educational system, including expanding access to free and compulsory education and introducing innovative reforms such as merit-based teacher recruitment and public-private partnerships. Despite these efforts, Pakistan still faces substantial challenges, underscored by its low education spending relative to South Asia, which contributes to high dropout rates and learning poverty.

As the debate concluded, the participants expressed optimism about the adoption and implementation of the proposed reforms and the positive impacts they are expected to bring to Pakistan's economy.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Leghari called on by Charge d' Affairs of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Shafiev Saidjon on Friday.



Photo: Online

## Trinidad and Tobago recognized to State of Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomes the decision taken by the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to recognize the State of Palestine and considers it a significant step, consistent with International law, which will in turn contribute to all international efforts towards ending the Israeli colonial occupation and achieving peace and stability in the region.

It also welcomes the statement issued by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago announcing its decision, in which it stresses the importance of recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to live in their independent state in freedom and security, rightfully emphasizing that this is the only way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The Ministry once again calls on all states that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to take



Islamabad Ramzan Mughal, President, Jahangir Choudhary, Secretary General, Journalist for International peace cutting the cake on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

Fourth Generation Universities

## ICE presents Future Work Connect 24 to enhance Pakistan's global competitiveness in education



PPA

KARACHI: The International Centre of Excellence (ICE) successfully organized "Future Work Connect 24," a high-profile event aimed at advancing Pakistan's global competitiveness in education and fostering collaboration between industry and academia. Held at the British Deputy High Commission Karachi, the event brought together esteemed panelists, thought leaders, and stakeholders from the corporate and education sectors to address the challenges and opportunities in talent acquisition and development.

The theme of the event, "Fourth Generation Universities," underscored the importance of innovative approaches in education to meet the evolving needs of the workforce and enhance Pakistan's position on the global stage. Through engaging discussions and insightful presentations, Speakers and the panelists explored strategies to bridge the gap between industry requirements and academic curriculum, ensuring graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for success in today's competitive job market.

Keynote speakers at the event included Sarah Mooney, British Deputy High Commissioner; Dr. Gahram Spickett Jones, Dean of ICE; and a distinguished lineup of Speakers and panelists: Fazal Niazi, CEO of Franklin Convey Education, Prof. Dr. Tariq Rafi, Chairman of HEC Sindh, Raza Ahmad Sukera, Chief Industry Development Officer from the Pakistan Software Export Board, Dr. Raheel Nawaz, Pro Vice Chancellor of Staffordshire University, Muhammad Raza, SEVP of Meezan Bank, Prof. Tariq Rahim, Rector of IOBM (Institute of Business Management), Khawaja Tanween Saleem, CIO of United Energy Pakistan, Dr. Farooq e Azam Cheema, Provost of KSBL (Karachi School for Business and Leadership), Dr. Irum Saba, Program Director at IBA (Institute of Business Administration), Dr. Gulfam Baghoor, CEO of Skillsratar

Their valuable insights and expertise enriched the discussions and provided actionable strategies for driving innovation and excellence in education.

"We are thrilled to have hosted such an impactful event that brought together leaders from various sectors to discuss the future of education in Pakistan," said Usman Akram, CEO at ICE. "Future Work Connect 24" served as a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration, laying the foundation for strategic partnerships that will propel Pakistan's education landscape forward."

Future Work Connect 24 received positive feedback from attendees, who praised the event's relevance, insightful discussions, and networking opportunities. Participants expressed enthusiasm for future collaborations and initiatives aimed at advancing education and driving economic growth in Pakistan.

# Kashmiri political prisoners need to be released unconditionally: Sardar Attique

Noorulhassan

JEDDAH: An impressive and meaningful meeting of the leadership of all religious, social and political parties of Azad Kashmir took place at Jeddah to discuss the latest situation in Indian occupied Kashmir. The guest of honor of the event was Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, the chief guest was Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General, World Kashmir Awareness Forum, and the event was presided over by Sardar Waqas Inayat, President, Jammu Kashmir Overseas Community, Jeddah.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, who was in town to attend the annual meeting of Muslim World League (MWL), as a member of the Supreme Council of MWL said that the Kashmir dispute was primarily the issue of self-determination which is a basic principle of the United Nations Charter. The applicability of the principle of self-determination to the specific case of Jammu and Kashmir has been explicitly recognized not only by the United Nations but also equally by both India and Pakistan when the Kashmir dispute was brought before the Security Council in 1948. The Kashmir issue, Sardar Attique added involves the life and future of the 23 million people of the State of Jammu & Kashmir that existed on August 13, 1947. Because of its impact on relations between India and Pakistan, however, it directly affects the peace and stability of the South-Asian subcontinent. The denial of this right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir has brought India and Paki-



stan to the brink of nuclear catastrophe.

Sardar Attique explained that all international conflicts ultimately were resolved on the negotiating table. If that is true, then the world powers should become deeply engaged in order to make sure that the peace process between India and Pakistan once initiated does not get derailed. "His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman can also play a bridge building role to bring parties together so that the animosity is done away with, and the dawn of dialogue and engagement is sustained," Sardar Attique highlighted.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai said that Kashmir conflict is not about Modi's so-called development or jobs or even money; it's about freedom and respect for the sovereign right of a people to choose their own way of life, their own leaders, and their own politics without interference

from outsiders.

Fai warned that cost of inaction by the international community is enormous - for the global community, for the region of South Asia and especially for the people of Kashmir. If the global initiative is taken, it will not only end the bloodshed and suffering in Kashmir, but also will have a direct positive effect on international security by eliminating regional fighting and risk of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. It is in everyone's interests to settle the Kashmir dispute peacefully without further delay.

Mr. Farooq Rehmani, former Convener, All Parties Hurriyat Conference said that the repression of Kashmir's soul has not diminished the pain or the need for India to meet those face to face who have had nothing but a boot to the belly and a cane to the back. The voice of Kashmir not only remains as vibrant and shrill as in the

very beginning, it is yet even stronger. It is time that India showed some honesty and forthrightness in its dealings with Kashmir.

Consul General, Khalid Majeed Sahib said that our brothers and sisters in Occupied Kashmir have suffered for over seven decades. They look towards us to raise their voice against the oppression at the international forums. It is our moral, legal and religious duty to come forward and be the voice of the people who feel muzzled by the draconian laws which have given total immunity to over 900,000 Indian occupation forces in Kashmir. The whole nation of Pakistan is standing with the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir and will keep exposing the atrocities and brutalities of PM Narendra Modi at all international forums.

Mr. Masud Ahmed Puri, Chairman, Kashmir Committee, Jeddah said the sovereignty and right to

self-determination is being ignored. But the people of Kashmir will not rest unless they achieve their ultimate objective which is freedom from Indian occupation. The leadership of various political parties in Azad Kashmir has played a role for decades in internationalizing the issue of Kashmir. The people of Azad Kashmir will never let the sacrifices of the people of Kashmir go in vain, Mr. Puri added.

Sardar Waqas Inayat, President JKCO and the host of the event said that the leadership of the Kashmiri political resistance movement and human right activists in occupied Kashmir are incarcerated on frivolous charges and lodged in notorious prisons under sub-human conditions. The goal is to convert Indian Occupied Kashmir into a Hindu majority state with a long turn plan to achieve favorable outcome in case plebiscite is held in the future.

Sardar Muhammad Ashfaq, Vice Chairman, JKCO and Emcee of the event said that to the horrors of repression for which the people of Kashmir suffer are added two other circumstances, each cruelly adverse. One is the apathy of the world at large, including governments and organizations that otherwise are justly proud of their championship of democracy and human rights.

Others who spoke included: Engineer Arif Mughal, senior vice chairman, JKCO; Choudhary Khursheed Ahmed, former Chairman, JKCO; Raja Shamroz, Additional Secretary General, JKCO.

The event concluded with the du'a for the martyrs of Kashmir and Gaza.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
71,902.09	70,657.64
Day's High	Day's Low
71,986.43	70,671.71
Index Value	Change
16,351,097,674	+1244.45
Percentage	Time
+1.76%	3 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,213.49	+41.34
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	3 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,715.34	+489.68
Percentage	Time
+1.28%	3 May, 2:10 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,236.07	-37.98
Percentage	Time
-0.099%	2 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180.15	182.15
Bahrain Dinar	740.29	748.29
Canadian Dollar	203.15	205.15
China Yuan	38.45	38.85
Danish Krone	39.85	40.25
Euro	294.15	297.15
Hong Kong Dollar	35.58	35.93
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.39	912.39
Malaysian Ringgit	58.38	58.98
New Zealand \$	164.24	166.24
Norwegians Krone	25.12	25.42
Omani Riyal	722.98	730.98
Qatari Riyal	76.47	77.17
Saudi Riyal	73.4	74.1
Singapore Dollar	204.65	206.65
Swedish Korona	25.46	25.76
Swiss Franc	302.83	305.33
Thai Bhat	7.5	7.65
U.A.E Dirham	75.15	75.9
UK Pound Sterling	344.8	348.2
US Dollar	277.35	280.1

# People involved in wheat scam deserve no leniency: Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that misuse of investigating agencies has become a big problem for the country's fragile investment climate and reputation.

The illegal activities of probing agencies are sending a very negative message; therefore, he said a mechanism should be made to block the way of political cases.

According to Mian Zahid Hussain, if the government can investigate the wheat scandal, it can also examine and punish the perpetrators of the LNG scandal.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that dozens of dignitaries were imprisoned, harassed their families, conducted media trials, and wasted billions of



rupees to appease a politician. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had ordered an investigation into the wheat scandal, which was the right decision. The caretaker government allowed the import of wheat in

unnecessary quantities, exempted taxes, ignored the opposition of the Minister of Commerce and Trading Corporation, and did not monitor imports.

Due to the attitude of the caretaker government, the importers filled their pockets by importing more than the prescribed amount of wheat, causing considerable losses to the country.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the action of caretakers cost the nation more than one billion dollars and jeopardized the future of millions of farmers, who are now protesting nationwide.

He noted that instead of giving justice to farmers, they are being beaten, and arrests are being made. The hoarders buy vast amounts of wheat from farmers at throwaway prices, which does not meet their costs.

He warned that farmers could not buy seeds and fertilizers for the next crop, which may affect the production of various essential crops next year.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that an investiga-

tion of the LNG scandal is also necessary apart from the wheat scandal. The public has a right to know the cost of this bogus scandal to gratify a failed politician's ego.

The injustice done to those who support the fake claims of a political cabal should be remedied. Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, former PSO MDs Sheikh Imranul Haq and Shahid Islam, former Port Qasim Authority Chairman Agha Jan Akhtar, former OGRA Chairman Saeed Ahmad Khan, former OGRA Chairperson Uzma Adil Khan, former member Asim Naseem, investor Hussain Dawood, and his son Samad Dawood are among the victims of the LNG scandal.

Retaliatory politics also targeted Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Cheema, and Fawad Hasan. Many of the accused were kept in jail for months before formal charges, and many bureaucrats were forced to support the false accusations and subjected to severe torture if they refused.

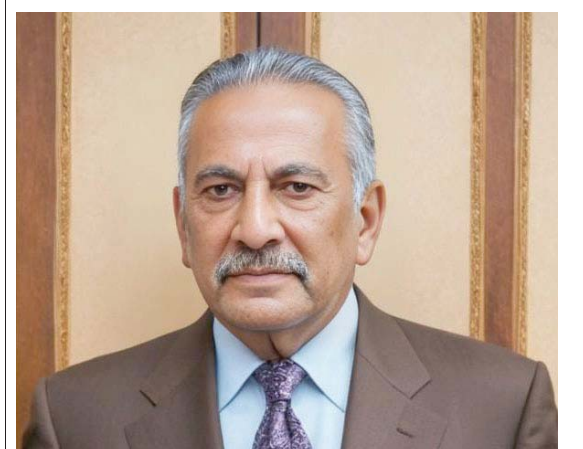
## Inauguration the Safe City Project

ISLAMABAD: PTCL and the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) have joined forces to inaugurate the Safe City Project Rawalpindi to revolutionize urban safety and security. Group Director, Enterprise Solutions, PTCL, Waqar Ahmed, and Chief Information Officer, PITB, Sajjad Ghani signed the agreement in the presence of Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Zarrar Hasham Khan and Director Procurement, PITB, Atta Ur Rehman.



Photo: Online

## Administrative measures are necessary to reduce inflation



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, who had previously served as the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on Friday that it is possible to bring assistance to the business community by lowering lending rates by a small amount.

The government and the masses are also being negatively impacted by the high interest rates. Therefore, the central bank should modify the policy rates during its subsequent meeting, he said.

In a statement released here today, Shahid Rasheed Butt stated that the SBP is exercising reluctance because it believes that loosening monetary policy will hasten the outflow of capital, raise the amount of pressure on the exchange, and enhance inflation which is already very high.

He said that the country is experiencing a decline in inflation; however, the inflation rate is thirteen percent greater than the objective set by the State Bank, which means that it cannot be handled just by implementing monetary policy. In order to combat inflation, he stated that administrative measures against hoarders and profiteers, as well as essential changes, are the necessary measures.

The business leader said that Pakistan had joined the top ten countries regarding inflation, where inflation is five times higher than India and twice higher than Bangladesh.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that inflation has made it impossible for people to live with peace of mind. Expenditures are increasing, but incomes are stagnant. Moreover, he said that inflation could be reduced if there is a reduction in the price of electricity, gas, and oil, which will make it easier for the central bank to lower interest rates.

He noted that the central bank kept the key interest rate steady at 22% for the seventh straight meeting a few days ago, which disappointed businessmen. SBP noted that macroeconomic stabilization measures contribute to considerable improvement in inflation and external position amidst moderate economic recovery.

The upcoming budgetary measures may affect the outlook for near-term inflation. The bankers stressed continuing the current monetary policy stance to bring inflation down to the target range by September 2025.

Besides the coordinated tight monetary and fiscal policy response, other factors that have led to this favorable outcome include lower global commodity prices and improved food supplies. He said that with the IMF stressing the necessity for continuous economic adjustments and Pakistan facing substantial debt repayments of \$24 billion in the upcoming fiscal year, the SBP is poised to maintain a cautious policy stance.

It may be mentioned that amid uncertainty regarding the inflation outlook, key central banks in advanced and emerging economies have maintained a cautious monetary policy stance.

## Huawei Envisions Plan for Digital Corridor in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Huawei Pakistan led by Mr. Ethan Sun, CEO Huawei Pakistan; Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masood, Director Subsidiary Board & Deputy CEO; Mr. Yushaoning, Vice CEO; and Mr. Ahmad Mehboob, Senior Manager Government Affairs called on Planning Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal in his office on Friday.

"Pakistanis are the second biggest nationality employed in Huawei," stated the delegation to highlight Pakistan's potential to emerge as a key player in the competitive digital economy. It is projected that developed economies will witness a significant surge in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stemming from digital advancements. According to leading experts, more than 30% of the GDP of developed nations is expected to be driven by digital innovation and infrastructure by the coming decade, as expressed by CEO Huawei Pakistan.

During the meeting, discussions revolved around various projects to be included within the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase II project list, along with



collaboration opportunities concerning Pakistan's Digital Economy Strategy. Both parties explored future ventures in digital economy transformation under CPEC, recognizing Pakistan's significant potential for growth in this sector.

The Minister stressed on establishing a Digital Corridor, acknowledging Pakistan's role as a prime ground for digital economic expansion.

Moreover Ahmed Bilal Masood Deputy CEO Huawei Pakistan assured Pakistan can become a big trading zone for the large user-base of Middle Eastern countries.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of digital advancement in shaping the future of Pakistan's economy, Minister asserted, "The only path to sustained economic progress for our nation is through comprehensive digital transformation. Embracing digital technologies and infrastructure is not just an option; it's a necessity if we are to thrive in the global marketplace."

The Planning Minister proposed to initiate Islamabad as a model smart city, emphasizing the importance of digital infrastructure provision for the new age economy. Furthermore, Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the establishment of an Innovation Center at UET Narawal, inviting Huawei to be a technology partner in this endeavor.

Mr. Ethan expressed that Huawei's keen interest in collaborating with Pakistan on the proposed initiatives, reaffirming Huawei's dedication to fostering technological innovation and economic growth in Pakistan.

## Govt Provide Business Opportunities to Business Community, says Mian Rashid

Quatul Ain Asim



MULTAN: Pakistan Stock Exchange Investor and Industry awareness session was held at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan, and information about GEM was also given to SMEs. An awareness session was held. Inauguration of the session. President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan Mian Rashid Iqbal said that in the economic downturn and troubled business conditions, it is the responsibility of the government to provide business opportunities to the business community and investors in an atmosphere of trust so that the troubled economy can be brought to a better state. And restore the confidence of the investors. He said that Pakistan Stock Exchange has started GEM (Growth Enterprise Market) Board in addition to its regular board for the development of Pakistan's SME sector as part of the awareness campaign related to the industry.

## ICCI to extend fullest support in turning F-8 markaz: Ahsan Bakhtawari

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that F-8 markaz enjoys the finest location and the Chamber in collaboration with concerned Traders Welfare Association will extend all out support to turn it into an excellent business hub adding that all the concerned government departments must also play their due role in removing the remnants of the district courts and lawyers chambers and help facilitate the affectee traders.

He said this while addressing a gathering arranged in honour of the newly elected President Sardar Tahir Mahmood and General Secretary Ismail Khan of the Traders Welfare Association, F-8 markaz, who visited the Chamber House along with other office bearers.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI is the mother body of all the traders and its doors are opened for them for the ease of business doing. He assured that not only the filtration plant will be installed in the market but parking lanes will also be marked at the earliest to resolve the cleaning drinking water and parking issues.

Appreciating the countless services of Sardar Tahir Mahmood, Ismail Khan and other office bearers of the Association in removing the district courts and lawyers chambers, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI is in touch with all the relevant departments for the speedy and up to the mark development of the markaz.

Secretary General United Business Group and former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said that Sardar Tahir Mahmood, Ismail Khan and their team bagged the victory on the basis of its performance. He urged them to leave no

stone unturned in upgrading the F-8 markaz in cooperation with the ICCI.

Vice President ICCI Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar termed unity among all the ranks of traders as the key necessity for the solution of their problems.

President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch assured his all out support for the development of F-8 markaz.

Secretary General IEAA, Zahid Rafique recounted the services of ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari as well as Sardar Tahir Mahmood and Ismail Khan for the traders.

General Secretary TWA F-8 markaz Ismail Khan vowed to continue work for the welfare of the traders under the leadership of Sardar Tahir Mahmood.

Saeed Swati expressed his gratitude for Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for the provision of filtration plant from his own exchequer for



the markaz.

Those who were present in the ceremony include Haji Naeem, Nasir Chaudhry, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Nawaz Basra, Ashfaq Chhattah,

Rana Javaid, Adnan Fayyaz, Rana Qaisar Mahmood, Raja Zahid Dahnyal, Rana Arif, Imtiaz Abbasi, Babar Chaudhry, Ch. Mohamamad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry and other.

# Punjab wins Prime Minister National Talent Hunt Table Tennis League

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Men's and women's team won the finals of Prime Minister's National Talent Hunt Table Tennis League at the Rodham Hall, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Friday.

The six day event is being organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Punjab B defeated Punjab A by 3-0 in the women's team event final. Punjab A Captain Ramsha Niaz defeated Tayyaba Latif after a tough match by 11-7, 6-11, 11-4, 8-11, 11-9. In the second match Saba Syed defeated Tania Khan 11-7, 6-11, 11-2, 8-11, 11-8 while Shamila Javed defeated Laila Nayab 9-11, 12-10, 8-11 11-5, 11-7. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won the third position in the women's team event.

In the final men's team event, Punjab A defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 3-1 games. Punjab A Atta Ul Mannan defeated Awais Khan 11-6, 8-11, 11-7, 11-4. KPAs Obaid Shah defeated Punjab's Paras Azam 10-12, 11-8, 11-6, 11-7 while Punjab's Usman Nawaz defeated Haroon Khan 11-7, 11-9, 6-11, 11-8 and Atta Ul Mannan



won the game by defeating Ubaid Shah 11-7, 11-5, 11-8.

Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan was the chief guest of the closing ceremony, who along with the host Government College University Lahore Director of Sports Wasim Akhtar, Pakistan Sports

Board Deputy Director General Shahid Salam and officials of the Higher Education Commission distributed prizes to the players.

Speaking on the occasion Rana Mashhood, has reiterated the government's commitment to provide a platform for young talent to shine in various fields,

including sports, health, culture and art, adding that PM's vision was to identify and groom talented young players to represent Pakistan at international levels.

He expressed his excitement about the abundance of talent in every province of Pakistan, which he witnessed during his travels across the country. He emphasized the importance of merit-based selection and the development of young talent to propel the country forward.

Chairman PMYP announced plans to organize leagues like the Pakistan Super League (PSL) in other sports, ensuring a comprehensive approach to talent development. He assured that players identified through the Talent Hunt Program would receive world-class training and grooming, enabling them to make Pakistan proud on international platforms. He predicted that within a year, Pakistani players will be making a mark globally, thanks to the government's initiatives.

Rana also commended the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Sports Board, and Table Tennis Federation for their support of the PM's Youth Programme.

## Target ball coaching and referee judge course conducted



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Target Ball Association (PTBA), as per directions of Pakistan Target Ball Federation (PTBF) President Arif Mahmood Khan and Secretary General Nizamul Haque, organized a Target Ball Coaching and Referee Judge Course at Al Fateh Sports Complex, Faisalabad under the supervision of PTBA President Nasira Kafel and General Secretary M Akram on Tuesday. Chairman Pakistan Flying Tennis Federation Ch Arshad Jat was the chief guest.

More than fifty coaches and technical officials from Lahore, Faisalabad, Sheikhupura, Jhang, Gojra, Toba Tek Singh, Shorkot and Sangla Hill including Director Sports Faisalabad Division Shehzad Gujjar, Shajar Gilani, Ali Aslam, Samina Kausar, Rana Tanveer and Asghar Ali participated in the course.

Senior Vice President of Punjab Target Ball Association Arslan Ali Tariq and Associate Secretary Abdullah Mughal enlightened the participants of the course about the innovations and rules in the game of target ball. A written test was also conducted for the participants of the course. At the end of the course, the chief guest distributed certificates and prizes to those who passed the course.

## Pakistan slide to number 7 in T20 rankings

Pakistan on Friday lost two spots in the International Cricket Council (ICC) T20 rankings, sliding to the seventh position, according to the annual update issued by the global cricket body.

India (264) are still at the top in the updated T20I rankings but their lead has dropped from 11 points to just seven with second-placed Australia (257) rising above third-placed England (252).

South Africa (250) also jumped two spots from sixth to fourth and are now only two rating points behind England.

West Indies (249) in sixth place are two points ahead of Pakistan.

"The rankings update only takes into consideration teams' performances after May 2021, with India's impressive 2-1 series triumph over Australia under skipper Virat Kohli that finished in January of 2021 dropping out of the rankings period," the ICC said in a press release.

"All results between May 2021 and May 2023 are then weighted at 50 per cent and the ones in the following 12 months — that includes Australia's World Test Championship final victory — are then weighted at 100 per cent."

There is no change in the ODI rankings with India increasing their lead at the top to six rating points over Australia (116). Third-placed South Africa (112) have reduced the gap with Australia to four rating points, while Pakistan (106) and New Zealand (101) are also in the top five.

Sri Lanka (93) in seventh place are only two points behind England (95), with Bangladesh (86), Afghanistan (80) and West Indies (69) other teams in the top 10.

Meanwhile, Australia's impressive 209-run win over India in the World Test Championship final at The Oval last year helped them overtake their opponents at the top of the Test rankings.

India (120) are in second place, four points less than Australia, meanwhile, England (105) are in third spot on the ICC Test rankings.

South Africa (103), New Zealand (96), Pakistan (89), Sri Lanka (83), West Indies (82) and Bangladesh (53) remaining unchanged in positions between fourth and ninth.

## Liverpool manager Klopp speaks up about Mohamed Salah amid spat

Days after heated exchange between the Liverpool manager and the forward player last week that made headlines, Jurgen Klopp revealed the status of his relationship with Egyptian Mohamed Salah Friday.

While speaking in a pre-match press conference, Jurgen Klopp told the media that they have known each other for very long and they know how they should deal with it, without any outside expectations.

The manager said while responding to the question about the bilateral matter: "Completely resolved. It's no problem. If we didn't know each other for that long, I'm not sure how we would deal with it."

The 56-year-old German noted: "But we've known each other for that long and respect each other too much that it's really no problem. I think we have the right to deal with these kinds of things completely independent of any expectations from the outside. So we are absolutely fine with it, that's a long story."

## Pakistan confirm To South Africa tour details: PCB Official

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced details of its men's cricket team's tour to South Africa for three T20Is, three ODIs and two Tests in the second half of 2024.

Durban, Centurion, and Johannesburg will host the T20Is from 10-14 December. The ODIs will be played from 17-22 December in Paarl, Cape Town, and Johannesburg, while the two ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 matches will be held at Centurion (26-30 December) and Cape Town (3-7 January).

The side will depart for Durban on 2 December after returning from Australia on 19 November, having featured in a series of three ODIs and three T20Is from 4-18 November. After completing their



African safari on 8 January, the national side will take on New Zealand and South Africa in a three-nation ODI tournament on home turf, which will be followed by the eight-team ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan.

Prior to the tours of Australia and South Africa, Pakistan will host Bangladesh and England for two and three Tests, respectively. This means they will play seven Tests, minimum of 10 ODIs, and six T20Is in the six-month period from August 2024 to January

2025. This will be Pakistan's seventh Test tour of South Africa since 1994-95. Their two Test wins were in the 1997-98 and 2006-2007 series. In the Durban Test in 1997-98, Pakistan won by 29 runs at the back of centuries from Azhar Mahmood (132) and Saeed Anwar (118), match figures of nine for 149 by Mushtaq Ahmed and a first innings five-fer by Shoaib Akhtar. In the 2006-2007 Port Elizabeth Test, Pakistan won by five wickets with Inzamam-ul-

Haq being named as Player of the Match for his 92 in the first innings.

In ODIs, Pakistan has won two of the last three series in 2013-2014 and 2020-21, while South Africa triumphed in 2002-2003 (4-1), 2006-2007 (3-1), 2012-2013 (3-2), and 2018-2019 (3-2).

In 12 T-20 to date, Pakistan leads 6-5 in head-to-head encounters, with one match ending in no-result.

**Tour schedule**

10 Dec - 1st T20I, Durban

13 Dec - 2nd T20I, Centurion

14 Dec - 3rd T20I, Johannesburg

17 Dec - 1st ODI, Paarl

19 Dec - 2nd ODI, Cape Town

22 Dec - 3rd ODI, Johannesburg

26-30 Dec - 1st Test, Centurion

3-7 Jan - 2nd Test, Cape Town

## Jr Tennis Initiative Program Activity held at PTF



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Around 250 students Friday visited PTF Complex under JTI programme to witness the opening ceremony of the 1st PTF Inter Department Tennis Trophy. The students aged between 8 and 14 from OPF Junior and OPF Higher Secondary School F-11, OPF School F-8, Allied High School, OPF Girls Wing F-11 and Dar-e-Arkam School Islamabad got a chance to meet, mingle and play with members of the Pakistan team.

International tennis star and President-PTF Aisam ul Haq Qureshi led the on-court activities and was joined by Aqeel Khan,

Muhammad Shoaib, Barkat ullah and Yusuf Khalil. It was heartening to see the enthusiasm and excitement amongst the young students for the game of tennis. Such initiatives are very important for the development of tennis and making the game popular in Pakistan.

## Rovman Powell to lead as West Indies unveil squad for T20 World Cup

A Sports

ANTIGUA: Rovman Powell was named the captain as West Indies announced their 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 which the country will co-host with the United States.

Shamar Joseph, who shot to fame in the Test series against Australia earlier this year, has been included in the squad and is likely to mark his T20I debut.

Shimron Hetmyer made a comeback to the team for the T20 World Cup 2024 while Kyle Mayers and pacer Oshane

Thomas were omitted from the squad.

Johnson Charles, Brandon King, and Shai Hope have been picked for top-order positions.

The West Indies squad also includes several hitters and all-rounders including Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Powell, Jason Holder, Sherfane Rutherford, and Romario Shepherd.

In the spin-bowling department, Akeal Hossain and Gudakesh Motie will lead the team in the upcoming T20 World Cup while vice-captain Alzarri Joseph will lead the

pace line-up along with Shamar



Joseph.

Director of West Indies

Cricket Desmond Haynes said

that the selection committee

had a long discussion regarding the batting line-up.

"I want to state very clearly that our focus has always been (on) roles — roles that we want people to play. The situation of someone like Shamar Joseph, you really can't question someone like him, we saw him in Australia. He ticked the boxes for us," he added.

Co-host West Indies will start their campaign against Papua New Guinea (PNG) on June 2, before taking on Uganda, New Zealand and Afghanistan respectively in the group stage.

## Taskin, Tanzid propel Bangladesh to beat Zimbabwe in T20I series opener

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Debutant opener Tanzid Hasan hit an unbeaten 67 after Taskin Ahmed's 3/14 and guided Bangladesh to an eight-wicket victory over Zimbabwe in the first T20I of the five-match series in Chittagong.

The hosts raced to 126-2 in under 16 overs after bowling out Zimbabwe for 124, with Towhid Hridoy finishing unbeaten on 33.

Tanzid smashed eight fours and two sixes in his 47-ball maiden T20I, lifting Luke Jongwe over mid-off for a boundary to complete the match.

"Everyone played well today... but we can still learn from this game and come back well in the next match," said Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain

Shanto.

"Last couple of days, we trained very hard, and I hope that Tanzid continues his form."

A record stand by Clive Madande and Wellington Masakadza earlier helped Zimbabwe recover from an early collapse that left the tourists languishing on 41-7.

The pair put on 75 runs together for Zimbabwe's highest eighth-wicket partnership.

Taskin Ahmed bowled Madande for 43 off 39 balls to break the stand, but Masakadza (34) stayed at the crease until he was run out on the last ball of the innings.

Put into bat first, Zimbabwe lost Craig Ervine for a duck in the second over.

Mohammad Saifuddin then forced debutant fellow opener Joylord Gumbie (17) to give a catch to Taskin at fine leg.

Mahedi Hasan's next over saw Brian Bennett run out for 16 with skipper Sikandar Raza out leg before first-ball.

Taskin also sent back Sean Williams and Ryan Burl, both of them also going for golden ducks to make it three in the innings, off back-to-back deliveries in the following over, and Saifuddin dismissed Luke Jongwe for two.

"A lot of seniors went missing, we depend heavily on them in batting and they missed out," said Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza.

"But hopefully we'll get back better in the next game."

Madande was given leg before off



Saifuddin on 28 but the decision was reversed after review.

Chittagong hosts the second match

of the series between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe on Sunday.

The series is Bangladesh's last before

next month's T20 World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States and West Indies.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

## PM optimistic for a polio-free Pakistan very soon

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the government, in collaboration with the global partners and national institutions, would be able to eliminate polio from the country very soon. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's

Global Development Division, said the government was fully resolved to purge the country of this fatal disease.

The prime minister directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to launch a joint awareness drive, in collaboration with the GPEI. He told the delegation that the government would carry out the accountability of the institutions involved in the polio eradication to ensure transparency in the process. He also assured to provide full security cover to the vaccination

teams. Prime Minister Shehbaz lauded the \$500 million donation by Saudi Arabia during the World Economic Forum for polio eradication. He said the Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation was a must to eradicate polio from the region. The members of the delegation apprised the prime minister of the ongoing measures for polio eradication and appreciated the government's resolve to get rid of the disease. The delegation also highlighted the problems faced during the immunisation.

The delegation members observed that the government was resolved to ensure success of polio eradication drive by providing necessary technical expertise. Dr Christopher told the prime minister that Bill Gates was extremely pleased over the anti-polio initiatives taken during his both stints as Punjab chief minister. The meeting was attended by Regional Director of EMRO Dr Hanan Balkhi, Sanjay Wijesekera, Unicef Regional Director of South Asia, Dr Omotayo Bolu,

Polio Branch Chief of Centres for Disease Control, Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan,

Dr Hamid Jafari, Director Polio Eradication, EMRO and Michael Galway, Deputy Director Polio Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Coordinator on Health Mukhtar Malik and relevant senior officers were also present.

## Justice delayed is justice denied

### Imran Khan seeks earliest decisions on cases against him, Bushra Bibi

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founding Chairman Imran Khan urged the judges hearing his and his spouse Bushra Bibi's cases to decide all their cases at the earliest instead of delaying them unnecessarily because Justice delayed is justice denied.

In his message to the nation from jail, PTI Founding Chairman stated that everyone knew that all these cases whether it was the

Al-Qadir Trust case, the Iddat case or the Cypher case were fabricated, false and baseless.

About the statement of CJP Qazi Faiz Isa that there is no pressure on him, Imran Khan said: "Pressure faces only those who refuse to do wrong, while you have become B-team against PTI."

PTI Chairman reminded him: "You snatched the PTI electoral symbol of bat, did not provide a level playing field to PTI, besides violating our basic human rights under the guise of May 9 incidents."

He noted that PTI's petition regarding May 9 had been pending since May 25, 2023, which was not fixed for hearing till date.

Similarly, Imran Khan stated that PTI's petitions filed against the flagrant riggings in the general elections were also not fixed for hearing hitherto, besides unnecessarily delaying the issue of PTI women's reserved seats.

He said that the Supreme Court's (SC) decisions revived the doctrine of necessity once

again, adding that decisions were being taken under duress and intimidations, which was destroying the judicial system of the country.

Imran Khan recalled that the letter of the six judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) proved that a law of the jungle prevailed in the country. "It is high time that the judges of the top court should stand firmly with judges of the high courts and refuse to give wrong decisions under duress and coercion."

PTI Founding Chair-

man urged the nation that this was a historical opportunity to stand up, as great nations took advantage of such opportunities.

Imran Khan warned that the nations did not stand up against the oppression would remain slaves forever.

PTI Founding Chairman said that he wrote a letter to the Telegraph in which he stated that not only his life but his wife was also in danger, who was being denied medical treatment for the last three months.

## Mushaal condoles sad demise of Shiekh Tahnoon Bin Mohammad



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, former SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, expressed her heartfelt condolences to the President, the entire Al Nahyan family, and the honourable people of the UAE on the sad demise of Shiekh Tahnoon Bin Mohammad Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative in Al Ain Region.

Mushaal, a wife of unlawfully incarcerated Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, in her condolence message said that the entire people of Kashmir were grieved over the passing away of the Shiekh Tahnoon Bin Mohammad.

## NIPS highlights Vietnam cooperation in bid to boost bilateral ties

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) organised a keynote address by H. E. Nguyen Tien Phong, the Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, on "Envisioning Comprehensive Pakistan-Vietnam Cooperation: Prospects and Opportunities." Lt Gen (Retd) Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, greeted the esteemed guest upon arrival. Moderated by Dr Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Director General, NIPS, the keynote highlighted the areas of Pakistan-Vietnam cooperation.

The Ambassador stressed the importance of people-centric approach to bilateral relations as the foundation for enhancing bilateral trade, S&T partnerships, academic and student exchanges, cultural understanding, and tourism promotion. He termed business-to-business (B2B) and people-to-people ties key to strong bilateral relations between the two countries. He underlined the need for a strong mechanism for implementing plans, projects, and proposals related to cooperation, which, he said, required strong ownership by the government and the people on both sides.

## Systems Limited hosts U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan



## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Systems Limited, Pakistan's premier provider of IT and IT Enabled Services, had the distinct honor of hosting the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Donald A. Blome. Mr. Asif Peer, CEO of Systems Limited, along with Mr. Aezaz Hussain, Founder and Chairman of the Board, warmly welcomed U.S. Ambassador Blome, U.S. Consul General in Lahore-Kristin Hawkins, Political Economic Officer Douglas Johnston, and Commercial Specialist-Hassan Raza, providing them with insights into the ongoing U.S.-Pakistan collaborations in the IT sector and future plans of Systems Limited.

During the visit, Ambassador Blome inquired about the availability and quality of IT resources in Pakistan. The Systems team proudly informed him of their strong partnership with academia, emphasizing their commitment to nurturing and developing high-quality IT talent through academic collaborations and skill-building initiatives.

## COMSTECH organizes Int'l Workshop on Big Data Analytics, AI, and Data Security in Kazakhstan

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized an International Workshop under its Distinguished Scholars Program, on Big Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Data Security, held at the L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan from April 29th to May 4th.

This esteemed workshop, led by the renowned COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar, Prof. Dr. Jasni Mohamad Zain, Professor and Director at the Institute for Big Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (IBDAAI) at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. Prof. Zain brought together experts and scholars to explore the cutting-edge advancements and applications of big data analytics and AI across various sectors, including oil, gas, and medicine.

Prof. Zain's captivating lectures delved into the theoretical and practical aspects of these fields, sparking insightful discussions on their real-world applications.

The COMSTECH Distinguished Scholars Program plays a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration and capacity building in science and technology in OIC member states.

## President PWCTA calls on Minister Shaza Fatima

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association (PWCTA), Vancouver Canada, Bushra Rehman called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in Islamabad.

During the meeting, President PWCTA Bushra Rehman apprised Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima about PWCTA's initiatives and achievements.

She also briefed the Minister of State for IT about International Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Expo being organised in September this year in collaboration with the



Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), featuring more than 100 exhibitors from various sectors of Pakistan.

## Uzbekistan Embassy congratulates Pakistani journalists on World Press Freedom Day

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan congratulate on World Press Freedom Day.

He highly appreciates the invaluable contribution to the development of Uzbek-Pakistani strategic partnership in all spheres, the promotion of the initiative of H. E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan,

on Regional Connectivity between Central and South Asia, as well as transport, logistic and infrastructure projects within the framework of this Initiative.

Mr. Oybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan wishes Pakistani journalists good health, family happiness and new successes in your professional activities.

## PM AJK visits CMH to inquire about injured machine operator



## Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Friday visited the CMH to inquire about the health of machine operator who was airlifted to the hospital for treatment after getting seriously injured while conducting landslide clearance operation in Neelum

valley area.

The Prime Minister Haq inquired about the health of the injured driver and expressed his best wishes and speedy recovery.

The PM was accompanied by senior minister Col. retired Waqar Ahmad Noor, minister for Communications and Public Works Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq.

## Ambassador Baloch interacts with Pakistani business, finance professionals in Brussels



## Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: Ambassador of Pakistan to European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg Anma Baloch interacted with Pakistani Business and finance professionals from Belgium & Luxembourg in Brussels today.

The delegation included Mr. Shakil Ahmed, FCA, Chairman Luxembourg Intervest Capital Partners, Mr. Abdullah Sarwar, ACA, Secretary, Luxembourg Ernst & Young and Ms. Hira Mehmood, ACA Member, Belgium.

Ambassador Anma Baloch appreciated the important role that Paki-

stani chartered accountants & finance experts are playing in the development of the economy. She thanked the ICAP delegation by adding that such regular interactions would help to share more ideas and opportunities, which also advances the Embassy's purpose. She expected that today's interaction would be a harbinger of future collaboration between the embassy and the Pakistani finance professionals in Belgium & Luxembourg.

The delegates thanked the ambassador for invitation and support extended by the Embassy.

## Minister Sheikh lands...

Continued from Page 1

Chairman Gwadar Port Passand Khan Buledi briefly insights into the ongoing development projects at Gwadar Port, followed by a detailed briefing from Chairman COPHC about the port's operations and recent developments

The Minister also visited the Free Zone, including a visit to the newly constructed 1.2 MGD Desalination Plant, showing keen interest in the infrastructure developments.

Expressing satisfaction, the Minister commended the progress of ongoing works in Gwadar.